

YOUR EVENTS, YOUR HAPPENINGS, YOUR LIFE

CABARRUSNOW

MAGAZINE

Volume 1 / Issue 5



In This Issue

Train Ride For Christmas
Holiday Economics
Giving - The Best Gift

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COVER: Santa makes a surprise stop at the Kannapolis. train station

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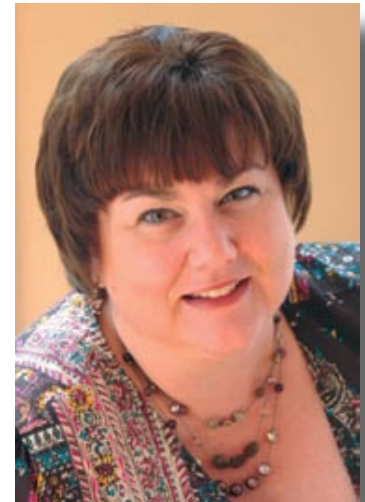
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Keeping the Spirit of Brotherly Love all Year Long



Each family observes the Holiday season with their own family traditions.

Whether it is Christmas, Hannukah, or Kwanzaa there is a common thread, that being the celebration of "Goodwill towards man (and women) kind". I'd like to encourage our readers to continue this concept by reaching out and making a difference throughout the next year.

Whether you know the person or not, there are many ways to place a smile on someone's face. There are simple acts, like a sincere compliment to a person in your office, a stranger, or a loved one. Leaving a note in your child's book bag reminding them how much they mean to you. Letting someone go ahead of you in the grocery line, or giving a kind word to a mother dealing with her impossible two-year old. On a larger scale, take a group Christmas caroling at an Assisted Living Community, then return once a month to sing other songs (especially those of their era). Hold the door open for a stranger. Take advantage of anysoldier.com and send a note (or two) of gratitude to a soldier overseas. Take homemade treats to the local orphanage, homeless or battered women's shelter. Become a lunch buddy, Big Brother or Big Sister. Take a dinner plate to that elderly neighbor.

The important thing is not so much how it is executed as is the spreading of goodwill and kindness throughout our community.



Commentary:

We would like to recognize and congratulate those readers who have contacted us to let us know about their FaceBook adventure which started from reading the TechTalk article in the last edition of the magazine.



Giving - The Best Gift

By Katherine Gonzalez

Quite a few years ago, while living in another state, members of my family wanted to perform some Christmas service. We contacted the Salvation Army and had the opportunity to work with the "Angel Tree" project. During the early holiday season, most of us have seen the Christmas trees with angel shaped tags notated with a child's age, gender, size and a three item wish list. Volunteers choose a tag and purchase the items listed, then return the tag and gifts to the Salvation Army (who delivers them to the child.)

Our assignment was to take the tags and assemble the gifts, preparing them for pick-up. What an undertaking!

When we arrived at the huge building we were greeted by two Salvation Army workers and, while

they hoped they had some help coming, they didn't realize there would be five of us. We took a tag with the child's information, then "shopped" among the tables and aisles of donations, assembling each collection of gifts. It was everything you would hope a service project would be. It was fun. It was a challenge, the amount of labor needed to complete the project was staggering, but it felt so worthwhile. Without us, it would have been even more daunting.

I don't recall anything else about that Christmas except the memory of our service; how much we were needed, how fun it was and how good it felt. Many parts of the Christmas celebration—food, gifts, parties—don't last. Giving to others does. If we are at a comfortable and profitable time in our life, service is a way

of giving back when we are doing well. If we are experiencing difficult times, service allows us to step away from ourselves and our difficulties and focus on someone else—to savor the good feeling of giving.

The little people in our house love to drop money in Christmas bell ringer's buckets. To get children involved in service, give them tasks to earn that money. Or allow them to pick out and buy one of the angel tree items with their earnings, or give to Service For a Senior, or to participate in other worthwhile volunteer opportunities. They will remember and appreciate what takes effort, not what is made too easy.

Give your family the opportunity to be unselfish and to feel terrific. This is the best gift (and lesson) they can receive. And is the best way to recall He who gave everything for us, and whose birthday we celebrate at this time of year.



Veterans Corner

Military Appreciation Monday



Monday
Nov. 16, 2009,
5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Golden Corral's 9th annual Military Appreciation Monday dinner will be held on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 5 to 9 pm in all Golden Corral restaurants nationwide.

The free dinner meal is a special "thank you tribute" to any person who has ever served in the United States Military. If you are a veteran, retired, on active duty, in the National Guard or Reserves, you are invited to join us for Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Monday dinner.

To date, Golden Corral restaurants have provided over 2.2 million free meals and contributed over \$3.3 million to the Disabled American Veterans organization.

To locate a Golden Corral near you, visit www.goldencorral.com/locator.



In the Blink of an Eye

By Sarah Gillespie

A few weeks ago, I started my Thursday morning like I started every morning. My husband and I got ready for work and the children got ready for school. After breakfast, as always, we went our separate ways.

That morning, I had an appointment at the American Red Cross. I wanted to learn how they operate in an emergency, who they help, and how they help. Walking in, however, my plans changed from conducting an interview to witnessing emergency assistance. In Midland, a family had started their morning unlike any other they had experienced. They had awakened to smoke and fire consuming their home.

As I arrived, preparations to assist the family were underway. Crucial information needed to aid them was being gathered from the Sheriff's Department. Foremost was where the home was located, who the family members were and any possible special needs. The destroyed house was home to an elderly woman on oxygen, her husband, their quadriplegic son, two other adults, and two young children. Once the volunteers were informed of the situation, they went to work collecting materials for the family. Toiletries for the adults and stuffed animals for the children were among the basics. As volunteers departed to the victims' home, others remained at the Red Cross office arranging lodging for the family.

Several fire trucks and other emergency vehicles were on the

scene as the white van with the familiar Red Cross emblem arrived. Smoke from the roof sent large gray plumes into the sky. Firemen surrounded the property, spraying the home and foliage with their hoses. The retrieved family belongings, now dampened or blackened covered the yard. Neighbors stood by, wanting to help but not knowing how as the family sat and watched in their minivan, their sole remaining possession.

As the volunteers began speaking with the family members, I surveyed their faces and saw disbelief, fear, grief, and gratitude. I imagined they could not believe what had happened to them; that they were scared not only about their future but what could have happened; that their hearts were breaking for the lifetime of photographs and heirlooms that were destroyed; and I imagined they were grateful to be there all together. I started to think about my morning, my family, and how easily things could be different.

Involved in careers, children, and chores many of us don't think how we are one unattended candle or one heavy rainstorm away from having our lives become unrecognizable. While we can sympathize with the victims and admit our lack of preparedness, we continue to believe we are immune. Or perhaps we choose to deny our vulnerability. Maybe, we think, if we ignore the possibilities, we will also survive them.

Tragedies happen. Whether produced from man or nature, they are unpredictable and the consequences frequently unforeseen. We cannot live in fear or hide from life, but we can remember adages like "Expect the unexpected" and "The best defense is a good offense." Clearing the grocery store shelves of bottled water and canned goods or building a storm shelter may seem extreme, but being prepared is a must.

The Red Cross and Emergency Management exist to help us. Whether fires, floods, hurricanes or hazardous waste spills, they work together to prepare for tragedy and to provide support. Assistance, however, cannot always be instantaneous or obtainable. It is the responsibility of each family to have a plan and make preparations in case of the worst. And while being prepared and having a plan can't prevent disaster (and won't keep us from feeling devastated and distraught) it will help us cope and just might keep us from feeling lost and helpless.

To learn more information about how you and your family can be better prepared for an emergency visit cabarruscounty.us/emgmt, fema.gov, and redcross.org.

Too Much, Too Much, Too Much

By Katherine Gonzalez

Christmas has evolved into the season of Too Much. Too much running. Too much spending. Too much food. Too much stress. Too many expectations. Too many activities designed to impress and not enjoy.

Is Christmas more hectic than happy? Evaluate your current take on gifts, entertaining, shopping, food, and activities. It may only take tweaking. Or a major overhaul may be necessary.

Gifts

Most people have enough stuff. Children, especially, fall into this category. Ask the dotting relatives, instead of buying more toys to crowd the kids' already overstuffed rooms, to give them the gift of an experience. A trip to an amusement park, hands-on museum or science center, a special trip, white water rafting, pottery throwing classes, sports training or lessons in the child's field of interest. If the child is quite young, ask them to put the money they would spend into a savings bond for the child. Young children need very few playthings. Investing in their future is better.

Many families find their family members and friends are willing to scale back on gift giving. Suggest that:

They draw names. Put a limit on the amount spent.

Adult family members forgo presents and buy for

the children (with a cap on spending).

Purchase a family gift: a game, movie, ice cream maker, etc.

As a group, make a game out of re-purposing a great item you own but rarely use (crepe or bread maker? George Foreman Grill? Wool scarf from Scotland?)

Give the gift of service with a gift certificate:

Home cooked meal, homemade



bread, cookies or other baked item. A Car Wash, Baby sitting, Yard work, Sweeping the front porch, patios and walkways (especially good for a child to give). Sewing on buttons, hemming pants or replacing a zipper, Dog Walking, Handyman (or woman) for the day-hanging pictures, moving furniture, etc. or Running errands.

Entertaining

Simplify by spending less time and money on the event. Downsize

the menu and serve simpler favorites. Focus on the time spent with friends and worry less about impressing.

Activities and Traditions

Prioritize activities and take stock of your traditions. What must you keep? What can you let go, if just for this year? Ask:

Why am I doing this? Is it because:

Everyone does it (and we want bragging rights also)?

It's expected (by whom? Do we do it to impress or is it an actual pleasure?)

We always do it. (Is it a tradition that has outlived its time? Can we put a spin on it we would enjoy more? Or do something else instead?)

Can we afford it?

Perhaps we could before but can't now (shift gears and do something within budget).

We never could really afford it (but we went into debt and did it anyway.) This is a good year to make better choices.

Christians, for whom this is a religious event, can especially benefit by stripping back the excess. The Christmas whirlwind and surrounding trappings can blur the reason for the holiday.

This year examine your holiday celebrations. Slow down, take stock and most important, refocus and simplify.



Wings of Eagles Ranch

By Sarah Gillespie

For most of us, horses are not a part of our lives. This was true for the Cronin family until their son Brendan was born.

Brendan, diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was very young, endured surgery at age seven to remove the right side of his brain. After the surgery, the Cronins were led to therapeutic horseback riding. As a result, the Cronins saw Brendan gradually grow in both self esteem and physical strength. Now a 21 year old college student, Brendan pursues everything from skiing to driving. His motivation and enthusiasm is an inspiration to all who hear his story.

Over ten years ago, motivated by Brendan's success, the Cronins envisioned a therapeutic riding center where people with disabilities could benefit from riding as Brendan had and build confidence, independence, and strength. Now a reality, Wings of Eagles Ranch strives to help as many patrons as they can with



a variety of activities. Adult and young riders enjoy the horses year round while the summer camps incorporate art, music, archery, fishing and more.

Arriving at the ranch I met Brendan's mom, Christine, known around the ranch as "Chris." Her passion for the work is obvious in her endless energy and warm smile. Quickly moving from one end of the arena to the other, she engaged each rider:



coaching, communicating, and connecting. But running this enterprise is not a one woman job. Chris has lots of help from the countless volunteers (ranging from high school students to a retired Cabarrus County School superintendent) who assist the riders, clean stalls, feed horses, and help maintain the ranch.

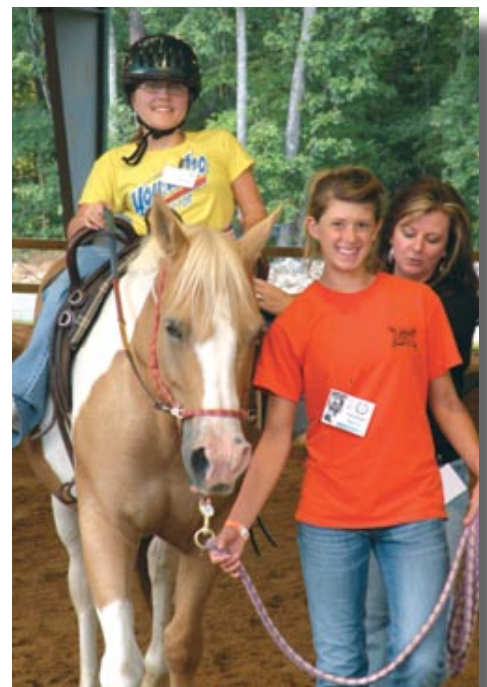
During the visit, I met Angie Stevens. Her daughter Kayla, 17, has spinal bifida and scoliosis. Kayla began riding at the ranch at a young age but took a lengthy hiatus due to a necessary back surgery. Upon her return, Kayla was scared to ride. Her fear now overcome, Kayla's captivating smile shows how much she loves it. And while Kayla's balance has improved, Angie believes one

of the psychological benefits resulting from riding is her increased personal confidence.

Despite what the Cronins have been able to accomplish and all the patrons they have been able to help, they envision even more possibilities. A zip line and climbing tower are currently under construction and they hope to add swimming facilities and cabins to continue building the Wings of Eagles dream.

As I was leaving the ranch, Chris added, "The ranch is really God's work, and we are just His hands and feet."

For more information about lessons, volunteering, or donating, visit wingsofeaglesranch.org.



Poetry Corner

Christmas is a time of inspiration and reflection. Thousands of poems, songs and sonnets have been written for and about the season. We have collected a few examples with hopes that they will help you gain the spirit and the sole of Christmas.

The editorial and design staff of CabarrusNow Magazine wishes you and yours a fine holiday season.

Nadine Long

The doorbell rings
announcing the crowd
A wealth of relatives, and neighbors
The laughter so loud.

Small children with fingers
loaded with olives,
Teens on the Wii,
competition has started,
Everyone's mood lighthearted.

Women in the kitchen
fussing with the rolls.
Men in the living room
discussing the "Bowls".
Tom in the oven,
quite snug in his pan,
Jeweled yams glisten golden,
Oh, I'm a big fan.

The table so meticulously set
adorned with a Cornucopia and
a Pilgrim salt and pepper set.

These are the times
we cherish the most,
the blessing of Holidays
to bring us so close.

Martin Luther

Good news from heaven the angels
bring,
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:
To us this day a child is given,
To crown us with the joy of heaven.

Walter de la Mare

Sitting under the mistletoe
(Pale green, fairy mistletoe),
One last candle burning low,
All the sleepy dancers gone,
Just one candle burning on,
Shadows lurking everywhere:
Someone came, and kissed me there.
Tired I was; my head would go
Nodding under the mistletoe
(Pale green, fairy mistletoe)
No footsteps came, no voice, but only,
Just as I sat there, sleepy, lonely,
Stooped in the still and shadowy air
Lips unseen - and kissed me there

William Shakespeare

At Christmas I no more desire a rose,
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;
But like of each thing that in season grows.

Christina Rossetti

Love came down at Christmas;
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Stars and angels gave the sign.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on Earth, good will to men!

Helen Lowrie Marshall

The merry family gatherings –
The old, the very young;
The strangely lovely way they
Harmonize in carols sung.
For Christmas is tradition time
Traditions that recall
The precious memories down the
years, The sameness of them all.

Sir Walter Scott

Heap on the wood!
The wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

When Christmas bells are swinging
above the fields of snow,
We hear sweet voices ringing from
lands of long ago,
And etched on vacant places
Are half-forgotten faces
Of friends we used to cherish,
And loves we used to know.

Sir Walter Scott

A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the
year.

Anon

God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children
That round the table go;
And all your kin and kinfolk,
That dwell both far and near;
I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year.



2009 in Review

By Travis McGaha

This is a good time to look back at tech that was significant in 2009.

The current financial conditions have had an unusual effect on Tech industries. The increasing trend is toward retooling existing technology and changing their targeted audiences. Here are some of this year's significant examples:

The latest iPods generally have only slight improvements over the former models. This year, however, Steve Jobs upped the game with significant price drops across the board. People formerly reluctant to drop \$275.00 on a iPod can now jam with the new iPod Nano for around \$149.00 (complete with its new integrated video camera). The venerable iPod Touch has a



more responsive touch screen. And, with the addition of several thousand new applications available from the iTunes store, this wi-fi enabled music player is

now a full-on computer/PDA that any business person could benefit from. My iPod touch is easily my favorite gadget. It has become so useful (by means of the limitless and relatively cheap applications available) that it can be regarded as your digital "Swiss Army Knife" for around \$200.00.

Another area with significant improvement is in the "Netbook" or mini-laptop arena. This quickly expanding genre began with Asus and their iconic EEEpc. Their market share, however, has been eroded by offerings from HP, Acer, and other companies offering wireless web browsing, basic applications and multi-media in an ultra-compact package. And, though I am a huge fan of my netbook, one must use caution in netbook purchases. Until recently, most computers were running with nearly identical specifications- they all used the same Intel "Atom" processor chip, and similar memory configurations. Brand to brand performance differences were minimal. In the next few months, however, we should be seeing a newer generation of netbooks that will be superior in performance. Hopefully this will reduce the already low prices of many of the current mini laptops.

A rare new technological advance we've seen is the proliferation of "pico-projectors" or miniature video projectors. There is, of course, a huge market for the multi-media projectors used in home theaters. Available now from Dell, Aiptek, Atlantis and AAXA are tiny projectors (roughly



the size of a pack of cigarettes) that provide instant movie projection on just about any surface. These miniscule projectors may be in their first generation of development and production but what you get for your money is impressive. Most of the projectors available are around \$300.00 and allow you to watch video from your computer or portable DVD player or present an impromptu Powerpoint presentation. Often, unfortunately, these mini-projectors lack the light intensity (measured in lumens) that larger, more expensive projectors have. If you need a reliable projector for daily meetings and presentations in well-lit rooms, keep looking. If, however, you need a portable projector that throws 50 inch wall images in a darkened room then you may have found digital gold. (Check Amazon.com for the wide offerings from the above mentioned manufacturers.)

And finally, something for fun. I have been aware of the new genre of musical instrument video games (like Guitar Hero and Rock Band) but they never interested me.

Then, earlier this year Guitar Hero World Tour came out, incorporating drums and vocals along with guitar action. (Think karaoke on steroids.) You sing and have guitar interaction and drums. This was considered a “kids game” until it recently matured



into an interactive experience. (I've hosted more than one party where the adults played for hours, reliving the music of their youth.) Also appealing to adults is Rock Band's recently released Beatles version with its retro styled instrument controllers. The

current market has literally dozens of variations with different music themes and genres to allow just about anyone to release their inner rock star.

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming year but when it comes to technology, remember “The Latest is not always the Greatest”.



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A Train Ride For Christmas

By Mary Norvell

Whether boarding a train at your favorite theme park, rushing across the city on the subway, or piercing through dawn at high speed on a train, the subject of trains conjures up memories of the fascination of trains from childhood that has lasted a lifetime. Everybody has a good train memory to tell.

For instance, my dentist, Dr. O'Leary grew up in Eerie, PA., a popular thoroughfare where the trains roll through town everyday, and the roaring sound of locomotive engines and train whistles blowing can be heard echoing clear across town. He laughed, telling about how he and his friends used to lay pennies on the railroad track so the train would run over and them and flatten them out, and for some reason they never saw the pennies again! "Trains were a great part of my life growing up, he said, and went on to tell some of his treasured memories of taking the train back and forth to college from Eerie to South Bend, Indiana in the winter time." His two oldest boys love riding the Tweetsie

Railroad Train at Blowing Rock. They can hardly wait to go back next year with one-year old brother, Brecken for his first ride on the Tweetsie Railroad.

While waiting at the station in Kannapolis, I watched as two little boys ran squealing into the outstretched arms of their grandmother. Joanne Morin had just arrived from Raleigh to spend the weekend with her family. Her son, Greg and wife, Holly smiling and totally absorbed in the scene playing out before them, the boys, Luke and Dominic trying to talk to their grandmother, both at the same time. Greg yelled over to his mother, "How was your trip?" Just about that time, the train was pulling away. The conductor spotted the boys and waved at them, but the boys were much too busy to notice. Joanne, stooped down, her arms wrapped tightly around her grandsons, and yelled back at Greg, "I loved my trip! It was such an easy ride and a great way to travel! I enjoyed a tasty breakfast, and of course, free snacks are always a plus!"



she said, turning her attention back to the boys.

Holly told me Joanne loves traveling by train when she visits. Says she feels refreshed and rested when she arrives, having more quality time to spend with her family. Holly vows her next trip to Raleigh with the boys to



visit grandmother will be by train, and has already invested in two car seat car seats for the train.



With the holiday season nearing, and Christmas lists already coming in, why not make this year's gifts a treasure of memories by giving your loved ones a train ride for Christmas. Just imagine the luxury of sitting back while someone else does the driving, read a book, have a snack, or simply enjoy the scenic picture window size view outside.

"A train ride is for everybody," says Chick Seaford, a ten-year employee with the railroad. He recommends the experience of a train trip for young and old alike. "Why travel using any other form of transportation, when the train offers luxurious comfort, spacious and reclining seats, moving around freely throughout the cars, you can enjoy a delicious meal in the dining car. Chick's favorite trip is riding the train to Washington, DC, and taking the subway to the ball park to watch his favorite team play ball.



In this time of economic uncertainty and travel budgets shrinking, North Carolina's Amtrak is once again sponsoring "Santa Train Charlotte" in December where you can travel from Charlotte to Salisbury on a round

trip train ride with Santa at a low fare. And think about it, a train trip is something you can give yourself too!

There is no need to travel far from home to enjoy the thrill of a train ride. The thirty minute ride to Charlotte from Kannapolis is

not only fun, you can visit family, do a little shopping or have a nice lunch with friends at your favorite restaurant. I can hear the sound of the train from my office as the locomotive rumbles through town, the engineer lays on that horn, the sound echoes across town and with it comes memories.



Santa Train Charlotte

Saturday, December 5

Ride the Santa Train from Charlotte and Kannapolis to Salisbury and back

Riding Santa Train Charlotte on Train 80

* Reservations are required.

* For best fares, buy tickets early. For best fares, buy tickets early.

Kids younger than 2 ride free with a paid adult. Kids 2 to 15 ride for half price when accompanied by a paid adult.

Discounts available for AAA Motor Club members, seniors, college students & active military.

For more information call 1-800-USA-RAIL



War Bonds: Songs and Letters of World War II

Nov. 14, 2009 Times: 8:00pm
 Davis Theatre in Cabarrus County's historic Courthouse
 65 Union St., Concord NC
 Info: 704-920-2753
 Admission: \$35
 Filmed for public television as a companion to Ken Burns' The War, this entertaining cabaret is a musical journey through the war that changed the world.

Jazz with Jack Murray and Neal Davenport

Presented by Jeff Whittington
 Nov. 19, 2009 Times: 7:30PM
 Davis Theatre, 65 Union St. S, Concord
 Info: 704-920-2753
 Admission: \$10.00
 Jazz saxophonist Jack Murray has played with Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles while keyboardist Neal Davenport toured with Charley Pride and played on The Tonight Show.

12th Annual Tree Lighting

Nov. 20, 2009 Times: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
 Downtown Concord - Market St. and Cabarrus Ave.
 Info: 704-784-4208
 The event will feature live entertainment, crafts and kids activities including Santa's Village, trackless train, face painting, trolley rides and the Cabarrus Arts Council's Art Walk. The tree lighting ceremony will be followed by a fireworks show at about 7:30pm.

Concord Christmas Parade

Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009, 2:30pm
 Starting at Lake Concord Road to Church St. turn right onto Buffalo and then left onto Union St. to Downtown Concord.

7th Annual Christmas-For-Kids Car & Truck Show

Nov. 21, 2009 Registration: 8-12 Noon
 Hendrick Motorsports, 4400 Papa Joe Blvd, Concord
 Info: 828-464-3525 or 828-381-4099
 Admission: 1 new toy (age range toddler to age 16) valued at \$10
 A Benefit for Shriner's Hospitals for Children. Open to all makes and models of cars and trucks. Silent auction and door prizes. Concessions provided by Shriners.



Mt Pleasant High School Class of 1978-1980 Reunion
 Cabarrus Arena & Event Center
 Saturday, Nov. 8, 2009
 6:00PM - 11:00PM

**Cookies with Santa**

Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2009
 7:00PM-9:00PM
 Info: 704-721-0003
 Plaster Creations
 1010 Cloverleaf Plaza,
 Kannapolis

A Tuna Christmas

Dec. 3, 2009 - Dec. 13, 2009
 Times: Thurs. Fri. Sat. 8:00pm
 Sun 2:30pm
 Old Courthouse Theatre
 49 Spring St. NW, Concord
 Info: 704-788-2405

Admission: Adult \$15/ Sr. \$12/ Children \$10
 In this hilarious sequel to Greater Tuna, it's Christmas in the third smallest town in Texas. Radio station OKKK news personalities Thurston Wheelis and Aries Struvie report on various Yuletide activities, including hot competition in the annual lawn display contest. In other news, voracious Joe Bob jeopardized by unpaid electric bills.

Kannapolis Christmas Parade

Downtown Kannapolis
 Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, 4:00pm
 Info: 704-920-4343

Annual Tree Lighting

Kannapolis Village Park
 Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, 7:00pm

Senior Center Christmas Party

Cabarrus Arena & Event Center
 Dec. 8, 2009, 10:00AM - 2:00PM
 Entertainment, refreshments, goodie bags and of course - A visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.
 OPEN TO ALL SENIORS IN CABARRUS COUNTY.
 Info: 704-920-3484

Holiday Happenings

Dec. 10, 2009 - December 11, 2009
 Times: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
 Downtown Concord,
 Info: 704-784-4208
 Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides, and Santa

Piedmont Dance Theatre Presents The Nutcracker

Kannapolis Performing Arts Center
 Friday, Dec. 11th - 7pm and Saturday, Dec. 12th - 2pm
 Adult \$17/Student \$12 order tickets online at:
www.piedmontdancetheatre.com
 Info: 704-932-8888

Mount Pleasant Christmas Parade

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009 -11:00AM
Meet Santa - Mt. Pleasant Fire Department
Dec. 12, 2009, 1:00PM
Mt. Pleasant Christmas tree lighting in front of Town Hall
Dec. 12, 2009, 5:30PM.

Santa Claus is Coming To Frank Liske Park

Saturday; Dec. 12, and Dec. 19, 10:00AM - 1:00PM and 2:00-5:00PM. Meet at the upper level of the barn
\$20.00 per child / per session.
Register on-line at: www.CabarrusCounty.US/ReservePartner

Christmas Cantata

Oak Ridge Baptist Church
5340 Flowes Store Road, Concord, NC 28025
Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009, 6:00 pm.
Info: 704-782-0187

Jeff Whittington's Christmas Show

Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009 Times: 7:30PM
Davis Theatre, 65 Union St. S, Concord
Info: 704-920-2753
Admission: \$10.00
Celebrate the season with this bluegrass-flavored musical treat from the multi-talented Whittington who has played on the Grand Ole Opry and was staff musician on the Arthur Smith Show.

Live Nativity

Oak Ridge Baptist Church
Sunday, Dec. 20, 2009 time to be announced
Info: 704-782-0187
5340 Flowers Store Road, Concord, NC 28025

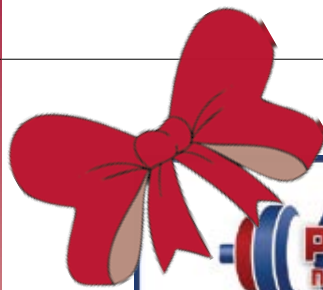


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Holiday Economics

By Ryan Platt, MBA & John Sanchez

The holiday season is a very exciting time of the year. We share time with family, we decorate our homes, our neighborhoods look festive, we join our friends at holiday parties, and we enjoy watching young children boil over with enthusiasm as they realize Santa is on his way.

The problem with the holidays is the ADULTS. There are many times that we go overboard, and we begin to spend our money, swipe our cards with little thought of the consequences. We can be our own worst enemies as we get caught up in the advertising wave of SPEND, SPEND, SPEND, which will land us on the beach of regret as we open our Credit Card statements in January and realize we can't pay that bill. It is important that we do not let the holidays sabotage our financial

lives, but instead we live within our financial means and still enjoy a wonderful holiday season.

We have assembled 5 ways to help you enjoy the holidays, DEBT FREE!

1. Plan your spending

Make a list of all the people you plan on giving a gift. Once you have made your list, determine the amount of money you will spend on each person's gift and write that amount next to their name. By doing this, you will be able to manage the total amount you spend on gifts this holiday season.

2. Keep the list with you - ALWAYS!

This step is very important. We are all susceptible to that impulse purchase --- something we see that would be perfect for someone on our list. At that moment, take out your list and find out if that "perfect gift" fits within the dollar amount you previously set. If not, DO NOT BUY IT!

3. Stick to your budget

If you spend too much, you will pay for it well into 2010 and the cost of that overspending will be much higher than just the original purchase price. Keep

in mind, credit card companies love to collect those large interest payments!!!

4. The Gift of Time

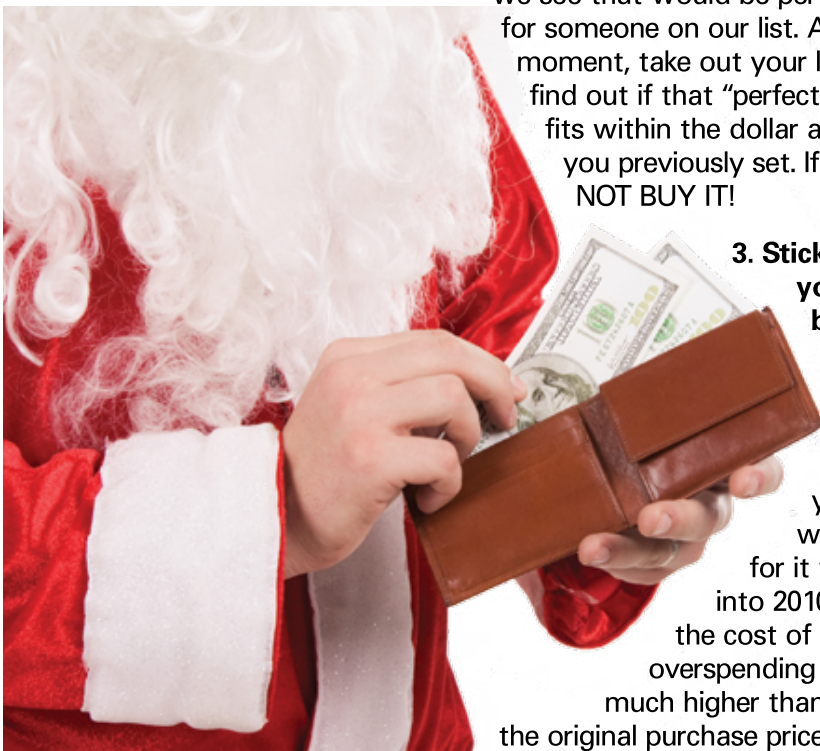
For most people on your list they have so much "stuff" already. You may be surprised that for most of us, the gift of time is what we desire. During the year, our busy lives take over and we rarely spend the time we would like with family and friends. Instead of worrying about the gift you need to buy, think about giving the gift of time and enjoying the precious resource of simply being together.

5. Keep an eye on the future

The decisions we make today will set us on our course into the future. If we spend more than we can afford, we will have to work longer hours in order to earn more money to payback our debt, which means we spend less time with those we love, our family and friends. Spending too much also means we will have less money to save for our children's education needs or our own retirement, and that means that instead of retiring at age 60 or 65, we will have to work until age 70 or 75, or longer. Please be very aware of your short-term decisions, because our short term decisions create our future life.



We hope you have a wonderful holiday season!



Bowling: Not Just Your Daddy's Sport Anymore

By Trevor Curtis

So it's Friday night and you've just come out of the latest Hollywood offering. The family doesn't want the evening to end, but you're stuck for ideas. Pool halls are smoky, and sports bars are no place for children. Then someone suggests, "Hey, we haven't been bowling in ages" and a chorus of groans and snide remarks erupt from the group.



But the cynics are wrong to mock the sport, especially if they haven't been in a bowling alley lately. Gone are the days of fake wood interiors and clouds of cigarette smoke. Bowling, like most sports, has upgraded both socially and technologically.

"It's not your daddy's sport anymore," says Dan Simril, owner and operator of Kannapolis' Foxfire Lanes on Security Street. With two nationally ranked coaches, himself and his manager, Marilyn, Foxfire Lanes is an outstanding facility.

It is also a high tech operation, showcasing the latest bowling innovations, like bumpers that can rise or fall depending on whether a small child or an adult is playing. Add in their state-of-the-art sound

system (with light shows on Friday and Saturday nights) and you've got a recipe for fun.

And it's economical fun at that. Games run three to five dollars each, and that's less expensive than most fun spots in the area. But some folks still hesitate, negative images having been burned into their skulls by movies like Kingpin.

What does Dan, who has been involved with the sport for over 30 years, say about those stereotypes?

"Many people haven't been paying attention. Bowling has been rising in popularity and is used to sell everything from Advil to Geico Insurance."

But what about the vision of bowling being a bunch of old guys sitting around smoking?

Dan (who the bowling industry should hire as their PR person) has an answer:

"As did much of the state, we went non-smoking August 1st, 2009. We have a gazebo outside for those who do smoke. And as far as old, our demographics are showing 70% of current bowlers are under 40."

Bowling, then, has come a long way since the days of "Bowling for Dollars". It's a fun, economical way to socialize and be with family and friends.

And what's wrong with that?



A Carolina Girl

By Nadine Long

Sarah Morgann was like many other girls. She played outside with her friends and brought home the occasional stray. In middle school Sarah described herself as studious and was involved in the Cannon School's Student Council. But, Sarah was different. Since she was four, Sarah had shown an interest in singing, and had received her first fan mail at age six.

At nine years old she began formal music studies. To cultivate Sarah's raw talent, her parents retained Dan Truhitte (of The Sound of Music fame) as Sarah's vocal coach. At age 13 Sarah recorded her first CD. Simply titled - *Sarah Morgann*, it was a collection of Christian music.

Now, ten years later, Sarah is an international recording artist. She opens her

heart with sincerity as she sings. Her beautiful voice carries her listeners through love, sorrow and joy. Her worldwide fan base appreciates that she sings fluently in several languages. Sarah has toured Israel, Central America and Europe with acclaimed pianist Marvin Goldstein.

Their Christmas CD was a best seller.

Her current project with Marvin includes vocals with musician, actor and comedian Kirby Heyborne.

But, Sarah describes herself a Carolina girl. ◆ ◆ ◆



Going Green this Holiday Season with Homemade Gifts

By Nadine Long

Black Friday is delightful for some shoppers and gives others visions of horror.



Re-purpose old pants or jeans into reusable shopping bags.



Make a gift basket with jars of homemade soups.



Book Clock: Take an old book and place clock works in it to make a great gift and conversation piece.

It is one of the busiest shopping days of the year and a die-hard shopper can save hundreds of dollars in a very short time. As a young adult, I have memories of my mother and I standing in line at four in the morning, armed with hot chocolate and a shopping list, excitedly awaiting the store opening. We had our attack strategically planned out with a time to meet back at the car to rush to the next sale. At the end of the morning we would limp home, exhausted, but satisfied we had gotten the most out of every dollar.

By contrast, I think of my childhood and teen years when, wood stove burning nearby, my mother and I would sit at the kitchen table hand crafting ornaments and baking wonderful sweets to give as cherished gifts. We would talk about life with my father joining in the conversations from the couch (where he was usually grading school papers). At the end of the day we had a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. But most importantly, we had memories of family.

How can this be considered going green? Going green is about not expending unnecessary amounts of energy. This should apply to our personal lives as well. I won't lie, I will be in one of those Black Friday shopping lines, but I am going to scale back my buying. I'll spend some weekends at home with my children and grandchildren making new memories and teaching them to enjoy the fruits of their own

hands. Plan ahead in order to be successful. Organize your projects as you work on your gifts from now until Christmas.



Make earrings out of bottle caps, or old buttons.



Make a set of blank greeting cards using bits of ribbon/buttons/colored paper. Place them in a matching handmade paper box.



NC LOGO STORY

By Nadine Long

During the summer of 2008, Grandpa Baker took us on a trip down the coast of North Carolina to visit each of the twelve famous North Carolina lighthouses. Grandpa Baker was stationed in Ocracoke, in 1955 and 1956, during his years in the Coast Guard. He had a fascination with these lighthouses and wanted to share his knowledge and experience with us.

We were able to visit some of his Coast Guard buddies who lived on the coast and hear their stories.

We visited the Cape Hatteras lighthouse and learned about the necessity and process of moving that lighthouse further inland due to heavy erosion. Our state does whatever is necessary to preserve the memory and existence of our lighthouses.



Ruth Jackson - Age 13 / J.J. Jackson - Age 12

After we returned from our trip, Grandpa Baker passed away. We will forever have the memories of that time together. It was then that we had the inspiration to create a North Carolina State Logo.

We remembered North Carolina Law Enforcement Officer Mark Coyle's lighthouse logo. He was inspired by the state logo stickers on South Carolina vehicles that featured a palmetto tree and crescent moon.



When we shared our plans to establish a North Carolina State Logo with Mark, he agreed to join us and connect his logo with our ideas

It is our desire to visit the North Carolina legislature someday and ask for this logo to become the official North Carolina logo. We were surprised to find that our state is one of the few that does not have one yet. For more information on our mission and to obtain a copy of our proposed North Carolina State Logo, visit NCLogo.com.



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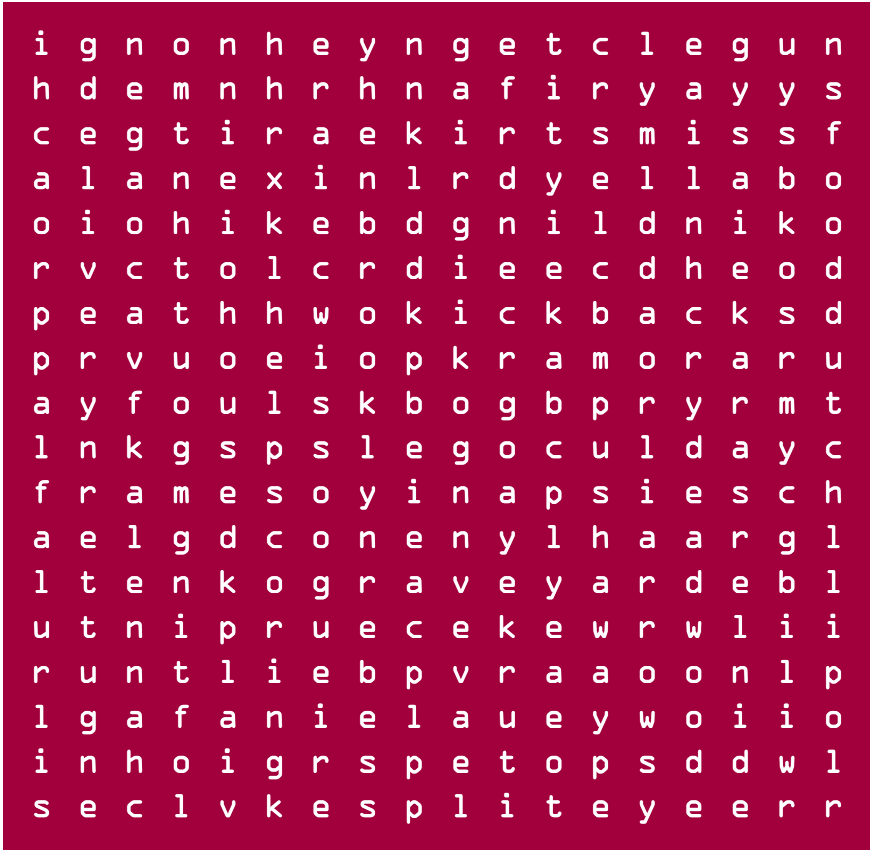
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Bowling Terms By Nadine Long



- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| approach | frame | miss |
| alley | game | mixer |
| arrows | graveyard | nose |
| ball | gutter | oil |
| bowling | hambone | pin |
| blocking | handicap | pocket |
| blow | hook | pushaway |
| brooklyn | house | railroad |
| carry | kegler | rake |
| channel | kickbacks | sandbagging |
| cherry | kindling | scoring |
| clothesline | lane | sleeper |
| crossover | league | span |
| deadwood | leave | spare |
| delivery | lift | split |
| double | line | spot |
| dutch | lofting | strike |
| foul | mark | turkey |

A Golden Christmas

The discovery of gold is the major story at Reed Gold Mine, but it is not the only story. When John Reed arrived in 1782 as a Hessian deserter, he found himself at home in a community with a familiar language and customs. Like John Reed, many of our modern American Christmas customs have Germanic origins. The Golden Christmas gives visitors the opportunity to discover how Christmas transformed through the years based on interaction with new cultures and traditions.

This year on December 5th, 10am-4pm special tours will be given by costumed interpreters with the mine illuminated by

lanterns and candlelight, much like when the mine was active. Tours will focus on the miners who were working and how they would have celebrated the holidays. On December 11th & 12th, 6pm-8:30pm, there will be a special reception, including refreshments and hors d'oeuvres, a showing of A Garfield Christmas in the auditorium, and special lantern tours around the site and underground mine. Reservations will be required for our evening activities. A Golden Christmas is free to all visitors, including our lantern/candlelight tours. We will be accepting monetary and non-perishable food donations for

the food pantries provided by Cooperative Christian Ministry.

Reed Gold Mine is located in southeastern Cabarrus County-

For additional information, call 704-721-4653, or email johnreed1799@gmail.com.



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There's a new Christmas show in town!

World-renowned pianist Marvin Goldstein, beloved actor and musician Kirby Heyborne, and classical vocalist Sarah Morgann, perform together in a Christmas variety show filled with music, sketches, improv and audience sing-a-longs.

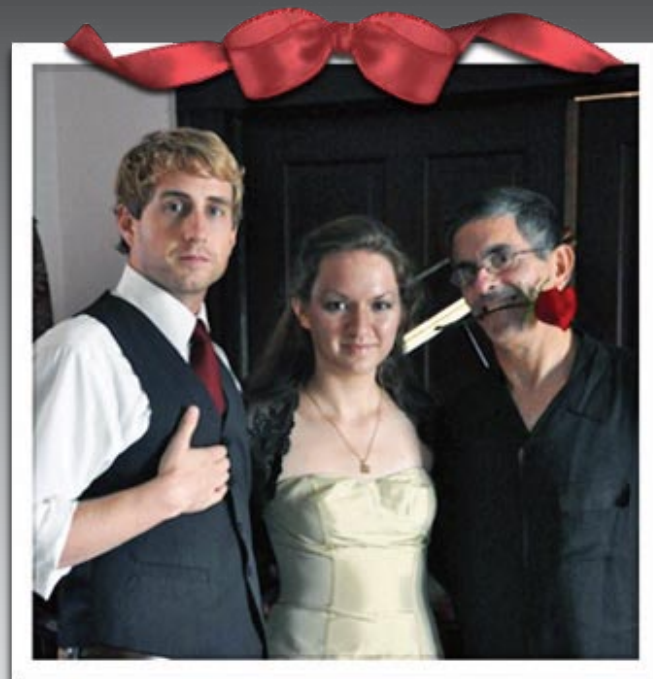
This family-friendly, interactive Christmas experience ushers in the season with traditional carols, classical Christmas pieces and original Christmas songs.

This trio keeps audiences entertained with their extraordinary musicianship and quick-witted humor.

Says Kirby, "When I'm on stage with Marvin and Sarah, I have as much fun as the audience. You never know what brilliance will come from these two."

One performance only in Concord at the JM Robinson High School Auditorium, 300 Pitts School Rd. S.W.

Friday December 11 at 7:00PM



Tickets:

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