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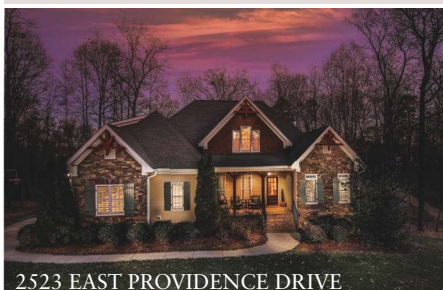
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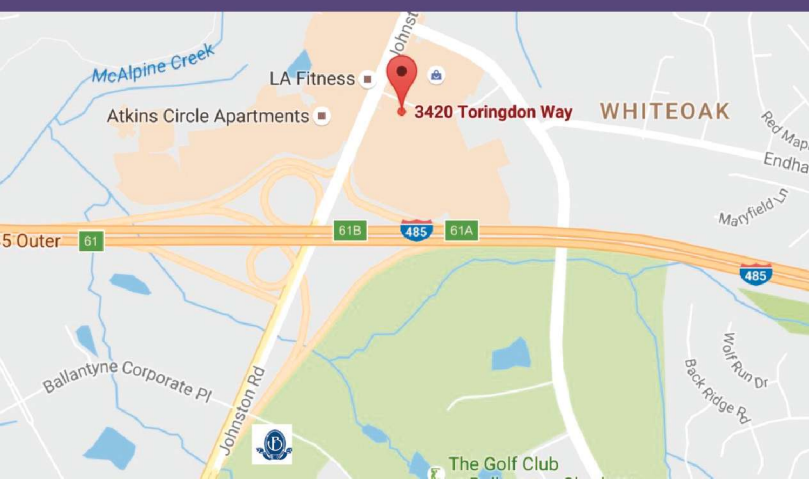


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SPRING 2017

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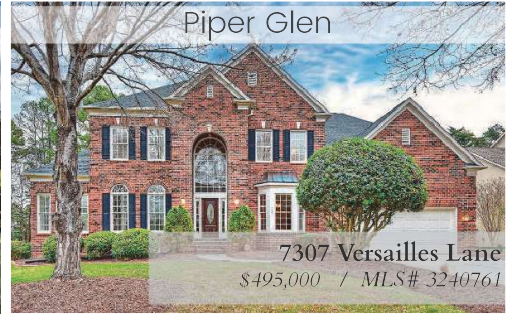
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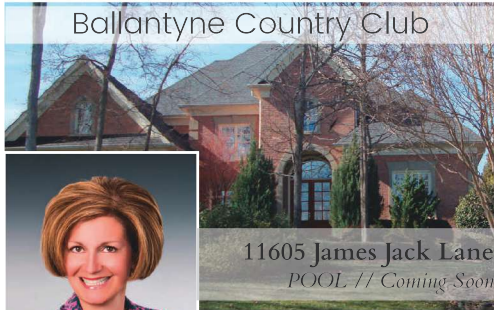


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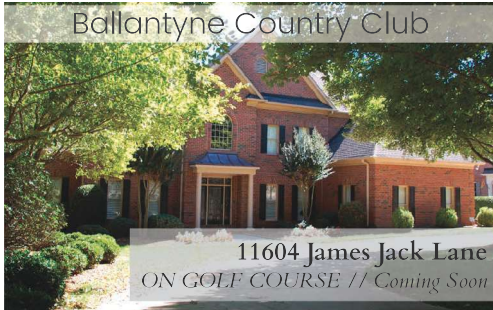
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## BEHIND THE SCENES

### Our Featured Contributors Reflect on Spring in Ballantyne



**Nan Bauroth**

A graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Nan Bauroth has been published in more than 30 magazines and websites. "To me, spring is synonymous with the resurrection of life, including in my garden in Ballantyne," she says. "This year I am trying something new — a temporary raised bed for my tomatoes."



**Whitley Adkins Hamlin**

Wardrobe stylist, tastemaker and personal shopper Whitley Adkins Hamlin has fond memories of a late-spring stay with girlfriends at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. "We spent the most fantastic 24 hours at the hotel — sunning, bathing, spa-ing and drinking tasty beverages by the pool," she says. "What a treat to have such a nice resort in our own backyard."



**Mark Hanson**

Based in Charlotte and New York, Mark Hanson is a filmmaker and fashion and lifestyle photographer, who has been shooting professionally since the age of 16. His clients include Wrangler, Lowe's Home Improvement, Meineke, Moen and Britax. "My favorite thing to do in Ballantyne during the spring is to sit outside and have dinner at one of Ballantyne's many restaurants," he says.

**BALLANTYNE**  
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Spring 2017 Vol. 17, No. 1

### On the Cover



Olivia Pires models a playful spring look at Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne. Photo by Mark Hanson.

### What inventive thinking and expression are taking place in Ballantyne? Let us know!

Show  
Us Your  
**Creative  
Spark!**

With help from Matt Olin and the CreativeMornings/CLT team — committed to showcasing Charlotte's creative thinkers, makers and doers on a global level — we have a new Ballantyne feature called "Creative Spark!" See our first one on page 96 and think about submitting your entry.

From fine arts to education and creative business practices, we'd like to consider it all. Send a brief description (50 words or fewer) about your project or idea and any accompanying photos or imagery to Jodi at [jgreenwald@ballantynemagazine.com](mailto:jgreenwald@ballantynemagazine.com).



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# Letter-Perfect

## Messages from the Heart Transcend

*"May you know what it means to love unconditionally and with all your heart, and may all this love you have to give be returned to you tenfold."*

— Lynn Werner (Jodi's mom)



Eight years ago when I became a mother, my mom wrote me a handwritten letter. In it she expressed her hopes and dreams for me as I entered this new chapter of my life. "May you know what it means to love unconditionally and with all your heart, and may all this love you have to give be returned to you tenfold," she wrote.

Unfortunately, my mom passed away three years ago from breast cancer. Therefore, when my sister became a mother this winter, my mom wasn't here to write her a letter. Luckily, my mom was a believer in equal parenting. I knew, if she were alive, she would have written a similar letter to my sister.

So, with a little Photoshop help from an amazing person in our office (that's you, Kat Carter!), I was able to transform my letter into one that had been "written" for my sister. When I presented it to her the first time I met my new niece, the letter brought us both to tears. It was as if our mom had communicated with her from beyond the living.

Ashley Davis discusses this transcendent power of letter writing in our new Creative Spark feature on page 96. In his new book, "A Life through Letters" (which he penned here in Ballantyne), Davis shares his father's story by curating his dad's letters.

Each issue in Creative Spark we will highlight innovators, entrepreneurs and artists who enrich the Ballantyne

community and beyond. Want to share your creative projects with our readers? Send an email to me at [jgreenwald@ballantynemagazine.com](mailto:jgreenwald@ballantynemagazine.com) so that we may consider them for the magazine.

As we enter the spring season, I am excited to share with you the magazine's newly refreshed design. Our goal was to give the text and imagery more breathability, and we think SPARK Publications nailed it. Throughout this issue, you will notice increased margin sizes and white space and other small changes to emphasize the magazine's most significant elements. May this new design serve as a subtle reminder to us all to make ample room in our lives for what's most important.

While my mom is no longer here in person to continue sharing this parenting journey with me and my sister, her letter and many of her other legacies remain.

Perhaps, taking a cue from my mom and Ashley Davis, you will pick up a pen today and write a special message to someone you love. It doesn't have to be fancy. A simple, sweet message will do.

Trust me, it will be cherished.

*Jodi*

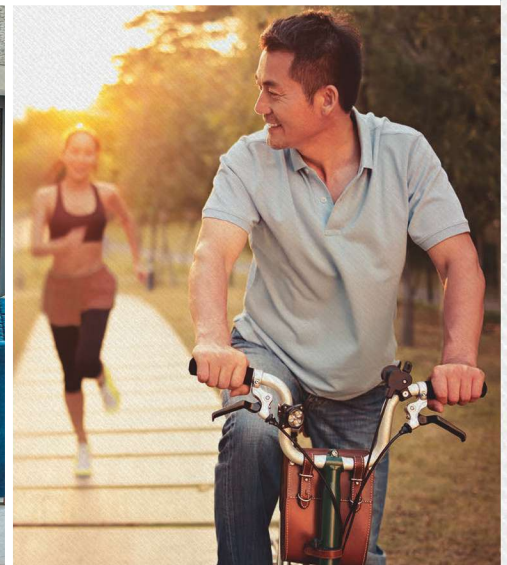
Jodi Werner Greenwald  
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# At a Glance

What's happening in and around Ballantyne



## Morrison Family YMCA Hosts Spring Events

The 13th Annual Run! Ballantyne race will take place on Saturday, May 20, in Ballantyne Corporate Park. The event supports the YMCA Annual Campaign, which provides opportunities for children and families to participate in youth sports, summer camp, preschool, afterschool and other programs.

The 8K will start at 7:30 a.m., the 5K at 7:45 a.m. and the 1-Mile Fun Run at 9:15 a.m. Accompanying the events are food trucks, prize giveaways, music, kids' activities and games.

Register at [www.runballantyne.racesonline.com](http://www.runballantyne.racesonline.com); early bird pricing ends May 6.

The Y will also stage its 16th annual charity golf tournament on Monday, June 5, at Ballantyne Country Club. The tournament benefits the Y Readers program and youth literacy. Tournament details: [jessica.lindberg@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:jessica.lindberg@ymcacharlotte.org).

The 8th Annual Tri! Ballantyne on Saturday, July 15, marks the return of the outdoor triathlon for the adult division. Adults and kids ages 10 and older can participate individually or as a relay team. Info and registration: <http://www.ymcacharlotte.org/events.aspx>.

# News Clues

## Events, activities and more

### Summer Camp Opportunities



Photos courtesy of Anne Springs Close Greenway

#### Anne Springs Close Greenway:

Parents of children ages 3 to 18 can register online for more than 50 summer camps at Anne Springs Close Greenway in Fort Mill. Options include the popular "Adventure Seekers" outdoor day camp as well as specialty indoor and outdoor camps teaching everything from photography to mountain biking to rocket science. Details: [www.ascgreenway.org](http://www.ascgreenway.org).

**Morrison Family YMCA:** Indoor and outdoor, age-appropriate summer day camps range from sports to arts to themed activities, all focused on the achievement of friendship, accomplishment and belonging. Register at <http://www.ymcacharlotte.org/camps/day-camp.aspx>.

**Sports Connection:** The Ballantyne location provides a choice of indoor summer camps for children, including Super Terrific Fun Camp that offers participants all the games and activities available at the facility, as well as a half-day option and Counselor-in-Training Camp. Details: 704-583-1444.



### Gallery Stages 'Transitions for Spring'

Charlotte Fine Art Gallery in Carmel Village Shoppes is staging its "Transitions for Spring" exhibit through Saturday, April 1. The display features pottery and paintings in spring shades of green, captured by artists represented by the gallery. Details: [www.charlottefineart.com](http://www.charlottefineart.com).

### Breakfast Club Holds Spring Meeting

The Ballantyne Breakfast Club will hold an April meeting to discuss changes in the area and future growth. The date of the meeting will be posted at the group's website.

Free and open to the public, the club's meetings are at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. Complimentary coffee and refreshments start at 8 a.m. Info: Ray Eschert at 704-651-1237 or [www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com](http://www.ballantynebreakfastclub.com).

### Museum Features Ballantyne Artist



"Charlotte's Road to Revolution" is an exhibit at The Charlotte Museum of History that tells the story of the Piedmont backcountry's role in the founding of the country. It includes 17 oil and acrylic paintings by Charlotte native and Ballantyne resident Dan Nance.

The exhibit continues through June. Details: [www.charlottemuseum.org](http://www.charlottemuseum.org).

### Corporate Park Sponsors Events



Participate in National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 5, from noon to 1 p.m. at Brixham Tent in Ballantyne Corporate Park (BCP). A warm-up with YMCA trainers begins at 11:30 a.m.

BCP will stage its annual Earth Day community event on Thursday, April 20, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Brixham Tent. The event features music, food trucks, giveaways and more than 40 local vendors showcasing their sustainable efforts or green products. Free, secure shredding and e-cycling start at 7 a.m. Contact [activities@bissellcompanies.com](mailto:activities@bissellcompanies.com) to learn more about vendor opportunities.

The corporate park will hold a BCP Social Hour with drink specials, music and mingling at Brixham Tent on Thursday, May 4, from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Enjoy a free yoga class compliments of BCP at Sara's YMCA on Thursday, May 11, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Knotts Green.



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# Spring Forward

## The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge

Enjoy a wide range of activities and events this spring at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. Reservations are required for food and beverage events. Call 704-248-4100 to save your spot.



### Special Teas

- **Very British Tea, March 8-11**
- **Easter Tea, April 12-15**
- **Mother's Day Tea, May 10-13**  
Cost: \$45 adults,  
\$25 children, ages 5-12

### Spring Brunches

Celebrate with an elaborate buffet on Easter, April 16, and Mother's Day, May 14, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$85 per person; \$35 for children, ages 5-12, and complimentary for children ages 4 and under (tax and 23 percent service charge extra).



### Whiskey Club

The Whiskey Club of Ballantyne will explore the nuances of whiskies in Gallery Restaurant on Fridays from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monthly events include: "Utah's Whiskey History" on March 21, "Become a Master Bourbon Blender with Woodford Reserve" on April 28 and a virtual reality "Untamed Islay Experience" on May 26. Cost: \$65 per person. (includes small plates).

### Tastings

Gallery Restaurant will offer monthly tastings on Fridays at 6:30 p.m. with complementing small plates. Enjoy "A Toast to St. Patrick" on March 17. Cost: \$50 per person.

### Afternoon Tea

Tea is served Wednesday through Saturday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. year-round. Cost: \$40 for adults, \$20 for children, ages 5-12.



### The Golf Club at Ballantyne

To participate in special offers listed below, mention them when reserving tee times at 704-248-4383.

**Mother's Day:** On May 14, moms play free with one paid round of golf at the daily rate.

**Armed Forces Week:** The Golf Club at Ballantyne offers half off the regular golf rate May 20-27. Golfers must present military identification upon arrival.



### St. Patrick's Day

Celebrate at Gallery Restaurant with **corned beef, smoked butter potatoes, braised cabbage and Irish porter cake for dessert.** Gallery Bar will have **dessert and drink specials.** Gallery Restaurant's Tasting that evening will feature "A Toast to St. Patrick" at \$50 per person.



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# Biz Buzz

## Company news and announcements



### ① Radiology Video Wins Regional Emmy

Greyhawk Films won a regional Emmy for its public service video, "Charlotte Radiology: Screening Saves," from the Nashville/MidSouth Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

The five-minute video features the experiences of 14 women whose lives were saved by early cancer detection because of screening mammography. The video has been viewed on YouTube and distributed across the country by Charlotte Radiology — which has a Ballantyne office — to breast cancer awareness groups and physicians. Details: [www.charlotteradiology.com](http://www.charlotteradiology.com).

### ② RadixBay Wins Tech Award

RadixBay, an IT consulting firm headquartered in Ballantyne Corporate Park, won the 2016 Corporate Impact Award at the NC Tech Awards, North Carolina's only statewide technology awards program. Info: [www.radixbay.com](http://www.radixbay.com).

attended the event, which featured restaurant samples, information and giveaways from corporate sponsors. Tickets will be on sale at Morrison Family Y in advance for \$10, as well as online and at the event. Info: [www.charlottechamber.com/ballantynechapter.com](http://www.charlottechamber.com/ballantynechapter.com).

### ③ Business Bash Celebrates 10th Year

The annual Ballantyne Business Bash is celebrating its 10th anniversary on Thursday, June 1, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Ballantyne Corporate Park at Brixham Tent. Last year more than 500 people

### ④ Staybridge Suites Completes Renovation

Staybridge Suites Charlotte Ballantyne has unveiled an extensive renovation that upgraded all guest suites with new furniture, drapes, linens, stainless steel appliances and carpet. The hotel also has new carpeting and lighting in hallways. Info: [www.staybridgeballantyne.com](http://www.staybridgeballantyne.com).



Tim Haley



Gaurang Gala



Maria Kramer



Angel Neelands

## Local Bank Welcomes New Personnel

Carolina Premier Bank, headquartered in Ballantyne, recently welcomed two new Small Business Administration development officers. Tim Haley will cover the Charlotte market, and Gaurang "Greg" Gala will focus on the Raleigh area. In addition, Maria Kramer has joined the bank as a deposit business development officer, and Angel Neelands has been hired as Rock Hill branch manager. Info: [www.carolinapremierbank.com](http://www.carolinapremierbank.com).



## Home Lender Chooses Ballantyne

eLEND, a division of American Financial Resources Inc., has opened its first regional home mortgage office at 13850 Ballantyne Corporate Place, Suite 250. Brendan Carlson, regional sales manager, is responsible for daily operations. Info: [www.elend.com](http://www.elend.com).

## Local Chamber Hosts Luncheons

The Ballantyne Chapter of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce will hold Thursday luncheon meetings this

spring on March 2, April 6 and May 4 at Ballantyne Country Club. Luncheons are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register at [www.charlottechamber.com/events](http://www.charlottechamber.com/events). The fee is \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door subject to a wait list.

## Practice Relocates to Corporate Park

Southeast Psych recently moved its Blakeney office to 15720 Brixham Hill Avenue, Suite 150, in Ballantyne Corporate Park. Info: 704-970-4791 or [www.southeastpsych.com](http://www.southeastpsych.com).

## New Apartments Now Leasing



Solis Ballantyne, a new apartment complex located at 9550 Community Commons Lane (across from the Morrison Family Y) is now open. Amenities include a saltwater pool, two club rooms, a yoga room and fitness center. Solis offers a variety of floor plans that feature stainless steel appliances, wood-grain textured floors and granite countertops. Info: [www.solisballantyne.com](http://www.solisballantyne.com).



## Commercial Builder Opens Locally

Ohio-based Cleveland Construction Inc. has opened a regional office

at 14825 Ballantyne Village Way to support \$3 billion in construction projects planned in Charlotte. Currently, 14 employees work out of the Charlotte office, and the firm plans to hire 12 more people over the next six months, including a client development manager, project managers, superintendents and administrative support.

Over the last decade, Cleveland Construction has completed \$150 million in Charlotte projects, including the Hyatt Place Hotel uptown. Info: [www.clevelandconstruction.com](http://www.clevelandconstruction.com).

## BCC Offers Corporate Memberships



Ballantyne Country Club (BCC), which celebrated 20 years in 2016, is now offering corporate memberships. The club features a golf course designed by Rees Jones, an award-winning junior golf program, a clay court tennis facility and an aquatics program, which includes adult lap swimming.

To learn more about corporate memberships, you may attend an open house and tour provided by the club this spring. Info: Emily Burgholzer, director of sales, 704-544-1404, ext. 401.



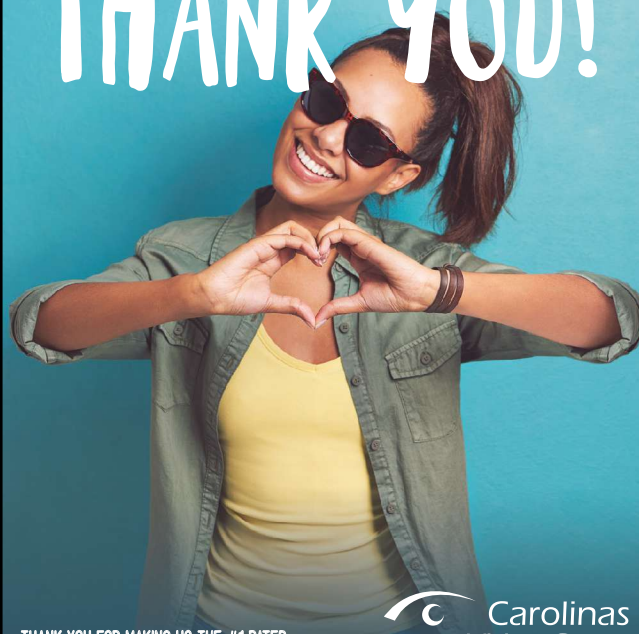
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# Career Close-up

## Celebrating kudos and opportunities

### Bissell Hires Moore for Digital Role



Kelsea Moore

Kelsea Moore has joined Bissell to manage all digital communications for Ballantyne Corporate Park, including a dedicated community website for tenants, [www.goballantyne.com](http://www.goballantyne.com). Prior to joining Bissell, Moore worked at the YMCA as electronic marketing coordinator.

### Executive Chef Joins Hotel & Lodge

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge wel-



Kennardo Holder

Ritz-Carlton New York, Westchester.

comes Executive Chef Kennardo Holder, who has nearly 17 years of experience working at Ritz-Carlton properties, most recently as executive chef at The

### Olin Addresses Networking Group

Ballantyne Briefings, a local networking group, will meet Tuesday, April 25, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Aloft Charlotte Ballantyne. Matt Olin, host of CreativeMornings/CLT will discuss "The Power of Connections." Details:

Allen Starrett [ars@starrettlawfirm.com](mailto:ars@starrettlawfirm.com) or [www.fb.me/ballantynebriefings](http://www.fb.me/ballantynebriefings).

### Allen Tate Co. Adds Associates



Heath Franklin



Melissa York

Associates Heath Franklin and Melissa York have joined the Ballantyne office of Allen Tate Co. Contact them at 704-541-6200.

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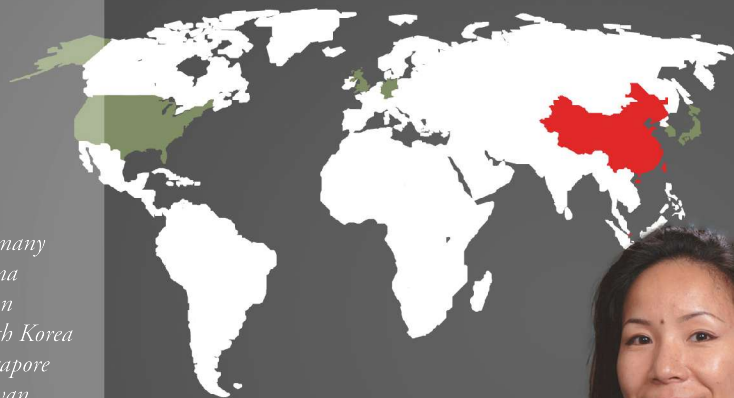
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# Younger Set

## Spotlighting our kids



### ① Students Help Weave 'Time Capsule'

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of Elon Park Elementary, students have collaborated with Victoria Sowers of Sandy Creek Weavers in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, to produce a Fabric Time Capsule.

Two 9-foot-long weavings/tapestries have been created on a 300-year-old loom, with each child weaving into the capsule a special item representing his or her interests and talents. The project — funded by the Arts and Science Council and the school's PTO — will be displayed at the school.

### ② Pradhan Installs PC Labs in Nepal

Ardrey Kell High sophomore Avideep Pradhan and his father, Abin Pradhan,

a native of Nepal, recently partnered to supply computers and an interactive digital curriculum to technologically disadvantaged elementary and middle school students in Kathmandu.

Avideep funded his project, "eBlackboard," with \$950 of his savings, which his father matched to purchase the equipment — which added back-up power supplies, monitors and keyboards to create a system that can run on solar power.

When Avideep and his family arrived in Nepal last summer, two nonprofits helped them install computer labs in a pair of schools.

Avideep and his father are now planning to install computer labs in five more schools in remote Nepal. Info and donations: [www.eblackboard.org](http://www.eblackboard.org).

### ③ Commander Makes Surprise School Visit

Navy Commander Bob Ramos and his



wife, Toni, recently surprised their children, Desmond and Vivian, when Bob returned from deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan, and appeared at a flag presentation ceremony at the children's school, Elon Park Elementary. Bob also used the occasion to ask Toni to marry him again.

### ④ TV Show Features Treehouse Library

The Omni Montessori School in Ballantyne was featured on Animal Planet's "Treehouse Masters" show in January to document the creation of the only known library treehouse on a school campus in the nation.

The Owl's Nest Treehouse, as the library is called, was a gift from a generous, longtime family of Omni Montessori School and built by Nelson Treehouse and Supply. Info: [www.omni-montessori.org](http://www.omni-montessori.org).



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# Openings

## New things to check out

### Breakfast Shop Now Serving



Rise Biscuits and Donuts has opened in the Ballantyne Town Center next to City Barbeque and Walgreens. Rise serves biscuits and donuts from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day, as well as locally roasted coffee, juices and milk. Biscuits feature fillings such as country ham, bacon, sausage, fried chicken, cheeses, eggs and fried eggplant "bacon." Details: [www.risebiscuitsdonuts.com](http://www.risebiscuitsdonuts.com).

### Pet Facility Opens in Indian Trail



Pack Pet Resort is now open in Indian Trail, serving clients in Weddington and Ballantyne. Pack Pet Resort offers indoor and outdoor play areas, suites for cats and dogs, a grooming salon and a training room with classes. Info: 704-839-0580.

### Waverly Signs Tenants, Opens Stores

Crosland Southeast and Childress Klein announced that Mainstream Boutique, a women's clothing store, and SourceIPhones, which sells and repairs mobile phones, tablets, MacBooks and other products, have



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### Pet Training Company Now in Carolinas

DogSmith, a business committed to humane pet training and care, has awarded its DogSmith license for the greater Charlotte area, including Ballantyne, to Mariah Hinds, a certified dog trainer. She is the first DogSmith licensee in the Carolinas. Reach her at 321-946-1035.

signed leases at the Waverly development near the intersection of Providence and Ardrey Kell roads.

In addition, Starbucks will build a freestanding, 2,300-square-foot store at the southeastern corner of Providence Road and Golf Links Drive.

Meanwhile, ULTA Beauty products, Chuy's restaurant, Mattress Firm, Chick fil-A and Panera Bread are now open. Whole Foods and Ted's Montana Grill are slated to open this spring. Details: [www.waverlyclt.com](http://www.waverlyclt.com).

Details: 843-751-4370 or email [ballantynenc@collegenannies.com](mailto:ballantynenc@collegenannies.com).

### All-Day Breakfast Spot Opens



**HAZELNUTS**  
—crêperie—

Hazelnuts Crêperie, a restaurant serving breakfast all day, along with sweet and savory crepes for lunch, dinner and dessert, recently opened its first standalone Charlotte location in Blakeney. Vegetarian and gluten-free versions are available. One of Yelp's 2016 Top 50 Places to Eat in Charlotte, the eatery is open Monday to Saturday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 980-339-7661.

### Firm Offers Child-Related Services

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Beckie Johnston, Operator  
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# Sweet Charities

## Lending a helping hand



### ① Ballantyne Relay for Life June 2

The American Cancer Society will hold its 5th Annual Ballantyne Relay for Life starting at 6 p.m. on Friday, June 2, at Ardrey Kell High School. Participants will camp out near the school's track with the goal of keeping at least one team member on the track or path at all times throughout the evening. Details: [www.relayforlifeofballantyne.org](http://www.relayforlifeofballantyne.org).

### Eberhardt Vies for Woman of the Year



Amy Eberhardt, a Ballantyne resident who is a 20-year survivor of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, is running for the Charlotte chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's 2017 Woman of the Year. The Man and Woman of the Year campaign, which runs from Thursday, March 23, to Saturday, June 3, recognizes the man and woman who have raised the most money during that time. Info: [www.mwoy.org/pages/nc/clt17/aeberhardt](http://www.mwoy.org/pages/nc/clt17/aeberhardt).



### ② Gingerbread Lane Sets Donation Record

The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge raised more than \$10,500 to benefit Levine Children's Hospital during its signature holiday event, a display of homemade gingerbread creations at the hotel.

Out of 45 entrants, Mariam Phillips, Dao Nguyen and Doug Mellen won the People's Choice Award for their "Snowman School." Attendees voted for their favorite creations with a minimum donation of \$1 to the hospital.

### Corporate Park Shares the Warmth

Ballantyne Corporate Park and its community partners collected more than 1,680 coats to benefit Steve's Coats for Kids during the Share the Warmth Coat Drive in early January.

### ③ Blood Drive Raises Awareness of HLH

Carlo Martinez, a partner in Hawthorne's New York Pizza and Bar, and his wife, Shirley Martinez, co-manager of the restaurant's location at Robinson Farm in Ballantyne, recently held a blood drive to



honor the memory of their daughter, Izzy. Izzy was a 16-year-old Butler High student who fell ill last year from a rare immune disease, hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis, or HLH, and passed away 13 days later.

The couple are now collecting donations for a Butler scholarship in Izzy's honor. To donate or help: [shirley@hawthornespizza.com](mailto:shirley@hawthornespizza.com).

### Teen Reach Partners with Hornets

Teen Reach, a nonprofit founded by Ballantyne resident Lisa Thornton, will hold a Spirit Day and Teen Showcase in partnership with the Charlotte Hornets on Sunday, March 26. The Teen Reach mission is to inspire youth by loving, serving and respecting themselves and others.

Tickets must be purchased through Teen Reach. Info: [www.teenreach.us](http://www.teenreach.us).

### ④ City Barbeque Aids Food Rescue

City Barbeque hosted its first charitable Pass the Pigs competition to support Food Rescue, a nonprofit that helps organize logistics for restaurants and other food-service providers to deliver food to local food banks. Details: [www.citybbq.com](http://www.citybbq.com). ⑩

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\$5,000.00-	\$99,999.99	.1000%	.10%
\$100,000.00-	\$249,999.99	.1500%	.15%
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		.3500%	.35%

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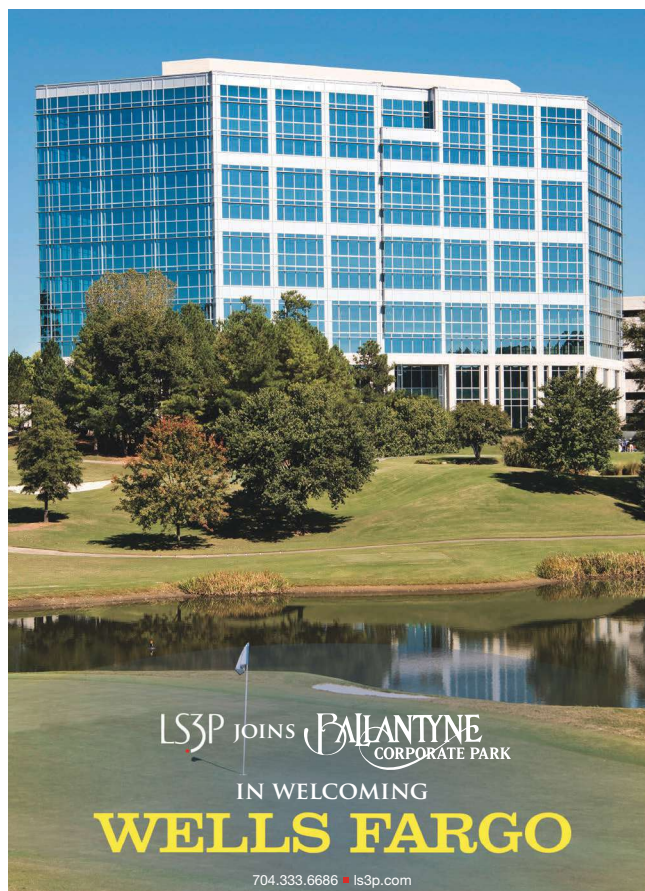


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FACES

# Fascinating Figures

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## Meet Three Local Business People

*Photos by Ray Sepesy*

**F**aces introduces you to people who make Ballantyne lively and interesting. In this edition, meet Tim McCleary, Qian Zhang and David Foster.



# David Foster

**Birthplace:**

Trumbull,  
Connecticut

**Job:**

General Manager,  
Hendrick Porsche

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

I absolutely love Miro (Spanish Grille). Our family has had so many great memories there.

**What is your dream vacation?**

Touring Europe and finishing it off in France with a little Côtes du Rhône wine. I would also really like to attend the 24 Hours of Le Mans car race.

**What is your favorite outdoor activity?**

Anything near water — fishing, boating, enjoying a nice walk on the beach or just being near an ocean or lake.

**What is currently your favorite song?**

“I Lived” by One Republic. The music video associated with that song was so touching. Watching that amazing person (a cystic fibrosis survivor) overcome so many different obstacles is very inspiring.

**What is your favorite thing about living in Ballantyne?**

We’ve lived in Ballantyne for 16 years. We absolutely love the accessibility to the great variety of shopping, restaurants and entertainment. It’s a beautiful area with great people and a terrific place to raise a family.

**What is the last book that you read?**

“The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership” by John Maxwell.

**What’s your business philosophy?**

It’s pretty simple, but for me, it’s always been the Golden Rule.

# Qian Zhang

**Birthplace:**

Neijiang, Sichuan, China

**Job:**

Owner,  
The Dumpling Lady  
food truck

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

I live in Plaza Midwood. I came to Charlotte (as well as the USA) nearly two years ago. When I was in China, I owned a language teaching school and was also a part-time tour guide.

**Why did you decide to open a food truck?**

The reason why I started cooking dumplings and other Chinese food is because I missed my hometown (in the Sichuan province of China).

**Tell us more about Sichuan.**

My hometown is the home base of giant pandas and spicy food. Hot pot is really famous in my hometown.

**How did you learn to cook?**

I learned cooking from my grandma and also from my friend when I was in primary school. I (also) read cook books and the internet. But I can only make Sichuan food, which is famous for its spice and greasiness.

**Do you have any pets?**

We have a Labrador called Meimei.

**What do you eat for breakfast?**

We normally eat noodles and steam buns and warm soy milk.

**How do you spend your free time?**

Yoga. I work 6½ days of the week so I don't really have lots of free time.

**Editor's Note:** The Dumpling Lady serves weekly at Ballantyne Corporate Park. Visit [www.goballantyne.com](http://www.goballantyne.com) for the schedule.



# Tim McCleary

**Birthplace:**

Toronto

**Job:** Founder and Managing Director, The Involvement Practice

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

I love helping organizations make real change within their culture — and the way employees' faces light up during our sessions when they realize they own the change.

**Do you live in Ballantyne?**

Yes. I moved with my family to Ballantyne from Newtown, Connecticut, in January 2015.

**What did you want to be when you were a kid?**

A cinematographer, working on feature films.

**How do you stay organized?**

*Everything* goes into my calendar. I love that my next appointment shows up on my Apple watch!

**Do you have pets?**

Yes, two gray tabbies named Rafa and Riley that we rescued as abandoned kittens. Rafa is the only cat I've ever met who thinks he's a dog.

**What are you reading now?**

"The Experience Economy."

**What charitable organization is important to you and why?**

A Child's Place. It exists to help children of homeless families stay in school where they are safe, fed and educated.

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

I was once a commercial photographer in Toronto and LA — creating images for everyone from fashion designers and Disney actors to "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson and later Jay Leno. ®



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# Parent Prep

# Readying Yourself for Your Child to Enter College

By Vanessa Infanzon



If you Google “preparing for college,” a vast number of links appear. The articles and resources offer advice to high school students about transitioning to college. Unfortunately, the parents of these college-bound students aren’t provided with the same amount of guidance. Parents are left to figure out on their own how to deal with the transition.

Many Ballantyne parents are getting ready to send their child to college this fall. Parents may be unsure how best to cope with these changes while being a support to their son or daughter. Here are five tips to help parents make the most out of the changes ahead.



Tip 1

Find  
quality  
time.





The Fuller Family: Jackson, Trevor, Schuyler and Camille.

For most parents, the years have flown by quickly. Suddenly your child is leaving home for college and your “baby” is making decisions about classes, majors and roommates. Parents want to yell, “Slow down!”

Mecklenburg County Commissioner Trevor Fuller and his wife, Camille Davidson, are Ballantyne residents preparing to send their son, Jackson, to college this fall. Davidson, a lawyer and professor, has reorganized her usual summer schedule to include more family time. “For summer 2017, I want to spend time with my family,” she says. “Even if it is weekend trips or just a movie down at StoneCrest or Ballantyne Village — it is downtime.”



#### Quick Tip

Fill a jar with things the family wants to do and pull out one idea a week and go do it.


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## Tip 2

# Be a resource.

Colleges and universities are in the business of providing students with the support they need to succeed. Knowing about and using such resources are up to the student.

Dr. John Downey, dean of students at Queens University of Charlotte, is a resident in the Ballantyne community. He recommends that parents become knowledgeable by learning about what the college has to offer in terms of career counseling, academic advising, tutoring and wellness programs. “The No. 1 resource the student is going to use is you — and you are a great resource,” says Downey.

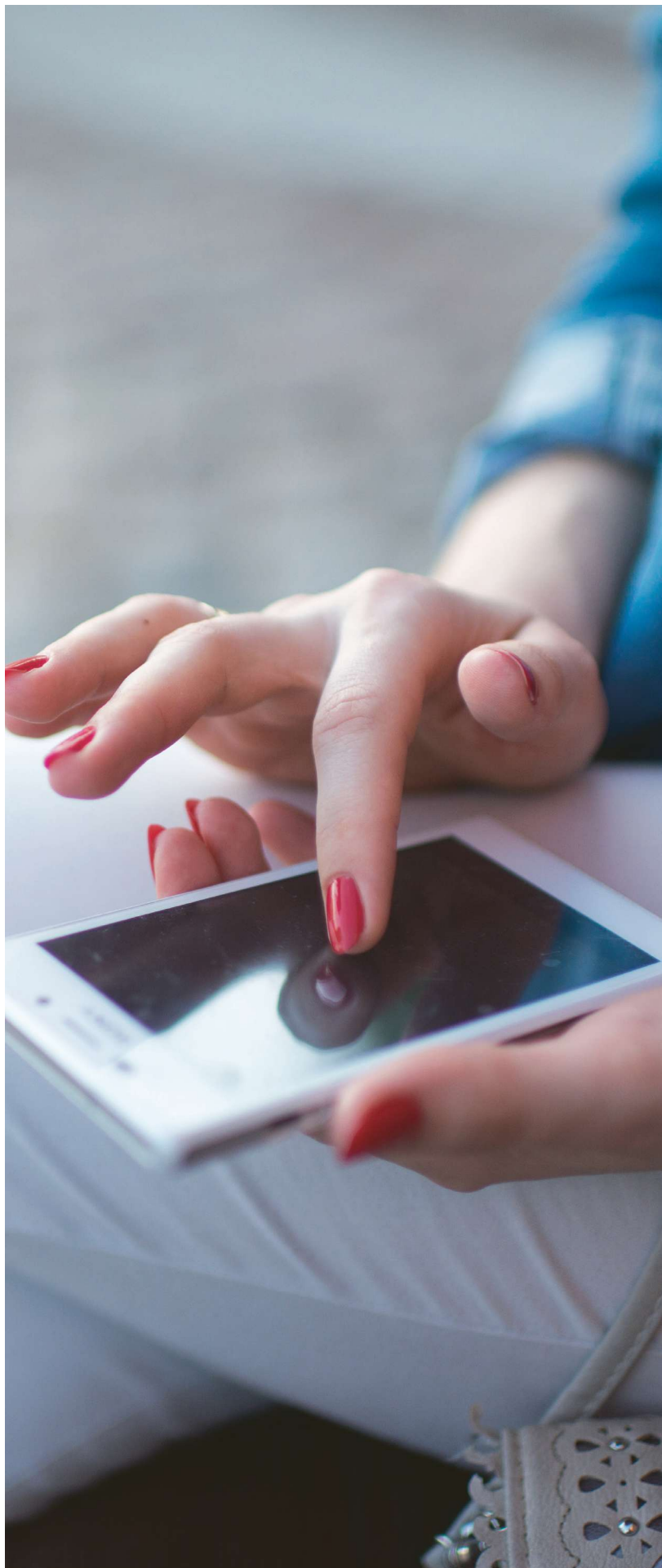
The automatic response for most parents is to rescue their child from problems. “You should empower the student to try first because that is part of the learning process,” Downey says. He suggests, for example, helping your child make a list of questions to ask a faculty member and then role-play how to approach the situation.



### Quick Tip

Attend parent orientation, even if this is your fifth child going off to school.





## Tip 3

# Stay in touch.



*The Ostendarp family: Angie, Jay, Alec, Jamie and Erin.*

With so many options for communication, it seems parents couldn't possibly lose touch with their child. But parents still worry. Like any mother, Camille Davidson has concerns about sending her son away to college. "I do worry that he won't call," she says. "The independence that comes with college may mean that he does not check in with his father or me when we want him to or expect him to."

Jay Ostendarp and his wife, Angie, are parents to two college students and one senior at Charlotte Catholic High School. Jay's experience communicating with his son and daughter while they are away at college has been pleasantly surprising. He and Angie receive a text or a request to Facetime every other day during the week. "They are never too far away from you," Jay says. "They are really only a Facetime away."

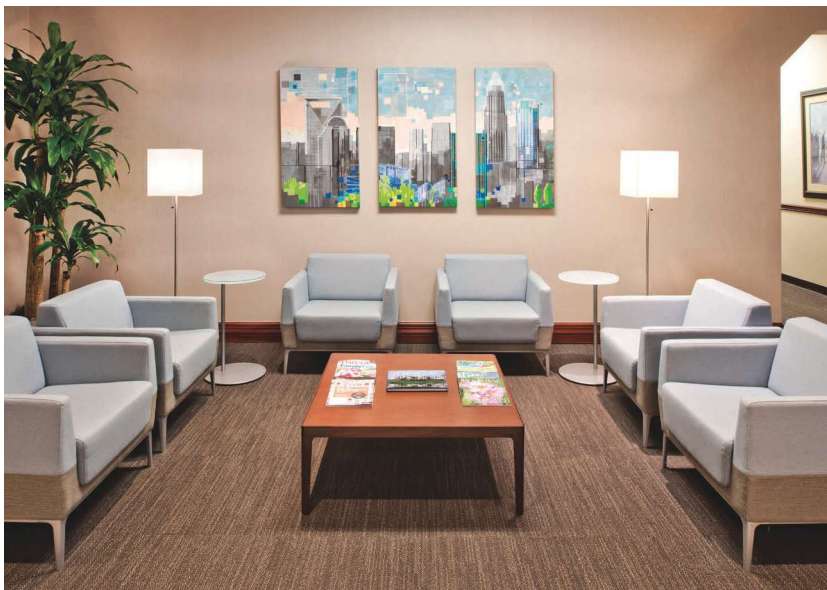


### Quick Tip

Send an inspiring photo or message to your child on a regular basis. Surprise them with snail mail.



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Since two of his children have gone to college, Jay Ostendarp (red hat) has had more time for playing guitar with Dead Man's Banjo, a local band.



## Tip 4

# Enjoy 'me' time.

After 18 years of child-focused time, it can be hard to redirect your attention from dance recitals, field hockey games and soccer playoffs to yourself. With his extra time, Jay sings and plays guitar in a local band, Dead Man's Banjo. Last summer, the band was featured in Ballantyne Village's weekly concert series. Jay has embraced his newfound time to practice and perform, and as long as his kids are happy, he is happy.



### Quick Tip

Re-evaluate how you want to spend your extra time. Volunteer? Start a hobby? Begin an exercise program?

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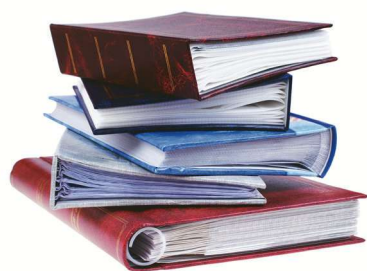


## Tip 5

# Take in the moment.

“My No. 1 piece of advice is to remember you have prepared your child for this moment,” says Downey, the dean at Queens. Going away to college is the symbolic moment for growing up.

Camille Davidson knows that she and her husband have been working toward this for their son's entire life. “I have to step back and say, ‘We have prepared you for this. You know who you are,’” she says. “I have taught him to make good choices. We have given him the foundation. As a mom, I just have to remind myself over and over.” ®



### Quick Tip

Go old school and make a memory book with special photos from the past 18 years. Be sure to include the ones from the first day at college!

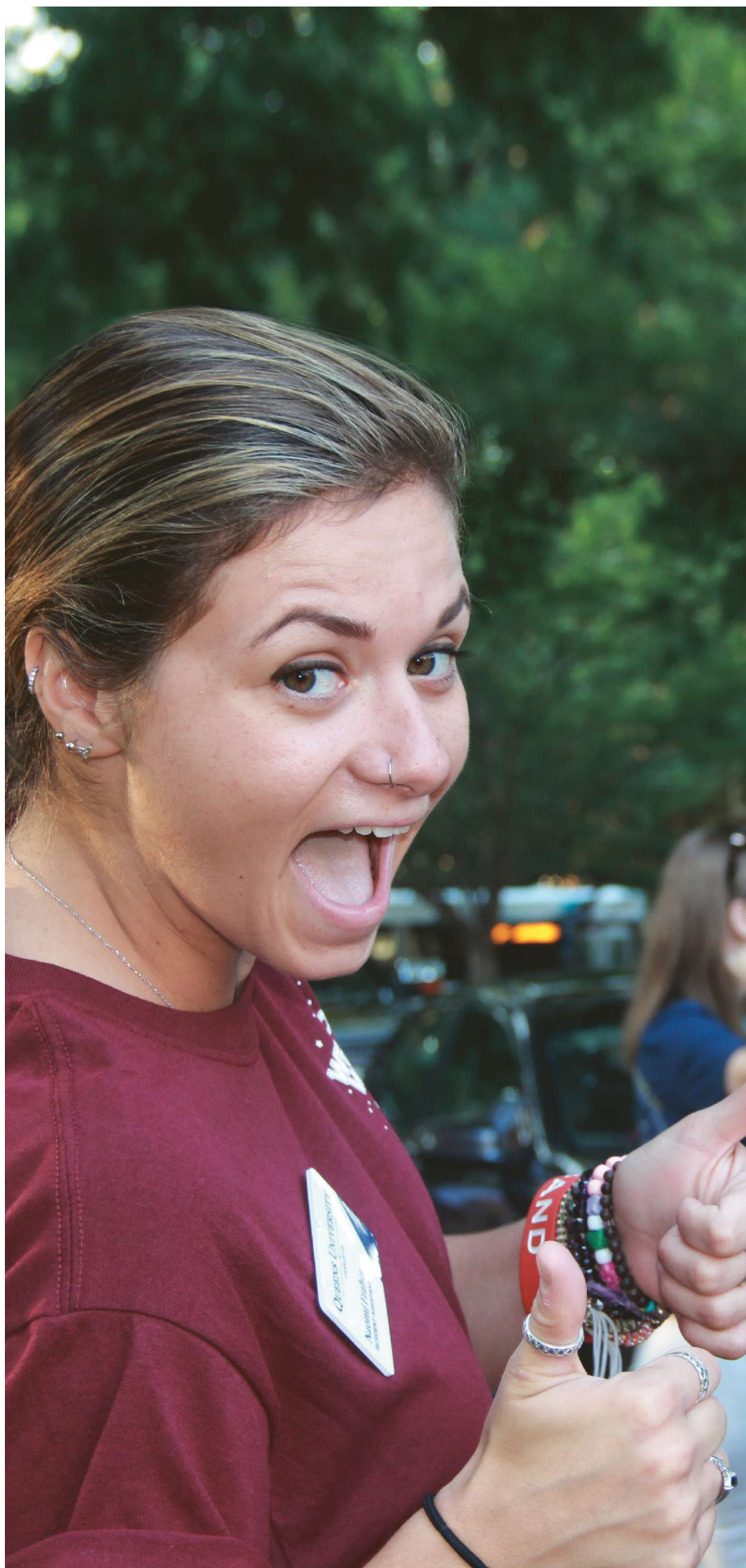


Photo by Patrick Motter, courtesy of Queens



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A knife steadied the Holy Cow Burger on its trip from the kitchen to the table.

# Rooftop Repose

## Brazwells Serves Up Sunset Views, Eclectic Menu

By Amy Rogers | Photos by Ray Sepesy

When you time it just right and settle into a seat on the rooftop patio at Brazwells Premium Pub, you can catch one of the season's prettiest sights: the sun setting each evening between the city's buildings.

Brazwells is a unique place. It's the only sports bar in Ballantyne with its own urban-style rooftop, in addition to a lively dining room and relaxing patio. It captures many different moods — mellow and serene as friends

gather at the end of a workday, but also energetic and fun when fans meet to cheer on their favorite teams. It's a popular spot for business meetings and networking over happy-hour libations, and it draws families with kids who play lively games of Jenga while their parents sip sangria.

### Versatile Kitchen

The menu is eclectic. The Holy Cow Burger nearly defies gravity as it towers over hand-cut fries on the plate. It consists of two eight-ounce patties, stacked with provolone and cheddar cheeses, tomato, bacon, peppers, onion rings and condiments that include house-made bacon jam. A helpful knife inserted vertically holds the burger together on its trip from the kitchen to the table. Among other beef selections, rib-eye steak makes for an extra-tender steak teriyaki with jasmine rice.

Sesame tuna is seared and glazed to perfection, then sliced and artfully arranged with bright green broccolini. Seasonal salads are abundant, and the kitchen is happy to accommodate



Photo by Justin Driscoll, courtesy of Brazwells



Sesame tuna with broccolini

### What'll You Have?

Check out these popular choices at Brazwells.



A "Ballantyne Mule"



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Steak teriyaki with jasmine rice



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requests for vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free dishes.

Warm weather calls for cool cocktails, such as a Ballantyne Mule made with grapefruit vodka, lime juice and ginger beer. At brunch on Saturday and Sunday, it's hard to resist \$2 mimosas and the expansive build-your-own bloody mary bar; you can even order a "slider" sandwich as a garnish. In addition to a good list of wines and beers, Brazwells offers a nice selection of red, white and sparkling wines.

Brazwells is part of the Bottle Cap Group. The Ballantyne location is one of four that include Montford Drive in Charlotte, downtown Greenville, South Carolina, and Lake Norman, north of Charlotte, due to open soon. Chef Matt Bauwin oversees menu development at all four.

## Weekend Tunes

Local musician Rod Fiske entertains on Friday evenings in Ballantyne, and a late-night DJ kicks things up a notch on Saturdays. A dozen chairs cluster around a central "Friendship Table" for solo diners or for those who want to strike up conversations. Don't be alarmed at the table cards promoting Sunday "SIN Nights"; that's an acronym for nights set aside for people in the restaurant service industry to unwind together.

Guests can make reservations for the main dining room and patio, but the rooftop is first come, first served. Some office workers in the area have been known to leave their desks a bit early when the weather is nice to head over to Brazwells. They want to make sure that they've got something refreshing in a glass and something tasty on the table as they watch the day end and a beautiful Ballantyne evening begin.®

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# SPRING'S *PALETTE*

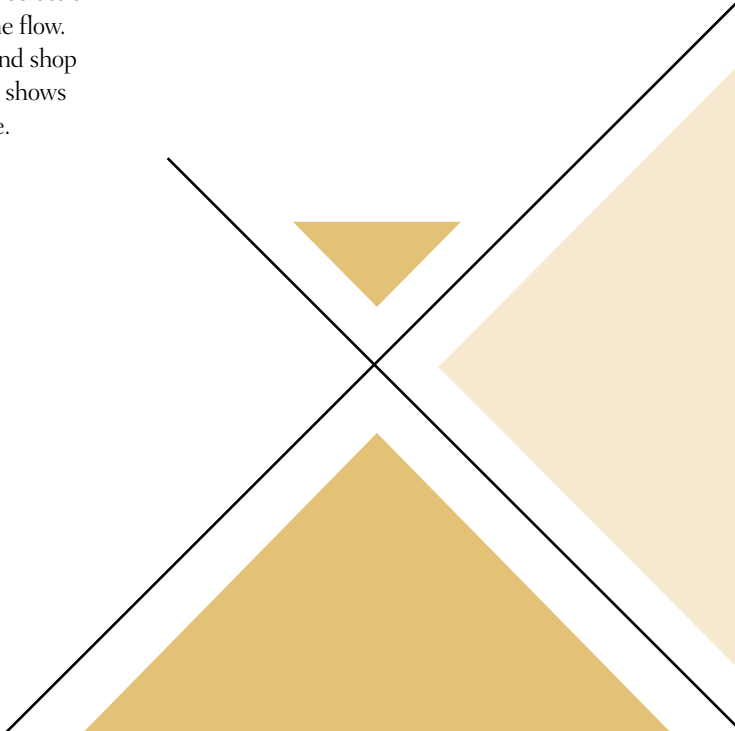
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**Photography:** Mark Hanson, assistant Jonathan Hamela

**Styling:** Whitley Adkins Hamlin **Hair, Makeup:** Heather Hawkins **Modeling:** Olivia Pires, Directions USA

Showing spring's hottest fashions from Ballantyne-area stores, we took to the streets with model and Ardrey Kell High grad Olivia Pires.

From casual vibe to eclectic glam, she goes with the flow. Work, live, play, stay and shop in Ballantyne — Pires shows us how to do it in style.





## **STAY**

*Shot at The Ballantyne  
Hotel & Lodge*

Tucker Silk Butterfly Print  
Silk Blouse, Nouveaux, \$80;  
Brown Suede Wrap Skirt by  
LUSH, K-la, \$62; Collier Bag  
in Glovetan, Douglas Rose,  
[www.douglasrose.co](http://www.douglasrose.co),  
\$985; Bahnar Necklace,  
Piet Jac Designs,  
[www.pietjacdesigns.com](http://www.pietjacdesigns.com),  
\$240; Coach Sandals  
(stylist's own); Chan  
Luu Sparkle Earrings,  
LA East, \$42; Quay  
Sunglasses, LA East, \$44

# PLAY

Shot at Aloft  
Charlotte Ballantyne.

Maeve Sleeveless Mustard Top, Nouveaux, \$45; Red Banana Republic Maxi Skirt, Nouveaux, \$34; Blue Ombre Tommy Bahama Maxi Skirt, Nouveaux, \$52; Rodarte Crossed Embossed Lucite Heel Sandals (stylist's own); Prada Chain Clutch, Nouveaux, \$475; Cobalt Blue Resin Necklace, GoldKloth, \$49; Cowboy Belt, LA East, \$70; Melvin Pom Pom Earrings, The Cheeky Bean, \$110; Silver Cuff, K-la, \$22; Virgin, Saints & Angels Ring, LA East, \$115; Ring with Large Purple Stone, K-la, \$18





## PLAY

Shot at Aloft  
Charlotte Ballantyne

Jill Stuart Red Strapless Dress, Nouveaux, \$140; Turquoise Beaded Earrings, The Cheeky Bean, \$32; Gigi New York Chelsea Bag with Detachable Strap, GoldKloth, \$175; Genuine Turquoise Ria Cuff, eb jewelry studio, [www.ebjewelrystudio.com](http://www.ebjewelrystudio.com), \$90; Vintage Embroidered Belt (stylist's own); Virgin, Saints & Angels Ring, LA East, \$115



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\$42.50; Hudson White Skinny  
Denim, The Cheeky Bean,  
\$155; Gold Wishbone Earrings,  
Kristin Hayes Jewelry,  
[www.kristinhayesjewelry.com](http://www.kristinhayesjewelry.com),  
\$80; Araminta Jewelry  
Multi-Tassel Necklace, LA  
East, \$94; Virgin, Saints &  
Angels Ring, LA East, \$115

## | LIVE |

*Shot at a Ballantyne Country Club home represented by Helen Adams Realtor® Christine Hotham*

Amuse Society Ivory Lace Maxi Dress, LA East, \$110; Hands High Designs Tassel Necklace, LA East, \$94; Babydoll Lace Hat, The Cheeky Bean, \$24; Wishbone Earrings, Kristin Hayes Jewelry, [www.kristinhayesjewelry.com](http://www.kristinhayesjewelry.com), \$80; Virgin, Saints & Angels Ring (right hand), LA East, \$115; Multi-Layer Ring (left hand), K-la, \$29



## WORK

*Shot at SPX Flow*

Tibi Cotton Skirt, Nouveaux, \$75; White Tie Neck Sleeveless Blouse, The Cheeky Bean, \$44; Dior Green Ostrich Leather Handle Top Purse, Nouveaux, \$2,650; Electric Blue Pumps, J.Crew (stylist's own)



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## SHOP

Shot at SPX Flow

Young, Fabulous and Broke Tie-Dye Dress, LA East, \$136; Gap 1969 Denim Jacket, Gap, \$69.95; Perforated Cream Backpack by Christian Lacroix, K-la, \$54; Ray-Ban Aviator Classic Polarized Sunglasses, \$200, [www.ray-ban.com](http://www.ray-ban.com); Milo & Finn Jewelry Cross Necklace, LA East, \$82; Julio Mixed Metals Cross Earrings, LA East, \$36; Punch Vintage Bracelet, LA East, \$52; Virgin, Saints & Angels Ring, LA East, \$115; Ring with Large Blue Stone, K-la, \$18

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Residents to Offer  
SignUpGenius



By Michelle Boudin  
Photos by Ray Sepesy

**I**t all started because of a series of snack snafus on the soccer field and at church.

Dan Rutledge was coaching his kids' soccer team and trying to get a snack assignment list organized. "I did it in Microsoft Word and had people sign up on a paper print out of it," he recalls. "Some moms were switching, and a few times no one remembered ... I had stuck the list in my soccer bag ... and I didn't know where it went."

It all started because of a series of snack snafus on the soccer field and at church. Dan Rutledge was coaching his kids' soccer team and trying to get a snack assignment list organized.



Angel and Dan Rutledge run the Ballantyne-based business, SignUpGenius.



Dan, who moved to Ballantyne with his wife, Angel, in 2005, says, "There were multiple weeks the kids had no snacks and would look across the field and see the other team enjoying brownies."

Angel remembers a church Sunday School party around the same time where they split the class by the alphabet and messed that up, too. "We got to the party and everyone had brought two liters of Diet Coke and chips and salsa. And that's it," she says.

That got both of them thinking there had to be a better way.

Employees at SignUpGenius not only run the web-based business they enjoy outings together.

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— Dan Rutledge



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"We saw the need — we experienced the problem enough that we were motivated to do something, and Dan had the ability to do it," Angel says.

At the time Dan was working with Michael Vadini at a technology services company, and the two were looking for new projects. "I worked for 10 years developing products for other people and thought this could be automated in a way that could remind people and allow people to have one spot they could go to," Dan says.

### Founded in 2008

Together, the men founded SignUpGenius in 2008. It's a website that literally helps people get organized. You create an online sign-up sheet, invite people and they sign up. SignUpGenius then sends reminders. "We replace the paper sign-up sheet that you would pass around or the 'reply all' email you would send to organize the group," Dan explains.

The company started small. Dan and a part-time assistant managed the entire site until 2011 when Angel officially came on staff to help run things.

"I released the first version to family and friends and, of course, my soccer team and said, 'Try this out,'" Dan remembers. People liked it, and it started spreading. Someone on the soccer team would send it to someone at school. Then someone there would send it to a nonprofit, and it started gradually moving out. "Pretty soon," Dan says, "I had someone emailing me from Texas saying they wanted it for their swim team."

Dan, now CEO, co-owns the firm with Vadini. Angel is the chief operating officer and chief marketing officer. The firm has grown so fast it keeps relocating to new offices within the Ballantyne area, not far from the Rutledges' home. The company has been in Ballantyne Corporate Park since 2015.

---

SignUpGenius was named Small Tech Company of the Year at the NC Tech Awards in November.



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“We wanted to expand our family through adoption, and we knew our kids would have people with similar backgrounds to them here in our community,”  
— Angel Rutledge



The Rutledge family grew almost as quickly and unexpectedly as their business. Parents Angie and Dan (center) had two children, Kayla (far left) and Zane (far right), when they adopted Henry and Angelyn from Liberia in 2007.

Angel says of the moves, “It’s actually been very purposeful because we have four kids, so every time we move the office we tell our broker this has to be the radius. It helps with the work-life balance.”

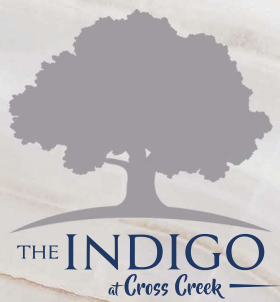
The Rutledge family grew almost as quickly and unexpectedly as their business. In 2007, they already had two kids, Kayla, now 17, and Zane, now 14. They adopted Angelyn, now 16, and Henry, now 14, from Liberia.

“We went from two kids to four kids the day they came home,” Angel says.

And there are just three years separating all four kids. “It was pretty crazy at the time,” she says of adding to their family.

### Adopting from Liberia

Dan and Angel had been talking about expanding their family for years when a group of families in the community adopted kids from Liberia. The



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story made “The Oprah Winfrey Show” because 14 Ballantyne area families adopted 33 kids from the same Liberian orphanage.

“We basically decided we would adopt from Liberia, too, because we wanted to expand our family through adoption, and we knew our kids would have people with similar backgrounds to them here in our community,” Angel explains.

As their family grew, so did SignUpGenius. The company now averages eight to 12 million users per month and had a whopping 66 million users in 2016. The Rutledges also now have 27 employees in their Ballantyne offices.

They love being in Ballantyne Corporate Park, even incorporating their “neighborhood” into the company’s fun. They recently did a scavenger hunt around the office buildings and took the whole crew to see the Star Wars movie at StoneCrest. SignUpGenius was named Small Tech Company of the Year at the NC Tech Awards in November, and it just continues to grow.

“People ask me if I thought it was going to get big when I started? Yes, of course!” Dan says. “The reason you start it is because you think it’s going to get big. But it was a process of watching more and more people find us and getting excited when we had 10,000 in a day on the site and then we had 100,000 ... then last year we had a million on the site in one day!”

But both Dan and Angel say the true measure of their business is the way SignUpGenius is helping people change the world for the better.

“I’ve been taking mission teams over to Liberia, and every time we go, we use the site to collect things for the kids: clothing, toothbrushes, soaps,” Angel says. “We tend to take more than 30 suitcases full of items all donated by people who sign up, thanks to the site. That’s been our mission (with the company) from the beginning — to empower people to change the world by making it simple to organize groups.” ®

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An integrated approach to life helps working moms balance family, work and volunteerism.

# Life-Management Tips

## How Working Moms Squeeze Volunteerism into Demanding Schedules

By Dawn Nacional and Cindy Baxter

*"If it's important, you'll find a way. If it's not, you'll find an excuse."*  
— entrepreneur Ryan Blair

**B**alancing work, family and volunteerism can be super tricky if you don't have an integrated life approach. What that means is learning how best to incorporate these important facets of your life, so that the overall experience is more enjoyable — and less stressful.

Working moms often experience long conference calls, frequent business trips, multiple family commitments and various school activities — which makes volunteering for causes they are passionate about a challenge. So how do they manage?



### Eat Healthy and Exercise

To sustain this fast-paced schedule, you must remember to care for your most important asset: YOU! This means eating healthy (less fatty and fried foods) and finding time to exercise both your body and mind. Perhaps take an early morning class at the gym or a long walk along the greenway — but why not invite a mom from your child's school, a colleague at work or another volunteer you're collaborating with to join you. You could use this time not only to increase your adrenaline but to learn more about what's going on in the classroom, at work or with creative fundraising strategies.

### Be the Queen of Multi-Tasking

Busy moms have a plethora of "to do" lists, and they are never just one or two items. It's important that as soon as your child has a doctor's appointment, or



Photo by Ray Sepesy

Friends **Dawn Nacional** and **Cindy Baxter** met through volunteering at St. Matthew Saturday Night, a fundraiser for St. Matthew Catholic School. This year they are co-chairing the event, to be held April 1 at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge.



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# The most successful mothers at balancing their day-to-day lives are those who are willing to seek help when needed.

you must bring in sprinkles for the school party, that you record the subject, time and location immediately in your calendar or set a reminder in the notes app on your phone. Otherwise, you likely won't remember the "to do" again until the day, night or moment before it's due. When you finally get to cross that item off your list, you'll feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment.



port philanthropy and volunteerism and allow their employees to volunteer up to two hours a week with manager approval in advance. If your company is one of them, you should absolutely leverage this perk if it's feasible in your current role. Additionally, some companies will give a grant to the nonprofit if the employee volunteers more than 50 or 100 hours per year. Time, talent and treasure — a win for everyone!

## Ask for Help

The most successful mothers at balancing their day-to-day lives are those who are willing to seek help when needed. These mothers may initially shy away from doing so because they

have always been self-sufficient; however, the reward of "simply asking" is exponential. You will also be surprised at how quickly other mothers are willing to help and offer their assistance and expertise. Of course,



you will one day have the opportunity to reciprocate the favor by paying it forward. ©



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Dawn Nacional is a senior vice president and event director at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Cindy Baxter is the creative director of upholstery at Sutter Street Manufacturing, a division of Williams-Sonoma Inc.



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**O**n Sanibel Island, shops really do sell sea shells by the seashore. Ranked the No. 1 shelling destination in the U.S. by Travel + Leisure magazine, Sanibel and neighboring island Captiva draw visitors year in and year out for the opportunity to collect a wealth of sea shells that wash up along the shimmering sands of the Gulf of Mexico.

# Shimmering Sands



**Sanibel, Captiva and Fort Myers  
Offer Serenity, Superb Shelling**

*By Nan Bauroth*

*Photos courtesy of The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel*





Photo courtesy of Heather Dunegan

“My family and I vacation in Fort Myers and Sanibel every year. We love it there.”

— Amy Melvin



These two southwest Florida barrier islands, along with nearby Fort Myers, are popular with Ballantyne residents for their low-key lifestyle and pristine beaches. “I have gone to Captiva and Sanibel for over 30 years,” says Heather Dunegan, who lives near Ballantyne. “We are in love with that entire area, including nearby islands you reach by boat. We went in late October, and it was beautiful.”


Amy Melvin, another Ballantyne-area resident, shares her enthusiasm. “My family and I vacation in Fort Myers and Sanibel every year. We love it there.”

### Beachcomber’s Heaven

The unusual alignment of Sanibel’s southern shoreline and the northern tip of Captiva act as a natural net for 250 varieties

### Downtime to remember

Heather Dunegan’s children enjoy the Cabbage Key restaurant near Fort Myers, while shell hunters peruse the shores of Cayo Costa and a kayaker takes in the beauty of Hickey Creek.

A large, ancient banyan tree with a massive trunk and sprawling roots in a park setting. The tree's trunk is thick and gnarled, with many aerial roots hanging down. The roots spread out across the ground, some forming large, hollowed-out structures. The foliage is dense and green, with sunlight filtering through the leaves. In the background, other trees and a paved path are visible.

Fort Myers,  
the mainland  
gateway to the  
islands, features  
one of the  
world's largest  
banyan trees.



Although  
best known  
for shelling,  
Sanibel and  
Captiva  
also appeal  
to visitors  
for their  
laid-back  
lifestyle.





Photo courtesy of Chris Stasinopoulos

Chris Stasinopoulos

of shells dislodged by storms from the floor of the gulf. The beachcomber's paradise gives rise to the "Sanibel Stoop" or "Captiva Crouch," the posture of visitors trolling the shoreline for conches, lightning whelks, colorful coquinas and brown-speckled junonia, a prized find.

Chris Stasinopoulos, a Ballantyne resident who visited Sanibel in December, says shelling was a highlight of the trip. "We did island cow shelling by the lighthouse," he says of seeking cowrie shells. "The Holiday Inn on the beach where we stayed was very clean and nice."

Christy Benoliet has visited Sanibel many times. "My favorite thing is to see the manatee at the marina in South Seas Plantation Resort on Captiva or to go shelling on Sanibel," says the Ballantyne resident. Other diversions include the Sanibel Historical Village and Museum and J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, a top birding spot in the nation, where tours via foot, car or canoe are available.

#### Shelling to the max

The unusual alignment of Sanibel's southern shoreline and the northern tip of Captiva act as a natural net for 250 varieties of shells.



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### Play time

Local ambiance ranges from relaxing al fresco dining to spring training with the Boston Red Sox to colorful shops for exploration.

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Offshore and deep-sea sport fishing are another big lure on Sanibel and Captiva, where teal blue waters near the shore feature tarpon, snapper, snook, redfish and Florida pompano, while the ocean beyond is prime grouper territory. A dozen artificial reefs and wrecks around the barrier islands provide intrigue for scuba divers.

### Kicking Back

Although best known for shelling, Sanibel and Captiva also appeal to visitors for their laid-back lifestyle reminiscent of vintage Florida. Only one two-lane road runs through Sanibel, and it has no stoplights. Dotting the route are small shopping complexes, casual restaurants and mom-and-pop motels and



resorts. Once over the short bridge to Captiva, a quiet road winds along million-dollar properties, ending at a charming village of eateries and shops bounded by unspoiled beaches.

Benoliet recommends staying at the Sundial Beach Resort & Spa or South Seas Plantation Resort. Other top choices are Casa Ybel Resort, Tween Waters Inn and Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa. Foodie favorites include Sweet Melissa's Cafe, The Mad Hatter, The Mucky Duck, Captiva Island Inn and the funky Bubble Room Restaurant, known for scrumptious desserts like Key lime pie.

## Fort Myers

As a gateway to Sanibel, Captiva and other remote islands of southwest Florida, Fort Myers also attracts Ballantyne residents. Norm and Lee Schmidt spent several weeks there last fall and returned in January for another five weeks. "The Hampton Inn on Colonial Boulevard was superb," Lee reports. "We like the native pink shrimp at Pinchers, a seafood restaurant in the historic district, and Ford's Garage, also in that area."

While there, the Schmidts enjoyed Fort Myers Beach and touring the Edison & Ford Winter Estates. The site features an old-style riverfront home on 14 acres, laboratory and experimental botanical gardens maintained as a tribute to one of the world's inventive geniuses. A top selfie spot is a banyan tree given to Thomas Edison by Henry Ford in 1925 and now one of the largest of its species in the world. Next door sits "Man-

goes," the winter retreat of automotive magnate Ford, who bought it in 1916 while visiting his friend Edison.

Jen Lochte visits Fort Myers every summer. "We love it because the water is incredibly crystal clear and the kids like to find sand dollars and starfish — which you must put back in the water," says the Ballantyne resident. "The downtown boardwalk area is fun for the kids to walk around and has great restaurants. During summer, though, I would recommend staying along the water to catch the breeze."



Photo courtesy of Jen Lochte

Jen Lochte's daughter, Reese, found starfish at Fort Myers Beach.

## Spring Training

Fort Myers is a major spring training destination for fans of the Boston Red Sox and Minnesota Twins. JetBlue Park at Fenway South has replicated the manual scoreboard and "Green Monster," the high left field wall of Boston's Fenway Park. The picturesque Hammond Stadium, where the Twins hold preseason games, is modeled after Churchill Downs, with statuesque Royal Palms lining the entrance that leads to a waterfall fountain plaza.

No matter the season, though, Ballantyne residents agree that the southwest shores of Florida are a delightful destination, offering a sanctuary from everyday cares. ©



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Photo by Ray Sepesy

Francisco Montero commutes to work from Ballantyne to Dilworth on his electric bike.

WHO KNEW?

# Electric Ride

## Adaptive, Motorized Bikes Increase Access to Cycling

By Jodi Werner Greenwald

**M**otorists commuting from Ballantyne to Uptown might notice Francisco Montero, 51, making the commute — on his bike. Mind you, it's not any normal street bike. Montero rides a Felt BruHaul Cargo E-bike, or electric bike.

"It's super stable and safe, and the front-wind fairing keeps me warm and dry when it rains," Montero says.

As long as it's 25 degrees or warmer outside, Montero — a master bicycle technician, fitter and coach who has worked at area bike shops and is co-owner of Charlotte Cycles in Midtown — bikes the 15 miles from his home near Kingsley View to Bike Gallery on Park Road, where he currently lends his skills.

Montero says he has committed himself to making the approximately 40-minute ride as many days a week as possible and has already commuted 200 miles on his bike since purchasing it in October 2016 — even hauling his 6-foot Christmas tree home on it.

In "turbo" speed, Montero's bike can go as fast as 28 mph, and he occupies the traffic lane on the road. He says he hasn't had any issues with traffic or motorists.

With the electric assist, you don't feel the hills, he says. "Once you get used to it, you're flying."

Montero's bike has a Bosch 350-watt electric pedal assist motor that can run up to 60 miles on one charge. He says most commuters take their e-bikes on rides up to 10 miles each way.

With specialty pedals, arm controls, seat backs and other modifications, e-bikes help increase riders' stability and safety while removing limitations. Therefore, they appeal not only to commuters but also to seniors and anyone rehabilitating an injury or wanting to travel farther with less effort.

### Cruisin' in Sun City

Nancy from Sun City (she prefers going by her first name only) rides her Day 6 Patriot 750 Crank Forward bike back and forth from her home to the clubhouse. She also takes it to the library, grocery store, doctor's office and drug store. In the first six months of owning the bike, she too has already logged 200 miles.

"It's been totally awesome because I have the help I need getting up the hills, but I still get the exercise," she says.

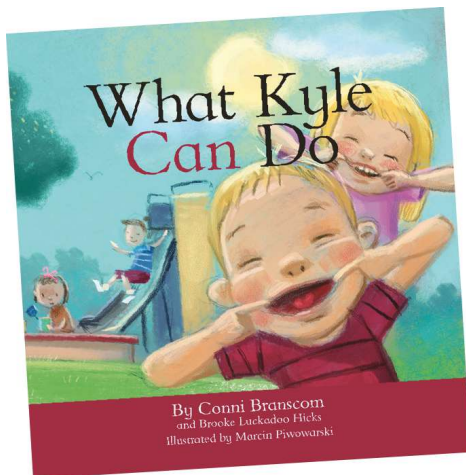
Nancy has arthritis and bursitis and broke her back last year. "I couldn't really ride leaning over. There was too much pressure on my shoulders," she says. Her new bike is upright with a 16-inch seat and a seat back. "The handlebars come up and are fully adjustable, so I don't have to bend over."

### Easy Cycling

Nancy from Sun City has found her adaptive e-bike helps her get around despite physical challenges.

Photo courtesy of Nancy from Sun City





Proceeds from this book help buy adaptive bikes for kids with special needs.

### Local Nonprofit, Book

Special features like the ones on Nancy's bike can be expensive. One Ballantyne mom is helping to raise money so that children with special needs can obtain adaptive bikes, which can cost \$3,500.

Conni Branscom started the non-

profit Kyle's Korner when she saw the joy on the face of her son, Kyle, when he received his adaptive bike.

Kyle has Down Syndrome and a major heart condition. The family received his diagnoses before he was born, and his older sister wondered what he would and wouldn't be able to do with his limitations. The family's then-babysitter, Brooke Luckadoo Hicks, an Ardrey Kell High student at the time, wrote a story for her senior exit project to answer that question.

This December, Conni, an assistant in the exceptional children's program with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, adapted that story into an illustrated children's book printed by Warren Publishing. Proceeds from book sales help purchase adaptive bikes for children with special needs.

"The fun part for Kyle is seeing friends riding their bikes in the neighborhood or at the park and he can join them," Conni says. "Watching him ride with his siblings and other kids just proves he is more alike than different."

### For the Fun of It

Montero says he commutes by bike to train and to prove it can be done, but there's one more motivation: "There's a smile on my face the whole way there," he says.

At the core of the electric and adaptive bike phenomenon is the sense of joy the bikes bring back to people's lives.

"It's fun again to ride a bicycle," Montero says. ®

**To learn more about biking around Charlotte and general cycling trends, check out these websites:**

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

[www.charlottenc.gov/transportation/programs/pages/bicycle.aspx](http://www.charlottenc.gov/transportation/programs/pages/bicycle.aspx)

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

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# Film Fest Celebrates 13 Years

*Photos by Peter Safir*



The Charlotte Jewish Film Festival, a program of the Levine Jewish Community Center, showcased 13 films during February and early March in celebration of its 13th year. Nine screenings were held at Regal Ballantyne Village.

Opening weekend Feb. 11-12 was held at Temple Israel and included two Israeli films, a feature called "Women's Balcony," sponsored by the Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah, and a basketball documentary, "On the Map," sponsored by Temple Israel and the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte and featuring an appearance by Tal Brody, one of the movie's stars. Dessert receptions were held both nights.

1. Ellen Goldberg, Karen Turk, Heidi Rotberg, Hadas Kasher, Margie Sigal, Roz Cooper, Tami Bernat
2. Marissa Brooks, Gary Maniloff, Eileen Schwartz
3. Peter Blair, Jodi Greenwald, Jeff Turk
4. Paul Orland, Steve Wasser, Steve Lepow, Elaine and Michael Denenberg
5. Rabbi Murray Ezring
6. Susan Kent, Linda Lepow, Amy Marx, Linda Wasser
7. Sue Littauer
8. Tal Brody, Jason Stoogenke
9. Susan Gundersheim, Larry and Dale Polsky, Kayla Piscatelli
10. Karen Maniloff, Elsa Safir
11. Tal Brody with members of the Israeli national swim team
12. Eric and Judy Laxer

# Ballantyne Ball Aids Lily Pad

*Photos by Hayley Lawrence*

The third annual Ballantyne Ball was held Feb. 11 at The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge. The community celebration and masquerade ball included a cocktail hour, silent and live auctions, a sit-down dinner and dancing.

Each year all proceeds benefit a local organization. This year's recipient was Lily Pad Haven, which helps victims of human trafficking become survivors by offering safe homes, transitional care and support networks. The organization also provides community awareness and education.



1. Svetlana Pavlova
2. Chris and Renee Hobart, Wheela and Corey Sunstrom
3. Derek and Kristy Buckowsky, Allen and Hillary Starrett, Geoff and Kirsten Wrinkle
4. Robert and Tiffany Schwandt
5. Andrew and Kara DeMarco
6. Ryan and Todd Bates
7. Mark and Cindy Dunn, Shannon and Mitch Sells
8. Leo Melish, Stephanie Kennedy, Pam and Sam Melish
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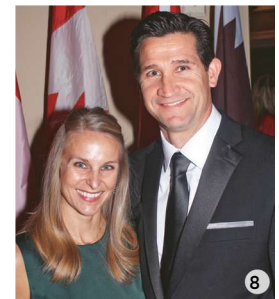
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# Ball Funds Children's Programs

*Photos by Daniel Costan*

Allegro Foundation, which aids children with disabilities, honored Ambassador Ali Al-Hajri and his country of Qatar at the 8th Annual Ambassador's Ball on Jan. 7 at Quail Hollow Club. Guests enjoyed a formal dinner, silent and live auctions and dancing to music by the Peace and Love band. Businessman Felix Sabates hosted the event.

All proceeds from the Ambassador's Ball go to funding and expanding Allegro's free movement-education programs, which currently help more than 700 children with disabilities in Charlotte and Fort Mill.



1. Ali Al-Hajri, Felix Sabates
2. Richard Oliver, Al and Donna de Molina, Denmar Dixon, Ali Al-Hajri, Ellen Dixon
3. Children and teaching assistants in Allegro Foundation's program
4. Nick and Suzie Trivisonno, Ali Al-Hajri
5. Ambassador's Ball sponsors
6. Linda and Rex Welton
7. Guests of Fifth Third Bank
8. Tera and Jamie Black
9. Felix Sabates, Lin Johnson, Mikel Edwards
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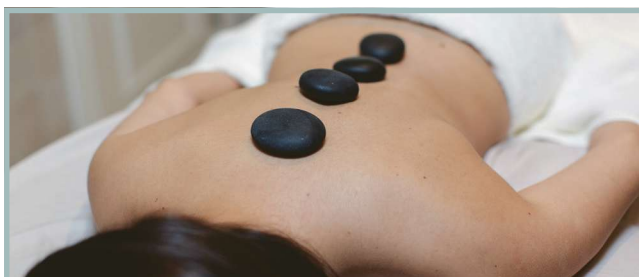
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# Written Legacy

## Simple Notes, Letters Enrich the Human Spirit

By Matt Olin and Jodi Werner Greenwald | Photo by Ray Sepesy



Ballantyne author **Ashley Davis** found inspiration in his father's handwritten letters and published them in a curated collection. In our first Creative Spark — a collaboration with Matt Olin and the CreativeMornings/CLT team — Davis shares with us the joys and challenges of his creative process.

### What was it like growing up as the “dreamer” in your family?

I think being the dreamer was a direct result of being the middle child. Thinking outside the box was a necessity early in life. Finding creative ways to stand out and express one's self is essential for everyone. The middle child learns to do it a little earlier than most.

### What's been most challenging about creating your book, “A Life through Letters”?

Making sure that I captured the spirit in which my father wrote his original letters. That was ever present in my work. It was such an honor to posthumously co-write with my father, and I wanted to get it right.

### How did you keep yourself motivated and accountable to see this project through?

I had worked on the project starting in early 2013. Then in January 2015 I simply decided that was the year I was publishing the book. I picked a date and would not let myself stop until it was completed. I would often think of the struggles my father had in his life due to his physical limitations. That always kept me motivated.

### How do you want your book to make others feel?

I hope this book inspires

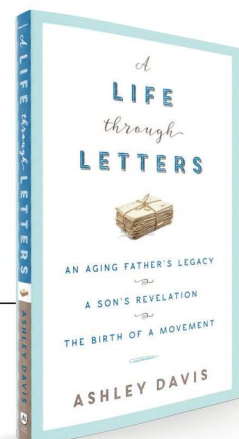
people to connect. We all have people in our lives with whom we should be in touch. A simple note or letter has such a tremendous impact on the human spirit. Emails can be deleted in a fraction of a second. As I say in the book, letters can last a lifetime — and sometimes beyond.

### Where are favorite spots in Ballantyne to get inspired?

Rush espresso, hands down. I spent a tremendous amount of time there while working on the book. It is where I go to write, connect and create. Paul and Jenny have done an amazing job of creating a space that feels like a community.

### Anything else to share?

I see letter writing as a way to preserve one's legacy. One of the very fortunate by-products of this project is that I now have a living, breathing tribute to my father and our entire family from which my two little boys can learn. I would encourage everyone to take the time to capture that same legacy and put their own stamp on it. ☺

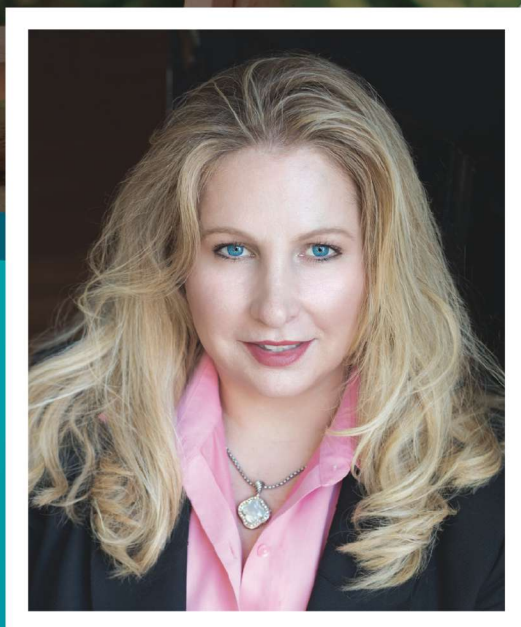


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