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magazine

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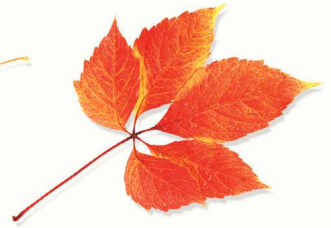
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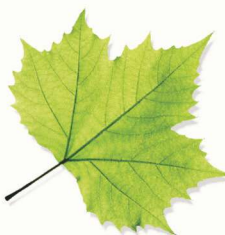
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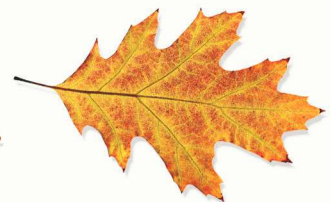
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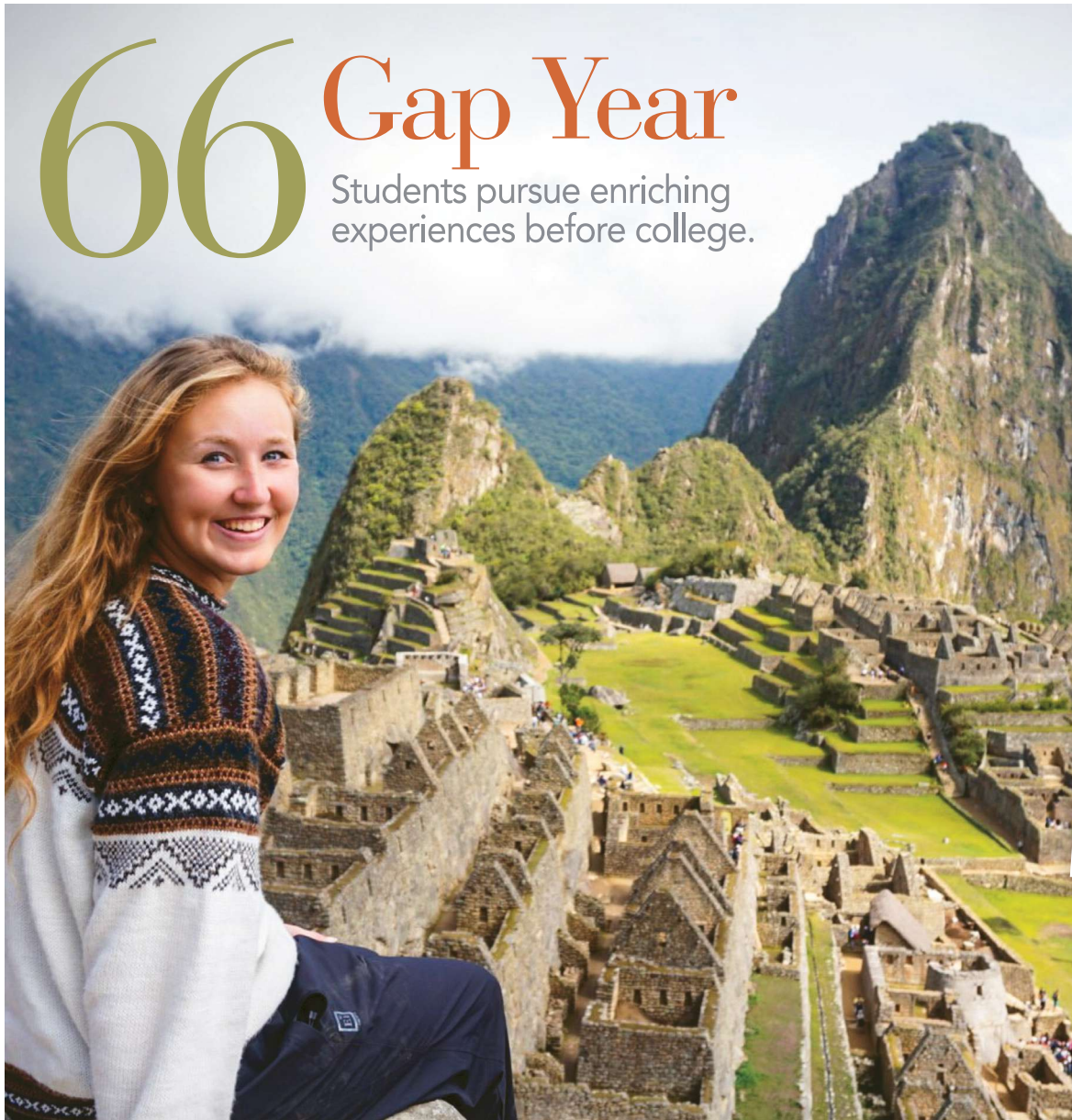
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## FEATURES



# 66 Gap Year

Students pursue enriching experiences before college.



**ON THE COVER:**  
Ballantyne's superfans of the Carolina Panthers are a dedicated, creative lot with their eyes on winning the Super Bowl.  
Photo by LunahZon Photography

## Morning Buzz

Weekdays in Ballantyne begin with a flurry of activity.



## Panthers Mania

Fans pound even harder after last season's success.



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## BALLANTYNE magazine

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Fall 2016 Vol. 16, No. 3



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# Far and Wide

## Ballantyne Spirit Starts Here

ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS SO FAR about editing Ballantyne Magazine has been spending time in our readers' homes. This summer I had the unexpected pleasure of hanging out in two Ballantyne-area garages.

Let me explain. For our Panthers Mania story, the Burkhart family invited us to the ultimate "man cave" and Carolina Panthers viewing spot — their garage. When I saw the oversized sectional to match the oversized projection screen, I could understand why their friends flock to their home on game day.

Writer Nan Bauroth invited lots of Ballantyne superfans to the Burkharts' garage, and we had ourselves a little preseason Panthers party.

I also spent time in Frank Atwood's garage, waiting out one of our many storms this summer. (It didn't pass, and we had to reschedule.)

Atwood displays his team spirit by placing Panthers decals on his jeep, flags on his lawn, even jerseys on his dogs. When his neighbors saw we were photographing his fandom, they rushed to display their Panthers flags, too, showing the wider neighborhood support and enthusiasm.

But enthusiasm in our area extends well beyond football.

Mystery writer Jenifer Ruff is one of our residents who rises with a purpose and greets the day ready to make something happen. One morning, she invited us into her dining room to meet her monthly Charlotte Writers Club group of fellow mystery writers. Page by page, they offer feedback that gets each member closer to that next book release.

Meanwhile, in our gap-year feature, three young adults



from the Ballantyne area give us a glimpse into their temporary homes around the world. Writer Dawn Liles interviewed three high school graduates about their experiences. From pushing personal boundaries to raising funds for their trips, they each took a year off before going to college to serve others and explore this fascinating planet. As you'll see, these young adults are excited about new friendships and discoveries and display a wisdom beyond their years.

## Enthusiasm in our area extends well beyond football.

Whether it's early-morning pursuits or garage gatherings, Ballantyne residents are creating community, celebrating their team and making a difference. And what starts here doesn't just stay here, as we learn from our gap-year students. The Ballantyne spirit extends far and wide. It's an honor to capture its essence in these pages.

Jodi Werner Greenwald  
Editor-in-Chief

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# What's happening in and **around Ballantyne**

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## New Artwork at Gallery Restaurant

Gallery Restaurant's exclusive exhibit from Shain Gallery, a leading Charlotte contemporary art provider, features new artwork. They include "Finish Line" by Charlotte artist Josh Brown, "Summer Bouquet" (pictured) by popular Atlanta artist Susie Pryor and "Mellow" by Lynn Johnson, an emerging Atlanta-based artist. All art is available for purchase. Info: 704-248-4058 or [www.shaingallery.com](http://www.shaingallery.com).

Photo courtesy of Shain Gallery

# NEWS CUES

## Fall Festival, Wine Tasting at Historic Cabin

The Community House Fall Festival is Saturday, Sept. 24, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the historic log cabin on Community House Road.

The free event, open to the public, features 30 artisans selling jewelry, garden art, candles, children's toys and pottery. There will also be a petting zoo and ice cream for children. Barbecue plates, hot dogs and baked items will be for sale, and the Presbyterian Breast Center Mobile Mammography Unit will be on-site to provide screening mammograms.

The cabin is also the site of a wine tasting and food pairing Sunday, Oct. 9, with Catherine

Rabb, a certified sommelier and senior instructor from Johnson & Wales University. Tickets are \$10 at the door, with all proceeds benefiting cabin preservation and restoration. Reservations recommended: 704-905-8334.

The cabin, also known as the Lower Providence Community House, is located at 9735 Community House Road, across from Community House Middle School. Women of the club meet at 10 a.m. on the third Monday of every month, and anyone in the community is welcome to join. Details: [www.lowerprovidencelogcabin.org](http://www.lowerprovidencelogcabin.org).



## Youth Stage 'Wizard,' Holiday Classic

The Ballantyne Arts Center presents the "Wizard of Oz" Nov. 4-6. The show features second graders through 12th graders acting and singing beloved songs from this timeless children's classic.

The third annual production of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!" is Dec. 9-11. In this humorous classic, young actors portray a couple struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant. Info and tickets: 704-716-4600.

## Club Hosts Candidates Meet & Greet

The Ballantyne Breakfast Club will host its Candidates Meet & Greet BBQ on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Attendees can meet candidates running for office and enjoy free barbecue. Details: Ray Eschert, 704-651-1237 or [www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com](http://www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com).



## Atkinson Leads Wingate Ballantyne

Jeff Atkinson, longtime Ballantyne-area resident and former TV anchor/reporter, has been promoted to assistant vice president at Wingate University. He leads the Ballantyne campus.

In his role, he oversees marketing efforts, helping to expand enrollment and increase awareness of the school's educational opportunities. Previously, Atkinson served as director of marketing and communications for the university.

Wingate's Ballantyne site, located in the Harris Building at Ballantyne Corporate Park, serves approximately 600 students, faculty and staff. Facilities include 10 classrooms, administrative offices, breakout discussion rooms and a computer lab. For more information, go to [www.wingate.edu/ballantyne](http://www.wingate.edu/ballantyne).

## Training On Tap

On Thursday, Oct. 20, from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., join Sara's YMCA for Training On Tap, a free after-work social with fitness activities, food trucks, drinks and music at Brixham Tent in Ballantyne Corporate Park. Details: [www.goballantyne.com](http://www.goballantyne.com).

**BIZ  
BUZZ**



## IT Firm Launches Rural Center

RadixBay, an IT consulting firm headquartered in Ballantyne Corporate Park, opened a Rural Development Center (RDC) in Tabor City, N.C., a concept developed by CEO Greg Lovette, who grew up in a small town and wanted to bring jobs to rural parts of the state.

Working with schools, RadixBay trains aspiring IT professionals to work with clients and centrally manages them from the RDC. Info: [www.radixbay.com](http://www.radixbay.com).

# BBQ IS AN ART WITH PLENTY OF CRAFT.

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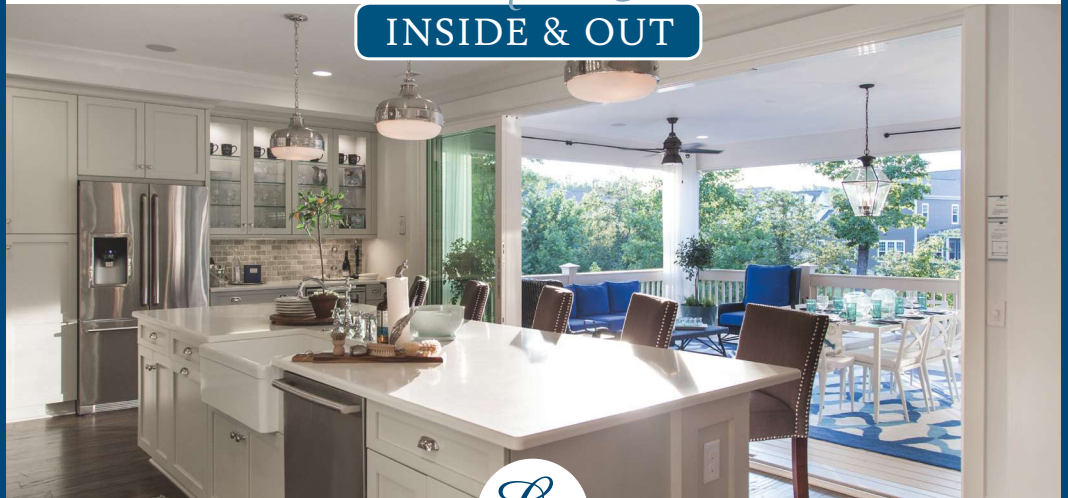
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## Celebrate Autumn at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge

Reserve your spot at The Ballantyne's Tastings, Whiskey Club events, Afternoon Teas or Thanksgiving Brunch. Call 704-248-4100.

### Tastings

Gallery Restaurant will offer weekly tastings on Fridays beginning at 6:30 p.m. with complementary light bites. Tastings usually alternate each week between wines and cocktails. Cost: \$25-40 per person (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations required.



### Whiskey Club

Whiskey Club of Ballantyne meets monthly on Fridays from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. to explore whiskies and enjoy complementing small plates. Upcoming events: Whiskies of the World, Sept. 30, and Angel's Envy Distillery, Oct. 28. Cost: \$50 per person (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations required.

### Afternoon Teas

Afternoon Tea is served Wednesday through Saturday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. year-round. Cost: \$36 for adults and \$18 for junior patrons (plus tax and gratuity).

The following special teas will be available this fall: Champagne Tea with Jane Austen, Sept. 14-17; Mad Hatter's Tea Party, Oct. 5-8; and Psychic Tea, Nov. 9-12. Cost of special teas: \$40 for adults, \$20 for junior patrons (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations required.



### Beer Garden

From noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 9, enjoy an Oktoberfest-themed, pop-up Ballantyne Beer Garden on the South Lawn. Free and open to the public, the event features live music, local beer, German food and drawings for prizes. Menu items will be available a la carte.

### Thanksgiving Brunch

Celebrate the holiday with brunch and live entertainment on Nov. 24 from noon to 4 p.m.

Cost: \$75 per person, \$35 for children, ages 5-12, and complimentary for children ages 4 and under (pricing does not include alcoholic beverages, tax or 23 percent service charge). Reservations required.

### Fitness at The Ballantyne

**Personal Training:** Sign up for 10 individual 45-minute sessions for \$450 or 10 group one-hour sessions for \$400 per person. Terms and conditions apply.

**Boot Camp:** Enroll in an eight-week session from Sept. 12 through Nov. 4. Attend three hourly sessions per week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at noon. The cost is \$300, and all fitness levels are welcome. Advance registration and payment are required. For inquiries or to sign up: 704-248-4348.



### Space for Holiday Events

The Ballantyne offers a variety of event-space options for corporate and social events. For events hosted Sunday through Thursday in November and December, receive 10 percent off food and beverage pricing with reduced room-rental fees and guest-room rates.

Food and beverage minimums apply. Inquiries: 704-248-4070 or [sales@theballantynehotel.com](mailto:sales@theballantynehotel.com).

### The Golf Club at Ballantyne

On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, veterans play half off the daily rate. Golfers must present valid military identification on arrival. Info or tee times: 704-248-4383.



Sara Butkovich



Nadia Naja

### Staff Expands at Chiropractic Center

Weddington Chiropractic Wellness Center in Blakeney has welcomed to its staff Dr. Sara Butkovich, a doctor of chiropractic, and Nadia Naja, a wellness coach and doctor's assistant. Services include chiropractic, nutritional consultations, weight-loss programs, therapeutic massages, acupuncture and cold laser pain therapy. Details: [www.weddingtonwellness.com](http://www.weddingtonwellness.com).



## Waverly Signs More Retailers

District 5 Interiors, Simply Grand! and Mattress Firm have signed leases in the new 90-acre Waverly development near the intersection of Providence and Ardrey Kell roads.

This is the second Charlotte location for District 5 Interiors, which specializes in casual lifestyle furniture and accessories. Simply Grand! features Southern, coastal and popular trends in clothing for men, women and children; boutique accessories; special occasion items; seasonal decor; and decorative accents. Mattress Firm will be adjacent to CVS.

The first retail tenants at Waverly are expected to open this fall, with Whole Foods opening in early 2017. Details: [www.waverlyclt.com/interactive-siteplan](http://www.waverlyclt.com/interactive-siteplan).

## AMA Publishes Asher's Tumor Study

In its July 26 issue, the Journal of the American Medical Association published an international brain tumor research study co-authored by Charlotte neurosurgeon Anthony Asher.

Asher is with Carolina Neurosurgery & Spine Associates, which has a Ballantyne office. The article reported results of a clinical research trial originating in Charlotte a decade ago comparing the effects of treating patients with a combination of whole brain radiation and focused radiation, versus focused radiation alone.

"First and most directly, this study provides definitive evidence that patients with one to three brain metastases should no longer receive routine whole brain radiation



Anthony Asher

therapy, and should be treated with focused therapy alone to better preserve cognitive function and quality of life," Asher says.

Asher recently presented his findings at the 2016 American Association of Neurological Surgeons Annual Scientific Meeting, where he received the Leksell Radiosurgery Award for his research.

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## Networkers to Discuss Leadership

Ballantyne Briefings, a business networking group, will meet Tuesday, Oct. 25, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne. Stacey Brown Randall of the Brown-Randall Group will discuss "Reversing Your Goal-Setting Strategy." Info: Allen Starrett at [ars@starrettlawfirm.com](mailto:ars@starrettlawfirm.com) or [www.facebook.com/ballantynebriefings](http://www.facebook.com/ballantynebriefings).



Paul Cattieu



Audrey Bell



Schuyler Clark



Carolina Kramer



Garrett Merck



Meredith Neal



Matt Tilman



Alice Danter



Shalini Iyer



Alex ReFalo

Photos courtesy of Bissell

## Bissell Promotes, Hires Staff

Bissell Companies has promoted Paul Cattieu to director of sustainability and welcomes Audrey Bell as shared services specialist.

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge has named Schuyler Clark as director of rooms, promoted Carolina Kramer to director of front office, hired Garrett Merck as executive banquet chef and named Meredith Neal

as guest services manager at The Spa at Ballantyne.

Matt Tilman was promoted to chef de cuisine and Alice Danter was named sous chef at Gallery Restaurant.

Shalini Iyer was named director of sales, and Alex ReFalo was promoted to groups and event manager at Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne.

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## Local Chamber Holds Fall Meetings

The Ballantyne Chapter of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce holds Thursday luncheon meetings this fall on Sept. 1, Oct. 6 and Dec. 1 at the Ballantyne Country Club. Meetings are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the fee is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door subject to a wait list. Registration: [www.charlottechamber.com](http://www.charlottechamber.com).

## Ballantyne Brews Holds Social

Ballantyne Brews, a social group bringing together people who work in or around Ballantyne Corporate Park, meets the first and third Tuesday of the month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Locations vary and are announced by email a few days in advance. For notifications or to join the email list, email Allen Starrett at [ars@starrettlawfirm.com](mailto:ars@starrettlawfirm.com).

## OPENINGS

### Grill Opens Second Site

The Lodge has opened its second Charlotte location in the Shoppes at Ardrey Kell. Signature entrees feature wings and all kinds of burgers, including bison and tuna. Full bar and patio seating available.

Info: 704-752-0035 or [www.lodgecharlotte.com](http://www.lodgecharlotte.com).



### Trampoline Store Now in Blakeney

Springfree Trampoline has opened a store in Blakeney, its eighth U.S. location. Springfree uses strong, flexible composite rods in place of springs and an enclosure that helps prevent falls off the trampoline. The store also sells the outdoor digital game system "tgoma," which stands for "take games outside and make them active." Info: 704-312-1212 or [www.springfreetrampoline.com](http://www.springfreetrampoline.com).



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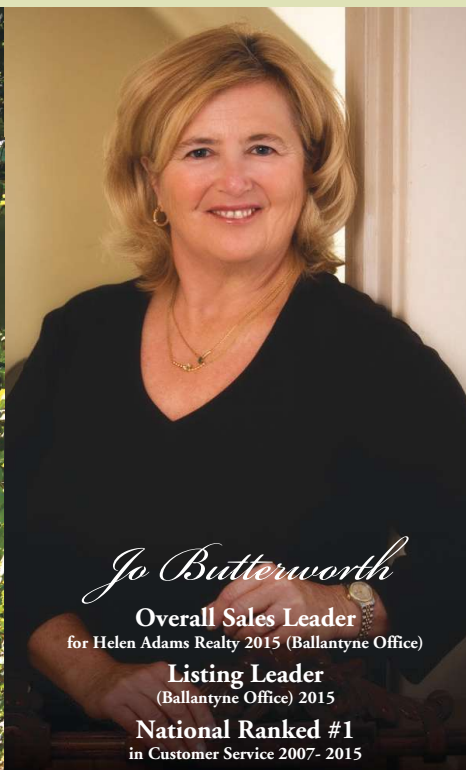
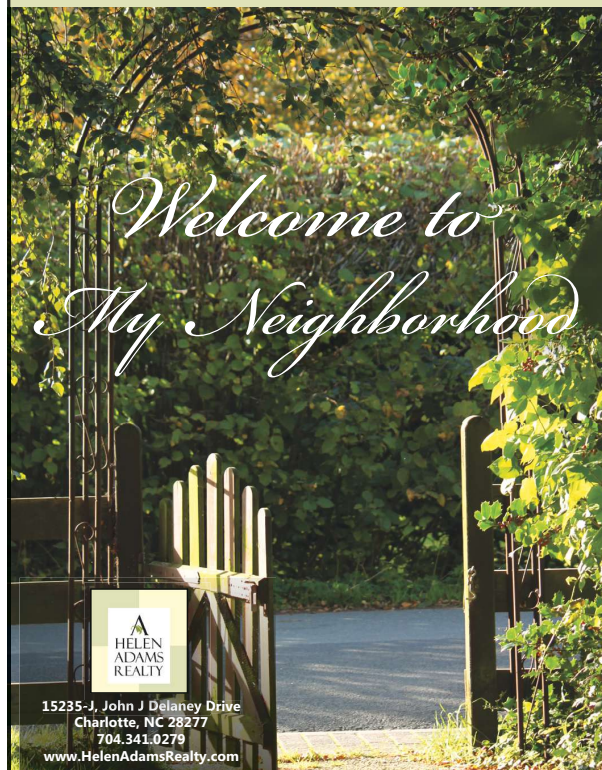
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## Craft Beer Shop Coming to Pineville

Kit's Trakside Crafts, expected to open in September at 330 Main Street in Pineville, will feature craft beers from North Carolina and beyond, including distinctive imports and ciders.

The store's general manager is Kit Burkholder, featured in the Fall 2015 issue of this magazine as "the beer guy" and certified cicerone at a local grocer.

Kit's Trakside Crafts will be located in a 1912 building that sits along the railroad tracks in downtown Pineville. Trakside Crafts LLC, formed by Le Ann Fenton and Bill Burkholder, owns the store. Info: 704-956-3008 or tracksidecrafts@gmail.

## BLACKFINN<sup>®</sup> — AMERIPUB —

## Pub Joins Ballantyne Village

Blackfinn AmeriPub is slated for a September opening in Ballantyne Village. The pub concept specializes in house-made American fare, 50 beer taps and handcrafted cocktails. The menu also has vegetarian and gluten-free options. A semi-private space is available for group and corporate parties. Details: [www.blackfinnameripub.com](http://www.blackfinnameripub.com).



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## Toringdon Adds Sports Medicine Group

iOrthoBiologix Sports Medicine, an orthopedic and sports medicine practice specializing in bio-restorative/regenerative medicine, is now open in Toringdon. The practice focuses on using a patient's stem cells and growth factors to spur healing from acute and chronic injuries. Details: 980-859-2340 or [www.iorthobiologix.com](http://www.iorthobiologix.com).

## charming charlie

### Jewelry Shop Now at StoneCrest

Charming Charlie has opened its ninth North Carolina contemporary jewelry and fashion accessories shop, in StoneCrest. The store also sells handbags, scarves, watches, sunglasses, footwear and apparel. Community members can host charity events at the store, donating a portion of the proceeds to a nonprofit organization of choice. Info: 704-341-2142 or [www.charmingcharlie.com](http://www.charmingcharlie.com).

### TotalCyclist Training Center Opens

TotalCyclist, an indoor cycling training center for cyclists, triathletes, mountain bikers and others, has moved near Elm Lane and I-485. Info: 704-376-7006 or [www.totalcyclist.com](http://www.totalcyclist.com).



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## Window Firm Now in Pineville

Atlas Security Shutters & Windows, which offers security roll-down shutters and impact-resistant windows that come with a lifetime guarantee, has opened in Pineville. Details: [www.atlassecurityshutters.com](http://www.atlassecurityshutters.com).



## YOUNGER SET



Taryn Rimland, a leadership and development manager with the local Girl Scouts (right), congratulates Archana Jayasekar and Rajani Guditi on their awards.

## Scouts Win Silver Awards

Ardrey Kell High students Archana Jayasekar and Rajani Guditi from Troop 3744 earned Girl Scout Silver Awards this spring. Their award project involved forming a math-tutoring club for seventh graders at Community House Middle School, where they could share their longtime passion for math education.

Their project also spurred interest from Ardrey Kell High's National Junior Honors Society and Beta Club, whose members earn volunteer hours for working with the math-tutoring club. Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent Ann Clark spoke at the awards ceremony.

## SWEET CHARITIES



## Kick Up Your (High) Heels!

The 6th Annual Stiletto Sprint is Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8 a.m. at SouthPark Mall. Presented by Bissell Companies, the event benefits ovarian cancer research and programs at Levine Cancer Institute.

Sign up for competitive or noncompetitive sprints, and bring spectators to watch and enjoy the festivities. The event is in the parking lot area near the mall's Symphony Park. Registration and info: [www.tealheels.org](http://www.tealheels.org).

## Rally Hosts Events, Bow Campaign

The 2016 BCC Rally, an all-volunteer nonprofit that raises funds and awareness to fight breast cancer, will host four major events this September at Ballantyne Country Club. BCC Rally events are open to the public and feature:

- "Night in the Caribbean" on Saturday, Sept. 17, features dinner, dancing, music and an auction sponsored by Skatell's Manufacturing Jewelers.
- "Set Sail into Rally" is the theme for the women's golf event on Tuesday, Sept. 20, sponsored by Aetna. Golf is followed by a luncheon with founding sponsor Charlotte Radiology.
- The Men's Pink Ball Golf Tournament, a four-man team event with an informal buffet,

follows on Thursday, Sept. 22, sponsored by KPMG.

- The Beach Bash Tennis Event is Friday, Sept. 23.

During the fall, BCC Rally's Pink Bow Campaign for businesses, neighborhoods, individuals and schools helps organizations hold their own rally fundraising events. Bows come in three sizes — small (\$2), medium (\$5) and large (\$7).

Funds raised by BCC Rally support the work of Komen Charlotte in 13 local counties as well as breast cancer research at Carolinas' universities. Since its founding in 2004, BCC Rally has raised more than \$1.6 million and earned a Susan G. Komen Lifetime Pink Ribbon Circle Award. Registration/info: [www.bccrally.org](http://www.bccrally.org).



## Dance Recital Supports Indian Education

The Ashwini Kathak Dance Academy in Ballantyne, which teaches the classical Indian dance of Kathak, held its annual recital this summer. More than 600 people attended the event, which featured performances by students, Indian food, fashion and accessories.

The event raised more than \$5,000 for Ekal Vidyalaya, a nonprofit organization that provides education, health services and economic-development help to remote and underserved villages in India. Details: [www.ashwinigate.com](http://www.ashwinigate.com).

## Race Honors Fallen Firefighter

Anytime Fitness of Pineville, along with Hendrick Honda and Sky High Sports, will hold a 5K and one-mile fun run Saturday, Sept. 10, to honor Pineville firefighter Richard Sheltra, who lost his life in the line of duty in Pineville earlier this year.

The race starts at 8 a.m. at Belle Johnson Community Center in Pineville. Entry fee: \$25. Proceeds benefit the Richard Sheltra Memorial Fund to purchase new gear and defray educational expenses for first responders. Info: 704-889-0800.

## Staybridge Helps 'Give Kids The World'

Staybridge Suites Charlotte Ballantyne hosted its seventh annual Give Kids The World Village Luncheon on May 11. The barbecue event raised \$1,965 for the nonprofit that treats children with life-threatening illnesses and their families to fantasy vacations at Give Kids The World Village, a 70-acre "storybook" resort.

## Hunger Project Hits 10 Million Meals

Community volunteers joined St. Matthew Catholic Church and Elevation Church in Blakeney this summer to pack one million meals in one weekend for hungry children and families in Charlotte, Nicaragua and Haiti.

The Million Meal Weekend also created the 10th million meal packed by Servants With a Heart, a local nonprofit founded in early 2011. More info: [www.servantswithaheart.org](http://www.servantswithaheart.org).

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## Guild Tour Includes Local Kitchens

For the first time, the Symphony Guild of Charlotte's Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour features kitchens in two Ballantyne homes.

The self-guided tour on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. features eight homes with spectacular indoor and outdoor kitchens — including a historic carriage house as well as the kitchen of Bruce Moffett, chef and owner of Barrington's, Stagioni and Good Food on Montford.

Top local chefs and artisanal food vendors will offer tastings, culinary demonstrations and product displays, while music from Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra performers round out the event.

Tour tickets are \$25 in advance online and at several area outlets. Tickets are \$30 at eight tour sites on Oct. 15.

The charitable event kicks off at the Taste of the Tour cocktail party on Thursday, Oct. 13, in Ferguson's new South End showroom from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Proceeds from the fundraiser support the Charlotte Symphony, its youth orchestras and the guild's award-winning youth music initiatives. Details: [www.symphonyguildcharlotte.org](http://www.symphonyguildcharlotte.org).



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## Hotel Hosts Ballroom Dancing

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge hosted the first North Carolina open ballroom dancing competition this summer.

Staged by Yusimi Cruz, owner of Banquet and Ballroom, the competition included "Best of the Carolinas," an amateur competition in which winners were selected based on the number of "Likes" on Facebook; a pro-am competition for age groups; and a professional show starring local couples, some of whom are world champions.

All proceeds benefited Dance Trend Foundation, a charity run by Cruz that teaches people with disabilities how to dance.



Photo courtesy of Beth Wade Photography

## 5K/10K Races Honor Santos

The Isabella Santos Foundation's 9th Annual 5K/10K Race for Kids Cancer and one-mile fun run are Saturday, Sept. 24, in Ballantyne Corporate Park.

The events honor Isabella Santos, daughter of Ballantyne-area residents Erin and Stuart Santos, who died of neuroblastoma.

MetLife is the lead sponsor again this year. Last year's event attracted more than 3,000 participants and raised more than \$300,000, according to organizers. Registration and details: [www.5kforkidscancer.com](http://www.5kforkidscancer.com).

## Big South Hosts Annual 5K

The Big South Conference, an NCAA Division I league headquartered near Ballantyne, will host the seventh annual Big South 5K Road Race at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 22, at Blakeney Shopping Center. Participants will be treated to food, beverages, music and giveaways at the end of the race.

Since 2010, the race has raised more than \$113,000 for middle school athletic programs in Mecklenburg, Union, York and Lancaster counties. The event draws approximately 1,000 participants and coincides with the 10th annual Blakeney Boo! Bash fall festival immediately following the race. Details and registration: [www.bigsouth5k.com](http://www.bigsouth5k.com).



## Allegro Hosts Golf Invitational

The Allegro Foundation's seventh annual golf invitational is Thursday, Sept. 22, at The Golf Club at Ballantyne.

Proceeds from The Allegro Invitational support programs for children with disabilities. The foundation will also hold its annual Ambassador's Ball, hosted by Felix Sabates, at Quail Hollow Country Club on Jan. 7, 2017. Info: Stephen Davis, 704-364-4063 or [www.allegrofoundation.net](http://www.allegrofoundation.net).

## 'Putt for Pups' Aids Others

Project 2 Heal's fourth annual "Putt for Pups" golf fundraiser is Monday, Sept. 19, at Firethorne Country Club. All proceeds benefit Project 2 Heal's mission of providing service and companion dogs for children with special needs and wounded veterans. Details: [www.project2heal.org](http://www.project2heal.org).



## Julie Cole Tourney Raises \$184,000

This year's Julie Cole Charity Golf Classic raised \$184,000 for Bridge Hospice, the Women's Center of Bluffton Hospital in Findlay, Ohio, and the Julie Cole Junior Golf Fund, which supports the nonprofit kids' golf organization, First Tee.

John Cook, an Ohio State University Hall of Famer who has won 11 PGA Tour events and 10 events on the Champions Tour, joined Cole to help with fundraising.

Since its inception, the golf event has raised more than \$2.5 million. Cole, a managing partner at Dana Rader Golf School, is a former LPGA touring pro.

## Tenants 'Color the Park' with Success

Ballantyne Corporate Park achieved impressive results with its annual Color the Park Marker Drive, collecting 32,124 packs of markers, colored pencils and crayons for Classroom Central this summer. Classroom Central is a free store for teachers that supports more than 100,000 local children who need school supplies.

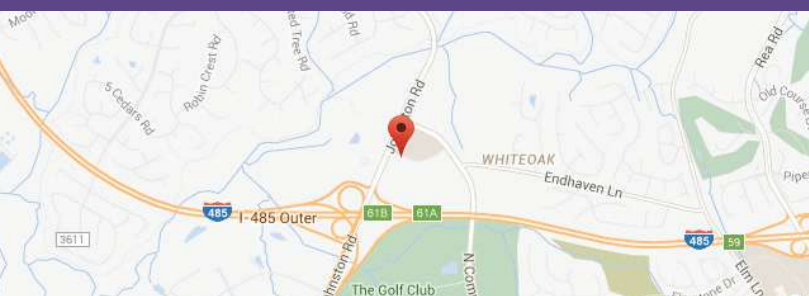
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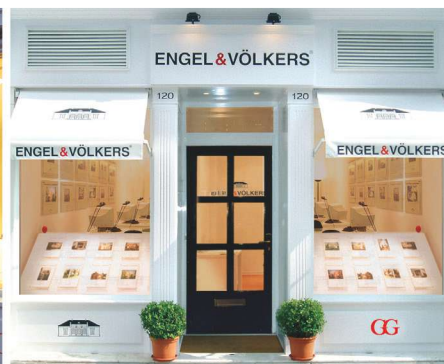


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# EXEC EXUBERANCE

Check Out this Local Trio

Photos by Ray Sepesy



LOOK NO FURTHER to meet three non-natives who help make Ballantyne the vibrant place it is.

All executives, they hail from central Florida, the nation's capital and the heart of the Midwest.

Their guilty pleasures range from '90s hip-hop to cigars and dessert to James Corden's "Carpool Karaoke." They wouldn't be caught dead in: a pro football jersey, suspenders and jean shorts, or "jorts."

Meet Evan Weiss, Erin Santos and John Cash.

**JOHN CASH**

**Birthplace:** Washington, D.C.

**Job:** Sports and Entertainment Marketing Executive; Adjunct Professor, Johnson C. Smith University.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I enjoy developing marketing, sales and sponsorship strategies and programs that drive profitable revenue and increase brand consideration and equity at the expense of the competition.

**What are your guilty pleasures?**

Golf, cigars and dessert.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Yes (walking distance to my daughter's school).

**What is your favorite Ballantyne-area restaurant?**

Chopt (gotta balance out the guilty pleasures). I love how Chopt rotates in new menu items.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

As an Air Force veteran and officer, I have visited a few places, but I still love the Caribbean Islands (the people, sun, beaches, food and golf).

**What would your theme song be for walking into a room?**

"Superstar" by rapper Lupe Fiasco, featuring Matthew Santos.

**What is your favorite news source?**

NPR.

**I would rather be caught dead than wear\_\_\_\_\_.**

Clip-on suspenders.

**What charitable organizations are you involved with?**

I am the marketing chairperson for the Charlotte Boys & Girls Club. When I was growing up in D.C., the Boys & Girls Club helped me stay on the "straight and narrow." I also support Transformation Educational Services, which provides tutoring services to African immigrant youth in the Charlotte area.

**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

Rude people.

**What is a hidden gem in Ballantyne?**

The backgrounds, nationalities and cultures of the residents. I appreciate the effort people make to be objective and accepting.

**Share something that someone would never guess about you.**

I am great at household chores.





## ERIN SANTOS

**Birthplace:** London, Ohio.

**Job:** President, Isabella Santos Foundation.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I love the people I work with and seeing our hard work turn into immediate new clinical trials for kids with neuroblastoma. I also love writing blogs that speak to people.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Shoes, lululemon workout gear and '90s hip-hop and rhythm and blues.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Just over the border in Marvin Creek.

**What is your favorite Ballantyne-area restaurant?**

Viva Chicken is amazing, and I have never had a bad meal or experience at Firebirds.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Running for Isabella's Dream Team. There are about 200 of us training to run a half marathon in November to raise money.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

Any tropical beach where I can be really lazy. St. John and Aruba are my favorites. I also dream of going to Greece.

**What would your theme song be for walking into a room?**

"You Can Leave Your Hat On" by Tom Jones and "Cake by the Ocean" by DNCE.

**What is your favorite news source?**

Love the "TODAY" show because of Matt Lauer (Ohio University alumnus). Also sadly, I get news from Facebook.

**I would be rather caught dead than wear a \_\_\_\_.**

Pro football jersey. It's just not a cute look on me. Still love the Panthers, though!

**What charitable organizations are you involved with?**

The Isabella Santos Foundation, of course. It was created in honor of my daughter, Isabella, who lost her battle with neuroblastoma in 2012. I love that we are honest and true to our mission and what we give to. We really are making a difference for kids.

**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

Guys who wear tank tops and rude children.

**Share something that someone would never guess about you.**

Even though I can be outgoing and social, I'm obsessed with having alone time. I could go on vacation alone or hole up in an empty house for days without talking to anyone.

## EVAN WEISS

**Birthplace:** Maitland, Fla.

**Job:** President, Carolina Classic Builders.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I love that my job is never the same. It is unbelievable the transformations we have performed on houses. The feeling is indescribable knowing we helped make a house a home.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

"Carpool Karaoke" with James Corden.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Off Providence Road, just north of 485.

**What is your favorite Ballantyne-area restaurant?**

Viva Chicken. We also have a family tradition of going to Red Robin for the kids' celebrations and birthdays.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Watching University of Florida football on a crisp fall day.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

I love history. My wife and I have discussed Greece for many years.

**What would your theme song be for walking into a room?**

"Gonna Fly Now," the theme song from "Rocky."

**What is your favorite news source?**

CNN (app or TV).

**I would rather be caught dead than wear \_\_\_\_.**

Jorts (jean shorts).

**What charitable organizations are you involved with?**

South Charlotte Rotary. One of our events is an annual beach blast in May. We take hundreds of underprivileged middle school children to the beach, some of whom have never even been to the beach. I am also on the board of the Levine Jewish Community Center.

**What is a hidden gem in Ballantyne?**

The Secret Chocolatier.

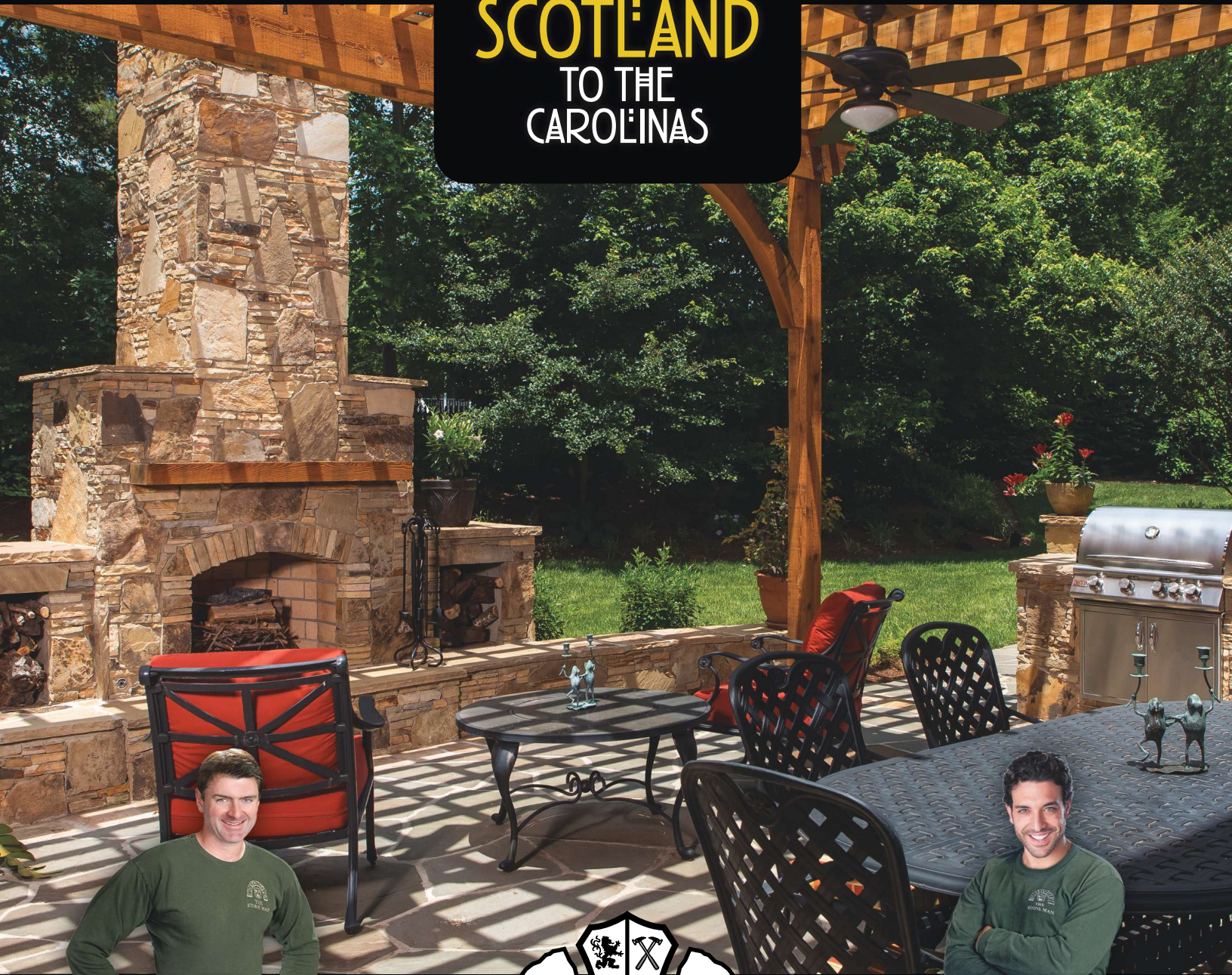
**Share something that someone would never guess about you.**

I grew up playing ice hockey in Florida.



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# Morning Buzz

WEEKDAYS IN BALLANTYNE  
BEGIN WITH A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY

By Jodi Werner Greenwald Photos by Ray Sepesy





TO KICK-START THE DAY, many Ballantyne residents sip their favorite java, catch up on the morning news or hit the gym. Others take it up a notch, participating in a wide variety of interest groups and activities. Three profiled here — a military networking group, a mystery writers club and a community affairs coffee — show the diversity of opportunities and allure of a.m. inspiration.

Former Army officer Cindi Basenspiller moved to Ballantyne from Atlanta in 2010 and discovered she missed Atlanta's military networking group called MilBuds. When she couldn't find something similar in Charlotte, she and friend Ed Voelsing decided to start one themselves.

### Following a Hunch

Today, 50 to 80 veterans gather in Dilworth on the second Wednesday of the

Cindi Basenspiller (standing) founded a southern segment of the Charlotte Veterans Network, which meets in Ballantyne.

month to socialize and support one another as part of the Charlotte Veterans Network. Yet, Basenspiller suspected there were more veterans living or working farther south — in Ballantyne, Fort Mill or Union County — who couldn't make it to Dilworth for lunch.

Her hunch was right. She now convenes a southern



“These gatherings let veterans share their stories, questions and successes. It’s a place of trust and authenticity.”  
— Cindi Basenspiller



The Charlotte Veterans Network meets the first Thursday of the month for breakfast at Another Broken Egg Café in Ballantyne.

segment of the group for breakfast every first Thursday of the month, from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at Another Broken Egg Café in Ballantyne. Approximately 30 people attend.

Basenspiller schedules the meetings early in the morning so participants can go about their day afterward. Over breakfast, veterans engage in what Basenspiller calls “camaraderie-based networking.” She likens the experience to the chow hall in the military, where veterans get away from the serious side of their service and relax.

“Transitioning to the civilian way of life brings challenges,” she says. “These gatherings let veterans share their stories, questions and successes. It’s a place of trust and authenticity.”

Former senior Air Force officer Michael Krueger, a Charlotte native and Ballantyne resident, has attended Charlotte Veterans Network lunches since 2012 when he retired from his last assignment in Virginia and moved back to Charlotte. A Realtor® with Helen Adams Realty, he now attends the breakfasts as well, noting substantial benefits.

“I rarely leave a breakfast empty handed, most times with a new contact or special event to attend,” he says. “It’s more than just a job fair — there are takeaways that could impact your whole culture (or lifestyle), which is what many veterans miss after transitioning.”

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When asked why they meet at 9:30 a.m., Dennis Carrigan (right) says jovially, “We don’t have jobs.”



Jenifer Ruff (right, blue necklace) hosts a mystery writers' group meeting at her home in Challis Farm. The group is affiliated with the Charlotte Writers Club.

mystery writers gather at Jenifer Ruff's dining table in Challis Farm. They draw numbers, and James “Jim” Charles Boatner is selected to go first, followed by Ruff.

The group gets right to work with little chitchat. The vibe is cordial and respectful, but the writers

are not there to socialize or eat. They share one laser focus: getting published.

For this month's critique, Boatner and Ruff have submitted first chapters of new suspense novels. Boatner's is a historical novel set in the mid-1800s called “Yellowstone.” Ruff's is a young adult novel

named “Game Changer.”

Dennis Carrigan, a retired English teacher, offers grammar tips, which the group has come to expect. When asked why they meet at 9:30 a.m., he says jovially, “We don't have jobs.”

Susan Mills Wilson, a retired business administrator with a new novel coming

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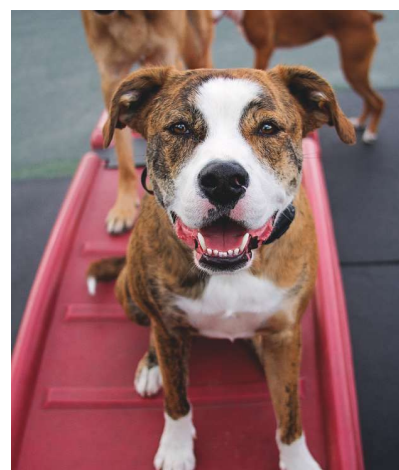
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“We’ll have participants from both parties, though it’s predominantly conservative. Everyone is welcome for sure.”  
— Council Member Ed Driggs



out in September, adds, “It’s more convenient; we’re morning people. I can do the corrections in the afternoon while they’re fresh in my head.”

Wilson and Carrigan convened the group in 2013 under the umbrella of the Charlotte Writers Club. Today they keep their group to six participants. If writers leave the group, they find new

members during a yearly open-enrollment period. They currently have a wait list.

During the meeting at Ruff’s house, the writers receive feedback on things like narrative voice, authenticity of dialogue and the need for further explanation or transition. With such support, they get results: they have a stack of published books among them.

### Civic Chats

Gallery Bar at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge might seem like an unusual place to meet for coffee. But on Friday mornings at 7:30, 20 to 30 elected officials and civic-minded early risers do just that. It’s a tradition started by former Charlotte City Council member Warren Cooksey when he represented District 7, and continued by

On Friday mornings, elected officials and civic-minded residents gather at Gallery Bar for coffee and conversation about community affairs.

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and donate today.



**Above:** James Van Meerten contemplates ideas presented at the meeting.

**Below:** Vito Catanese (right) enjoys exchanging information with fellow attendees.



his successor, Ed Driggs.

The coffee chats can lean to the conservative side since Driggs is a Republican. But he says he makes a concerted effort to balance the discussion.

"I try to keep it informational yet not get too deep into political

viewpoints," he says. "We'll have participants from both parties, though it's predominantly conservative. Everyone is welcome for sure."

Driggs posts his agenda on his Facebook page by Thursday night and brings to the weekly gathering a binder of printouts and

notes to guide the discussion. He shares takeaways from council meetings and sparks discussion on national topics.

Ray Eschert, founder of the Ballantyne Breakfast Club, is a regular participant. While his breakfast club's bimonthly Saturday morning meetings are nonpolitical, its tagline aligns with Driggs' coffee meetings: "An informed community is a better community."

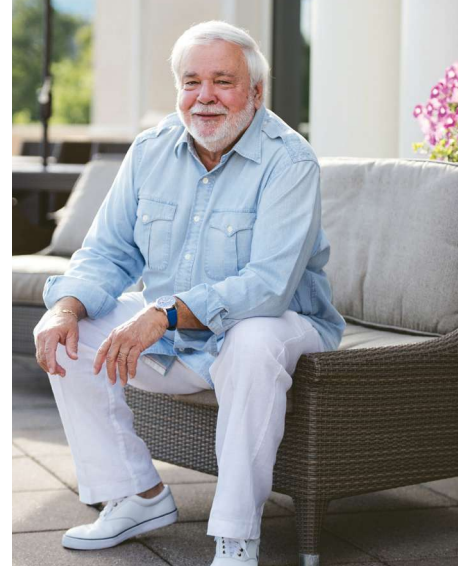
Susan Spaulding has attended the coffees since fall 2009. A vocal and conservative Twitter user, she doesn't like to rely on a single media outlet when getting the news, she says. "You come to these meetings and you hear all these perspectives — from the city to the county to the state. I'm a former teacher so



Connie Green-Johnson, an N.C. House candidate for District 105, chats with Irving Schwebel at the gathering.

An advertisement for Amélie's French Bakery & Café. The background is a collage of food items including bread, pastries, and a charcuterie board. Overlaid on this is a semi-transparent white box containing the text. The logo features a yellow beret and the name 'Amélie's' in a script font, with 'A FRENCH BAKERY & CAFÉ' in a smaller sans-serif font below it. The text lists 'pastry | savory | coffee' and 'new brasserie menu with beer + wine at select locations'. It includes a call to action to book catering with a phone number and lists locations in Charlotte, Rock Hill, and Atlanta, along with the website URL.


  
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Ray Eschert (above), founder of the Ballantyne Breakfast Club, is a regular at the Friday coffee meetings. At left, he speaks with John Powell.

for me education is critical."


At times, discussions get animated, especially when participants address this year's gubernatorial and presidential elections. If needed, Driggs reins in the conversation.



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At-Large County Commissioner Pat Cotham and At-Large Charlotte City Council member Claire Green Fallon, both Democrats, were among the attendees at a recent meeting. Fallon attends the meetings, she says, because she wants to increase connectivity between the

north and south sides of town.

In general, Driggs wishes more people were involved in government issues. "A relatively small number of people are informed and vocal about local government affairs, so anything that promotes that interest and gives people access, I think

is a good idea," he says.

His coffees seem to be succeeding at increasing public engagement. Attendee John Powell, a Republican who ran for Charlotte City Council in 2015, says: "I was inspired by Ed's coffees to run for office." ☕



## WANT MORE INFO?

### ■ Charlotte Writers Club

[www.charlottewritersclub.org](http://www.charlottewritersclub.org)

### ■ Charlotte Veterans Network

[www.facebook.com/groups/charlotteveteransnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/groups/charlotteveteransnetwork)  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/3760029/profile](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3760029/profile)

### ■ Friday Coffee Meeting

[www.facebook.com/ed.driggs.1](https://www.facebook.com/ed.driggs.1)

### ■ Ballantyne Breakfast Club

[www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com](http://www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com)



County Commissioner Pat Cotham (left) chats with Chris Turner, who ran for the District 7 City Council seat in 2015.

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FASHION'S MOST EXCITING SEASON HAS ARRIVED, and here are just about all of fall's biggest trends.

For both men and women, the return of velvet, metallic fabrics and bomber jackets are an exciting nod to the 1980s.

Women are also donning two-piece short skirts, pinstriped suits, large plaids, puffer jackets and one-armed tops — topping them off with tassels, sequins and guitar straps. Such creative combinations not only provide a killer wardrobe but an accessory game to bewilder and impress.



**Furbish Bella Tassel Earrings**, \$52, [www.furbishstudio.com](http://www.furbishstudio.com)



**Randolph Aviator Green Flash Lens Sunglasses**, \$159, Paul Simon Co.



**Peace Jackets "Victoriana" Military Inspired Cotton Jacket**, \$450, [www.peacejackets.com](http://www.peacejackets.com)



**Hiltl 5-Pocket Jeans of Lux-Hand Supple Cotton**, various colors, Taylor, Richards & Conger



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Women can also feel deceptively conservative wearing turtlenecks that double your wardrobe's CPW (cost per wear!) when layered under schoolgirl dresses and everything else.

For trend-setting Southern men, the return of "real men wear pink" is expected in everything from shirts and pocket squares to puffer vests and jackets! 🍷



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Volcano Fish, deep-fried red snapper in a sweet-and-sour sauce, is Bahn Thai's signature dish.

# 'Spice Up Your Life'

## Laotian Couple Serves Up Asian Array at Bahn Thai

By Amy Rogers | Photos by Ray Sepesy

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS CHARLOTTE HAS BEEN HOME FOR STEVEN AND AMPHAY PHILAVANE, but the restaurant world is still relatively new to the couple who came to the U.S. from Laos. After many years in traditional business careers, they were ready for a change — and a challenge — so they opened Bahn Thai in Toringdon about three years ago.

Amphay Philavane, who goes by “Amp,” says it took a while to find the ideal location, “where people don’t like to cook.” That’s a wise insight about the modern lifestyle that makes it simpler for busy residents and commuters to pick up a meal than prepare one of their own. Having offices and hotels nearby guarantees a steady stream of patrons to the sleekly appointed restaurant.

“Bahn” means house or home, and Bahn Thai offers a good selection of traditional Asian dishes. These include sushi, stir-fry combinations and curries not only from the family’s homeland but from neighboring countries as well.

Ginger and its root relative galangal are mainstays of the cuisine, along with tamarind pulp from pods that grow on trees in the tropics.

### Flavor Fest

Tom yum is the Thai soup of tomatoes and sliced mushrooms that’s pungent but not overly spicy. The som tum salad of shredded green papaya, peanuts, chili peppers, carrots, tomatoes and green beans topped with shrimp is authentically Laotian. With a dressing that’s a mixture of traditional fish sauce, lime juice and palm sugar, the salad has a complex, sweet and tangy flavor.

Bahn Thai’s signature dish is Volcano Fish. It’s a filet of red snapper that’s deep fried and served in a colorful presentation with ripe mangoes and broccoli in a sweet-and-sour sauce. The restaurant’s crispy duck entree is seasoned and then battered, fried and served with cilantro, mild red onions and a juicy tamarind sauce.

The Ballantyne Sushi Roll boasts a creative combination of shrimp, crab, masago (red caviar), scallions, cream cheese, smoked salmon and avocado. Coconut milk

adds mildness to curries, such as the red curry dish known as gaeng dang, flavored with basil leaves. Like many menu choices, gaeng dang is easily adaptable for vegetarians and meat eaters alike. The level of “heat” each diner prefers is always a matter of personal preference, but energetic servers wear T-shirts that playfully proclaim “Spice Up Your Life at Bahn Thai.”

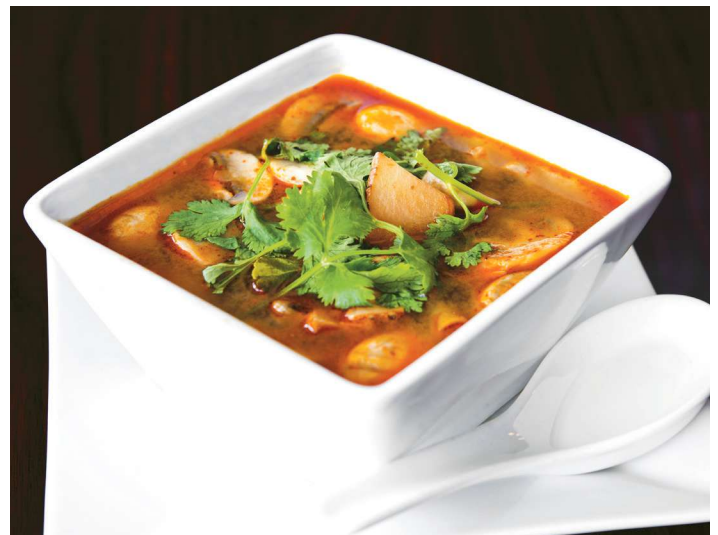
### Finger Lickin’ Dessert

For dessert, mango with sweet rice is a rich treat infused with coconut milk. Aficionados know it’s



Steven and Amphay Philavane opened Bahn Thai about three years ago.

Many menu choices are easily adaptable for vegetarians and meat eaters alike.



A Thai soup favorite is tom yum, which is pungent but not overly spicy.




Amhay Philavane (left) depends on her niece, Emily Douangmichit, to help run the restaurant.

not only acceptable but a Laotian tradition to forgo a spoon and eat the dessert with one's fingers.

Bahn Thai serves lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday and is closed Sunday. The lunch menu is a scaled-down version of the dinner menu. Many items are naturally gluten free, and gluten-free soy sauce

is available on request. Beer and wine are served.

These days, most of the extended Philavane family lives in the Charlotte area. Niece Emily Douangmichit, who has worked at the restaurant since it opened, is the assistant manager. Some in-laws staff the kitchen and dining room.

As newcomers join the neighbors and regular customers who frequent this busy spot, they all enjoy the warmth of home that has traveled from half a world away to Bahn Thai. 



Mango with sweet rice is a rich dessert treat.

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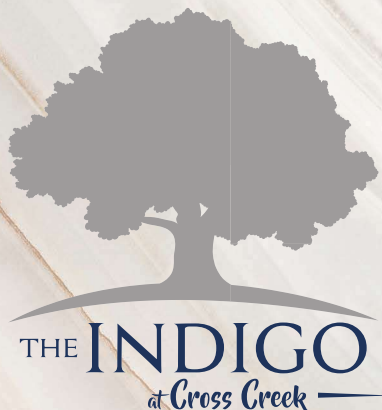
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## CAROLINA PANTHERS FANS POUND EVEN HARDER

By Nan Bauroth

THE FIRST WORDS BECKEY FARRIS UTTERED WERE “HUT, HUT.” Or so her father insists. “I was the firstborn, and my dad was hoping I would be a boy,” the Ballantyne resident explains. “When I was young, they called me ‘Coach,’ and my dad had me in a football stance before I could walk.”

Suffice it to say, Farris never became a draft pick, but she has never stopped pounding for the Carolina Panthers. After last season’s thrilling 14 straight wins to start the season and trip to the Super Bowl, she is like many other Panthers fans — pounding even harder.

Farris attends games when she gets tickets, watches other games at Bradshaw Social House in Ballantyne, travels to away games with Roaring Riot (the unofficial Panthers fan club), visits training camp with her 10-year-old son and recently cruised on Lake Norman with Panthers and other NFL players to support linebacker Thomas Davis’ Defending Dreams Foundation.

Gary and Shellie Burkart (far back right) invite fellow superfans over to watch home games in their Panthers-themed garage.

# Panthers MANIA



Photo by LunaliZen Photography

Pictured (from left, counterclockwise) are superfans Dirk and Michelle Dockins; Julia and Corrie Burkart; McKenna, Jennifer, Brendan and Sean Singleton; Gary and Shellie Burkart; Don Stedem; Mason and Beckey Farris; Carolina Bonecrusher (Jeff Land); Panther Predator (Will Kalai).





“When I was young, they called me ‘Coach.’”  
— Becky Farris

**Above:** Farris' office near Ballantyne is a shrine to the Panthers.



Queen City Riot, the Charlotte chapter of the Roaring Riot fan club, took their Panthers spirit to last season's game in Jacksonville, Fla.

Last year she attended the Panthers' Moms Football Safety Clinic, where she and other mothers of aspiring footballers learned about everything from hydration and

nutrition to tackling safely.

And that's just her personal life. Her office at the Ballantyne-area branch of Lee Hecht Harrison, a workforce talent and transition firm, is

a shrine to the Panthers, with promotional posters, selfies snapped with favorite players and autographed footballs.

The decor turns out to be the perfect backdrop now

that she has channeled her passion for all things pigskin into her job. As a career consultant, she supports the company's contract to help Carolina Panthers and other NFL players who retire in the Charlotte area transition into new careers.

### Superfan Frenzy

Panthers Mania is a condition that afflicts a diverse group of people and often includes the entire family. JetBlue pilot Dirk Dockins and wife Michelle, a nurse, fly their small plane to training camp with their children and sometimes bike uptown to watch practices. This spring the Dockins family attended Taste of the Panthers as well as Bowlaplooza. "You



**Left:** This autographed ball by Luke Kuechly is among Becky Farris' prized paraphernalia.

**Below:** Panthers blue is a must on game days, even when munching.



### PANTHERS SIGHTINGS

The Panthers player most often seen around Ballantyne is tight end Greg Olsen. Farris has run into him with his family after games at Hawthorne's Pizza. Barbee has also seen Olsen and his son at Hawthorne's as well as at the Blakeney Chick-fil-A.

The Dockins' son, Tim, who works at Five Guys Burgers and Fries in Blakeney, says linebacker Thomas Davis and former Panthers defensive tackle Colin Cole have dropped in. Tim's mom, Michelle, has bumped into former Panthers receiver Steve Smith at Harris Teeter and Target.

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Photo by LunahZon Photography

Superfan Don Stedem (above) is a favorite of Brendan Singleton and other kids who love the Panthers.

get great autographs at charity events," Dirk notes.

Shane Barbee, a real estate property manager, his wife and their two children are likewise mad about the Panthers. In addition to holding personal seat licenses, the family travels once or twice a summer to training camp. Last year they did a draft-day experience where they toured the locker room and saw the NFC championship trophy and were allowed to take a picture.

Then there is Don Stedem, owner of a DJ business. "I

**"I bleed Panther-blue blood."**  
— Don Stedem

bleed Panther-blue blood," he asserts. "I love my Panthers and never miss a home game." He enjoys the tailgating scene uptown, giving out blue beads and wearing his Panther tail. "Kids love it," he says. For away games he heads to Bradshaw Social House, a popular hangout for Panthers fans.

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BALLANTYNE

feature



Two of Frank Atwood's loyal  
pooches are named Caroline  
(left, golden doodle) for  
"Sweet Caroline" and Cam  
(Aussie doodle) for Cam Newton.



After  
moving  
from New  
Jersey,  
Frank  
Atwood  
became a  
Panthers  
superfan.



with family and sports  
paraphernalia that includes  
memories of Gary's days as  
a high school football player  
and Shellie's as a cheerleader.  
Plus, "when you have a  
blended family, you have a  
lot of stuff," Shellie says.

During games, Gary  
projects the live TV feed onto  
a wall, making the players  
life size. "Friends, family  
and neighbors know the  
man cave is open on game  
days, so it becomes a party,"  
Shellie says. "My husband  
would prefer to watch games  
here than go uptown."

**Game Days  
in the Cave**

Gary Burkart, a Realtor®  
with Allen Tate Co., and wife  
Shellie, an account executive  
for WSOC-TV (Channel 9), are  
so gaga over the Panthers that  
they transformed their garage  
into a man cave plastered

## Flags, Dogs and a Jeep

After moving here from New Jersey, Frank Atwood transferred his team loyalty to the Panthers, buying season tickets and flying bow flags along his driveway. His neighbor joined the cause, and now every game day four Panther bow flags fly at the entrance to their development.

But Atwood, who works in the financial services industry, didn't stop there. His jeep is painted in team colors and adorned with claws, and the family's three dogs are named Jake, Cam and Caroline. "We named her that because the Panthers always play



## JONATHAN STEWART COACHES LOCAL KIDS

The past two summers Carolina Panthers running back Jonathan Stewart has held a ProCamp at Ardrey Kell High School for boys and girls grades one through eight.

This year he and linebacker Luke Kuechly provided hands-on instruction in fundamentals of the game. In addition to the rare thrill of practicing with NFL superstars, each camper received an autographed item and a camp team photo with Stewart.



Photos courtesy of ProCamps Worldwide

The summer camp at Ardrey Kell teaches football fundamentals to boys and girls.

my  
inspiring  
moment

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"Sweet Caroline" when they win at home," he says. Jake is former Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme, and Cam, of course, is for current quarterback Cam Newton.


### Do You Riot?

Many local Panthers fans belong to Roaring Riot, the unofficial team fan club that boasts 2,200 members in 35 states and 10 foreign countries.

Sean Singleton, who works in Ballantyne for Payzer, a financial technology startup, is president of Queen City Riot, the Charlotte chapter. He says at home games the club's family-friendly tailgates raise money for the Cam Newton Foundation. For away games, members like to party in Dilworth or travel together to provide the team hometown spirit.

"I've been a huge Panthers fan since they become a team in '95," Singleton says. He and wife Jennifer take their 3-year-old son to the team's Christmas tree lighting at the stadium as well as to training camp and Fan Fest in the summer. "You're starving for football at that point in time," he says.

Ashley Jagielnicki, a Ballantyne superfan who works at Carolinas Medical Center, is already anticipating traveling with Roaring Riot to Tampa for New Year's. "It's a birthday present to myself," she says. "I can't wait because it's such a fun experience to be with so many Carolina fans."

Two years ago, the Barbees went on the Tampa trip. "We had a blast," Shane recalls. "It was like spring break for adults." 

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The Audubon Amphitheater is a landscaped pocket park in Ballantyne Corporate Park.

# Take It Outside!

## Audubon Amphitheater Offers Nature Setting for School Lessons

Photos by Ray Sepesy

*"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children."*

THAT OBSERVATION by John James Audubon, the 19th century American naturalist and wildlife artist, has never been more relevant as people today recognize the need to understand and protect Mother Nature. For that reason, The Bissell Companies is inviting Ballantyne-area teachers and school groups to consider using the Audubon Amphitheater in Ballantyne Corporate Park (BCP) for class lessons about conservation, the environment and other topics.

Looking out on the pond on the 17th hole of The Golf Club at Ballantyne, the beautifully landscaped pocket park features a manicured lawn with two semi-circular tiers of large, flat rocks that serve as seating for 100 people.



The outdoor facility also includes six picnic tables, a gazebo and "The Necessary," an on-site restroom. Close by in the 17th Pond Event Area is a fishing dock stocked with fish food and a bench for anglers engaged in the conservation practice of catch and release.

### Built in 2012

"The vision was to transform the area into a park that could be used for outdoor learning opportunities and social gatherings," says H.C. "Smoky" Bissell, chairman of Bissell. "We wanted it to be a place in Ballantyne Corporate Park where tenants and visitors would come to enjoy fresh air, eat lunch, read a book or take a leisurely walk." Built in 2012, the amphitheater underwent a rigorous certification process to qualify as an Audubon cooperative sanctuary.

To date, BCP tenants have used the site for company picnics and team-building exercises. Recently, the Endhaven Elementary Girls Engaged in Math and Science Club, the "GEMS," visited the amphitheater for a workshop led by Debbie Foster, founding member of Habitat and Wildlife Keepers.

In a one-hour seminar, the third and fourth graders learned about healthy habitats and how to use binoculars and went on a wildlife hike, according to the school PTA's Facebook page. The students spotted butterflies, bumblebees, a dragonfly, fish, rabbits, lizards, birds, a nest of bluebird eggs and a great blue heron. After the hike,

they learned about bird watching and the many species that can be seen in the Corporate Park.

### 'Possibilities are Endless'

The success of this first educational experience prompted The Bissell Companies to promote the Audubon Amphitheater as an outdoor classroom. "With Bissell's ongoing commitment to building a stronger future for our community, we would love to offer this space as an opportunity to connect local


"The vision was to transform the area into a park that could be used for outdoor learning opportunities and social gatherings."

— H.C. "Smoky" Bissell  
Chairman, The Bissell Companies



students with nature through on-site workshops," says Hailey Rorie, the organization's community director.

Ideas include studies on wildlife habitats, bird identification and sustainability, as well as field trips exploring science topics at various grade levels. "We would also encourage music, art and reading experiences," Rorie adds. "The possibilities are endless, and we just want to make local schools aware of this opportunity."

To start the approval process for a group outing at the amphitheater, visit [www.goballantyne.com/maps/park-reservations](http://www.goballantyne.com/maps/park-reservations). 

**STUDENTS PURSUE  
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BEFORE COLLEGE**

# Gap Year

By Dawn Liles

TAKING PART IN A MISSION TRIP IS A POPULAR ACTIVITY for many Ballantyne youth, but taking an extended time before college to see the world and volunteer — a gap year — can bring a whole new level of awareness. Even Malia Obama is taking that route before starting Harvard in fall 2017.

Caroline Cary took a four-day trek to Machu Picchu in Peru as part of her gap year.

Photo courtesy of Ma McCue



“It became customary to hear conversations in different languages as I walked across the ship.”

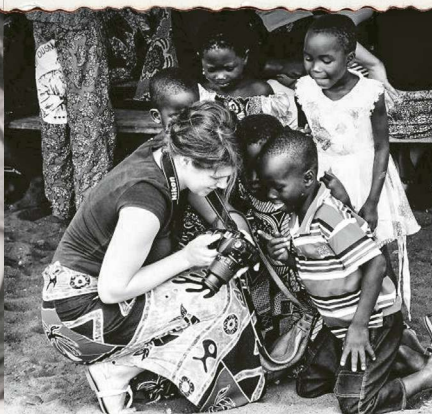
— Aly Dove



Davidson graduate Aly Dove, 22, spent a gap semester in Africa, on a hospital ship in Togo with the international charity Mercy Ships when she was 18.

She graduated high school a semester early and raised the required funds for a spot on the ship by working with kids' programs at the Morrison YMCA, supplementing her income with donations from family and friends.

Her position on the ship required working 20 to 30 hours a week, greeting guests and setting up rooms, while shadowing medical personnel and living in a 10-berth room with women from all over the world.



While working in Togo, Aly Dove taught African children how to use a camera. Her job was working on the hospital ship Africa Mercy, which provided free care to residents.

# WORLD

N

SPHERES

"One of the neatest aspects of my gap year was the international community I experienced on the ship," Dove says. "It became customary to hear conversations in different languages as I walked across the ship."

Time spent on volunteer excursions working with local children off the ship was equally valuable. "As a photographer, I realized how power dynamics are shifted when the camera is placed in the hands of a child. Photography is instant and accessible, and the kids could express themselves creatively with very little training."



"Having time away to explore and meet people all over the world gave me a renewed love of learning."

—Caroline Cary



Photos courtesy of Caroline Cary

Caroline Cary saw Buddhist monks in Cambodia (far right, moving clockwise); visited the world's largest salt flat, in Bolivia; enjoyed The Swing at the End of the World in Ecuador; and assisted this kindergarten student and others in Peru.

# THE W IN HEMISP

“I love to shop with friends but gave most of that up... to fund my trip.”

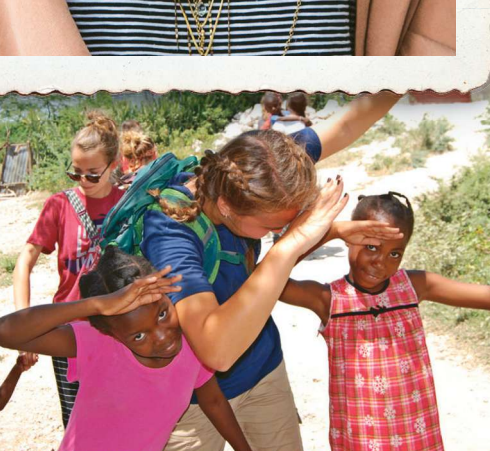
— Katey Shehan



## Impact at Home

At Davidson College, Dove received a grant to begin YouthMap (Youth Marketing and Photography), which teaches disadvantaged young people about photography and the editing process. Students give back to their communities by taking photographs that local nonprofits can use in their marketing.

“The best thing I learned during my gap year is that you are there for a short time, so you can’t change anything for the long term,” says Dove, who now works for Outdoor Ed as an international program instructor in Massachusetts. “It’s better to take what



In high school, Shehan served on a Haiti mission team that helped build a school (bottom, moving clockwise), befriended a boy aiding his family by selling bracelets, “dabbled” with youngsters and presented goats to families to help them sustain themselves.

you've learned and make a difference back in your own community."

Rising college freshman Caroline Cary was ready for a new adventure after graduating from Charlotte Latin School in May 2015. "Charlotte Latin was very challenging academically, and I was exhausted after high school," recalls Cary, 19. "I needed to embrace learning again, and having time away to explore and meet people all over the world gave me a renewed love of learning."

She applied "early decision" to Denison her senior year of high school, and her parents said if she received a scholarship to college, she could do a gap year. She got her acceptance and scholarship offer and applied to Youth International, where she volunteered and explored South America for the first semester.

### Trek into the Andes

In Peru, Cary tested her physical and mental strength when she and others embarked on a four-day trek into the Andes Mountains, hiking through rainforest and blizzard-like conditions, finally arriving at the ancient Incan archaeological site of Machu Picchu.

"I have never been a hiker so pushing myself and reaching that goal was a very emotional experience for me," explains Cary. And she was finally able to use the Spanish she had studied for years at Latin.

Cary then came home to Charlotte, worked for two months and headed off to Southeast Asia with Carpe

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Diem Education for second semester. A highlight was spending time with teenaged Buddhist monks in Thailand. "Buddhism teaches us to live in the moment," she says. "Many distractions today keep us from this, but it is so important, and this lesson will stay with me forever."

Only 18 years old, Katey Shehan is already a veteran of four mission trips to Haiti through Forest Hills Church and several mission trips in the U.S.

A recent grad of Ardrey

On Katey Shehan's four trips to Haiti, she saw this boy from Minotrie each time.

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Kell High School, Shehan plans to go to Nicaragua in the fall with Adventures in Missions and then back to Haiti as an intern in the spring with Mission of Hope. She was accepted at Appalachian State and plans to enroll in fall 2017.

## Raising Money

Shehan's parents have provided emotional support but told her the financial piece was up to her. Mission of Hope volunteers raise money for their own lodging, food, airfare, clothing and medical expenses, which can be costly. Shehan has worked two jobs — at Mellow Mushroom restaurant

and the Morrison Y — and sold T-shirts. "I love to shop with friends but gave most of that up," she says. "But I'm able to save the money I need to fund my trip."

During her gap year, Shehan hopes to lead a group painting houses, planting fruit-bearing trees that the local people can eat or sell and helping distribute goats they can use for food, milk or to sell.

"The Haitian people are so relaxed and relational," she notes. "They share their stories and are so happy to see us. I keep up on Facebook with a lot of the kids I met there, and I can't wait to go back." 



## GAP YEARS AT A GLANCE

The American Gap Association is a nonprofit accreditation and standards-setting organization for gap years, recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. According to the association:

- The trend of American students pursuing a gap year is increasing, with females more likely than males to pursue it.
- Within one year of completing a gap year, 90 percent of students are actively enrolled in a four-year institution.
- Many individual gap-year programs offer scholarships or tuition reductions to bring programs within financial reach.

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Once you have picked out a gift the recipient will love, the hard part is over and you are almost done. The final step is packaging.

Photo courtesy of HoneyBee Gifts

# Thoughtful Gift-Giving

## How to Remember People in Ways They Appreciate

By Simone McDowell

WHETHER IT'S FOR A BIRTHDAY, HOLIDAY OR SIMPLY A "THANK YOU," a thoughtful gift resonates with the recipient and giver alike. The recipient enjoys the pleasure of something meaningful, and the giver receives the satisfaction of communicating appreciation in a significant way.

The cliché "it's the thought that counts" rings true, but picking out the perfect gift is not always easy. The thoughtful present usually takes a bit of planning and time but is worth the effort. Here are Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind:

### Do think about the recipient.

Some people tend to pick gifts based on what they think recipients need. I say, what about the "wants" — items people long for but may not purchase themselves? Pay attention to the things people mention that they like — objects or experiences that may come up in casual conversation, something they wish they could do, have or see. These are thoughtful gifts.

Some people tend to pick gifts based on what they think recipients need. I say, what about the "wants" — items people long for but may not purchase themselves?

### Don't rush the shopping process.

Remember — picking out great gifts takes a little preparation and time. Consider making a list of your recipient's favorite shops and interests before actually going shopping. Use the list as a guide. Are there similarities between your handpicked item and a theme on the list? Does the item match the recipient's interests?

You should begin gathering information and making your list a few weeks before a special occasion or holiday. If you wait until the last minute, you run the risk of picking something that doesn't align with the recipient, spending more money to just end the experience or not finding anything at all.

### Do have a gift closet.


A well-stocked gift closet is a place in your home that contains gift options for many occasions — or even a "just because" gift. Such closets help eliminate the anxiety of finding the perfect gift at the last minute.

While the gift closet could be any space, ranging from a cabinet to an under-the-bed storage container, the most important part is the contents. I recommend items like candles, coffee-table books and wine as gifts that can be a great fit for many "thank you's," holidays and celebrations. I consider such gifts evergreen, that is, relevant any time of the year.

### Don't stop with the gift; pay attention to its presentation.

Once you have picked out a gift the recipient will love, the hard part is over and you are almost done. The final step is packaging. It is important to consider the entire presentation. If wrapping is a skill you lack, consider taking the gift to a local store that provides this service. Don't be afraid to use nontraditional



wrapping materials such as denim, burlap or even the Sunday newspaper. In addition, bows, ribbons or a flower stem or two can be great accents that add a finishing touch to a pretty presentation. 



*Simone McDowell is a Charlotte-based public relations and marketing consultant who writes a blog on gift giving, [www.honeebeegifts.com](http://www.honeebeegifts.com).*

## BEER GARDEN SPOTLIGHTS SOUTH LAWN

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge hosted its inaugural pop-up Ballantyne Beer Garden on the South Lawn July 3. The family-friendly public event featured local beer, a cookout, cornhole, drawings for prizes and live music by Pluto for Planet and Wicked Powers.

Menu items were available a la carte, including hamburgers, bratwursts and chicken sandwiches.

Photos by Ray Sepesy

1. Chad Crenshaw, Caroline and Emily Davidson with Kirby
2. Renee and Peter McQueen, Scott and Kelly Wolinsky
3. Josh, Monica and Henry Palmer; Mike, Teresa and Cole Rivers
4. Tania, Mara and Scott Doxey
5. Michael and Pam Ausberry
6. Benjamin Yagoda, Meredith Hill
7. Pamela and Doug Gray
8. Drashti Jani, Samir Patel
9. Darlene and Ed Putz, Phyllis and Jay Weber, Jane and Bill LaGrone
10. Jim, Julie and Kaitlyn McArdle, Jake Ballenger
11. Tony LiPari, Dawn Ralph
12. Jessica Kloster, Brandon Marinelli





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## GRAY CLASSIC SUPPORTS STUDENTS

The Gray Classic, founded by Herb and Felicia Gray in 2009, is the premier fundraiser for 100 Black Men of Charlotte.

This year's four-day event, held at venues throughout Charlotte July 14-17, raised money for the organization's student mentorship, education and networking programs.

More than 2,500 people attended, including business, civic and political leaders. The golf tournament as well as the women's empowerment brunch took place at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge.

Photos by Ray Sepesy

1. Earl Dixon, Ronald Alexander, Sporty Black, Greg Pounds, Steven LoKey, James Burrell
2. Claudie Johnson, Keith Dixon
3. Lisa Morgan, Debby Stroman
4. Dennis Summere, Jeff Eagles, Chris Johnson, Frank Brice
5. Ray Diggs, Brian Morgan, Will Ponton, Marcus Clark
6. Bryan White, Jeremy Ledbetter, Dane Small, Shawn King
7. Ann Ford, Mary Jones, Gloria King, Geraldine Nathan
8. Mike and Crystal Bradley, Mike Gorman
9. Dino Benjamin, Tony Belton, Vernon Maxwell, Joe Lattimore, Anthony Sowell, George Suber
10. Herb Gray, Boo Ellis
11. Terrell Kirby, Cameo Crumby, Don Lewis, Jarron H. Thomas
12. Charles Fennell, James Robinson, Zeb Levister, Michael Haselrig



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## BIZ BASH ATTRACTS CROWD

The Ballantyne Chapter of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce held its ninth annual Ballantyne Business Bash June 2. The networking event was presented by MetLife and Morrison Family YMCA and hosted by Bissell.

More than 500 professionals mingled at Brixham Tent in Ballantyne Corporate Park and enjoyed food from 16 local restaurants.

Photos by Hayley Watson

1. Valerie Larsen, Melissa Latin
2. Sam McCabe, Kevin Dingle
3. Ali Bouasavatdy, Polly Outhay
4. Ed Injaychock, Audra Begg, Armah Shiancoe
5. Elaine Klein, Beth Courtney
6. Christy Gisinger, Nancy Cole
7. Carmen Cook, Penny Teeter, Rob Altamare, William Bradley, Lee Ws, Patrick DeRose
8. Mike Gentile, Pat Utke, Justin Bregman
9. Patsy Wilson, Lindsay McCarley, Layla Haecherl, Bernard Lee
10. Bernadette Adams, Sherri (standing) and Sloane Bissell, Denny Adams
11. Vickie Groves, Adam Altman
12. Kristie Jordan, Erin Foster
13. PJ Kennedy, Alyson Keller, Louise Maguire
14. Erin Hunter, Kelvin Ford
15. Katrice Branner, Robin Johnson, Susan Sweeney





## KIDS GET BOOST FROM HOOPTEE

The 14th annual HoopTee Celebrity Golf Classic was held at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge July 20-22. HoopTee Charities Inc., founded by Charlotte Hornets President Fred Whitfield, is a nonprofit that supports opportunities for youth in the Carolinas and beyond.

Local celebrities, athletes and golfers attended this year's event, which raised money for children to attend Achievements Unlimited Basketball School, among other programs.

Photos by Hayley Watson

1. Adam Hayes, Brian Roberts, Robbie Lewis, Bob Brannan, Jay Howard
2. Fred Whitfield
3. Keith Hicks, Jeff Genthner, Muhsin Muhammad, Michael Parkins, Jeff Dewosky
4. Jason Cipriani, Dennis Hansen
5. Cooley Smith, Patrick Brady
6. Robert Stevanovski, Bruce Bowen
7. Matt Carroll, Bryan Williams
8. Molly and Emily Foster
9. Thomas Davis, Cory Wyatt, Jordan Abrams, Jim Willard, Jim Taylor
10. Celebrity golfers

# Bluegrass Beauty

Small-Town  
Charm,  
Bourbon Await  
in Lexington

By Nan Bauroth



IN 2015 AFTER AMERICAN PHAROAH SWEEPED THE TRIPLE CROWN AND BREEDER'S CUP Classic to become the first horse to win thoroughbred racing's Grand Slam, he made tracks for his old Kentucky home. Now enjoying life at Ashford Stud near Lexington in the heart of Bluegrass Country, the celebrity stallion is just one of the star attractions in this city dubbed "The Horse Capital of the World."

Surrounded by rolling hills dotted by more than 100 picturesque horse farms, Lexington is equally famous as the epicenter of Kentucky bourbon distilleries that produce this country's only native spirit, according to the Kentucky Distillers Association. Add a splash of Southern small-town feel and you have an original American destination.

A six-hour drive from Charlotte over the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lexington is accessible by direct flights on American Airlines as well.



Chad Baker

Lexington native Chad Baker — team lead for INT Technologies in Charlotte and president of the city's University of Kentucky alumni chapter — often goes home for games and to reconnect with family.

"Fall is one of the most beautiful times of year given the foliage change," he says, referring to the cornucopia of gold, crimson and burnt orange boughs that line byways and create a glorious show of color against bluegrass meadows.

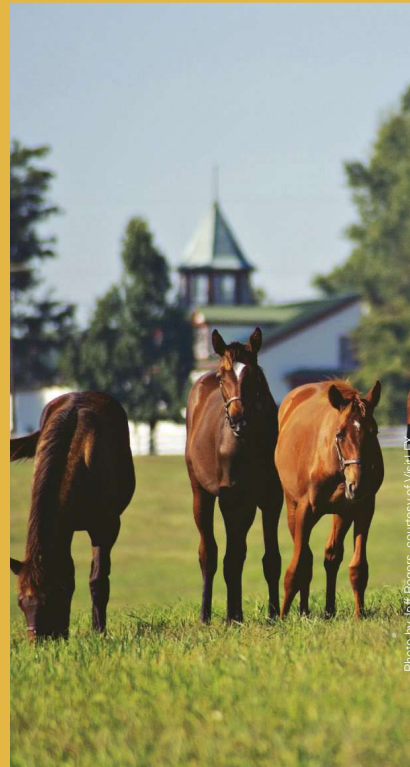
Visitors to Lexington, Ky., can choose among three self-guided tours through farms that make up "The Horse Capital of the World."

### Where to Horse Around

Downtown Lexington is an ideal place to stay. Baker recommends the trendy 21c Museum Hotel inside the beaux-arts Fayette National Bank Building. Other options include Campbell House, rich in tradition, or Gratz Park Inn, a historic hotel with authentic



Surrounded by *rolling hills*  
dotted by more than 100  
*picturesque horse farms,*  
Lexington is equally  
famous as the epicenter of  
*Kentucky bourbon distilleries.*



**Left, Top, Right:** The 21c Museum Hotel, a former bank building, features beaux-arts decor.

**Bottom:** Horses graze at Calumet Farm, a thoroughbred site famous worldwide.

Kentucky atmosphere and an upscale restaurant, Distilled, run by esteemed local chef Mark Womble. Family-priced accommodations are available at every major hotel brand as well.

After a breakfast feedbag at Doodles or Wild Eggs, head to the Lexington Visitors Center at 401 West Main Street to obtain the Bluegrass Country Driving Tour map, which details three self-guided circuits that wind through

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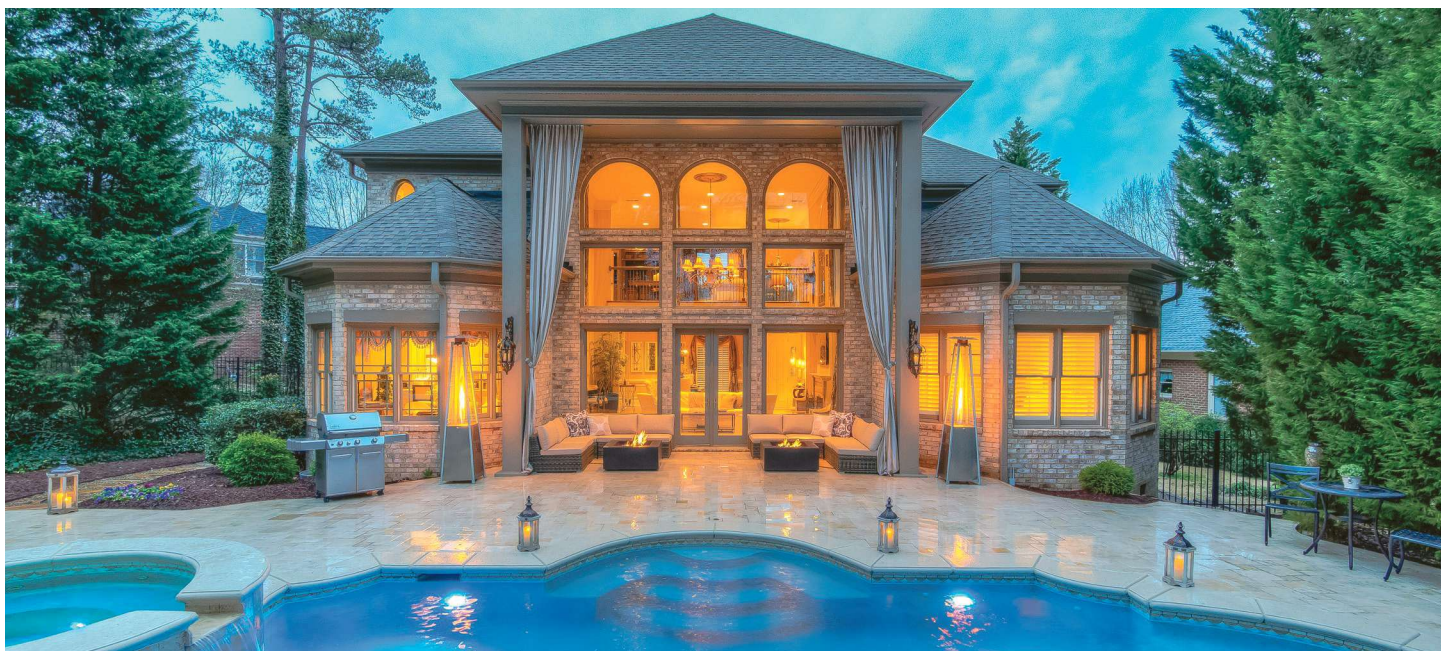
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scenic pasturelands of America's most iconic horse farms. Each route features historic sites and quaint country stores or lunch spots, including Wallace Station and Windy Corner Market, two eateries owned by Lexington superstar chef Ouita Michel. Most visitors drive — each circuit takes an hour — but others cycle to fully experience the gorgeous views.

Those champing at the bit to get up close and personal with racing thoroughbreds can take professionally guided farm tours that include selfie ops at renowned



Photo by Gene Burch, courtesy of VisitLEX



Photo by Jeff Rogers, courtesy of VisitLEX



Jeff Rogers, courtesy of VisitLEX

**Top:** Horses silhouetted in the morning mist are a lovely sight in Bluegrass Country.

**Middle Left, Right:** Spectacular thoroughbreds draw attention at Keeneland Race Course.

**Right:** Since winning the Triple Crown, American Pharoah spends much of his time near Lexington.

operations like Claiborne Farm, where a tombstone marks the grave of beloved Secretariat. This year approximately 3,000 visitors have also gotten tickets in advance to meet and greet the magnificent American Pharoah (he is usually gone from July to January).



Photo courtesy of Coolmore, Ashford Stud



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Photo courtesy of Four Roses Bourbon

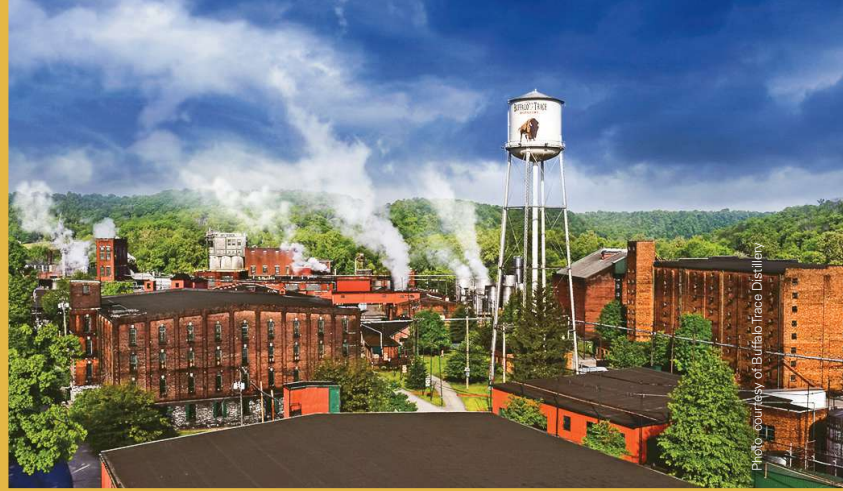


Photo courtesy of Buffalo Trace Distillery

Bourbons from Buffalo Trace (above) and Four Roses (left) are among Chad Baker's favorites.

No visit to Lexington would be complete without an afternoon at Keeneland Race Course, a national historic landmark with a genteel aura and beautiful grounds. "Keeneland is not to be missed," Baker agrees, advising visitors during fall or spring meets to dress to impress,

bring your wallet and harbor an appetite for chili. "Betologists are there to help beginners," he adds, noting that he buys an entrance ticket and stands by the rail to catch the action.

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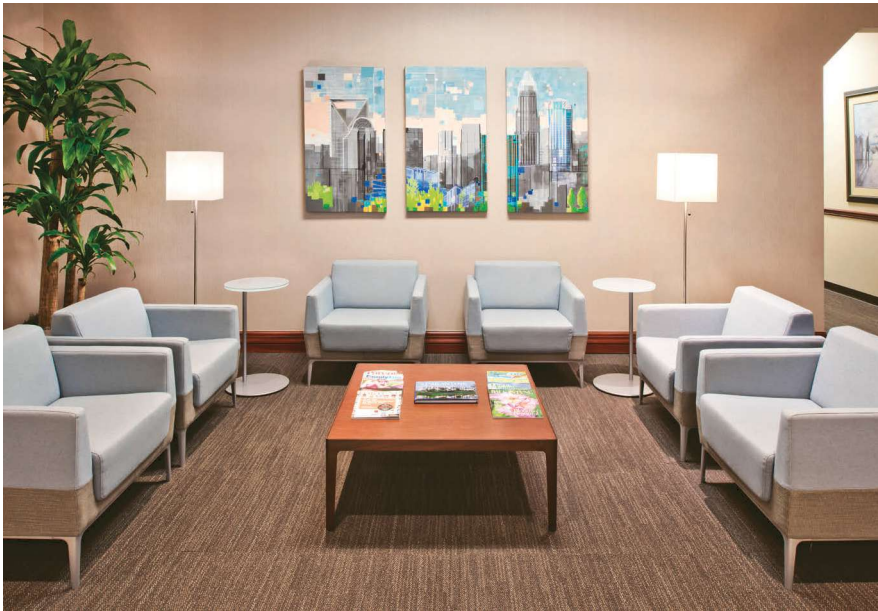
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## BALLANTYNE | escape

making — which springs from limestone-rich ground around Lexington. Since distillery tours involve sampling straight up, it's advisable to go by bus; although, cyclists seeking to go where the spirit leads them — so to speak — can pedal it off by doing the entire Kentucky Bourbon Trail. Baker's top distillery picks include Buffalo Trace, Four Roses Bourbon and Brown-Forman.

In addition to its hallowed

reputation as the birthplace of bourbon, the Lexington area is a fount for master craft brewers and distillers. The Brewgrass Trail is a chance to visit eight of the best. Baker's preferred local brewers include West Sixth, Country Boy, Ethereal and Blue Stallion.

### Beyond Grits

Lexington's culinary scene is as inventive as its culture. Top foodie haunts

Known by early settlers as  
*"the water of life,"*  
Kentucky bourbon is considered by  
many the world's premium whiskey.



Photo courtesy of Four Roses Bourbon

Four Roses Distillery is on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail west of Lexington.



**Above Left:** Chef Mark Jensen uses the Argentinian smoke oven at Middle Fork Kitchen Bar. Pork belly (left) is a popular dish.  
**Above Right:** Buffalo Trace makes bourbon at its distillery west of Lexington.

include Lockbox at 21c Museum Hotel, where chef Jonathan Searle puts Kentucky twists on dishes that recall Southern picnics. In the up-and-coming Pepper district, site of a former distillery, chef Mark



Jensen has parlayed his food-truck chops into Middle Fork Kitchen Bar, recently named to the Top 100 Restaurants on Open Table.


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Photo by Magnus Lindquist, courtesy of VisitLEX


Top chef Quita Michel poses at her Windy Corner Market restaurant.

on Short, Lexington's oldest white-tablecloth establishment, famous for its bourbon selection and rooftop patio. Coles 735 Main, an upscale but casual dining spot, and County Club, specializing in smoked meats, are other popular dine-ins.

Nothing gets more local with food, though, than burgoo, a spicy stew concocted of chicken and who knows what else. Baker jokes that Keeneland sometimes refers to it as "what didn't make it around the track." Instead, he suggests

trying beer cheese. "We're pretty wild about it," he says, explaining the cheese is infused with flat beer and spices and turned into a spread or dip. He personally goes for the Beer Cheese Burger at Lynagh's Irish Pub.

Another local favorite worth sampling is Ale-8-One, an unusual caffeinated ginger ale and citrus-blend soda with a kick that Baker insists most locals find addictive.

"It can be safely said that Lexington likes to have a good time and offers some of the most beautiful backdrops in the country," Baker observes. "The people are also genuinely nice and friendly." 



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