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magazine

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## FEATURES



Endhaven's students are like a mini U.N., hailing from 42 countries.

# 34 Global Glee



### ON THE COVER:

This spring salad at Gallery Restaurant features scallops, shrimp and fresh vegetables.

Photo by Ray Sepesy

## The Taste Of Spring

Chefs from five local restaurants share inspired dishes of the season.

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## Celebrating Baby

From apps to gender reveal parties, this is not your mother's baby bump.

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# Spring Loaded

## Reveling in New Life, Beauty & Diversity

NO MATTER HOW LONG WE HAVE LIVED IN AMERICA, we all cherish our native roots. This realization hit home when I traveled to Nicaragua with the Heineman Foundation of Charlotte, on whose board I serve. The foundation was donating a heart catheterization lab to Centro Nacional de Cardiología, located by the Roberto Calderón Gutierrez Hospital in Managua.

The dedication ceremonies at these events usually feature local dignitaries, but this time, girls in Nicaraguan costume performed native dances to impart a sense of their culture. On the flight back to the United States, I couldn't help reflecting that in our spring issue we are drawing a parallel by featuring children at Endhaven Elementary donning native dress to celebrate their heritage. In "Global Glee," you'll learn how the school's teachers created an International Fair for students and their parents, who represent an astounding 42 different native countries.

The blessing of children is also the focus as we explore a growing trend of new and expectant mothers popping up around Ballantyne. In "Celebrating Baby," we share some of the latest high tech apps and entertaining ways that local mothers-to-be are heralding the new life within.

Since a growing family often needs to upsize, we decided to turn to a leading home staging professional to give "Expert Direct" advice on how to quickly transform your for-sale house into a "sold." Whether or not you're moving, the before and after pictures show what a difference that de-cluttering rooms can make, giving you the gift of a whole new house. To whet the artistic appetite of homeowners who get into DIY this time of year, Style Points shows you an easy way to turn plain glass bottles into beautiful decorative vases featuring the Pantone color of the year, emerald.

Of course, come spring, romance is in the air. Date Night



follows a couple as they venture into a cooking class at the Morrison Family Y to make good on their 2013 resolution to dine more at home. Among other challenges, they discover that all-important culinary knowledge of who's better at separating an egg. Also on the food front, to give you ideas on timely menus, "The Taste of Spring" showcases spring-inspired dishes by several of Ballantyne's leading chefs.

In "Celebrating Baby," we share some of the latest high tech apps and entertaining ways that local mothers-to-be are heralding the new life within.

As azaleas and dogwood grace us with their ethereal blooms, this time of year can be especially beautiful in the Deep South. In "Going Home," we take off for Birmingham, Ala., one of the region's best-kept travel secrets. Our Ballantyne tour guides, Todd and Geneva Greene, who both grew up in "The Ham," believe you'll be surprised at the city's rich historical legacy, multitude of places to see and things to do and a dining scene that's on the national foodie radar for inventive indigenous cuisine.

We hope this issue captures the renewal of life we feel during springtime and inspires you and your loved ones to take full advantage of the many pleasures this enchanting season has to offer.

JJ Bissell  
Publisher, Ballantyne Magazine



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



## Morrison Y Offers Community Activities

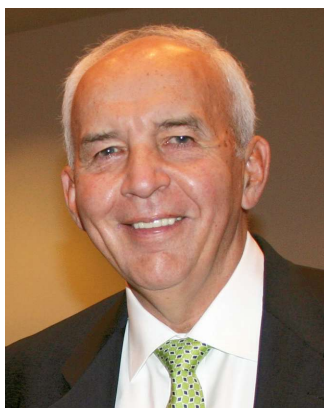
The Morrison Family YMCA will hold its ninth annual Run! Ballantyne 10K/5K Race and One Mile Fun Run on Saturday, May 18 in Ballantyne Corporate Park. Proceeds fund the Community Support Campaign. Register online at [www.YMCACHarlotte.org/Morrison](http://www.YMCACHarlotte.org/Morrison) or in person at the Y.

The Y will also host its 13th annual golf charity tournament on Monday, June 3 at Ballantyne Country Club. The tournament benefits the Y's Readers Literacy Academy for under-resourced students at Nations Ford Elementary School and other efforts. For tournament details, email [eric.white@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:eric.white@ymcacharlotte.org).

Registration for Summer Day Camp, the Children's Academy PreSchool and Ballantyne Preschool of the Arts at the Y is now open. Learn more at 704-716-4600 or visit <http://www.ymcacharlotte.org/branches/morrison/youthdev/camp/camp.aspx>.



## NEWS CUES



Don Lochman

### Street Name Honors Former Councilman

The Ballantyne Corporate Park Owners Association has renamed a portion of John J. Delaney Drive to Don Lochman Lane. The road is located across from Conlan Circle in Ballantyne Corporate Park, immediately off Johnston Road.

A former District 7 City Council member, Lochman represented south Charlotte for eight years. "Don Lochman will be forever remembered for his ongoing commitment to doing what was best for the entire city of Charlotte," says Smoky Bissell, chairman of the Bissell Cos.

### Breakfast Club Sets Spring Schedule

The Ballantyne Breakfast Club will meet this spring on Saturday, April 13, and Saturday, June 8. The club will hold its annual Tommy Bahama Party & Fashion Show in May.

Meetings, which are free and open to the public, are held at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Breakfast gatherings start at 9 a.m., with attendees gathering at 8 a.m. to enjoy complimentary coffee and refreshments. Info: Ray Eschert at 704-651-1237 or [reschert@aol.com](mailto:reschert@aol.com), or visit [www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com](http://www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com).

### Cricket Club Seeks Sponsors, Players

The Charlotte Ballantyne Cricket Club has started its sponsorship drive for 2013, and is seeking new players as well. The club is also working with Ballantyne schools to set up a coaching clinic for children during the summer. Last year, the club reached the final four of its league's T20 Championship and was only two games away from winning the title before losing in the semifinals. Learn more: [www.ballantynecricket.com](http://www.ballantynecricket.com).

### Reserve Your Spot for Chamber Meetings

The Ballantyne Chapter of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce will meet on March 7, April 4 and May 2. The group's annual Ballantyne Business Bash will take place on June 6 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Ballantyne Corporate Park. Lunch meetings are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Fee is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door subject to space availability. Register at [www.charlottechamber.com](http://www.charlottechamber.com).

## YOUNGER SET

### After-School Theatre Program Offered

Drama Kids of South Charlotte, a new after-school drama program, is now offering classes at Elevation Blakeney, Sports Connection and Charlotte Preparatory School.

Drama Kids is also an approved vendor for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' after-school enrichment program and is planning to begin classes at a local school this spring. Director Bonnie Davidoff has years of experience in the theatre, including directing musicals at theatre summer camps and traveling with the Parker Playhouse Children's Theatre in Ocean City, Md. Learn more: 704-612-1441 or [www.dramakids.com/nc2](http://www.dramakids.com/nc2).



### Champion Smokies At Bat Again

The Ballantyne Smokies, who won the Southern Collegiate Baseball League World Series last summer, will hold their first home game of their second season on June 3. The game starts at 7 p.m. at Ardrey Kell High School.

Cost is \$5 for adults (children 12 and under are free). The Smokies will also hold their weekly Hustle Baseball Camps again through the Morrison Family YMCA this summer for children ages 5 to 12. Camps conducted by Smokies players start June 17 and July 15 and run Monday to Friday. Cost is \$99. Follow the team on Twitter: @Ball-Smokies or [www.ballantynesmokies.com](http://www.ballantynesmokies.com).







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## Put Spring in Your Step

### Enjoy Events at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge

Look no further than The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge for spring fun. Enjoy everything from wine and scotch tastings to special brunches and teas.

#### **Gallery Bar Wine Tastings**

Enjoy sampling a variety of wine selections on March 8 (chardonnays) and March 22 (South American selections). Both events are Friday gatherings at 6 p.m. Cost: \$25 per person. Reservations: 704-248-4100.



#### **The Scotch Society of Ballantyne**

Explore flavors of Irish whiskey, including Midleton, Redbreast and Jameson Gold, on Saturday, March 16 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Cost: \$40 per person. Limited to 20 guests; RSVP required at 704-248-4100 or [htapper@theballantynehotel.com](mailto:htapper@theballantynehotel.com).

#### **Easter Brunch**

This favorite annual event features live entertainment, an appearance

by the Easter Bunny and an Easter egg hunt. It will be Sunday, March 31 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$65 per person, \$32 for children ages 5-12, and complimentary for children ages 4 and under (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations required: 704-248-4100 or [www.gallery-restaurant.com](http://www.gallery-restaurant.com).



#### **Royal Birthday Tea**

In honor of Queen Elizabeth II's birthday on April 21, The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge will host a special version of its traditional afternoon tea from Friday, April 19 through Sunday,

April 21, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The tea will feature Champagne Royale, Dubonnet and decor fit for a queen. Reservations: 704-248-4100.

#### **Mother's Day**

Sip tea with your mom on Friday, May 10 or Saturday, May 11 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Cost for the Mother's Day Tea is \$32 for adults and \$16 for children ages 4 to 12 (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations: 704-248-4100.

Take your mom to brunch on Sunday, May 12 and enjoy a sumptuous meal and live entertainment from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$65 per person, \$32 for children, ages 5-12, and complimentary for children ages 4 and under (plus tax and gratuity). Reservations required: 704-248-4100.

Play a round of golf on May 12 and your mom will play free with one paid round at The Golf Club at Ballantyne. Mention this offer when reserving your tee time at 704-248-4383.

#### **Armed Forces Week**

The Golf Club at Ballantyne is offering 50 percent off its regular rate during Armed Forces Week, May 12-18. Golfers must present military identification on arrival. Mention this offer when reserving your tee time: 704-248-4383.





# BIZ BUZZ

## New Networking Group Forms

A new professional networking group called Ballantyne Briefings will begin holding quarterly meetings this spring at Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne. Sponsors of the group include Allen Starrett, an attorney with the Starrett Law Firm; Brad McKeiver, a CPA at McArthur & Company; Charles Neil, a commercial real estate broker with Cornerstone Property Advisors; and Scott Serfass and Mike Phillips, financial advisors at Ameriprise.

"The name reflects one of our objectives, which is to offer valuable information in a succinct format," McKeiver says.

"Ballantyne Briefings will offer an alternative to the routine networking scene by focusing on insightful and high-impact briefings in a relaxed and vibrant environment," Starrett says. "Topics will vary, but members will take home useful information and build lasting community relationships with professionals in Ballantyne and Charlotte."

For meeting notifications, email [events@ballantynebriefings.com](mailto:events@ballantynebriefings.com). More info: [facebook.com/ballantynebriefings](https://facebook.com/ballantynebriefings).



Patty Cullim

## M/I Homes Hires Sales Associate

Patty Cullim has joined M/I Homes Charlotte as a sales associate for Ardrey Crest and Ardrey Woods, two communities in the Ballantyne area. Ardrey Crest was recently named one of the area's top-selling residential neighborhoods by The Charlotte Business Journal. Cullim, who lives in Ballantyne, previously served as director of operations for a national real estate company.

## Burget, McCoy Join Weichert

Laura Burget and Dennis Ronald McCoy have joined Weichert, Realtors®-Rebhan & Associates, a firm that serves the Ballantyne area.



Laura Burget



Dennis Ronald McCoy

Burget has seven years of experience assisting home buyers and sellers in the Huntersville, Concord, Lake Norman, and University areas. McCoy is a 19-year area resident with 12 years in real estate. He assists buyers and sellers in Charlotte, Hickory, Conover, Newton and Lenoir. You may reach Burget and McCoy at 704-553-7777.

## Golf School Staff Promoted, Recognized

Susan Iadarola has been promoted to general manager at Dana Rader Golf School. Iadarola had served as director of sales and marketing.

Marc Lapointe, director of instruction, and Molly Tullar, director of junior golf, were named to the U.S. Kids Golf honorable mention list of Top 50 Kids Teachers for 2012. This is the third time that Lapointe has achieved this honor, and second time for Tullar, who also was named an official U.S. Kids certified golf instructor. Contact them at 704-542-7635 or [www.danarader.com](http://www.danarader.com).



Susan Iadarola



Marc Lapointe



Molly Tullar



## Bissell Organization Hire, Promote Staff

At Bissell Hotels, Marshall Hilliard has been promoted to vice president of sales and marketing.

Peter Grills has been promoted to general manager of The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Previously, Grills served as hotel manager.

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge has also elevated Brian Schleicher to director of group sales, and Monica Murano Robinson joins the organization as director of catering. Adair Yatko and Melinda Plavnick have been named catering sales managers. In addition, Rick Cammer has been named sales manager.

In other promotions, Matt Zvanut has been named head professional at The Golf Club at Ballantyne and Jill Ott is now assistant property manager at Bissell corporate.



Marshall Hilliard



Peter Grills



Brian Schleicher



Monica Murano Robinson



Adair Yatko



Melinda Plavnick



Rick Cammer



Matt Zvanut



Jill Ott

## Associates Join Allen Tate at Ballantyne

Allen Tate Co. announced the following associates have joined the Ballantyne office: Karen Sroczyński, Bret Miles, Lisa Dardis and Angela Stone. Reach them at 704-543-5806.

## CMC, Urology Specialists Recognized for Prostate Care

Carolinas Medical Center-University has been awarded Disease-Specific Care Certification in prostate cancer by the Joint Commission, an independent agency that accredits health-care programs.

Patients enter the prostate cancer program at CMC-University when they are scheduled for radical prostatectomy by Timothy A. Gajewski, Roberto F. Ferraro or Ralph N. Vick, physicians with Urology Specialists of the Carolinas.

Urology Specialists has 15 doctors and nine offices, including locations in Ballantyne and Pineville. Learn more: [www.urologyspecialistsnc.com](http://www.urologyspecialistsnc.com) or [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).





# NOW OPEN

## Artisan Pizzas Coming to StoneCrest

True Crafted Pizza is opening this spring in StoneCrest. The restaurant will feature two styles of artisan pies: individual neo-Neopolitan pizzas cooked to order in a wood/stone oven and signature grilled pizzas. True Crafted Pizza also offers a selection of sandwiches, salads, appetizers and a children's menu. Patio dining and take-out are available.



## Firestone Opens in Blakeney Corners

Firestone Complete Auto Care is now open in Blakeney Corners behind BB&T Bank. The shop, which offers oil changes, tune-ups, tires, batteries and brake services, is open seven days a week. Info and appointments: 704-846-0934 or visit [www.firestone.com](http://www.firestone.com).

## Store Specializes in Oils, Vinegars

Olive This! is an extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar tasting boutique now open in The Shops at Piper Glen. Owners Kara Deir and Andrea Edwards sell over 45 varieties of the finest imported extra virgin olive oils and all-natural aged balsamic vinegars. They also hold private tastings for groups at the store after hours. Olive This! supports the Paula Takacs Foundation for Sarcoma Research as well as the Girl Scouts Hornets Nest Council. Learn more: 704-544-8099 or [www.olivethis.com](http://www.olivethis.com).



## Blakeney Shop Sells Junior Clothing

Riley Rose Boutique recently opened in the Blakeney shopping center near Zoe's Kitchen. The store sells junior clothing and accessories, including leggings, peplum tops and colored denim. Details: 704-544-8055 or [www.riley-rose.com](http://www.riley-rose.com).



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## Promenade Welcomes Burger Eatery

The newest BT's Burger Joint recently opened in the Promenade on Providence. Known for its wide selection of hamburgers, along with home-style milkshakes and fried pickles, BT's also offers hot dogs and grilled cheese sandwiches, along with domestic beers, wine by the glass and big-screen TVs. Info: 704-849-0410 or [www.btsburgerjoint.com](http://www.btsburgerjoint.com).



## Store Opens in Toringdon Circle

Ben Knight, owner and president of Charlotte-based Ben Knight & Associates Inc., has opened FASTSIGNS of Matthews-Ballantyne in the Toringdon Circle Shopping Center.

The store is a visual communications company specializing in sign and graphic consultation and design, production, delivery and installation services. Products include architectural signs, vehicle graphics, point-of-purchase posters and building signs. Details: [www.fastsigns.com/419](http://www.fastsigns.com/419) or 704-841-4033.



Megan Quesenberry

## State, Local Groups Honor Quesenberry

Megan Quesenberry, lodge and cottage manager at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, has been honored at the state and local levels for her commitment to excellence in hospitality. The North Carolina Restaurant &

Lodging Association selected Quesenberry as Lodging Employee of the Year.

This award is presented to a lodging employee who is highly successful in the eyes of his or her fellow NCRLA members in community involvement and contributions to the industry, and who has enhanced the overall image of the profession. In addition, Quesenberry received the Outstanding Ambassador Award at the Visit Charlotte Partner of the Year Awards.

## Capstone Commons Welcomes Paint Store

Sherwin Williams is now open in Capstone Commons at the corner of Highway 521 and Old Lancaster Highway. The store offers over 1,500 colors of interior and exterior paints, as well as stains and wall coverings. Details: 704-543-6825, [sw2696@sherwin.com](mailto:sw2696@sherwin.com).



The Kelilabee Flower Company, a family-run, full-service retail flower shop, is now open at Robinson Corners on Elm Lane. The shop specializes in same-day deliveries, corporate accounts, weddings, funeral and sympathy arrangements, prom flowers, live-plant arrangements (including orchids) and seasonal and holiday decorations.

The shop serves Ballantyne, Waxhaw, Marvin, Pineville, South Charlotte, Myers Park, Matthews, Weddington, Wesley Chapel, Fort Mill and Indian Land. More info: Meghan Mannon at 704-900-8949, [meghan@kelilabee.com](mailto:meghan@kelilabee.com) or [www.kelilabee.com](http://www.kelilabee.com).



## Shop Customizes Sandwiches

Which Wich Superior Sandwiches is now open in Ballantyne Corners. The eatery offers more than 50 custom sandwiches and salads, including signature items such as the "Thank You Turkey Sandwich" topped with stuffing and cranberry sauce. The children's menu features a sandwich, drink and treat for \$3.75. You may dine in, order online, take out or have food delivered. Catering is available as well. Details: 704-543-8698 or [www.whichwich.com](http://www.whichwich.com).



## StoneCrest Adds Clothing Boutique

The women's clothing boutique fab'rik is now open in StoneCrest near Chico's. Featuring merchandise under \$100, the store sells clothing, shoes and accessories such as everyday jewelry, handbags and scarves. Clothing lines include BB Dakota, Designer Denim, M&M Couture and fab'rik's White Collection. Details: 704-541-6065.



## Pagano Opens The Growth Coach

James Pagano has just opened The Growth Coach, a business and sales coaching service covering Pineville, Ballantyne, Matthews, Weddington, Waxhaw and SouthPark.

A former marketing manager with BSN Medical and a former director of marketing with Premier, Pagano helps clients achieve personal growth and improvement in their business, as well as enhance strategic business practices areas such as sales and marketing, leadership and management, strategic planning and development, and operating systems. Reach him at 704-996-3935 or [j.pagano@thegrowthcoach.com](mailto:j.pagano@thegrowthcoach.com).



James Pagano

## Tanning Salon Opens Second Locale

City Tan is opening its second Charlotte location, in StoneCrest next to Brownlee Jewelers. The tanning facility offers regular and UV-free technology, as well as tanning with an airbrush formula inside a heated Novell booth. Info: 704-887-9727.

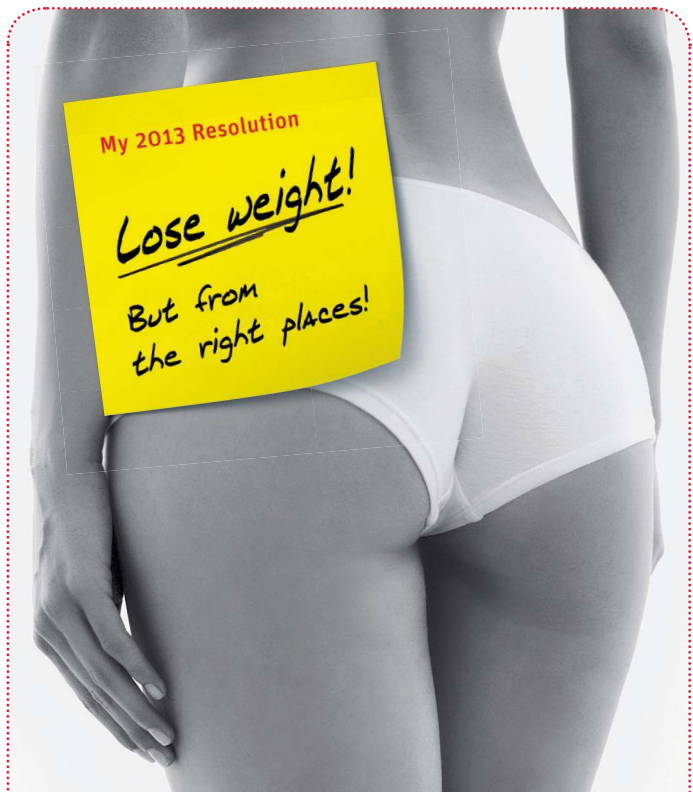


## Age Management Medical Practice Opens

CeneGenics Carolinas has opened its first Charlotte location in Pineville. The practice focuses on age management and personalized preventive care. Physicians Mickey Barber and Christopher Nagy lead the practice and are specialists in age management. Learn more: 704-945-7125 or [www.cenegenics.com](http://www.cenegenics.com).

## Take 'N' Bake Pizza Spot Now Open

Papa Murphy's Pizza, rated the number one pizza chain by Zagat for the last three years, recently opened in Capstone Commons (Highway 521 at Old Lancaster Highway). The restaurant offers take 'n' bake pizzas made fresh when you order and that can be customized. The restaurant also has starters, desserts and drinks. Details: 704-341-8394.



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# SWEET CHARITIES



Photo courtesy of Bissell Cos.

## Corporate Park Supports Toys for Tweens

Ballantyne Corporate Park collected 1,000 Toys for Tweens gifts last December. The effort also generated support from the greater Charlotte community, including a \$1,000 check from Sam's Club of Pineville.



North Mecklenburg Woman's Club President Lisa Vadnais (from left), ANSWER board member Tamara Cornish, ANSWER scholarship recipient Carrie Johnson and ANSWER founder Susan Andersen.

## Scholarship Fund Receives \$13,000

The North Mecklenburg Woman's Club raised \$13,000 for the ANSWER Scholarship Endowment at its annual "Over the Tabletop" design fundraiser at The Peninsula Club in Cornelius last November.

ANSWER, a Ballantyne-based nonprofit founded by Susan Andersen, provides college scholarships to mothers of school-age children. All of the woman club's gift will directly benefit the 2013-2014 ANSWER recipients when they receive their scholarships in May. Learn more: [www.answerscholarship.org](http://www.answerscholarship.org).

## Tourney to Benefit the Arc in April

The third annual Fore Inclusion Charity Golf Tournament is Monday, April 8 at Raintree Country Club. Proceeds benefit The Arc of Mecklenburg County, an organization that creates opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Details: [www.arcmeck.org](http://www.arcmeck.org).

## Extended Stay America Holds Successful Drive

Extended Stay America, whose headquarters is located in Ballantyne Corporate Park, recently held a coat and blanket drive, collecting 80 coats and 11 blankets. The items benefit Boys & Girls Clubs and the Center of Hope's Women and Children's Homeless Shelter.



## Remi Group Backs Dove's Nest

Last fall The Remi Group chose Dove's Nest, the Charlotte Rescue Mission's women's program, as the beneficiary of its annual company charity drive. During the two-week campaign, nine captains volunteered to encourage their teams to bring in the charitable organization's most needed nonperishable food, kitchen and cleaning items.

The winning team brought in 2,511 items, which earned members a paid day off and the team captain a gift card. The entire company donated 7,355 items for women and children at Dove's Nest. Learn more: [www.theremigroup.com](http://www.theremigroup.com) or [www.charlotterescuemission.org](http://www.charlotterescuemission.org).

## Ornaments Raise \$5,000 For Turning Point

Creative Nature by Home in the Blakeney shopping center raised \$5,000 during the holiday season through sales of a special ornament. The proceeds were donated to Turning Point, the women's shelter in Union County. Learn more: [www.unioncountyyturningpoint.org](http://www.unioncountyyturningpoint.org).



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## Cancer Society's Relay For Life May 31

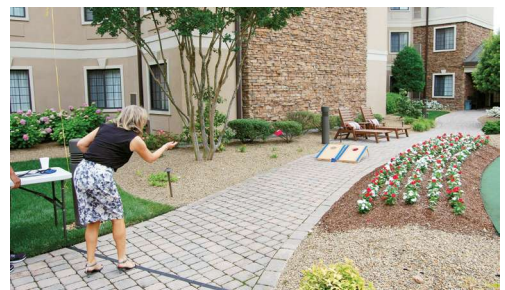
The American Cancer Society will hold its second annual Ballantyne Relay For Life May 31 at the Morrison Family YMCA. At Relay For Life events, individuals and teams camp out at an athletic track, park or other gathering area starting at 6 p.m., with the goal of keeping at least one team member on the track or pathway at all times throughout the evening. This year, the event kicked off in January with a party at Villa Antonio in Ballantyne Village. The fundraising goal for 2013 is \$50,000. Learn more: [www.relayforlife.org/ballantyne](http://www.relayforlife.org/ballantyne).



## Hotel Hosts Give Kids The World Luncheon

Staybridge Suites Charlotte Ballantyne will host its annual Give Kids The World Luncheon on Wednesday, May 8 from noon to 1:30 p.m. Give Kids The World is a nonprofit organization that treats children with life-threatening illnesses and their families to fantasy vacations at Give Kids The World Village, a 70-acre "storybook" resort.

The event is open to the community. Tickets cost \$8 per person and include lunch with beverage and dessert. There will also be games and raffles. Info: 704-248-5000.



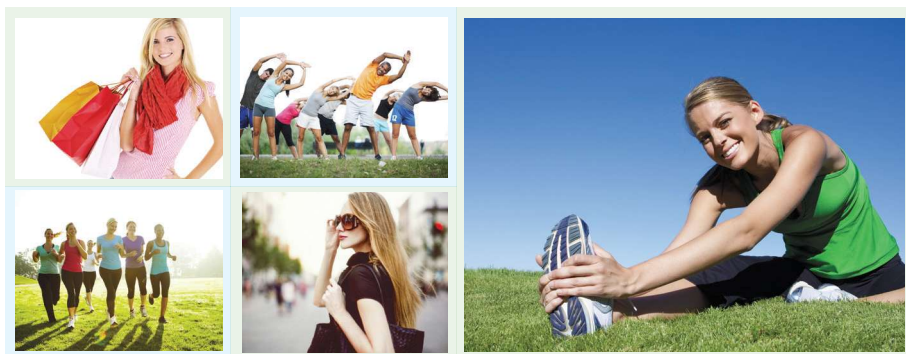




## Gingerbread Lane Donations Up Nearly \$1,000

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge raised nearly \$3,000 to benefit Levine Children's Hospital during its 2012 Gingerbread Lane display, which was open to the public in December. This is a record amount for the popular holiday event, which collected almost \$1,000 more than last year. The People's Choice Award Winner was Alice Kerrigan for her "Home Sweet Home" entry (left). 

## Get fit and feel great



**FREE** - Cardio Jam Fitness Classes  
every Saturday at 1pm on the Green 3/9 - 4/27

Come and enjoy *Cardio Jam Fitness* with one of the areas most sought after instructors, Lem Houston. He will lead an hour-long, fast moving, high energy routine that is sure to kick you back into shape for spring. **It's FREE!**

Promenade merchants will also be offering incentives during each *Cardio Jam Fitness* class. From proper shoe fittings to form flattering clothing, Promenade retailers will be there to help you look your best for the Spring.

Be sure to like Promenade on Providence on Facebook! Lem, the *Cardio Jam* instructor, will be popping in stores throughout March and April with **special offers** and **FREE** merchandise you won't want to miss!



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# A WARM HELLO

Introducing Three Intriguing Locals

Photos by Ray Sepesy

WHAT DO HOT, FLUFFY biscuits, prosecco and an early-morning summer run have in common?

Not much unless you happen to be our featured personalities in this edition of Faces. These “guilty pleasures” are what Elaine Chopski, Michele L. Stack and Zachary Mason White confessed to on the following pages.

Among other things.

Find out whose theme song for walking into a room should be “Girl on Fire,” whose dream vacation is to run a marathon through 59 vineyards in France and who is so directionally challenged that a GPS brings no peace of mind.

The trio is among the many fascinating people who make Ballantyne an attractive place to be. We invite you to turn the page and meet Elaine, Michele and Zachary.





**ELAINE CHOPSKI**

**Birthplace:** Manila, Philippines.

**Job:** Director of marketing and catering, Frankie Boys Burgers, BBQ and Ribs.

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

Providing great food to great people. I love seeing their happy faces after eating our barbecue. In addition, I get to meet and talk to new people — which adds a lot of excitement to my day.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Hot, soft, fresh biscuits or rolls. Place the whole basket in front of me and most of the time I can't say no to them.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

No, but I work, shop and go to the gym in Ballantyne.

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

Sushi 18. The Hawaiian Sunset rolls are amazing. It's a favorite place for a date night with my husband.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Chasing my 4-year-old at the park and walking our 120-pound German shepherd. I love running and hiking as well.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

Maui, Hawaii. Feet on the sand, hot sun, delicious seafood, fresh pineapple, Kona coffee, creamy Roselani ice cream, luau on the beach, golf for hubby, spa for me and surfing for the kids. No phones, no computer, no alarm clock. This was my honeymoon destination, and I really would love to visit every year.

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

"Girl on Fire" by Alicia Keys.

**What is your favorite news source?**

The Charlotte Observer. I also watch CNN and CBS News in the evenings.

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

Corduroy. It's just not for me.

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

Turning Point. The organization provides safe housing and counseling for victims of domestic violence as well as for their children.

**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

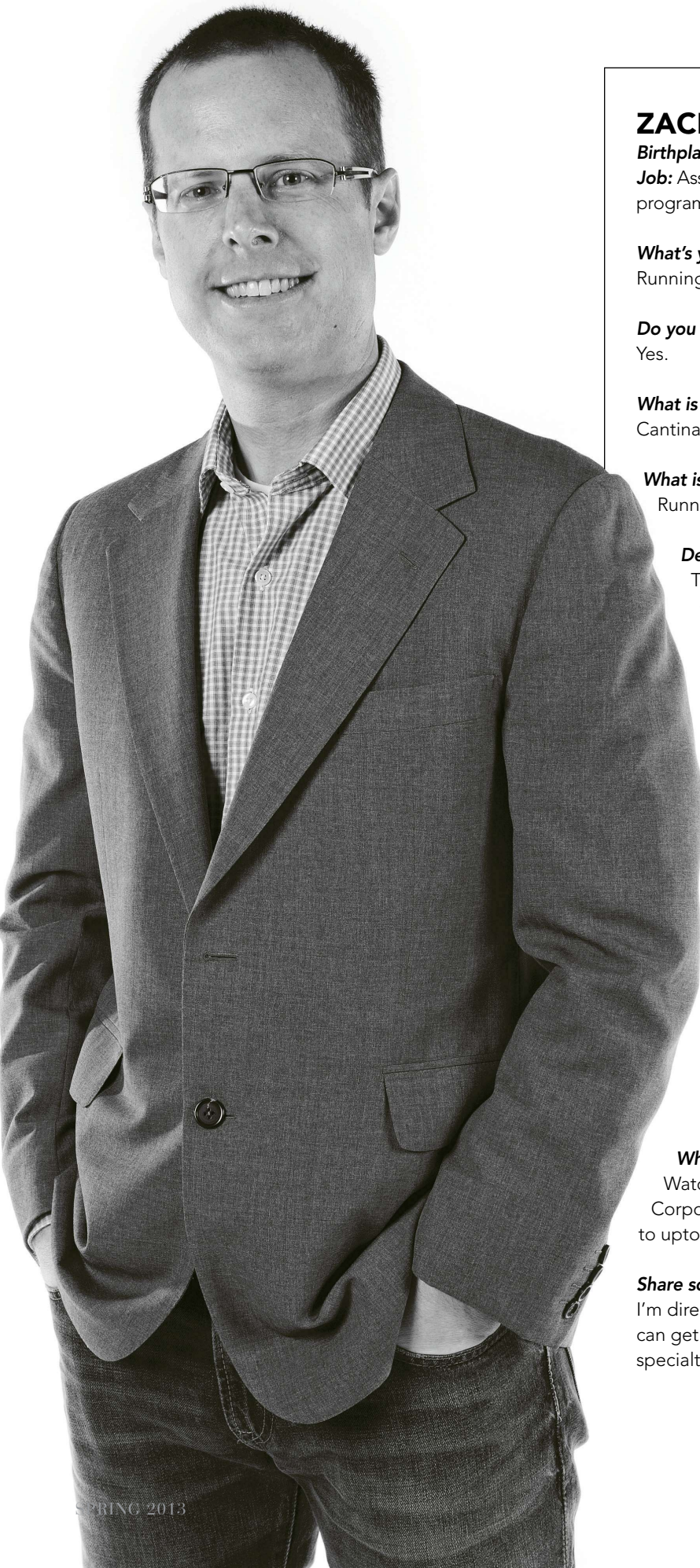
When people don't say "please" and "thank you."

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

I have a 15-year-old son who is 6 feet 1 inch tall. He is a sophomore in high school. People are always shocked when he introduces me as his mom.







## ZACHARY MASON WHITE

**Birthplace:** Tulsa, Okla.

**Job:** Assistant director and interim director of graduate programs, Knight School of Communication, Queens University.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Running, particularly in the early summer mornings.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Yes.

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

Cantina 1511.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Running the greenways.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

Traveling in Poland. My wife was born there, and I have a great affinity for the culture and history of the country.

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

Anything by Coldplay.

**What is your favorite news source?**

I'm a sampler. I like watching and listening to news sources that seemingly contradict what I think I believe.

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

A tie while I teach. I gesture too much!

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

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. I'm a father and there is nothing worse than feeling helpless when it comes to your kids.

**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

People who have a lot of answers but few questions.

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

Watching fireworks from the parking deck of the Ballantyne Corporate Park. You can see them all the way from Lake Wylie to uptown.

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

I'm directionally illiterate. I'm one of the few people I know who can get lost even with a GPS device. Getting lost is definitely a specialty of mine.





## MICHELE L. STACK

**Birthplace:** Fort Lee, Va.

**Job:** Works in finance with the American Red Cross.

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

I previously worked for the Junior League of Charlotte. There's much reward in working with nonprofits offering support to the people they serve.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Trader Joe's prosecco.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Yes, on four acres off Lancaster Highway we affectionately refer to as "The Ponderosa."

My husband, Myers Park High wrestling coach Rick Stack, has done a wonderful job of renovating the place.

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

Red Bowl Asian Bistro (sushi). I also enjoyed recent trips to Vine and Blackthorne.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Running! Have completed many marathons and half marathons over the years, but the most special was running with my teenage daughters in the Charlotte Thunder Road half marathon last November.

**Describe your dream vacation.**

Would love to run the Marathon du Medoc in Bordeaux, France. The route goes through 59 vineyards.

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

"Teenage Daughters" by Martina McBride or anything by Maroon 5.

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

A tattoo or piercings other than in my ears.

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

I have been a member of the Junior League of Charlotte for over 15 years and admire its commitment to serving children. I have also been involved with Girls on the Run and Getting2Tri.

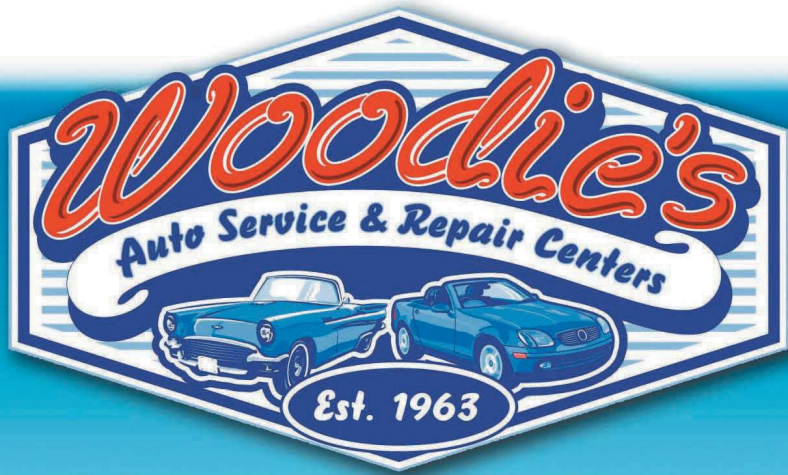
**What is your biggest pet peeve?**

People teasing me about my "ugly" feet. I have runners feet; people with pretty feet finish in the back!

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

Growing up in a military family, I attended eight schools before high school. I lived 18 places before ending up in Charlotte.



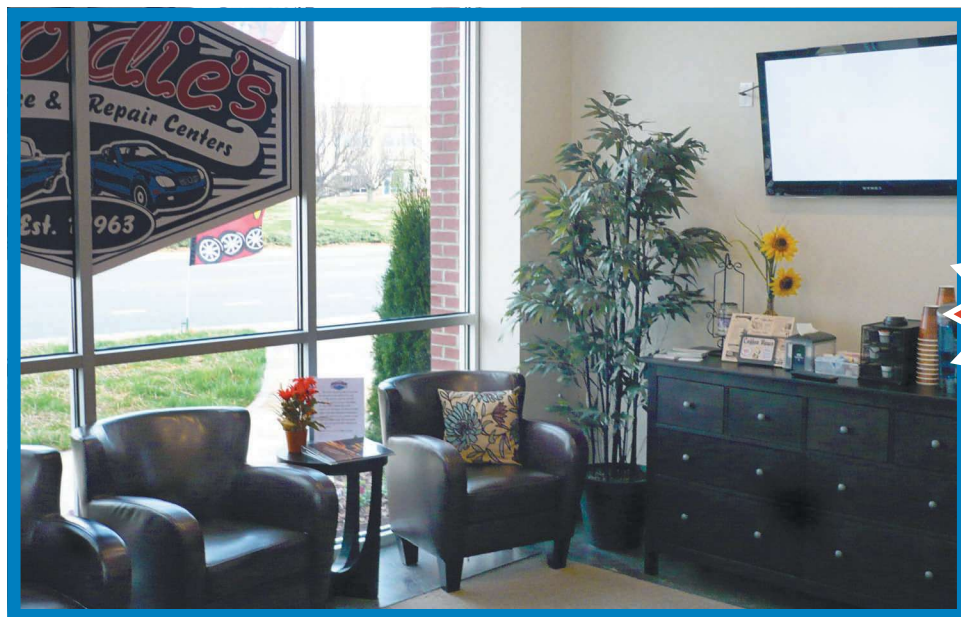


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# Stage Direction

## Here's How to Accelerate Your Home Sale

By Barbi MacKinnon

STAGING YOUR HOME FOR SALE IS REAL WORK, but it's easier if you know what to do — and not to do.

The Staging Girl, my Ballantyne-based company, specializes in strategic home staging. We give workshops to Realtors® and work directly with sellers. Like any project, staging takes organization, planning and elbow grease. Here are the key steps.

**Step 1: Say this aloud:** “Staging is a sale process. This isn't personal. It's business.”

Your goal is to sell your home to someone else. It needs to be attractive to the largest group of people. This means you may love your porcelain chicken collection, your college shot glasses and hunting trophies, but many buyers may not. Get packing.

**Step 2: Colors count.** Ask 10 people what “neutral” is and you'll get 10 answers.

Choose a color that accents your ceiling height and the trim around your doors and windows, but don't tie your buyer into a color scheme. If you have white ceilings and white trim, then painting your walls white will not help you. A flat finish helps camouflage any problems in the walls. Pick a color that meets the criteria above and makes your home feel warm.

**Step 3: Personal pictures are needed.**

The trick is knowing how many to use, what sizes work and where to put them.

Some stagers believe for-sale homes should never have personal pictures. Not true, in my book. A few well-chosen and well-placed pictures make the house feel like a home, not a furniture showroom. But it's wise to put away the pictures of your dogs and cats. Buyers are wary of a home that has been occupied by pets. You don't want anyone to imagine a smell that isn't there.

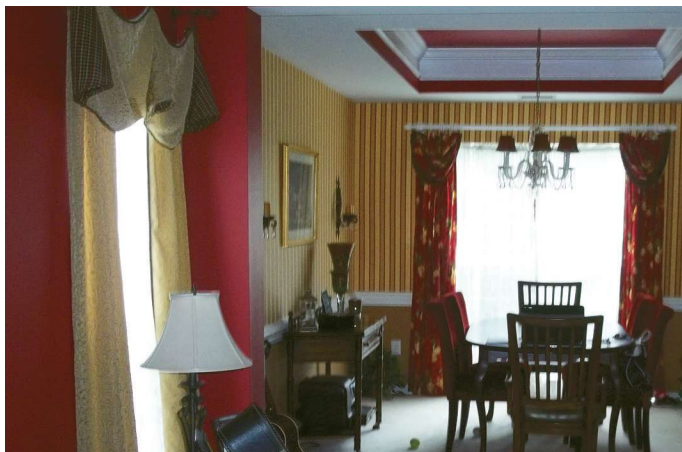
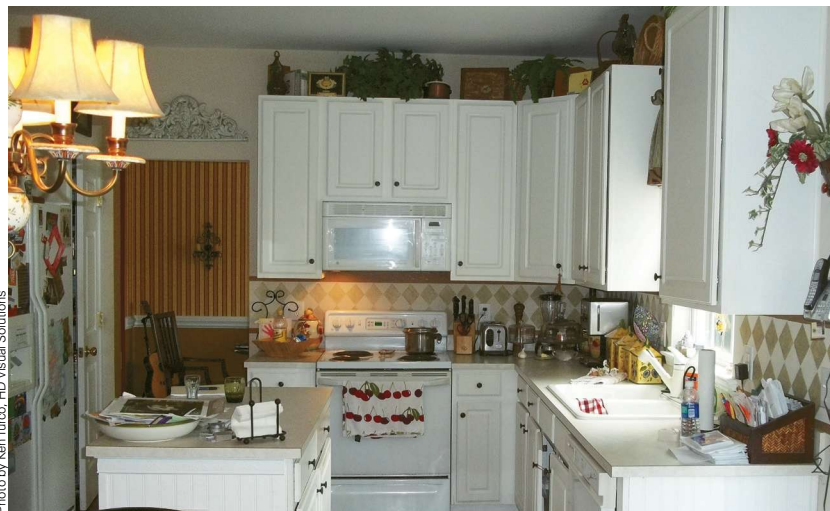


Photo by Ken Turco, HD Visual Solutions



This kitchen began with too many accessories and other items on the countertops, creating clutter.

**Step 4: Your home must be clean.**

Buyers and Realtors® remember a dirty house.

Use mild cleaners. Be sure to clean the right way. For example, grind up a lemon with ice in your disposal to get rid of sink odor. Use oven cleaner in cast iron tubs and

toilets to get rid of stubborn stains and soap scum. Use candles and air fresheners sparingly. The best smell in your home is none at all.



Photo by Jim Merrill

**Barbi MacKinnon**

has a degree in residential planning and retailing from The Art Institute of Atlanta. She began honing her staging skills as a 10-year-old helping her Realtor® mom. She opened The Staging Girl in 2007 and can be reached at 704-430-3600.

The dining room's pronounced color scheme makes the room look smaller and ties a potential owner into colors they may not like.

**Step 5: Too much stuff:** If you think you have too much furniture or too many accessories in any room, you are probably right.

Remove unnecessary pieces. Your buyer shouldn't have to walk around furniture to move through the room. Do you have hardwood or tile floors? Let's see them. 📷



# Global Glee

Endhaven  
Elementary  
Celebrates  
Students from  
42 Countries

By Nan Bauroth  
Photos by Jessica Milligan





IT IS A SMALL WORLD at Endhaven Elementary. Four years ago the school staged an International Fair for students and parents to explore cultural distinctions of the native countries within its student population. The fair was such a success that this year the number of countries in the "Hall of Nations" rose to 42, exemplifying the amazing diversity of backgrounds in one Ballantyne school.

"The fair helps children realize there are more



At the International Fair, Dominik Bule wore this outfit for his performance with a children's group from the Polish School of Charlotte.







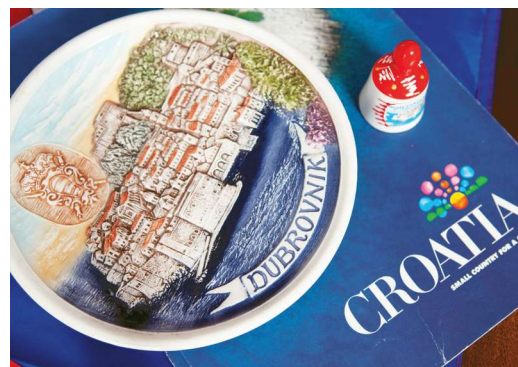
Third grader Dominik Bule and his parents represent the global flavor of Endhaven. His mother Ela is from Poland and his father Pero is from Croatia.



commonalities between people than they hear about,” says Hope Donato, chairperson of the social studies professional learning community at Endhaven. “Children are fascinated to learn how another country compares with what they know about their own.”

‘The fair is a great thing because it shows children that we can learn by example from other people and cultures.’

— Endhaven Parent  
Ela Bule



**Top right:** The display on Poland explained the country's location and culture.

**Above:** This commemorative plate honors a popular Croatian tourist destination on the Adriatic Sea.

**Left:** The rams and the clock-tower replica were part of the presentation on Poland.

According to Donato, students come to understand that regardless of their own background, all cultures have similar components. For instance, this year younger children made a list of all the countries that use fireworks in celebrations.

The 42 native countries of students currently enrolled



at the school are scattered across the globe on six of the seven continents. In North America, the countries are the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Honduras and Puerto Rico. From South America, they are Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, Chile and Ecuador.

Asian countries are Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, Russia, India, Maldives, Iran, Israel, Palestine and Lebanon. On the African continent, there are Sudan, Jordan, Ghana, Morocco and Republic of Congo. Representing Europe are Spain, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland,

Asma Bukhari (left) grew up in Pakistan and Canada, while her husband Omar Afzal is a native of Iceland.



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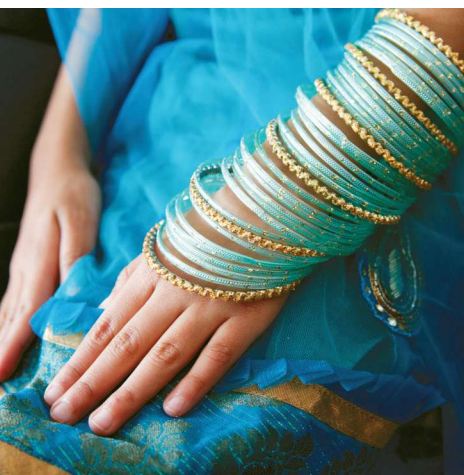
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Parents at Endhaven quickly embraced the fair, asking to bring personal artifacts and native cuisine.



Laila Bukhari displays traditional Pakistani attire as well as a decorative silver container.

**Top Left:** This embroidery adorns Asma Bukhari's wedding sari.

**Second Left:** Zahra Bukhari models Pakistani bracelets.

**Bottom Left:** In Pakistan, colorful embroidery is a popular decorative element.

Ireland, England, Greece, Denmark and Croatia. Australia, which comprises the sixth continent, completes the list.

The annual festival began as a collaboration among Donato, music teacher Robyn Cogan and Chris Ayers, who teaches English as a second language. Cogan's extensive world travels inspired her to teach students songs in other languages to expand their horizons. The idea was to hold a small event to recognize all the native countries of students so children could see the great diversity among their fellow students.

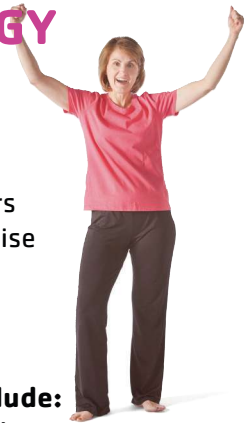
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SPRING 2013





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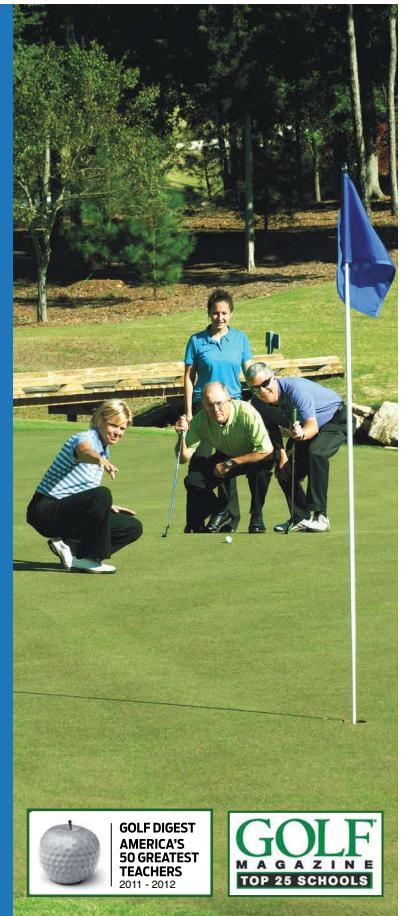
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■ continued from page 38

## 'Wow' Facts

The first year, each classroom created a large board with information about a particular country. Categories included the national flag, map, cuisine, culture, money, economy and

'It is so important in education to learn about other cultures, especially since we have had the opportunity to travel around the world.'

— Asma Bukhari,  
mother of  
Zahra and Laila

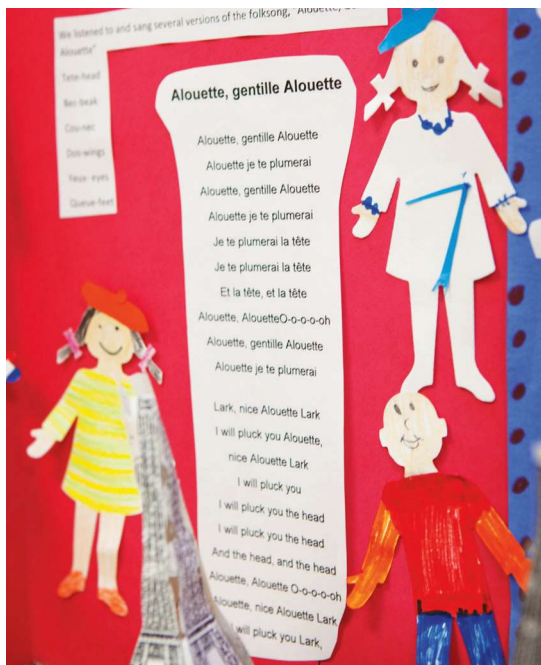
"wow" facts that students compiled about that nation.

Students were encouraged to involve parents in lending items, such as national flags, and helping provide information that could be placed on boards. Each child received a "Citizen of the World Passport" with the seal of all the countries. At the festival, they were encouraged to visit each country's board with their parents and have their passport stamped.

"Children loved the passport," Donato says. "The national flags were also a big deal, so we left them in the hallway for an additional



These shoes showcase Pakistani beading and embroidery.



**Above:** Endhaven students made this board of facts and information about France.

**Left:** As part of the French exhibit, students featured the folk song "Alouette."





The Eiffel Tower in Paris was part of the French display.

week. Students began to see similarities in the flags, realizing how many countries had the same coloring.” For example, the fifth grade class discussed the British flag at the height of the country’s empire, seeing how it influenced the design of the flags of colonies once they broke away.

Parents at Endhaven quickly embraced the fair, asking to bring personal artifacts and native cuisine. The musical element also grew. This year the festival showcased African storytelling and children presenting dances of India, the Dominican Republic, Ireland, Brazil and Poland.

Dominik Bule, a third grader at Endhaven who performed with a group of children from the Polish School of Charlotte, is the son of Pero Bule, a native of Croatia, and his wife Ela, who hails from Poland.

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**Left:** Immanuel Alvarado and his mother Maida Alvarado have participated in the International Fair since its inception.

**Top Left, Right:** Maida Alvarado demonstrates a Venezuelan hairstyle and dance.

**Above:** Venezuela's colorful flag features many symbols.

## 'Learn By Example'

"Dominik loves to learn about other countries," says Ela, noting that he especially enjoys it when she and her husband share pictures and books about Poland and Croatia. "The fair is a great thing because it shows children that we can learn by example from other people and cultures. We need from youth to understand that there is way more out there that is good that we can bring to the U.S. and life here."

Maida Alvarado, a native of Caracas, Venezuela, and her son, Immanuel, a second grader, have participated in the event since its inception. "This year the boards had some amazing facts," she says. "My son enjoys it so much taking his passport to every country. The parents really take time to do that with their kids."

Zahra and Laila, the daughters of Omar Afzal, a native of Iceland, and his wife Asma Bukhari, who grew up in Pakistan



Each child received a 'Citizen of the World Passport' with the seal of all the countries.

and Canada, had the most fun developing "wow" facts about the country their classroom studied.

"It is so important in education to learn about other cultures, especially since we have had the opportunity to travel around the world," says Asma. "My husband is with a shipping company, so we have lived in Oman and Jordan. We tell our daughters that the fair is an excellent opportunity to learn about other countries and their economy, currency, culture and political values."

Today Donato, along with co-chair Cogan and teachers Karen Lee, Melanie Gaylor, Melissa Crawford, Linda Fox, Chris Ayers, April Leach and Endhaven's PTA, all work to make the festival a reality. For all of them, the culmination is seeing children actively seeking to expand their knowledge about the world. Asma agrees. "We have a truly multicultural school." 🌐



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# Culinary Delight

At cooking class, Dana McKinley and Erika Sturino prepared crab-stuffed Alaskan wild salmon in hollandaise sauce and sweet potato gnocchi in butter sage sauce.





# YOUNG COUPLE FINDS TWO COOKS BETTER THAN ONE

By Michael J. Solender  
Photos by Shane Baskin

DANA MCKINLEY, 26, AND ERIKA STURINO, 24, made each other a promise as part of their New Year's resolutions — more cooking and eating at home in 2013.

The busy couple — he's a manager of client services for Ballantyne-based Integration Point; she's an online marketer for Red Ventures — felt they were eating out far too often, spending too much money and too much time away from home and each other. This year they vowed to share cooking responsibilities around the house, which meant improving their culinary skills and adding some dishes and techniques into their kitchen routines.

"When the Date Night opportunity came up to take

the couples cooking class at Morrison Family YMCA," Sturino says, "it could not have been more perfect. Dana and I got really excited about spending some time in the kitchen together and learning some new tricks."

## Mom Plays Key Role

Sturino and McKinley have been together since 2007 when they met at the University of South Carolina. They share a home together in Indian Land after each moved here one year apart after graduation.

But it wasn't sparks and fireworks for the couple as they first got to know each other mostly through mutual friends, sorority sisters and fraternity brothers. In a not-so-small way, it was actually

McKinley's mother who played an integral role in the couple getting together.

"I was one year ahead of Erika," McKinley explains. "And when I first moved to the dorm from Ohio, my mom came along to help get me settled. She met some of the other moms, mostly of the young women in the coed dorm. They got together and it was my mom who connected me with the girls who eventually introduced me to Erika."

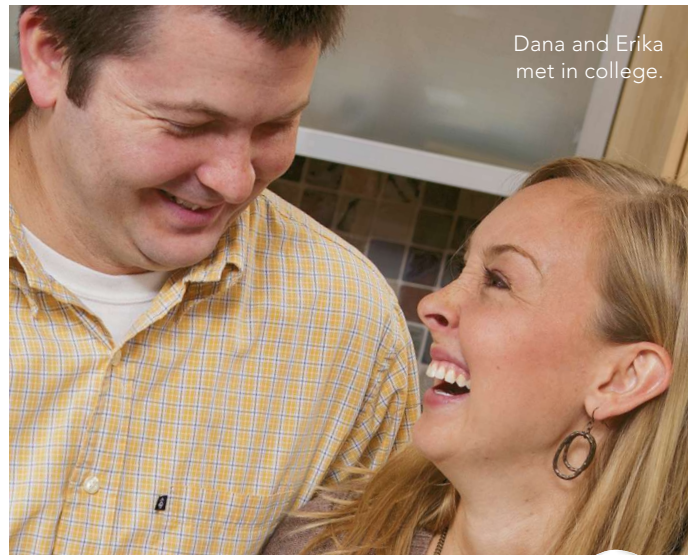
Initial dates were quiet Mexican dinners and enjoying a craft beer or two at some of the local college-area pubs. Each recalls having a great time at the World Beer Festival in Columbia, which the couple has made into an annual must-attend event. Another extra special date

involved making the trip to McKinley's parents' home in Ohio, where the couple enjoyed fishing together and attending the annual car show.

"A great date for us," Erika says, "is where we can leave our mobile devices turned off and tune out from our phones or computers and just enjoy some quiet time together."

The couple has redoubled their efforts to adapt a healthier lifestyle this year. That finds them sharing alternate evenings in the kitchen cooking. They recently remodeled their kitchen and equipped it with some high-end appliances, including a "top drawer" stove that until recently served as a sorting table for bills and extra counter space.

"We are determined to put



Dana and Erika met in college.

"A great date for us is where we can leave our mobile devices turned off and tune out from our phones or computers and just enjoy some quiet time together." — Erika Sturino





it to the use it was intended for,” Sturino says.

## Cooking Styles

“Each of us really can cook,” she continues, “I like to improvise and use recipes more as guidelines, while Dana is a more literal cook. He needs a lot of detail and direction — the cooking class was actually a good fit for both of us.”

Along with three other young couples, McKinley and Sturino were greeted at the Morrison Family Y’s pristine demonstration kitchen by Chef Adie Cervin. She is executive sous chef at Myers Park’s Nolen Kitchen, a top area restaurant.

Cervin had a special romantic menu on tap for the evening’s lesson: crab-stuffed wild Alaskan salmon fillets with hollandaise sauce, seared sweet potato gnocchi in a butter sage sauce and perhaps the ultimate couple’s dessert, creme brulee.



“There was just a bit of a competitive nature with the couples as we went around the room, first separating eggs for the creme brulee.”

— Dana McKinley

“It was a fun, relaxed atmosphere, and they had everything laid out for us,” McKinley recalls. “There was just a bit of a competitive



Erika tries her hand at something new — separating an egg.





nature with the couples as we went around the room, first separating eggs for the creme brulee. The first couple really nailed it and then Chef Adie came to us, and I started to feel the pressure.”

McKinley’s recollection brought laughs from Sturino. “Dana comes from a food background — his mom taught home economics for a vocational school — but he has this thing about eggs. He can’t even make scrambled eggs without a step-by-step guide — it’s crazy.”

The truth came out a moment later when Sturino admitted she’d never separated an egg before either. “That really was a new experience for me, and I don’t

Chef Adie Cervin explains to Erika and Dana the particulars of stuffing the salmon with crab.

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Dana adds the finishing touch to the creme brulee while classmates Andi Kennington (from left), Erika Sturino, Clay Kennington, Jeremy Singleton and Asha Singleton look on.



## COUPLES COOKING CLASS

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consider myself a novice cook," she notes.


The crab-stuffed salmon proved to be a favorite for the couple, both in preparation and in eating. The crab meat was combined with seasonings, bread crumbs and mayonnaise to bind it together.

## Whisk-Impaired

"We had tons of crab," says McKinley, clearly a big fan of the crustacean. "It was almost as much crab as salmon, so we got the best of both worlds."

The hollandaise sauce, a decadently rich, lemony sauce made with — you guessed it — more eggs (and butter) also proved to be a hit. McKinley couldn't help but get a few samples from the fingers of his gal-pal. In another playful moment that involved the prep of the sweet potato gnocchi, a small "explosion" of flour managed to get more of the white powder onto Sturino's nose than into the tiny dumpling mix.

She managed her payback, however, in turning over whisking duties to McKinley. Admitting to being "whisk-impaired," Sturino was only too happy to let her beau whip up the tasty outcome to the evening's festivities.

With Sturino and McKinley eager to try their new techniques and recipes at home, rumor has it — the couple's stove no longer is the final resting place for their bills. 

**Center:** The class baked the crab-stuffed salmon and seared the sweet potato gnocchi.

**Left:** Before digging in, Erika and Dana congratulate themselves on their culinary achievement.





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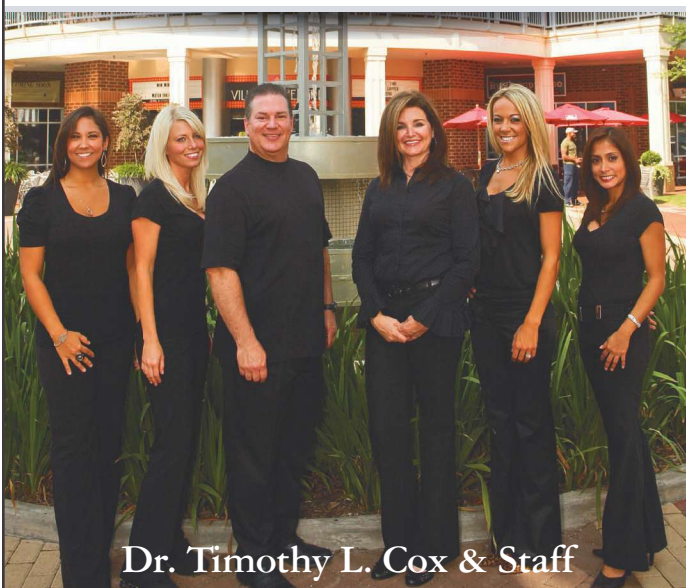
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# From Apps to Gender Reveal Parties, This is Not Your Mother's Baby Bump



Having a baby — especially your first — is one of the most celebratory moments you'll ever have. It's everything from hearing "Yes, the test came back positive" to enjoying showers and well wishes from those you know and even strangers. More recently, it's also the "Likes" and comments via social media and sharing sonograms with countless friends and family in cyberspace.

Modern pregnancy simply isn't what it used to be. People are having gender reveal parties and in-home ultrasound gatherings and using mobile apps to track the growth of their baby-to-be. Pregnancy and those "baby bumps" are being celebrated like never before.





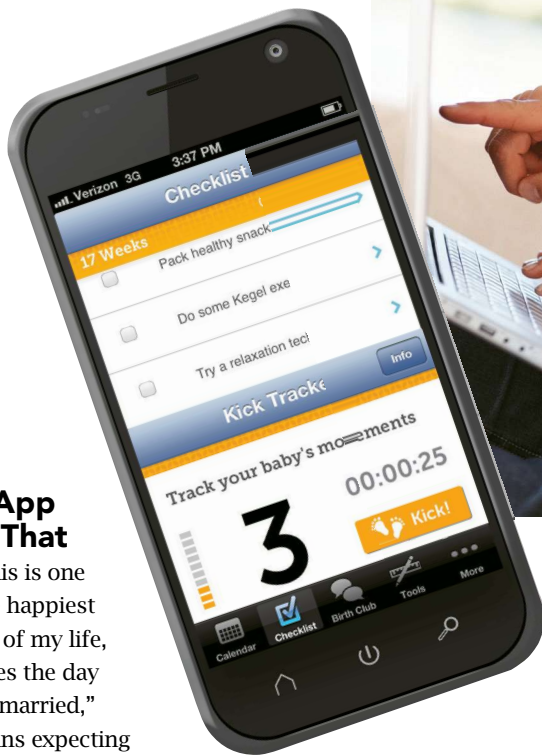
## An App For That

"This is one of the happiest times of my life, besides the day I was married," explains expecting mom Christina Kindel.

Kindel has been tracking the growth of her baby girl since she learned she was pregnant. But it's not just taking a look in her doctor's office; it's the image on her computer and in the palm of her hand on her iPhone. Yes, there's an app for this.

The "What to Expect" pregnancy application allows moms to see the baby's growth and to communicate with other moms online. Tracking growth weekly, the app details the physical changes occurring to both mom and baby, even equating the size of your unborn child to a piece of fruit in your kitchen.

"I remember when I started tracking her growth online and she was the size of a pea. Now she's the size of a cantaloupe!" quips Kindel. Expectant parents learn the week their baby's



"I remember when I started tracking her growth online and she was the size of a pea. Now she's the size of a cantaloupe!"

— Mom-to-be Christina Kindel

face begins taking shape and when they begin to practice survival techniques needed during birth, such as sucking and swallowing. Moms also share tips and advice on everything from maternity fashion must-haves to finding the best deals on baby furniture and where to look for trusted babysitters and nannies.

Parents are well researched these days, explains Deborah Johnson, director of maternity services with Carolinas Medical Center-Pineville. She says parents usually know their options. They want to be involved in determining details of preconception planning, as well as everything up to and including the birth experience.

## Upward Trend in Births

Johnson says that while nationally the number of births has gone down in recent years, the Ballantyne area is experiencing a baby boom of sorts. "CMC-Pineville has seen an upward trend in births, with an 8 percent increase in 2010-2011 and a 7 percent increase in 2011-2012."

A common request in recent years is water births. "While we don't offer water births for safety reasons, we do offer other tools including hydrotherapy in the form of whirlpool tubs in our maternity rooms to help moms relax during contractions," Johnson explains. "So we try to accommodate parents requests as closely as we can while keeping safety in mind."

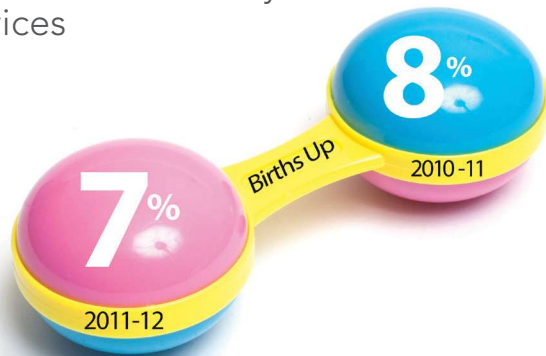
Administrator Deborah Johnson says parents served by Carolinas Medical Center-Pineville often are involved in everything from preconception planning to the birth experience. She is pictured here in a private maternity room.





"CMC-Pineville has seen an upward trend in births, with an 8 percent increase in 2010-2011 and a 7 percent increase in 2011-2012."

— Deborah Johnson,  
Director of Maternity  
Services



In 2011, CMC-Pineville nearly doubled the footprint of its maternity center, adding birthing suites, Murphy beds for mom's partner and a level-three intensive care nursery within the maternity center. "When parents come in and have special requests, we know they have done their homework and we do all we can to accommodate their requests," says Johnson. "It's not very often that they have an expectation that we can't meet."

The maternity center's patient population is primarily in the age range of 30s to early 40s. Many women are having their first babies after having had a career for a while, while others are having second or third children or celebrating births from recent marriages. "We are seeing many older moms, and for some, this is their first child and may be the only child they have," Johnson says, noting that details and planning seldom are taken lightly.

## Baby Blogs

Kelly Randazzo understands the desire to plan and cherish every moment. After more than two years of dealing with infertility issues, she finally learned she was pregnant in October 2011 after undergoing in vitro fertilization. "This pregnancy was much anticipated," says Randazzo. "I wanted to celebrate every milestone during my pregnancy."

Initially, Randazzo launched a blog called Searching for Serendipity ([searching4serendipity.blogspot.com](http://searching4serendipity.blogspot.com)) as a way to share her struggles with infertility. The process of writing and posting helped her feel less alone. Learning that friends had made it through such tough times, with healthy babies afterward, helped Randazzo realize that maybe she, too, would have her happy ending.

"It was very cathartic to explain what was going on with us," Randazzo says. "As soon as I released my first blog post about my infertility issues, I had close friends from my inner circle reaching out to me to say they had gone through similar struggles."



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Photo by Jessica Milligan

Photo by Jessica Milligan

And the big reveal?  
PINK! PINK! PINK!  
The Randazzos were  
having a little girl!

**Near Right:** Guests wore either pink or blue to cast their votes. Though Jennifer Cole's choice didn't win, it didn't stop her from having a good time.



Photo by Jessica Milligan



Photo by Jessica Milligan

**Top:** At the party, the Randazzos and their guests learned the sex of the baby at the same time. Selena Talbert (from left), Rick Cammer, David Randazzo, Kelly Randazzo and Erin Hunter celebrated the big moment.

**Above:** "Bun in the Oven" was the theme for the cake.



## Gender Reveal Parties

Once her pregnancy was confirmed, plans for a festive gender reveal party soon began. Kelly and her husband David wanted to share their excitement with family and friends and learn the sex of their baby-to-be at the same time as everyone else. "The ultrasound technician had us turn our heads," Kelly recalls. "She put the sonogram image in an envelope, and the secret was then handed off to the woman who baked the cake for our big reveal." The couple waited almost two weeks to learn the sex of their baby.

The cake theme was "bun-in-the-oven." Guests wore either pink or blue to cast their vote. Then it was finally time to cut the cake. "I was so nervous," Kelly admits. With family and friends watching closely, the couple cut into the cake to learn the sex of their child. And the big reveal? PINK! PINK! PINK! The Randazzos were having a little girl! "My husband really wanted a little girl and the look on his face was just priceless," Kelly says.

Five days after celebrating their seventh wedding anniversary, the Randazzos welcomed baby Nicolette into the world. Their desire to have a family had finally come true. "Pregnancy really goes by in the blink of an eye and you never get that time back," Randazzo says. "That's why it's so important to enjoy the journey and embrace every moment." 📷

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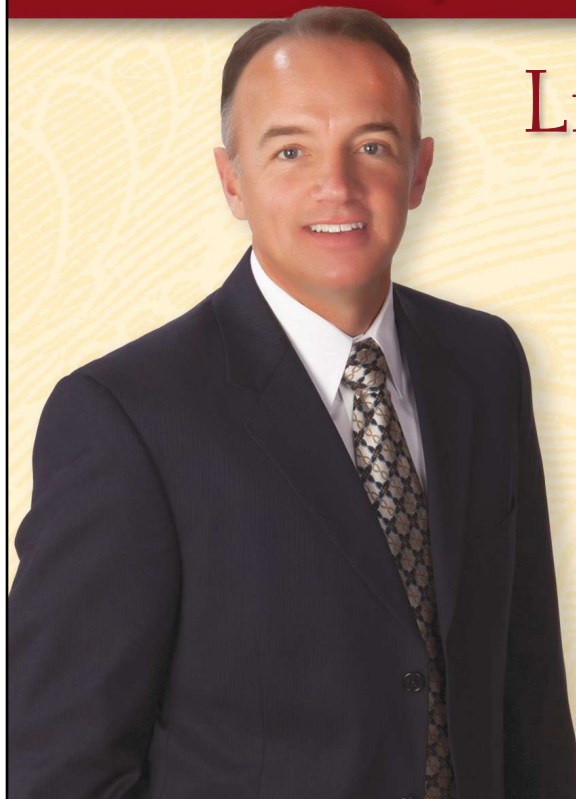
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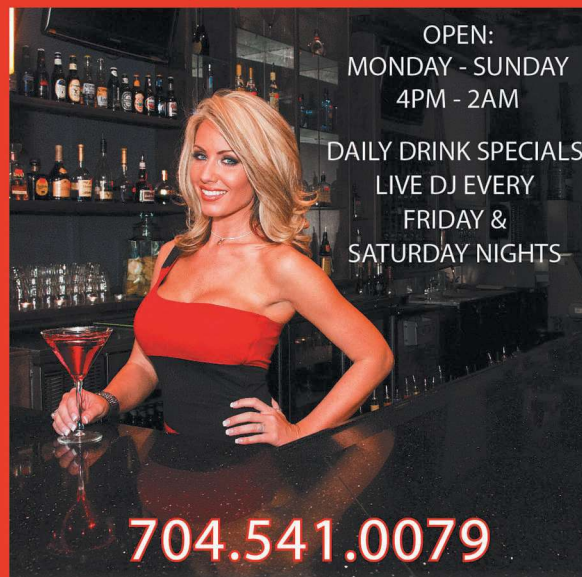
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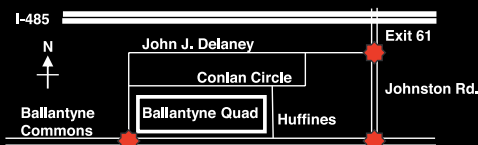
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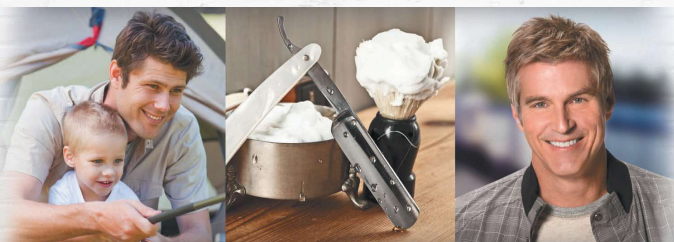


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Elwood's platter of smoked beef brisket is the menu's standout.



# Flavorful Fun

## Elwood's Serves Up 'Cue, Burgers in Relaxed Setting

By Amy Rogers Photos by Ray Sepesy

HARDLY ANYTHING WILL GET FOLKS RILED UP FASTER than a lively discussion of barbecue and what kind is best: pork or beef, chopped or sliced, tomato- or vinegar-based sauce?

At Elwood's Barbecue & Burger Bar, choosing a favorite is probably impossible. The family-owned restaurant proudly serves 'cue that's hickory-smoked on site, along with a menu that features traditional fare as well as modern versions of old favorites.

Patriarch Jim "Spanky" Sprowles gives generous credit for the restaurant's success to his two sons, Jamie and Justin, and to his wife of 41 years, Betty, who works in management. "Jamie is the 'food guru,'" who develops the recipes and oversees the kitchen, explains Spanky. "Justin is the 'personality' of the business." Justin designed the space, along with the eye-catching signage, menus and web graphics that give Elwood's its brand of flavorful fun.

Originally, Elwood's offered quick service for customers who liked to order at the counter during their lunch hour. But staff noticed that more and more, people really wanted to linger, often in the evenings when they'd drop off their children at karate lessons or other activities. Some of Elwood's regulars still stroll up to the counter to order — and to say hello — but most now enjoy table service.

### Brisket Bravado

People boast about the brisket here, proclaiming that even a Texan or two has deemed it the best ever. Elwood's popular brisket tacos with grilled avocado slices are a clever take on a familiar item, but the true menu standout is the platter of smoked meat, simply sliced with a choice of side dishes.

Spanky explains, "A lot of people define barbecue by the sauce. We define it by its preparation and its stand-alone taste." That's a purist's perspective, to be sure. But aficionados who like to sample a variety of sauces won't be disappointed. Elwood's offers its own



**Above:** The family-owned eatery will take your order at the counter or serve you at the table.

**Left:** If you love ribs, Elwood's has you covered.

**Bottom Left:** Local craft beers are a popular choice at the cozy bar.

blends, with helpful suggestions on the bottle to encourage perfect pairings. The "Red Sauce" is a stick-to-the-ribs favorite. "Piedmont Vinegar" will please fans of Eastern N.C.-style barbecue, and "Elwood Sauce" goes best with pork and chicken.

Elwood's also offers salads, sandwiches, Brunswick stew, burgers and ribs. The most creative appetizer, "Penos del Don," consists of hickory-smoked jalapenos filled with pork and cheese, then wrapped in bacon. They're one of several items honoring namesake Don Elwood, a beloved family friend and business associate. As a tribute to his exuberant personality, the Sprowles family named the place for him.

### Community Fixture

Although situated in the modern Hunter's Crossing development where Elwood's opened in August 2011, the eatery feels like it's



continued on page 61





# B

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been part of the community for much longer. The main dining room is as relaxed as a broken-in pair of jeans. An outdoor area with picnic tables is a perfect place for kids to sit and nibble, along with a homey screened-in porch where adults or families can dine. Local craft beers are popular in the cozy bar area.



The brisket tacos are a clever take on a familiar item.

## ELWOOD'S BARBECUE & BURGER BAR

### Hours

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11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday

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"We will strive very hard to make sure you have a good time in addition to good food," says Spanky. A large stenciled placard on the wall explains why: "Elwood was a buddy of mine. He loved BBQ, burgers and beer. When he died a few years ago I thought to myself, life is too short not to fill every day with what you love." 

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# Spring in a Bottle

## How to Create Eye-Catching Emerald Vases

By Missy of pinkpistachio.com

It's a great time to gather up your old condiment bottles and jars and repurpose them into painted vases in this spring's sweet shades of trendy emerald.

The process is easy, and the vases are the perfect seasonal display to update a mantle, kitchen table, nightstand or windowsill.







### Gathering Materials

**Bottles:** soda bottles, vinegar bottles, syrup bottles, jam jars, etc. **Paint:** Olympic A62a and A62b (shades of emerald), \$2.99 each, Lowe's. **Syringe:** complimentary, Lowe's. **Spray of Roses:** \$5.99, Trader Joe's. **Key, Sheet Music:** prices vary, Christie's On Main, Old Town Pineville.

### Washing Bottles

Begin by washing bottles and jars and letting them dry completely overnight. Work in a well-ventilated area.



### Painting

1. Withdraw paint using the paint syringe. 2. Insert syringe into each bottle/jar opening and dispense a stream of paint. 3. With the bottle lying horizontal, slowly rotate to evenly cover entire inside surface of the bottle. 4. Pour remaining paint back into jar. 5. Remove excess paint from bottle mouth using a paper towel, dampened with water if needed. 6. Let bottles stand upright for 3-4 hours. 7. Repeat steps 4 and 5. 8. Let bottles rest overnight until completely dried. 9. Fill a disposable floral vile with water (do not put water directly into bottles as the paint will wash away). 10. Insert flowers into vile, arrange them and place vile inside the bottle. 11. Decorate some bottles with keys. 12. Display vases in any place that needs a touch of spring beauty. Use the sheet music as a decorative mat under the vases.







# Turning Pages

## Ballantyne Book Club Focuses on Literary Fiction, Building Friendships

By Michael J. Solender    Photos by Ray Sepesy

GROWING UP IN WESTERN INDIA, Rush Shah enjoyed a steady diet of literary fiction. That fed his interest in exploring the world through the eyes and words of both classic and experimental authors. When Shah, a software engineer for Premier in Ballantyne Corporate Park, moved to Charlotte in 2001, he was surprised to find many Americans didn't share his literary tastes and seemed instead to favor genre fiction.

He made it his personal mission to start a book club and expose colleagues and new-found friends to the allure and the power of a good novel such as Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield" or F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby."

In January of last year, Shah launched the Ballantyne Book Club, a monthly gathering of avid readers who read one book per month and meet to discuss their impressions in a relaxed, after-work atmosphere.

"I was brought up on the notion that the novel is the heart of modern culture," Shah says. "When I first arrived here, I tried on more than one occasion to get a book club going, first with the main Charlotte-Mecklenburg library and then again at Davidson College. I was never really able to get traction. When I took the idea to Bissell Cos., they thought it was a great idea and helped spread the word through the park."

Shelly Johnson, digital media specialist with Bissell, was quick to sign on, and soon the fledgling book club had a tab on the Go-Ballantyne website, an inviting monthly home at the Aloft

The book club is a monthly gathering of avid readers who commit to read one book per month and meet to discuss their impressions.

Charlotte Ballantyne and a growing membership that today has close to 40 people on its mailing list. Monthly group discussions usually draw eight to 10 participants, and the club is free and open to the public.


"We are very casual and friendly," Johnson says. "The goal of the group is to build a sense of community and friendship amongst people who share similar interests. It is really a great opportunity to read books you might not ordinarily read and get to hear and learn from others' perspectives."

Several recognizable and popular novels have made it into the

reading queue over the past several months, including, "Naked" by David Sedaris, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot, and "The Tiger's Wife" by Téa Obreht.

Members collectively decide which books will be read from the group's suggestions. Themes such as young adult fiction and memoirs allow for subgenres to be targeted. Shah serves as an informal meeting facilitator and helps with keeping the discussion focused on character motivation, author intent, literary style and the like.

"While it is all about having fun and enjoying books," Shah says, "we do aim for serious discussion. My favorite aspect of the club is learning others' reactions and seeing how people relate circumstances found on the page to what we find in our own lives."

Who knew reading could be so much fun? Shah did, and the Ballantyne Book Club does, too. 



Book club founder Rush Shah (center) leads a monthly meeting. From left are Diane Carter, Suzanne Zeitouni, Shelly Johnson, Shah, Diane Meierowitz and Joshua Glessing.

### BALLANTYNE BOOK CLUB FREE, OPEN TO ALL

**Meetings:** Last Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.

**Location:** Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne, 13139 Ballantyne Corporate Place.

**Details:** The book club meets each month in the hotel's bar area, the conference room past the bar to the left or outside in the "back-yard" depending on weather.

**More information:** Go to [www.go-ballantyne.com](http://www.go-ballantyne.com). Select "Tenant Activities" from the top tabs; then choose "Ballantyne Book Club" from the drop-down menu.





This spring Ballantyne Country Club is serving prosciutto-wrapped chicken on lemon-dressed arugula, finished with candied pine nuts and balsamic onion jam.





In springtime, everything feels new, fresh and full of possibility. Lengthening days and mild evenings beckon, and we welcome the chance to meet with friends and family to enjoy a meal that captures the colors and flavors of the unfolding season.

At Ballantyne Country Club, executive chef Anthony Soriano sources fresh fish that are delivered directly from Florida within hours of being caught. This season, he's looking forward to serving pink snapper with a seasonal risotto as well as pan-roasted grouper with a ragout of baby vegetables and foraged chanterelles and morels.

In a presentation of chicken thighs wrapped in prosciutto di Parma, nestled into lemon-dressed baby arugula, and finished with candied pine nuts and balsamic onion jam — the dark meat's intense flavor is pleasantly balanced by the bright greens and sweet finishing touches.

At Blackthorne Restaurant & Bar, the heady aroma of herbs and ciabatta bread in the oven are immediate reminders that there's more than pub fare to be found



Anthony Soriano, executive chef at Ballantyne Country Club, likes to source fresh fish delivered within hours of being caught.

# THE TASTE • OF Spring

Five Restaurant  
Chefs Share  
Inspired Dishes  
of the Season

By Amy Rogers  
Photos by Ray Sepesy





at this American bistro. Grilled North Carolina trout, accompanied by spicy lobster risotto, crisply fried spinach and roasted shallot chutney, will be on the menu this spring. A colorful vegetable version of the risotto, finished with truffle oil, is a simpler but no less satisfying vegetarian option.

Also enticing is the traditional Southern

shrimp and grits that is one of chef Daniel Tunks' signature offerings in every season. Blackthorne works with regional suppliers whenever possible, and Tunks especially commends Feba Farm in Shelby for its heirloom produce, along with Lucky Leaf's microgreens from Harrisburg that add color and verve to his menu this spring. He's

Traditional Southern shrimp and grits is one of Blackthorne's signature offerings in every season.

**Above:** Chef Daniel Tunks likes to use local ingredients whenever possible. This spring he is doing a North Carolina grilled trout with lobster risotto. Here he assembles shrimp and grits.

**Right:** Open a little more than a year, Blackthorne has become known for shrimp and grits (seen here) and a colorful vegetable risotto finished with truffle oil.





also creating weekly features comprised of 100 percent local ingredients that will vary with market availability.

At Gallery Restaurant, executive chef Tim Toohey and chef de cuisine J. Kelly Morrow bring their talents to a menu that's always inventive and evolving. Prior to cooking at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge locale, they each studied and cooked in kitchens around the world.

Unlike chefs at hotels who must adhere to menus devised by offsite managers, the pair have the freedom and flexibility to develop their own menus and to select the best locally available ingredients at the height of the season. Embracing change, they develop "adventure menus" for diners eager to sample a

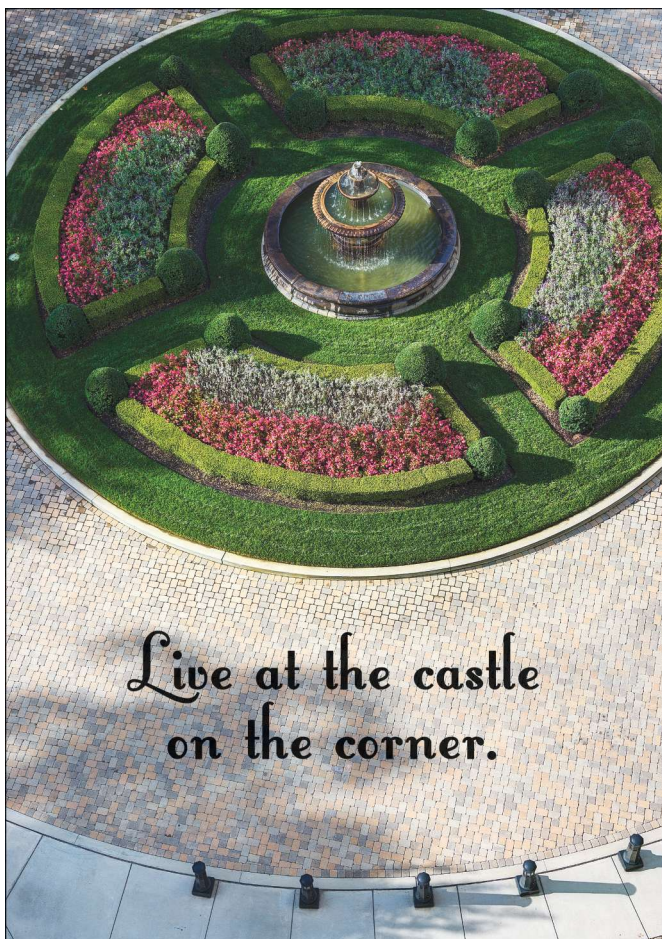


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Gallery Restaurant develops 'adventure menus' for diners eager to sample a four- to six-course tasting menu without knowing in advance what is planned.

four- to six-course tasting menu without knowing in advance what the chefs have planned. Certain to be a favorite this spring is a presentation of large sea scallops atop a seasonal salad of poached shrimp and lettuces, with an English pea sauce that's vibrant

**Above:** This dish of large sea scallops atop a seasonal salad of poached shrimp and lettuces is expected to be a spring favorite at Gallery.

**Left:** Chef de cuisine J. Kelly Morrow (pictured) and executive chef Tim Toohey have the freedom to craft their own menus.

in both color and flavor.

Meanwhile, wine is at the heart of Vine American Kitchen, but there's more to the restaurant's concept than the drink of the gods. The name is a tribute to the relationships that connect the farmers, growers and chefs who labor to bring high quality, regional foods to the table. This spring, in addition to Vine's ever

continued on page 73



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At Vine American Kitchen, there's more to the restaurant's concept than the drink of the gods.



Porcini-encrusted beef tenderloin is a spring attraction at Vine.





Vine chef Paul Cruz is known for his rotisserie-roasted meats as well as fresh seasonal vegetables and salads.

■ continued from page 70

popular rotisserie-roasted meats, executive chef Paul Cruz is serving a porcini-encrusted beef tenderloin with petite cippolini onions; a medley of roasted mushrooms; red, purple and gold fingerling potatoes; and black truffle jam.

Spring salads glisten with house-made white balsamic or Champagne vinaigrette dressings, seasonal pears and fresh berries, along with herbs sourced from Nise's in nearby Locust. A large, custom-built cuvenee chills and dispenses wine by the glass at the optimal serving temperature. The modern device also enables Vine to

offer a larger selection of wine than it otherwise could.

In contrast to Vine's slick cuvenee, the vaulted ceilings, burnished wood and white tablecloths of Arooji's Wine Room evokes a cozy, old-world style of dining. It began as a wine bar but ripened into a full-service Italian restaurant. Its menu embraces elements of Tuscan regional cookery as well as the Persian cuisine that honors the family heritage of owner Steve Arooji.

The popular shirazzi salad of chopped tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, onion, celery and herbs arrives dressed with tangy feta cheese, olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Another Persian dish

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is sambuce, a beef-and-cheese filled tortilla that's served with a pungent red chili-tomato sauce. This season head chef Hilario Almazo features light and colorful menu specialties, including a juicy sea bass —branzino, in Italian — served with an orange beurre blanc sauce, oven-crisped potatoes in cream and tender

baby carrots and asparagus in a balsamic reduction.

Nowhere is an awakening sense of taste more artfully expressed than in fine restaurant kitchens. That's where chefs bring forth inspired interpretations of their signature dishes and present us with new creations to savor throughout the season. 

**Left:** An Italian sea bass served with an orange beurre blanc sauce is a featured dish at Arooji's Wine Room.

**Below:** Head chef Hilario Almazo is known for light, colorful specialties.



Arooji's began as a wine bar but ripened into a full-service Italian restaurant. Its menu embraces elements of Tuscan regional cookery as well as Persian cuisine.





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## PURSES WITH POWER ATTRACTS HUNDREDS

Benefiting the Arthritis Foundation, the eighth annual Purses with Power Auction & Social was held at Mercedes-Benz of South Charlotte on Nov. 8.

"Charlotte Today" co-host Colleen Odegaard emceed the event, which included a chance to bid on purses filled with jewelry, offers for dinners and overnight stays and other items. Hundreds attended the event to raise funds for arthritis research, programs and education.

Photos by George Hendricks, Blackbox Studios



1. Savannah Lloyd, Debbie Fortnum, Ashley Edwards

2. Colleen Odegaard, Scott Hill

3. Jessica Jacks-Turkas, Anja Doyle, Julie Peace

4. Nance Smithwick, Kristy Hemsley

5. Pam Smith, Stephanie Bryant

6. Tyler Wallace, Mary Leigh Phillips, Jenny Smith

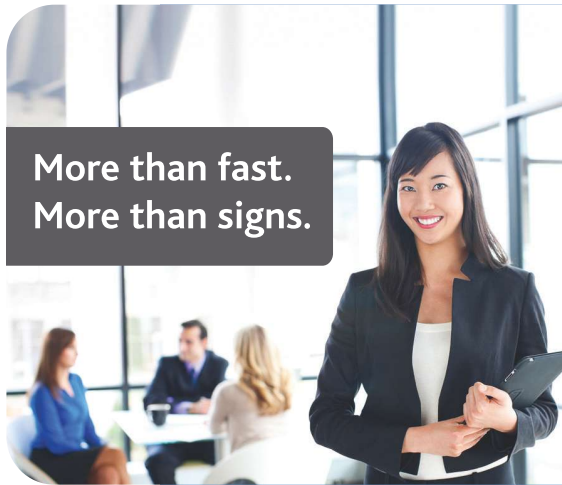
7. Karen Branan, Suzie Manofsky, Susan Ramsey, Laurie Brady

8. Jillian Willard, Morgan Matthews, Brianna Willard

9. Kelley Melchior, Kathleen Maryman, Keagan Maryman







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An aerial photograph of Ballantyne Corporate Park, showing several modern office buildings with glass facades and flat roofs. The buildings are surrounded by green lawns, trees, and parking areas. In the background, a residential neighborhood with houses and more trees is visible.

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## INSPIRE! SUPPORTS WELLNESS

The fifth annual Inspire! Ballantyne Gala was Dec. 6 at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Attendees enjoyed a silent auction, delicious food and great music. Proceeds from the event benefited the Morrison YMCA's Carolinas Cancer Wellness Program, a free fitness program for cancer survivors.

Photos by Hayley Brafford



1. Joe Benton, Brittne Brown
2. Becky Beaty, Randy Beaty, Chris Colcer, Al Colcer
3. Don Blossfeld, Christine Blossfeld, Mark Lombardi, Cynthia Lombardi, Marc Sansone, Cherie Sansone
4. Bryan English, Priscilla English
5. Plum Whitney, Dawn Newsome, Giordana Andretta
6. Jennifer Bowron, Lisa Yankie, Heather Deutschle, Rachel Drees
7. Keith Middleton, Sandy Middleton
8. Linda Lockman-Brooks, Wil Brooks
9. Tina Barclift, Ed Hyman
10. Jesse Cureton, Angela Cureton
11. Gena Dechant, Vonda Huss, Sandy Morgart, Beau Mazoway



# BALL BENEFITS ALLEGRO FOUNDATION

On Jan. 12, Felix Sabates' Mercedes-Benz of South Charlotte hosted the Ambassador's Ball with a "Spend an Evening in Barbados" theme. This year's special honoree was the Barbados ambassador to the U.S., John Beale.

The fourth annual Ambassador's Ball supports the Allegro Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping local children with disabilities.

Photos by Hayley Brafford



1. Kimberly Morgan, Tonya Black, Hanna Taylor, Rachel Pazdziorko, Jenny Williams, Chelsea Rehak, Dara Creswell, Lindsey Smith, Brittney Gallagher

2. Josh Wallace, Shana Wallace, Debbie Miller, Tim Black

3. Larry Sprinkle, Sarah Louise Head

4. Stefanie Bruno, Donnell Woolford

5. Farah Anne Friedrich, Larry Parks

6. Heidi Hourigan, Burke Cowley

7. Matt Ellis, Rhonda Ellis

8. Nick Trivisonno, John Beale, Henry Fraser, Suzanne Pittenger, Robert Pittenger

9. Lisa Buckner, Shannon Buckner

10. Rick Hasty, Waverly Hasty

11. Donna de Molina, Alvaro de Molina





## APRIL

	1	2	3	4 gwn	5 gwn	6 gwn
7 gwn	8 nor	9 nor	10 nor	11 GWN 7:15	12 GWN 7:15	13 DUR 7:15
14 DUR 2:15	15 DUR 7:15	16 DUR 11:15	17 dur	18 dur	19 GWN 7:15	20 GWN 7:15
21 gwn	22 gwn	23 NOR 7:15	24 NOR 11:15	25 NOR 7:15	26 NOR 7:15	27 SWB 7:15
28 SWB 2:15	29 SWB 7:15	30 SWB 7:15				

HOME

away



FIREWORKS

## MAY

			1 off	2 tol	3 tol	4 tol
5 tol	6 col	7 col	8 col	9 col	10 PAW 7:15	11 PAW 7:15
12 PAW 2:15	13 PAW 7:15	14 LOU 7:15	15 LOU 7:15	16 LOU 7:15	17 LOU 7:15	18 buf
19 buf	20 buf	21 buf	22 off	23 roc	24 roc	25 roc
26 roc	27 TOL 7:15	28 TOL 7:15	29 TOL 7:15	30 TOL 7:15	31 ROC 7:15	

## JUNE

							1 ROC 7:15
2 ROC 2:15	3 ROC 7:15	4 paw	5 paw	6 paw	7 paw	8 lhv	
9 lhv	10 lhv	11 lhv	12 off	13 COL 7:15	14 COL 7:15	15 COL 7:15	
16 COL 2:15	17 SYR 7:15	18 SYR 7:15	19 SYR 12:15	20 SYR 7:15	21 ind	22 ind	
23 ind	24 ind	25 lou	26 lou	27 lou	28 lou	29 BUF 7:15	
30 BUF 2:15							

## JULY

	1 BUF 7:15	2 BUF 7:15	3 DUR 7:15	4 gwn	5 gwn	6 NOR 7:15
7 NOR 2:15	8 DUR 7:15	9 DUR 7:15	10 dur	11 dur	12 nor	13 nor
14 nor	ALL-STAR BREAK			18 NOR 7:15	19 NOR 7:15	20 nor
21 nor	22 IND 7:15	23 IND 7:15	24 IND 7:15	25 IND 7:15	26 GWN 7:15	27 GWN 7:15
28 GWN 2:15	29 GWN 12:15	30 off	31 gwn			

## AUGUST

			1 gwn	2 gwn	3 nor	
4 nor	5 LHV 7:15	6 LHV 7:15	7 LHV 7:15	8 LHV 7:15	9 dur	10 dur
11 dur	12 off	13 swb	14 swb	15 swb	16 swb	17 DUR 7:15
18 DUR 2:15	19 DUR 7:15	20 dur	21 dur	22 syr	23 syr	24 syr
25 syr	26 dur	27 dur	28 NOR 7:15	29 NOR 7:15	30 NOR 7:15	31 GWN 7:15

## SEPTEMBER

1 GWN 7:15	2 GWN 2:15	3	4	5	6	7
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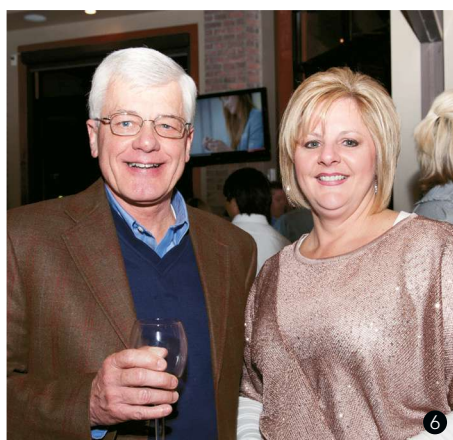
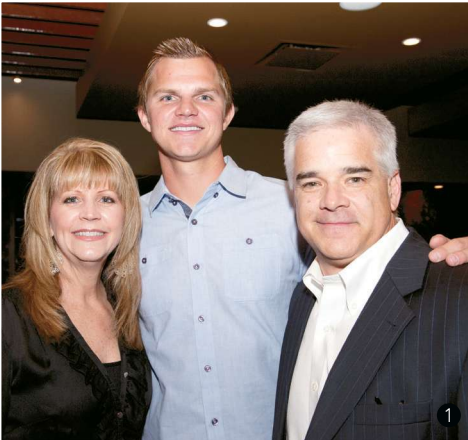
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## VINE HEATS UP DINING SCENE

Vine American Kitchen held its grand opening on Nov. 30. Guests enjoyed sampling many of the restaurant's signature items. Created and owned by seasoned restaurant executive and local resident, Bill Freeman, Vine features American cuisine, an extensive wine selection and private-event options.

Photos by Hayley Brafford



1. Karrie Freeman, Jimmy Clausen, Bill Freeman
2. Bob Holmes, Claire Holmes, Caryn Johnson, Will Johnson
3. Michael D'Agata, Patti D'Agata, Lisa Owen, Bruce Hensley, Jill Hensley
4. Jessica Prillaman, Larken Egleston
5. Suellen Skach, Glenda Seligman, Joe Gaven, Deborah Marks
6. Larry Huelsman, Janet Morgan
7. Debbie Ricks, Collin Ricks
8. Joe Gaven, Craig Utt, Tom Stroozas, Debbie Stroozas, Steve Grist





The torii, or "gate to heaven," appears at the entrance to the Japanese area at the popular Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Photo courtesy of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens

The Vulcan Park and Museum is home to the world's largest cast-iron statue, depicting the Roman god of the forge.

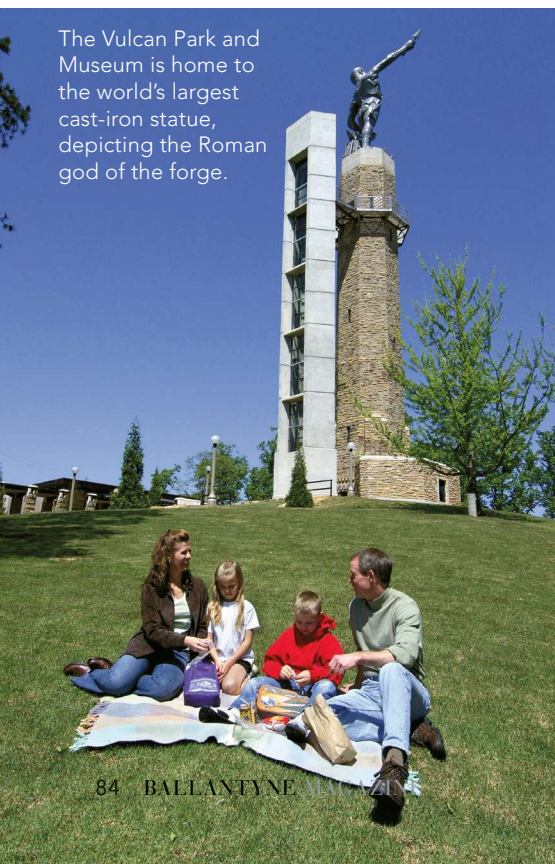


Photo courtesy of Vulcan Park and Museum ©2014 Rob Lagerstrom

# Star-Kissed







Beard award-winning chef Chris Hastings serves fresh seafood true to his restaurant's name, the Hot & Hot Fish Club.

Photo courtesy of Hot & Hot Fish Club

## ALABAMA CITY OFFERS DIVERSE PLEASURES, TOP CHEFS

By Nan Bauroth



Located at the base of the Appalachian foothills, Birmingham was once called "The Magic City."

# Birmingham



Robert Trent Jones designed the course called Ross Bridge. Pictured is hole No. 17.

© Photo courtesy of Michael Clemmer

Judging by its attractions, when stars fell on Alabama, a whole galaxy landed in Birmingham. Known to insiders as "B'Ham" or "The Ham," this is a city home to the James Beard Foundation's 2012 Best Chef of the South, a renowned art museum and botanical gardens free to the public, the world's largest vintage motorcycle museum and a cemetery where caretakers got so tired of giving directions to the final resting place of Coach "Bear" Bryant that they painted crimson stripes leading to his grave.

One reason Birmingham is on people's radar this year is the city's "Fifty Years Forward" commemoration of its roots in the civil rights struggle, an event propelled by the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church.

A starting point for visitors is the Birmingham Civil





Photo courtesy of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

Visitors to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute learn the city's pivotal role in one of the nation's biggest struggles.

“Birmingham is pretty much a microcosm of our country today with collaboration between the black and white communities.”

— the Rev. Arthur Price Jr., 16th Street Baptist Church



**Above:** In downtown Birmingham, the Cajun peanuts at this historic venue are a big hit.

**Right:** The Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame showcases the many top performers who have impacted the state's jazz scene.



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame





Photo courtesy of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute captures the imagination of all ages.

Rights Institute near the church and across from Kelly Ingram Park, where protests took place. Visitors can also attend worship services at the church or take a tour by appointment. "Birmingham is pretty much a microcosm of our country today with collaboration between the black and white communities," notes the current pastor, the Rev. Arthur Price Jr.

### All That Jazz

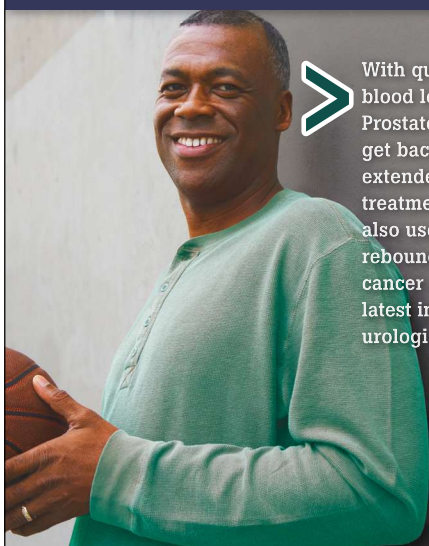
Downtown (also known as Northside), the joint gets jumpin' at the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame, where exhibits celebrate greats from W. C. Handy to Lionel Hampton. A personally guided tour by Dr. Frank Adams, who shares

anecdotes and plays his own horn, can be arranged by appointment.

Next up is The Alabama Theatre, a splendrous Art Deco movie palace, refurbished with its Mighty Wurlitzer organ on stage. Once host to the largest Mickey Mouse Club in the world, the theatre today holds film festivals and concerts by big-name artists.

While in the neighborhood, grab a bag of Cajun peanuts at the historic Peanut Depot, then head several blocks north to the Birmingham Museum of Art, noted in the Southeast for its special exhibits. Visitors love to guess the current "Mystery Object" and lunch at Oscar's Café, one of the Greenes' favorite spots.

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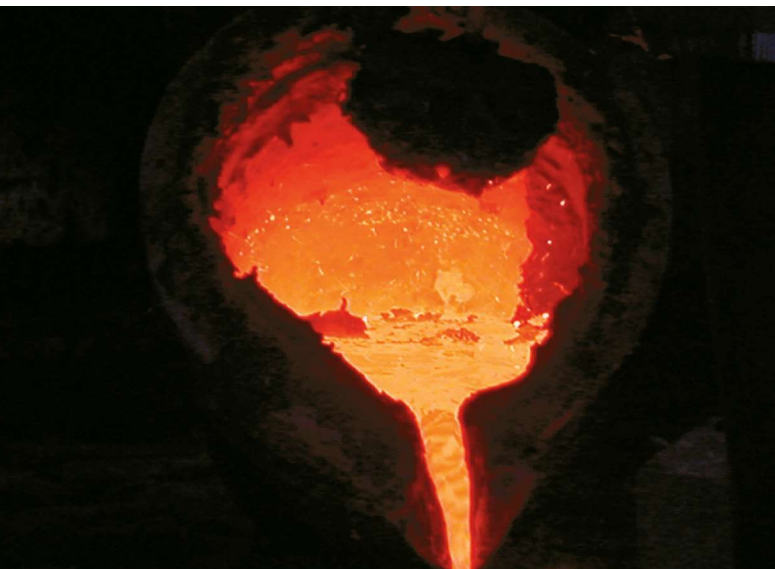
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**Left:** Sloss Furnaces Museum makes a work of art based on a visitor's sandstone design.

**Below:** The equipment yard at Sloss speaks to the city's rich manufacturing history.



The city has preserved its legacy of steel and iron making at Sloss Furnaces Museum, a massive industrial complex dating to the 1920s.



The statue at the Vulcan Park and Museum overlooks the city of Birmingham.



## Iron-Age Attractions

Birmingham is the only place in the world that possesses the three natural elements to make steel — coal, iron ore and limestone. The city has preserved its legacy of steel and iron making at Sloss Furnaces Museum, a massive industrial complex dating to the 1920s. There is a guided tour, and those who call ahead can design a piece in sandstone and watch steel pourers turn it into a work of art. For sheer fun, the Greenses recommend Sloss Furnaces' "Stokin' the Fire," the largest amateur barbecue competition and music festival in the Southeast, held every fall.

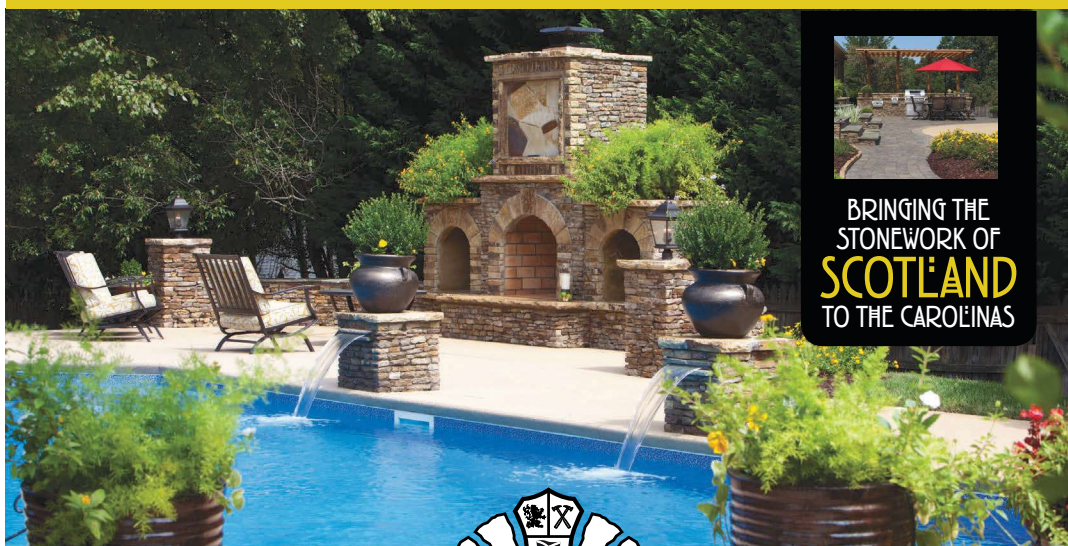
Another noted city landmark, Vulcan Park and Museum, houses the biggest cast iron statue in the world. Climb the 129 steps or ride the elevator to the top of this colossal monument to the Roman god of the forge for an unparalleled view of Birmingham and surrounds.

## Epic Mountain Biking

Many first-time visitors to Birmingham are surprised at the hilly terrain, which makes for superb mountain biking. At Oak Mountain State Park just outside of town, the Double Oak Loop Trail (known to locals as The Red Trail) was recently designated by the International Mountain Biking Association as one of its 50 EPIC Mountain Bike Rides in the world. Note: The trek can take up to three hours, so novices or families with children should opt for the Lake Trail.

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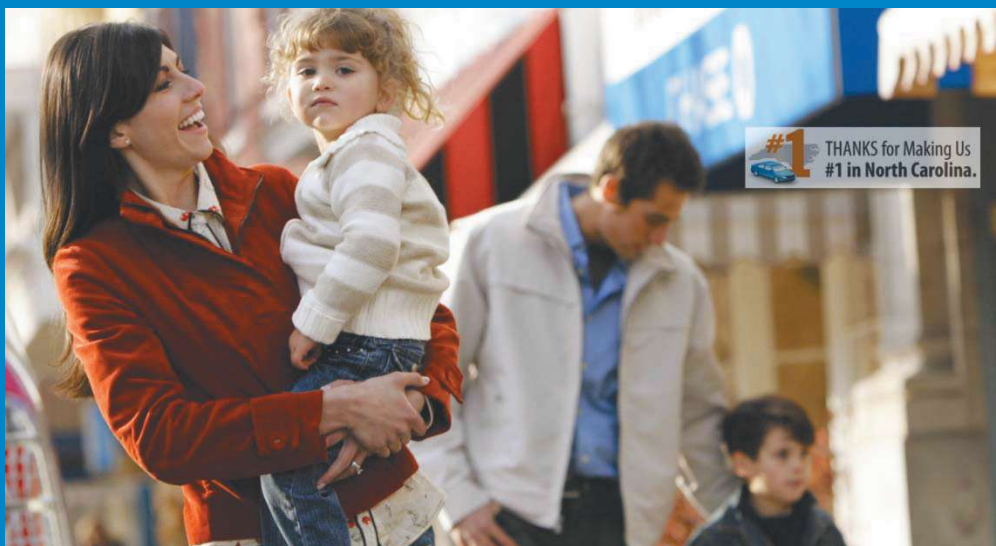
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Photo courtesy of Hot &amp; Hot Fish Club

Birmingham has become a haunt for original cuisine some dub “Cal-Abama,” a mélange of down-home Southern cooking married to California farm-to-table.



Photo courtesy of Hot &amp; Hot Fish Club

**Top:** Fresh local ingredients are a staple of the Hot & Hot Fish Club, one of Birmingham’s culinary treasures.

**Above:** The restaurant doesn’t just serve up flavorful fish. Check out the chicken trio.

**Right:** A large arrangement on the bar at the Hot & Hot Fish Club pays homage to the Deep South’s historical crop, cotton.



Photo courtesy of Hot &amp; Hot Fish Club



challenging hillsides at Oxmoor Valley and Ross Bridge, two of 11 courses on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail that crisscrosses the state. The newer, top-rated Zagat course at Ross Bridge features a waterfall that drops 80 feet between the ninth and 18th holes.

During spring, nature lovers get their floral fix at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. More than 350,000 people a year meander through 25 collection gardens and miles of serene paths. The Wildflower Garden is especially spectacular this time of year.

### Foodie Mecca

Birmingham also has become a haunt for original cuisine some dub “Cal-Abama,” a mélange of down-home Southern cooking married to California farm-to-table.

The four-star list begins with the Hot & Hot Fish Club, where chef and co-owner Chris Hastings, winner of the Beard honor, works his magic mixing indigenous ingredients like cornmeal and moonshine with fresh seafood and local game (be sure to buy a bottle of his amazing herb salt).

The Highlands, run by his mentor, Frank Stitt, is another must-stop on the foodie tour. Other intriguing eateries include The Little Donkey, where Mexican cuisine is done with a Southern drawl, while every May brings the annual Crawfish Boil, a jam-packed food and indie rock festival sponsored by eye surgeon

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## BALLANTYNE | going home

Dr. Jack Scheaffer to raise money for children with cancer.


In the view of the Greenes, Birmingham truly is Sweet Home Alabama, offering many interesting attractions but retaining a small-town feel. They dub it “a collection of neighborhoods where everyone knows everyone else.” 



Photo by Hayley Bradford

Todd and Geneva Greene and their sons.

### THE GREENES' PICKS & TIPS

Todd Greene moved to Birmingham when he was nine and lived there for 21 years. Geneva Greene is a native who grew up in Irondale and Cahaba Heights. Both attended the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Todd is a founding partner of Brader Greene, a CPA firm located in The Fountains at Ardrey Kell that focuses on small to medium-sized businesses. Geneva is human resources coordinator for Bonsal American, a manufacturer of packaged building materials. They have three sons, two loyal to Alabama's Crimson Tide and the other to the Auburn Tigers.

#### Driving:

Take I-85 to I-20, but hit Atlanta after 8 p.m. to make it in six and a half hours (Birmingham is on CST).

#### Hotels:

Family friendly: The Sheraton Downtown.

Historic: The Tutwiler.

Splurge: Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort and Spa.

#### 'In' Places:

Download the convention and tourist bureau's "IN Guide" for top picks by locals.

#### Music:

Parkside, Zydeco or Saw's Juke Joint (Taylor Hicks' new music/barbecue eatery).

#### Dining:

Surin West for sushi.

Dreamland for ribs.

The Golden Rule for pork barbecue.

#### Breweries:

Good People, order the Snake Handler.

#### Kid Fun:

The Birmingham Zoo, followed by hot dogs at Sneaky Pete's.

#### Mementos:

Bottles of Ollie's BBQ Sauce, sold at grocery stores.

#### Cravings:

Cream Cheese Meltaways at Savage's Bakery, a Birmingham original.

**Tips:** Manners are a must!






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# Transfer Training

Take your Game from the Range to the Course

By Nancy Harvey, LPGA Class A Teaching Professional, Master Instructor, Dana Rader Golf School

Photos by Ray Sepesy

TO PLAY GOLF SUCCESSFULLY INVOLVES MORE than just knowing what is wrong and how to fix it. Three essentials to good play are ball control, decision-making and self-management. One way to boost all three, particularly your ball control, is to practice specific skills and then transfer them to the golf course.

During such transfer training, players mentally begin attaching a new movement to new feelings they have internalized during a lesson. By attending more to ball flight and strategy, focusing less on technical positions, a player can finally begin to own their golf swing.

The following pictures illustrate two ways to transfer your skills to the golf course. In the full-swing exercise (A), view specific targets and their yardages. Rotate between targets and the correct club selection, assessing your actual skill to hit the targets.

In short-game practice (B), challenge yourself with course-like conditions. Using only one ball, assess your chipping, pitching and putting. Play holes as if you missed every green. Alternate chipping and pitching your ball from different

lies. After you pitch or chip, putt your ball in the hole. See how many total strokes it takes to get the ball in the hole. An up and down is two strokes.

Once you get the feel of your ability through these drills, transfer your skills to the course. From there, you can gauge whether you are making correct decisions and managing your attention and thoughts under playing conditions.

If you want to learn more about this tip or my golf performance program, contact me at [nharvey@danarader.com](mailto:nharvey@danarader.com) or call Dana Rader Golf School at 704-542-7635.

Check out the video version of this tip at [www.ballantynemagazine.com](http://www.ballantynemagazine.com) and [www.danarader.com](http://www.danarader.com).



Nancy Harvey

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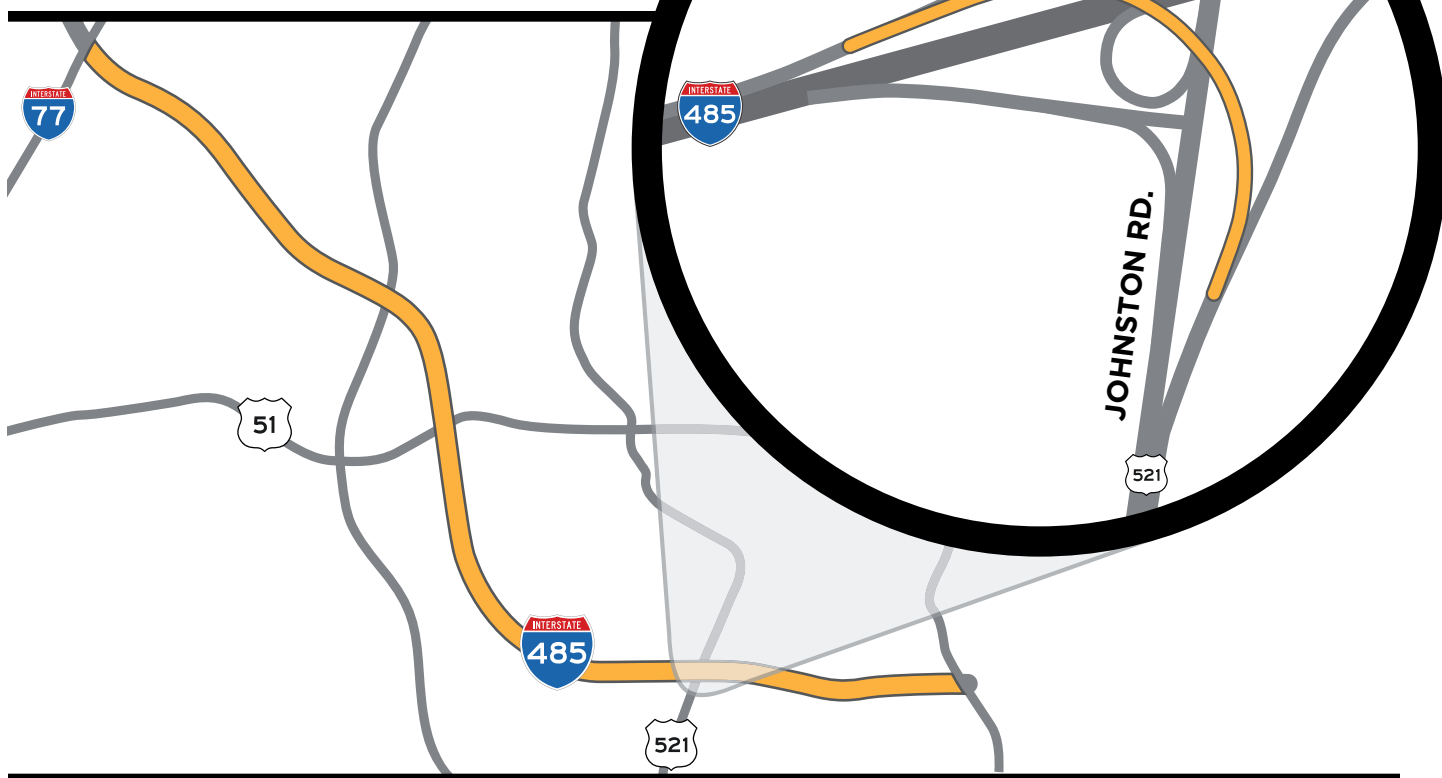
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# Finally!

## Widening of 485's Southern Leg to Start this Spring

By Nan Bauroth



THE LONG-ANTICIPATED WIDENING of the southern leg of I-485 is beginning this spring.

### Construction Scope

The project consists of adding one inside lane in each direction from I-77 to Rea Road, widening existing bridges along the project route and resurfacing the roadway, as well as building a flyover from U.S. 521 North (Johnston Road) to I-485 West. The flyover will begin at the existing I-485 East on ramp near John J. Delaney Drive, with one lane splitting to the left leading to I-485 West.

In addition, to enhance traffic flow and safety, an auxiliary lane to the outside shoulder of westbound I-485 between U.S. 521 and N.C. 51 (Pineville-Matthews Road) will be built so that motorists who only want to travel from one to the next will no longer need to merge into the general purpose lanes to make that transition.

### Timeline


Construction is anticipated to begin later this spring, with the contractor now proposing completion by December 2014 instead

of November 2016. Jen Thompson, communications officer for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, says lane construction must adhere to time restrictions in the contract. The restrictions outline when lane closures are permitted and take into account holidays and special events.

### Traffic Updates

Commuters can stay in the loop on construction progress, including information about current detours and closures, by visiting the project page at [www.ncdot.gov/projects/CharlotteOuterLoop](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/CharlotteOuterLoop) or signing up on Twitter for updates at [www.ncdot.gov/travel/twitter](http://www.ncdot.gov/travel/twitter) (tweets will generally go to the department's NCDOT and Charlotte feeds).

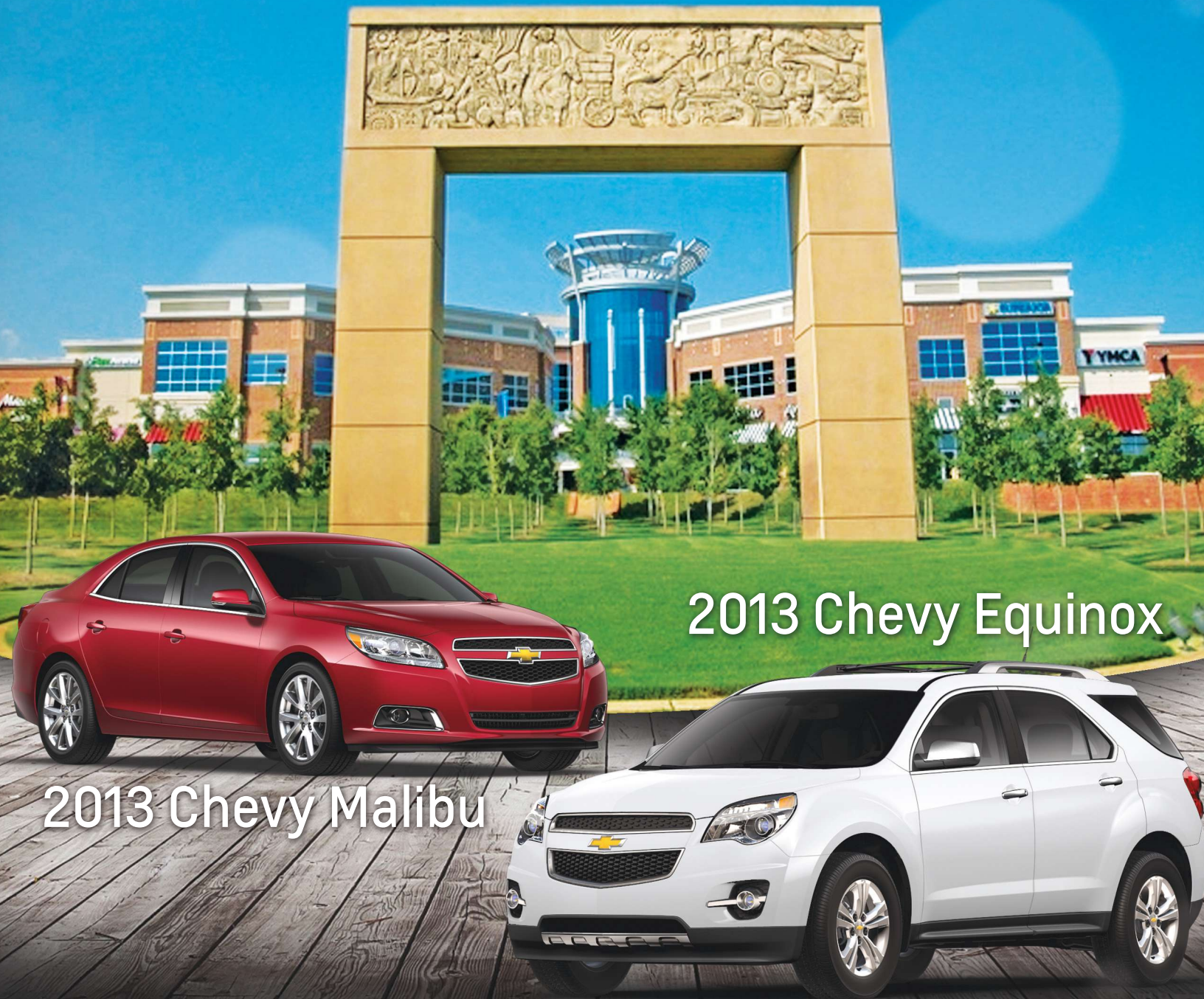
Thompson also notes that drivers can always call 511 to access information on traffic updates for the I-485 corridor or any other road in Mecklenburg County.

For updates on road construction in Ballantyne Corporate Park, check [www.go-ballantyne.com](http://www.go-ballantyne.com) or visit [www.cdor.charmeck.org](http://www.cdor.charmeck.org) and click on the "Construction" link. 



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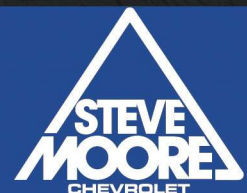
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