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Milling About

We came, we saw, we bedazzled

BY LINDSAY MARTELL

I'm decidedly unfancy. And yes, that is partly due to being a mom, as my focus is getting my kid out the door in the morning, and all of the things that come with multitasking as a work from home parent. But opting for simplicity is also just a zillion times more my speed.

Except when it comes to sparkle. I love sparkle.

Things that glitter, shimmer, illuminate ... I love it all. So, when Fred and June's Books held a book bedazzling event, I was over the moon. I mean, books and sparkles in one event? Yes, please.

I spent an hour and a half painstakingly applying tiny beads to the cover of my current read "Romantic Comedy" by Curtis Sittenfeld (five stars, btw).

Who knew there was an art to bedazzling? Start small, pick one spot to focus on, and go slow. Seems like a great approach to most things in life but especially when wielding tiny tools and trying to make art.

The result? A few smudges, a lot of pink baubles and sooo many laughs. I cherish making imperfectly pretty things.

Which leads me to another moment of all things pretty and pink – the angsty teen classic from forty years ago, *Pretty in Pink*, which I enthusiastically bought tickets to for a one night showing at Regal Birkdale.

I'm more than a little obsessed with films from the '80s, and I will always hold John Hughes movies close to my heart.

It was wild seeing it in a theater again – the unfiltered realness of the actors, simple sets and brilliant soundtrack. The characters' grit and heartache as they inch toward adulthood feels so familiar and so impossibly long ago.

Going way, way back is always a bit of a trip. Especially when you feel like you've time traveled back 247 years, which is what happened when my daughter and I explored the Hugh Torrance House and Store – one of the county's few surviving 18th-century structures.

Purchased by Hugh Torrance (an Irish immigrant and Revolutionary War soldier turned merchant) in 1779, it is North Carolina's oldest surviving store



Hugh Torrance House and Store

and a national historical landmark.

We visited on a day so cold we could see our breath as we walked along creaky floors strewn with dust.

It's one of those places you pass on Gilead Road about a hundred times a year and never really give it much of a thought. But it's worth the 45-minute guided tour. It's mysterious and captivating in an old-timey way.

Speaking of captivating, at Davidson Playhouse, I listened to a handful of storytellers take the stage with tales of love, romance and human connection as part of Lake Town Stories – an event inspired by *The Moth* – an organization that hosts live storytelling events in cities around the world.

I was mesmerized by the candor of the participants who spoke openly about finding and losing love, and seeking connections in a fragmented world.

They were shimmering examples of all that's imperfectly perfect. Sparkles and all.

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 Community Garden Closed, to Reopen in 2027

BY DAVE VIESER

The Cornelius Community Garden, located on the south side of Catawba Avenue just east of Highway 21, will be closed for the remainder of 2026. The garden is expected to reopen in 2027.

“Our town staff met with the Smithville Community Coalition (SCC), which manages the garden, in February,” said Assistant Town Manager Tyler Beardsley. “We all determined at that time that for the safety of gardeners, the garden should be closed this year while construction work is happening near the driveway.”

The construction includes two new roundabouts near the Catawba/Highway 21 intersection and additional lanes for eastbound traffic on Catawba Avenue, directly in front of the garden entrance.



Plans call for the garden to reopen next year at the same location. Long-term plans propose relocating it to a new site.

“As part of the Smithville Community Coalition’s revitalization plan, the garden is proposed to move further into the neighborhood near Vivian Lane,”

Beardsley said.

Vivian Lane is a residential street about a block south of Catawba Avenue.

Garden history

The community garden was established in 2013 through a partnership between the Smithville Community Coalition and Cornelius town officials.

At the time, Lisa Mayhew Jones, SCC executive director, said the goal was “to establish a place where the community could come together, communicate and grow various crops, just as our residents in Cornelius and Smithville did decades ago.”

Participants say the garden has achieved that goal. One of the most active is John Slee, 86, a retired engineer with Mobil Oil Corp.

“Back in 2014, we first learned about the concept of the community garden,”

Slee said. “I immediately bought a plot and told some of my friends. Altogether, we ended up with six plots.”

Slee focuses on growing vegetables including cucumbers, green beans, cauliflower and Swiss chard. “Swiss chard is a leafy green vegetable from the same family as beets and spinach,” he said. “Despite the name, it did not originate in Switzerland but in the Mediterranean region.” He also enjoys growing new potatoes.

Much of the garden’s produce is distributed to community groups and senior center programs.

“John and his fellow gardeners are well known around Cornelius for their wonderful fresh products,” said Christy Gepert Tyson, owner of Beyond Balanced Solutions on Highway 21. “It’s always a pleasure when we see him coming into our classes with a bag full of the freshest vegetables one could imagine.”

Distributing produce to the community was a central goal when the garden was launched.

“It’s a very rewarding experience and, quite frankly, brings us closer to God,” Slee said.

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NORMAN KNOWS Let's Do Brunch

BY NORMAN, WHO KNOWS

Starting this month, we are taking reader submissions on things you want to know more about around Lake Norman. If we can find the answer, we'll publish it here.

This month's submission comes from Stephanie Bitner in Robbins Park.

"My friends and I all have young children with busy weekend schedules, and we would love to know when restaurants in Cornelius, Davidson and Huntersville serve weekend brunch."

Well, Stephanie, you asked and Norman scoured the Internet to find the answer. Below are restaurant hours and a few unique dishes, as well as a list of traditional weekend breakfast restaurants.

Weekend brunch spots

Barrel & Fork

Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Fried quail and buckwheat johnnycakes, and mountain trout.

Bonefish

Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.;

Sunday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Bang Bang shrimp eggs Benedict, crab huevos rancheros, and crème brûlée French toast.

Burtons

Saturday and Sunday,
10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Croque madame, short rib hash, and truffle and goat cheese frittata.

Cheesecake Factory

Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
and Sunday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Lemon ricotta pancakes, jambalaya hash and eggs, and green chilaquiles and eggs.

Ed's Tavern

Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Build-your-own omelet, breakfast burrito, and malted waffles.

Firebirds

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Lobster spinach queso, wood-grilled chimichurri shrimp, and sausage gravy and biscuits.



Cheesecake Factory lemon ricotta pancakes

Foxcroft Food & Wine

Sunday, noon-4 p.m.

- Smoked salmon board, green shakshuka, and hash brown quiche.

Fresh Chef Kitchen

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- California omelet, filet Benedict, and breakfast biscuit.

H2 Public House

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Eggs Benedict, BLT, and corned beef hash.

Harp & Crown

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Full English breakfast, roast beef hash, and banger egg and cheese.

Kindred

Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Crab banh mi, cornmeal waffle, and Wagyu skillet burger.

Link & Pin

Saturday and Sunday,
10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Whole flounder, lobster roll, and granddad's deviled eggs.

North Harbor Club

Saturday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.;

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Pork wings, grown-up grilled cheese, and crabby poached eggs.

Red Rocks

Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Strawberry waffle, crab cake Benedict, and steak and eggs.

The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Red velvet waffle, breakfast quesadilla, and veggie eggs Benedict. Lunch items available at 11 a.m.

Torrence & Knox

Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

- French toast, burger, and New York-style home fries.



Red Rocks steak and eggs



Firebirds sausage gravy and biscuits



Harp & Crown banger egg and cheese

Traditional breakfast spots

Bob Evans

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Eggs Up Grill

Saturday and Sunday, 6 a.m.-2 p.m.

Famous Toastery

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

First Watch

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Fresh Egg Restaurant

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.

Metro Diner

Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

Milkbread

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Rise Café

Saturday and Sunday, 7 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

The Egg Cafe

Saturday, 7 a.m.-11 a.m.;

Sunday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

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Transit plans shift to the fast track

BY MARK WASHBURN

Transit improvements are accelerating for Lake Norman even before the first payout of the 1-cent road and rail tax approved last year.

In the March Newsmakers Breakfast organized by Cornelius Today at The Peninsula Club, residents learned that Red Line trains could be running from uptown Charlotte to Cornelius in as few as eight years.

Money will also be on the way for roads and buses. Tax collections begin July 1 and the first disbursement is expected in October.

“We need better roads and less congestion in our town,” said Bob Menzel, who represents Cornelius on the Metropolitan Public Transit Authority, a new agency focused on the region’s mobility.

Also speaking was Brent Cagle, former Charlotte Douglas International Airport director and interim CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System.

Cagle, who moved to Huntersville in 2012 from Phoenix, said he never thought the Red Line would happen because Norfolk Southern Railway steadfastly refused to sell or share its little-used freight railbed between Charlotte and Lake Norman.

Then, the railroad reversed course and in 2024 the city of Charlotte bought 25 miles of the line to the Iredell County border for \$74 million plus \$15 million for the uptown platform at the Gateway Station.

“That changed everything,” Cagle said. “That jarred everything loose.”

Charlotte will transfer the rail line to the transit authority along with CATS. Iredell County and Mooresville have not decided whether they will invest in continuing the Red Line north of Davidson.

Under the transit tax legislation, the Red Line must be the first rail project to see construction and must be 50 percent complete before competing projects, like the Blue Line or Silver Line light rail, can get a share of the money.

Preliminary design work for the Red Line is already 30 percent complete, and planners are getting ready to do the environmental impact analysis, which may take as little as two years, Cagle said.

Then the Metropolitan Public Transit Authority will seek federal money for the project, followed by construction. Planners in Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson are already working on station locations.

Cornelius expects its station to be



From Left: Speakers Brent Cagle and Bob Menzel / Photos by Jason Benavides



Dixie Dean

in the Antiquity area along N.C. 115. Davidson has acquired land at Main Street and Griffin Street. Huntersville is considering stops at Hambright Road, downtown Huntersville and in a new mixed-use development north of Sam Furr Road.

There are 86 grade crossings along the Red Line route, some of which will need to be upgraded or eliminated.

Bus and Micro transit

Cagle said that two main complaints about CATS’ new Micro transit system – an Uber-like ride-sharing service being tested in North Mecklenburg – is that the pickup zone, largely along

the I-77 and N.C. 115 corridor, is too narrow and riders endure delays during rush hour.

Bigger vans and more of them might be the solution to the rush-hour demand, Cagle said. CATS aims to pick up passengers within 30 minutes of being summoned, he said.

But he said that studies of other transit systems offering similar on-demand rides showed that service zones lose reliability if they are too diffuse.

CATS Micro started serving Lake Norman with seven vehicles and now uses nine. Ridership continues to increase, he said, and exceeds that of the old Village Rider bus service.

There is still strong demand in North Mecklenburg for express routes to downtown Charlotte, Cagle said. There is consideration being given to adding midday routes for those who work half-days and for starting special event routes for concerts, Panthers games or soccer events.

“We call it the Beyonce Effect,” he said. “Demand skyrocketed when Beyonce performed here.”

Menzel said a key to easing transportation congestion is integrating all functions – roads, Micro, bus and rail into one efficient system.

“We’re trying to build a mobility network,” he said.

Sound Check with John Heffron

John Heffron is a stand-up comedian from Detroit, best known for winning Season 2 of NBC’s “Last Comic Standing” in 2004. His comedy centers on everyday middle-class life, relationships and growing up. He has released several stand-up specials and continues to tour regularly across the country.

On April 30, he’ll visit the Cain Center for the Arts as part of a fundraiser benefiting Yay!Day, a local nonprofit founded by Cornelius teenager Zoey Boukedes.

Ahead of his visit, Heffron tackled our Sound Check Q&A.

Opening act: My love of comedy started with comedians on The Tonight Show. Then my mom bought me tapes of Eddie Murphy, George Carlin, Steve Martin, and I wore those out. But the real moment was when I was 17 at an open mic. The comedians were so bad I remember thinking I could do this. That was the first time it felt possible.

Well, that didn’t work: When I was 18, I did a Bar Mitzvah. After every

single joke, the whole group would yell, “That’s what your mom said!” I learned two things that night: One, you are not always in control of the show. And two, I no longer do Bar Mitzvahs.

Hard habit to break: I put two folded napkins in my back pockets—learned that the hard way. I put my phone away about 45 minutes before the show so I’m not walking on stage thinking about emails or dumb stuff. I do a little breathing to settle in and then right before I go on, I scream into my arm just to get the energy out and reset.

Going to Carolina: I’ve got a brother who lives in North Carolina, and growing up we came down to Nags Head or Kitty Hawk every year. Being back here always feels a little familiar.

Weirdest origin for a joke: I was sitting with my mom when she was in hospice, and something hit me in that moment. It was strange but also kind of perfect. A lot of ideas come when I’m supposed to be listening to someone. I’ll be in a conversation and part of my brain is already turning it into a bit.



That was odd: I had a woman who was convinced I was sending her secret messages through my stand-up. She started writing me 45-page letters and mailed me finished cans of tuna and asked if I would pick up after myself.

Once your jokes turn into coded messages and seafood mail, you realize this job has some range.

Heavy rotation: I listen to Sade almost every night to fall asleep, and then somehow also MMMBop by Hanson. So my playlist is basically “smooth, calming adult followed by a full sugar rush.”

Theme song: “Running on Empty” by Jackson Browne. Not in a burned-out way—more like still moving, still showing up, just a little more aware of the mileage.

Please stop: When someone wants to take a quick picture and it turns into a full production. They dig their phone out, can’t open it, can’t find the camera. They hand it to someone else. Then they’re pulling friends in, taking jackets off. At that point, it’s not a photo, it’s a photo shoot.

Must see: You’ve got that really nice mall—I always forget the name—but it’s for fancy people. That’s where I like to go. Just to walk around and pretend I belong for a little bit.

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Another infill development proposed for Washam Potts

BY DAVE VIESER

The two-mile, two-lane road connecting Old Statesville Road to Bailey Road in Cornelius is officially known as Washam Potts Road, named for several well-known and influential families in the town.

Some residents, however, suggest it might be more accurately called Washam Potts Infill Road, because developers have found vacant land along the road ideal for small subdivisions, often called infill development.

"Infill development" refers to building on unused or underutilized land within existing development patterns.

Another infill project is now being considered on the south side of the road, on a primarily vacant parcel about a quarter-mile northeast of the Westmoreland Road intersection.

The address is 9910 Washam Potts Road. County tax records show it is a



seven-acre parcel containing one private home, owned by Rachel Anne Potts of Huntersville, with an assessed tax value of \$1.33 million.

The proposed subdivision would include up to 16 single-family homes on

approximately five of the seven acres. The existing home, built in 1924, will remain.

The Bowman Development Group of Huntersville is proposing the development. To proceed, the zoning on the land, currently listed as NR, or Neighborhood Residential, must be changed to conditional zoning.

That requires a public hearing process, including two town board hearings and a planning board hearing with a recommendation. No dates for those meetings have been set.

Under Cornelius regulations, the first step is a presentation to the town's pre-development review committee, which occurred March 5.

At the meeting, staff and attendees raised several issues: buffering and tree protection, accessibility to the nearby greenway, and the potential traffic generated by 16 new homes. There was also interest in community input, which the

town's hearing process will provide.

The project appears to qualify as infill development.

"The available inventory of lots is decreasing every year, and infill will be the only opportunities left for new residential homes in a very short period of time," said Deputy Town Manager Wayne Herron.

Much of today's Cornelius was carved from farmland, and some parcels are now available for new homes. Another proposed infill development is less than half a mile away.

Landowners often hope for town approval so they can use proceeds from sales to finance living and retirement expenses.



Herron



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Special-needs athletes get their field of dreams

BY JON SHOW

For nearly 20 years, tucked into the weekly rhythms of the Charlotte Independence Soccer Club, a group of players has gathered on the field to compete — not for trophies but simply to play.

TOPSoccer — short for The Outreach Program for Soccer — is a U.S. Youth Soccer initiative administered through affiliated clubs like the Independence.

The program was brought to the Independence when Executive Director Thomas Finlay joined the club in 2006 and has quietly become one of its most meaningful offerings, welcoming children and adults into a game they might otherwise never have had the chance to play.

"The goal is to work with special-needs individuals, both children and adults, to use the game of soccer to help them participate in an athletic event that they possibly would otherwise not be able to participate in," said Chris Bradley, director of the club's TOPSoccer program.

The program holds sessions once a week, with attendance ranging from 10 to 20 participants. Sessions begin with warm-up activities and build toward scrimmages, all designed to accommodate the full spectrum of players.

Central to each session is the buddy system — a one-on-one pairing between a volunteer and a participant.

"We have a wide variety of abilities and a wide variety of diagnoses as well," Bradley said. "That one-on-one time is definitely needed to help the session go well."

Kayla Stump, a student at Hough High School and a youth player for the Independence, volunteered for the first time last fall.

"I found out about it through school and just wanted to share my love of the game," she said. "Communication

wasn't easy at the very beginning, but once I figured it out, I could communicate in a way they understood and was able to build connections."

Bradley said progress in the program



rarely looks like a goal-scoring highlight. Sometimes success is simply a participant staying engaged for a full session or eventually learning to kick a ball after weeks of reluctance.

In one instance, a participant who resisted a soccer ball altogether found joy in kicking around a beach ball instead.

"If they're smiling and they're having fun, then we've done our job," Bradley said.

Bradley pointed to the power of connecting with participants as one of the program's most underrated tools.

"When they come back the second and the third time, and you remember their name, and they know that they're a part of the program, it's extremely rewarding," he said. "You really have a good feeling, especially when you see the smiles on the kids' faces."

The impact and connections, coaches said, extend well beyond the players themselves.

"Being able to grow with them was awesome," Stump said. "I really loved the kids, and that made it so enjoyable. I felt so happy I was able to connect with them."

The club is always looking for more buddies over the age of 12. Volunteer onboarding is quick and sessions run for eight consecutive weeks in the fall and spring.

Information about the program is available on the Charlotte Independence website under the Community section.

Bradley said all are welcome — volunteers and participants — regardless of their soccer knowledge or skills.

"Soccer is for everyone," Bradley said, "and TOPSoccer definitely fits that."

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Hough soccer, volleyball have championship aspirations

BY RYAN MOXON

A strong senior class determined to rebound from last year's early playoff exit has the Hough girls soccer team chasing a state title this season.

The Huskies are 11-1 at press time, including wins over highly ranked Hoggard and Jacksonville, powered by senior goalkeeper Riley Pickels, senior midfielder Sydney Treanor, senior defender Shelby Siggins and junior forward Olivia Miller.

Coach Mike Kutcher singled out Pickels' on-field leadership, Miller's steady contributions, Treanor's scrappiness and Siggins' clutch play. He also praised the contributions of two newcomers: sophomore midfielder Sophia Pustorino and freshman forward Nora Breault.

"Phia is a workhorse in the midfield," Kutcher said. "She reads the game well and does a very good job of putting herself in winnable situations. And when she can do that she has proven she is going to create an opportunity for us more times than not."

Pustorino and Breault have been key offensive contributors, combining for 10 goals and 18 assists through the first half of the season.

"Nora has a knack for putting herself in great position inside the box to capitalize on opportunities created by teammates and has also proven that she can create chances for herself if needed," Kutcher said.

The only loss on the Huskies' record came in a 3-1 defeat to No. 2 Cardinal

Gibbons.

"We were not happy with our loss versus Cardinal Gibbons," Kutcher said. "Too many mistakes and Gibbons is too good of a team. We just did not have our best night and they punished us for our mistakes."

Kutcher believes the team's best performances are still ahead but acknowledges distractions such as final exams, prom and spring break could test the Huskies' focus.

"Remaining focused and maintaining our competitive edge is imperative if we want to make a playoff run," he said.

The season's toughest stretch looms with matchups against highly ranked Ardrey Kell and Myers Park. Kutcher plans to rely on senior leadership and using last year's playoff disappointment as motivation.

"This team is very close and has tremendous leadership from the senior class," he said. "They also play with a bit of a chip on their shoulder after coming up short in the playoffs as the No. 1 seed last season."

Boys volleyball

The Hough boys' volleyball team is off to a strong start this season, holding an 8-2 record as of press time. With several key games ahead, the team is aiming for another run at the state championship game.

The squad features five seniors who have previously earned All-State or All-State honorable mention honors: Noah Gauthier, Christopher Barnes, Landon



Senior goalkeeper Riley Pickels

Hixon, Jaden Verhoeven and Colten Short.

Team captains Gauthier, Barnes, and Short anchor the roster. Barnes and Short, both four-year varsity lettermen, form what coaches call the state's top setting tandem.

Short brings a fiery intensity to the court, said head coach Greyson Roberts, while Barnes provides a steady, reliable presence.

Gauthier has emerged as one of the state's premier outside hitters. Known for balancing a fun-loving personality with intensity, he serves as the on-court captain and the emotional center of the team.

"As he goes, so goes the team," said Roberts. "He's been my go-to eyes and ears on the court since his sophomore year. This program doesn't have the identity it does today without his impact."

Junior Brooklyn Matthews joined Hough this year and has been transitioning from back-row play to middle hitter. Midway into the season, Matthews is gaining confidence and has contributed in multiple matches, showing promise as a key fixture for the team moving forward.

Hough's biggest win of the season thus far came in a 2-0 win against Weddington, which was a rematch of last season's state semifinal. So far, Hough has avoided any disappointing losses, falling only to state powerhouses Reagan and TC Roberson.

The team knows its size disadvantage against most opponents, so coaches emphasize speed, disciplined play, and smart court coverage.

"We want to frustrate bigger teams with how well we pass, how well we cover, and how quickly we can find an offensive attack," Roberts said.

Ten seniors make up the roster, six of whom have been playing together for four years. That cohesion was evident last season, when underclassmen who played in the state title game vowed to return stronger after a 3-1 loss to West Forsyth.

This season, the mission remains the same: return to the state championship and win it all.

"The team of underclassmen that played that day vowed after the loss that they would be back for it all next season," said Roberts. "Next season is now this season, and their mission remains the same. They want to win it all."



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New Hotel Proposal

Developer Jake Palillo has requested a zoning change for 6.3 acres near the intersection of Sam Furr Road and Mayes Road to construct a 45,000-square-foot hotel with 45 rooms and a spa.

Elevations on the town of Cornelius' website show a U-shaped hotel featuring a courtyard pool and spa/club building. Seven cottages are proposed for the north side of the site.

The property is zoned rural preservation and would need conditional zoning for the hotel. Following a community meeting, the proposal will undergo two public hearings before the town board, as well as a planning board review.

Cardboard Boat Race Returns

Registration is open for an annual event the Cornelius Parks and Recreation Department hopes will develop into a signature lakeside tradition.

Now in its second year, the Cornelius Cardboard Boat Regatta pits amateur boat builders against each other in a race on Lake Norman. Prizes will be awarded for best decorated, people's choice and the Titanic Award for best sinking vessel.

Detailed rules are available on the town website. The event will take place Saturday, May 2, at Jetton Park from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Advance registration is required and capped at 25 teams. The cost is \$25 per team for residents and \$35 for nonresidents. Proceeds will benefit Float It Forward, a nonprofit that provides personal flotation devices for docks and educates lake users on water and boating safety.

Admission is free for spectators, and a food truck will be on site.

Contract Awarded on Bailey Road Extension

The N.C. Department of Transportation awarded a \$7.8 million contract to Blythe Development for improvements to Bailey Road aimed at improving safety and traffic flow.

Plans call for extending Bailey Road about a half-mile along a new alignment between U.S. 21 (Statesville Road) and Poole Place Drive. A roundabout will also be constructed at the intersec-

tion of Bailey Road, Poole Place Drive and the new Bailey Road extension.

The project will also include a connection from the future roadway to the Caldwell Station Creek Greenway using a new culvert.

Construction is expected to be finished in fall 2027.

Bailey Road study

The Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization board approved funding for several transportation projects, including \$64,000 for a study of the Bailey Road and N.C. 115 intersection aimed at improving traffic.

Downtown Plan and other Town News

Town officials are targeting early summer 2026 for adoption of the downtown master plan, according to Planning Director Rox Burhans.

Before then, the town plans an extensive outreach effort to update residents on the proposal, which was first unveiled last year.

"We hope to have a final draft done by early April, which we can then post on

the town website," Burhans said at the March 16 Town Board meeting. "After that, we would seek to set up a community meeting in May to further explain the plan."

Outstanding Citizen Award

Cornelius Mayor Denis Bilodeau established a quarterly Outstanding Citizen Award. The first-quarter 2026 award was presented posthumously to Lin Snowa, who was a frequent attendee at Town Board meetings and was involved in numerous town and community events.

OTC Social District

The board expanded the boundaries of the downtown social district to include additional portions of downtown Cornelius, including the Cain Center pottery studio, the Mills Market development, the Oak Street Mill complex and the live-work units on Catawba Avenue.

Wher-Rena Site Vacant Again

The SouthTown Motorsports boat dealership has relocated its Lake Nor-

man showroom from West Catawba Avenue in Cornelius to Grayland Road in Mooresville.

The dealership had been operating at the former site of Wher-Rena Boatland, which was also briefly home to an Ed Watkins Marine store.

The West Catawba property is owned by Catawba Property Investments, an entity affiliated with NASCAR driver Joey Logano.

Town Buying More Land North of Bailey Road

The Cornelius Town Board approved the purchase of 37.4 acres of vacant land at an estimated cost of \$961,950. The property is just north of Bailey Road Park, adjacent to a vacant 36.18-acre parcel purchased last year.

The adjacent land purchased last year had been the proposed site of a commercial development that generated significant opposition.

The 10-year parks master plan adopted in 2024 calls for adding two large parks east of Old Statesville Road, each approximately 100 acres or more, in the general

Continued on PAGE 14

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Update on NCDOT road projects

BY DAVE VIESER

Construction work on the roundabouts in Cornelius west of Interstate 77 will begin the week of April 6, according to Deputy Town Manager Wayne Herron. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has divided the project into six phases.

Phase one work will begin on One Norman Boulevard, Knox Road and the Knox Road and Torrence Chapel Road roundabout. The Knox Road work will be held during daylight hours due to its proximity to residential neighborhoods.

The remainder of the work will be conducted at night, according to NCDOT.

Phase two work will be on the interior section of the Torrence Chapel Road/Knox Road roundabout. Phase three will be on Torrence Chapel Road, including the roundabout between Fresh Market and Randy Marion.

NCDOT stated that phase four work cannot begin until after January 2027 and will include the roundabout at the post office.

Phase five will include the widening of Liverpool Parkway and a slip lane from West Catawba Avenue onto Interstate 77 south, as well as a left-turn lane to stack traffic from Liverpool to West Catawba.

Final paving will comprise phase six of the project, estimated for spring of 2028.

Herron said a community meeting with street renderings is being scheduled for April to further communicate the scope and timetable of the project to area residents.

He also noted that construction crews plan to retain off-duty police officers

and their vehicles to enhance safety in the construction zones.

Other project updates from NCDOT

Dual roundabouts near Catawba Avenue

Progress is 51% complete. The contractor is working on waterline relocations in advance of widening Catawba Avenue.

Traffic has been detoured on Holiday Lane to begin grading work to build the roundabout at the end of Holiday Lane and Sterling Bay Lane.

The contractor anticipates reopening Holiday Lane to through traffic in fall 2026.

Roundabout at Potts Street and N.C. 115 (Main Street)

Progress is 48% complete. Traffic has shifted to the new Potts Street alignment, and the contractor is installing a waterline, pavement, curb and gutter, sidewalk and drainage on Main Street.

As part of that project, contractors are working on grading and drainage for the extension of Sloan Street to Potts Street and the roundabout at Sloan Street and Griffith Street in Davidson.

Both projects are currently anticipated to be complete by summer 2027.

NCDOT recently closed a section of South Main Street in Davidson just north of the train trestle while crews install waterline, drainage, pavement, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. The road is expected to reopen in June or July.

Northcross Drive extension

The project is about 51% complete, with completion anticipated in spring 2027.

Continued from PAGE 13

areas north and south of Bailey Road.

Planning Board Rejects Novant ER

The Cornelius Planning Board unanimously recommended denying a request from Novant Health to erect an 11,400-square-foot freestanding emergency room on Holiday Lane just north of Interstate 77 Exit 28.

The decision was based on the proposal's conflict with the town's land-use

plan. A freestanding emergency room is not listed as a permitted primary or secondary use in the Waterfront Mixed Use District, which includes the property where the ER is proposed.

Novant's other proposal on the March 9 agenda fared better, as the Planning Board unanimously recommended rezoning for a proposed facility on Westmoreland Road. The facility would be designed as an urgent care center, along with some minor surgery.

Both projects will be presented to the Town Board for a formal vote.

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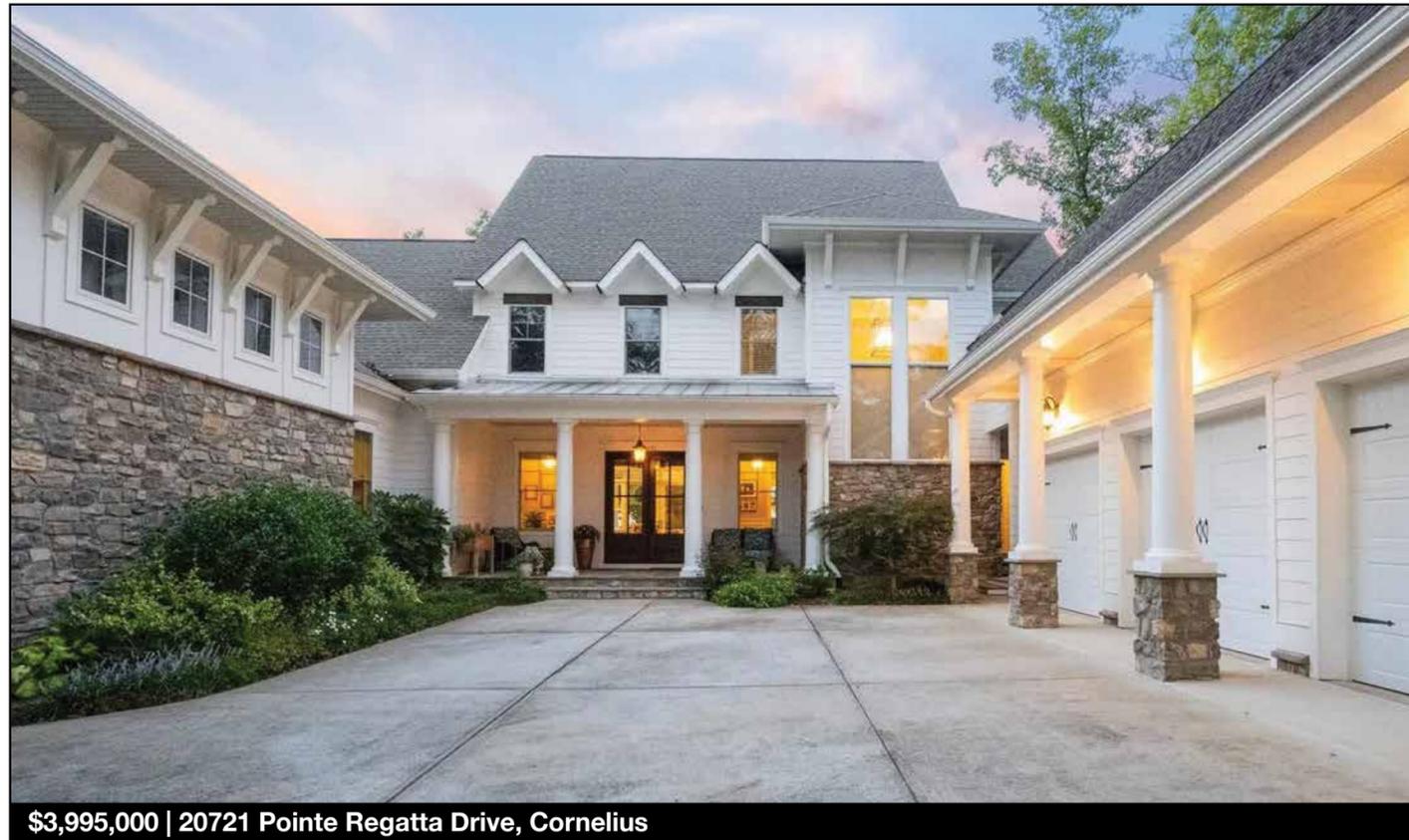
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2/23/26, \$750,000, 21817 Chapel Way, 3BR/2.5BA, Antiquity, 2,383 sq ft, built 2008

2/23/26, \$935,000, 21228 Lakeview Cir, 3BR/2.5BA, Country Club Shores, 2,231 sq ft, built 2016

2/23/26, \$455,000, 21300 Sandy Cove Rd, 3BR/3BA, Rockridge Shores, 1,897 sq ft, built 1986

2/25/26, \$295,000, 17562 Tuscany Ln, 2BR/2BA, Vineyard Point, 960 sq ft, built 1995

2/25/26, \$450,000, 11422 Potters Row, 3BR/2.5BA, Antiquity, 1,705 sq ft, built 2008



\$1,250,000 | 18908 Riverwind Lane, Davidson

2/26/26, \$400,000, 17919 Kings Point Dr Unit G, 2BR/2BA, Bayshore, 954 sq ft, built 1991

2/26/26, \$757,500, 12612 Meeting-house Dr, 3BR/2BA, Baileys Glen, 2,441 sq ft, built 2012

2/26/26, \$415,000, 18701 Nautical Dr #103, 2BR/2BA, Admirals Quarters, 1,000 sq ft, built 1986

3/2/26, \$750,000, 19716 Outermark Ln, 5BR/3.5BA, Sawyers Landing, 2,876 sq ft, built 1999

3/2/26, \$305,000, 19930 Weeping Water Run, 3BR/2BA, Mill Creek, 1,396 sq ft, built 2005

3/2/26, \$3,995,000, 20721 Pointe Regatta Dr, 4BR/4BA, Pointe Regatta, 3,775 sq ft, built 2016

3/6/26, \$319,000, 20115 Henderson Rd Unit D, 2BR/2BA, Windward, 1,046 sq ft, built 1987



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3/6/26, \$410,000, 8273 Viewpoint Ln, 3BR/2.5BA, Harborside, 2,111 sq ft, built 2012

3/11/26, \$408,000, 10008 Caldwell Depot Rd, 3BR/2.5BA, Caldwell Station, 1,622 sq ft, built 2005

3/12/26, \$620,000, 18647 Vineyard Point Ln, 3BR/2BA, Vineyard Point, 1,330 sq ft, built 1990

3/16/26, \$890,000, 19031 Brandon James Dr, 3BR/2BA, Baileys Glen, 2,689 sq ft, built 2024

3/10/26, \$475,000, 10219 Caldwell Depot Rd, 3BR/2.5BA, Caldwell Station, 1,964 sq ft, built 2004

3/12/26, \$285,000, 21219 Alto Tierra Dr, 3BR/1BA, Bahia Bay, 925 sq ft, built 1973

3/13/26, \$365,000, 11403 Talley's Way Unit U-1, 2BR/2.5BA, Antiquity, 1,176 sq ft, built 2008

3/19/26, \$428,000, 11104 Aprilia Ln, 3BR/2.5BA, Heritage Green, 1,707 sq ft, built 2004

3/11/26, \$281,750, 18001 Delmas Dr Unit 3C, 2BR/2BA, The Terraces at Oakhurst, 1,216 sq ft, built 2006

3/12/26, \$450,000, 20441 Harbor View Dr, 3BR/3.5BA, Lake Norman Cove at Jetton, 2,390 sq ft, built 2007

3/13/26, \$345,000, 19524 Feriba Pl, 3BR/2.5BA, Mill Creek, 1,160 sq ft, built 2001

3/19/26, \$330,000, 9532 Cadman Ct, 2BR/2.5BA, Oakhurst, 1,583 sq ft, built 2003

3/19/26, \$479,500, 19431 Heartland St, 3BR/2BA, Wellsley Village, 1,937 sq ft, built 1990

3/19/26, \$367,500, 18832 Nautical Dr #39, 2BR/2BA, Admirals Quarters, 1,121 sq ft, built 1999

3/19/26, \$2,625,000, 18353 John Connor Rd, 4BR/3.5BA, Cornelius, 3,653 sq ft, built 1986

Davidson

2/25/26, \$1,195,000, 18504 Carnegie Overlook Blvd, 3BR/3.5BA, River Run, 3,228 sq ft, built 2005

2/25/26, \$575,000, 731 Beaty St, 3BR/3.5BA, Davidson Walk, 2,459 sq ft, built 2023

2/26/26, \$225,000, 502 Cardinal Ct, 3BR/1BA, Lakeside Park, 1,053 sq ft, built 1967

2/26/26, \$583,127, 553 Annie Lowery Way, 4BR/3.5BA, Parkside Commons, 1,906 sq ft, built 2025

2/26/26, \$720,000, 19914 Wooden Tee Dr, 4BR/3BA, Bradford, 2,980 sq ft, built 2010

2/27/26, \$539,882, 541 Annie Lowery Way, 4BR/3.5BA, Parkside Commons, 1,961 sq ft, built 2025

2/27/26, \$300,000, 15879 Sharon Dale Dr, 2BR/2.5BA, Summers Walk, 1,166 sq ft, built 2009

3/2/26, \$960,000, 208 Ambleside Village Ln, 3BR/2.5BA, Ambleside I, 2,274 sq ft, built 2020

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3/3/26, \$335,000, 765 Southwest Dr, 2BR/2BA, Davidson Landing, 990 sq ft, built 1994

3/4/26, \$739,000, 11655 Terrill Ridge Dr, 3BR/2.5BA, River Ridge, 2,891 sq ft, built 1995

3/5/26, \$404,000, 3316 Streamside Dr, 4BR/2.5BA, The Farm At Riverpointe, 2,090 sq ft, built 2009

3/10/26, \$414,000, 11033 Hat Creek Ln, 3BR/2.5BA, The Farm At Riverpointe, 2,151 sq ft, built 2011

3/4/26, \$1,250,000, 18908 Riverwind Ln, 4BR/3.5BA, River Run, 3,618 sq ft, built 1998

3/4/26, \$940,000, 316 Kimberly Rd, 4BR/3.5BA, Hudson Place, 3,817 sq ft, built 1994

3/5/26, \$928,000, 13417 Scanlan Way, 4BR/2.5BA, Pages Pond, 3,450 sq ft, built 1994

3/13/26, \$1,100,000, 748 Amalfi Dr, 4BR/4.5BA, Davidson Bay, 3,263 sq ft, built 2017

3/13/26, \$490,000, 520 Catawba Ave, 3BR/2.5BA, Deer Park, 1,344 sq ft, built 2002

3/13/26, \$529,000, 1331 Torrence Cir #1331, 2BR/2BA, Davidson Landing, 1,087 sq ft, built 1996

3/13/26, \$592,000, 15107 Rocky Bluff Loop, 4BR/3.5BA, The Summit at River Run, 3,163 sq ft, built 2018

3/17/26, \$1,500,000, 18637 Davidson Concord Rd, Davidson, built N/A

3/17/26, \$520,000, 714 Northeast Dr #53, 3BR/2BA, Spinnaker Reach, 1,375 sq ft, built 1999

3/18/26, \$410,000, 10900 Tailwater St, 3BR/2.5BA, The Farm At Riverpointe, 1,952 sq ft, built 2011

3/18/26, \$280,000, 711 Beaty St, 2BR/1.5BA, Davidson Walk, 1,026 sq ft, built 2023

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Visit 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.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen | 6 p.m. — John Sullivan (Rock) — Free

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Lost Worlds Brewing | 6 p.m. — Matt Walsh (Blues) — Free

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — Neal Carter (Americana) — Free

Harp & Crown | 7 p.m. — Pluto for Planet Duo (Classic Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Thomas Road Band (Country) — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 9 p.m. — Radio Source (Rock) — Free

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Primal Brewery | 5 p.m. — Mike Faulkenberry Trio (Blues/Rock/Jam) — Free

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — Radio Nowhere (Classic Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Landslide (Fleetwood Mac Tribute) — Paid

Cain Center for the Arts | 7:30 p.m. — Joanne Shaw Taylor — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 10 p.m. — Hoods Creek (Country) — Free

SUNDAY, APRIL 5

Harp & Crown | 12 p.m. — The Fiddler & The Flutist (Celtic) — Free

Rudder & Rose | 6 p.m. — Scott Johnson & Friends (Rock & Country) — Free

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Peninsula Prime | 6 p.m. — Coconut Groove Band Duo (Acoustic) — Free

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — String Theory (Classic Rock) — Free

Harp & Crown | 7 p.m. — Union Groove (Classic Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Rev On (The Foreigner Experience) — Paid

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Primal Brewery | 5 p.m. — Gabriel Van (Bluegrass/Jam) — Free



Saturday, April 25 | Fooz Fighter (Foo Fighters Tribute) with Krack'd Vinyl. 8 p.m.

Royal Bliss | 7 p.m. — Bailey Marie (Country) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Brightside (90s Party-Rock) — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 10 p.m. — Throw-down Jones (Rock) — Free

SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Rudder & Rose | 6 p.m. — Little Johnny Trailer Trash (Rock) — Free

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen | 6 p.m. — Keith Wilson (Rock) — Free

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

Lost Worlds Brewing | 6 p.m. — Keith Wilson (Rock) — Free

Harp & Crown | 7 p.m. — Paul Atkinson Band (Rock) — Free

Cain Center for the Arts | 7:30 p.m. — The Cleverlys (Bluegrass) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Blink180True (Blink-182 Tribute) with Spiderwebs (No Doubt/Gwen Stefani Tribute) — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 9 p.m. — Uncanny (Rock) — Free

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

Lost Worlds Brewing | 6 p.m. — Special Characters (Rock) — Free

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — Gina & The Crew Dogs (Rock) — Free

Cain Center for the Arts | 7:30 p.m. — Jeff Allen (Comedy) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Tennessee Whiskey (Chris Stapleton Tribute) with Ultimate Eric Church Tribute — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 10 p.m. — Kids in America (Rock) — Free

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen | 6 p.m. — Keith Wilson (Rock) — Free

Cain Center for the Arts | 7 p.m. — North Mecklenburg Chorus (Classical) — Paid

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

Lost Worlds Brewing | 6 p.m. — Raphael Graves (Rock/Country/Americana) — Free

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — Chasing Phoenix (Rock) — Free

Harp & Crown | 7 p.m. — Ben Gatlin (Blues) — Free

Cain Center for the Arts | 7:30 p.m. — Hunter Hayes with Franklin Jonas and the Byzantines (Genre Bending) — Paid

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Departure (Journey Tribute) — Paid

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

Royal Bliss Brewing Co. | 7 p.m. — OldSkool (Classic Rock) — Free

★ **Boatyard Lake Norman** | 8 p.m. — Fooz Fighter (Foo Fighters Tribute) with Krack'd Vinyl (Rock) — Paid

Primal Brewery | 7 p.m. — Next Stop Comedy (Comedy) — Paid

Rudder & Rose | 10 p.m. — Next 'O Kin (Rock) — Free

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

Rudder & Rose | 6 p.m. — Tommy Keys Duo (Roots Mix) — Free

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

Peninsula Prime | 6 p.m. — Daniel Smith (Acoustic) — Free

Harp & Crown | 6 p.m. — Ryan Winters (Acoustic Covers) — Free

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen | 6 p.m. — John Sullivan (Rock) — Free

Cain Center for the Arts | 7:30 p.m. — John Heffron with Jason Allen King (Comedy) — Paid

Listings are free of charge. Want to include your venue? Contact us at jon@corneliustoday.com.

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SOLD | 168 Brownstone Drive, Mooresville | \$1,900,000 | Represented Seller



SOLD | 18916 Riverwind Lane, Davidson | \$1,650,000 | Represented Buyer

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Thank you, Marzia!"

— Mike and Kate G., Mooresville and Cornelius

"From the moment we began our relocation journey, Marzia was nothing short of exceptional. Our home search began in July and culminated in November, and throughout every step, Marzia provided unwavering guidance, expertise, and care. She combines deep real estate expertise with genuine warmth and professionalism. We are profoundly grateful for everything she did for our family."

— Thomas and Leslie B., Davidson and Cornelius



SOLD | 18806 Fore Sail Court, Cornelius | \$1,328,000 | Represented Seller



SOLD | 167 Greenbay Road, Mooresville | \$885,000 | Represented Seller

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Homage to popular lakeside tavern

BY JON SHOW

It might be in name only, but the “Rudder” is back — sort of. Robyn and Kevin Hefner, two longtime Lake Norman residents, purchased The Tropicana on West Catawba last summer from previous owners. They recently unveiled a series of extensive interior and exterior renovations and a new name: Rudder & Rose.

“People loved the Rudder around here, and they were so sad when it closed,” Robyn said. “We’re not trying to copy anything or ride the coattails of the old Rudder, but we wanted to pay homage to it and maybe bring back some of those memories.”

The couple met at the old Rusty Rudder on the Fourth of July in 2014. The raucous lakeside tavern, once located in the space now occupied by Hello, Sailor, closed in 2016 when its lease was not renewed.

They later reunited and were married four Octobers ago in a Halloween-themed wedding centered around roses and sugar skull face paint.



When they purchased the bar and restaurant, they wanted a new name to help launch the concept. Robyn, known to friends as “Rockin’ Robyn,” or RR, wanted a name that reflected her nickname and the theme of their wedding.

After considering several options, they chose Rudder & Rose. The logo features a ship’s wheel and a skull with

a long-stemmed rose between its teeth, creating a brand mark befitting of the Rudder’s heritage.

“Kevin says I’m the rose in the equation,” Robyn said jokingly.

The West Catawba location, most recently known as “The Trop,” has had multiple names over the years, including The Graduate, Laketown Tavern and Kat’s Seafood. The previous owners rebranded it as The Tropicana in 2023 after the original location up the street closed due to a fire a year earlier.

While the new sign out front makes for a good story, the couple has spent thousands of dollars overhauling the restaurant with a goal of making it a premier live music and sports destination.

Upgrades include new flooring and bars, a redesigned balcony and addi-



Robyn and Kevin Hefner

tional loft seating, a renovated stage, a stamped concrete patio with pergola, outdoor games and a large fire pit. Extensive bathroom renovations will be completed in the coming weeks.

The kitchen is currently closed as it prepares for a full renovation this summer and the debut of a new menu focused on bar food classics. The plan is for the kitchen to be fully operational by football season.

Nightly entertainment offerings are as equally ambitious as the renovation, including open mic nights, line dancing, DJs and a full schedule of live music, as well as nightly drink specials.

Response on social media and elsewhere has been overwhelmingly positive.

“The Trop and the Rudder were staples of Cornelius when I moved here in 2005,” said Dawn Lynn, a Lake Norman resident.

“I think it’s awesome to be able to say ‘Let’s go to the Rudder’ again.”

New Corporations

These businesses registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State

CORNELIUS

2/2/26 Jjova Realty LLC, Nancy Pilar Pena, 19907 Shearwater Point Dr., Cornelius

2/2/26 MCR Capital Group Inc., Dustin S. Crouse, 17505 W. Catawba Ave. Ste. 200, Cornelius

2/3/26 Affordable Autos Lake Norman LLC, Kevin Bradley Jessup, 19129 Serenity Point Ln., Cornelius

2/3/26 MK Builders LLC, Juan Jose Collazos Giraldo, 19140 Chandlers Landing Dr. Apt. 302, Cornelius

2/3/26 GRIT Med Solutions LLC, Lisa Caligiuri Schmalzried, 19545 Natalie Rd., Cornelius

2/3/26 Meghan Coppola Rizzo Foundation, Krista Coppola Patterson, 18936 Balmore Pines Ln., Cornelius

2/3/26 Townes at Maxwell HOA Inc., Shane Seagle, 18825 W. Catawba Ave. Ste. 250, Cornelius

2/3/26 Unified Strength 2.0 LLC, Christopher T. Lee II, 16835 Doe Valley Ct., Cornelius

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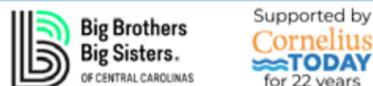
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Sound Off

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

Hotel Proposed for Southeast Cornelius

Rural preservation does not mean a hotel and spa! Stop this absolute nonsense that is ruining this town! Not in favor of a zoning change for this.

—Marci Grebstein

It is zoned rural preservation for a reason. Enough of this garbage.

—Michael Austin

Town Buying More Land on Bailey Road

I love that you are allocating less for commercial!

—Gail Williams

ABC Store Eyes New Home

More parking and easy access will be a good improvement.

—Renee Blanchard

Live at the Lake

Thank you for posting local entertainment that's free.

—Yasmin Loft

NCDOT Completing Land Acquisition for West Catawba Widening

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

—Chris Smith

Former Wher-Rena Site Vacant Again

I guess I'll tear it down and put in a couple hundred condos or apartments and clog up (West) Catawba Avenue even more

—John Babb

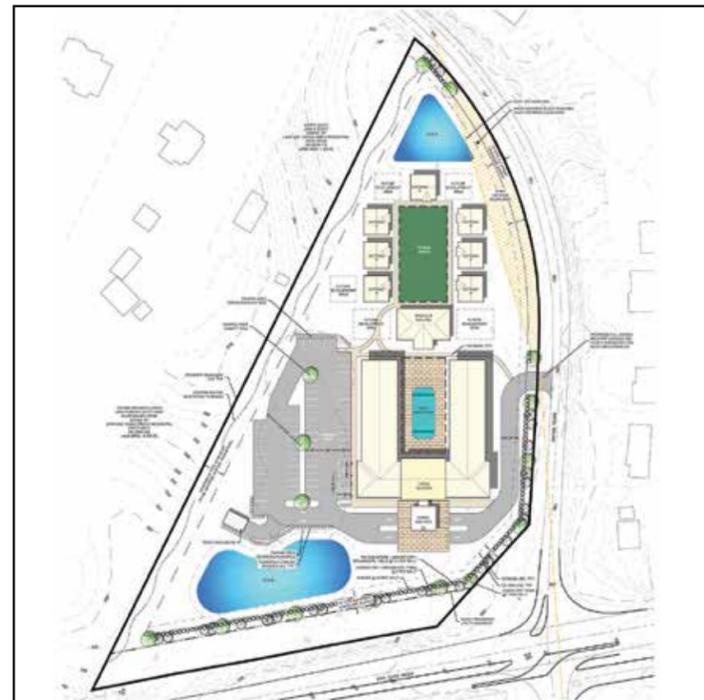
Maybe a Trader Joe's.

—Fred Westaway

Changes Coming to Barrel and Fork

It looks really nice, hope to enjoy it soon.

—Nekka Larkins-Mosqu



Hotel proposed near the intersection of Sam Furr Road and Mayes Road.



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A family that stashes together stays together

BY JON SHOW

Everyone in my house is hiding something. Not like a secret. I'm certain they have some, but I honestly don't care. People keep things secret for a reason and I'm not really at the stage in my life where I care to find out what theirs are.

I'm talking about physically hiding something.

Accusations of "eating my snacks" are a common refrain around here. Each of them perceives something as theirs, and when someone else eats it, their personal privacy has been violated, or something like that.

As it relates to the children, I believe my love of Halloween candy may be a catalyst for their perceived need to bury all their treasure.

When they were little, I would wait until the day after Halloween — which is a national holiday for home-office parents — and absolutely demolish their bags of candy to the tune of 15 to 20 pieces per day.

Wife shaming

I also blame the Mother of Dragons, who grew up in a house with so many people that I don't think I've met them all.

When she was a kid, whenever there was ever a box of something good sitting in the pantry, someone devoured it immediately.

As such, she developed what the medical community refers to as a defense mechanism and, thus, has been hiding snacks and treats for years.

What kind of snacks and treats?

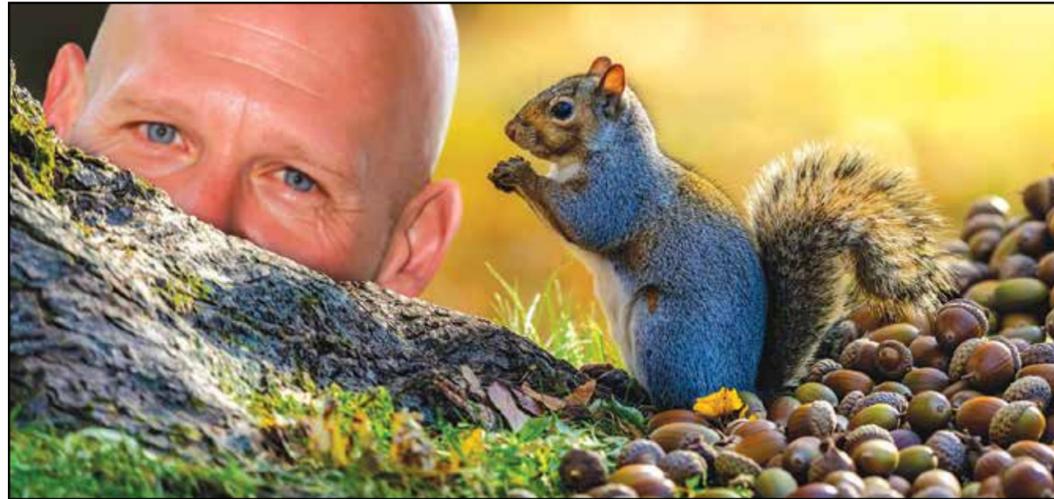
Blocks of dark chocolate with various flavorings like raspberry, salted caramel and whatever else they use to flavor fancy chocolate. Cadbury Mini Eggs. That's all I've been able to uncover, but I'm sure there's more.

She used to hide the blocks of chocolate on a high cabinet shelf, but the kids grew taller and eventually found them, so she's moved them somewhere else that I can't locate.

She also used to stash her snacks, but then she went gluten-free a couple of years ago. She claims it was for health reasons, but I firmly believe it was so she no longer had to hide her snacks.

Now she keeps them in a basket in plain view, but no one wants to eat anything in there because it all tastes like rice flour or macerated almonds.

Or it's filled with protein snacks that



middle-aged women have flocked to en-masse, like organic meat sticks — which are just glorified Slim Jims, a snack they would never eat.

On the occasion there's something in there that tastes good and I eat any of it, I'm chastised for eating her snacks.

Get it, girl

The Blonde Bomber is the worst of all of them. No one else knows this, but she keeps a box of old Eggo waffles in the freezer that is filled with various frozen treats she doesn't want anyone to find.

Yes, I just dimed her out. No one in my family reads this anyway, so it's not like they're going to find out here.

There's really no way to hide ice cream, so on the rare occasion I see some Jeni's frozen lemon sorbet with blueberries, have a craving and eat a quarter cup of it, I'm excoriated after school the next day for eating her food.

Yes, the same child for whom I've been cooking between two and three meals a day for the last 14 years dresses me down for eating a small portion of her ice cream.

Last month she bought herself a 3-pound bag of Cadbury Mini Eggs, which I love. She poured them into a Tupperware container that she carried around the house under her arm like an elderly woman clutching her purse in a nursing home of ill repute.

The son also rises

Future Man, who occasionally gets paid by someone to do something, usually uses the money to buy gas for his car.

Wait, sorry, no he doesn't. He uses it to buy desserts from the school lunch aisle at the grocery store. Things like Moon Pies and angel cakes and various other things considered delicacies in the '80s, which he then stores in plain sight in his bedroom because no one wants to walk in there and be subjected to the smell of his room.

Keep in mind this is the same child from whom I only have to hide one thing: my underwear. Because when he goes too long without doing his laundry he goes looking for my skivvies to buy himself a few more days.

As a result, I now hide my underwear. But there are only so many places you can hide your underwear in your closet, so he eventually finds them, depletes my stock, and I end up having to wear a pair of ill-fitting boxer shorts from the Obama administration.

He stole my socks for a long time as well, but I figured out a solution to the problem. I bought the ugliest John Deere mid-calf socks they sell at Target because he wouldn't be found dead wearing them in public.

Victory, Dad! I think? Just let me have this one.

Accepting some blame

Am I a participant in this Squirrel Game of hiding food? No. Do I hide things I don't want them to eat? No, I do not. I just eat things I know they hate and I don't have to bother with it.

As a result I find myself eating a lot of things with gluten. A lot of pistachios. I'd been on a hummus kick for years but had to give it up this winter when the

Blonde Bomber decided she liked hummus and cleaned me out in a week.

Or I eat the packages of things that my kids request for lunches but then never finish, because we always buy too much of it at Costco and they get tired of eating it.

It took me all last summer to devour the remnants of a 10-pound box of Welch's gummy treats and the remains of a 5-pound box of Toast-Chee crackers.

Before that it was mini Slim Jims, which I don't even like, but someone had to eat them.

One afternoon my wife came home early from work to grab a snack on her way to the gym and saw me in the kitchen eating one.

She made a face and scoffed. "Ew, are you eating a Slim Jim?"

And then she reached up into her gluten free snack basket, grabbed a Chomps meat stick and walked out the door.

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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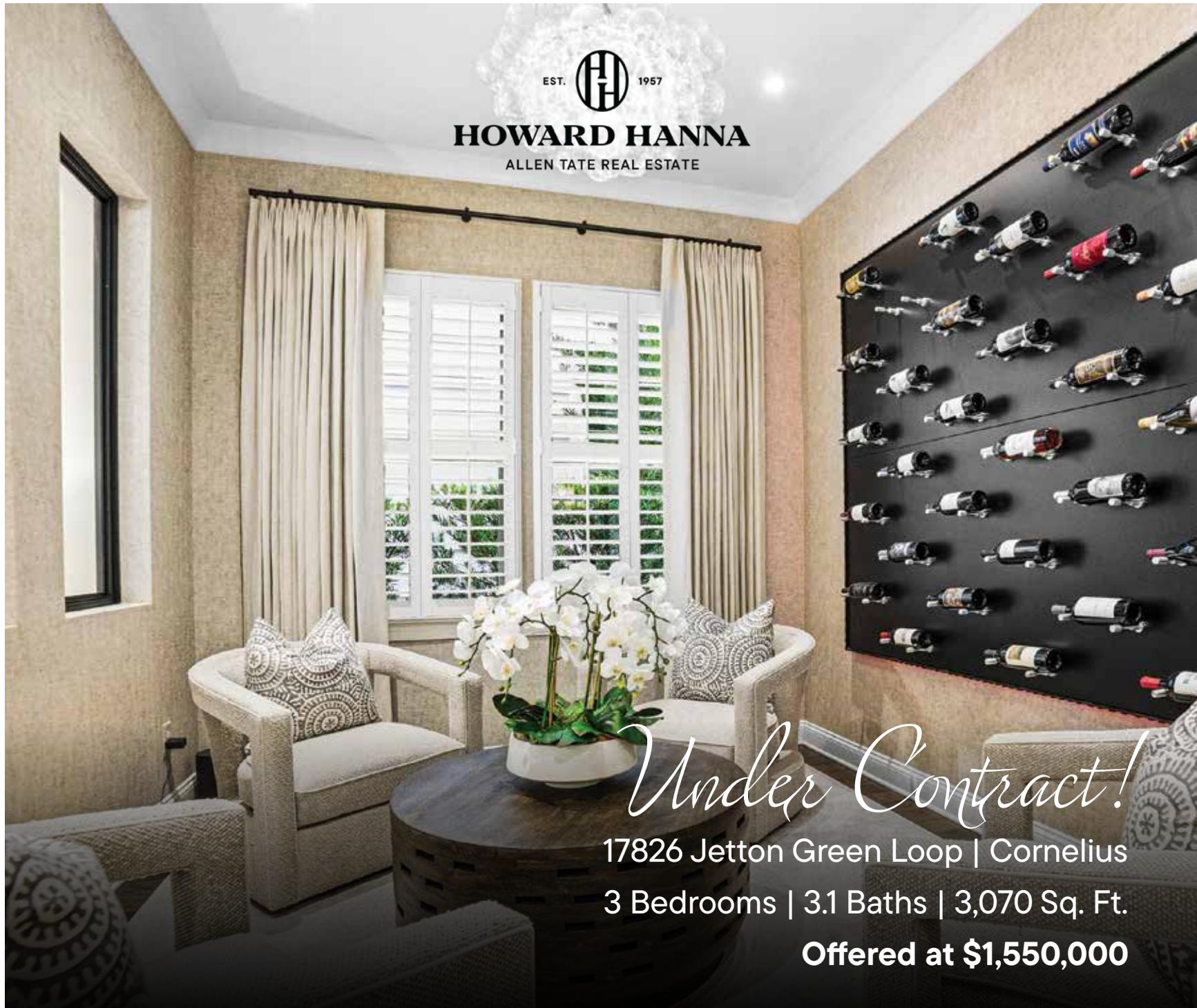
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