

HOSPITALITY NEWS

"I didn't make as much profit, but I got more traffic. It's a trade-off. I am still happy..."

SERVING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF THE CHARLOTTE AREA

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Proposed Park Bond Means More "Green" For Your Business

MOHAMMAD JENATIAN Greater Charlotte HTA

With the national economy negatively impacting our region's hospitality industry, there has never been a better time to justify our relentless pursuit of amateur sporting events. And that requires us to have the facilities required for major tournaments.

The hospitality and tourism industry, which generates nearly \$3.5 billion in annual revenues in Mecklenburg County, is one of the main pillars of our region's economy and impacts thousands of businesses both directly and indirectly. With all that is riding on the industry's vitality, we must do more to make it more diverse and less dependent on the corporate business that is vulnerable to economic downturns and the financial health of major corporations.

To make our region's hospitality industry more diverse and even recession-proof, we must make it the "Amateur Sports Capital of the South." This will enable us to attract more major regional, statewide and national amateur sporting events, particularly on weekends and holidays and during the summer when business is slowest.

We at the Greater Charlotte Hospitality & Tourism Alliance (HTA) have focused our efforts on working with the city, county and other regional decision makers towards accomplishing this goal. We can proudly say our community is educated about the value of amateur sporting events and is eagerly engaged in developing required master plans.

Please see PROPOSED PARK BOND, page 23

Ribbon Cutting...SMI Style!

Racing execs and local leaders officially open the zMax Dragway @ Concord, built in record time!

PHILLIP BROOME

TRIP Hospitality Resources

Even though its first event isn't until mid-September, the zMax Dragway @ Concord was christened on August 20 when area leaders and media representatives were invited to the dragway for the opening ceremony and ribbon cutting. The dragway, which was built in six months by 1,876 workers from 57 companies, has already been dubbed the "Bellagio of dragstrips."

The event began with remarks by Lowe's Motor Speedway President Marcus Smith, Speedway Motorsports Inc. Chairman Bruton Smith, Concord Mayor Scott Padgett and Tom Compton, president of the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA). Mayor Padgett said the dragway solidifies Concord's position as the epicenter of American motorsports and will have an estimated annual economic impact of at least \$26 million.

The zMax Dragway is a state-of-the-art facility with a seating capacity of 30,000 split between two grandstands on each side of the quarter-mile drag strip and 40 luxury suites. It is also the only dragstrip in the U.S. with four, all-concrete racing lanes. This permits specific track preparation for different



Accompanied by pyrotechnics, defending NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series Pro Stock champion Jeg Coughlin and his Cagnazzi Racing teammate, Dave Connolly, officially opened the zMAX Dragway @ Concord by performing dual burnouts through a symbolic ribbon.

Please see RIBBON CUTTING, page 12

Party Reflections Celebrates The 50th Year In Triumph

PHILLIP BROOME

TRIP Hospitality Resources

Fifty years is a long time to be doing anything, and there aren't many companies that stay in business that long. So it's quite the accomplishment that the Hooks family has been operating Party Reflections, one of the Carolinas' premier sources of event rental equipment, party supplies and services, for five decades.



Dan Hooks, son of founder Wayne Hooks and president of Party Reflections, proudly shares the evening of triumph with his staff.

Please see PARTY REFLECTIONS, page 19

Member News

Rob Cote has been named general manager for the **Aloft Hotel** currently under construction at the **EpiCentre** in Center City Charlotte. He has been regional director of operations for a portfolio of hotels owned by **Noble Investment Group of Atlanta** for the past five years. In addition, **Carolyn Cudd** has been named director of sales and marketing for the property, and **Gloria O'Hal** has been named sales manager. Cudd has been area director of sales for Noble for five years, and O'Hal has been with the company since 2002. The hotel is slated to open November 1.

Terry Crawford, general manager of the **Embassy Suites Golf Resort & Spa**, has been elected chair of the **Cabarrus County Tourism Authority Board** for fiscal year 2008-09. Other officers are Secretary **Noelle Scott**, Cabarrus Arts Council, and Treasurer **Garrett Jenio**, Wingate by Wyndham.

Please see MEMBER NEWS, page 22

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Greater Charlotte HOSPITALITY NEWS

SERVING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF THE CHARLOTTE AREA

September 2008

I'd like to share my column this month with my friends from the Community Culinary School of Charlotte (CCSC), Chef Ron Ahlert and Amy Jarmatchki. On Thursday, August 21, the CCSC held another fabulous 'foodie' event at their facility on Distribution Street. The 'Mid-Summer Night's Bistro' featured hors d'oeuvres, wine and beer followed by a dinner buffet and presentation of the winner of the first annual 'class vs. alumni' competition. Invited guests included the school's board of directors as well as new and long-time school supporters. My good friend Amy Jarmatchki, who is CCSC program administrator, organized the event and invited me. Its purpose, she said, was to "widen the exposure that the school has in the community while having some friendly competition among students and alumni and enjoying delicious food prepared at the school."

Chef Ron is the executive director of CCSC, and he loves what he does at the school. "We use the culinary arts as a conduit to help people get a new start." He couldn't stop thanking the many people and businesses who have been instrumental in keeping the vision of the school alive: founder and first executive director Chef Linda Vogler, Chef Aidan Waite, Chef Jim Alexander, Tony Pressley, the current board of directors, IFH Foodservice, Piedmont Natural Gas, Bank of America, Wachovia, Chef Randy Page, SYSCO, the Gleaning Network, Friendship Trays, and many many more.

As Ron wound down his talk, you could feel the tension in the room beginning to mount among the competitors for the class vs. alumni competition. With Class 31 standing ready to unveil their buffet on one side of the room, and the alumni also ready with their buffet on the other side, mystery judges were tallying up the scores for presentation, taste and creativity. Each group had been given the same ingredients (rice, shrimp, pork tenderloin, asparagus, squash, tomatoes, roasted red peppers and coconut milk plus the basic herbs and spices) and told to prepare dinner for the bistro guests. Scores were close, but the winner was Class 31. Better luck next year, alumni. Each student on the winning team was awarded a professional knife set donated by Piedmont Natural Gas.

Mary Margaret



Top: A big crowd of supporters enjoyed the buffet.
Bottom: The winners of the competition celebrate.

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AFFILIATES



First "Charlotte Restaurant Week" A Rousing Success

BEA QUIRK

Staff Writer

Just how busy were the 42 restaurants that participated in Charlotte's inaugural Restaurant Week July 12-18?

Based on surveys from the participants, lead organizer Bruce Hensley estimates that more than 30,000 meals were served during the week, totaling more than \$1 million in revenues. On average, a restaurant saw a 33% increase in business over the same week in 2007. Hensley is a partner in local PR firm Hensley Fontana.

"Overall, it was fantastic and a tremendous success," observes Rick Cheesman, general manager at Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House, located in Piedmont Town Center

Alex Myrick, owner of Blue in uptown, agrees. "It was great—we were packed every night, and business was up significantly from last year."



Alex Myrick

Restaurateurs were pleased, not just by the increase in business they experienced during the week, but also because of the potential business it may bring in down the road.

At Del Frisco's 70% of the guests who booked through the online reservations service Open Table were first-time visitors. "A lot of them said they would unequivocally be back later in the year," Cheesman says. "For a new restaurant like us, it's important to get people in the door. Then when you do, you have the opportunity to show them what you are about."

At Blue a number of first-time guests signed up for its email notices. Staff also showed each guest the usual menu. "We want them as repeat customers," Myrick says. "We wanted them to see that our regular menu won't break them."

Myrick—as well as many of the other participating restaurateurs—was also pleased with the exposure his establishment got from the week's promotional efforts, which included a website that got almost 80,000 visits in five weeks; TV, radio and print advertising and coverage; and lots of give-away gift certificates.

"We got exposure we couldn't afford on our own—it put us on people's radar."

Cheesman calls it "an advertising no-brainer."

And that will have a long-term impact. "I think we'll see a steady return for several years to come. And ideally, people will come back without a coupon or promotion," comments Jim Alexander, chef owner of Zebra Restaurant, located across from SouthPark Mall. He says he had 1,000 guests during the six nights he was open during the promotion, and 80% of them were there for the first time. He added 500 names to his email list.

But there's no doubt that the allure of a three-course meal for \$30 brought in lots of guests. Given today's economy, Myrick says people like the idea of a deal even more than in the past.

Says Tom Sasser, president of the Harper's Restaurant Group, which had six restaurants participating, "This promotion really struck a nerve with people—it gave them a sense of how much they were going to spend, so they could allot money for it. It made eating out more palatable."

Sasser extended the \$30-meal at all his restaurants—such as Zink American Kitchen and Upstream—for several weeks. Many others, such as Blue and Zebra, added another week or two.

Myrick and Alexander agree that extending the promotion took some of the exclusivity away from the actual week itself. But they felt it as worth the effort. Still, it's why they are ambivalent about holding another Restaurant Week promotion in January, as has been proposed. If it happens too often, "it may take some excitement from the annual event and so people may put off coming out," Myrick observes.

Restaurateurs acknowledge their margins were down due to the reduced prices. Alexander says he merely broke even; Sasser and Myrick say their margins were much smaller.

"I didn't make as much profit, but I got more traffic," Myrick says. "It's a trade-off. But I am still happy even with the lower margins."

About two dozen other U.S. cities hold similar promotions, so many restaurateurs were familiar with the concept when Hensley unveiled it. But he says that selling it was made easier after American Express signed on as a presenting sponsor, and the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority and the Greater Charlotte Hospitality & Tourism Alliance provided financial support.

"I think that some restaurants that chose not to participate were unhappy," Myrick notes.

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The President's Desk

BY MOHAMMAD JENATIAN

As hard as it is to believe, the Charlotte area will host its first major drag racing event September 11-14 at the brand-new zMax Dragway @ Concord.

Hardly six months have passed since the City of Concord and Bruton Smith of Lowe's Motor Speedway "made up" after their major disagreement, and the track received the green flag to be built. You have to admire Smith's determination in getting this project done in almost six months when it might have taken others six years just to plan a project of this magnitude. Get ready for this new drag racing event, which will bring thousands to our area at a time when we really need them.

The speedway is also responding to the current tough economic climate and has lowered ticket prices to enable more people to attend the races. If you have never been to a race, I encourage you to go to one now and take advantage of the great deals they are offering. Many of our jobs are directly or indirectly supported by NASCAR, and we owe it to ourselves to support NASCAR events when they need more attendance to have successful races.

I also invite you to take a drive to the speedway area to see all the magnificent developments in the area. You will be amazed.

The Men's Club Sky Lounge Takes Flight

STEPHEN MCWILLIAMS

Empire Media

The much anticipated Sky Lounge—the club within the club—has opened to rave reviews at The Men's Club of Charlotte. With more than 3,000 square feet of space featuring an opulent décor and a spectacular aerial view of the main floor, the Sky Lounge is perfect for intriguing dates or group parties.

After 10 years as an industry leader and the premier adult entertainment club in Charlotte, The Men's Club has experienced a metamorphosis of monumental proportion. This has not been a caterpillar-to-butterfly transition, but rather one of a beautiful butterfly becoming a peacock.

Guests experience the difference from the moment they enter the expansive lobby and enter the grand club room. Their eyes are immediately drawn to the towering wine display and massive stairwell ascending to the Sky Lounge where a colossal hand-blown glass super-nova chandelier lights the way to the ultimate entertainment experience.

Internationally renowned architect Carlos Castroparedes artistically combines drama and sophistication to emphasize bold vistas while recreating the nostalgic ambiance of old-time Paris. The 25-foot-high back-bar with its impressive imagery of the Charlotte skyline acts as a unique juxtaposition to the contemporary dining and lounge areas. Rich fabrics blend harmoniously with coiled stainless steel draperies to exude stylish energy while the entertainers dance seductively on the onyx-topped stage.

Both individuals and groups can enjoy all aspects of The Men's Club. The extensive 50-item menu has something to satisfy every culinary palate. For casual appetizers, there's the Roman Orgy Platter with a broad array of taste sensations, and our signature Breasts-of-Fire, both perfect for group sharing. Of course for a truly decadent dining experience, nothing



The Sky Lounge at The Men's Club, the club within the club

beats a fresh-from-the-tank cold water lobster. And for meat lovers, the Kick-Ass Filet is the prime of the prime, grilled to perfection over open flames and enhanced with three specialty sauces.

As a complement to its varied menu, The Men's Club is proud to have received the coveted Award of Excellence from *Wine Spectator* magazine for its extensive and impressive wine list. The staff is expertly educated to help every customer select a wine or champagne that satisfies their individual taste.

For those customers who want to be sure their favorite wines and cigars are always available, there are private wine and cigar lockers. These lockers provide both security and status and ensure that your favorite cigars and wines are stored at the constant correct temperature. Ask a manager or floor host for details.

In the lobby the Venue Boutique carries an extensive array of contemporary clothing and accessories for both men and women. Inside the club the highly trained bar and service staff caters to customers' every need, and the floor hosts can discuss every international cigar in the humidor.

The Men's Club is open to the public and encourages groups such as bachelor and bachelorette parties. It's also welcoming to sports enthusiasts who appreciate watching their favorite team on the numerous HD flat-screen TVs throughout the club while sitting in comfortable wing-back chairs.

Due to its size and accommodating floor plan, The Men's Club can cater to both individuals and conventioners looking for that special place to host a memorable party. The club also features daily lunch specials, monthly events, tail-gate parties, great food and friendly professional service.

Located on Tyvola Road at I-77, The Men's Club is the perfect place to hang out with friends and make new ones. For more information, call 704-525-8525 or visit online at www.mensclub.com.

HTA Thanks Our Renewed Members

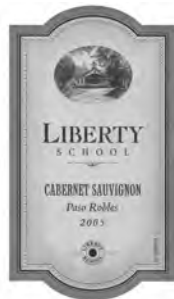
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NC Tourism's Media Showcase

MARY MARGARET TRAXLER

TRIP Hospitality Resources

On August 21, more than 50 North Carolina counties showed off their tourism attractions for members of the Charlotte-area media at the first annual North Carolina Tourism's Media Showcase. Held at the Holiday Inn Center City, the event was organized by the NC Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development to publicize what is new in the state for fall 2008.

In addition to exhibits displayed by attractions and CVBs from across the state, there was plenty of food and beverages. North Carolina is ranked among one of the top five states in the U.S. for culinary tourism, and attendees were encouraged to enjoy our state's wines and regional food.

North Carolina leads the Southeast in the number of breweries and brewpubs. A beer tasting area featuring some of the region's best brews was one of the most popular exhibits.

Exhibitors were divided into three regions—the Mountains, the Piedmont and the Coast—and each region had its own ballroom for exhibits.

The Mountains featured a trout food station and included exhibits from the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority, Chimney Rock Park, Smoky Mountain Host, McDowell County Tourism Development Authority, Swain County Tourism Development Authority, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, Asheville CVB, High Country Host, Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree—Spruce Pine, Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority and Wilkes Chamber of Commerce.

Visitors to the Piedmont exhibit area enjoyed a barbecue station and exhibits by the Heart of North Carolina, Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, Wilson Visitors Bureau, Hickory Metro CVB, Mooresville CVB, Pinehurst/Southern Pines/Aberdeen Area CVB, Lexington Tourism Authority, Pittsboro-Siler City/Fearrington House Country Inn, the Cabarrus County CVB, Visit Charlotte, Richmond County CVB, Greensboro CVB and Polk County Travel & Tourism.

The Coast was represented by the Stanly County CVB, Fayetteville Area CVB, Onslow County Tourism, Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce/Bald Head Island Limited, Elizabeth City Area CVB, Halifax County CVB, Greater Raleigh CVB, Lumberton Visitors Bureau, Crystal Coast Tourism Authority, Johnston County Visitors Bureau and Wilmington/Cape Fear Coast CVB.

Judy Root, director of communications for the Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau, which gave away a bottle of 'moonshine' as a door prize, said the bureau participated in the showcase to generate interest from regional writers. Extra exposure to the Charlotte market, she believes, will encourage 'stay-cations' during these times of high gasoline costs.

Karin Moss, executive director of North Carolina High Country Host, also said the showcase was a success. "It's been a great day. I met a lot of writers and also had the opportunity to spend quality time with our partners."

For more detailed news about North Carolina and all the happenings this fall, go to VisitNC.com or call 1-800-VISIT NC.

Clockwise beginning top left: Cordelia Anderson from the Cabarrus County CVB, Carolyn Allison of Graham County Travel & Tourism Authority, the ladies of Visit Charlotte, Leah Mitcham from the Mooresville CVB, Tammy O'Kelley from Randolph County, and the nice lady from Chimney Rock Park.



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Marriott SouthPark Continues Renovations

The Charlotte Marriott SouthPark Hotel announces the completion of a \$3-million renovation to all guest rooms, suites, meeting space and ballrooms as well as its new state-of-the-art fitness center. Formerly The Park Hotel, the distinguished property has 195 guest rooms, including eight suites, a concierge level, 24-hour health club and 8,750 square feet of meeting space.



Each graciously appointed room has the new Revive Bedding package.

Hardwood floors at the entrance of each guest room leads to a tranquil setting with rich deep colors offset by contemporary lines, classic crown molding and lightly colored accent pieces. Each graciously appointed room has the new Revive Bedding package, which includes 300-thread-count sheets, thicker more comfortable mattresses with the addition of a mattress topper, and more luxurious pillows. The Revive Bedding is among the finest and most distinctive in any global hotel brand. An added bonus of each guest room, the new Plug In Play, enables guests to connect laptops, MP3 players, digital cameras and more to the 32" flat-screen HDTV. In addition, iPod alarm clocks with docking stations are positioned in each room as an added upgrade.

"The technology features in each guest room have added a new element to our already classic, sophisticated guest room," says Michele Pajot, general manager of the Marriott SouthPark Hotel.

Two other projects were completed during the renovation. The intimate meeting space and spacious ballrooms have been updated to include new décor. The 24-hour fitness center, one of the area's largest at over 1,100 square feet, now has LifeFitness' latest line of cardio equipment including treadmills, stationary bikes, and elliptical machines, each with individual entertainment screens and an iPod docking/charging station.

Final stages in the hotel renovation process will include the hotel lobby, lounge and restaurant.

CRVA Welcomes New Board Members

The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) Board of Directors announces the appointment of three new members to its board: John Sweeney, T. Anthony Lindsey and Tina Whitley.

John Sweeney, new general manager of The Westin Charlotte, has over 25 years of hotel industry experience. He has served as general manager of The Millennium Hilton in New York City's financial district and The Westin New York at Times Square. Prior to the hotel industry, Mr. Sweeney was a police officer for the City of Atlanta. His community involvement includes serving as a past trustee for the Elizabeth Economic Development Corporation and the Downtown Lower Manhattan Association, as well as involvement in the Broadway Association and the Times Square Business District Association and the 8th Avenue Association. He is a graduate of Georgia State University and has his Juris Doctorate from Woodrow Wilson College of Law



John Sweeney

T. Anthony Lindsey's career in the real estate industry has spanned over 11 years. He is nationally known for his work in affordable housing and advocacy of homeownership for low and moderate income households. He is currently serving his second term as chair of the City of Charlotte's Housing and Trust Fund Advisory Board and is director of



T. Anthony Lindsey

the Real Estate and Building Coalition Board of Governors. He has served on the North Carolina Association of Realtors board since 2003, as president of its statewide Housing Opportunity Foundation (of which he is an organizing member) and continues still as director of the foundation. In 2003, he was appointed as the National Association of Realtors Federal Political Coordinator for Congressman Mel Watt (NC District #12). As director of the Charlotte Regional Realtor Association, Mr. Lindsey helped form its Housing Opportunity Foundation and a program called Home Give-Away. He also serves on boards including the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and the Charlotte Housing Authority and is the founder, president and CEO of real estate brokerage firm Globe Crossing Realty, LLC.

Tina Whitley is executive director of the Matthews Chamber of Commerce and has served in this role for over five years. Previously she served as events coordinator and as a director of the Matthews Chamber board for over 12 years. Ms. Whitley's work experience includes years of banking at Bank of America and BB&T, as well as starting the Val-Pak business after moving to Matthews 18 years ago. She is a past member of the Matthews Kiwanis Club, the Postal Advisory Council of Matthews, the Matthews Historical Foundation Board, the Town of Matthews Tourism Board, the Levine Senior Center Board, an elder at Matthews Presbyterian Church, parade chair on the Board of Directors for Matthews Alive!, and a member of the Matthews Rotary Club.



Tina Whitley

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NCRLA 2008 Legislative Summary

The North Carolina General Assembly convened on May 13, 2008, and adjourned the two-year session on July 18. Commonly referred to as the "short session," the 2008 session focused on bills that affected the state budget, bills that passed one chamber in 2007 but remained pending in the other chamber, and recommendations from study committees that met in the interim. Over 1,300 bills were introduced in the short session but only 229 passed. The General Assembly will convene the 2009-2010 Session on January 28.

Overall, this session was a good one for the hospitality industry. Work remains to be done on a meals tax referendum in Durham County, a tax credit for businesses that participate in the ABC recycling program, and supporting increased funding for the tourism division during tough economic times. NCRLA would like to recognize Chairman Dave Gronewoller and Government Affairs Committee Chairman Billy Sewell for their hard work this session. Below are brief summaries of some of the highlights of the session.

Travel and Tourism Promotion Funding Slashed—In a difficult year for finding funds, the 2008-09 budget reduces the Division of Travel and Tourism's recurring appropriation by \$88,926 annually and reduces the Welcome Center appropriation by \$6,923

annually. Though the Division is slated to receive a onetime, non-recurring increase of \$300,000, the permanent budget cuts and the reallocation of \$650,000 from existing Division funds for special provisions leaves less money available for statewide tourism and film marketing and promotion for fiscal year 2008-09. NCRLA will continue to advocate for more funding.

Nonprofits Can Get Mixed-Beverage Permits for Fundraisers—Legislation passed this session allowing nonprofit organizations to receive permits for the sale of mixed beverage at a single fund-raising event. Currently, the law provides for such sale of malt beverages, unfortified wine and fortified wine. However, these permits can only be issued where the sale of such beverages is lawful.

Tax Relief for Bakeries—Several bills were introduced to provide retroactive and prospective tax relief for bakeries. The final budget exempts bakery items of certain bakeries from the state sales tax (local taxes still apply). Effective January 1, 2009, bakery items will be exempt from state sales tax if they are sold without utensils by a bakery that derives over 80% of gross receipts from the sale of bakery items and whose gross annual revenues do not exceed \$1.8 million.

—Information provided by the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association

Duke Energy Holding Workshop About Sustainable Kitchens September 22

On Monday, September 22, 2008, Duke Energy is holding a workshop at their Customer Resource Center entitled "Energy Efficiency in Food Service: Creating a Sustainable Kitchen." The workshop will be held from 9:30am-2pm.

Whether you're building a new food service operation or remodeling an existing one, your kitchen design and the equipment you select will affect your bottom line and the eventual success of your business. Energy efficiency and sustainability are currently influential drivers of those decisions.

Knowing how your kitchen equipment uses energy is vital to making smart business decisions. Simply changing a few daily practices can save energy and reduce your operational costs.

- This seminar will
- help you manage your energy consumption
 - demonstrate how energy-efficient appliances can save money
 - show you how to provide a more comfortable work environment
 - provide you with resources to make good business decisions.

The workshop is recommended for facility managers, operators of chain restaurants, food service directors and managers, purchasing managers, food service equipment dealers and reps, restaurant owners, kitchen designers and consultants, and code agencies.

The speaker will be Richard Young, senior engineer and director of education at the Food Service Technology Center

(FSTC), an independent research facility that focuses specifically on commercial food service applications.

The FSTC works at all levels of the food service industry, from mom-and-pop restaurants to the largest chains, as well as with manufacturers, trade associations, utilities, and state and federal government.

Young's engineering background initially led him into the power generation business. He changed course 17 years ago when he joined the FSTC's research team. His current focus is on technical outreach—translating research into practical information. Young has a dozen years of experience creating and presenting seminars on energy efficiency. He also authors a regular column, The Green Sheet, for the California Restaurant Association.

The Duke Energy Customer Resource Center is located at 3201 International Airport Dr., Suite 100 in Charlotte. For more information about the workshop, email sktuttle@duke-energy.com.

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Claude Clark
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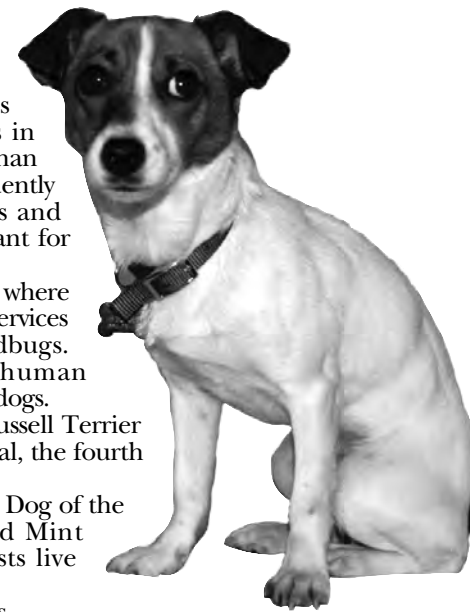
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Mr. K Speaks



Earlier this summer, bedbug infestations were reported at some homeless shelters in Charlotte. These tiny insects—no bigger than an apple seed—are popping up more frequently across the world in homes, college dorms and hotels in all price ranges after being dormant for about 50 years.

Charlotte is one of only a handful of cities where hoteliers and homeowners can turn to the services of a specially trained dog to sniff out bedbugs. Although the bugs can be found by human inspectors, humans are not as effective as the dogs.

Mr. K is a 14-pound, two-year-old Jack Russell Terrier who is owned by Killingsworth Environmental, the fourth largest pest control company in the state.

He has recently been named the Official Dog of the WFNZ Doghouse at West Morehead and Mint streets, where the radio station broadcasts live during Panther games.

Mr. K recently took some time out of his busy schedule—he typically makes four to five inspections a day, five days a week—to speak with *Hospitality News* Editor Bea Quirk. Here are some excerpts from that conversation.

HN: Thanks for meeting with me today, Mr. K.

Mr. K: Delighted. But Mr. K is my professional name. My real name is Bandit. You can call me that.

And to clarify—I am no relation to the Mrs. K who smells for bedbugs for Killo in the Raleigh area. She’s a Boston Terrier. Killo is going to add a dog in the Asheville area next year.

Thank you, Bandit. How did you learn to smell for bedbugs?

Actually, I smell their pheromones. I learned how during more than 400 hours of training from the Florida Canine Academy under the direction of trainer Bill Whitstine. I am 100% effective in finding bedbugs; human are only 60% effective. I can also smell termites.

How do you go about doing it?

I travel in a big box and often sleep in it. I like it there. My handler and friend, Andy Rodgers, lets me out of my travel box, puts on my leash and says, “Seek.” So I start sniffing around furniture, beds, all over the room. When I catch the odor, I get excited, and then he says, “Show me.” So I point to the bedbugs with my nose. Then he gives me a treat.

I can inspect a typical hotel room in three to five minutes. They like me to do hotel inspections when there aren’t a lot of people around. And I never inspect a room where people are staying. So it may take me a couple of days to inspect an entire hotel.

What do you do when you’re not sniffing out bedbugs?

I live with Andy, who is the son of Mike Rodgers, the president of the Charlotte office of Killo. I live like any other dog, except I only get fed when I find a bedbug. But I always find some.

(Editor’s note: Andy hides a vial of dead bedbugs—in places hard to find—so Bandit can find it and get fed. Mr. K can’t tell the difference between live and dead bugs.)

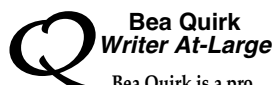
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In Memoriam: George Stephen Nivens, September 19, 1949 - August 15, 2008



Steve Nivens

Steve Nivens, a Charlotte native, was president/CEO of Cafe, Inc., a foodservice brokerage company that he founded with partners Ronnie Fore and Mike Bolton in January 1986. He was a member of Mint Hill Masonic Lodge, No. 724; a 33rd Degree Mason in the Scottish Rite Bodies, Valley of Charlotte; a long time member of Oasis Shriners, where he served on the Ritualistic Cast and was a member of the Oasis Band for 37 years; and the Royal Order of Jesters, Court 109, where Steve was to have become Director, the chapter's highest position, in 2009. He was also active in producing the Jesters' "Book of the Play."

In addition to his wife, Lucius, Steve is survived by his son, Greg Nivens and his wife Katie of Towson, Md.; and daughters, Stephanie Nivens of Charlotte, Stacy Hwang and her husband Jeff of Greensboro, N.C., Clair Matevie and her husband Jeff of Wesley Chapel and Katie Glover of Charlotte; four grandchildren, Zoe, Noah, Joshua and Eliza. Steve is also survived by one sister, Deidre Hill and her husband Marvin of Charlotte; brothers, Jeffrey Fore and his wife Mary Ann of Charlotte, Ronnie Fore and his wife Sheree of Charlotte, and Alan Fore of Charlotte; and numerous nieces, nephews and a host of friends.

Masonic Brother Tom Stroozas, retired from Piedmont Natural Gas, remembers his friend. "Throughout the 25+ years of my knowing Steve, we worked together on numerous occasions with events to benefit the local foodservice industry and our fraternal responsibilities as Masons to the Charlotte Scottish Rite Children's Learning Center and Shriners Hospitals. I recall working with Steve at the beginning of the annual Doug Mayes Children's Charity Golf Classic, now in its 5th year, which has raised thousands for the cause of children. Without Steve's ideas and leadership, many children would have missed out on the help they so desperately needed."

Memorials can be sent to the Scottish Rite Children's Learning Center, 4740 Randolph Road, Charlotte, NC 28211 or to the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled and Burned Children, 950 West Farris Road, Greenville, SC 29605.

ACF Charlotte Cooks To Support Our Troops

ACF Charlotte brought out the big guns to support our troops by assisting with a National Guard family picnic on Saturday, July 19, at the National Guard Armory in Belmont, NC.

When Kim Scott, office manager at Cyprus Restaurant Supply in Charlotte, approached ACF Charlotte chapter President Rick Dudley about providing some items and expertise to help plan the menu, Chef Dudley was quick to say, "ACF Charlotte will handle the job!" The chapter helped to secure volunteers as well as a suitable industrial-size grill to cook up the several hundred hamburgers and hot dogs to feed the soldiers and families who attended. The staff from catering company Delectables by Holly—Executive Chef John Cutitta, sous chef

Phillip Plutoni, and Giovanni Escobar—prepared the massive fare. Commenting on the company's involvement, Chef Cutitta said, "It is very important to show our troops that we appreciate their efforts to keep America free. Helping with this event was a no-brainer way to say thanks."

The picnic was established to honor those from the following Charlotte-based National Guard units who will be deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan in early 2009: DET1-30th HHC, DET2-252nd HHC and DET3-120th CAB.

Special thanks to Yorkmont Café in Charlotte for donating the hamburgers, hotdogs and buns.

—By Tom Stroozas, Managing Director, ACF Charlotte



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Ribbon Cutting

Continued from Page 1

vehicles and racing four cars at a time, as well as the possibility for racing to continue in the event of an oil-down that requires extensive cleanup.

The most prominent feature of the dragway is its 34,000-square-foot starting-line tower that includes 16 luxury suites and an additional 4,000 square feet of rooftop space accessible to guests. The tower also includes a control area for race officials, a

broadcast booth for announcers and a press box. Compton noted that any group building NHRA dragstrips in the future will use the zMax as a model.

For a project of this magnitude, an ordinary ribbon cutting just wouldn't do. Defending NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series Pro Stock World Champion Jeg Coughlin and teammate Dave Connolly used their race cars to rip through NHRA Nationals banners that were stretched across the lanes.

For the fans the zMax will offer some of the lowest ticket prices on the circuit, beginning with the NHRA

Carolina Nationals September 11-14. Four-day tickets for the inaugural race will start at \$99 for adults and \$20 for children aged 12 and under. Another great benefit is that all tickets include a pit pass, which allows fans access to the professional and sportsman pit areas.



Christian Byrd has been named executive director and general manager of zMAX Dragway @ Concord. Since 2007, Byrd has served as manager of

business development for Speedway Motorsports, Inc., Lowe's Motor Speedway's parent company. A native of Winston-Salem, he grew up in motorsports as his father, Jeff Byrd, was a motorsports marketing executive with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. for several years prior to becoming president and general manager of Bristol Motor Speedway and Dragway. After graduating from East Tennessee State University in 2001, Byrd spent two years working with NASCAR's digital entertainment and brand/consumer marketing divisions. In 2004, he joined GMR Marketing and was eventually promoted to account director, managing the sports and partnership portfolio for Lowe's Home Improvement. Since joining Speedway Motorsports, Byrd has played a key role in growing and managing the company's portfolio of national sponsors. Additionally, Matt Greci has been named manager of dragway operations for zMAX Dragway. He joined the Lowe's Motor Speedway corporate sales department in 2006 as track rental coordinator and in his new position will be responsible for scheduling and managing a variety of events at the dragway.



- A) NHRA Pro Stock class emerged from the production-based Super Stock class in the 1970s.
- B) The most prominent feature of the dragway is its 34,000-square-foot starting-line tower.
- C) Bruton Smith told the crowd that the opening of SMI's dragway "is an important moment in the history of NHRA drag racing."
- D) In addition to Bruton Smith, LMS President Marcus Smith (far right), Concord Mayor Scott Padgett (seated right) and Tom Compton, president of the NHRA, addressed the gathering.
- E) Concord Mayor Scott Padgett
- G) The Top Fuel Dragster is one of the five pro classes in North America and is the fastest class.

Bedbugs Make A Comeback! The last thing your hotel needs is bad publicity!

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Do not stay at this hotel! The room was crawling with bed bugs. My husband and I went to see a doctor after we went back home because we were bitten so badly. We informed the front desk but they seemed unconcerned and muttered a feeble apology—disgusting place.

—A Trip Advisor member
Los Angeles, CA

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CAHA News


The growth of tourism in Cabarrus County has been getting a lot of media attention lately, and so CAHA invited DeSales Wagster, president and CEO of the Cabarrus County CVB, to our June meeting to update us on what's going on.

Wagster reviewed a lengthy list of new hotel projects that are completed, under development or under discussion. This includes another full-service hotel, as well as the expansion of the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center.

In addition, a water park is under construction, and the new drag strip at Lowe's Motor Speedway, which will seat 30,000 people, will open this month. A new championship-level private golf course has also been recently finished.

In July Visit Charlotte's Mike Butts was on hand to review its 2008-09 marketing plan. He distributed copies to everyone in attendance and went through the main sections, including the organizational goals for CRVA in the area of sales and marketing; the leisure market sales plan; group and convention sales; and conference and sports sales. He also touched on the new destination brand rollout. One of the things he emphasized was the customer satisfaction survey Visit Charlotte is using to measure results.

Jason Lawrence from Charlotte Area Transit (CATS) also presented a brief overview of plans for a new transit route for the West Corridor and solicited thoughts from the group. The critical question was whether a Trade/Tryon route would be preferable to a Stonewall Street route that circled the



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center city. Most people agreed with the CATS position that Stonewall would be the best one. He also presented plans for a new color scheme on buses.

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Light Factory, Reel Soul Honor George Romero

The Light Factory and Reel Soul Cinema welcome the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority as a presenting sponsor of 'American Zombie: George A. Romero's Film Revolution,' a retrospective featuring horror filmmaking legend George A. Romero, director of 'The Night of the Living Dead,' produced in 1968. The retrospective, to be held Friday, September 19, through Sunday, September 21, will feature film screenings, question-and-answer sessions and a seminar with Romero. He is credited with changing the horror genre. For event details and to buy tickets, log on to www.zombiestatecharlotte.com.



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News & Services

Split Second Sound Signs Exclusive Agreement With Daniel Entertainment

Daniel Entertainment Group, representing and booking live entertainment for events throughout the Southeast, has signed an exclusive agreement with the popular DJ company Split Second Sound.

Split Second Sound (motto: "We don't just provide entertainment...We create it!") will offer its services for weddings, parties, and other events exclusively for clients of Daniel Entertainment. As part of the deal, Split Second owner Vinny Esposito will join Daniel Entertainment as an agent.

Esposito comes to Daniel Entertainment as a veteran of the music business, with more than 20 years of playing live music in bands and mobile DJ experience. From working as a sound engineer (over 500 credits) in a studio to live sound (over 1000 live shows) with many New York and North Carolina bands, Esposito knows the music business in and out. "This makes him a perfect fit with all the other music snobs at Daniel Entertainment," says President Doug Daniel.



Vinny Esposito

Esposito was born and raised on Long Island, NY but turned to his unfulfilled roots of the South in 1999, when he and his entire family moved to North Carolina. "I was always a Southerner trapped with a New York name," he jokes. He says moving to Charlotte was one of the best things he has ever done.

Split Second Sound has grown dramatically since his move here; from 2003 to 2006 alone, business doubled. More than 90% of the company's business has come from referrals. Esposito credits "years of experience and catering to the exact needs of our clients, along with a friendly and positive attitude. No client is too small to get our full attention." The key ingredient, he believes, is "our personalities. We love what we're doing, and we pass that passion on to the people who hire us." Another key figure is Diane Esposito, who will continue to manage the day-to-day operations of Split Second Sound.

As talent buyers rather than booking agents, Daniel Entertainment Group helps its clients choose from a large selection of bands, DJs, national acts, musicians, comedians and novelty performers. The company strives to help clients create the atmosphere they want and transform their events into something to celebrate. Clients include the NFL Carolina Panthers, Food Lion Speed Street, NBA Charlotte Bobcats, the AAA Charlotte Knights and The Grove Park Inn in Asheville.

Daniel Entertainment is headquartered in Charlotte, NC, with additional offices in Chapel Hill and Atlanta. For more information, see danielentertainment.com or call 704-333-2122 in Charlotte, 919-942-4616 in Chapel Hill.

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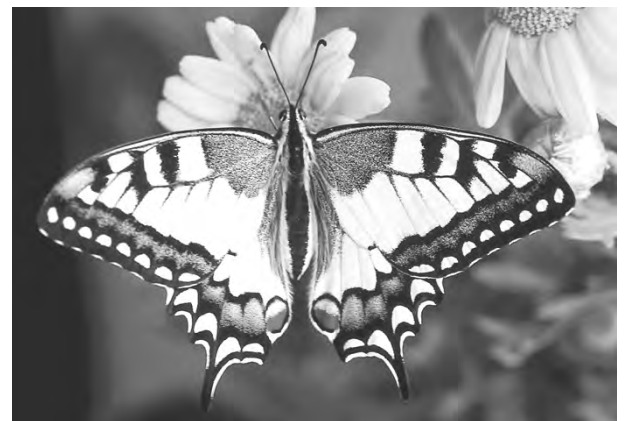
Party Reflections

Fall Family Festival Kicks Off Butterfly Display At DSBG

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden will host its second annual Fall Family Festival Saturday and Sunday, September 27-28, in conjunction with the opening weekend of the "Something's A-Flutter" butterfly display.

Bugs and more bugs is the theme for the festival. Visitors will experience the magic of over 1,000 butterflies floating around them in the Orchid Conservatory. Additional butterfly explorations await on the Butterfly Trail, which offers a series of interpretive signs as well as hands-on activities at several locations throughout the garden.

Children will have plenty of opportunities to be immersed in everything "buggy" as they make their way through the "Giant Caterpillar Obstacle Course," get their face painted with their favorite insect, enjoy some of Hollywood's best bug movies, or enlist the services of our caricature artist who will draw them into the world of bugs. They can even try their skills in the "Caterpillar Game Zone."



Throughout the weekend music and dance performances will take place on the Four Seasons Lawn. The Roustabouts will perform on Saturday at 10am, noon and 2pm, and the Whippersnappers will take the stage Sunday at 10am, noon and 2pm. Innovative dance performances by Caroline Calouche & Co. will add to the weekend entertainment. Other activities include storytelling in the White Garden, butterfly releases and hay rides.

The event runs 9am-3pm Saturday and Sunday. Regular garden admission applies (\$10 adults, \$9 seniors 60+, \$5 children 4-12).

The Something's A-Flutter exhibit will be at the garden through November 9. An extension of the daily garden experience, the butterfly exhibit will include special butterfly interpretation throughout the garden, a butterfly trail, conservatory hosts, and hand-on activities and demonstrations.

For more information, please visit www.DSBG.org or call 704-829-1252.

CONVENTION

News & Services

ASC's Cultural Free For All

Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents and visitors will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of free daily arts, science, history and heritage events during the month of September through the Arts & Science Council's (ASC) "Cultural Free for All." This year the Free for All celebrates ASC's 50 years of supporting the local cultural community. Events include the annual crowd-pleasing Gospel Shout, presented by the Levine Museum of the New South and Charlotte Center City Partners; Festival in the Park; a Charlotte Symphony open rehearsal; Blues, Brews & BBQ; Mamadou Diabate, a West African drummer performing at Davidson College; and the Roman Army Festival presented by Discovery Place to support its current exhibition, A Day in Pompeii. Check the Cultural Free for All page on www.CharlotteCultureGuide.com for more info.

African-American Heritage Driving Tour Brochure Now Available

Historic Charlotte, Inc. has published a Mecklenburg County African-American Heritage Driving Tour brochure that highlights 250 years of African-American heritage with a 55-mile journey through the county. The tour, which takes 2½ to 3 hours to drive without stops, features 23 historically significant African-American homes, businesses and religious buildings. The brochure includes turn-by-turn driving directions, and each site listing features a picture and brief description of its historical significance. Historic Charlotte, Inc. collaborated with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Heritage Committee to create it. UNC Charlotte professor Dr. Dan Morrill, Dr. Tom Hanchett of the Levine Museum of the New South and scholars from the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Carolina Room at the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County contributed to the text. Brochures are now available at the Charlotte Visitor Info Center, the Levine Museum of the New South and the Carolina Room at the main branch of the public library uptown.

80th Gridiron Contest Between Eagles And Aggies Comes To Charlotte


In order to accommodate an anticipated crowd that exceeds the capacity of its own stadium, North Carolina Central University will move its home football game against long-time rival North Carolina A&T State University to Memorial Stadium in Charlotte. The 80th gridiron contest between the Eagles and Aggies will kickoff at 5pm on Saturday, October 4. Since 1994, the average attendance for this clash is 35,478, including a high of 48,001 at Carter-Finley Stadium in Raleigh in 1997. Memorial Stadium can seat 24,000. For ticket information, contact the NCCU Ticket Office at 919-530-5170 or visit www.NCCUEaglePride.com.

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September Conventions & Big Events

Date	Group	Venue	Type
Sept. 1	Matthews Alive	Downtown Matthews	Public Event
Sept. 4-7	Yiasou Festival	Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral	Public Event
Sept. 4-7	Antique & Collectibles Show	Charlotte Merchandise Mart	Public Event
Sept. 5-7	Carolina Coin Show	Charlotte Merchandise Mart	Public Event
Sept. 5-7	Southern Ideal Home Show	Charlotte Merchandise Mart	Public Event
Sept. 7	Panthers vs. San Diego Chargers	Bank of America Stadium	Sporting Event
Sept. 10-12	21st Century Building Expo & Conference	Charlotte Convention Center	Conference
Sept. 11-13	Blues, Brews & BBQ	Center City Charlotte	Public Event
Sept. 11-14	American Association for Justice	Omni Charlotte Hotel	Conference
Sept. 13	3rd Annual Whitewater Festival	U.S. National Whitewater Center	Public Event
Sept. 13-16	Food Lion AutoFair	Lowe's Motor Speedway	Public Event
Sept. 14	Panthers vs. Chicago Bears	Bank of America Stadium	Sporting Event
Sept. 18-21	Festival in the Park	Freedom Park	Public Event
Sept. 18-21	Southern Women's Show	Charlotte Merchandise Mart	Public Event
Sept. 19-21	Davidson Beauty Systems Fashion Focus 2008	Charlotte Convention Center	Public Event
Sept. 21	Panthers vs. Minnesota Vikings	Bank of America Stadium	Sporting Event
Sept. 25-27	American Association of Bovine Practitioners	Charlotte Convention Center	Conference
Sept. 26-27	Charlotte Shout Culinary Arts Experience	Gateway Village	Public Event
Sept. 26-28	Saving Our Kids, Healing Our Planet	Charlotte Convention Center	Public Event
Sept. 27-29	Charlotte Gift & Jewelry Show	Charlotte Merchandise Mart	Public Event
Sept. 28	Panthers vs. Atlanta Falcons	Bank of America Stadium	Sporting Event

HSMAI-CC Hits The Road For Meeting In Raleigh

ELIZABETH HIGDON

Visit Charlotte

High gas prices didn't keep the Carolinas chapter of HSMAI from taking a road trip for its first meeting in Raleigh to reach out to members in that area. The meeting was hosted by the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel on July 29, and the topic was "Turbulent Economic Climate, Soaring Gas Prices and the Hospitality Industry."

A panel of top professionals was on hand to discuss this timely—and complex—topic: Cecilia Bell, key account director with InterContinental Hotels Group Global Sales; Bill O'Laughlin, director of national accounts with HelmsBriscoe; Jana Rae Oliver, director of sales with the Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau; Julie Campbell, director of sales with Embassy Suites Raleigh-Durham/Research Triangle; and Melissa Beard, a meeting planner with the NC Society of Surveyors.

Here is an excerpt from the questions attendees asked and the panel members' responses:

Q: Based on your knowledge of the airline industry and the imminent flight reductions, can you share with us how it will affect first, second and third tier cities and specifically the Raleigh market?

Bell: Airline capacity is expected to decrease 8% and will affect every major market. PKF Hospitality Research estimates that for every 1% decrease in seat availability, there is a .39% decrease in hotel occupancy. For a perspective,

after 9/11, we experienced a 3.3% decrease in occupancy.

Campbell: MidWest Express is closing its RDU operations, and so is Express Jet. American Airlines is cutting 14 routes in September. Southwest continues to pick up market share as a result of airline buy downs. It is the only airline adding flights.

Q: What other trends are you seeing as a result of this soft economy?

Campbell: Amateur sports are becoming victims of high gas prices. Tournaments held in the Raleigh market are performing below last year's numbers from teams pulling out due to high gas prices. Families can't afford to do multiple tournaments in a year. Also, corporate business cancellations will increase based on the need to show better performance.

Bell: Corporate meeting and travel budgets are being slashed. Some 34.5% of corporate planners are seeing a reduction in the number of meetings this year, and they'll be using fewer resorts.

Q: How can we ensure we are marketing to the appropriate customers and delivering the appropriate message to fill our hotels at the best rate?

Oliver: Keep rate integrity because it's hard to recover once you have lost it. Utilize your convention & visitors bureau to help you sell the destination and close the piece of business.

O'Laughlin: Second-tier cities have to

be aggressive for the business. Don't just rely on the Internet and email. Don't forget about clients in your own backyard. They will be there during good times as well as bad. Be creative with your proposals to clients.

Beard: Promote meeting planner incentive packages to help with budget restraints. Make sure to treat the customer right. Work with convention & visitors bureaus. If a planner has a good experience at a hotel and with its sales person, they are going to try and bring business back. Be creative.

Campbell: Customer service is more important than it ever was. Demonstrate value for the customer. Align your product to clients' needs and make sure you address them.

HSMAI-CC would like to thank the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, all the panelists and board member Shannon Bortz from InterContinental Hotels Group for making the meeting a success.

For more information on HSMAI-CC, visit www.hsm.ai.org

HSMAI's mission is to be the leading source for sales and marketing information, knowledge, business development and networking for professionals in tourism, travel and hospitality.

Mark your calendar for our October 28 meeting. For more information, contact Executive Director Brandon Stanley at brandonclt25@gmail.com.



NACE Members Glean Green Tips At August Meeting

Members of the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE) gathered at St. Peter's Episcopal Church on August 18 for their August meeting entitled "Shades of Green." Green, of course, refers to environmentally responsible practices and policies and how they can be incorporated into our professional lives. St. Peter's Episcopal Church is the home of La-tea-da's Catering and Events, a full-service catering company that offers off-site and on-site catering for corporate and social functions.

Prior to the beginning of the program, attendees enjoyed a delicious Southern dinner prepared using locally sourced ingredients by the chefs of La-tea-da's—Carolina catfish, red cabbage slaw and hushpuppies plus organic salad and a farmer's market vegetable buffet with sweet corn succotash, green beans with caramelized onion & roasted garlic and ginger-roasted sweet potatoes. Special thanks to owners Chrys and Janet Woodson, a mother-and-daughter team who started their successful catering business over 12 years ago. Thanks also to Kristen Prestwood who provided the decor, centerpieces and linen; Diane Mason of Diane Mason Photography for photographing the meeting; and American

Audio Video for providing the AV.

Diane Mason was given the opportunity to say a few words about her company, Diane Mason Photography. Diane, one of Charlotte's top wedding photographers, has had her photographs published in numerous newspapers and magazines and displayed in art galleries in New York and Colorado. She has been a NACE member for one year and can be contacted at 704-408-1400. Another NACE member, David Stewart, national sales manager for Bioselect, also gave a short presentation about the earth-friendly foodservice products his company manufacturers—compostable cups for hot and cold beverages, deli containers, plates, cutlery; natural willow catering trays; and 100% biodegradable bags. View their products online at www.bioselect.com and contact David at dstewart@bioselect.com.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Cassie Brown, director of events for Tribble Creative Group. She began her talk with a warning: the green movement is not a passing trend. The up-and-coming Generation Y is for it and will make it a part of their personal and professional lives. So it is imperative that your company establish an environment

policy and list its environment standards in its contracts. According to IMEX, 67% of meeting planners are taking environmental considerations into account when planning, and meeting planners are requesting environment policy information during the "shopping phase."

For event planners, the elimination of plastic bottles is a good place to start. For example, a typical 4-day conference for 2,500 attendees uses 90,000 plastic bottles and cans. Making bottles to meet Americans' demand for bottled water requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel 100,000 cars for a year. Nearly 90% of water bottles end up in landfills. Available U.S. landfill space has dropped 80% in the last few decades. Replacing plastic bottles with water coolers or pitchers is an easy way to get started with your new green policy.

Specific to catering companies, Cassie suggested the following green policies:

- Buy condiments in bulk
- Don't use polystyrene (styrofoam)
- Don't pre-fill water glasses
- Use china
- Use cardboard matches
- Buy sustainable coffee
- Serve in-season food
- Use coasters rather than cocktail

napkins

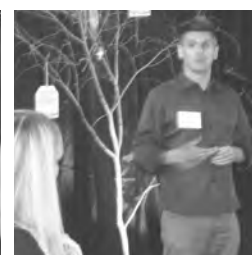
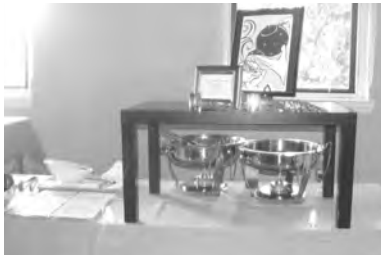
- Run a full dishwasher
- Donate food through programs offered by Loaves and Fishes or Second Harvest Food Bank

• Clean microwave

• Use soy or beeswax candles

PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic is one of the most hazardous consumer products ever created. Unfortunately, signage, so prevalent at meetings and events, is often made of PVC, which takes 450 years to break down in a landfill. Cassie recommends that event planners avoid PVC products totally, although finding a replacement product has been difficult.

To get started, Cassie suggests that you research best practices in your industry. Several websites can be helpful including www.MeetGreen.com, www.GreenMeetings.info, www.BlueGreenMeetings.org, www.GreenGlobe.org, and <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/>. Be realistic; don't try to do it all the first year. And finally, put your newly adopted standards in writing. Try to determine guidelines for each category of your business such as office, food, beverage, rentals, transportation and event visuals.



From The President



BYCORTENAY MATTERS

We're back from the 2008 Experience! Conference in Philadelphia! We had an absolute blast and have brought a wealth of information back to our chapter. We were joined by local chapter members Katie Mills, Allison Myers, Nathan Hoffman, Todd Crawford, Scott Garland and Linwood Campbell, CPCE, who was elected

national secretary/treasurer.

We enjoyed speakers such as Walter Scheib, the White House executive chef from 1994-2005, and Mindy Weiss, the wedding planner who handles glamorous celebrity weddings. The Culinary Experience featured exquisitely delicious appetizers, vegetarian specialties, organic foods and desserts prepared by Philadelphia's best chefs.

Also at the conference, local Hospitality Committee Chair Jessica Helms was named to the President's List, which recognizes outstanding NACE members who go above and beyond to support their local chapter. Charlotte chapter board members had this to say about Helms:



Jessica Helms

"Her love for the association is unparalleled and is unconditional. She is always the first to step up to the plate and make things happen, without being asked."

"Jessica is a mentor, cheerleader, leader and follower. She is what the true embodiment of a NACE member should be."

"She works diligently to monitor and execute registration for monthly meetings and, as the first face at the door, greets attendees with a warm smile and genuine personality. Jessica encourages new guests to network with the members and is always available to discuss the benefits of NACE, in an effort to increase our chapter's membership. Jessica seeks to make our members feel valued and recognized when they attend meetings."

"Jessica works hard for our chapter, without asking for credit or formal recognition. Her efforts are purely out of enthusiasm and dedication to the NACE community. She plays a vital role in our chapter as a chairman, friend, mentor and professional. We look forward to her successes as a future leader of this chapter."

"Under Jessica's leadership our Hospitality Committee has been taken to the next level with care, passion, attention to detail, determination and consistency."

The co-chairs and Décor Committee have met to brainstorm about ideas and themes for the 2009 Experience Conference in Charlotte. We are very fortunate that surrounding chapters such as Charleston, Triangle and Atlanta have committed their support to help us. If you are interested in joining a committee, please contact me or Katie Mills.

This time last year, our chapter had 90 members. Today, we have 113, meaning we have now achieved Centurion status. Congratulations and thanks to Gail Buff, our membership committee, our board and to our chapter members!

National's Spring Membership Campaign was a grand success, attracting 291 new members across the country. The Charlotte chapter came in second place with 14 new members. We are on a roll! The fall membership campaign is tentatively scheduled for October 6 to November 10.

Our next membership meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 15, at the Charlotte City Club where we will bring the '08 Experience Conference to you! You can register for this meeting at www.charlottenace.com.



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ISES Members Are Reminded To "Mind Your Manners"

PHILLIP BROOME

TRIP Hospitality Resources

Before I begin this story, I would like to start with a disclaimer: I was raised in a single-parent home with a mother who was also a small business owner and definitely not the world's best cook. Most dinners were spent in front of the TV with something microwaved. Salad forks were the last things on our minds.

Therefore, proper dinner etiquette is not one of my strong points. For this reason August's ISES meeting was mandatory for me. By the look of the meeting's turnout, I was not alone.

The meeting took place Tuesday, August 12, at the Duke Mansion. The feature presentation was "Mind Your Manners: Etiquette According to Sikky," given by Sikky Rogers of Rogers & Gala Creative Partners, Inc.

As mentioned above, my knowledge of proper food etiquette is lacking. Therefore, I listened attentively as Sikky gave us "the code of conduct for a civilized environment."

As the presentation moved along, Sikky and her three assistants demonstrated the proper way to enjoy our lunches. Everyone carefully watched each other as we all attempted to use our best manners to chow down on the delicious fried chicken, peas

and pasta salad. Since we were essentially in an etiquette crash course, I decided to grade myself based on Sikky's instruction.

Bread

- Break bread into small pieces so you don't stuff your mouth.

- Always put the butter on your plate instead of putting it directly on bread from the butter tray.

Self Grade: D+ (I graded myself low here because I couldn't help but take big bites of the bread. On the positive note I did put the butter on my plate for the first time ever.)

Meat

- Cut meat into small pieces before eating.

- When talking, lay your utensils on the edges of your plate.

Self Grade: B (The Duke Mansion tried to throw us a curve ball here by serving fried chicken. It was almost impossible to eat the chicken properly. I tried my best and didn't give in to the temptation to pick up the chicken with my hands.)

Peas

- Never eat peas with a spoon.

Self Grade: B+ (I think I did a pretty good job eating the peas. I didn't chase them around the plate or smash them with my fork like Sikky said her grandchildren do.)

Pasta

- Never slurp!

Self Grade: B (I made sure I didn't slurp, but I did get a little sloppy as the lunch went along. I even started mixing the peas with the pasta. Hey, it wasn't my fault everything was so tasty.)

All in all, Sikky said the most important rule in etiquette is to make others feel comfortable. When sitting down for a meal, watch how your host eats, then adjust your behavior accordingly.

Lastly, I would like to leave everyone with a couple of pointers I picked up from Sikky:

- "Turkey and roast are done. You are finished."

- "Superman does good; you are doing well."

The next ISES meeting will be September 9 at M5 Modern Mediterranean. Registration begins at 11:30am.



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Party Reflections

Continued from Page 1

On August 6, the family did what it does best and threw a grand party to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary. They did it in typical Party Reflections style with help from Indigo Photography, Total Event Production, Best Impressions, Plate Perfect Catering, Momentous Events, La-tea-da's Catering & Events, Walter's Choice Catering, Royal Restrooms, Side Porch Catering, Art of Vision, The Duke Mansion, Trolley's, Inc. and SMS Catering.

Looking at their enormous 115,000-square-foot facility, you wouldn't believe that Party Reflections started in 1958 as a chair and equipment rental company with an inventory of only 30 tables and 300 chairs. With a desire to work for

himself and armed with a degree from Davidson College and several years of corporate sales experience, founder Wayne Hooks saw his opportunity when he purchased a small inventory of tables and chairs from a local businessman.

Wayne was definitely taking a big chance. In 1958, the event rental industry was almost non-existent, especially in a small city like Charlotte. But from day one, Wayne understood what it would take to be successful. As he puts it, "Give people good service, and they'll pay you for it."

Wayne and his wife Sue, who soon came on board as the company's receptionist, worked from sunup to sundown to make sure all their customers' needs were fulfilled.

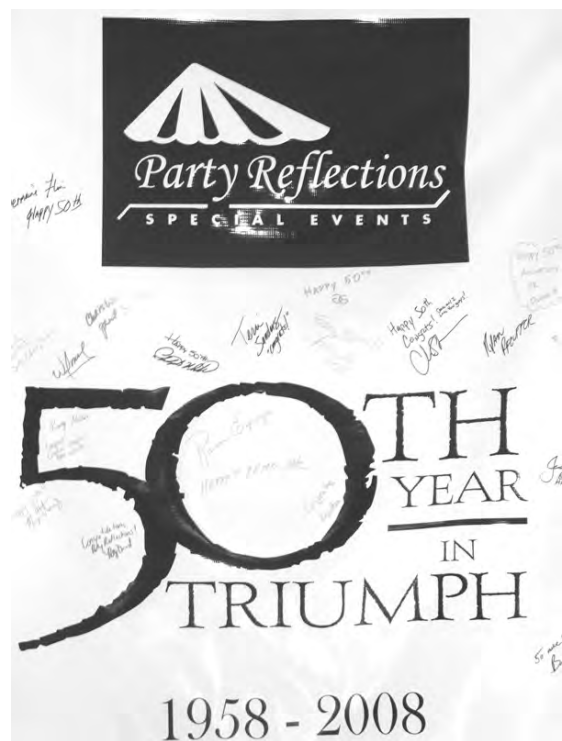
Together they grew the company from the ground up to become a pioneer in the event service industry by providing quality equipment at a reasonable price with a special attention to detail.

Along the way Wayne also instilled that ethic into one of his young employees. To this employee Wayne wasn't just "The Boss," he was also Dad. Dan Hooks' first job was doing whatever he was told, and now he is the company's president. Like his father, he is keen on building the company by making customers happy and is not solely driven by profits. His philosophy, he says, is "want it, live it, sacrifice it. You do the things you have to do to make sure the next day happens."

One strength Party Reflections has

always had is its personal service. This has led to Dan having some of the strongest relationships in the industry. He always does his best to provide whatever is requested, no matter the size or the client. Even though he is the president, he realizes that 50 years of being in business could not have been done alone. It takes everyone, including vendors, employees and the employees' spouses.

Moving towards the future, Dan and Party Reflections will continue to serve customers with first-class service and to strive for excellence while keeping an inventory that is cutting edge and top-of-the-line. Here's to another 50 years!



From The President



Rick Dudley

With the shorter days of September now upon us, we can look forward to some "cooler temps" as we gear up for the plethora of fall activities and events that lie ahead over the next few months.

August provided us yet another great venue to meet and acquaint ourselves with new ways to conjure up some great and exotic cuisine. Special thanks to Yossi Shem-Avi and U.S. Foodservice for hosting and sponsoring Food Innovations and Justin Wiernasz. We were indeed dazzled by the exotic products from around the world that are available to enhance our creativity as chefs and culinarians. Thanks to all who helped make our August meeting a big success!

For those of you who have not signed up, ACF Charlotte will host its 14th annual Chef's Golf Classic on Monday, October 6, at the Country Club of Salisbury. It will feature the traditional Captain's Choice format and is limited to 120 golfers. Entry fees are \$125/person

and include food, beverages, door prizes and enough fun to last until...Special thanks to SYSCO Charlotte for signing on as our Presenting Sponsor.

To make it easy for you to sign up, a registration form can be found inserted into this issue of *The Greater Charlotte Hospitality News*, and you can even pay with a credit card! So don't delay, sign up today, and remember the first place team wins \$2,000. We will also offer a \$10,000 team "putt-for-cash" contest as well. Why put off registering?

Due to extenuating circumstances we have postponed our scheduled trip to Childress Winery until a later date. Instead we will convene back at Piedmont Natural Gas for an incredible program that will feature "cutlery and fruit" starring Chef Philip Lloyd from the Country Club of Salisbury and cutlery expert Bryan Diliberto of Pro-Chef. Come see, hear and learn how you can make some real tasty food art for your plate and table presentations and the tools you'll need to make some real "sharp" carvings. If you've never seen Shipindiaokedao Carving Tools in action, this is a program you can't afford to miss! For updated information, log on to our website at www.acf-charlotte.org and stay tuned for email updates as the date approaches.

Chefs' August Meeting Focuses On The Exotic

On August 11, 2008, members of the Charlotte chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) took the short trip to Fort Mill, SC to the headquarters of U.S. Foodservice for their August educational meeting. The featured speaker was Chef Justin J. Wiernasz, president of Food Innovations, a Naples, FL-based company specializing in exotic and specialty foods.

According to Chef Wiernasz, Food Innovations provides "creative culinarians with unique, organic, sustainable and artisanal products sourced from all regions of the world." Available products include origin-specific seafood, exotic meats and game, dry-aged meats, exotic fruits and vegetables, specialty chocolates, artisanal cheeses, and imported specialties from around the world. Meeting attendees were invited to partake of one of their exotic products—kangaroo meat—which looked like filet mignon and some say tasted like filet mignon. We also were treated to samples of their line

of chocolates and specialty spices. To see what products are available from Food Innovations, log on to their website at www.foodinno.com or call U.S. Foodservice at 803-802-6000. U.S. Foodservice Executive Chef John Eyer also demoed preparation of some beautiful salmon, which attendees were invited to sample.

Meeting announcements included a reminder of the annual golf tournament, this year to be played on October 6 at the Country Club of Salisbury, as well as the schedule of meetings for the remainder of the year (September 8: "Cutlery & Fruit" at Piedmont Natural Gas, October 13: S&D Coffee plant tour, November 10: "Kooking Kosher" at Piedmont Natural Gas Tech Center, and December 8: Annual Holiday Social).

Special thanks to Yossi Shem-Avi and U.S. Foodservice for hosting the August meeting. For more information about the ACF Charlotte chapter, contact Managing Director Tom Stroozas at 704-488-3779.



A



B



C



D



E

A) Chef John Eyer of U.S. Foodservice B) Chef Justin Wiernasz of Food Innovation C) Chef Phillip Lloyd and Ronnie Fortenberry D) Samples of exotic spices E) Chef Mark Henry and Chef Geoff Blount



Submitted by Gary Gorham, IFH Foodservice Distribution

The term "shrink," which refers to how beef cuts lose weight, now looks likely to apply to the U.S. beef industry for the next several years.

Cattle cycles historically last 10 to 12 years, with the cycle split between expansion and contraction. The current cycle, however, appears to have broken the mold, leading some analysts and industry players to suggest that U.S. cattle numbers might not increase in the foreseeable future. The total U.S. herd (beef and dairy cattle) peaked in the latest cycle at 103.5 million head on January 1, 1996, and eight years of herd liquidation left the population at 94.9 million head on January 1 2004.

The supply squeeze became real later that year, and packers began losing money week after week as fed cattle prices outstripped packers' ability to sell beef at sufficiently high prices to make a profit. That's been the challenge facing packers ever since. More significantly, analysts say there is little likelihood of any expansion for the rest of 2008 or 2009.

Pork producers will likely see profits again in 2009, although higher input prices have kept them in the red for close to nine months, according to U.S. Pork. It has been suggested the industry is in the middle of a perfect storm—excess hog supplies, record feed prices and initial concerns regarding the robustness of domestic demand.

U.S. demand for pork remains steady. The index for consumer-level demand rose 2.5% in 2007 and was 0.2% higher in the first quarter of 2008 over 1Q 2007. Meanwhile, beef demand was down 3% and poultry demand was up 3.2% during the same timeframe. These figures are consistent with an economy in recession—lower beef demand, steady pork demand and higher chicken demand.

The "trading down" phenomenon appears to be at play with consumers shifting their protein expenditures away from beef to less expensive chicken. Pork prices will be bolstered by higher chicken prices and sustained in the long-term by constraints on cattle availability.

Higher input costs are the main cause for the average hog producer to lose as much as \$50 a head so far this year. Based on futures prices at the end of June, assuming non-feed costs remain constant, hog producers will not be able to achieve a breakeven scenario until May 2009.

U.S. pork exports have reached record levels for each of the last 16 years, and pork exports are on pace to set new records in 2008. In the first four months of 2008, U.S. pork exports were 52% higher than 2007 levels. Totalling more than \$1.4 billion so far in 2008, U.S. pork exports could surpass \$4 billion for the year.

As the poultry industry reels from the weight of rising feed costs, the government reaffirmation of its commitment to corn-based alternatives has hit processors the hardest.



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Culinarians Code

- I pledge my professional knowledge and skill to the advancement of our profession and to pass it on to those that are to follow.
- I shall foster a spirit of courteous consideration and fraternal cooperation within our profession.
- I shall place honor and the standing of our profession before personal advantage.
- I shall not use unfair means to effect my professional advancement or to injure the chances of another colleague to secure and hold employment.
- I shall be fair, courteous and considerate in my dealings with fellow colleagues.
- I shall conduct any necessary comment on or criticism of the work of fellow colleagues with careful regard for the good name and dignity of the culinary profession, and will scrupulously refrain from criticism to gain personal advantages.
- I shall never expect anyone to subject himself to risks which I should not be willing to assume myself.
- I shall help to protect all members against one another from within our professional.
- I shall be just and enthusiastic about the success of others as I am about my own.
- I shall be too big for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the pressure of business to hurt anyone, within or without the profession.

ProActive Food Safety Training

Schedule for September

September 8 - 9: Duke Energy Customer Resource Center
September 16 - 17: Bass Pro Shop Concord Mills

Cynthia and James Scherbaty CEC • ProActive Food Safety Training
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Chef Mark Martin Named Academic Director Of The International Culinary School At The Art Institute Of Charlotte

Chef/instructor Mark Martin, former executive chef of Ethan's on Elizabeth, has been named academic director of the International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Charlotte. He replaces Chef Joseph Bonaparte who has become director of curriculum and quality assurance for the more than 30 International Culinary Schools at The Art Institute's system of schools.

A Charlotte native, Chef Martin began his culinary career at Coyote Café in Santa Fe, NM. He gained a reputation locally with his creations as chef de cuisine at Pastis and later at Ethan's on Elizabeth where he was owner and executive chef. Martin is known for his dedication to locally grown produce and for the quality of his ingredients. That same dedication to the "Slow Food" movement (locally grown, organic foods) is a trademark of the International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Charlotte.

Martin joined The Art Institute as a part-time instructor in 2005 and in 2006 became a full-time instructor. Soon after he closed Ethan's. He is a graduate of UNC at Chapel Hill and the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont. He earned an MBA at Wake Forest University.

As academic director, Martin will oversee the academic affairs of the International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Charlotte including academic standards and policies, class schedules, faculty and community involvement. His appointment was announced by Douglas N. Heaps, dean of academic affairs at The Art Institute of Charlotte.

"We are fortunate to have an instructor of Chef Martin's stature who is willing and able to step into the position of academic director," said Heaps. "We look forward to his continuing the standard of excellence in instruction and the level of community participation set in the first six years of culinary education at The Art Institute of Charlotte."

Martin said accepting the position is a natural progression in his career. He will continue to teach but also will be involved in administration and in individual work with students. He said he looks forward to helping "the culinary program continue to grow through quality instruction" and to leading students and faculty in community



Chef Mark Martin

activities.

"One reason I like this position is the faculty—I admire them, and I am honored to lead them," said Martin. "It's a great atmosphere with chefs who are committed to learning, who love food (and) who love to cook."

Chef Bonaparte opened the culinary arts program at The Art Institute of Charlotte in October 2002. Prior to coming to Charlotte, Bonaparte was a chef instructor at The Art Institute of Houston. A founder of Slow Food Charlotte, Chef Bonaparte was named 2006 Chef of the Year by the Charlotte chapter of the American Culinary Federation. He will continue to be based in Charlotte where he is 1st vice president of ACF-Charlotte.

The International Culinary Schools at The Art Institutes is North America's largest system of culinary programs with over 30 locations. Based on classical Escoffier, Asian and Latin culinary techniques with an emphasis on progressive trends and practices, the schools' curriculum are designed to develop and sharpen fundamental cooking techniques and professional skills and introduce a variety of international cuisines. Internships, student-run school restaurants, guest lectures and web-based seminars, and study abroad programs help broaden the scope of learning for students.

For more information about the International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Charlotte, call 704-357-8020 or log on to www.artinstitutes.edu.

ACF To Host 14th Annual Golf Tourney

The American Culinary Federation Charlotte chapter (ACF Charlotte) will host its 2008 golf tournament on Monday, October 6, at the beautiful Country Club of Salisbury. This year's tournament is presented by SYSCO Charlotte and will feature a \$10,000 "Putt-for-Cash" and numerous other games of skill and chance throughout the day. Total prize packages are estimated to be valued in excess of \$619,210.07 with \$2,000 CASH going to the winning team!


Foursome fees are \$500 with hole sponsorships starting at \$125. The tournament will be limited to thirty teams

(120 golfers) with reservations accepted until September 29. So don't delay, sign up today! For your convenience, ACF Charlotte now accepts credit cards for golf registrations and sponsorships.

Special thanks to Chef Philip Lloyd for hosting this year's tournament. For sponsorship and registration info, contact Tom Stroozas at 704-488-3779 or email him at tom@bluewateraviation.com.

A handy registration form has been inserted into this newspaper. Don't delay. This tournament is selling fast!

—By Tom Stroozas, ACF Charlotte Managing Director



ACF Charlotte Golf Tournament

Monday, October 6 • Country Club of Salisbury

Download the registration form at www.acf-charlotte.org.

For sponsorship and more info, contact Tom Stroozas at 704-488-3779 or email tom@bluewateraviation.com.

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Member News

Continued from Page 1

On Tuesday, August 19, **BlackFinn American Saloon** held their "First Look Party" showcasing everything they have to offer. BlackFinn, located in center city's Epicentre, offers something for those looking for a casual "bite" or a complete dining experience. The contemporary American menu is complete with a large selection of starters, soups, salads and entrees. In addition to the restaurant, BlackFinn also gradually transforms into a world-class party bar as the night progresses. For the sports enthusiast, there's 30 large flat panel TVs, a state-of-the-art sound system, and a flat-panel TV at every booth. Last but not least, BlackFinn specializes in all types of private events for groups of any size. There are several private-room options, and the chef has put together a great catering menu to ensure that guests will leave impressed.



Top: Guests enjoy themselves at BlackFinn's "First Look Party." Bottom: Two debonair gentlemen from Charlotte TRIP with BlackFinn's Sales & Event Manager Courtney Maddox.

Maggiano's Little Italy at SouthPark Mall has promoted **Antonio Tillery** to the position of managing partner. He was previously the restaurant's executive chef. The new executive chef at Maggiano's is **Delfino Netto**.



Antonio Tillery

Cyrl Santos, owner and executive chef of **Cyros LLC Sushi Catering**, has opened a sushi bar at **Rooster's Wine Bar**, located just across the hall from Rooster's Wood Fired Kitchen, a SouthPark restaurant owned by **Jimmy Noble** of Noble's Restaurant. Santos supplied the sushi at the U.S. Tennis Open Championship in New York for three weeks this summer.

Linwood Campbell, CPCE, past president of the Charlotte chapter of the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE), has been elected secretary/treasurer of the NACE national board. He is the senior convention services manager at **The Westin Charlotte**.



Linwood Campbell

Travel + Leisure has announced its 13th Annual World's Best Awards, and two North Carolina sites have been recognized as "Best In World." **The Inn on Biltmore Estate** ranked 36th among the Top 100 hotels in the U.S. and Canada, while the **Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa** ranked 13th among the Top 20 Hotel Spas. Both properties are located in Asheville.

Jim Utrata has been promoted to general manager of **The Oceanaire Seafood Room**, located in Piedmont Town Center near SouthPark Mall. He has served as the restaurant's assistant GM since its opening in September 2006. In addition, **Cory York** has been promoted to executive chef.



Jim Utrata

The Golf Club at Ballantyne Resort is reopening this month after being closed for renovations that made significant enhancements. The second hole has received a completely new design and layout—the tee boxes have been moved down the hill closer to the creek; the fairway is leveled; and the green has been moved. In addition, Hole #3 has been made a Par 4 by moving the tee boxes forward to increase the level of playability for the average golfer. Hole #12 has been lengthened to become a Par 5. There is also a new pavilion providing personalized service, more food and beverage options, and a 60-inch plasma TV with full A/V capabilities for a first-class pre- or post-outing experience. The pavilion can accommodate up to 50 people for a seated dinner or up to 100 people for a reception.



The Golf Club at Ballantyne Resort reopens in September after adding significant enhancements.

Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau CEO DeSales Wagster was chosen as one of the *Charlotte Business Journal's* Top 25 Women in Business. She was honored along with her peers at a luncheon at the Charlotte Convention Center July 17.



DeSales Wagster

Meetings & Conventions magazine recently awarded **Visit Charlotte** a 2008 Gold Service Award for outstanding professionalism and dedication in their service to meeting professionals. The magazine's readers awarded 77 domestic and 13 international convention and visitors bureaus with the Gold Service Award distinction. Selections were based on criteria that included professionalism of staff, support with hotels and site inspections, assistance with ground transportation planning, guidance on local attractions, and liaising with local vendors and services.

Tom Durban, owner of **Event Productions USA, Inc.**, a 15-year-old production company specializing in corporate video and lighting systems, and **Tom Stanton**, who



moved to Charlotte in 2006 and founded **Stanton Productions** (later renamed Uptown Lighting and Sound), have merged their companies. The new name is **Uptown Event Productions**. Says Durban of the new venture, "By creating one large company, we have expanded our areas of expertise and now are able to serve all the production needs of our clients." Stanton's knowledge of staging and rigging come from his years of theatre work that began in high school in New York, while Durban is widely known and respected both locally and nationally as an expert in lighting, sound, video and projection. For more information, call Tom Durban at 704-543-6991.

Keith Sweeney is now the food and beverage director at the soon-to-open **Hilton Garden Inn** located at I-485 and S. Tryon. The property, owned and managed by **Griffith Stafford**, will open mid-September. **Tyler Birchfield** is the hotel's general manager.



Keith Sweeney

On July 29, **Bissell Hotels** held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction on **aloft Charlotte Ballantyne**. The 136-room hotel, adjacent to the Lodge at Ballantyne Resort, is scheduled to open in fall 2009. Bissell Hotels owns and operates several hotels in the Charlotte area; its flagship property is the Mobil Four-Star, AAA Four-Diamond **Ballantyne Resort**.



Left to right: H.C. "Smoky" Bissell, Howard Bissell, Ray Eschert, Joe Hallow, JJ Bissell, Brent Rumsey, Steve Kalczynski, Clifton Coble, Marshall Hilliard, and Peter Grills. Photo courtesy of Bissell Companies

Speedway Motorsports, Inc. (SMI) has promoted **Don Hawk** to the new position of vice president of business affairs. Hawk, with 22 years of experience in the motorsports industry, will oversee several of SMI's subsidiaries, including 600 Racing, SMI Properties and The Source International, and also coordinate the company's food and beverage operations. Prior to joining SMI in November 2007 as vice president of special projects, he had assembled a broad-based motorsports résumé. His career started in 1986 as director of Winner Ford Motorsports, and he was general manager of Alan



Don Hawk

Kulwicki Racing in 1992. Hawk then served as president of Dale Earnhardt, Inc. from 1993-2000 when he formed Hawk Sports Management. In 2005, he became director of regional racing development for NASCAR and was responsible for research and development related to its weekly racing series and regional touring series.

Jessica Helms, who chairs the Hospitality Committee for the Charlotte chapter of the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE), was named to the President's List at the recent 2008 Experience! Conference in Philadelphia. The list honors outstanding NACE members who go above and beyond to support their chapter and NACE. Helms is senior sales manager at **Hampton Inn & Suites SouthPark at Phillips Place**.

The 36th Street Bakery, Cafe and Catering opened a second location on July 8 in the heart of downtown Lincolnton in the former Ramseur's Sandwich Shop at 101 North Court Square. Says owner **Rick Dudley**, president of the Charlotte chapter of the American Culinary Federation, "I decided to open the new location because it offers more seating and more visibility." The original location on Westview Drive will remain open. The Court Square eatery features a large selection of deli sandwiches, salads and breakfast items. Future plans for the new location include live music. The 36th Street Bakery is open from 7am-6pm Monday-Friday and 7am-3pm on Saturday. For more info, call 704-735-1116 or 704-735-1117.



Barbara (front left) and Rick Dudley, with son Allen (second and third from right), held a grand opening for the second location of their bakery, the 36th Street Bakery, located in downtown Lincolnton. Photo by Lisa Brown/LTN Photo

Speedway Motorsports, Inc. (SMI) has promoted **Mike Burch** to vice president of business development and **Jessica Fickenscher** to director of special projects. Burch began his sports marketing career in 1989 at Georgia Southern University and then worked for the NBA's Orlando Magic and Houston Rockets. He served as vice president of marketing for the Charlotte Hornets from 2000-2002 and then operated Upsell Sports, providing marketing and sales representation for several Charlotte area sports and entertainment properties. He joined SMI in 2003 as director of business development. Fickenscher joined SMI in 2000 to work with the company's Internet initiative group. She then served as an executive sales assistant for SMI's Performance Racing Network before being named client services coordinator in 2002. She was promoted to client services manager in 2003. While Fickenscher will continue to work with key national clients such as Lowe's and Sprint, she will now manage other special projects as well.

Morton's The Steakhouse has hired **Gustavo Ibarra** as the chef for their SouthPark restaurant. A native of Mexico City who was raised in Los

Member News

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Angeles, Ibarra has spent 10 years in the restaurant business. Beginning his restaurant career in the Los Angeles area at the California Pizza Kitchen, he then became employed by Houston's Restaurant in Pasadena. After he and his family moved to Charlotte, he was employed by The Cheesecake Factory and Oceanaire Restaurant before joining Morton's.

Heidi Nowak has been named director of sales and marketing for **The Ritz-Carlton, Charlotte at Bank of America Center**. Her pre-opening office is located in the Hearst Tower at 214 N. Tryon St., Suite 1600. The property is scheduled to open in fall 2009.



Heidi Nowak

Congratulations to **Norm and Stacy Randall** of **Dilworth Neighborhood Grille** whose son, **Jacob Vincent Randall**, was born August 15, weighing in at 7 lbs., 7 oz.



Jacob Vincent Randall

Several personnel moves have recently been announced at **Lowe's Motor Speedway (LMS)**. **Steph Grennan** was promoted from senior manager of events to director of events. She began her motorsports career in 2002 when she joined GMR Marketing as an executive assistant/office manager. She moved to Sprint Nextel in 2004 where she worked as an executive assistant to the marketing and public relations teams dealing with the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. Grennan joined the LMS events department in February 2006. **Lindsay Spiegel** will now be manager of guest services and logistics after serving as a coordinator in the same department since January 2006. She graduated from Mercyhurst College in 2005 and started working in the LMS ticket services department that same year. **Megan Smith** moves from community relations coordinator to guest services and logistics coordinator. A 2004 graduate of York College, she started at LMS in February 2007 as an intern in the guest services and logistics department. Later she moved to the ticket services and community relations departments before accepting her new position. **Emily Link** was promoted from corporate administrative assistant to community relations coordinator. Link, a 1997 graduate of St. Andrews Presbyterian College, joined LMS in April 2008 after operating her own equestrian services business. **Kyle Edmiston** has joined the corporate sales department as track rental coordinator. A 2007 graduate of the University of South Carolina, he was an intern in the

speedway's corporate sales department from February 2006 until December 2007. He then worked as a local account specialist for Muzak prior to this new position.

Cortney Matters, president of the Charlotte chapter of the National Association of Catering Executives, has joined the team at **Weddings and the City**. Her new phone number is 704-975-8724, and her new email address is cortney@weddingsandthecity.com. **Weddings and the City** was founded in 2004 by **Kristin Vining**, who currently oversees a team of three planners.



Cortney Matters

Great Wolf Lodge, scheduled to open in March 2009 at I-85 and Speedway Blvd., has announced the promotion of **Lisa Browning Mitchell** to director of sales & marketing. She was previously with Great Wolf Lodge Pocono Mountains.

Ashley Shoemaker is the new convention services coordinator at the **Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau**. A graduate of UNC Charlotte, she has worked there as an intern the past two summers. She also has lived and worked in Sevilla, Spain, where she taught English to students at IES Murillo. In her new position, she will make sure that booked events are a smooth ride from start to finish.

Mike Butts, executive director of **Visit Charlotte**, has been named to the **Destination Marketing Association International** board of directors. The 90-year-old organization is the largest association of destination marketing organizations and convention and visitors bureaus in the world, with more than 625 members from approximately 25 countries.



Mike Butts

Former Speedway Motorsports President **Humpty Wheeler** has started a new company, **The Wheeler Co.** Joining him in his new business venture is his son **Trip**, a sales and marketing executive at Velocity, and his daughter **Patti**, owner of the Charlotte-based TV production company Wheeler TV. The elder Wheeler is chairman, while Trip will serve as president and remain with Velocity as an independent contractor. Patti will keep her position as president of Wheeler TV. The Wheeler Co. will focus on consulting in the motorsports industry.



Humpty Wheeler

Proposed Park Bond

Continued from Page 1

Many of our decision makers are embracing the idea of making our region the "Amateur Sports Capital of the South" and are ready to champion the need for additional facilities. They are embracing these efforts, not only because of their economic impact, but also because they improve the quality of life for residents and create more opportunities for our young people. We simply do not have enough athletic fields to keep our children active in Mecklenburg County. If we did, we stand a better chance of keeping kids away from criminal acts and joining gangs.

I am proud to say that for a number of years we have been working with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation. We are enthusiastically supporting the proposed \$250-million park bond, which was tentatively approved by county commissioners August 5. They will hear again from the public on September 3 and will vote for the final bond package that day.

If approved by the commissioners, the bond will come before voters November 4. It will provide funding for several amateur sports facilities, including a regional complex in Matthews and a mega-recreation center in North Mecklenburg, as well as renovations of several existing facilities, such as the Mecklenburg Aquatic Center.

The bond package will be a tremendous tool for growing our remarkable hospitality and tourism industry and will bring us a step closer in becoming the destination choice for major amateur sporting events. While these projects will definitely make our community a better place to live, it will also mean lots of business for companies directly or indirectly impacted by the hospitality and tourism industry.

I strongly urge you to find out more about this important bond package and ask you to please vote for its passage. If you have any questions, please contact me at 704-331-0079 or at mjenatian@charlottehta.com. As always, I thank our members for their support and for providing us with the opportunity to serve them as a full-time association dedicated to maximizing their business opportunities and bottom lines.

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Deadline for submissions is 10 days prior to cover date (i.e. September 20th for October issue).

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation
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EVENT VENUE RENTALS

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Visit parkandrec.com or call 704.336.2884

- LARGE INDOOR & OUTDOOR EVENTS
- LARGE MEETING SITE
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Industry Notes

Lake Norman Chamber To Host Public Swimming Access Meeting Sept. 19

The Lake Access Advisory Committee, originally formed by Cornelius Mayor Jeff Tarte, will meet at the Lake Norman Chamber (19900 West Catawba Ave., Suite 100, Cornelius) on Friday, September 19, from 9-10am in the Marion Board Room. Jim Garges of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation will discuss the topic and take input from local Chamber members and community residents. The Lake Norman Chamber supports lifting the ban on public access swimming. For more information, email Bill Russell, chamber president, at russell@lakenorman.org or call 704-892-1922.

ServSafe Essentials At CPCC In October

ServSafe Essentials will be offered at Central Piedmont Community

College's Harris Campus October 13 and 14 from 8:30am-5pm. The cost of the two-day class is \$85. The textbook, which is available at the Harris Campus bookstore, is required. To register for the class, call 704-330-4223.

A Wealth Of Culinary Ideas At IFH "Chef-To-Chef Culinary Showcase"

Discover a wealth of culinary ideas at the "Chef-to-Chef Culinary Showcase" presented by IFH. This invitation-only special show will take place on Monday, October 6, from 5-9pm at The Mint Museum of Art, located at 2730 Randolph Rd. Culinary displays from national and regional vendors will be featured. The Charlotte ACF "Chef of the Year" Dirk Rusthoven CEC will prepare plenty of scrumptious food samples and will present cooking demonstrations. On display will be cheeses from around the world; organically raised, hormone-free meats; gourmet desserts; and appetizers. For

more information visit the IFH website at www.ifh.com and click on the News and Event link or call IFH center-of-the-plate specialist Gary Gorham at 704-421-0211.

Date Set For Charlotte's 14th Annual Taste Of The Nation

Charlotte's 14th Annual Taste of the Nation will take place April 15, 2009 at the Wachovia Atrium. Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation® Charlotte, presented by American Express®, is part of the nation's premier culinary benefit dedicated to making sure no kid in America grows up hungry. Since 1990, the Charlotte event has raised more than \$1 million. For more information about the 2009 event, visit www.tasteofthenation.org/charlotte.

ASC Cultural Investments Top \$14.5 Million

The Arts & Science Council (ASC) will provide more than \$14.5 million to support Charlotte-Mecklenburg's cultural community during 2008-2009. Of that total, more than \$12.7 million will go to directly support 102 organizations for cultural education, community projects, operations of cultural institutions, and new public artworks. These funds were made possible through corporate and individual gifts to ASC's 2008 Annual Fund Drive, as well as from public dollars from the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, the North Carolina Arts Council, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville, and earnings from the ASC endowment. For more details, visit www.artsandscience.org.

Art Institute's Slow Food Club Plants Organic Garden

Student members of the Slow Food Club at the International Culinary School of The Art Institute of Charlotte, following the lead of chef-instructors who opt for local organic produce and meat, will now grow their own. The culinary students planted six beds totaling 56 varieties of winter vegetables, such as lettuces, beets, carrots and root vegetables, just outside one of the school's kitchens. These veggies will be served at the school's restaurant, Artisan. Artisan is the teaching restaurant for the "a la carte" class at the International Culinary School and is open to the public for lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Where possible, produce not used by Artisan will be used in other culinary classes. Shortly after Artisan opened in the spring of 2004, culinary students planted an herb garden from which they have supplied the restaurant and other classes.

CRVA Announces Yearly Tax Revenues, June Lodging Stats

According to the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, June occupancy registered 65.7% in the market, down 10.2% from last June's 73.2%. Year-to-date, occupancy is 64.4% in Charlotte, down 4.6% from last year's mark of 67.5% through June. By comparison, year-to-date occupancy has fallen 2.7% in the U.S. and 4.1% in the state. Charlotte's market-wide average daily rate (ADR) was \$86.27 in June, up 5.6% from June of 2007. Year-to-date, ADR is \$89 in the market, up 7.9% from the same period last year. By comparison, year-to-date, ADR has grown 4.2% in

the U.S. and 5.6% in North Carolina. Charlotte-area revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$56.67 in June, down 5.3% from last June's performance of \$59.84. Year-to-date, market-wide RevPAR is \$57.33, up 3% from the same period last year. By comparison, RevPAR has grown 1.5% in the U.S. and 1.2% in the state compared to the same time last year. For FY 08, Mecklenburg County's 6% occupancy tax collections totaled \$26.4 million, a 9% improvement from last fiscal year's \$24.2 million. The 2% NASCAR Hall of Fame tax collections totaled \$8.8 million for FY 08, also a 9% rise from last fiscal year's \$8 million. The 1% prepared food & beverage tax collections topped \$20 million for the first time, finishing FY 08 at \$20.6 million, which was up 7% from the \$19.3 million collected during FY 07.

Great American Dine Out Fights Childhood Hunger September 21-28

Share Our Strength's (SOS) Great American Dine Out is a week-long national dine-out held in September (September 21-28 this year) that brings together the entire restaurant industry and millions of customers. Restaurants contribute a percentage of their sales; diners eat out at as many participating restaurants as they can during that week. The funds raised support the efforts of SOS to end childhood hunger through grants, partnerships and education. To find participating restaurants in the Charlotte area, log on to GreatAmericanDineOut.org. American Express is the presenting sponsor and other great companies have followed as partners.

Mecklenburg County Boasts NC's Top Tourism Revenue

According to the NC Commerce Department's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development, Mecklenburg County led the state in tourism revenue in 2007 with a total of more than \$3.4 billion. Statewide, visitor spending last year increased 7.4% to \$17.1 billion. Wake County ranked second with nearly \$1.5 billion in travel revenue, followed by Guilford County with almost \$1.1 billion. Union County had a 12.2% increase in tourism revenue, and Cabarrus County's numbers were up 12.1%. The data was gathered by the Travel Industry Association using sales figures, tax revenue and employment numbers.

Mint Museum Kicks Off Major Expansion Project

The Mint Museum officially begins construction this month on its new building that's part of the Wachovia Cultural Campus. A public kick-off celebration will be held Sunday, September 7, from 2-4pm on The Green uptown. During the celebration, guests will enjoy live entertainment by Brass Charlotte, light refreshments and art-making activities for all ages. The new facility will provide larger and more flexible exhibition space, unique galleries to showcase the collections, and a dramatic light-filled Grand Room where visitors can gather. The new facility will also house a Family Gallery to reinforce the museum's dual priorities of art and education. The new facility is scheduled to open in the fall of 2010, just before The Mint Museum's 75th anniversary. The Randolph Road location will remain open. For more information, visit www.mintmuseum.org/expansion-news.html.

Calendar of Events

September

- 8** **ACF Charlotte General Membership Meeting** at Piedmont Natural Gas Technology Center (4301 Yancey Rd.), 6pm (board meets at 4pm). Program: "Cutlery and Fruit" featuring Chef Philip Lloyd from the Country Club of Salisbury and cutlery expert Bryan Diliberto of Pro-Chef. Learn how to make tasty food art for your plate and table presentations and the tools you'll need to make some real "sharp" carvings. For info call Tom Stroozas at 704-488-3779 or email him at tom@bluewateraviation.com.
- 9** **ISES Power Lunch** at M5 Modern Mediterranean (4310 Sharon Rd.), 11:30am. Program: "Business Model 101 - Conception to Completion" featuring Tom Sasser, owner of Harper's Restaurant Group. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 nonmembers. For more info or to register, email isescharlotte@yahoo.com or call Cassie Brown at 704-376-1943.
- 12** **CAHA HR Committee Meeting** at Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel, 2800 Coliseum Centre Dr., 9am. Seminar on demographics. For more info, call Sid Smith at 704-588-3255.
- 15** **NACE Membership Meeting** at Charlotte City Club (2100 W. Trade St., 31st floor), 6-8pm. Program: "Recapturing Highlights from the 08 Experience Conference!" Cost: \$30 members, \$50 guests, \$15 students. To

RSVP, log on to www.charlottenace.com.

- 17** **CAHA Membership Meeting** at Charlotte Arrangements, 2315 N. Davidson St., 3pm. For more info, call Sid Smith at 704-588-3255.
- 18** **HTA'S Autumn Golf Tournament** at Renaissance Park Golf Club (1525 W. Tyvola Rd.), 9am. Awards presentation follows play. Cost: \$380 per foursome includes lunch, refreshments all day, cart and green fees. For registration info, call the HTA office at 704-331-0079.
- 22** **"Energy Efficiency in Food Service: Creating a Sustainable Kitchen" workshop** at Duke Energy Customer Resource Center (3201 International Airport Dr., Suite 100), 9:30am-2pm. Featured speaker: Richard Young, senior engineer and director of education at the Food Service Technology Center, an independent research facility that focuses specifically on commercial food service applications. For more info/registration, email sktuttle@duke-energy.com.
- 29** **IFSEA Membership Meeting** at location TBD, 6:30pm. For more info, call Agnew Hopkins at 980-598-1526.

Please send calendar information to:

Hospitality News Calendar
1000 Seaboard St.
Suite C3
Charlotte, NC 28206
or fax to 704-376-7802
or email: mmt@charlottetrip.com.