

GASTON ALIVE

MAGAZINE

HOME | GARDEN | STYLE | FUN | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

Home Harvest Sowing Seeds Of Change

p6

Glenn's Poached Eggs p10

Plant A Tree! p13

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

It may not be Spring, but it sure feels like it! Spring doesn't officially arrive until March 20th, but don't tell the cherry trees. I'm not much for cold, dark rainy winter days, so sunshine and temps in the 60's and 70's are just what the doctor ordered. Spring is also when all of the outdoor fun and festivals begin-looking forward to Mount Holly's Springfest and Belmont's Criterium.

On page 6 we have a piece about Home Harvest. If you would like locally grown, pesticide free lettuce, cabbage, carrots, green onions, strawberries, or free-range eggs and chicken, grass-fed beef and local goat cheese or honey delivered right to your home or business, be sure to check them out. They not only provide healthy food options, but also employment for individuals that may have had difficulty overcoming barriers to employment.

As always, please support your local merchants, who give Gaston County so much flavor and vitality.

All the best,

David

featured this month

06

HOME HARVEST SOWING SEEDS OF CHANGE

10

GLENN'S POACHED EGGS

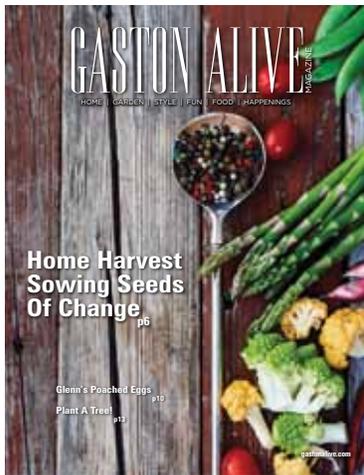
13

PLANT A TREE!



HOME | GARDEN | STYLE | FUN | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

on the cover



This month's cover features Home Harvest, a local service that delivers farm fresh produce, meats and honey directly to your home or business. Check them out on page 6. Cover graphic design by David James.

our staff

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GA|3|16

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THROUGH MAR 22

Art & Orchids-Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Through March 22nd. Striking color, natural symmetry, unmatched variety, and graceful and flowing lines make orchids one of the world's most-photographed flowers. This winter the Garden is pairing its orchids with the work of three outstanding North Carolina photographers for a special exhibition of Art & Orchids.



SATURDAY MAR 12

Merry Market Spring Show-Mount Holly Grand Hall, March 12th 10a.m.-4 p.m. Spring shopping! Coffee! Sweet treats! Wine! Friends.....and much more!



Shop with 50+ local artisans, craftspeople and small businesses for handmade and handpicked items at Mount Holly's beautiful Grand Hall. Find lots of homemade items for wedding gifts, birthdays, anniversaries, holiday decorating and just for fun.

SATURDAY APR 23

Cherry Blossom Festival-Main Street, Downtown Cherryville. April 23rd, 10a.m.-4p.m. Games, inflatables, clowns, puppets, dancers, Little Blue Choo, arts, crafts, dancers.



SUNDAY MAY 1

Caromont Health Criterium-Belmont, NC will host its fourth annual competitive bicycle criterium race through the streets of downtown on Sunday, May 1, 2016. The CaroMont Health Criterium in Downtown Belmont is the 2nd stop in the week long bicycle racing series called USA CRITS Speed Week starting in Charlotte, on April 30th and ending in Athens, GA on May 7th!



SATURDAY MAY 7

Springfest-Downtown Mount Holly. May 7th 10 a.m.- 4p.m. Over 100 different vendors, food, kids activities, entertainment, and car show.



Home Harvest Is Sowing SEEDS OF CHANGE.

By David Hamrick

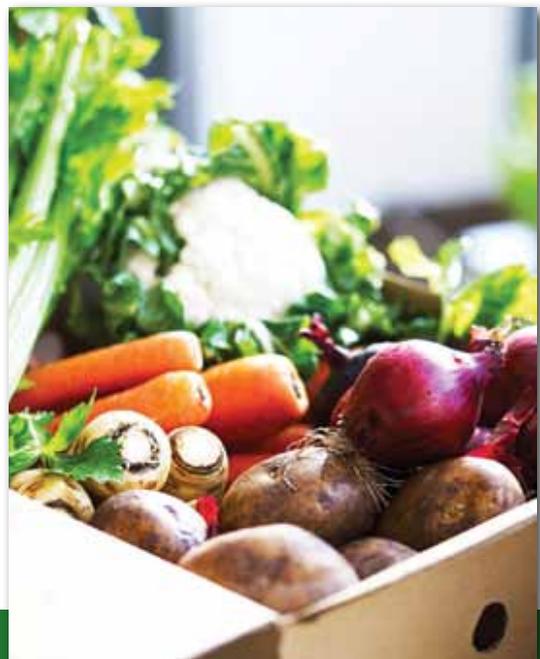


GA!: What products and services does Home Harvest provide folks in Gaston County?

Jenny: Home Harvest is a unique food company that links farmers to the people of our community through farmers markets and delivery of fresh, local produce. We offer pesticide-free produce, grown within 50 miles of our main office, including some that we've grown in our own backyard community garden. It has always been our belief that eating locally-grown produce should be affordable and accessible to everyone.

GA!: I understand the beginning of this program was an effort to employ some folks who have been unemployed for a while...how did that come about?

Jenny: Home Harvest is a division of Career Management Group (CMG), a local non-profit organization that assists individuals with overcoming barriers to employment. In 2010, a reduction in the number of available jobs in Gaston County inspired CMG to create Home Harvest in order to generate jobs and support the local economy. Home Harvest was awarded a grant from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to begin operation. Home Harvest has been successful in creating employment opportunities through its unique service, while at the same time working with local farmers and giving back to the local economy.



GA!: The eat local, slow food movement seems to be increasingly popular...

Jenny: By choosing to purchase local foods you are also protecting your own personal health and well-being, preserving the environment, and benefiting the local economy. Industrially-produced foods are subjected to irradiation in order to extend their shelf-life. The process reduces the nutritional value of foods and has uncertain effects on human health. Local foods are typically harvested and distributed within the same week, maintaining the nutrients within the food. Factory farms emit harmful gases and particles such as methane and hydrogen sulfide, which contribute to global warming and harm the health of those living or working nearby. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides have turned agriculture into a leading source of water pollution in the United States. When purchasing produce from Home Harvest, you are supporting a

local business and local farmers. In today's market only 9 cents of every retail food dollar goes to the farmer, while 91 cents goes towards distribution. Doesn't it make more sense to support something grown naturally, while giving back to the people who grew it and who live close by?

GA!: So you use local farmers exclusively? Define "local"?

Jenny: In the US, the average meal travels 1,500 miles before it reaches your plate. The concept of buying local is simply to buy food or any goods or services produced, grown, or raised as close to your home as possible. Our farmers are your neighbors. Home Harvest utilizes various farmers within 50 miles of our Gastonia office. One of our partners, Nature's Way Farm, is located in Cramerton, and is owned and operated by John and Faye Simonds. John and Faye have been farming for most of their lives and take pleasure in growing produce that others enjoy. Nature's Way is known for their heirloom vegetables and farm fresh eggs.

GA!: What products are for sale, and how do folks buy from you?

Jenny: Our produce varies depending on the season. In the Spring, our farmers will be harvesting lettuce, cabbage, carrots, green onions and strawberries to name a few. We also currently offer free-range eggs and chicken, grass-fed beef and local goat cheese and honey.

Home Harvest has several ways to bring fresh produce to you and your family. You can enroll on our website for a ten-week season that will include access to vegetables, fruits, herbs and protein that are seasonally available from farmers in our community – and we can deliver them right to your home or office! We are currently enrolling in our 2016 Spring Season. If you are not quite sure about the ten-week commitment, you can contact us to discuss scheduling a "trial-run." In addition, we have several pop-up farmers markets that take place throughout the week beginning in the Spring – you can follow us on Facebook to see where we may be on any given day. Look for us at Home Harvest NC.

GA!: What is your vision for this program, and are there other programs like this in North Carolina?

Jenny: In keeping with our philosophy that eating locally-grown produce should be affordable and accessible to everyone, we are working towards being able to offer Home Harvest produce through the SNAP program. In doing so, we would create more job opportunities for those individuals that may be underemployed, while at the same time supporting more local farmers and ensuring that local, fresh produce is accessible to everyone. There are other businesses within North Carolina that offer produce delivery; however, often times the produce is not local or pesticide-free. Home Harvest is a way to give back directly to the community where we live!



GA! Does your parent organization (CMG) have similar or complementary programs?

Jenny: Yes! In addition to Home Harvest, CMG also has a shredding service, a recycling business and a janitorial microenterprise. We can assist you with a variety of needs.

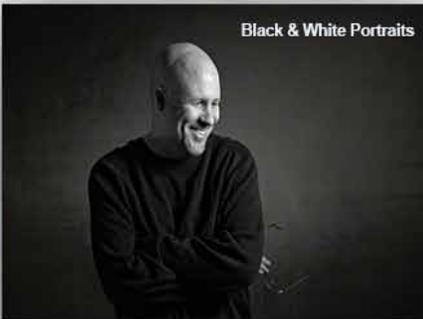


*(Back) Roger Hibberts, Blaine Adams (L),
Karen Brooks (R), Jenny Putnam, (Front),
Not Pictured: Danielle Thuot*



For More Info Or To Enroll:

Home Harvest 980-989-0435 or www.homeharvestnc.org



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COOKING WITH GLENN

POACHED EGGS

If you have been paying attention to any of the food shows you might have noticed a trend of adding poached eggs to everything. Some might ask why are eggs the new darling of the culinary scene?

The answer is they aren't, if you look through the seminal tomes of cooking you will find whole chapters devoted to eggs. In culinary school a considerable amount of time is spent on cooking eggs perfectly. This is because eggs are so versatile, they serve as an emulsifier in sauces like hollandaise and mayonnaise. They can be part of a filling or even serve as the wrapper for your other favorite ingredients. (What is your favorite omelet?)

This month I will focus on the poached egg. This one simple style of cooking an egg can be used across a multitude of dishes. A tossed spinach salad, green beans or Asparagus can be elevated to a whole new level by adding a poached egg on top, it becomes a light meal. Adding a poached egg on a hamburger transforms it from simple back yard staple to gourmet fare.

I have been utilizing poached eggs on several dishes recently, as an appetizer I toast brioche bread, layer over sautéed mushrooms and top with the egg. For morning after re-overs I have pan fried Thanksgiving dressing (some might say stuffing) and layered with smoked turkey and the egg with a bit of gravy.

Of course the staple of any brunch is Eggs Benedict with the English muffin, ham, egg and hollandaise. Today we will take a more Southern spin on this with Eggs Beauregard, but first some technique.

To poach any thing is to cook it in gently simmering liquid. To poach an egg we will use water with just a bit of white vinegar and salt. In a two quart sauce pan half full of water I add half a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of vinegar. The vinegar helps the 'white' (see side bar) stay more intact. Bring the water to a temperature of about 160-170 degrees. It should form tiny bubbles which cling to the sides of the pot but they are rising to the surface. I have heard this called bringing the water to a simmer.

Crack the egg into a mise en place bowl or custard dish. This is done so the egg can be inspected for any shell or other imperfections as well as helping ease the egg into the poaching water. With a slotted spoon stir the water to start a gentle whirlpool and carefully dipping the edge of the egg bowl into the pot let the raw egg slip into the water.

The whirlpool effect helps keep the egg from sticking to the bottom of the pot. At one min take the slotted spoon and gently roll the egg over in the pot. At a minute 45 to two minutes dip the egg up from the water and drain. You can place the poached egg in another container or directly onto the dish.

Prepare your biscuits as your mama taught you. If you don't know how to make great biscuits or simply don't want to take the time those frozen ones at the market are pretty good. Cook your sausage and make up a quick gravy from the pan drippings. If you can't make gravy you better forfeit your Southern card and just go out for breakfast.

Now it's as simple as splitting the biscuit, placing the sausage on it, layering the poached egg on that and artfully placing the top of the biscuit, drizzling with the gravy and finishing with a grind of fresh pepper.

Serve this at Easter Brunch and it will be a hit. I guarantee it will make some bunny very happy.

Till next time, make it your own!
Glenn



EGGSCCELLENT



The egg is made up of eight parts:

1. The shell
2. The outer membrane
3. The inner membrane
4. The air cell
5. The albumen
6. The chalazae
7. The vitelline membrane
8. The yolk

If we focus on the edible parts it's the last four items, the Chalazae you probably have never heard of but it is the white stringy stuff which actually hold the yolk in the middle of the egg. In custard recipes you should remove this as it creates a lump when cooked. The Vitelline membrane is the clear casing which holds the yolk. The Albumen is the clear viscous liquid around the yolk that when cooked turns white. The Albumen (Latin root Albus or 'white') has over 40 different proteins and the yolk contains not only iron, vitamin A & D, phosphorous, calcium, thiamine and riboflavin but it also is a great source of lecithin which is a natural emulsifier.

These properties are what make the egg so useful in cooking.

EGGS BEAUREGARD

- Eggs
- Biscuit
- Sausage
- Gravy

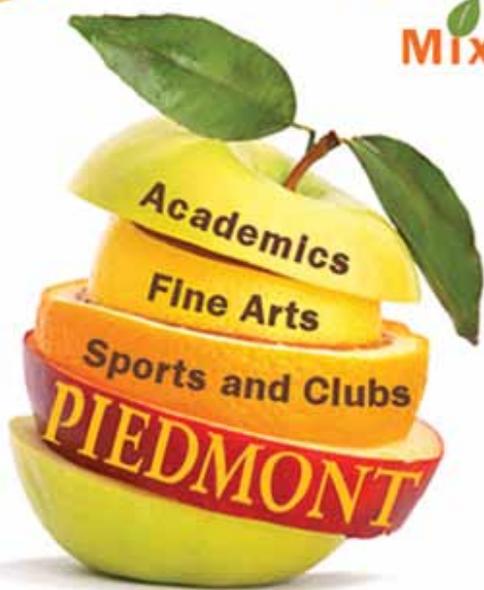
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GETTING AN EARLY START ON SPRING

As soon as the first morning frost appears and the first snowflakes start to pile up, many begin looking forward to spring. Images of green leaves, red and orange blossoms, fresh vegetables and herbs help keep the cold winter days manageable as you wait for the ground to thaw so you can start planting. A good green thumb knows early starts in the garden or yard ensure lush, healthy plants, especially if you're planting trees.

Many people do not realize that they shouldn't wait for summer. Young trees do best when they are put into the ground in spring and have ample time to establish themselves in the soil before either extremes of heat or cold hit.

Therefore, if part of your winter landscaping daydreams include planting trees, it's important to know you'll need to be ready to plant early. Winter is an opportunity to begin planning.



Five simple ways trees are practical and beautiful

Few things can be so practical and as beautiful as a tree. It's no wonder that with the rising popularity of the do-it-yourself lifestyle, more people are deciding to plant trees in their yard. Here are five simple reasons why:

1. A mature tree can add up to \$10,000 to your property value.
2. Trees can reduce energy costs by providing shade to a house in the summer.
3. Trees naturally offset carbon emissions.
4. Because many change from season to season, trees add a variety of different colors to your yard and allow for a range of creative choices and combinations.
5. Trees help make memories. Watching a tree grow in your yard from year to year builds a connection between you, your family, your home and the memories you make there.

An easy way to get started

The nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation is encouraging people to get an early start on their tree planting this year by offering 10 free flowering trees with a \$10 membership. Which 10 flowering trees a new member will receive is based on what the state forester recommends or other trees selected for your area to ensure they thrive when planted.

The 6 to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow and are currently scheduled to be shipped in March or April, a perfect time for optimal, early season planting. So if you're already getting excited about spring projects, visit www.arborday.org/earlyplanting to make sure your trees arrive at the right time for planting where you live.



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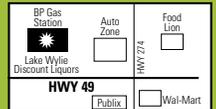
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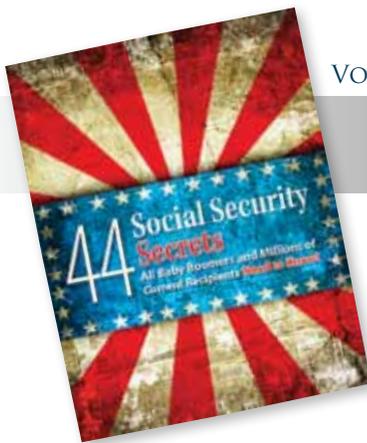
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