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SEPTEMBER 2021

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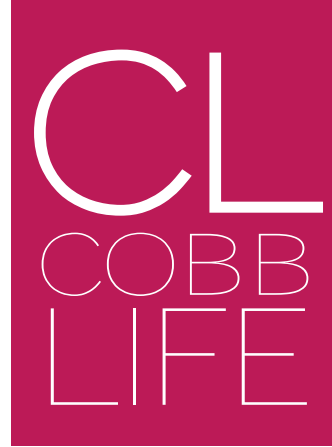
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EXECUTIVE

PUBLISHER

Otis Brumby III

GENERAL MANAGER

Lee B. Garrett

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Wade Stephens

V.P. OF CONTENT

J.K. Murphy

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR

Madison Hogan

CONTRIBUTORS

Ira Blumenthal, Anna Chapman, Madison Hogan, Erin Miller, Jon Styf, Erica A. Thomas

PHOTOGRAPHY

Evie Mae Photography, HADLEY(s) Photography, Anna Chapman, Madison Hogan, Catherine Manavi, Elena Willingham

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Caffeine Generated Graphics
Robin Harrison

ADVERTISING STAFF

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Tara Guest

COBB ADVERTISING MANAGER

Becky Opitz

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Jill Abbott, Stephanie deJarnette, Ginny Hrushka, Paula Milton

GRAPHICS/LAYOUT COORDINATOR

Beth Poirier

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Erin Barkwell, Tona Deaton, Lee Field, Jennifer Hall

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Dave Gossett

INFORMATION

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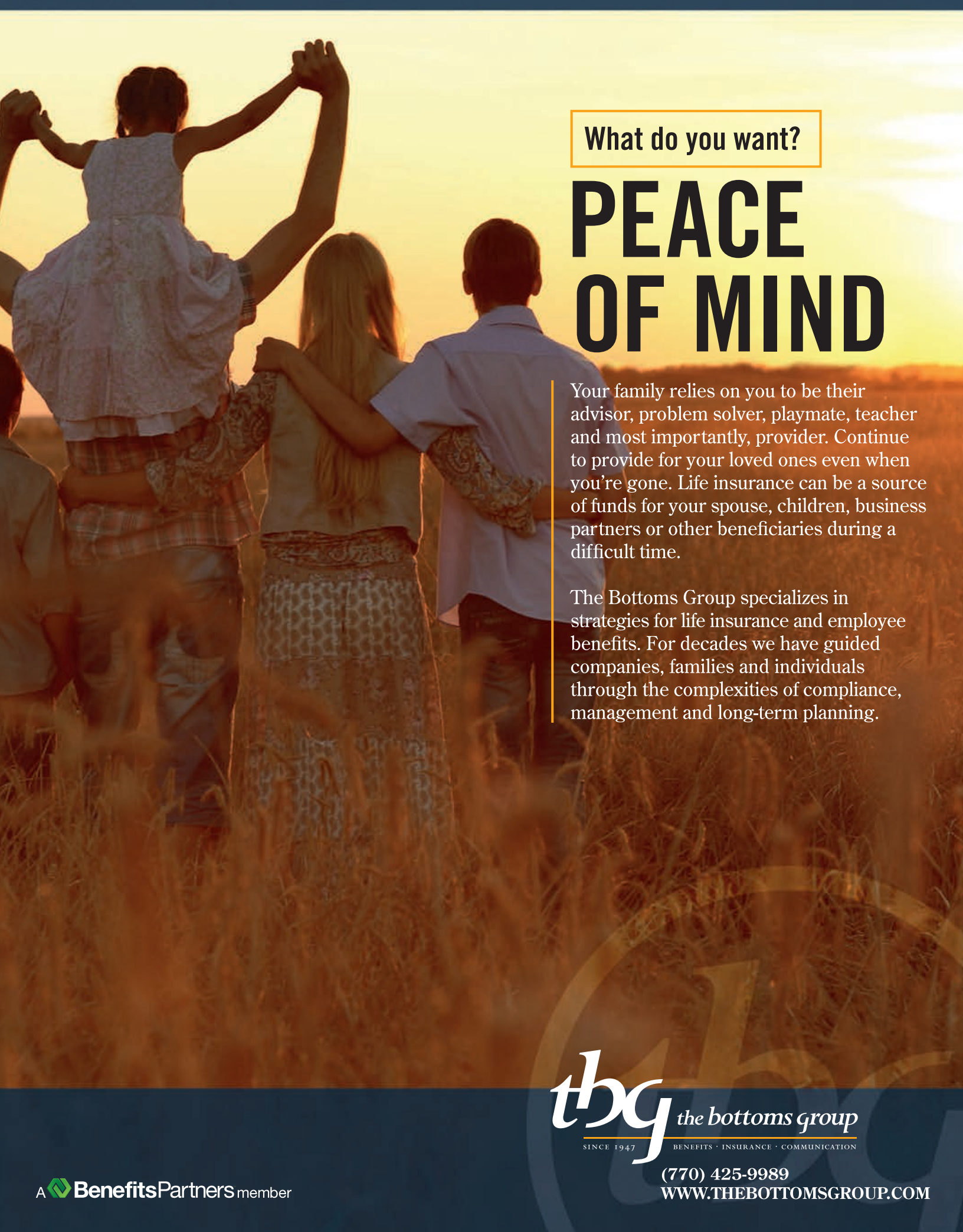
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THE NORTH GEORGIA STATE FAIR is back and better than ever after a brief postponement, just in time for fall.



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letter from the *EDITOR*

HELLO FRIEND,

How do you start a letter to someone you haven't spoken to in a long time? Is "friend," too intimate? "To whom it may concern," too impersonal? My theory is you start a letter off as a wish. A letter is a hope to convey a message to someone. There's no guarantee you'll reach your audience, even if you have the right address. So I hope at the end of this letter, you and I can be what I hope us to be: friends.

My name is Madison Hogan. I'm the new Cobb Life Editor.

I'd say it's great to meet you, but we certainly aren't strangers. In 1999, I moved to Cobb County with my family and it's been my true home ever since. I spent a few years in the Midwest, obtaining my degree in journalism at Indiana University-Bloomington, and about a year in Beaufort, South Carolina before Georgia was on my mind again.

I began writing for the Marietta Daily Journal's sister paper, the Cherokee Tribune, in 2017 as a crime, government and business reporter, in addition to being a weekly columnist. I spent more than two and a half years writing for Atlanta Inno, a sister publication to the Atlanta Business Chronicle, covering tech, startups and



innovation. I like to say that I've written just about every beat in the newsroom, and this isn't my first stint as a magazine editor either.

In the fourth grade, I published my first work as the editor of "Due West Elementary Magazine." With the help of friends, we created a hand-drawn cover, a nice little gossip column, a brownie recipe one of our mother's gave us, a crossword puzzle and for some reason that I cannot fathom why, the first 10 numbers in French. We only made it to press twice, but I was hooked.

In some ways, putting together my first edition of Cobb Life felt a lot like those early days on the playground, plotting out layouts and

design on the monkey bars and holding writers meetings at the old tree stump.

Our theme for this month's issue of Cobb Life Magazine is the return of fall, as we close the final weeks of summer and enter into a new season. Our cover, shot by local photographer Brittany Willingham, owner of Evie Mae Photography, is an ode to the all-American fall festival we know and love. Our cover story revisits the North Georgia State Fair, having been postponed due to the pandemic, and its plans for an epic comeback in September. Be sure to check out our "Now & Then" photo segment at the end of the magazine for a glimpse back to fairs past.

For the 20th anniversary of the September 11th attacks, I spoke to Cobb County residents who were directly affected. Their stories are riveting. I hope you'll enjoy learning about the places around town to discover fall fun in our favorite fall spots feature and even try a few of the coffee shops featured in our story on cool cafes in Cobb. If you're feeling particularly adventurous, make sure to check out our story on spooky haunts and where to visit paranormal hotspots. And if you're dying to get your book clubs and dinner parties going again like me, take a crack at the tips and recipes that will help you play host, post-pandemic style.

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as I enjoyed putting it together with the help of our photographers, writers and designer. May you start the season off right. Until then, happy reading, friend.

-Madison Hogan
Cobb Life Editor

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REMEMBERED, NOT FORGOTTEN

written by **MADISON HOGAN**

ASK ANYONE WITH A MEMORY OF SEPT. 11, 2001, and they can recount where they were when nearly 3,000 people were killed in a hijacking plot against America as if it were yesterday. But it wasn't yesterday. This modern day of infamy will reach the 20th year anniversary on Sept. 11, 2021.

As we remember the lives of those who were lost on that fateful day, as well as the lives of first responders and soldiers that were lost in the aftermath of illness and war as a result of that day, Cobb Life spoke to Cobb County residents whose lives were especially touched by the Sept. 11 attacks.

A MEMORY LIVES

Cobb County resident Marianne Burke had just returned from a weekend at the beach with her friends when news broke that airplanes had crashed into the Twin Towers. Burke, who had grown up on Long Island, knew she was going to know victims of the attacks. That morning, she was concerned for her brother-in-law, Brad Noack, who worked at the World Trade Center in New York City.

"My dad probably called sometime around 11 o'clock or so," she said. "I had no idea my sister would be (at the World Trade Center)."

Burke's youngest sister, Katherine "Katie" McGarry Noack, was asked by her boss the night before to attend a conference at Windows of the World on the top floor of the North Tower. That morning, she traveled to the World Trade Center with her new husband, Brad Noack. They had married just five months prior, with plans to travel to Australia, Brad Noack's homeland, soon.

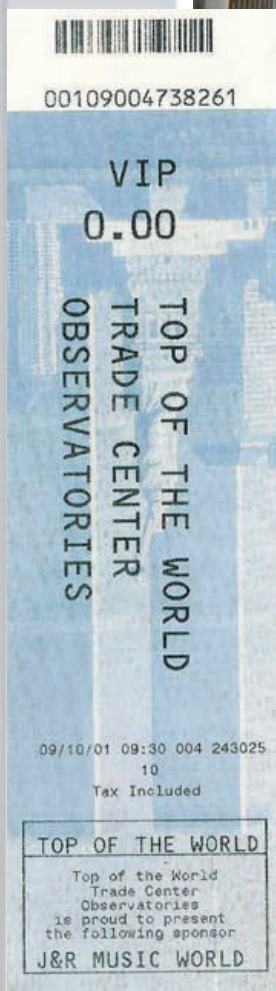
After American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into floors 93 through 99 of the North Tower at 8:46 a.m., Brad Noack received a phone call from his new bride.

"She said that it was very smoky and she knew she was going to die so she had gotten someone's cell phone... she wanted her family to know that she loved us," Burke said.



Katie Noack was married just five months prior to when she died in the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.

Ryan Levy stands atop the South Tower at the World Trade Center in New York City on Sept. 10, 2001. Less than 24 hours later, terrorists crashed United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 on the southern façade of the tower.



Ryan Levy's ticket stub from the Top of the World Trade Center Observatories.

Burke said her family had also lost a first cousin in the attacks. For a long time, her family held out hope that Katie Noack would be found among the wreckage after the towers fell. Her remains were never recovered.

"Sometimes it feels like yesterday and sometimes it feels like a lifetime ago," she said.

Today, Burke's middle daughter is the same age as Katie Noack was when she lost her life that day. A newlywed herself, Burke's middle daughter wore Noack's veil in her wedding ceremony.

"She lives on in all of us and our kids and their memory," she said.

When asked what she will be doing on the 20th anniversary of her sister's passing, Burke said she will attend the Field of Flags at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. The ceremony, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Marietta, will feature a flag for each life lost on 9/11.

"I wish that people wouldn't forget the day, the time and the way the world changed," Burke said.

ANOTHER DAY

Marnie Levy, a Cobb County resident of 15 years, said her brother, Ryan Levy, and a friend were visiting New York City the weekend before the attacks for Michael Jackson's 30th Anniversary Celebration concert at Madison Square Garden on Sept. 10, 2001.

Marnie Levy, who was working as a broadcast news reporter at a FOX affiliate in Tampa at the time, said that morning her brother went to the Lincoln Square studio to sit in the audience of the "Live! With Regis and Kelly" show.

"They were turned away because they were already full," she said. "They had received tickets to the World Trade Center observation deck in lieu of tickets to the show."

Ryan Levy traveled 110 floors to the rooftop observation deck on the South Tower.

"My brother isn't good with heights to begin with," Marnie Levy said.

Clouds and fog fuzzed the details of the New York skyline that morning, but observers could look out and still see the sprawl of lower Manhattan.

Ryan Levy peered over the edge, 1,362-feet from the ground. He pulled coins from his pocket and slipped them into the penny press. He squeezed out a flat penny with the New York Yankees' emblem and put the memento in his pocket for good luck. Ryan Levy's friend offered to use the last picture in the roll of a disposable camera to take a snapshot of him, his back against the white railing. It would be the last picture they would take that day.

The time stamp on Ryan Levy's ticket to the observation deck reads: "09/10/01 09:30."

Twenty-three hours and 33 minutes later, five hijackers crashed United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 on the southern façade of the tower. Less than an hour after that, the South Tower would crumble into dust, ash and smoke with an unknown number of souls lost in the rubble. It would take just 10 seconds to fall.

"Basically in a nutshell, 24 hours saved my brother's life," Marnie Levy said. "He very well could have been on top of one of those two towers at the point of impact."

Ryan Levy was supposed to be on a flight home to Florida on the morning of Sept. 11. But the day's events grounded more than 4,500 commercial and general aviation flights.

"We had no way of getting in touch with him and whether or not he was on those planes," Marnie Levy said. "At that point, it wasn't identified which planes were going where. They just knew at the time two planes struck the towers and they were commercial airliners."

Marnie Levy and her family were a nervous wreck until they realized none of the planes hijacked that day were scheduled flights to Florida. Phone lines were jammed and it would take Ryan Levy five days to get out of the city on a 27-hour Greyhound Bus ride, but his family knew he was safe. Before he left, Marnie Levy said he reached as close to Ground Zero as he could to deliver socks and Gatorade to rescue crews.

"Obviously it was a scary time, but the picture just tells a thousand stories," Marnie Levy said. "He was probably one of the last groups of people to have that experience of going up on that observation deck and

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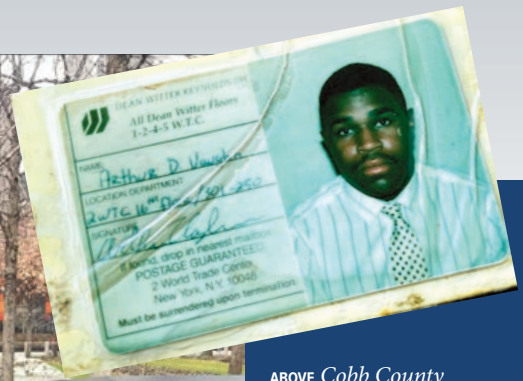
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REMEMBERED, NOT FORGOTTEN



ABOVE Cobb County resident Arthur Vaughn's employee ID for the Dean Witter office at 2 WTC in New York City. "I was really young on that ID, because I was really young then," Vaughn said.

LEFT Arthur Vaughn touches the name of Jeffrey Dingle, one of his closest friends growing up in Brooklyn, at the 9/11 Memorial in New York City.

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with that one last photo in the camera roll he had shot, it was quite incredible.”

After the towers fell, the family felt a new appreciation of life and gratitude, knowing that a day can change everything. Just one month prior, on Aug. 12, 2001, Marnie and Ryan Levy lost their father.

“Twenty-four hours later, people are here and then they’re not,” she said. “It’s just right place, right time... It’s hard to believe 20 years, to be honest.”

A NEW YORKER AT HEART

Former Georgia Postsecondary Education Commission Chairman Arthur Vaughn has lived in Marietta since 1995, but two years prior to his migration to the South, the New York City native was working as a bond underwriter for Dean Witter on the 16th floor of the South Tower. He grew up in a small place in Brooklyn called Roosevelt.

On February 26, 1993, Vaughn was at work with more than 40,000 people in the Twin Towers when a group of terrorists drove a bomb-laden van into the public parking garage below the World Trade Center Complex. The 1,200-pound bomb exploded, creating a crater 150-foot wide and several stories deep under the North Tower. Those on the top floors of the towers and surrounding buildings felt the force of the explosion that killed six people.

“It was scary,” Vaughn said. “The entire building shook and there was smoke coming up through the building, you’d smell like a fire burning.”

People began running down the stairways, afraid but unaware of what was happening, Vaughn said. As they descended lower through the stairwells, the smoke became thicker and the burning smell grew stronger.

“You didn’t realize what was going on until you got out of the building,” he said. “Imagine that uneasiness of not knowing what’s going on but know something bad is going on... The lower you get, the more excited people are, and excited in a bad way.”

Years later, Vaughn recalled any time the words “bomb” or “fire” were mentioned, colleagues would pack up their items and leave at the slightest incident or possibility of a threat for fear of another tragic incident.

“The emotion attached to it was just really frightening,” he said. “The first one, we didn’t know what it was. You could see smoke, so you assumed fire, but the word ‘bomb’ didn’t go through your mind at that time. When you started getting to the lower floors and people started saying it was a bomb... It hit you that you could have died that day.”

Vaughn left the South Tower with his life that day, and

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two years later he would make his way to Atlanta to pursue a PhD. But his story doesn't end there.

The morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Vaughn was in a meeting in Atlanta when news broke that a plane hit the North Tower. At first, Vaughn, who had not seen any news coverage of the event, assumed the plane must have been a small charter flight with one or two passengers – an accident. The meeting ended when news broke that a second plane hit the South Tower. After hearing that a plane had hit the Pentagon, Vaughn said he realized America was under attack.

"You just get scared and angry, in disbelief," he said. "A lot of emotions overcome you at one time."

Through the shock and confusion, Vaughn tried to reach his family in New York City, including his oldest daughter, whose elementary school sat just five blocks from the World Trade Center.

"The landlines aren't working, the cell phones aren't working, there's just no way to communicate," he said.

After picking up his middle daughter from preschool in Atlanta, Vaughn sat down with his daughter and went numb, unable to reach his aunts, his uncles, his 5-year-old daughter and others in New York City.


"You couldn't reach any family members and figure out who was alive and who wasn't," he said. "But you obviously knew people were going to die."

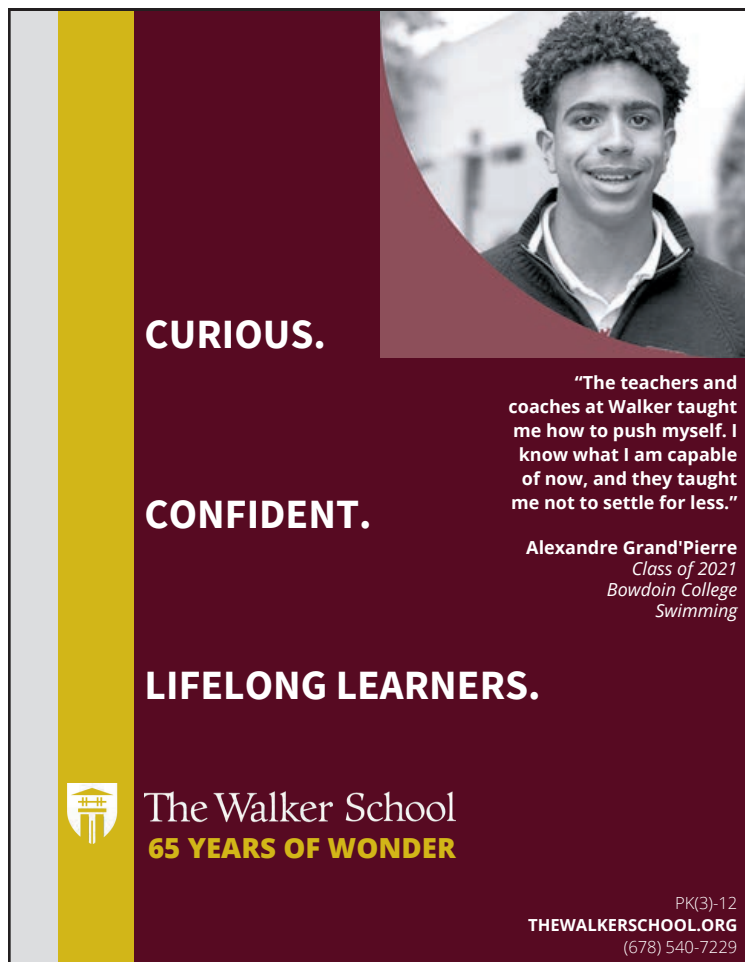
Vaughn lost an unknown number of friends, colleagues and schoolmates that day. One of his closest friends growing up, Jeffrey Dingle, a married father of two, died in the World Trade Center. He was only a year older than Vaughn.

"When we get old, people pass but you don't expect someone your age to die," he said. "We were in disbelief and shock."

In 2019, Vaughn traveled to New York City and visited the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. At first, he couldn't remember where the towers stood, until he realized he was standing on them.

His hand rested over the name he sought to find among the 2,983 inscribed on the bronze parapets on the memorial pools: Jeffrey Dingle. On the twentieth anniversary, Vaughn said he will attend the Field of Flags at Kennesaw Mountain to reflect and later join the 100 Black Men of North Metro Atlanta for COVID Vaccination Day for community service.

"I think that we can always reflect on how privileged we are and fortunate we are to live in America," he said. "Being the imperfect country that we are, there's no other place I'd rather live." 



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THE 2020 FALL SEASON was unpredictable for families like the Stills, who operate Still Family Farm in Powder Springs. But once the pumpkin weekend fall fun operation opened last September, the crowds came, with more than 1,000 visitors per day throughout the season.

This year, the expectations are more tempered with so many more options open and available for fall entertainment. But the Stills are making preparations to open the farm starting on Sept. 18 as families throughout Cobb County and beyond catch the fall fever, get outside to enjoy the beautiful fall colors and outdoor adventures.

Stephanie Still Davis, marketing director for Still Family Farm, called the farm's fall activities the family's "heart project" because they all have other full-time jobs, including a family construction company. However, they work together to keep the fall operation enjoyable, targeting families with kids who are ages 12 and younger with plenty of fall activities, including a 25-minute hayride that meanders through the neighboring woods.

"We are one of the smaller operations," Still Davis said. "We are your boutique property. We really focus on the customer experience and connecting with people."

It's also all about having an enjoyable family outing from the pump duck races to a five-acre flower maze to human-sized hamster wheels.

"If you're a parent, you can just plop down at a picnic table and put your head on a swivel as they do a bunch of activities," Still Davis said. "It's not so big that you lose track of your kids. It's really good for the younger family."

8

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BY JON STYF

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The 128-acre farm is open weekends from 10 a.m. to dusk from Sept. 18 through Oct. 31 with the last tickets sold at 5:30 p.m. General admission tickets are \$16 per person. Children ages 4 and under are free to attend and parking is free. The farm also hosts field trips for some groups on Tuesdays and Fridays during the season.

Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park

900 Kennesaw Mountain Drive, Kennesaw

History and scenic beauty go hand-in-hand at Kennesaw Mountain, where you can take the 2.1-mile round trip hike up and down. From the top, you can get a great view of the Atlanta skyline and Cobb. Another option is the 11-mile Battlefield Trail to experience it all, from open fields to the highest heights.



Cauble Park Trail

4425 Beach Street, Acworth

The park is a great summer spot for swimming and relaxing and has a killer Fourth of July celebration. But fall can be just as enjoyable at Cauble Park. Stroll along the Lake Acworth waterfront on a nearly 1-mile path that crosses two pedestrian bridges that showcases all of the amazing fall colors that Georgia has to offer.

Sope Creek Trail

3726 Paper Mill Trail SE, Marietta

One option at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is this trail, which showcases the colorful trees along the creek and pond. You can see the ruins of a paper mill from the Civil War era as well as find a quiet escape in the beauty of fall.



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The farm will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays through Sundays from Sept. 24 to Oct. 31. General admission tickets are \$12 with some discounts available. From tractor rides to a corn maze, pumpkin patch, farm animals and kids games in a playground, there is plenty going on at Sleepy Hollow Farm this fall. Last year, a storm took out the corn maze but this year it is scheduled to return.

Escape Woods (at Sleepy Hollow Farm)

628 Sleepy Hollow Road, Powder Springs

escapewoods.com

You've probably heard of an Escape Room, but have you heard of Escape Woods? It's a different type of play on the Escape Room phenomenon with a variety of options, including plenty of scary ones if that's your thing. You can try

out options from "Hopper's Cabin" or "The Bunker: Aftermath" to ages 18 and up options such as "The Pig Farmer: Cult of the 7 Sins." Book your Escape Woods experience ahead online.


Paces Mill

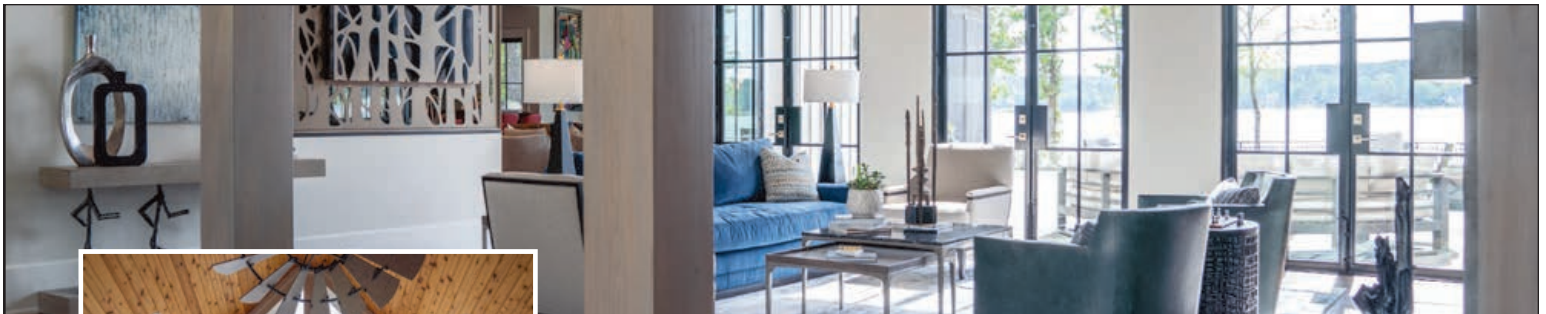
3444 Cobb Parkway, Atlanta

You can hike or bike as you enjoy the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area at Paces Mill. The paved path follows the river and visits a small waterfall near the end of the trail as you enjoy those beautiful Cobb County colors.

Heritage Park Trail

60 Fontaine Road SW, Mableton

This hiking trail has a waterfall, the ruins of a historic mill and the Concord Covered Bridge. This four-mile round trip gravel trail along Nickajack Creek is the perfect spot to witness all of the beautiful fall colors with the option to join up with the Silver Comet Trail and make a day of it. 



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Playing Host

POST PANDEMIC

By ERICA A. THOMAS

After spending more than a year in the house during quarantine, it's safe to say that some of our entertaining skills have gotten a bit rusty. As we adjust to our new normal by playing host, post-pandemic, things can seem a bit overwhelming. From deciding on what food to prepare, to how to set the table, getting back to social interaction while wearing "real" clothes, along with the idea of entertaining it, can all seem a bit stressful.

When I'm entertaining, I like to take a simple yet sophisticated approach to my recipes and entertaining style. I am most successful with my entertaining when I am creating simple meals with minimal preparation time but maximum flavor.



*Pesto Basil Shrimp
with Chickpea Pasta*

(RECIPE ON PAGE 26)



Erica A. Thomas is a resident of Cobb County and founder of her award-winning food brand and blog, Eating With Erica. Erica also hosts a podcast, "Owning Her Seat," which features women who break through glass ceilings in culinary, hospitality and entrepreneurship. Erica loves living in Smyrna with her loving husband, Desmond Thomas. Erica and Desmond also run a food-inspired candle company, EWE Home. When Erica isn't writing about stellar restaurants or cooking up simple yet sophisticated recipes, she loves dining in Cobb, trying out new spots and supporting local restaurants and small businesses.

Here are few tips for playing host, post-pandemic:

- 1. Start small:** Getting back into the swing of things, when it comes to entertaining, can be a lot. When you host smaller gatherings, you can really attend and focus more on the details. You will also get a chance to connect with your guests more and enjoy yourself at the same time.
- 2. Clean, clean, clean:** Have a cleaning station. Let's be honest, everyone's level of comfort with social gatherings is different. Make sure to have a station for masks and hand sanitizer.
- 3. Prep:** Place all plates, silverware and napkins out. The night before, prep as many dishes as possible. Also, don't forget to prepare your floral arrangements.
- 4. Menu:** Simplicity is best. Don't stretch yourself too thin with cooking. Make something that your guests will prefer and that's delicious. It's okay to over-impress; however, don't forget that the simple things work out every time.
- 5. Have fun:** Don't stress out. A lot of things that we freak out about, guests don't even pay attention to. So relax and have the best gathering ever!



REALTOR®
Spotlight

ERIN OXFORD CLARK

770-815-2826

ErinOxford.Clark@HarryNorman.com
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Erin is a Georgia native having lived in various parts of metro Atlanta for over 20 years. With a fresh and unique approach to real estate, Erin incorporates the most current tools and resources to enhance the real estate experience for her buyers and sellers alike. Erin is a graduate of The University of Georgia with a degree in Speech Communication. She has spent the first twenty years of her career in client-focused relationships through consulting and advocacy with the public and private sector. She has a passion for people and enjoys customizing the buying or selling experience based on her clients individual needs. Erin resides in Marietta with her husband and two sons. She enjoys traveling, hiking with her rescued pups and cheering on the Dawgs.



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RECIPES:

PESTO BASIL SHRIMP WITH CHICKPEA PASTA

I have really become a huge fan of chickpea, pea and lentil pasta. Not only are all these food items a good source of plant-based protein, but they're also an excellent source of fiber. To be completely honest, I have made this dish for friends and family, and I've never told them that it's not traditional pasta. They actually don't even notice!

When to Prepare This Recipe:

This recipe is perfect for a book club gathering. Enjoy with garlic bread and a salad. This dish would also be perfect for a "Meatless Monday" supper. It can be made for the entire family or as a single serving.

BASIL PESTO SHRIMP WITH CHICKPEA PASTA

Ingredients

One (1) container of pesto sauce
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 boxes of chickpea pasta
1/2 cup shaved Parmesan
1 pound of large uncooked shrimp
1/2 stick of butter
1 tablespoon red flakes
2 tablespoons of lemon juice
Basil to garnish (optional)



Directions

- In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain well. Set aside.
- Season shrimp with garlic, lemon juice, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Set aside.
- Turn the stove on medium and add butter to a large skillet.
- Add shrimp and sauté, until bright pink.
- Add the pasta into the pan with the shrimp. Stir in the pesto.
- Make sure the pesto, pasta noodles and shrimp are well blended.
- Scoop out the desired amount into a bowl.
- Garnish with chopped basil and shaved Parmesan, if desired.

Enjoy!

CHEESE & CHARCUTERIE BOARD



Playing Host

Whether you're hosting family for the holiday season or just having friends over for dinner, cheese boards are the way to go. What I like most about them is that they are visually impressive and minimal prep time is needed. Your guests will be thoroughly impressed by the fanciness of your board.

You can purchase these brands at stores such as Kroger, Whole Foods or your local farmer's market. When you first see the cheese section, do not become overwhelmed. The key to a fancy-looking cheese board is, well, the board! There are countless boards to choose from that come in various shapes and sizes, ranging from circular, rectangular, oval or square.

During day events, I like marble and light wood boards; and in the evening, I like to use slate and dark wood boards. There isn't a right or wrong way to select your board. The most important thing is that it needs to be large enough to hold all of the goodies that will be displayed on it. It's pretty impossible to mess up creating a cheese board unless you have all of the same types of cheese on the board. But how boring is that?

When creating your board, it's important to add a variety of cheeses that vary in texture, flavor, colors and shapes.

This is the fun part: garnish, garnish, garnish! It is important to leave little or no space available on your board, which

means that your cheese board is going to need some friends. You need to have a balanced blend of salty and sweet. Add savory bites such as olives, nuts, meats, pickles, crackers and crostini. Examples of your sweet items would be honey and chocolate; dried fruits, like, cranberries, raisins, and mango; and fresh fruits such as grapes, strawberries, blackberries and apples.

When to Prepare This Recipe:

This cheese board is perfect for when you're having a grilling shindig. It's the perfect item to have for friends and guests so that they can have something to nosh. It's also ideal for holiday gatherings at the house.

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Playing Host



BBQ CHICKEN FLATBREAD PIZZA

When it comes to making an at-home pizza, I don't always feel like going through the process of kneading the dough, rolling the dough and waiting for the pizza dough to rise. That's why this BBQ flatbread pizza is definitely one of my favorite recipes to prepare because it has minimal prep and cook time.

The barbeque sauce: When it comes to the barbeque sauce that you will be spreading on your flatbread, you can use any brand and/or flavor that make your taste buds joyful. I actually prefer to use sweet and spicy barbeque sauce because it causes the flatbread to have a sweet and savory flavor. But whichever barbeque sauce you choose to use, just make sure that it has a thick consistency.

Flatbread is the ideal substitute if you do not want pizza dough, because it offers great flavor, and there are various length and shape options that you can select from. When preparing the chicken for this recipe, you can opt to prepare the chicken yourself, purchase it pre-cooked, or use leftover cooked chicken from a previous meal. I totally understand that pre-shredded cheese can make life a little easier. However, I highly recommend using grated cheese, if you have the time. And if you do decide to grate your own cheese, you will definitely see that it melts better and has a much more flavorful taste.

When to Prepare This Recipe:

This recipe is perfect for when you're tailgating a little league game, hosting a slumber party at your home or if you're hosting book club.

BBQ CHICKEN FLATBREAD PIZZA

- 2 pieces of flatbread
- 1/2 cup barbeque sauce of your choosing
- 2 cups of cooked chicken
- 2 cups grated Colby and Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/2 red onions, sliced
- 1/2 bundle of cilantro

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Spread 1/4 cup of barbeque sauce on top of each of the flatbread.
- Evenly distribute the grated Colby and Monterey Jack cheese on top.
- Add the cooked chicken, and then evenly distribute it on top of the flatbread.
- Add the sliced red onion.
- Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the cheese has melted. (Be careful. The top of the flatbread will be hot and bubbly.)
- The bottom of your flatbread should be slightly crispy.
- Top with cilantro. 🌿

Enjoy!

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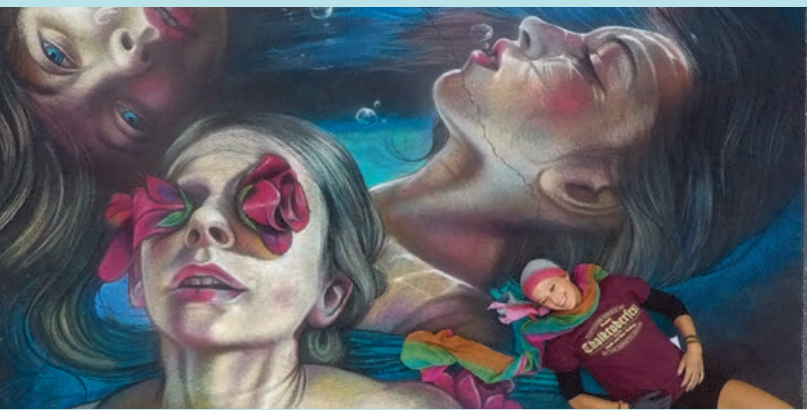
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It's a Family

Af-FAIR

COBB ANTICIPATES THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE
[NORTH GEORGIA STATE FAIR]

BY ERIN GREER

THE NORTH GEORGIA STATE FAIR PREMIERED IN 1921 when many attendees arrived on horseback and most of Cobb County lacked electricity and indoor plumbing.

It's been a tradition for Cobb families ever since.

One such family is Tod Miller's. In his youth, Tod worked as a parking attendant for the fair, where his father, Jim, was fair manager. Today, Tod serves as the current fair manager, and the fairgrounds bear his father's name: Jim R. Miller Park.

"I love seeing people continuing traditions. It's hard to beat that feeling," Miller said. "We're proud that we're the largest event in Cobb. We're proud to be many people's family tradition."



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It's a Family Af-FAIR

DARK DAYS AND BRIGHT HORIZONS

Sidelining a stalwart like the fair is no small feat. World War II made the fair "go dark" for a few years, but, in Miller's 31 years as manager, he has only seen the fair close once – last year when the COVID 19 pandemic hit, and the county used the grounds as both a COVID testing and vaccination site.

Miller said the fair worked to bring joy – even in the pandemic – by providing socially distanced food trucks on site. And while no one wants a repeat of 2021, Fair Assistant Manager Bill Watson said the fair has adopted some pandemic closure practices that will continue this year. Examples include the presence of copious amounts of hand sanitizer, and the addition of Northside Hospital – a first-time sponsor – as the official first aid provider of the fair.

Though the fair officially began in 1895, due to the changing of ownership, venue, wars and other historic aberrations, some years of the fair were lost to time. The goal is to bring back the modern fair bigger and better than ever for its 89th annual return to Cobb after its pandemic-forced hiatus last year.

POST-PANDEMIC RENAISSANCE

Everyone loves a good comeback story, and Miller and Watson believe this year's fair, which runs 11 days, Sept. 23 – Oct. 3, 2021, will shatter attendance records, which already clock at an impressive 300,000 attendees each year.

"The last five or six fairs have set attendance records," Miller said.

"More people attend fairs than all spring events combined, and what we're seeing this year is that people are coming out and shattering attendance records," Watson added.

To bring in those record crowds, Miller and Watson have procured some new acts that, they say, are guaranteed to wow both newcomers and seasoned fair veterans.



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It's a Family Af-FAIR

And Watson should know. Like Miller, he has more than his “fair” share of fair bonafides.

Watson “developed a love for the fair” while working there as a parking attendant like Miller in his youth. In 1995 he accepted a management role, and now gets ideas for new acts at the International Association of Fairs Expo, as well as from traveling to attend other fairs.

THOSE TRAVELS HELPED SNAG THIS YEAR'S NEW LINE-UP, WHICH INCLUDES:

The Paul Bunyan Lumberjack Show:

Old-fashioned, family entertainment in the form of quality lumberjack competitors known throughout the world.

Jurassic Kingdom: Patrons experience life-like dinosaurs in action, and can touch and interact with them throughout the show. Guests can meet Terry the Pterodactyl, Jack the baby Brontosaurus and more.

The Kachunga & the Alligator Show: Guests can step foot into the watery domain of the alligator with Kachunga, a real American Bushman. From a safe distance, attendees will watch as Kachunga apprehends an alligator with his bare hands.

ARCY, Live Event Murals: Known for his paint-splashed style of street art, ARCY has been honing his skills for over a decade, spray painting 8'x12' live event walls in many of the country's largest cities. ARCY has created hundreds of live murals and permanent large scale works throughout North America, Australia and Europe. His clients include The Smithsonian Institute, Major League Baseball, America's National Parks Service and he is currently developing a collaborative body of work for The Walt Disney Company as a Disney Fine Artist.



MILLER AND WATSON HAVE PROCURED SOME NEW ACTS THAT, THEY SAY, ARE GUARANTEED TO WOW BOTH NEWCOMERS AND SEASONED FAIR VETERANS.

Magic Man TJ Hill: Combining comedy and magic, Magic Man TJ Hill puts on a show with music, audience participation, comedy and incredible magic. The Magic Man will be performing Sept. 24-30.

Robo-Cars: This “real life” Transformer will cruise, dance and transform daily.

TreeMan and Cowboy Woody: At over 12’ tall, the Walking TreeMan can be seen from 150 yards away. And keep your eyes peeled for Woody from “Toy Story”. He’s 10 feet tall and will be performing lasso tricks.

Robinson’s Racing Pigs & Paddling Porkers: Audiences can cheer on their favorite porcine celebrities like Britney Spareribs and Lindsay Slowham as they race for the coveted Oreo prize.

Watson recommends fair attendees check out all of the free “ground acts,” and encourages eagle-eyed patrons to look for Mickey Mouse in ARCY’s paintings.

“This guy’s work is phenomenal,” Watson said. “He does a lot of work for Disney, so he always hides a little Mickey Mouse in there. And he can do anything. If you can dream it up, he can paint it.”

We know, we know. You’re raring to go, and we’ve barely even mentioned the 40 amusement rides and games courtesy of the Great James H. Drew Exposition.

Favorites like the Ferris Wheel, the Georgia Mountain Lift and the Wildcat Coaster will be returning, of course. But before you fasten your safety harness, Miller and Watson want to remind you that the North Georgia Fair fare is second to none.



FAMILIAR FAVORITES: WELCOMING BACK AN OLD FRIEND

From its roots as an agricultural fair, the North Georgia State Fair, like the county around it, has grown. Today's fair still includes agriculture staples like the petting zoo and flower show, but also boasts rides, entertainment acts and concerts with internationally renowned acts.

"The fair reflects the diverse interests of the county," Miller said. "We've won the Best Festival and Best of Cobb Awards in recent years, and now we're back and bigger than ever."

"Bigger than ever" is an exciting claim for the fair, which, over the years has drawn superstars like Charlie Daniels (13 times), Loretta Lynn, Kenny Chesney and Blake Shelton. Miller said this year's lineup will likely see the 7,500 seat arena filled to capacity on performance nights.

THIS YEAR'S CONCERT LINEUP:

Friday, September 24: We Are Messengers

Saturday, September 25: Chris Lane

Wednesday, September 29: Gabby Barrett

Thursday, September 30: Jon Langston

Friday, October 1: Chase Rice

Saturday, October 2: Mark Wills

"Gabby (Barrett) is gonna be huge," Miller said. "And Mark Wills? We started booking Mark Wills when he was a local guy. Now he's a member of the Grand Ole Opry."

And when fair goers aren't singing and clapping along to the evening's musical talent, they can enjoy returning favorites including:

The Eudora Farms Exotic Petting Zoo: an interactive, hands-on exotic animal petting zoo including 20 to 25 rare and exotic animals from around the world. See a wallaby, a zebra, a lemur and have a chance to ride a camel.

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The Master of the Chainsaw: Brian Ruth will be back to transform raw logs into true works of art.

The North Georgia Animals Petting Barn: a fun, educational experience where children and adults can befriend chickens, goats, cows, rabbits and llamas. There are pony rides too! The Human Cannonball: turn your eyes to the skies to see David "The Bullet" Smith, who will be shot out of a cannon multiple times each day, soaring 300 ft. above the midway.

Sandscapes: marvel as the Sandscapes sculptors transform 50 tons of sand into a special-themed works of art throughout the run of the fair.

Watson said the return of old favorites – and the addition of new ones, is a key to the fair's decades of success in Cobb.



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It's a Family Af-FAIR



"We're staying true to old heritage with petting zoo, and other traditions like the local photography and art exhibits," Watson said. "There are so many layers to it. You've got the rides, you've got the vocal entertainment, you've got the ground shows. You can spend 10-11 days here easy and not see everything. And we're expecting record turnout this year."

In keeping with tradition, all concerts and shows are free with admission to the fair.

COME FOR THE SHOWS, STAY FOR THE FOOD

Approximately 50 percent of fair attendees don't ride rides, "but almost 100% come to eat," according to Miller.

And whether it's staples like cotton candy and funnel cakes or something a bit more... "exotic," for fair foodies, this year's offerings will not disappoint.

To keep menus daring and fresh, Miller offers \$500 cash prizes for vendors with the Best Taste and Most Creative menus. The result, Watson said, is food "on a whole 'nother level!"

"We've even had deep friend Kool Aid on a stick," Watson said. "This is the South. If you can fry it, you're gonna do it!"

Miller recommends everyone try at least one of the "on a stick" culinary offerings, but Watson recommends the old favorites like strawberry shortcake and elephant ears. Still, if you offer Watson a jalapeno corndog on a stick, he won't say "no."

"They're hand-dipped jalapeno corn dogs," Watson said. "They're delicious!"


SPECIAL DAYS AND DISCOUNTS

As in years past, the fair will host its special days, including Student Days, College Nights, the MUST Ministries canned goods drive and Senior Citizen's Day/Hero's Day, where selected groups receive free admission. This year, in recognition of the fight against COVID-19, healthcare workers have been added to the list of military, police, firefighters and first responders to be honored on Hero's Day, Sept. 24.

Miller said specialty days, which run throughout the fair, ensures the fair remains a cost-friendly activity for all Cobb families.

"We give everybody the opportunity to come to the fair, no matter what your socioeconomic situation is," Miller said. "We want to be a good community partner, and we want everyone to have the opportunity to come to the fair and enjoy themselves."

Watson said he wants the fair to be accessible to all Cobb families, so that they, too, might make the North Georgia State Fair a family tradition, as it is in the Miller and Watson households.

"Our kids are growing up with the fair," Watson said. "It's come full circle." 

Plan Your Day

The North Georgia State Fair runs Sept. 23 – Oct. 3, 2021, at Jim R. Miller Park, 2245 Callaway Road, Marietta, GA 30008.

General admission is \$10; children aged 10 and under are free.

Ride tickets are \$1.25 a piece, with discounts offered for bulk ticket purchases.

Parking is \$5.

Discount tickets can be purchased online, in advance, or at any Metro Atlanta O'Reilly Auto Parts store.

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COFFEE

WARM (AND COOL) HANGOUTS

COBB'S COFFEE *Cafes*



BY IRA BLUMENTHAL

*“What goes best with a cup of coffee?”
The answer is simple... “Another cup!”*

AMERICA IS FULLY IMMERSED IN A COFFEE CULTURE. Many of us started our addiction to caffeine in college. The traditional all-nighter provided us a way to stay awake for hours and hours doing term papers or studying for exams. After graduating college, coffee evolved to become our fuel. Some call it “human gasoline.” It helps us to multi-task. We have learned to use coffee shops as our very own branch or satellite offices. They’re a place to network. Ironically enough, over a steamy hot cup of coffee, they’re also a place for us to chill.

It is surely our fuel for staying awake, for staying aware, for staying engaged, for staying communicative and social. It is also our fuel for thought. Technology visionary Steve Jobs said, “Where good ideas come from brainstorming, great ideas come from coffee.”

Let’s visit five terrific coffee shops right here in Cobb County. Cobb Life toured, tasted and experienced Cobb coffee at its finest. Join us as we toast a cup of joe to the “who,” the “what” and the caffeinated “how.”

COFFEE

Coffee



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OWNERS: Edgar Bahamon, Jennifer Cifuentes

MUST TRY: Signature Waffle Sandwich Dulce de Leche with Mozzarella.

"Tinto" means high-quality black coffee in Spanish. The point of uniqueness in this cool shop across the street from Kennesaw State University is simple... authenticity. Owner Edgar Bahamon said, "At Tinto's, we only use the highest quality beans from my native land, Columbia... where the best coffee beans in the world are grown." The aroma in the café is beyond description. It's amazing. It's wonderful. It's purely Colombian. Their sign that reads "No Coffee? No Problem!" represents a part of their menu board with a wide array of non-coffee drinks (smoothies and more) for those who would prefer a break from caffeine. The London Fog tea is "spot on," as they'd say in the U.K. Their shop also has a cool retail section with unique crafts and more. KSU Owl students and business people alike love Tinto's.

THE DAILY GRIND

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OWNER: Nikki Krzemien

MUST TRY: The Panini Club and the Daily Grind's Creamy Caramel Latte.

The key word and uniqueness for this comfortable shop is "family." In the words of owner, Nikki Krzemien, "Not only is the store family-owned but both employees and customers are treated like family." As an example, when Krzemien recently got married, many of her customers came to the wedding. The service level is stellar. The aromas are amazing and the ambience is living room comfortable. A special program they implement is called "Teacher's Lunch Box." Through an online ordering app, students (all ages, all grades) and their parents can order a lunch, side and of course coffee to be delivered to their favorite teacher at their school. They now serve more than 25 schools in the program. For more information, visit www.TeachersLunchBox.org



The key word and uniqueness for this comfortable shop is "family."



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CAFÉ COMMA

3621 Vinings Slope Rd., Vinings

OWNER: Kristy Yun

MUST TRY: Fig and Ricotta Toast

Call it new age, contemporary or alternative, Café Comma boasts "...a calmer, more civilized gourmet coffee experience" and "an oasis among the concrete jungle." Although the café's feel and ambiance is sleek, unassuming and modernistic, its blend of gourmet coffees and fabulous food (i.e. Brie & Apricot Toast, Fresh Avocado Toast, Egg and Garlic Toast, etc.) is extraordinary. Of special note is a large wall graphic that owner Kristy Yun proudly displays and claims, "We Don't Have Inspirational Quotes Here. We Only Have A Good Coffee And Good Vibes."

Delicious drinks include the Mexican drink, Horchata, as well as Lavender and Charcoal Coconut Lattes. Café Comma could easily change its name to Café Exclamation Point... it's that dynamic!





COOL BEANS

31 Mill Street, Marietta Square

MUST TRY: 8-Ball and T-Man espresso drinks

How's this for balancing on-premise and off-premise? Buy a bag of beans at Cool Beans and get a free cup of coffee. This shop fits its name well. It's cool! From art work on the walls to an outside courtyard with seating and a coffee roaster adjacent to the retail counter, the atmosphere is laidback and upbeat. Cool Beans Manager Lauren Felcyn said, "Variety is one of our assets with over 40 coffee flavors and new ones added to match holidays (i.e. Pumpkin Spice or Egg Nog Lattes)." Ask any cool cat wandering about the cafe why they dig the place and they'll likely respond with a knowing look: "C'mon. Look around. This place is cool."

*The café's feel and ambiance is sleek,
unassuming and modernistic.*

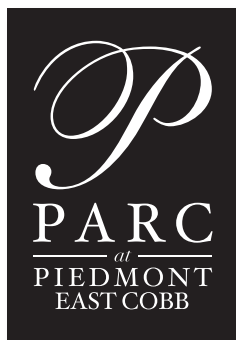


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There's lots of local
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The atmosphere is more of a
hip, eclectic art museum than
it is a traditional coffee shop.




REV COFFEE ROASTERS

1680 Spring Road, SE, Smyrna

MUST TRY: Bacon Cheddar Muffin

This is a funky coffeehouse in a converted garage that serves house-roasted beans accompanied by live music occasionally.

There's lots of local artwork on the walls and it's all for sale. The atmosphere is more of a hip, eclectic art museum than it is a traditional coffee shop. Rev is anything but "traditional." Besides roasting coffee beans from around the world, you can also buy coffee roasters, brewing devices, tumblers, cups, apparel and more. The atmosphere is as much market as it is café. Their Almost Famous Chicken Salad, and Spinach Florentine Quiche are unique and simply wonderful. Empahsize wonderful. Oh yes, and the Bacon Cheddar Muffin is worth the trip. Manager Sean Hagler said, "There's nothing frozen at Rev. Everything is freshly baked on premise. Oh yes, attention aspiring artists: Rev's waiting list to display local art is ten month's long." 



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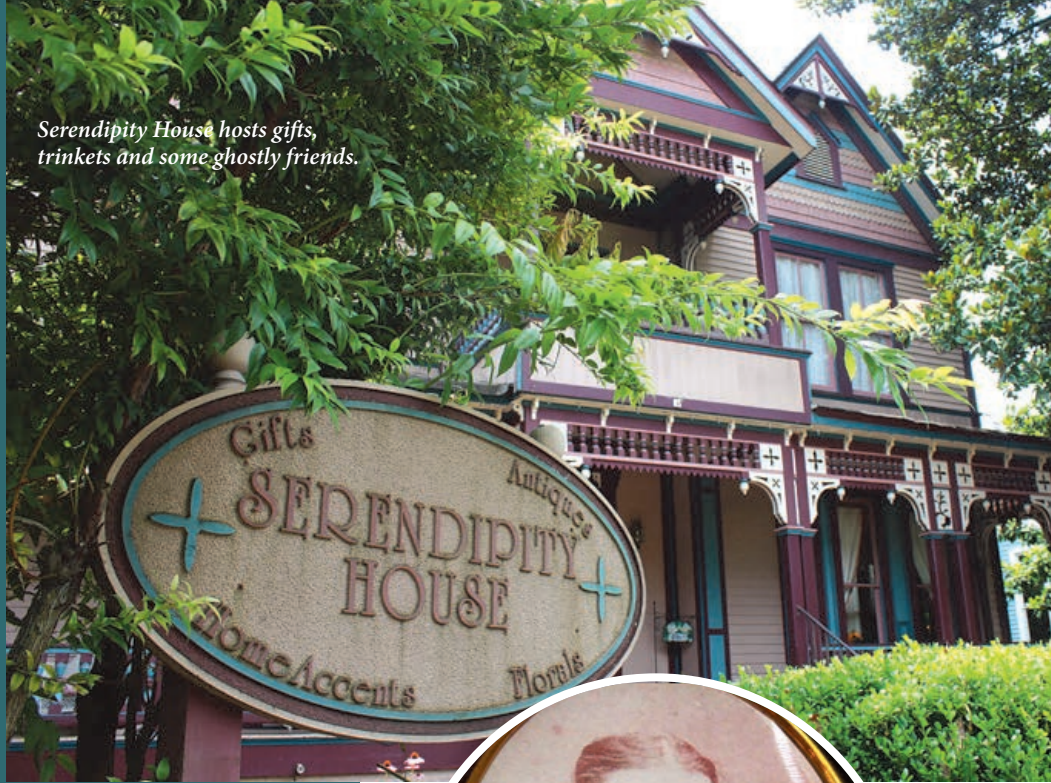


SPOOKY STORIES AROUND COBB TO GET YOUR FRIGHT ON

BY ANNA CHAPMAN

***Here are seven (supposedly)
haunted locations in Cobb County:***

*Serendipity House hosts gifts,
trinkets and some ghostly friends.*



RIGHT: Serendipity House owner Darlene Knight keeps a photo of Lizzie Lemon, the house's original owner, behind the register.

It is never too early to start considering where to get your haunts for the Halloween season. Aren't the grocery stores already stocking candy corn on their shelves?

If you're in the mood for haunted tales of ghosts and ghouls that will make your skin crawl, you don't have to travel far to get your fix. There are plenty of spots around town that will drive a shiver up and down your spin. From psychiatric facilities to cemeteries, Cobb has the place that will make your teeth chatter.



SERENDIPITY HOUSE, ACWORTH

Though most locals know Darlene Knight as the sole owner of the Serendipity House, a small gift shop in Downtown Acworth, Knight herself claims that she's had some otherworldly assistance in the shop.

Serendipity House, located in a late 19th century Victorian estate, was once home to Jesse and Elizabeth Lemon. Elizabeth, mostly known as 'Lizzie,' threw Jesse out of the house due to his drinking, gambling and womanizing habits, according to Jim Saltarella, the founder of Acworth Ghost Tours.

Saltarella said that Lizzie, Jesse and the ghost of an unidentified child haunt the home.



LEFT AND BELOW:
The basement of Red Hare's Still on the Square acted as a morgue during the Civil War. Ghosts have been sighted in the women's restroom and the manager reported smelling formaldehyde, a chemical commonly used to preserve bodies, when walking down the stairs.

"Lizzie does not like men who cheat and are rascals ... things have been hurled at them," Saltarella said.

When Saltarella was giving a ghost tour, he said that every time he mentioned the name "Jesse Lemon" while standing in front of the home, the lights would flicker. That same night, a familiar face appeared in a photograph taken by an attendee.

"They sent (the photograph) to us several days later. In the window is Jesse Lemon's face, Saltarella said. "I have a picture of Jesse Lemon from one of the old newspapers, and it looked so much like him."

Knight, who said she was willing to believe in the spiritual realm, said that checks have turned up missing on multiple occasions, nowhere to be found after a thorough search.

"Somebody said, 'Did you ask Lizzie for (the checks?)' I said no, I hadn't asked her for them," Knight said. "So I said, 'Lizzie, what are you doing to me?' And I found them. I swear it was in a place that I had already looked."

Though she is happy to share her space, Knight said that she doesn't view the other-worldly inhabitants as a bad thing.

"I don't look at it as being haunted. I just look at it as, you can't just be in a place and have your heart in it without leaving something behind," Knight said.



2

THE STILL ON THE SQUARE, MARIETTA

When a patron walks into the Red Hare Brewing Company's location on the Marietta Square, they might expect to be greeted with the scents of craft beers and handcrafted cocktails.

This assumption holds true for the first floor, but a walk down to the basement might bring different aromas; Red Hare's basement was the city morgue during the Civil War.

"Every now and then, I'll walk down the stairs or go to my office and it will smell like formaldehyde," said Daphne Leveque, general manager of the Marietta Square location.



SPOOKY STORIES AROUND COBB

Bartender Rebecca Mason had a scarier encounter with the resident spirit: she saw a ghost in the basement-level women's restroom.

"It was a woman dressed up in an old Civil War-era nurse uniform," Mason said. "When I saw her, she just looked like a normal person, but her outfit wasn't of our time period ... I turned back around to see if she was still standing there, and she was gone."

Though this encounter may seem tame, Leveque said another staff member had a more terrifying experience.

"He was in the beer cooler by himself. He heard someone whisper in his ear, 'Hey!' and then he turned around and there was nothing. And then the door slammed, and it's one of those doors where you actually have to force it to close," Leveque said.



BRAWNER HALL, SMYRNA

Many Cobb residents may know Taylor-Brawner House and Brawner Hall in Smyrna as an event space and a walking trail, but it was once home to a psychiatric hospital opened by Dr. James Brawner in 1910. It operated as a psychiatric facility until 1999.

The facility's long run as a mental health institution has garnered plenty of ghost stories.

One chilling story involves a young woman from a wealthy New York family who became a patient at the facility, said historian Mike Terry from Smyrna.

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LEFT: Taylor-Brawner House was home to a psychiatric hospital until 1999.

“She was described as a lovely 20-year-old girl with long blond hair, but she seemed deeply troubled and depressed. They weren’t really sure what her problem was, but Dr. Brawner agreed to keep her and work with her and see if he could help,” Terry said. “As the weeks went by, she seemed to respond well to his treatment methods and she quickly became a favorite of the staff members that were there at the hospital.”

As she continued to recover, the blond woman suddenly died after falling ill with fever and chills.

“The family and the staff were quite devastated by her death, and several weeks later ... a night duty nurse reported that she had seen a ghostly image of this girl on the second floor of this hospital, the long flowing hair streaming behind her as she ran down the hall and ran into the room where she stayed while she was there.”

Many nurses reported seeing the same ghostly apparition for a year, and then it suddenly stopped.



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ABOVE: Mary Meinert's monument in St. James Episcopal Cemetery. The statue is said to cry real tears if children perform the correct ritual.



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ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CEMETERY, MARIETTA

Local lore surrounds one burial plot in the St. James Episcopal Cemetery — and it's not the grave of JonBenét Ramsey, a child beauty pageant queen from Boulder, Colorado whose 1996 murder remains unsolved.

The decaying statue of Mary Meinert, located towards the front of the cemetery, features a woman with flowing hair holding two babies in her arms. The cemetery is directly across the street from Marietta Middle School, and Meinert's statue has scared generations of middle school students.

"All the legends are a bit different," said Lindsey Coleman, owner of the Ghosts of Marietta Tour. "Some say if you go on Halloween night, some say it's Friday the 13th, it just depends on the legend, but they always say if you go around Mary Meinert's statue and you say 'Mary, Mary, what happened to your babies?' supposedly she cries tears that are so real they'll even gather on the bodice of her dress."

According to her obituary published in the Marietta Daily Journal on May 26, 1898, she had just given birth to twin girls four weeks before her death.

There is speculation as to how Mary and her babies died. Coleman said some accounts have her dying in a fire alongside her children, others say she died in childbirth, and some say Meinert herself contracted a lung disease.

5

KENNESAW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, KENNESAW

With 4,000 lives lost in the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in June 1864, the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is a hotbed for ghostly sightings.

According to neighbors, cannon volleys can be heard blasting through the night. Visitors on the walking trails report gunfire echoes, battle commanders shouting at soldiers and the wailing screams of injured soldiers.

A group of historical reenactors said that one reenactor from their troupe walked past a man in a Union uniform one night. This wouldn't have been an usual circumstance, given his role as a historical reenactor. However, as the soldier got closer into view, the young reenactor noticed that the soldier's arm was badly mutilated. That night, fellow reenactors reported hearing troops marching and the smell of gunpowder.



ABOVE: The rumble of big guns could be heard at the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield in June 2013 as Confederate States of America soldiers unloaded a volley of fire in honor of the 149th observance of the Civil War Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. STAFF/KELLY J. HUFF



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The Old Mill in Acworth is reportedly home to seven spirits, including the previous owner John Cowan.

6 OLD MILL, ACWORTH

One of the most infamous ghostly sites in Cobb County lies just on the other side of the railroad tracks from the Serendipity House.

John Cowan constructed the mill in 1874 after he returned to Acworth from Montana, where he struck it rich mining for gold. The mill produced flour, then tapestries, but ceased production after a fire in 1992.

Chef Steven Dudley told Jim Saltarella, the founder of Acworth Ghost Tours, about the daily difficulties faced by the restaurant staff because of the spirits.

“He told me that he had never been in a place where the ghosts wanted you to know they were haunting the place,” Saltarella said.

Dudley also told Saltarella that spirits taunted the staff.

“[Dudley] would turn out a light that would turn back on,” he said. “He would close the door, it would fly back open. He said nobody would go into the basement, which is where most of the activity would occur.”

Perhaps the reason spiritual torments were so frequent was because there are supposedly seven ghosts inhabiting the property, as reported by a paranormal investigative team. The ghost of John Cowan haunts the property along with a woman named Elizabeth, who hanged herself in the basement after discovering her fiancé was cheating on her.

Two children also met an untimely demise in the mill: one died after falling off the loading dock, and another fell into the elevator shaft.

The spirits are also fond of romantic ambiance in the building, according to Saltarella. Votive candles on the tables would mysteriously reignite their flames after being extinguished at night.

“Every day when (the staff) came back in, a couple of the candles would be burning,” said Saltarella. “It made (the owner) concerned, because the place had suffered from a fire before, and she didn’t want that to happen again.”

Currently, the Old Mill operates as The Cowan Historic Mill, a wedding venue and special events space. The supposed spirits have not yet managed to drive the current owners away.

7 KENNESAW HOUSE, MARIETTA

The once-bloodsoaked halls of the Kennesaw House, now home to the Marietta Museum of History, are home to many ghostly tales. The building served as a hospital for both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War.

According to Lindsey Coleman, owner of the Ghosts of Marietta Tour, one of the most recent run-ins with an otherworldly figure occurred when two museum guests met an unwelcome visitor.

The museum had just gotten new artifacts to put in

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their exhibits, and one of the visitors requested the museum staff to "tell that young man to stop following us and harassing us."

"The museum staff said, 'You guys are the only people in the museum right now, we don't have anybody else in here.' The volunteers split up to try and find a person who snuck in," Coleman said.

Museum staff then asked the visitor to describe the man that was harassing her.

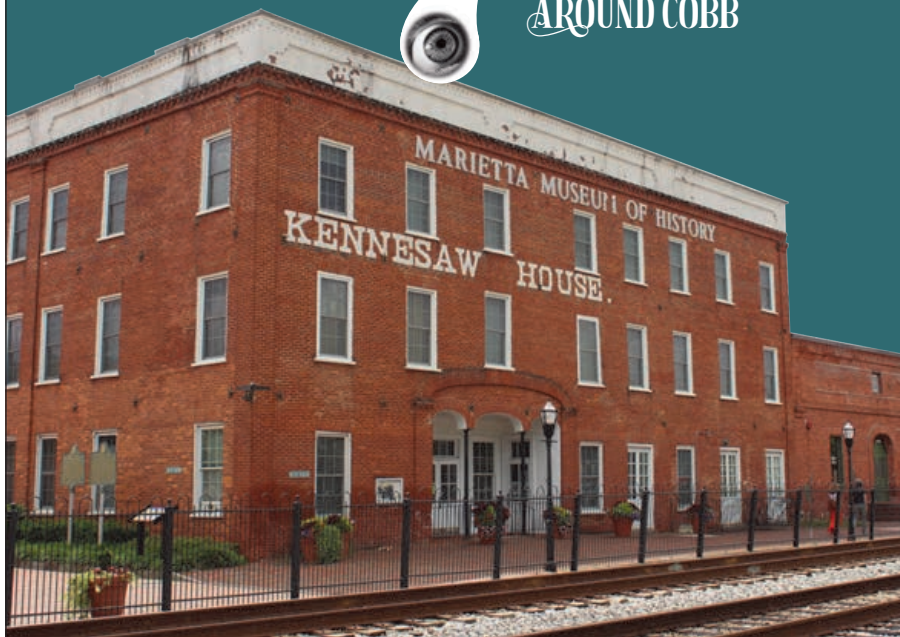
The outfit description included a navy blue shirt with gold buttons, a jacket with a "weird collar" and a baseball cap that was flat on the front.

"She was describing what they were wearing. It sounded like . . . what one of the lower-ranking officers of the Civil War would've worn," Coleman said.

This bizarre episode is, in fact, one of the more tame episodes.

Coleman said that one paranormal investigator who visited the Kennesaw House got off the elevator and walked into a brutal Civil War hospital scene, with doctors performing surgery on screaming patients. 📺

7 SPOOKY STORIES AROUND COBB



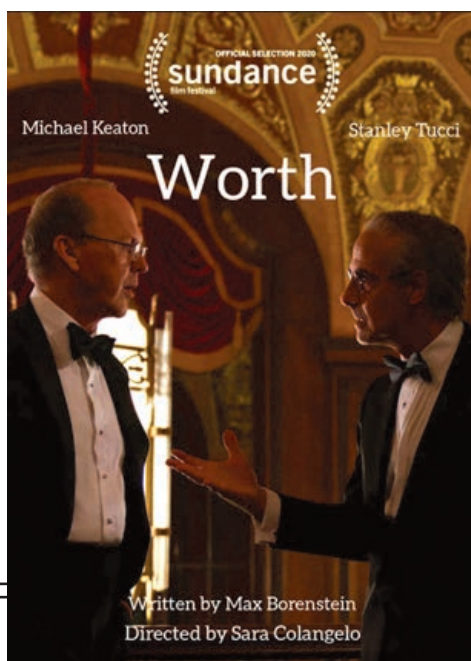
The Kennesaw House sits just across from the railroad tracks that run through Marietta. It served as a hospital for both Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War, and apparently, some spirits refuse to leave the building.

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ALBUMS

★ FIREBIRD

By Natalie Imbruglia
September 24

Natalie Imbruglia's first new album in six years, 'Firebird' was written in an array of international locations alongside Albert Hammond Jr. of The Strokes, Romeo Stodart of The Magic Numbers, KT Tunstall, Eg White, Luke Fitton, Fiona Bevan, Rachel Furner and more, touching on themes of independence, vulnerability, the juxtaposition of strength and fragility, revealing Imbruglia's newfound sense of confidence. In contrast, the album was almost entirely recorded in lockdown. Discussing the album, Natalie said, "Making this album has been such a profound and satisfying experience ... With each session and new collaborator, I started to gain confidence, find my voice again and craft the sound and style that felt authentic to me. I just can't wait for people to finally hear it."

★ THANK YOU

By Diana Ross
September 10

Diana Ross sings "Thank You" to the world in her first new release in 15 years. "This collection of songs is my gift to you with

appreciation and love. I am eternally grateful that I had the opportunity to record this glorious music at this time," said Ross in a statement. Her new album, "Thank You" is scheduled for release this fall through Decca Records / Universal Music Group. Recorded in her home studio, "Thank You" offers a powerful, inclusive musical message of love and togetherness. With its songs of happiness, appreciation, and joy, it wholeheartedly acknowledges that we are in this all together. Her family, friends and loyal and loving audiences all around the globe have been an integral part of her wonderful life's story.

★ LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

By Lindsey Buckingham
September 17

The self-titled album is Buckingham's first solo release since 2011's "Seeds We Sow" and follows his departure from Fleetwood Mac. The new project showcases Buckingham's instinct for melody and his singular fingerpicking guitar style, reaffirming his status as one of the most inventive and

electrifying musicians of his generation. The album was written, produced and recorded by Buckingham at his home studio in Los Angeles, CA. The new album is a display of Buckingham's instantly recognizable guitar work and vocal layering. "I wanted to make a pop album, but I also wanted to make stops along the way with songs that resemble art more than pop," he said. "As you age, hopefully you keep getting a little more grounded in the craft of what you're doing. For me, getting older has probably helped to reinforce the innocence and the idealism that hopefully was always there."

STREAMING & MORE

★ WORTH

Netflix

September 11

"Worth" explores the true story of difficulties faced by one lawyer in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, released on the 20th anniversary of the attacks. Congress appoints attorney Kenneth Feinberg, played by Michael Keaton, to lead the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. He struggles to put a value on the lives lost in the attacks. Caught between lawyers looking to sue and airline lobbies anxious to settle, Feinberg must broker a deal with the victims' families. When he locks horns with Charles Wolf, played by Stanley Tucci, a community organizer whose wife died in the towers, Feinberg begins to learn the human costs of the tragedy.

★ CLIFFORD THE BIG RED DOG

Theatres

September 17

"Clifford the Big Red Dog" brings the beloved children's story character to the big screen. Starring Jack Whitehall and Darby Camp in the leading roles, "Clifford" tells the story of Emily, middle schooler struggling to fit in at home and in school, until she discovers a small red puppy who is destined to become her best friend. As Clifford grows into the giant red dog, it catches the attention of genetic companies that want to supersize animals. Emily and her Uncle Casey must ward off the greedy scientists, along the way they learn the true meaning of love, acceptance and family.

★ Y: THE LAST MAN

FX on Hulu

September 13

Based on the acclaimed comic book series of the same name by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra, "Y: The Last Man" explores a post-apocalyptic world after a disaster that killed all mammals with Y chromosomes. However, one man, Yorick Brown, played by Ben Schnetzer, and his pet monkey, survived the catastrophe. The series follows the adventures of Yorick and his monkey as they navigate the new world and struggle to restore what was lost in the disaster.

BOOKS

★ BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY: A MEMOIR

By Qian Julie Wang

September 7

When seven-year-old Qian arrives in New York City in 1994, she is overwhelmed by crushing fear and scarcity. In China, Qian's parents were professors; in America, her family is "illegal" and it will require all the determination and small joys they can muster to survive. In Chinatown, Qian's parents work in sweatshops and sushi factories. Qian goes to school hungry, where she teaches herself English through library books. At home, Qian's headstrong and resilient Ma Ma ignores her own pain until she's unable to stand, too afraid of the cost and attention a hospital visit might bring. And yet, young Qian cannot ask for help. The number-one rule in America still stands: To be noticed is to risk losing everything.

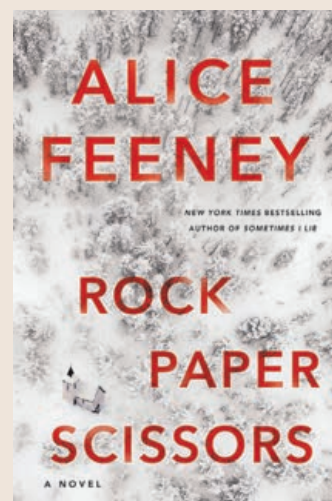


★ ROCK PAPER SCISSORS

By Alice Feeney

September 7

Things have been wrong with Mr. and Mrs. Wright for a long time. When Adam and Amelia win a weekend away to Scotland, it might be just what their marriage needs. Self-confessed workaholic and screenwriter Adam Wright has lived with face blindness his whole life. He can't recognize friends or family, or even his own wife. Every anniversary the couple exchanges traditional gifts — paper, cotton, pottery, tin — and each year Adam's wife writes him a letter that she never lets him read. Until now. They both know this weekend will make or break their marriage, but they didn't randomly win this trip. One of them is lying, and someone doesn't want them to live happily ever after. Ten years of marriage. Ten years of secrets. And an anniversary they will never forget.



★ UNDER THE WHISPERING DOOR

By TJ Klune

September 21

When a reaper comes to collect Wallace Price from his own funeral, Wallace suspects he really might be dead. Instead of leading him directly to the afterlife, the reaper takes him to a small village. On the outskirts, off the path through the woods, tucked between mountains, is a particular tea shop, run by a man named Hugo. Hugo is the tea shop's owner to locals and the ferryman to souls who need to cross over. But Wallace isn't ready to abandon the life he barely lived. With Hugo's help he finally starts to learn about all the things he missed in life. When the Manager, a curious and powerful being, arrives at the tea shop and gives Wallace one week to cross over, Wallace sets about living a lifetime in seven days.



Q & A

MEET THE AUTHOR



Marietta local Lance LoRusso is a self-described “attorney with a writing habit.” Most recently, he’s the published author behind “Hijacking Justice,” an eight-episode tale of detective Johnny Till. In this new installment of LoRusso’s Blue Mystery novel series, Till finds himself thrown in jail and charged with triple murder after being ambushed while visiting Ingram County on the Georgia Coast to help put away a serial rapist. LoRusso has authored more than seven books, all self-published, thanks to his extensive experience representing more than 120 law enforcement officers. Cobb Life Editor Madison Hogan asked LoRusso to share some of his insights as a writer and talked the nitty gritty about the life of crime, justice and storytelling.

CL: How does inspiration strike you?

LL: I’m fascinated by how people interact with each other and face life’s challenges. Many of my stories and plot lines arise from exchanges I’ve witnessed or by imagining how a person would feel if they were placed in a trying predicament. Practicing law and serving as a law enforcement officer provides a seemingly endless supply of such events. Both professions witness the very best and the very worst on the full spectrum of human behavior.

CL: What separates this book from other pieces you’ve written? What connects it?

LL: My first books are non-fiction. “When Cops Kill: The Aftermath of a Critical Incident” and “Blue News” are about law enforcement while “Firefighters in The Hot Seat” is about the fire service. While I have written fiction books, like “Peacemaking and Parallax,” “Hunting of Men” is my first full-length novel and the first in my Blue Mysteries Series. Writing a story in long form provides more opportunities to develop characters. My latest in the Blue Mysteries Series is “Hijacking Justice”... Both novels present the realities of law enforcement and portray how real law enforcement officers solve crimes through the story of Johnny Till, a young homicide detective. The novels and the non-fiction provide the public with a side of law enforcement reality which is not typically portrayed in movies and television.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT OF LANCE LARUSSO’S LATEST NOVEL, “HIJACKING JUSTICE.”

A blinding flash ripped through Johnny Till’s vision like a bolt of lightning piercing a peaceful dream on a stormy night. Just as his mind recovered from the insult, another, then another burst shattered his vision. The flashes reminded him of night fire exercise on the police range, and his brain searched for the missing sounds of gunfire, the push of recoil, and the pungent smell of gunpowder. Flash, flash, flash — this time more rapid but distant and his eyes saw the rapid movement of shadows at their origin. The next flash was not as bright, but soon after, a plume of glass erupted toward him, the fragments dancing in the air reflecting in the limited ambient light and nearly forming a rainbow.

Suddenly aware of a trigger beneath his right index finger, Johnny pulled hard and fast, but the gun would not fire. Instead, the

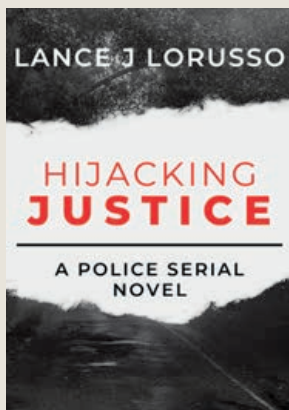
resistance of the trigger seemed to build, heavier and heavier, as if the gun was resisting him with all its effort. The flashes came again as he felt he was moving. His brain scrambled to find a safe place and panic set in because his firearm was useless. Survive, fight, win! The words echoed louder and louder until only the thunder of his heartbeat could compete.

As Johnny’s struggle raged, staggered pillars of light pierced four narrow windows illuminating particles of dust

hovering in the air like stars on a clear night. The strong spring sun brought warmth to locations fortunate enough to receive the heaven-sent reminders of life outside the thick walls. Two beams landed on Detective Johnny Till—one on his feet and one on his face. The industrial surroundings and thin, issued blankets did little to help fight the cold that seemed

inescapable. As the merciful, warm light slowly rescued him from another restless night, Johnny’s mind stopped the replay of the internal terror he couldn’t escape.

Hopeful that the last few months were just a horrible nightmare, Johnny gathered the courage to pull back the curtain of his eyelids to look beyond the horror chamber that his mind had become and slowly opened his eyes. Adjusting to the natural light on his face, he wiped the sweat from his forehead, and nearly stopped breathing when the orange sleeve of his inmate uniform combined with the smell of industrial cleaners and the dank odor of his thin mattress signaling the start of another day in the Ingram County Jail. Forcing himself to take a deep breath, longing for fresh air, Johnny lay still, staring at the ceiling as the fragments of memory flooded back piecing together how he turned from a law enforcement witness in a serial rape and homicide case to a man being held without bond for murder.



CL: Do you have any rituals or best practices for writing?

LL: I'm very fortunate to be able to sit and write at the drop of a hat. Writing energizes and refreshes me like a cat nap on a long, rainy day. I know some authors have rituals of shutting out all noise, locking themselves away for days at a time, or outlining every detail prior to writing, but I am able to sit and write whenever I have time or need a few minutes to recharge my batteries. The best practice — don't let a desire for perfection drive procrastination. Just start writing. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in seventeen days. I doubt he spent a lot of time outlining prior to putting quill to parchment.

CL: What advice can you share with other local aspiring authors?

LL: Pick a topic and genre that allow you to get lost in the world you are creating through your writing. Don't focus on commercial success when deciding what to write.

CL: How has your environment influenced your work?

LL: I get to represent heroes every day — firefighters, law enforcement officers, EMTs and their families. It's the best job in the world. Unfortunately, especially recently, their lives are filled with a lot of turmoil and personal struggles as a result of the negativity thrust upon their professions. Their dedication to their communities provides a lot of inspiration, and it's an honor to


write books that highlight their triumphs, expose the public to their realities and celebrate their commitment to protect the lives of strangers.

CL: What's your favorite part about writing? Your least favorite?

LL: I love allowing my creativity to take over because most of my professional writing is formal, direct and geared toward a commitment to a mantra of, "Brevity is bliss." No one likes editing... except maybe editors. Maybe.

CL: What separates your work from the rest of the world?

LL: I'm most proud of three comments about my writing. People have said my books opened their eyes to some of the realities facing law enforcement officers, readers have commented that my books are quick reads but pulled them in emotionally and public safety professionals have told me that I've remained true to reality. The emotions and struggles you will read are real and raw, and the action scenes are intense reflecting my experience representing over 120 law enforcement officers following officer-involved shootings and other critical incidents.

In a world of electronic distractions, I want readers to learn, escape and enjoy the time they graciously set aside to explore my writing. 



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Georgia Symphony Orchestra returns to stage for 2021-2022 concert season

The Georgia Symphony Orchestra announced its 71st concert season with a return to the stage beginning late September 2021.

The GSO's Classics series, led by music director and conductor Timothy Verville, will feature three performances at either the Marietta Performing Arts Center or the Bailey Center for the Performing Arts at Kennesaw State University. In an effort to continue its focus on diversity and inclusivity in classical music, the series features the works of two American women composers and two women soloists.

On Sept. 25, the orchestra will kick off the season with Mahler's symphony, a reduced orchestration of Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Soprano and Marietta native Maria Valdes is the featured soloist.

The GSO's performance of Beethoven at the Beach, scheduled for Feb 26, 2022, features Amy Beach's Symphony No. 2, the first symphony written and published by an American woman composer, and Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major. The award-winning violinist, Minami Yoshida, joins the GSO for her American debut. Yoshida was



GEORGIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

a major prize winner at the Montreal and Sibelius competitions and has performed with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and others.

The Classics series concludes on May 21, 2022, with a concert entitled The Firebird and Music of Remembrance. The performance includes American composer Jennifer

Higdon's Blue Cathedral and Igor Stravinsky's Firebird Suite (1919). This concert also will feature the GSO's 90-voice GSO Chorus.

In addition to the Classics series, the GSO's season also includes its Holiday Pops, Sensory Friendly and GSO Jazz! concerts.

Two shows of the GSO's Holiday Pops concert will be held at the Marietta Performing Arts Center on December 4. In addition to a traditional sing-along and



holiday favorites, the concert also will feature the winner of its Virtual to Center Stage competition, opera vocalist Lainie Ewers.

GSO Jazz!, led by music director Sam Skelton, welcomes fans to Earl and Rachel Smith Strand Theatre on Feb. 12 and April 2, 2022, to enjoy a jazz small ensemble and classic Big Band repertoire.

The GSO will hold its annual Sensory Friendly performance on March 12, 2022, at the Marietta Performing Arts Center. Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and designed specifically for individuals with sensory sensitivities and their families, the concert features a range of enjoyable musical selections. Audience members are free to change seats, move about the auditorium, sing and vocalize.

For more information, visit georgiasymphony.org/all-events.

Strand Theatre debuts theme song to be played before shows

Marietta's Earl and Rachel Smith Strand Theatre is a beloved local icon in large part because of its historic character — the art deco building is 86 years old. Now, as the Strand emerges from the pandemic, its guests will be welcomed by an official theme song that pays tribute to its origins.

The 52-second theme song, written by local musician Travis Cottle, is a swinging, jazzy tune reminiscent of the big bands that helped define 1930s American music.

"I kind of wanted to go for something that maybe you would hear on the radio in 1935, when the building opened," Cottle said. "But something that also kind of sounded really theater-y."

Cottle plays piano, with other musicians on clarinet, trombone, drums, bass and resonator guitar, which provides a "metallic, banjo-y quality," as Cottle put it.

"It's a subtle part of the song," Cottle said, speaking of the guitar. "I think it kind of really pulled it all together, to have this kind of thumping, 30's, banjo-y vibe."

Cottle's relationship with the theater began when he helped produce a series of indie band shows there. In 2016, he started producing shows for the Strand, putting together bands to play Motown, tribute, country and Christmas shows. Since then, he's become something of a composer/arranger in residence, he said.

Strand General Manager Andy Gaines previously had Cottle, who he called a "good friend and great musician," write and record a different theme song that was produced for a late-night talk show pilot hosted by Gaines.

"There was no reason to do it, just to, I

guess, see if we could," Gaines said. "And so, we made one (a pilot), and one of the things that we needed was a theme song."

The talk show project fell by the wayside, but ever since, Gaines has used the theme as a walk-up song when welcoming guests at Strand events.

"It was just kind of a primer for the audience to know that things are about to start," Gaines explained.

During the pandemic, Cottle was writing and recording an album when he and Gaines had the idea to re-record the Andy Gaines theme, to make it more professional. Gaines, however, proposed Cottle write an all-new theme just for the Strand.

Gaines approached Kim Gresh, who chairs the Strand's board, and who agreed to fund the project. Cottle recorded the new theme in the same studio where he recorded his album, and had the musicians he was already working with play various parts.

Gaines was more than pleased with the result — "it sounds awesome," he remarked.

The theme will be played before shows at

the Strand, which is back in full swing after being mostly closed for more than a year during the pandemic.

"Anything that we could do to make the patron experience better at the Strand Theatre, we want to do it," Gaines said. "If that means, 'Let's make a theme song,' then by golly, let's make a theme song. And it just adds a slight bit more joy to people's lives."

The theme song can be heard on Youtube and on Spotify. To find the song, search "Earl and Rachel Smith Strand Theatre Theme."

See what Switzer Library's \$10 million renovation looks like

Elected officials and other leaders were among a crowd eager to cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Switzer Library.

The \$9.6 million renovation project has transformed the building, offering an array of





AVENUE EAST COBB



new amenities and brightening the 32-year-old structure.

"Libraries are a beacon of hope in our community. They are a place where people come to learn about different topics and where they come to learn about themselves," Cobb Commission Chair Lisa Cupid said at the start of the day's ceremony.

According to Cobb County Manager Jackie McMorris, the county's "central flagship library" ... "now known as the Charles D. Switzer Library," has been on its current plot since 1989, "serving as a major community focal point and historic downtown Marietta landmark."

From 1963 to the move to its current location at 266 Roswell St., Marietta, Switzer was housed in the old Marietta post office, now the home of the Marietta Cobb Museum of Art, just off Marietta Square, McMorris said. In the summer of 2013, she said Central Library was renamed the Charles D. Switzer Library in honor of the longtime library trustee and community volunteer.

McMorris also noted that Switzer Library

now houses a larger Georgia Room, home to local historical artifacts, and is the new home of the Windy Hill Library, which serves those with special needs. The Windy Hill Library was relocated to a dedicated accessibility services room at Switzer from a community center in Smyrna.

State Rep. Teri Anulewicz, D-Smyrna, called Switzer a "third place," a place where the community comes to gather and one that is accessible to everyone.

"Libraries are the most genuine and essential place we have in our communities," she said. "We demonstrate our commitment to our communities through how we demonstrate our commitment to our libraries."

Developer plans facelift for Avenue East Cobb shopping center

The Avenue East Cobb will be revamped by the developer behind Atlanta's Atlantic

Station, the company announced.

North American Properties plans to give a facelift to the 22-year-old shopping center by building a "central event lawn surrounded by restaurants with vibrant patios," introducing a concierge program and bringing community events.

The 230,000-square-foot shopping center is located near the intersections of Roswell and Johnson Ferry roads.

"Our plan is to create a socially magnetic place that pulls people together to hang out and connect with community," Adam Schwegman, partner and senior vice president of leasing at NAP, said in a news release. "East Cobb is home to an incredible population of families who are looking for places to go and things to do, yet it lacks any resemblance of a downtown. Utilizing best practices from our other projects, we are excited to elevate this already great shopping and dining destination into a modern gathering place."

NAP hopes to sign leases that will bring new retail and "chef-driven" restaurants to create "street-level energy" and improve walkability.


The shopping center's retail tenants currently include Bed Bath & Beyond, Gap, Lululemon, Pottery Barn, Sephora, Williams-Sonoma and Ann Taylor. Dining options are mostly chain restaurants — they include Panera Bread, Kale Me Crazy, Menchie's and Tin Lizzy's Cantina.

NAP's announcement initially described the project as an "acquisition," but later clarified that it was not buying the property but entering into a joint venture partnership with PGIM Real Estate, the current owner. As part owner, NAP will oversee leasing and management of the property. The property was previously managed by Poag Shopping Centers.

The nearly 30-acre property, developed by Cousins Properties in 1999, was sold for \$94.25 million to a division of PGIM in 2006, according to property records.

NAP is also the developer behind Midtown Atlanta's Colony Square, as well as Alpharetta's Avalon development.

Tim Perry, a managing partner at NAP, said in the release that shopping centers such as The Avenue East Cobb "were designed to fill gaps in the market — the retail deserts between regional malls — by providing outdoor shopping for the community."

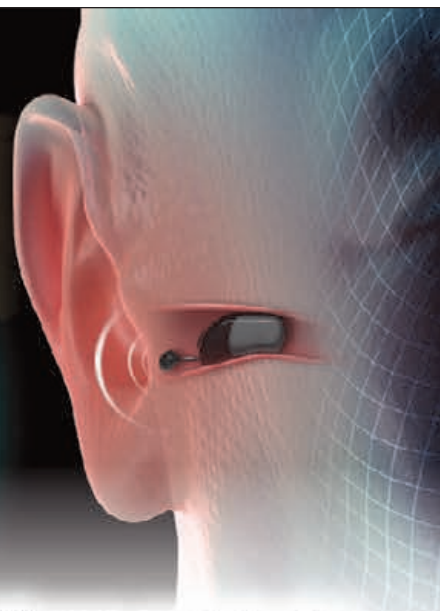
"As these communities have matured around them, they became the center of the community and while The Avenue East Cobb has remained a high-performing asset over the years, NAP sees an opportunity to elevate the destination into a true third place with a modern mix of retailers and restaurants," he said. 

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Best of Cobb Event



1. From left: State Rep. David Wilkerson, D-Powder Springs and John Loud, owner of LOUD Security Systems and chair of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce, chat at the 2021 Best of Cobb event at Jim Miller Park in June.

2. From left: Rachel Welch and Katie Penegar show off Encore Formal and Bridals dresses at the 2021 Best of Cobb event.

3. Pictured is T. Scott Jordan, General Manager of Carl Black Auto Dealership of Kennesaw, which won Best Auto Dealership, at Cobb County's Jim Miller Park for the 2021 Best of Cobb event.

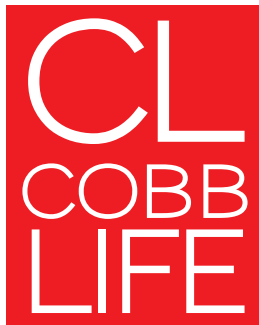
4. From left: Lilly Patterson, Demitre Green and Tracy Ryan, of Nature's Pick Market in Marietta, serve smoothie and juice samples at the 2021 Best of Cobb event at Jim Miller Park.

5. Ansley Atlanta Real Estate Marietta won Best Real Estate Company, Best Real Estate Agent, Johnny Sinclair, and Best Real Estate Team, Crowe & Turner for the annual Best of Cobb competition.

6. Husband and wife Jay and Lee Cunningham pictured at the 2021 Best of Cobb event at Jim Miller Park.

1. Anita Douglas, board chair for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), hugs Marjorie Seon, a CASA volunteer of 18 years. The pair attended the Hangin' with the Heroes event to express appreciation for CASA volunteers.
2. Cecily Cornish purchases South Carolina peaches from David Read at the Acworth Farmers Market.
3. Parade goers enjoy the procession at the 35th Let Freedom Ring parade on July 3.
4. From left: Deedra Watts, Powder Springs native and District 4 assistant to Commissioner Monique Sheffield; Jamal Webb, of Powder Springs; and Michele Burnett, of Clarkston, dance to the live music at Powder Springs' 2021 SpringFest at Thurman Springs Park on July 4.
5. Scott Wilson, 7, smiles after a butterfly crawls onto his finger in the butterfly enclosure at Kennesaw's Smith-Gilbert Gardens.





Cobb Life Issue	Published Date	Space Deadline
2021-2022 Cobb Factbook	9/26/2021	8/23/2021
November 2021 - Pets Issue	10/24/2021	9/25/2021
December 2021 - Gift Guide	11/28/21	10/18/21

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- Scenes from Marietta's 18th annual Juneteenth celebration at Marietta Square on June 19. The Atlanta Ol Skool Drummers perform at the festival as attendees watch, dance and applaud.
- Ava and Neel Erninty pose near a wilderness shelter they helped construct in the woods near the West Cobb Regional Library. The brother-sister duo attended an "I Survived the Outdoors" event at the library in late June, learning outdoor skills such as first aid and navigation..

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Now & Then



Pictured in the Monday, Sept. 23, 1996, Marietta Daily Journal was a photograph of Tod Miller, who was listed as having taken over running the North Georgia State Fair, metro Atlanta's largest state fair, at age 22.



This year marks the 88th anniversary of the North Georgia State Fair. The fair will run from Sept. 23 through Oct. 3 at Jim Miller Park on Callaway Road.

PHOTOS BY MDJ

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