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## Lucky Day

St. Patrick's Day celebrations  
around Lake Norman **PAGE 6**



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# Leaning in and getting out

BY LINDSAY MARTELL

Savoring the moment does not come easily to me. I'm a consummate planner; an overthinker and I slip into cruise director mode way, way too often (cue my family rolling their eyes daily, at least once. OK, twice.)

But I'm trying to lean in to spontaneity, and embody the meaning behind one of my favorite quotes by Henry David Thoreau: "You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment."

Live, launch, find. I love it.

Taking this to heart, my family and I headed up to Lake Norman State Park near Troutman, a place we hadn't visited since the early days of the pandemic. It was just as idyllic as I remembered — lake views along the Alder Trail, where we hiked a one-mile loop beneath a canopy of still-bare trees that crisscrossed over our heads.

Our pup, usually the most reluctant walker, was unusually prancy; I guess he had been craving some forest-y air as much as we did. It never takes us long to shed our suburban skin and let the quiet wash over us.

Closer to home, we hit up two new-to-us spots in Cornelius: The Peach Cobbler Factory (for sweets) and Old Town Vinyl (for spins).

At PCF, we shared a hefty Bigger Better Salted Caramel Cookie, which was just perfection on a plate, and gushed over the peach cobbler. We sat outside on a chilly, sunless day, and let the gooey goodness warm us up.

Down the street at Old Town Vinyl — an absolute gem of a music store — we picked up a few records; each one showcasing our, er, vastly disparate musical tastes. Our daughter chose Olivia Rodrigo's *Sour*, my husband grabbed Van Halen's *1984* and I snagged a '60s collection from the \$5 bin.

And now that I've admitted to a very Boomer taste in music, I gotta come clean about something else: I've vastly underutilized our local libraries for way, way too long.

Oh sure, our daughter and I frequented story time when she was a toddler, and I'm a full-on Libby app addict, but I had no idea they were also vibrant hubs for creativity and connection, with



offerings like game nights to scavenger hunts to makerspaces.

I signed up for Bad Art Night (BAN) at North County Regional, despite being a massive introvert with zero fine arts skills. I quickly learned Bad Art is a bit of a misnomer; BAN is just a low-key way to create whatever you want (using things like sparkly pens to paints to scrapbooking supplies and everything in between).

A dozen or so of us spent the next hour creating, gluing, and cutting, with one lucky artist taking home a trophy at the end of the night. Spoiler alert: my funky collage with rando haiku didn't nab the top prize. Still, it was a great night out, and the best way to flex some creative muscle.

We live, we launch, we find...more of ourselves. Every step of the way.

*Milling About* is a column about life around Lake Norman, written by Lindsay Martell.

The column name is a nod to life around the lake and our town's mill history.

Lindsay Martell lives in Birkdale with her husband, daughter, and a scruffy mini mutt named Dug.



Martell



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Cornelius Today, PO Box 1226, Cornelius, NC 28031-1226.

**Telephone:** 704-953-3381

*Cornelius Today is locally owned and operated and proudly based in Cornelius.*

**Back issues:** Payable by VISA and MASTERCARD ONLY. \$5.00 (if available); \$10 to mail.

**Reprints:** Reprints on high-quality, frangible stock are available, starting at \$65

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# Winter storms test the town's limits

BY DAVE VIESER

Snow and ice once meant waiting days for neighborhood streets to clear in Cornelius. Last month, many residents were driving again within hours — the result of years of investment in equipment, planning and manpower.

“I was surprised to see the trucks and crews out so early treating the roads,” said Cornelius resident Mike Shaffer, a native of upstate New York. “I was especially surprised to see the town trucks working on state roads. I’m sure the early start helped reduce the storm impact.”

## Small department, big footprint

Storm preparation and road clearing in Cornelius were not always as efficient as they are today.

Cornelius Public Works Director Tyler Beardsley, a 41-year-old Raleigh native who has been with the town for 15 years, oversees a department responsible for nearly every piece of town-



The Cornelius Public Works team

owned infrastructure.

His team maintains 110 miles of roads and 140 miles of sidewalks, constructs new sidewalks, manages stormwater systems, oversees the solid waste contract, maintains town facilities, collects

leaves, mows rights-of-way and handles special projects.

All of that work is carried out by just eight full-time employees and one permanent part-time employee.

“Most of the employees are maintenance technicians,” Beardsley said, noting that Robin Sanders has been with the town for 35 years — the longest tenure of any town employee in its history.

## Back-to-back storms

This season tested the department’s limits.

“This winter was so difficult because of the back-to-back nature of the storms,” Beardsley said. It had been several years since crews even needed to plow, making two storms in consecutive weeks especially challenging.

Many crew members worked 18 consecutive days. A single snow event typically requires about a week and a half of work, he said, from preparing equipment and pre-treating roads to plowing and post-storm cleanup.

In addition to clearing roads, crews treat the town’s public safety facilities — two fire stations, the police department and Town Hall — before and after storms.

Complicating matters, fall and winter are already the busiest seasons for Public Works because of leaf collection.

## Investment in equipment

The town now owns seven snowplows and four salt spreaders, up from just two plows and one spreader 15 years ago. Previously, main roads were the department’s focus, but the additional

equipment now allows crews to prioritize clearing neighborhood streets as well.

The town also uses a tractor to clear access to fire stations, the police department and Town Hall, helping expedite emergency calls and municipal operations.

Seven years ago, Cornelius began sharing brine tanks with Davidson and Huntersville. Before that, the town purchased brine from a North Carolina Department of Transportation facility near Charlotte Douglas International Airport, which made it difficult to make return trips after a winter storm.

The new arrangement makes it easier for crews to apply brine after storms, which helped speed the clearing of main roads.

## Divide and conquer

For major weather events, the town prioritizes pre-treatment and clearing on its main roads, including West Catawba, Catawba Avenue, N.C. 115, U.S. 21, Bailey Road, Westmoreland, Torrence Chapel Road, Bethel Church Road and Jetton Road.

Although many of those roads are owned and maintained by NCDOT, the town does not rely on the state for clearing or preparation. NCDOT must set priorities across a much broader region, so local maintenance is not a priority.

“We try to get brine on every road within the town limits,” Beardsley said.

Using waste collection routes as a guide, the town is divided into five zones, with one plow assigned to each zone while the remaining two focus on major arteries.

Parks and Recreation maintenance crews also assist with cleanup efforts, providing significant support during storms.

For residents, the difference between this year and many years ago may be as simple as getting to work on time or just seeing a neighborhood street cleared sooner than expected.

For a nine-person department, it reflects years of investment, coordination and long nights.

“The guys have been working 50-plus hours per week since November,” Beardsley said. “All the team members are ready for things to slow down.”



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Beardsley



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**March 14-15, 17 | 3-Day Celebration**

The green beer bar will turn any draft option green on request plus the re-release of Irish Red. The Lucky Clover food truck will be serving Irish Fare with live music and HandCrafted Market (March 14 only).

- March 17, Reid Academy of Irish Dance perform at 6:30 p.m. followed by St. Patrick's Day themed trivia from 7-9 p.m.

**Birkdale Village**

Birkdale Commons Pkwy & Sam Furr Rd., Huntersville. (704) 895-8744

**March 17, 4:30-7:30 p.m. | Luck of the Village**

Enjoy an evening full of live music, festive performances, Irish dance, and plenty of fun for lads and lassies.

**Boatyard Lake Norman**

18418 Statesville Road, Cornelius.  
(704) 997-6069

**March 14, Noon-Close | Block Party**

Live music on two stages from Trae Pierce & the T-Stones, Diamond Dixie and Charlotte's own Bourbon Sons, followed by a late-night dance party with DJ Wheelz. Plus Irish dancers and bagpipers, along with themed cocktails, drink specials, whiskey flights, backyard games, costume prizes and giveaways. No cover before 2 pm. \$10 admission after 2 p.m. Space is limited.

**The Cabin LKN Social Club**

400 North Harbor Place Drive, Davidson. (980) 483-1529

**March 14 | St. Paddy's Day Party**

Wear your green as DJ Rick plays live music from 7-10 p.m. plus Irish drink specials.

**Downtown Mooresville**

Main & Broad St., Mooresville

**March 14, 3-8 pm | Shamrocks & Shenanigans**

Head to Downtown Mooresville for live music by Pluto for Planet, Irish dancers, Mooresville Fire-Rescue Pipes & Drums Band, food trucks with Irish themed menus, festive adult beverages, and loads more fun!

- Tickets are required only for the Bar Crawl \$25 in advance and \$30 at gate. Includes nine festive tastings plus a signature 2026 St. Patrick's Day scarf, lanyard, & pin.

# FEELING LUCKY?

Don't miss out on these St. Patrick's Day celebrations!



Mooresville Shamrocks & Shenanigans

**H2 Public House**

19906 N Cove Rd Ste A, Cornelius.  
(980) 231-5936

**March 15, 17 | St. Patrick's Celebration**

Mike Regan's All Stars from 2-5. Irish Dancers will perform right before the show. Specials include \$5 Guinness, \$5 Jameson and \$12 Irish Eggrolls. Same specials on March 17.

**Harp and Crown**

19930 W Catawba Ave. Suite 130, Cornelius. (704) 892-9641

**March 6-8 | St. "Practice" Day Celebration**

Celebrate with live music, Stella engraving, Guinness imaging and Loch Norman bagpipers

**March 13-17 | St. Patrick's Celebration**

Kick off the celebration with Flip-side Band and continue the party all weekend with David Maiorino Band, Steve Brown and Irish dancers. Sunday will feature a traditional Irish Round session at 6 p.m. and bagpipers before that.

The St. Patrick's Day celebration will feature The Vel-Crows and don't miss the leprechaun running around along with traditional Irish fare, green beer, and lots of fun!



Guinness imaging at Kilted Buffalo

**Kilted Buffalo Birkdale Village**

8625 Townley Road, Huntersville.  
(704) 892-7571

**March 14 | St. Patrick's Celebration**

Guinness will bring their ripple machine from 3-5 p.m. and guests can get any image they want into the Guinness foam. Drink specials and giveaways will happen all day. The DJ for the St. Patrick's celebration party starts at 9:30 p.m.

**Lake Norman Brewery**

1753 Triangle Circle, Denver.  
(980) 525-5562

**March 14 | Shake Your Shamrock 5K and Celebration**

Start the day at 9 a.m. with the 5k and stay for green beer, live music,

Irish dancers and food all day. Registration is required. You run once. You celebrate all day.

**Lost Worlds Brewing Company**

19700-D One Norman Blvd, Cornelius.  
(980) 689-2467

**March 14 | Shillelagh Shuffle 5K**

Start Saturday morning with the Fun Run at 9:30 am and the Shillelagh Shuffle 5K at 10 a.m. Registration is required. Shillelagh Irish Ale and green beer will be available all day and the kitchen is open from 12-9 p.m. Live music includes DJ Festivus, The Vel-Crows and RLM Band. Show off your St. Paddy's Day spirit for a chance to win festive prizes in the costume contest.

**Primal Brewery**

16432 Old Statesville Rd., Huntersville. (704) 947-2920

**March 14-15, 17 | 3-Day Celebration**

Primal will be serving green Lawn Boy lager all weekend with food trucks on site. Live music includes Lua Flora, Evan Blackerby & The Bandwagon and Father Sun. Take part in the scavenger hunt and win raffle prizes.

**The Serve Pickleball & Kitchen**

20220 Chartown Dr, Cornelius.  
(704) 851-1800

**March 17, 12-2 pm, 7-10 pm | Beat the Pros: Lucky Paddle Edition**

Test your game against The Serve instructors in this high-energy, St. Patrick's Day-themed open play.

Rotate through fast-paced matches, challenge the pros head-to-head, and see if a little luck (and a lot of skill) is on your side.

**Torrence and Knox**

20936 Torrence Chapel Road, Cornelius. (980) 445-6508

**March 17 | St. Patrick's Celebration**

Food and drink specials all day. Pipes and drums plus live music by Steve Brown.

**The Royal Academy of Irish Dance LKN Schedule****March 3**

- Socks in the Frying Pan, Cain Center in Cornelius: 7 p.m.

**March 7**

- Davidson Library, Davidson: 10 a.m.

**March 14**

- Eleven Lakes Brewing, Cornelius: 3:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

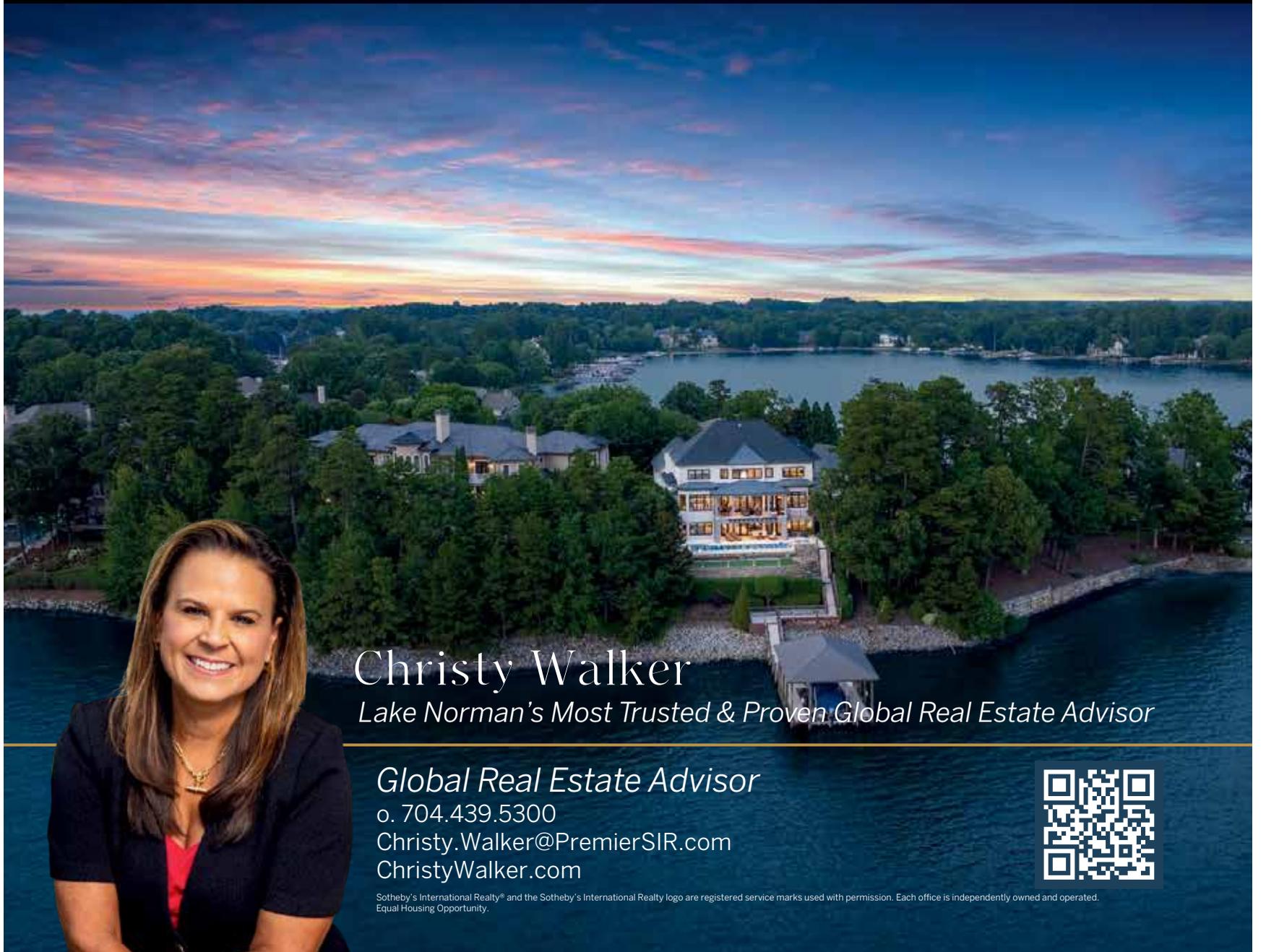


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# Downtown advocate hopes to take OTC into the future

BY JON SHOW

Case Warnemunde paces in the half-light of a winter day around Old Town Public House, his now shuttered live-music bottle shop. It's time to move out, after a months-long celebration that culminated in one final party a few nights earlier.

He's on the phone making plans, which don't immediately appear to include packing up the overturned chairs, boxes, and empty glasses strewn around a business that helped launch the cultural arts district that downtown Cornelius has become.

It's what's next — for him and the area of town that grew up with him. Now, at almost 40, he wants to help take it into the future.

After more than a decade of grassroots community building, Warnemunde is launching his vision for a downtown Cornelius marketing engine with the formal creation of Old Town Cornelius Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designed to serve as the cultural and economic connector for the town's emerging downtown district.

The Old Town Cornelius name isn't new, but its origin isn't widely known. It grew out of conversations more than a decade ago between Warnemunde and a group of artists and musicians who wanted a trendy name for the downtown area. Friends later designed the logo.

"We were originally going to call it DoCo, and we thought that was kind of clever," Warnemunde said. "Then as we did a little more digging, we realized the



Case Warnemunde outside of Old Town Public House

old-timers in the community refer to this place as Old Town. And it stuck."

While there's no formal recognition of the OTC name in town circles, its brand has become synonymous with the downtown area, even appearing repeatedly in the proposed downtown master plan.

## Origin story

For Warnemunde, launching the orga-

nization represents the culmination of efforts that began with open mic nights at Oak Street Mill more than 13 years ago.

"There wasn't really anything going on here in the downtown area," Warnemunde said. "We hosted this event every first and third Thursday, and we were bringing out so much talent."

Those open mic nights attracted musicians who would later become

mainstays of the local scene. The energy generated led to larger community gatherings, including art crawls and street festivals.

The word-of-mouth loop in the community proved powerful. As festivals and events grew, more businesses arrived. More significantly, Warnemunde began hearing directly from new residents who cited the emerging scene as a key factor in their decision to move to Cornelius.

"We got firsthand feedback that people were coming to this area specifically because of the culture, and we were at the forefront of that," Warnemunde said. "More residents were coming here and telling us specifically that they moved to this area because of the scene that was being created."

With the closing of OTPH, new developments on the way, and a new downtown master plan on the horizon, Warnemunde now wants to formalize and align the work of the town government, businesses, and residents under the Old Town Cornelius banner.

"We're not this rogue, organic movement anymore," he said. "We're a nonprofit organization dedicated to arts, culture, and community development in downtown Cornelius."

## Providing structure

Old Town Cornelius Inc.'s framework outlines four operational pillars: Events & Activations, Creative Placemaking, the Old Town Business Collective, and

Continued on PAGE 9

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Continued from PAGE 8

Marketing & Storytelling.

The Business Collective addresses what Warnemunde identifies as a critical gap — not a competitor to a chamber of commerce, but something complementary and more hyper-focused.

“For a long time there’s been a need for something to connect the downtown businesses and provide a unified voice and strategy so we can increase foot traffic,” he said. His proposed initiatives include an OTC passport program and “Second Saturday” events.

Warnemunde emphasizes the organization’s authentic development as a differentiator from manufactured neighborhood brands, drawing parallels to Charlotte’s NoDa district, which evolved organically from artist communities.

The organization positions itself as “the implementation arm of many aspects of the master plan” for downtown Cornelius. “We are perfectly positioned to immediately implement those things that the community has decided that they want,” he said.



The OTC name grew out of conversations from over a decade ago

Funding strategies include a Founders Circle program, potential town grants, and private donations. The organization recently submitted an application to the town for a nonprofit grant and plans a presentation to the town board in early spring. Discussions also are underway regarding alignment with existing businesses.

Community builder

For Warnemunde, the formalization represents both professional evolution and personal commitment. A University of Cincinnati graduate who relocated to the area in 2009, he has spent his adult life building community in Cornelius, first through hospitality employment, then through OTPH, and increasingly through cultural programming.

The closing of OTPH allows Warnemunde to dedicate himself to full-

time nonprofit work. After years of building intellectual property through trial and error, he is ready to organize the effort and secure the resources needed to sustain it.

“We’re professionals now,” Warnemunde said. “We understand what we’re doing to shift the entire economics of the area, how this impacts real estate value, businesses coming to the area. This is what people want.”

The mission statement reflects both the organization’s grassroots origins and its aspirations: fostering a vibrant and

connected community by celebrating local culture, enhancing public spaces, supporting local artists and businesses, and preserving the town’s unique history and heritage.

The vision is equally ambitious: “A thriving, walkable downtown where creativity, culture, small business, and community pride intersect — making Old Town Cornelius a destination that feels like home to everyone.”

“I knew early on that there needed to be an organization that would connect all of these unique businesses, ideas,

and the culture,” he said. “We have a lot of artists in our community, even though they’re kind of tucked away. You wouldn’t know all the pieces that are here.”

Old Town Cornelius Inc. aims to surface those hidden pieces and weave them into a cohesive identity that residents recognize and visitors discover — an authentic downtown experience forged through years of grassroots effort, now positioned for its next chapter of growth.

Just like Warnemunde.



# Advice for what matters most, when you need it most

Congratulations to **Scott Stimson** for being ranked **#1 on the Forbes “Top Next-Gen Wealth Advisors Best-in-State” 2025 list**. Published on August 6, 2025. Rankings based on data as of March 31, 2025.



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# Downtown Master Plan spurs strong reactions

BY MARK WASHBURN

**A** bold vision for Cornelius' historic downtown sparked a flood of comments after its release and has resulted in a second look at some of its provisions.

"We value citizen feedback," said Cornelius Commissioner Todd Sansbury at a Newsmakers Breakfast organized by Cornelius Today at The Peninsula Club. Also appearing were Mayor Denis Bilodeau and commissioners Michael Osborne, Susan Johnson and Colin Furcht.

Feedback poured in after the town's planning board endorsed a draft of the Downtown Master Plan on Oct. 13 and citizens could see a map of the reimagined district, Sansbury said.

Focused on the 220 acres of Old Town Cornelius along Catawba Avenue and N.C. 115, the plan envisions development opportunities, future parking and improved gateway corridors — including the preferred location for a future CATS commuter rail station and proposed street grid adjustments to improve traffic flow.

Some people liked the plan; others had reservations, Bilodeau said. More public meetings and discussion will be held before action is taken on the plan, meant to be a 25-year blueprint for downtown development.

"Ultimately," said Sansbury, "we want a vibrant and active downtown."

Osborne said he'd heard concerns from residents that roads would become connected and turn into through streets, bringing new traffic patterns



From left: Mayor Denis Bilodeau, Michael Osborne (mayor pro tem), Colin Furcht, Susan Johnson and Todd Sansbury / Photos by Jason Benavides



Anita Sabates

to the area. No specifics have been decided yet, he said, noting that the plan is meant to be an overall vision of what the town wants its eastern core to become.

"Do you want to be SouthPark, or do you want to be Charlotte when you grow up?" he said.



Jeff Tarte

Among the most favorable feedback Sansbury said he has received was on the small-town nature of the district and its emphasis on trees and walkability, similar to downtown Davidson and Concord.

Johnson said she has heard favorable reactions to the Cain Center arts dis-

trict, the notion of a festival street and more restaurants.

Interest is keen, particularly east of Interstate 77, in what the Red Line will mean for the town, Osborne said. While the 1% transit tax does not take effect until later this year and commuter rail is probably up to a decade away, the Antiquity development seems destined to be the best option for a Cornelius station, he said.

While most of the commissioners were careful to say they weren't supporters of the transit tax, Johnson said she favored the rail project. It will take cars off the road, she said, and provide connections to other destinations in the region.

**Among other topics commissioners addressed:**

- Sansbury said the stalled Alexander Farms development on Westmoreland Road and West Catawba Avenue is stirring again. River Rock Development and an investment group that includes some Cornelius residents have acquired the 10-acre commercial portion of the project and have begun work.

"It's not going to be the eyesore you see every day," Johnson said.

Among the proposed amenities would be an anchor grocery store. Johnson said she's heard considerable support for a Trader Joe's, but there's no decision yet. A major medical tenant is also being sought.

- Commissioners are concerned about making police and fire salaries more competitive with neighboring towns, Furcht said.

- Traffic is a key issue that commissioners hear about all the time, Furcht said. He noted there have not been any housing or development projects approved in the past five years contributing in a significant way to congestion.

Sansbury said Cornelius' population growth has fallen to about 1% in recent years.

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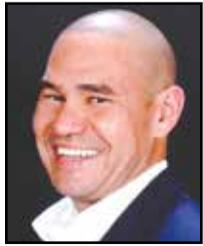
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## Police pay increase part of departmental budget requests

BY DAVE VIESER

A higher-than-usual salary increase for Cornelius police officers could be included in the proposed fiscal year 2027 budget, which begins July 1.

Town officials discussed a plan during a February budget planning session at the Cain Center for the Arts that would raise officers' salaries by \$8,480, bringing minimum starting salaries to \$62,282 from \$53,802. Town Manager Andrew Grant said the increase is



Grant

aimed at improving recruitment and retention after neighboring agencies approved larger raises in the past several months.

"We're learning from the past," Grant said. "We

don't know what the competition will do, but an increase is likely."

Officers in Davidson start at \$56,814 annually, compared with \$61,000 in Huntersville and \$59,000 in Mooresville. Grant said that those salaries will likely increase as those towns adopt new budgets, as well.

Police Chief David Baucom also requested creation of an associate communications supervisor position at a gross annual cost of \$113,000, with about \$70,000 coming from the department's existing overtime and part-time budget. Baucom said he hopes to fill the role from within the communications division.

The position would coordinate with officers and oversee operations within the town's 911 system, which also provides Davidson College with 911 communications service. Baucom said Huntersville may consider rejoining the Cornelius 911 system, although no formal request has been made.

### Fire department

Public safety requests also came from Fire Chief Guerry Barbee, who is seeking \$1.5 million to replace Engine 2, which has 90,000 miles and was placed in service in 2011. Barbee also plans to request \$320,000 in salaries to continue



Cornelius Police Dept.

transitioning the department to full-time staffing, adding three full-time firefighters next year. The department is also seeking a 5% cost-of-living adjustment and merit increase for part-time personnel.

Additionally, the fire department is requesting \$150,000 for a traffic preemption system that would allow responding units to control traffic signals when responding to emergencies.

### Economic development

The town is proposing a new position to oversee downtown management and economic development initiatives.

The role would lead capital infrastructure projects and coordinate implementation of Downtown Master Plan recommendations, including regulatory updates, branding, public signage and streetscape improvements. The position would also foster small-business growth, coordinate special events, serve as a liaison to stakeholders and a downtown nonprofit, pursue grant funding, and support business recruitment, retention and expansion.

The spending requests are department-level proposals and will be reviewed by town staff before a recommended budget is presented to the Board of Commissioners in May. A two-day budget retreat is scheduled for March 31st and April 1st at the Graylyn Conference Center in Winston-Salem.

Whether the proposals will be included in the final budget — and whether a tax increase will be necessary — remains uncertain. In his first budget season as mayor, Denis Bilodeau urged staff to clearly explain to residents how tax dollars are spent before adopting a new budget, which takes effect July 1.

Cornelius  
TODAY

# NEWSMAKERS BREAKFAST

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# Hough lacrosse has championship aspirations

BY RYAN MOXON

**H**ough looks to bookend state championships this year as the boys lacrosse team faces lofty expectations and a goal to match the football team's run through the state playoffs last fall.

The upperclassmen-heavy roster features a lineup full of returning starters and major contributors, but depth will challenge the team's state championship ambitions.

The defense is led for the third straight year by standout junior goalie Chubs Slater, who had a 65% save percentage last season.

Senior long-stick midfielder Bryson Armstrong projects to be the defensive leader outside the net, and he's joined by a pair of returning starters at long pole — junior Rocco Mozzone and sophomore Nick Misali.

Drew Weber and Noah Farris will look to keep scoring at bay in the defensive midfield.

Offensively, the Huskies have one of the most talented front six units in the state.



Faceoff specialist Alex Gregoloff

Junior attackman Grady Cinotti and sophomore Noah Sheridan were two of the team's top five scorers last season with 90 combined goals.

The return of senior Tripp Johnstone and junior Cooper Show provides scoring opportunities from the midfield, and senior Preston Graham figures to play an important role in the offensive production. The trio totaled 94 goals a

season ago.

Faceoffs are a major strength for a team that will hope to play an unbalanced game in terms of possessions. Senior Alex Gregoloff is one of the best in the nation at the faceoff position, with a 79% win percentage last season.

Conference play will be more challenging than in previous years. The Huskies swap perennial bottom-feeders such as South Iredell and Mooresville for Myers Park and Ardrey Kell.

A tough nonconference schedule includes matchups against Lake Norman, Charlotte Catholic, Christ School and Green Level.

## Baseball

Hough baseball enters the 8A era in a newly realigned conference that now includes traditional powers South Mecklenburg and Myers Park, along with crosstown rival Hopewell.

The conference schedule figures to be one of the most competitive in the state, and the Huskies expect to contend for the title while building momentum toward playoff time.

The season begins with the toughest nonconference schedule in program history, including "The County Clash," featuring matchups of Myers Park, South Mecklenburg and Hough against Reagan, West Forsyth and East Forsyth, followed by a demanding road trip to Wilmington to face New Hanover, Ashley and Laney.

Offensively, the Huskies are led by senior outfielder Jaxon Matthews, a four-year starter and five-tool player who enters the season as the school's career leader in home runs (10), walks (71), stolen bases (53), runs scored (100) and RBIs (73).

The roster features a veteran infield

that includes senior shortstop Derek Guzman, who tied the single-season doubles record (10) and finished second in home runs (5) last year, and senior third baseman Matthew Nesta, who set single-season records in stolen bases (29) and runs scored (42).

On the mound, senior right-hander Hank Tipton returns as the staff leader after going 5-1 last season with 41 strikeouts against just 10 walks, anchoring a young but high-ceiling pitching group.

With experienced position players and emerging arms, Hough has the makeup of a team built for a strong conference race and postseason run.

"We're excited to see how our experienced field players and young pitching staff come together this year," assistant coach Spencer Venator said. "Early success could catapult us to a great season and playoff run."

## Softball

Head softball coach Allison Mashburn has state championship aspirations for a team that returns most of its starting lineup this spring.

The pitching staff will be anchored by senior Payton Elwell, last season's conference Pitcher of the Year, who went 12-3 with a 1.81 ERA, along with junior Aubrey Martin (7-0, 0.84 ERA).

Offensively, production will be led by senior Reese Lavey, the conference Player of the Year a season ago, who batted .456. Mashburn expects balanced contributions throughout the lineup, including from senior Ashlyn Rogers (.412) and juniors Seanna Shivers (.333) and Caitlin Schriber (.321).

All three earned all-district honors last season, with Rogers also receiving all-state recognition.

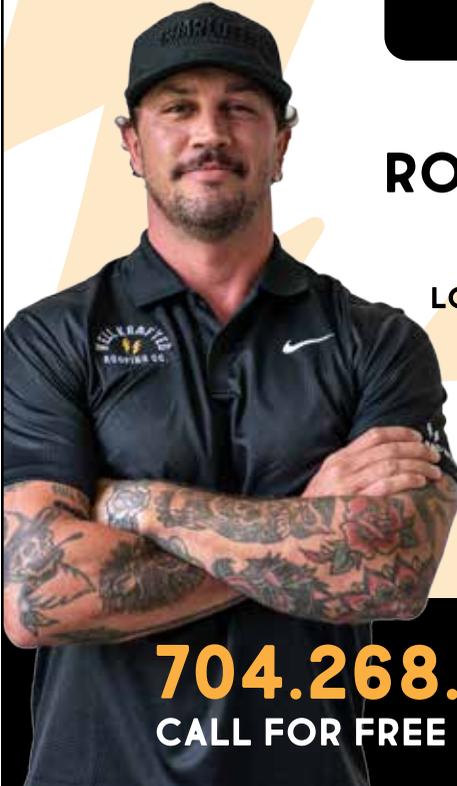
The 24-game schedule includes a challenging conference slate with the addition of Myers Park, South Mecklenburg and Hopewell, along with non-conference opponents Ardrey Kell and Providence.

The team motto is #Be1 Above this season, designed to hold everyone to a higher standard.

"We were a really close team last season, and we need to stay that way this season," Mashburn said. "We need to support each other and put the team first to give our program the best chance to be successful?"

*Stay tuned: next month we'll check in with the girls soccer and boys volleyball teams.*

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## Town board approves police vehicle purchase

Cornelius commissioners approved spending \$356,000 to purchase eight vehicles for the police department. Police Chief David Baucom said the

department will buy five Dodge Durango SUVs and one Chrysler Pacifica minivan through the county sheriff's procurement contract, with the SUVs serving as patrol vehicles and the minivan assigned to the Crime Reduction Unit.

Two Ford Mustangs will also be purchased for patrol and administrative purposes. The department maintains a fleet of 70 vehicles, typically reselling or retiring as many vehicles as it acquires each year. Baucom said the new vehicles are expected to be in service by

July, though lead times and equipment installation could affect the timeline.

## Consignment stores merge under new brand

Cornelius consignment stores Consign On A Dime and Showplace 28 are merging under the name Consign at 28, operating from the current Showplace 28 location in Shops on the Green. Owner Heather Kline said the merger combines the stores' inventories and customer bases, offering a wider selection and faster turnover for consignors.

The consolidated store will expand hours, open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Wednesday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday. Existing consignment agreements will be honored, and a grand opening celebration with customer promotions is planned.

## Cornelius ranks high in apartment prices

A study by leasing platform Zumper found Cornelius as the second-most expensive Charlotte metro city for two-bedroom rentals and third for one-bedroom units. Median rents are \$1,250 for one-bedroom units and \$1,570 for two-bedroom units. Rents fell 1.6% year-over-year, while nearby Mooresville recorded a 1.5% increase. The report analyzed active listings, including age-restricted units.

## Parks and Rec receives \$1 million federal grant

Cornelius Parks and Recreation secured \$1 million in federal funding for a multiuse path along Catawba Avenue. The funding will partially support the cost of widening existing sidewalks between Interstate 77 and Main Street, creating a 10-foot-wide path along a roughly one-mile stretch.

The project is part of the 13-mile Emerald Necklace greenway and multiuse trail loop.

## Budget survey highlights resident priorities

The town released results of its annual citizen budget survey, which received 1,032 responses. Transportation, public safety, public works, and parks and recreation were residents' top concerns, accounting for roughly two-thirds of responses.

Roads and traffic were the top fund-

ing priority at 54%, followed by public safety at 20% and parks and greenways at 10%.

Residents identified development, equity and affordable housing, and arts funding as areas where the town spends more than necessary. The survey informs the budget approval process, which includes public meetings, retreats, and board presentations later in the year.

## Town grants zoning exemption for furniture store expansion

The Cornelius Planning Board approved a variance allowing Vine by Viridien to expand its outdoor furniture store with a 2,660-square-foot showroom on Highway 21. The variance accommodates the lot's triangular shape and buffer requirements, with a 10-foot landscape buffer replacing the standard 50-foot interstate setback.

The board also ruled that no permanent or long-term outdoor storage, including sheds or furniture, can be visible from Interstate 77. Vine by Viridien operates on Statesville Road in a former used-luxury auto business and allows customers to mix and match collections for outdoor spaces.

## West Catawba Avenue widening project

Progress continues on widening 2.7 miles of West Catawba Avenue from Jetton Road to Sam Furr Road. NC-DOT's right-of-way acquisition is complete, and utility relocation will begin soon, including pipes, gas, electric, and communications lines.

The widening will expand the road from two to four lanes and is expected to take at least three years at a total cost of \$34.6 million, mostly funded by the state.

## Fire department honors members

Cornelius-Lemley Fire Rescue recognized members at its annual awards banquet. Kyle Graham was named Firefighter of the Year. Captain George "Obbie" Ross and firefighter Greg Sherrell received Lifetime Member status for 20 years of service, and Chief Neal Smith was honored for 40 years of service.

Sherrell also received recognition for actions during a 2003 ice storm incident on Interstate 77.

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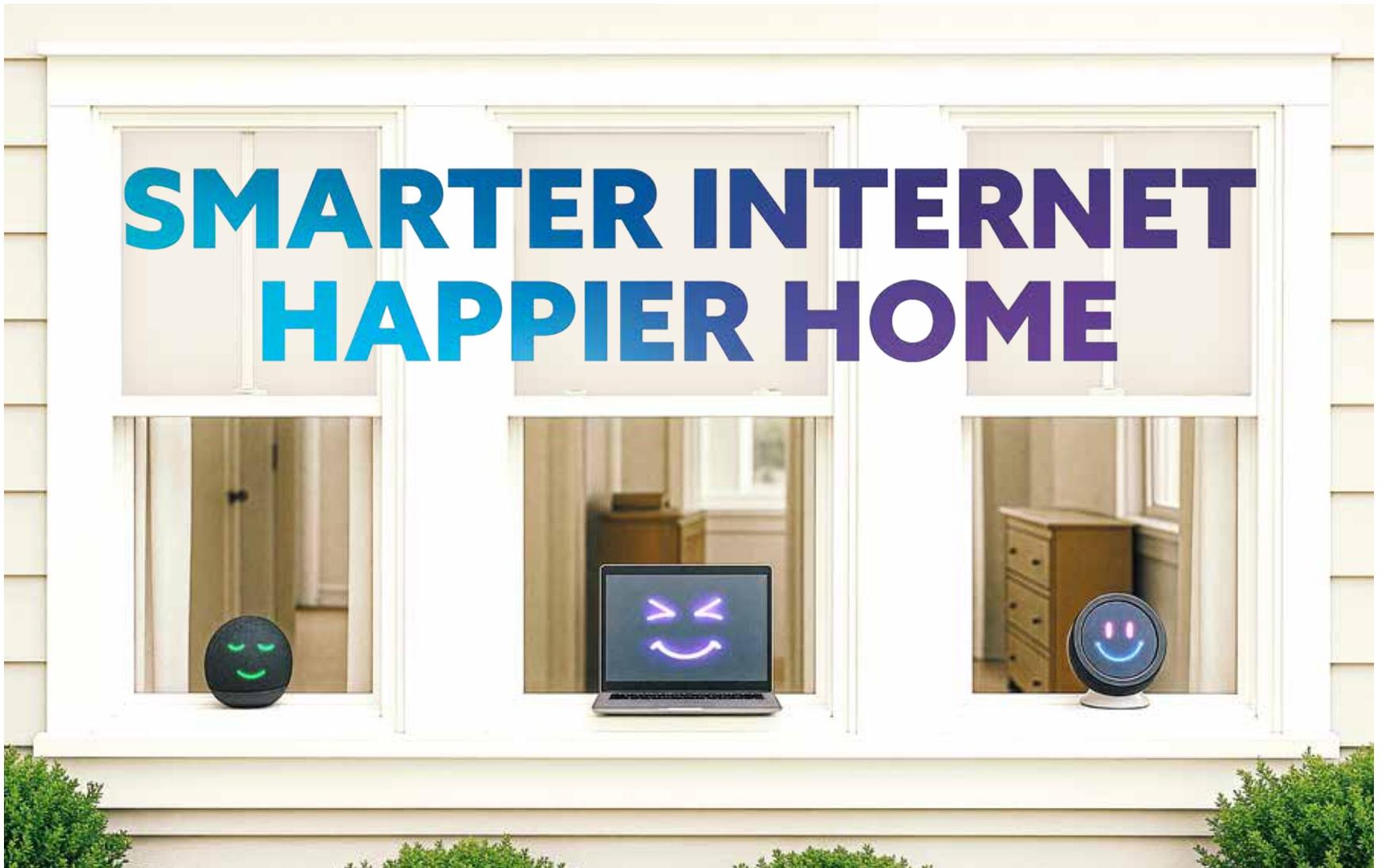
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# HOME SALES

*Editor's Note: We have expanded our real estate sales to include additional information like bed/bath and square footage. Due to privacy considerations we do not publish the names of buyers and sellers.*

## Cornelius

1/23/26, \$511,050, 19724-B School St, 3BR/2.5BA, Cornelius, 1,954 sq ft, built 2025

1/23/26, \$540,000, 8014 Houser St, 3BR/2.5BA, The Retreat At West Catawba, 1,929 sq ft, built 2023

1/23/26, \$460,000, 8731 Westwind Point Dr, 3BR/2.5BA, Alexander Chase, 1,728 sq ft, built 2006

1/23/26, \$535,000, 18840 Nautical Dr #65, 3BR/2BA, Admirals Quarters, 1,370 sq ft, built 1999



**\$1,107,500 | 19139 Berkeley Commons Dr., Cornelius**

1/23/26, \$550,000, 7836 Village Harbor Dr, 3BR/2BA, Villages at Harbor-side, 1,278 sq ft, built 1999

1/27/26, \$315,000, 17541 Tuscany Ln, 2BR/2.5BA, Bayview, 1,089 sq ft, built 1995

1/27/26, \$870,000, 12700 Meeting-house Dr, 4BR/3BA, Baileys Glen, 3,745 sq ft, built 2013

1/30/26, \$247,500, 21617 Rio Oro Dr, Bahia Bay, built N/A

2/3/26, \$407,500, 19606 Grasmere Pl, 3BR/2.5BA, Wellesley Village, 1,590 sq ft, built 1987

2/4/26, \$580,000, 11715 Meeting-house Dr, 3BR/2BA, Baileys Glen, 1,749 sq ft, built 2016

2/4/26, \$560,000, 18015 Harbor Mist Rd, 5BR/3BA, Victoria Bay, 2,696 sq ft, built 2002

2/6/26, \$280,000, 20115 Henderson Rd Unit H, 2BR/2BA, Windward, 1,021 sq ft, built 1987

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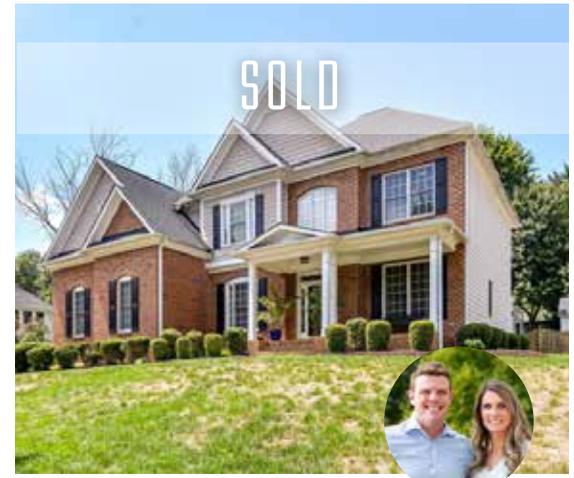
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2/11/26, \$534,000, 21326 Sandy Cove Rd, 3BR/2BA, Rockridge Shores, 1,816 sq ft, built 1984

2/11/26, \$625,000, 8130 Houser St, 4BR/2.5BA, The Retreat at West Catawba, 2,387 sq ft, built 2022

2/12/26, \$360,000, 16319 Peachmont Dr, 3BR/3BA, Oakhurst, 1,874 sq ft, built 2001

2/12/26, \$450,000, 18001 Bluff Inlet Rd, 3BR/2.5BA, Victoria Bay, 1,701 sq ft, built 2001

2/12/26, \$860,000, 12615 Old Westbury Dr, 4BR/3.5BA, Avery Park, 3,701 sq ft, built 2016

2/12/26, \$5,000,000, 18201 Mainsail Pointe Dr, 4BR/5BA, The Peninsula, 6,754 sq ft, built 2004

**\$999,000 | 20340 Cathedral Oaks Drive, Cornelius**

2/10/26, \$408,000, 11227 Suunto Ln, 3BR/2.5BA, Heritage Green, 1,680 sq ft, built 2004

2/10/26, \$999,000, 20340 Cathedral Oaks Dr, 5BR/5.5BA, Crown Harbor, 5,227 sq ft, built 1999

2/11/26, \$2,645,000, 19715 Stough Farm Rd, 3BR/3.5BA, Patrick's Purchase, 4,348 sq ft, built 1979

2/12/26, \$400,000, 18867 Vineyard Point Ln, 2BR/2BA, Vineyard Point, 837 sq ft, built 1989

2/17/26, \$1,107,500, 19139 Berkeley Commons Dr, 4BR/3BA, Jetton Cove, 5,141 sq ft, built 2002

2/17/26, \$1,320,000, 8614 Preserve Pond Rd, 4BR/3.5BA, Robbins Park, 3,151 sq ft, built 2013

2/18/26, \$3,260,000, 21400 Bethel Church Rd, 4BR/3.5BA, Cornelius, 4,097 sq ft, built 1989

2/19/26, \$965,000, 19943 Catamaran Ct, 5BR/2.5BA, Blue Stone Harbor, 3,167 sq ft, built 1996

2/19/26, \$321,000, 17525 Caldwell Track Dr, 3BR/2.5BA, Caldwell Station, 1,488 sq ft, built 2007

2/20/26, \$337,000, 17641 Delmas Dr, 2BR/2.5BA, Oakhurst, 1,503 sq ft, built 1999

## Davidson

1/28/26, \$525,000, 155 Harper Lee St, 3BR/2.5BA, New Neighborhood/Old Davidson, 2,070 sq ft, built 2003

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**4342389** Custom 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath home on a private acre along the 10th fairway of The Club at Irish Creek offers elegance and functionality. Wide-plank floors, soaring ceilings, a statement kitchen, and main-level guest suite create a warm yet sophisticated space. Enjoy screened porch living, loft flexibility, and access to a championship golf course, pool, and clubhouse. **\$1,075,000**



**4340574** Fully refreshed ranch in Birkdale Village showcases stylish upgrades and effortless living throughout. The remodeled chef's kitchen features quartz countertops, a prep island, farmhouse sink, and premium appliances, while custom closets and updated finishes enhance every space. A covered patio and detached two-car garage complete this move-in ready. **\$780,000**



**4346528** Nestled at the end of a desirable Northstone cul-de-sac, this spacious home offers timeless curb appeal and serene creek views from the back deck. An expansive third-floor bonus room provide exceptional flexibility. This property blends comfort and scenic surroundings. **\$779,000**



**4341235** Historic Edgewood Farmhouse, circa 1840, stands as one of Mecklenburg County's last remaining antebellum homes, showcasing Federal and Greek Revival architectural influences. With original heart pine floors, intricate millwork, and an accompanying circa 1830 log home create a rare opportunity on 2.5 picturesque acres. **\$699,000**



**4337531** This ground-floor Lake Norman waterfront condo is filled with high-end upgrades and meticulous craftsmanship throughout. Enjoy sunsets from the oversized Trex deck or relax indoors with 9-foot ceilings, crown molding, custom closets, and a gas fireplace for added charm! **\$659,000**



**4346471** Situated in Byers Creek, this Mooresville home features an expansive, tree-lined homesite offering exceptional privacy and outdoor possibilities. Inside, four bedrooms, a dedicated office, loft, and a spacious kitchen with Butler's Pantry enhance the home's blend of comfort and versatility. **\$512,000**



**4341138** Thoughtfully designed single-story home features four bedrooms and an inviting open layout for comfortable living. The granite kitchen flows into the dining area and patio, backing to wooded community open space for added privacy. All conveniently located near shopping, Lake Norman access, and just 25 minutes from CLT Airport. **\$455,000**



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**\$1,550,000 | 317 Catawba Avenue, Davidson**

1/29/26, \$1,100,000, 18807 Dembridge Dr, 5BR/3BA, River Run, 3,615 sq ft, built 1998

2/4/26, \$682,000, 168 Harper Lee St, 3BR/2.5BA, New Neighborhood/Old Davidson, 2,079 sq ft, built 2004

1/29/26, \$669,990, 407 Jetton St, 3BR/3BA, Parkside Commons, 2,231 sq ft, built 2025

2/4/26, \$595,000, 310 Magnolia St, 3BR/2.5BA, Watson At Davidson, 1,668 sq ft, built 1998

1/29/26, \$1,600,000, 19134 Newburg Hill Rd #35, 5BR/4BA, Davidson Woods, 5,093 sq ft, built 2026

2/10/26, \$480,000, 10913 Tailwater St, 4BR/2.5BA, The Farm At Riverpointe, 2,796 sq ft, built 2010

1/29/26, \$1,440,000, 18714 River Ford Dr, 4BR/3.5BA, River Run, 4,200 sq ft, built 1994

2/11/26, \$1,460,000, 233 Walking Horse Trl, 5BR/4.5BA, Anniston, 4,695 sq ft, built 2015

1/30/26, \$585,000, 411 Jetton St, 3BR/3BA, Parkside Commons, 1,964 sq ft, built 2025

2/12/26, \$515,000, 920 Mary Max Dr, 3BR/3BA, Parkside Commons, 1,952 sq ft, built 2024

1/30/26, \$680,000, 119 Meadowbrook Ln, 5BR/3BA, Twin Oaks, 2,458 sq ft, built 1964

2/13/26, \$618,000, 537 Annie Lowery Way, 3BR/3.5BA, Parkside Commons, 2,277 sq ft, built 2025

2/4/26, \$1,525,000, 608 Walnut St, 5BR/4.5BA, Davidson Springs, 3,125 sq ft, built 2026

2/18/26, \$1,550,000, 317 Catawba Ave, 4BR/3.5BA, Davidson, 3,243 sq ft, built 2017



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Visit [CorneliusToday.com](http://CorneliusToday.com) for a comprehensive list of all live music and comedy events. Details are subject to change – visit venue websites for up-to-date information.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

**Peninsula Prime** | 6 p.m. — Ephraim Sommers (Acoustic) — Free

### FRIDAY, MARCH 6

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 6 p.m. — Dolly Roger (Rock) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 6:30 p.m. — Caroline & Omar (Acoustic) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — Marshall Jones (Country/Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Carrie Marshall Presents Southern Shade of Blue (Blues/Soul) — Paid

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Fred Heinz (Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Grateful Dub w/ Roots of Creation (tribute) — Paid

### SATURDAY, MARCH 7

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 11 a.m. — Steve Brown (Rock) — Free

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 3 p.m. — Thomas Stainkamp (Jazz) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — The CoverUp Band (Classic Rock) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 7 p.m. — Tim Cook Trio (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Eric Gales (Blues/Rock) — Paid

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Isaac and Adele (Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Enrage Against the Machine (tribute) — Paid

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

**Harp & Crown** | 6 p.m. — John Sullivan (Acoustic) — Free

**Peninsula Prime** | 6 p.m. — Late Night Special Duo (Acoustic) — Free

### FRIDAY, MARCH 13

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 6 p.m. — Chris Vercauteren (Rock) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — In By Nine (Rock) — Free

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — John Sullivan (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Dino Light (Rock/Pop) — Paid



**Sunday, March 29** | Voices of Change: A Benefit Concert for Tommy DeCarlo is a special event to support the legendary singer of Boston. 1 p.m.

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Uptown Dueling Pianos (Dueling Pianos) — Paid

### SATURDAY, MARCH 14

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — Scandal (Rock) — Free

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Campbell Brothers (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Glen Phillips (Folk/Rock) — Paid

☘ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 2 p.m. — St. Patrick's Day Block Party (Multi-genre) — Paid

### SUNDAY, MARCH 15

**Harp & Crown** | 6 p.m. — Traditional Irish Session (Irish) — Free

### THURSDAY, MARCH 19

**Peninsula Prime** | 6 p.m. — John Sullivan (Acoustic) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7 p.m. — SPANK the 80's (tribute) — Paid

### FRIDAY, MARCH 20

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 6 p.m. — Analog Crash ('80s-'00s) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 7 p.m. — Special Characters (Rock) — Free

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — John Tyce (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Chris Funk (Americana/Rock) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8:30 p.m. — Jebb Mac Band (Multi-genre) — Paid

### SATURDAY, MARCH 21

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 6 p.m. — Retro Road Band (Rock) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — RLM Band (Rock) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 7 p.m. — Ben Gaitlin Band (Rock) — Free

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Isaac and Adele (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — Songs & Stories w/ Roger McGuinn (Folk/Rock) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — 80z Nation (tribute) — Paid

**Harp & Crown** | 6 p.m. — Lisa Denova (Acoustic) — Free

### FRIDAY, MARCH 27

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 6 p.m. — Tail Light Rebellion (Folk) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 6 p.m. — My Better Half Duo (Acoustic) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — Royal Bliss Duo (Rock) — Free

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Fred Heinz (Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — 20 Ride (Zac Brown tribute) — Paid

### SATURDAY, MARCH 28

**Lost Worlds Brewing** | 5:30 p.m. — Kristen O'Toole & the Tool Shed (Country) — Free

**Royal Bliss Brewing Co.** | 6:30 p.m. — Edison Overdrive (Rock) — Free

**Harp & Crown** | 7 p.m. — John Sullivan (Acoustic)

**Torrence & Knox** | 7:30 p.m. — Kristy Schrier (Rock) — Free

**Cain Center for the Arts** | 7:30 p.m. — The Lone Bellow (Folk/Rock) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Hot Fuss (Killers tribute) — Paid

### SUNDAY, MARCH 29

**Boatyard Lake Norman** | 1 p.m. — Voices of Change: Benefit Concert — Paid

Listings are free of charge. Want to include your venue? Contact us at [jon@corneliustoday.com](mailto:jon@corneliustoday.com)



*Our good friend and food correspondent Cloyd Burke is always asking bartenders and servers around town...*

## WHAT'S DELICIOUS?

*This month he'll tell you about Table 31*

If you haven't figured it out by now, I fall in love with certain dishes more than I do a restaurant's full menu.

There are exceptions, of course, but once I zero in on a menu item or two at a restaurant, I don't venture beyond them very often. Creature of habit, as they say.

You'll read all about them in these pages for as long as I can crank them out, but one I didn't think I'd ever get to write about was an all-time favorite — the tuna poke appetizer at Alton's, which closed up shop a couple of years ago. I still dream about it.

Well, the wife and I were out on a Saturday drive one day last year and came upon Table 31 up at the Langtree exit. I'd never been, and it was a little fancier than the cut-off shorts I was wearing, but we gave it a shot anyway.

We saddled up to the bar and ordered some drinks and, as always, asked the nice bartender, "What's delicious?"

She recommended the house-smoked trout dip, but the missus is on the gluten-free train and can't eat Saltines, so the kind lady recommended the house-made kettle chips on the side.

We sipped our wine, content to wait out the cold rain that was falling outside, and smiled when she dropped off our appetizer.

The trout was perfectly smoked and held together by a sauce that — I'm guessing, based on my culinary expertise — was a concoction of delicious.

The proverbial cherry on top wasn't a cherry at all, it was her suggestion to put a little dab of green Tabasco on each bite. It was smoky and spicy and divine.

We all began chatting and somehow

arrived at the discovery that the people behind Table 31 also owned Alton's, and that a few of the old menu items had made their way north.

So I immediately asked for a menu, scrolled around, and by golly, there it was.

Tuna poke with fresh avocado and warm chips.

The rain had subsided and we had to hit the road so we overtipped on our tab and resolved to return later to investigate the tuna.

A week later, we went back to Table 31, where we ordered the tuna and held our collective breath. The same bartender dropped off our order and, at first glance, it looked promising.

On the plate was the perfect ratio of tuna to cucumber and avocado with a drizzle of a tangy spicy drizzly on top,

and a bowl of some familiar-looking, perfectly salted tortilla chips.

We dove in. Chip, dip, chew and swallow. Smile. We were back in business.

Since that day, Table 31 has become part of our heavy rotation and we've returned multiple times, trying a few different menu items along the way.

The kettle chips with braised beef, parmesan and bleu cheese sauce will get your calorie count right at lunch and lead you down the path of a beautiful afternoon slumber.

The shrimp New Orleans harkens back to another of my favorite ol' dishes — the buttery lemony spicy barbecue shrimp at Cajun Queen in Charlotte.

But eventually we settled, like we always do, on two favorites. The trout dip and, of course, the tuna poke.

The restaurant interior is really nice but we much prefer the more laid-back feel of the Table 31 wine shop next door, which sends over food from the main kitchen.

It's a little more cozy and usually less busy, and you pay retail price for wine to imbibe while you vibe.

Hey, don't judge. We're on a fixed income, so we'll save an Abe Lincoln or two when we can, but never on the tip.

Check them out sometime, and if you do, tell them ol' Cloyd sent you.

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# Changes coming to Barrel and Fork

**B**arrel and Fork, a popular restaurant on Main Street near downtown Cornelius, will open a new outdoor veranda and launch several initiatives this month under new owner Sean Wilbur.

The 1,200-square-foot seating area will feature a stone patio with tables and lounge areas. It will include overhead lighting, space heaters for colder months and, eventually, a pergola over the lounge area.

Unlike the 83-seat interior and front porch, which are often booked weeks in advance, the patio will operate on a first-come, first-served basis for walk-in business and diners who arrive early for a reservation.

The kitchen will offer a \$10-\$20 limited appetizer menu designed to give patio guests a taste of the full dining experience. While the menu is still being finalized, plans call for less labor-intensive items that showcase the cuisine without affecting service inside the dining room.

“We want it to be a place where someone can come in on a Tuesday night, sit



Barrel and Fork rendering / Provided by JHS Outdoor Living

outside and just enjoy the atmosphere,” Wilbur said. “We envision live music out there eventually — a couple cocktails, small plates, just a relaxed place to gather.”

The veranda — designed and installed by JHS Outdoor Living in Mooresville — is one of several efforts introduced by the management team under Wilbur,

who purchased the restaurant in October.

Beginning this month, the restaurant will serve brunch on Sundays featuring Southern favorites such as fried quail and buckwheat Johnnycakes, and mountain trout.

The restaurant also is developing a Sunday evening menu inspired by tradi-

tional family dinners.

“Think meatloaf, fried chicken, short ribs — the kind of Southern comfort food you grew up eating at your grandmother’s house after church,” said chef Eric Litaker, who previously worked at Dogwood Southern Table, Suffolk Punch and Church and Union in Charlotte.

Offerings will change seasonally, such as lamb in the spring and chicken and dumplings in the winter, Litaker said.

Wilbur, a former CPA who previously owned Dillinger’s Tap Room in Charlotte, said the goal on Sundays is to create an elevated take on comfort food at more approachable prices.

“We’re known as a special-occasion spot, and we love that, but we also want people to feel like they can come over and over again — not just a few times a year,” he said.

While Sundays aim to be more approachable, Litaker also wants to offer elevated experiences for diners seeking something different.

Barrel and Fork plans to open at least one day per month to offer a special tasting menu with changing themes — Spanish, Asian, wild game, French or Italian, for example — as well as drink pairings.

Litaker said the daily menu will continue to feature weekly specials and seasonal updates, but no major overhaul is planned. Former favorites such as arancini and rotating risotto specials will return full time.

The restaurant will continue sourcing ingredients from local farms while working to expand partnerships with additional farmers and meat providers.

Barrel and Fork also has expanded its hours to attract more visitors to downtown Cornelius, particularly those attending performances at the Cain Center for the Arts.

Under previous restaurant group ownership, Litaker had moved full time to Savannah Oyster House, and general manager Brendan Schwartz split time between locations. Both are now back full time at Barrel and Fork and are joined by bar manager Joshua Sloan, who oversees an extensive cocktail program.

As for Wilbur, the changes to the front and back of house come with one goal in mind.

“My goal is simple — when people walk out of here, I want them to feel full, happy and already thinking about the next time they’re coming back,” he said.

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# Cornelius Summer Camps return to eight weeks, add new programs

The Town of Cornelius Parks and Recreation will open registration for its 2026 summer camp program March 2 for residents, with availability expanding to the general public March 9. After operating with seven weeks last summer, the program returns to a full eight-week schedule.

Camps will run June 15 through Aug. 14, excluding the week of June 29–July 3.

Three new specialty camps join the lineup this year.

LKN Boat Builders challenges participants ages 10–13 to design and construct full-scale cardboard boats using engineering principles, culminating in a regatta on Lake Norman.

Need for Speed has campers building rockets, racing cars, and engineering mini roller coasters while learning about motion, force, and acceleration.

The new Running Camp, taught by Andrea Dell of Andrea Dell Running Coach and a Bailey Middle School



cross-country volunteer, focuses on developing speed, strength, and confidence in children ages 10–12.

Several new instructors have joined the program in 2026. The Lake Norman Harbor Hippos will teach baseball, softball, and T-ball camps. Ray Gray with the Grayhounds Training Academy takes over sand volleyball instruction,

and Modern Strike Tennis will lead tennis camps, which run all eight weeks at Bailey Road Park.

The full-day camp program continues at two locations. Children ages 6–7 attend at Cornelius Town Hall, while ages 8–12 are based at Bailey Road Recreation Center. Camps run from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and include weekly field trips to destinations such as Great Wolf Lodge, iFLY Indoor Skydiving, Discovery Place Kids, and Sky Zone Trampoline Park.

Pricing is \$220 for residents and \$290 for nonresidents for most weeks, with Great Wolf Lodge weeks at \$255 and \$335, respectively. Families can pay 50% of fees at registration, with final balances due May 15.

Cornelius residents must submit proof of residency by May 15 to maintain their registration and receive the resident discount. A limited number of scholarships are available for Cornelius residents based on CMS lunch assis-

tance program eligibility.

The town partners with Mecklenburg County Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services to offer camps for any child with a disability, developmental delay, behavioral, attention, or sensory disorder, or any other challenge that affects learning or life experiences.

Returning programs include Lake Safety Camps with the Cornelius Police Department, where participants learn boating and water safety on Lake Norman, and Food Science Camps, which teach chemistry through cooking activities. Sports offerings span basketball, soccer, flag football, pickleball, disc golf, lacrosse, rugby, and volleyball.

For younger children, mini-camps provide 90-minute sessions in flag football, soccer, T-ball, and the new Sporty FUNdamentals program, which introduces multiple sports to ages 4–6.

Camp minimum enrollment must be met for programs to run, and dates, times, locations, and instructors are subject to change. Each camper receives one T-shirt per summer regardless of the number of camps attended.

Registration is available online at [www.cornelius.org/summercamps](http://www.cornelius.org/summercamps), in person at Cornelius Town Hall, or by phone at 704-892-6031, ext. 160.

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Stories with the most comments are marked with a fire emoji. Spelling and punctuation errors were corrected.

### Woody Washam: Living a Life of Service

You most certainly did leave the town in a much better place Mayor Washam! Thank you for your commitment to our town as mayor and as a citizen of our community. Your vision and accomplishments for our town are outstanding – especially with the Cain Center.

We know you will continue to be a contributing citizen but please enjoy yourself too. You deserve it :)

—Dora Dalmas

### Small businesses asking for help after winter storm

Thank you for sharing about how our community can support small businesses! We love being here!

—The Outpost LKN

We appreciate this post! Thanks for helping small businesses.

—Kunu Coffee

### Brooke Lee Chevy ad airs during Olympics

Love the singing by Brooke Lee in the newest Chevy commercial!! What a beautiful voice!!



—Diana Watson Gerding

Yay Brooke Lee!! Sooo excited for you!!

—Tracy N Eakins

Saw it tonight!

—Gail Williams

### Consignment stores merge under new brand

This is great news!



—Becky Johnson

Great source for quality furniture

—Rick Marchelos

### NCDOT completing land acquisition for W. Catawba widening

This will be such a mess during and after, no more left turns. Will take a long time to get used to.



—Chris Smith

### Live at the Lake

Thank you for posting local entertainment that's free.

—Yasmin Loft

Love this newsletter, especially the way you post all the music that's playing around.

—Linda Conley

### Town puts focus on engaging with residents

“Social Media” may be fine for those that use it, but in the case of the Downtown Master Plan there was no direct communication with those that would be negatively affected by it until just prior to the vote. A lot of us look for the yellow Public Notice cards in the mail, not a Facebook blurb.

Many of us were blindsided by road decisions that would greatly affect our neighborhoods and in one case demolish a historic home on Catawba to ease traffic caused by “festivals” downtown which would periodically close Catawba. Who thought that was a good idea?

Perhaps people that don't live in old town. If you plan on demolishing someone's home or opening a dead end to through traffic, a letter to the residents affected is in order long before the plan is printed and distributed! Much less just before the vote. As we have since pointed out, the road decisions in that plan are deeply flawed and we await a revision.

—Brian Lewis

20 24

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# Bidding Farewell to Things I Don't Miss

BY JON SHOW

When Future Man was a baby, we visited some friends with a child a year or two older.

Our newborn spent much of the night crying but was pretty calm in the morning, while her toddler was losing his mind over something trivial, like a missing sippy cup.

"It doesn't get better," she shrugged. "It only gets different."

I don't know if there's a better way to describe parenting. You trade making bottles for spilled milk. Scattered crumbs for empty cabinets. Nightly dinners for an empty house on Friday nights.

It may only get different, but that doesn't mean some of the change wasn't welcome. I was happy to shed some things along the way.

## The early days

It's irrational how happy I was to ditch the two things you probably use the most in the first year or two of parenting.

A mere 17 years ago, there was no such thing as automatic bottle washers (or at least none that I was aware of) or single-serve formula packets.

What began as an exciting morning ritual devolved into a deep breath and slog into the kitchen at unpredictable hours of the morning.

Diapers followed the same trend. The second kid spent way more time in a dirty diaper than the first one, who was changed every hour on the hour for his first six months.

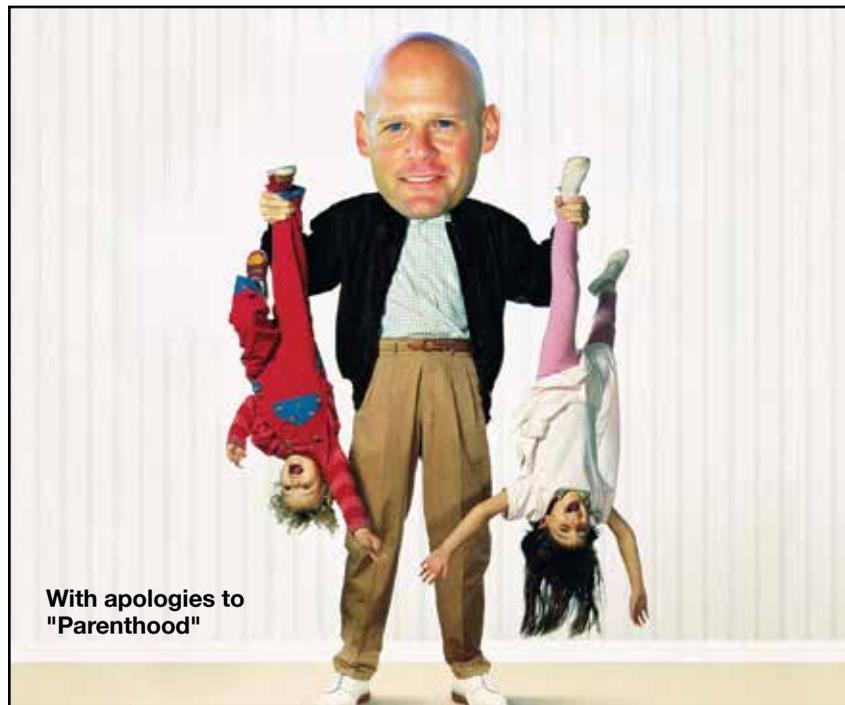
I have a disturbingly vivid memory of standing next to the dumpster at the Legacy Apartments in the fall of 2015 after we potty-trained the Blonde Bomber.

I lifted the changing table pad above my head and spiked it into the trash like a medieval warrior tossing bodies into a mass grave. The Diaper Genie (or whatever generic version we owned) went next.

## Parent-teacher conferences

My goodness, I despised parent-teacher conferences.

The first one we went to was when Future Man was 4 years old. He wasn't always the easiest toddler, so when his teacher sat us down and told us she wished she had six other kids just like him, we paused and asked her to make sure she was addressing the correct parents.



With apologies to "Parenthood"

I said the same thing in every ensuing one of them. I told each teacher that my parenting style could best be described as "1985," so if our kids did anything wrong, to please let me know so I could rain fury down upon them at home.

Was I going to? Probably not. But it stopped the teachers from contacting us every time one of our kids did something that would have caused zero concern in 1985. I wonder if they rarely contacted us out of concern over what they thought I'd do to our kids?

## Stomach bugs

Our family went through a period in the winter of 2016 when I googled "Can a home be infected with salmonella?" because we passed the vomit bug around three times in five weeks.

There is nothing — and I mean no torture that I have experienced in my life — worse than being the last family member left unheaved.

"I don't think I'm going to get it" is the last thought that runs through a parent's mind 30 minutes before blowing chunks for the next 24 hours.

## Lice

The only thing more anxiety-inducing than a vomiting toddler is one who starts scratching his or her head.

I don't think the Mother of Dragons would agree, but I love telling people that our family got lice four times. People look at me as if we live in the jungle and never bathe, which might be true,

but that's not why we kept getting hit by lice. The reality is that lice love clean, fine hair, and there were no finer candidates than our towheaded children.

I, of course, skated free with my bald head, but it afflicted my poor wife a couple of times because our kids loved using her hairbrush.

What's parenting like? It's like getting lice multiple times from your kids when they constantly use your hairbrush despite asking them not to use it at least 100 times.

## Feeding toddlers

One of the things you realize when your kids get older is that they don't really need you for survival. You're like an expert consultant whose advice is summarily ignored.

As teenagers, I love making them food. It's like my last thing left, and it makes me happy to have them ask what's for dinner and get excited when I tell them what it is.

As toddlers, however, I detested it. I wanted to love it for the same reason I love it now, but the reality is that I would make a breakfast presented on a plate to look like the face of a teddy bear, only to be told teddy bears are stupid and they wanted a bowl of oatmeal.

Yes, oatmeal. Spend 10 minutes constructing a plate of food artwork only to have your kids tell you they want to eat something that looks like a pile of dog vomit and see what it does to your self-esteem.

## Bedtime

My wife was the queen of bedtime. It was an experience. There were books, songs, memories and more.

I tried. I really did. I think I did a pretty good job for each of their first five years, but after that I treated it like they were in boot camp.

GET IN THE RACK! LIGHTS OUT!

*I forgot to brush my teeth.*

I SAID LIGHTS OUT!

There is something so satisfying about hugging your tweens and teenagers good night from the prone position on the couch and then sending them upstairs.

I don't even care if they sleep anymore. They could be up there wiring money from their Greenlight accounts to a prince in Nigeria, as long as I can watch "Shark Tank" in silence.

## Not all bad

There are so many things I do miss.

I miss taking them to the park, going on bike rides and taking them to the pool every summer night.

I miss taking them to the movies, building stuff in the garage, taking them to festivals and so much more.

They're teenagers now, and the only time they spend with us is either when they're so bored they have nothing else to do, when they want us to buy them something, or when they're grounded.

So every once in a while, when I'm missing the days gone by, I'll send them to their rooms and ground them for no reason so they have so little to do that they'll go to lunch with me.

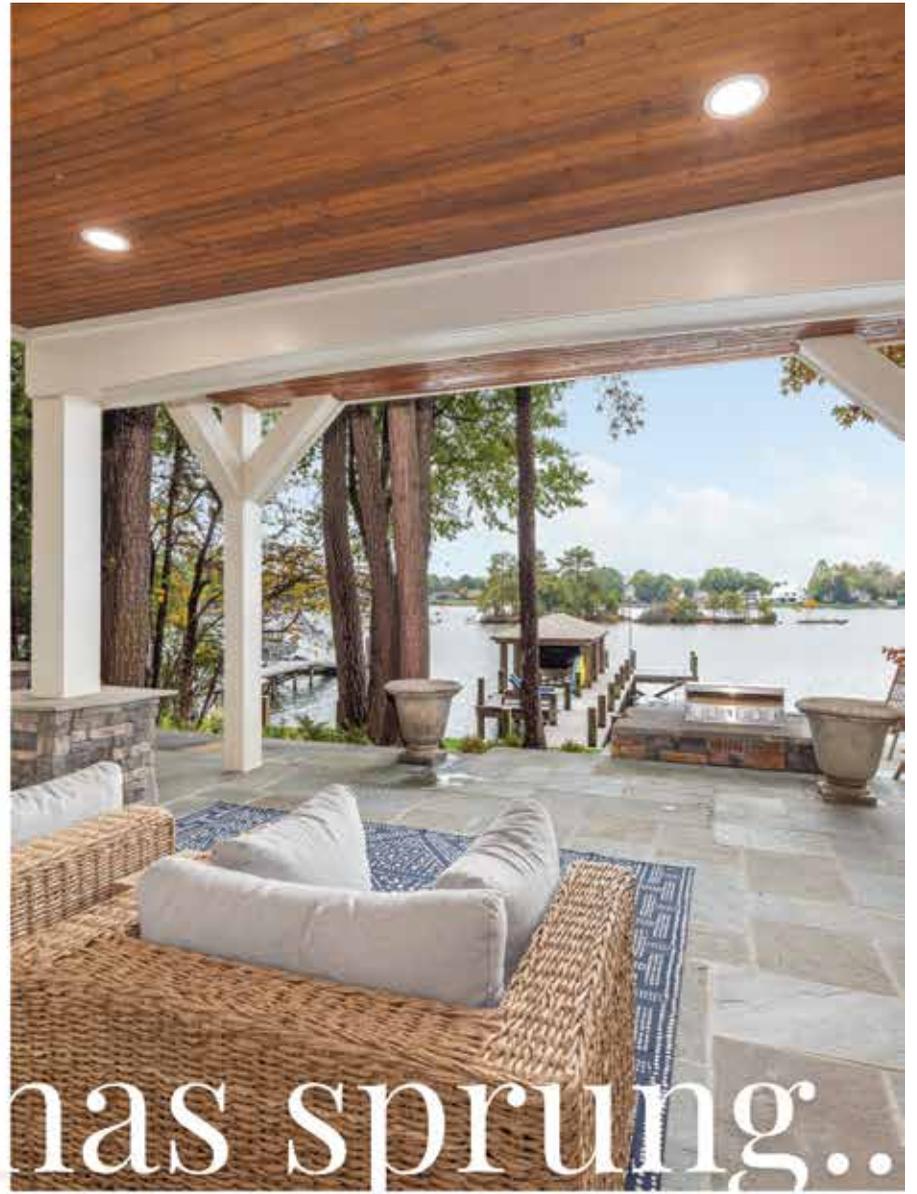
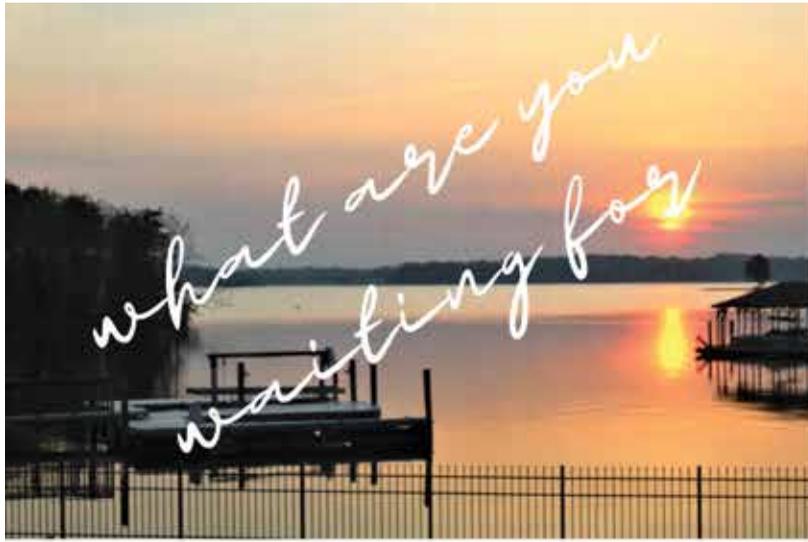
Don't worry, there's no chance they'll find out about the trumped-up charges. I don't believe either of them has ever read this column.

Can they read? I'm assuming they can.

Lucky for me, they're too old for parent-teacher conferences.

Jon Show lives in Robbins Park with his wife, who he calls "The Mother of Dragons." Their 17-year-old son is "Future Man" and their 13-year-old daughter is "The Blonde Bomber." Their dog is actually named Lightning.



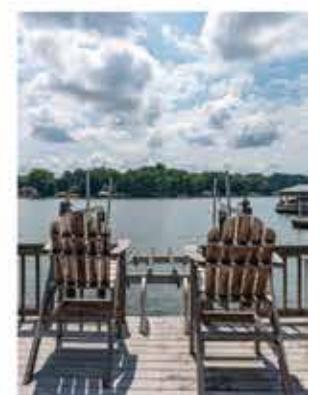


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