

March 2017
Volume 16 Issue 2

southern NEIGHBOR

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CHEF BRANDON SHARP

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About Us

Southern Neighbor is a student produced magazine, founded by Bonnie Schaefer and published under the DTH Media Corp.

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Our stories

NOTABLE NEIGHBOR PROFILE 3

For the first installation in our new monthly profile series, we talked to Brandon Sharp, the new chef at the Carolina Inn.



5 UNC FLOURISH

A club started by UNC-Chapel Hill medical students works with local organizations to teach nutrition and public health to members of the community.

CRAFTING IN THE TRIANGLE 8



Art and craft communities in the area provide niches for those looking to express themselves. We talked to local knitting groups and an art collective about their experiences.

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Chef Brandon Sharp

Crossroads chef returns to his roots

Photo by Viviane Feldman

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By Kayla Drake

The next time you feel the urge to treat yourself to dishes that have been carefully prepared by a chef with a Michelin Star, look no further than Crossroads Chapel Hill.

Crossroads, the restaurant housed in the Carolina Inn, has taken multiple steps to revamp its atmosphere and menu in the past couple of years. But perhaps one of its most intriguing changes was the hiring of Chef Brandon Sharp in October 2016.

Sharp, a UNC-Chapel Hill graduate and native of North Carolina, has made the food industry his life since his high school years, when he first started working in restaurants.

After graduating from UNC, he continued his culinary career by working in Nantucket, Mass., for a season. From there, he went to the Culinary Institute in Hyde Park, New York.

He then moved on to the French Laundry, located in Napa Valley, Calif. His experience there was crucial to his development as a chef.

"(That) is sort of my formative cooking experience," Sharp said. "I spent



Photo by Viviane Feldman

Brandon Sharp was hired by the Carolina Inn in October 2016.

two years there, spent two years in New Orleans, two years with (renowned chef) Gary Danko in San Francisco and then I became an executive chef at Solbar in Calistoga."

It was at Solbar that Sharp's culinary skills earned a Michelin Star.

"Every country and every city has its own press and system for reviewing restaurants. There're some restaurants that are excepted as excellent throughout the world no matter who's doing the rating," Sharp said.

"The Michelin guide is seen around the world as a universal standard. Achieving a one-star rating from them was an affirmation that we were among the best in the world, even though we were way out of San Francisco in a town of 5,100 people."

A chef position at Carolina Inn is not made available often, Sharp said. He said the restaurant at the historic hotel has always been a place he has respected, admired and aspired to.

His interest in working there happened to be timed perfectly with the Carolina Inn's desire to make Crossroads Chapel Hill more accessible to a wider demographic.

"His hiring coincides with the relaunching of the restaurant. We had been open approximately a year before Chef Sharp joined, and he is a part of the evolution of the food," Carolina Inn General Manager Mark Sherburne said.

"We are rated Four Star, Four Diamond at this time, so we will definitely be considered upper scale, but at the same time by offering a healthier approach and being more inviting overall, it's become kind of a place that hopefully locals will want to come into as well as our out-of-town guests."

While Crossroads is undergoing a transformation of sorts — in the hope of releasing a completely refreshed menu in winter 2017 — the restaurant will continue to focus on using locally sourced ingredients from all corners of North Carolina, Sherburne said.

When choosing a new chef, Sherburne said Crossroads was looking



Photo by Viviane Feldman

Chef Brandon Sharp is shaping the Crossroads menu with his experiences.

in particular for someone who could incorporate all of those local ingredients — and with a distinct Southern touch to boot.

"We knew that we wanted to continue to have a Southern influence, and that's a broad term, so we allowed our applicants to let their creativity shine through," Sherburne said.

"I want to fit in the ... contemporary feel of what Crossroads has become."

Brandon Sharp

"We were looking for uncomplicated dishes, ones that still had their inspiration in the South but took elements of their history and their passion and upbringings, so it shows their roots."

Sharp stood out from the pack in comparison to the other applicants in his ability to understand the direction Crossroads wants to go in, Sherburne said. He also came with an impressive training background and impeccable resume.

Sharp said he has already begun reimagining the menu to bring in influences from California, New Orleans and Spain.

"I have created dishes here that I think will fit our guests' expectations, fit what I want to express as a culinarian, and add to the conversation of what's being done in the restaurant scene here in Chapel Hill," he said.

"I want to fit in the classic feel of the Carolina Inn but also the contemporary feel of what Crossroads has become."

Sherburne said above all he wants people who have not been to Crossroads to be surprised — in a good way — about how open and welcoming the restaurant is. He thinks Sharp can help the restaurant get there.

"Being the University's living room is our tagline, so we want to be approachable for students, alumni, faculty, locals and visitors," Sherburne said.

"Really it's a melting pot for the whole area throughout Chapel Hill and North Carolina. The food and cuisine, coupled with the atmosphere, really makes it the place to be, and that's what we want it to be."



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STUDENTS HELP COMMUNITY FLOURISH

A student-run group helps teach health education in the Triangle

By Molly McConnell

Hayley Cunningham, a third-year medical student at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, sits across a table. She says she wants to do her best to help people find health — wherever they are in life.

A year ago, she saw a need for students in the School of Medicine to better understand the contexts

of patients with whom they were interacting. The idea for UNC Flourish was born.

“Patients were not getting the support they needed to be successful,” Cunningham said.

Jill Brown, director of nutrition education for the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, described the objective of the program succinctly.

“It’s an opportunity for medical students to understand barriers to families trying to prepare healthy foods,” she said.

A health education program seemed to be the answer. At first, Cunningham wanted to design her own curriculum to educate the public on nutrition, but Brown suggested the organization use a curriculum already in place.

“The more we can work with what’s already going on in the community, the better,” Cunningham said of the decision to partner with IFFS.

The Inter-Faith Food Shuttle is a national partner with the organization Share Our Strength, which aims to keep children from being hungry, and has free access to their materials, which include Cooking Matters classes to

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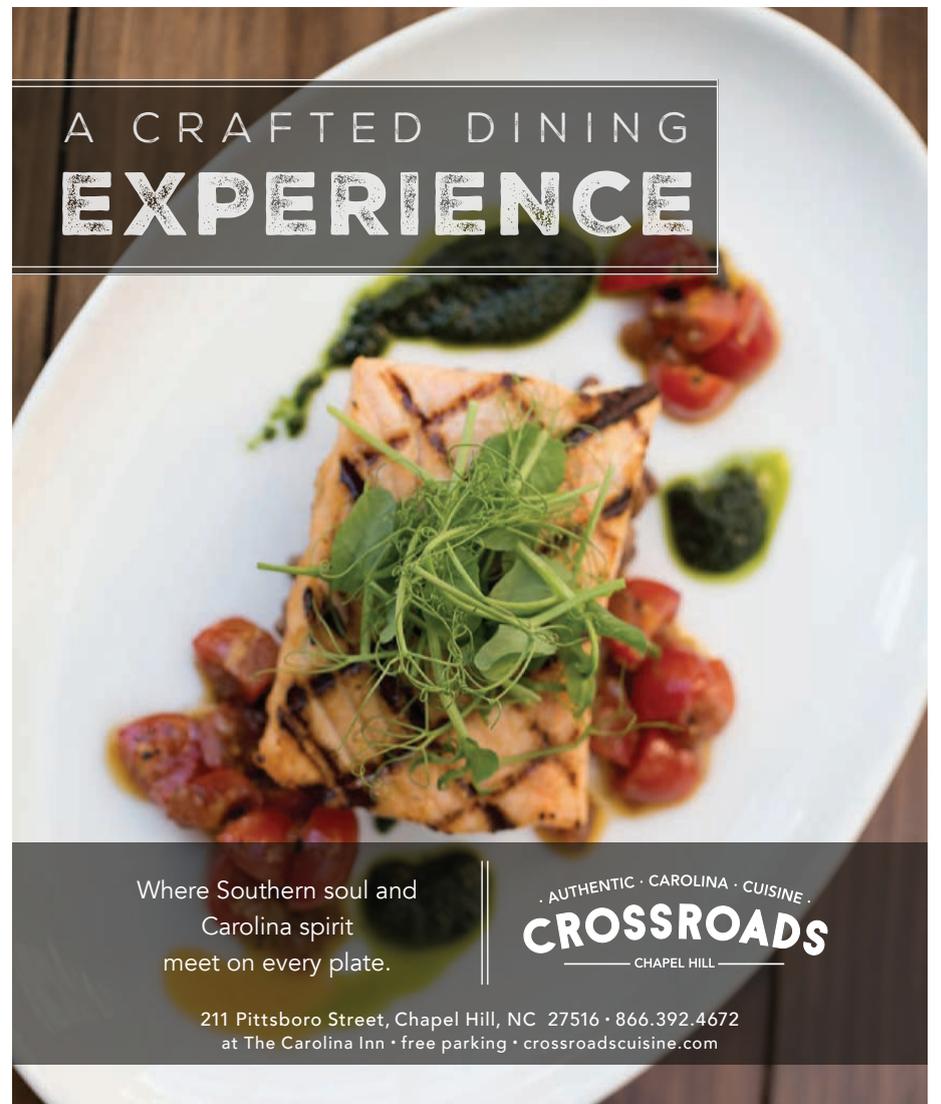
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encourage healthy cooking at home and Cooking Matters at the Store, a grocery store tour to educate participants on how to make healthy choices while grocery shopping.

“The whole point is building self-efficacy,” Brown said of those two curricula.

At first, professors at the School of Medicine were apprehensive about the potential success of UNC Flourish, Cunningham said. She said some thought it would be too big a challenge to take on, but since then, many have assisted her with finding funding and connecting her to resources.

The Inter-Faith Food Shuttle is the main resource for the young organization. Brown said the members of UNC Flourish learned that Cooking Matters classes take a lot of planning and commitment and time, and medical school students do not usually have an excess of time on their hands.

But in contrast, the Cooking Matters at the Store classes are an easier way to help the public while also promoting nutrition education because they require less preparation.

While Brown says the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle would be able to function without the volunteers of UNC Flourish, she does say they are able to

provide more classes because of the extra help.

The organization acts as a point of access between the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle’s work and the student populations of both the School of Medicine and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Photo by Claire Nielsen

One of the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle's warehouses is located on Mangum Street in Durham, which is also near an urban garden.

Two of these students include the two new co-presidents of the organization, Padam Kumar and Catherine Baird. Both were interested in public health and nutrition and were looking for ways to involve themselves in the greater Chapel Hill community when they found UNC Flourish or had

it recommended to them.

Kumar, a junior nutrition and history double major, said he is interested in all aspects of public health and Baird, a junior public health advocacy and dramatic arts double major, has always been interested in food and nutrition.

Kumar and Baird both want to see UNC Flourish grow.

“In terms of the number of students we have as volunteers and people in the community we’re partnering with,” Baird said.

Kumar said he sees the organization as a way for students to take advantage of hands-on opportunities to work in the community.

One of Cunningham’s original ideas was to begin one-on-one wellness coaching, which would be follow-up sessions with participants from the cooking classes and grocery store tours.

Both she and Baird think an emphasis on wellness coaching would encourage long-lasting relationships with members of the community.

Brown, too, emphasized relationships and partnerships in her work, though in the context of larger, more corporate partnerships, since the IFFS works across the state of North Carolina.

In this case, the partnership with UNC Flourish is mutually beneficial

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“ *It's an opportunity for medical students to understand barriers to families trying to prepare healthy foods.* ”

Jill Brown

because both organizations are able to work toward a common goal.

Cunningham emphasized the difficulty lower-budget families face to make healthy choices, and Brown also commented on the levels of complexity within the issue of connecting people to healthier food choices.

This is not a new problem, and UNC Flourish is not a new solution, she said.

There are programs in place to educate, and UNC Flourish is a small part of a larger machine attempting to do the work of change in the Chapel Hill community and beyond.

Students, like Kumar, who participate in UNC Flourish, are able to connect with children and adults

in cooking classes. Kumar says he saw children with no skills learn how to cook after six weeks and saw joy on their faces and those of their families.

This organization gives students at UNC-Chapel Hill the chance to involve themselves in the community, but it also makes students aware of the work already being done by organizations like the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.

The problems, and the work to fix them, existed before UNC Flourish, and they will continue to exist. Students are an important part of the system, but more help is always needed, Brown said.

“I could double my staff and not miss a beat.”



Photo by Claire Nielsen

The produce aisle at Food Lion in Carrboro is where many Cooking Matters at the Store classes take place.

UNC Flourish Projects

UNC Flourish is a child organization of the Student Health Action Coalition (SHAC).

Cooking Matters

Volunteer-led group classes about nutrition and cooking. Learn to shop on a budget and make healthier grocery choices.

Classes last six weeks.

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Organized by the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, a Share Our Strength program.

Cooking Matters at the Store

Volunteers lead a tour through each major food section of a grocery store. Get in-store training on how to get the most nutritious food for each dollar.

90-minute tours

Wellness Coaching

Individuals or families sign up to be coached by two volunteers with customized grocery recommendations and meal planning advice.

HOPE Cooks

Volunteers go to the HomeStart facility and cook a healthy meal for the residents using foods from their garden.

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CRAFTING CALMS RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES

Local artists and craftspeople find solace in their communities.

By Molly Smith

Log out of Netflix and put down the aspirin; there's a new and unlikely stress reliever hiding in the Triangle.

Knitting, crafting, blacksmithing, writing, painting and even watching independent films are all unique art forms that exist as the center of dozens of local communities. Despite its reputation of being geared toward older generations, a knitting group is thriving at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Carolina Craft and Tea Society is going on its seventh year of providing an outlet for knitters on campus.

"This year we've gotten a really good response," President Claire Ebbitt said. "We're all students — it's a great way to de-stress, talk about other stuff and learn from each other."

The club, referred to as CATS for short, welcomes newcomers of all experience levels. Ebbitt says teaching the craft is one of the most enjoyable perks of being president.

"Because I have a little bit more

experience than some of the people, I can teach them new skills," she said. "It's always really rewarding to see somebody master something that they didn't know how to do two hours ago."

CATS benefits more than just its members. Students have organized meetings to knit for charitable purposes as well.

"Before I joined, they knitted a bunch of baby hats for UNC hospitals," Ebbitt said, "and last year, we tried to make little nests for baby birds."

The group isn't exclusively for knitters. First-year Caroline Mueller attends the meetings, but she doesn't knit. She dabbles in metalwork instead.

"The scientific temperament and

the artistic temperament together — that's where innovation comes in," Mueller said.

She looks to North Carolina State University for most of her resources and says it's difficult to discover specific arts groups around Chapel Hill for her interests.

"I did stained glass, glass beads, silversmithing," she said. "All sorts of stuff that they should have here."

Durham artist J'Nai Willingham has been making jewelry and honing her metalwork skills since she was young.

"A lot of people figure out how to do metalsmithing from going

to school and taking classes," Willingham said. "But I was self-taught."

She also uses art as a relaxation technique and often expresses her emotions through the style of her jewelry.

"If you're emotional about something that's happening in your life at that time, the piece of artwork that you create will represent that," she said.

Willingham rents an art space at Durham's Golden Belt Studios along with 15 other artists — four of whom also make jewelry. She says she values this kind of community as well.

"We can bounce ideas off of one another, so it's useful to be in a community of artists," Willingham said. "It's helpful in so many ways for your creative energy."

Golden Belt also houses other types of artists, such as painter Chieko Murasugi. After moving to Durham from California, she was able to join the tight-knit group of artists.

"Fortunately, real estate prices are

“This year we've gotten a really good response. We're all students — it's a great way to de-stress, talk about other stuff and learn from each other.”

Claire Ebbitt

much more affordable here,” she said. “I was able to afford a studio outside my home, which I love.”

Murasugi mostly works on abstract art to make political statements. While her paintings may be centered around heavy subjects, she agrees that artistic expression can be therapeutic.

“I find it very comforting,” she said. “I’m kind of channeling my anger into something that is, for me, beautiful and soothing.”

This inherent stress relief is only boosted by the sense of community that local arts groups feel during meetings. One Carrboro knitting group revolves around the opportunities to connect with new people and indulge in some entertaining conversation.

“I usually knit at home on the couch,” said member Jennifer Herens. “It’s fun to share projects and stories with people.”

The group’s name — Carrboro

“ *I usually knit at home on the couch. It’s fun to share projects and stories.* ”

Jennifer Herens

Stitch n’ Bitch — follows a long tradition for knitting group names since World War II. Many attendees are also a part of a similar Triangle club called the Raleigh Knitting Group.

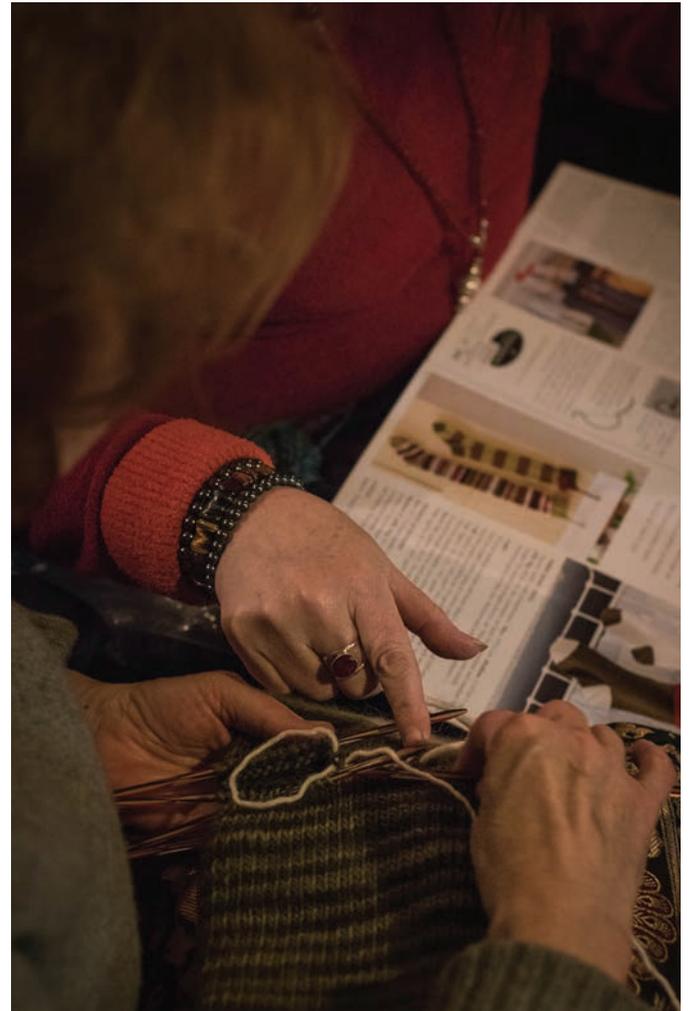
While local arts groups might seem difficult to discover when looking for a community, websites like Meetup and Ravelry allow arts-lovers, no matter how unique the hobby, to find a stress-free home.

Members of arts guilds like the Durham Writers Group, Triangle Indie Film Meetup Group and Triangle Photography Club have found a new niche through a few internet searches.

For new Carrboro Stitch n’ Bitch member J.J. Bauer, joining the group was less about learning to knit and more about making long-lasting friendships.

“I lost another community that I was a big part of, which was a theatre group,” Bauer said.

“I was spending a lot more time at home before I decided to come.”



Photos by Viviane Feldman

Carrboro Stitch n’ Bitch meets regularly at Open Eye Cafe in Carrboro. The group provides an outlet for those who want to share their craft – knitting – with others.

March Calendar

2 Thursday 'The Marriage of Figaro'

2 East South Street, 7:30 p.m.

The North Carolina Opera is presenting the "Marriage of Figaro" Mar. 2 at 7:30 p.m., Mar. 3 at 8 p.m. and Mar. 5 at 3 p.m.

3 Friday Clay Date Night

Durham Arts Council, 7 p.m.

Take your partner or a friend out for a creative night. Each person will create a functional piece of pottery. \$25 per person.

4 Saturday Craft Saturday

Historic Stagville, 10 a.m.

Visit Historic Stagville for an open house and make your own candle for craft Saturday. The event is for all ages, with a suggested donation of \$1.

5 Sunday Blues Concert

Cat's Cradle, 8:30 p.m.

All Them Witches is a five-piece band from Nashville that describes its sound as "psychadel-ta blues." Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$14 at the door.

6 Monday Flash Chorus

Motorco Music Hall, 7 p.m.

Flash Chorus is a weekly event welcoming singers of all skill levels to join together. Price is \$7-\$10 plus additional fees.

7 Tuesday Children's Story Time

McIntyre's Books, 10:30 a.m.

Join the children's book buyer at McIntyre's Books in Pittsboro for story time with babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

8 Wednesday Duke Symphony Orchestra

Baldwin Auditorium, 8 p.m.

Clarinetist Jimmy Gilmore will appear with the Duke Symphony Orchestra. Gilmore, a Duke faculty member, has made many appearances across the Southeast. Admission is free.

9 Thursday Hockey Game

PNC Arena, 7 p.m.

The Carolina Hurricanes take the ice against the New York Rangers at the PNC Arena. Tickets cost \$25 and up.

10 Friday Kids Yoga

ReCharge Pilates & Barre, 6 p.m.

Every Friday, ReCharge Pilates & Barre offers a yoga class for kids, which helps children develop important skills in a fun environment. The first class is free by registering online.

11 Saturday D-Town Beer Run

Durham Bistro, 3 p.m.

Join the Durham Bistro every Saturday at 3 p.m. for this 1-, 3- or 5-mile run with Dirty Bull Brewing Company and Fleet Feet Carrboro and Durham.

12 Sunday Sicilian Specialties

Southern Season, 2 p.m.

For \$55, experience the tastes of Sicily with Nick Malgieri. The menu will include focaccia bread, swordfish pie and various desserts. Look online for more information.

13 Monday Gordon Lightfoot

Carolina Theatre, 8 p.m.

Canadian folk musician Gordon Lightfoot has recorded around 200 songs and written more in his nearly 50-year career. Tickets cost \$47 and up.

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14 Tuesday

'The Bodyguard' Musical

DPAC, 7:30 p.m.

"The Bodyguard," based on a 1992 film, will begin its run at the Durham Performing Arts Center. Ticket prices range from \$20-\$125.

17 Friday

Annual Raleigh Blues Festival

2 E. South Street, 8 p.m.

The 10th Annual Raleigh Blues Festival features Bishop Bullwinkle, Sir Charles Jones and more.

20 Monday

Salsa Monday

The Roots Bistro, 8:30 p.m.

Salsa Mondays are held at the Roots Bistro in Chapel Hill. Enjoy salsa dancing for an entrance fee of \$5.

30 Thursday

English Country Dance

Beth El Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

This recurring dance event costs \$7 and happens every Thursday. Dances are taught in a gender-neutral manner. No partners required.

15 Wednesday

Comedy Show

Goodnights Comedy Club, 8 p.m.

In Horrible People, listen to some of Goodnights' favorite local comics tell stories about trying to be good humans. Tickets are \$12.

18 Saturday

Antiques Fair

American Legion, 8:30 a.m.

On Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., antique dealers from surrounding states will gather to show their wares.

24 Friday

Dance Concert

Memorial Hall, 8 p.m.

The Martha Graham Dance Company will perform at Memorial Hall at UNC-Chapel Hill. The company has been a leader in contemporary dance since it was founded in 1926. Tickets are \$10 and up.

31 Friday

Mental Illness Conference

St. Thomas More Church, 9 a.m.

This daylong conference is focused on overcoming stigma in Mental Illness. It will feature nationally recognized speakers and mental health experts. Tickets cost \$35.

16 Thursday

Free Men's Health Seminar

Mebane Arts & Community Center, 6 p.m.

A free talk will be held on prostate cancer and other men's health concerns. Registration is at 6 p.m. and the presentation will start at 6:30.

19 Sunday

Food Tasting

Southern Season, 3 p.m.

For \$50, learn about the new vegetarian plate. The menu will include cheese hushpuppies, artichoke pate, butternut squash mac and cheese and more.

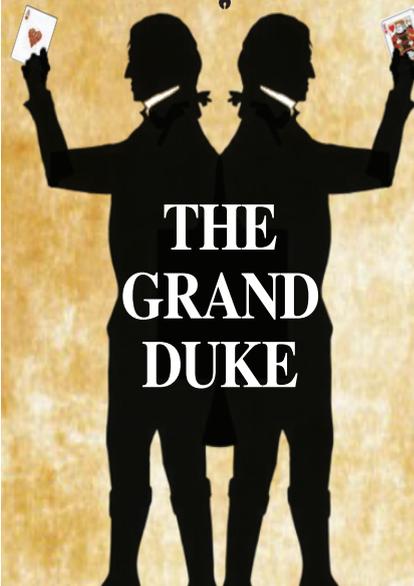
25 Saturday

Touch a Truck

Streets at Southpoint, 10 a.m.

Touch a Truck is an annual educational event that allows children to see and touch heavy machinery and meet the people who protect and build Durham and Orange counties. The event is \$5.

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NEWS BRIEFS

HILLSBOROUGH

Health department talks mental health

The Orange County Health Department has identified three priority areas for mental health services in the county, according to a press release from the department.

The three priorities are to restore funding for early mental health intervention care for those ages 0 to 5, to enhance in-school services for K-12 children and to provide community-wide education on access to care.

The department identified gaps in mental health care after the Board of Health and Healthy Carolinians of Orange County both identified access to care as a serious issue in the county.

Plans will be put in place for policies that would improve substance abuse and mental health services, especially for vulnerable populations such as the homeless and those in the criminal justice system.

More than 150 interviews were conducted with mental health service providers, education representatives, law enforcement and community activists to identify barriers to mental health care access, particularly for those 25 years old and younger.

CHAPEL HILL

Mexican festival comes to Seymour Center

The Seymour Senior Center is holding a fundraiser March 10 at its location on Homestead Road in Chapel Hill that will highlight the area's Mexican and Hispanic culture.

The Fiesta Mexicana, or Mexican Festival, will include music, dance performances, Mexican snacks and beverages and photos.

For entrance, a donation of \$30 per person is required, or \$50 for a couple.

Seating is limited. If you would like to purchase tickets in advance, contact Ken Moore at kmoore3@email.unc.edu.

Chapel Hill hosts food truck event

Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation is collaborating with the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership and the Raleigh Durham Mobile Food Association to bring a Food Truck Rodeo to Rosemary Street.

The event will take place from 12 to 5 p.m. March 26.

The food trucks at the rodeo will include Cousin's Maine Lobster, Banditos, Pie Pushers, Chirba Chirba, Hibachi Xpress, Only Burger, Morfa Empanadas and more.

Guests will be able to eat their chosen meals on top of the Wallace Parking Deck on Rosemary, where there will be plenty of tables and chairs available.

Apart from the food, there will also be games and DJ playing music.

In downtown Chapel Hill, parking is free on Sundays. Special event parking will also be available in the Wallace Parking Deck.

For more information and a map of downtown parking, visit www.parkonthehill.com.

DURHAM

County presents survey results

Durham County officials presented the results of a 2016 government survey Feb. 6 at a Durham Board of County Commissioners work session.

The survey's goal was to determine what residents think about quality of life and access to local government services, according to a press release from the county.

According to the survey results, 75 percent of respondents said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of their neighborhood.

In terms of safety, 83 percent of respondents indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their overall feeling of safety while walking alone in their neighborhood during the day.

For 12 of the 24 categories of city and council services that were rated on the survey, 50 percent of more of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with government services.

Satisfaction rates in Durham are higher than those in similar sized counties around the nation, according to the press release.



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KEYNOTES | March 2017

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Announcing the UNC Dental Faculty Practice Comfort Center

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How ADHD Medications Affect Kids' Brains

By Dr. Trish Leigh
Leigh Brain & Spine

First of all, let me start by saying that I am not anti-medication. When 1 of my 5 kids gets hurt, I give them medicine for the pain, but, I don't stop there. I figure out what is causing that pain and set about fixing it.

When parents give their kids ADHD medication, they are just dampening the symptoms of the underlying cause, not alleviating it.

ADHD Medications act as a Band-Aid for temporary relief of the symptoms.

At Leigh Brain & Spine, using state-of-the-art neuroscience, we identify the cause of a child's problem, the specific brain pattern that causes ADHD. In fact, there are different patterns associated with different learning challenges from dyslexia to sensory processing disorders. Once we know which pattern

is causing the problem, we create an individualized plan to permanently improve that pattern so that the struggles go away.

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If you want to know how it works, visit our website at leighbrainandspine.com.

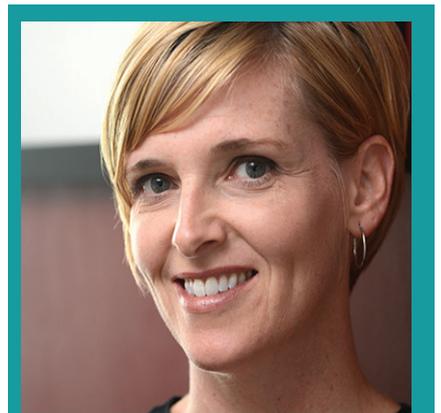
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Dr. Patricia Leigh



is a Neurodevelopmentalist and specializes in helping children and adults with ADHD overcome their struggles. Find out more at leighbrainandspine.com/adhd (919) 919-401-9933

Prepare For "Interesting Times"

"May you live in interesting times." A supposedly old, supposedly Chinese curse (neither substantiated it seems) that seems appropriate now. Our country is in a period of turmoil- be it political, social or economic. A divisive election has left some jubilant and hopeful, others distraught and fearful. Those hopeful look for greater security, a rebuilding of America, decreased regulation and government "interference", and maybe even a better healthcare system. The fearful see discrimination, harming of social programs, fear and isolation, and loss of healthcare. As time has shown, both are likely partly right and partly wrong. Eventually Democracy occupies the middle ground.

Not the most uplifting paragraph I've ever written. Hopefully it's fair. The point is there's a lot of anxiety in society- and that's worrisome. Anxiety can be distracting. It can make you focus on the wrong things. We don't and can't know what will come to be. For the most part, none of us, individually, can substantially influence those hopes or fears. Sure, we can protest, donate, campaign and vote- but those are group efforts that take time. Individually we should probably focus on what we can influence and control.

Peter Drucker, the management guru, wrote in his book *Managing in Turbulent Times*, "... in turbulent times, the first task of management is to make sure of the institution's capacity for survival, to make sure of its structural strength and soundness, of its capacity to survive a blow, to adapt to sudden change, and to avail itself of new opportunities." Substitute "I" for "management" and "family" for "institution", and we have a basis for action. If we focus on what we can control and take action, we'll tend to look longer-term and to better prepared if things don't go as hoped. What if they go even better? Fantastic! You'll be in great shape for "new opportunities."

What can we control? Lots. Here are

some biggies:

- Build your emergency fund. 3-6 months of "expenses" so you can ride out rough times.
- Save for retirement. Long after today will come tomorrow and retirement.
- Broadly diversify your investments. It's hard to predict what will shine and what will decline.
- Enhance your job skills. Learn something new. Become more valuable- now and later.
- Buy the proper insurance to protect you, your family and your possessions- no matter what happens. Life, health, disability, auto, home/renter's.
- Make or update your estate plan- Will, Powers of Attorney for finances and healthcare. It's not just for death- but incapacity too. It'll make a world of difference for caregivers and survivors.
- Avoid and/or pay off debt. Live below your means. No debt means lowers expenses if you face reduced hours, income, or job-loss.

Each and every one of these- and many others too- are completely within your control. Some take more work than others. But think about it. If you have money in the bank, investments for the long-term, new and better job skills, no



Todd Washburn

debt, and you and your possessions are protected- you're in pretty good shape regardless of what life- or the politicians- throw at you. Invincible? No- even Superman had Kryptonite. For most of us, our Kryptonite is fear and lack of knowledge, and therefore inertia. If this sounds a little daunting, it doesn't have to be. A fee-only financial planner can be a great partner to help you. We help clients sort through the noise so they focus on what's most important for them.

Hey- new website at www.toddwashburn.com. Check it out! I'd love to hear your feedback.

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Saying "I Do" Under a Carolina Blue Sky



From Chapel Hill to Hillsborough, Carrboro to Cedar Grove, Orange County is becoming a very popular place to get married. Some of betrothed are UNC grads who want a picture in front of the Old Well; others just know about our elegant hotels and non-traditional sites, the brilliant blue sky and aromatic florals. You'd be surprised at the number of wedding events hosted here each month.

Using the **Carolina Inn** as just one sample, here's what their banquets department reports:

- Number of Weddings in Fiscal Year 2016 –Ninety five (95)
- Average Spending by wedding party (without hotel rooms) \$13,622
- Anticipated Number of Weddings this Fiscal Year 2017-Eighty-four (84)

- Average Spending by wedding party (without hotel rooms) \$15,249

"When it comes to trends,' says Heidi Werner, Director of Sales and Marketing for the Carolina Inn, "last year's brides were looking for outdoor space so that they could capitalize on the 'tent' trend. The Carolina Inn hosted eleven more outdoor weddings last year than they did the year before."

Other interesting wedding tidbits:

- There are more wedding venues in Chapel Hill than ever. See list below.
- Most Popular Wedding Months: September, October, April, May and June.
- Most requested suppliers and vendors:
 - ➔ Wedding Planners
 - ➔ Florists
 - ➔ Event Rentals
 - ➔ Disc Jockey
 - ➔ Photographers

Non-traditional venues are becoming more popular every year. The Barn at Valhalla outside of Chapel Hill is one of the top choices for a bride and groom – or bride and bride, or groom and groom – who are looking for something different.

"Our 2016 was a wonderful year, and 2017 is shaping up to be even better – and were booking into 2018 as well," says Barbara Rich, sales specialist at Barn at Valhalla. We had a variety of weddings ranging from an East Indian ceremony, to one where all the guests had to come in carnival costumes. (By the way, you can never really get rid of glitter.) Small ceremonies to gala affairs. December is always the biggest engagement month -- but nothing like this year. We are happy to be receiving almost double the number of inquiries of last year. "

Here are some of the most popular venues for wedding in Orange County: Ayr Mount, Hillsborough

<http://classicalamericanhomes.org/ayr-mount/>

Barn at Valhalla

<http://www.valhallabarn.com/>

Carrboro Hampton Hotel

<http://bit.ly/1dMsfu2>

Chapel Hill Barn

<http://barnofchapelhill.com/>

Carolina Inn

<http://www.carolinainn.com/>

Carriage House Chapel Hill

<http://www.chcarriagehouse.com/>

Iron Horse, Cedar Grove

<http://www.ironhorseevents.com/>

Moorefields, Hillsborough

<https://moorefields.org/>

NC Botanical Garden

<http://ncbg.unc.edu/>

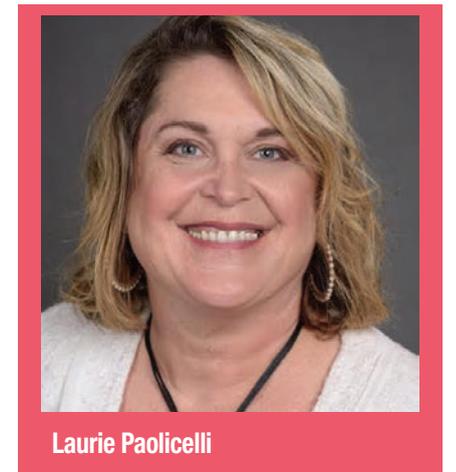
Siena Hotel

<http://sienahotel.com/>

Today, the average age of brides is 29 and grooms are 31 - this means that more and more Millennials will be planning weddings over the next 10 to 15 years. Orange County will be the destination for many of them.

This area is the most progressive community in the state, and the LGBT community knows that. Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle and her wife, Alicia Stemper, had the entire town celebrate with them when they married at Carrboro Town Commons, home of the renowned Carrboro Farmer's Market. Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough and beyond – everyone is welcome.

Need help planning your wedding in the Chapel Hill area? Looking for an easy reference book of facilities, costs and hotel room blocks? Just call the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau wedding specialist, Marlene Barbara, 919-245-4323. Or www.visit Chapel Hill.org



Laurie Paolicelli

Neighbor to Neighbor

Laurie Paolicelli has been Executive Director of the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau since 2005.

The agency is a department of Orange County and is located at 501 W. Franklin Street in Chapel Hill.

www.visit Chapel Hill.org

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A Priceless Gift

by Chris DiGiovanna

My father recently turned 70-years-old. For the last few birthdays, I had either sent him gift certificates to his favorite local restaurants or had offered to cook for him during his next visit. I mean, what are you supposed to get for someone who already has everything he wants and doesn't really need anything else?

I racked my brain for several days for gift ideas for him. Since I am well past nine-years-old, a new bottle of Old Spice aftershave no longer seemed appropriate. Dad enjoys movies, but fussed a bit about having to set-up a

Netflix account last time I got him a pre-paid subscription. What would be something small, yet simple that he would like?

My parents have lived in my childhood home for nearly 30 years. Over the years, they have added and removed walls, bookcases, closets, etc. Storage space has been maximized to the fullest extent, as my father is obsessed with storage and organization. So needless to say, their house is full of tchotchkes and other things that my siblings and I don't want.

Out of all of the stuff in my parent's home, the one item that I hope to inherit someday is my father's Mickey Mantle dinner plate. Although Mickey Mantle was best known for his hitting prowess while playing for the New York Yankees, he diversified into a number of different business ventures after his playing career, including opening-up several Mickey Mantle's Country Cookin' restaurants in Texas in the late 1960s. These restaurants focused primarily on country favorites such as fried chicken, catfish, and ham sandwiches. Unfortunately, they were poorly managed and didn't stay open more than a few years.

Dad acquired the plate at some point through his various Saturday morning garage sale expeditions. I remember when he came home with it, he was really excited to have his own special dinner plate. When I was growing-up, my siblings and I always seemed to be heading in different directions during our daily activities. However, dinnertime was the one time during the day that we would regularly sit down and spend time together. Of course, it may have involved some loud talking with hand gestures (Italians do love to speak with their hands...), but it was quality family time nonetheless.

For my Dad's birthday this year, we threw him a modest surprise party with a consisting of family friends and a handful of old co-workers. Of course, we had way more food than was necessary, including a pair of giant party pizzas that were so large, I had to turn the boxes sideways just to fit them inside of the house.

My daughter, Lily, was the first person to jump out from her hiding spot, and my father immediately broke into a big smile and started laughing. He was even happier when he learned that all of his



children were there, as we hadn't been all together for several years.

After the party, my father opened a small pile of cards and gifts from friends and family. He opened my present last. I had managed to find a small Mickey Mantle's Country Cookin' soup bowl on eBay that Mantle had signed. It came with a certificate of authenticity, which would make it easy to sell or trade at some point in the future.

And while Dad enjoyed the bowl, I realized after giving it to him that his favorite gift of the day wasn't something that could be bought or sold. It was the time and effort that his family put into his special day. And that is a priceless gift.

Neighbor to Neighbor

Chris DiGiovanna

is the President of **Trader Chris Consignments**, which specializes in selling valuable collectibles, jewelry, watches, and estate silver on eBay. Chris can be reached at chris@traderchris.biz.




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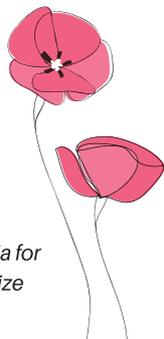
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