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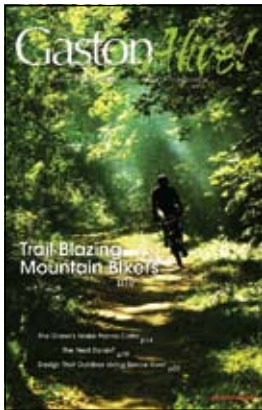
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# about the cover

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This month's cover shows a happy mountain biker-probably a member of PASA, (Piedmont Area Singletrack Alliance). PASA is a Gaston County mountain biking and trail building/advocacy group, see page 10 for related story. Cover graphic design by David James.

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## **GA!: What does Meese Jewelry offer to make it a unique store?**

**Christina:** Meese Jewelry is unique because everything except for our estate and consignment pieces are customizable and available in a few days to meet your tastes and desires. We are also the exclusive retailer of the [BEYA] collection for the US. We offer on-site jewelry and watch repair and we are family owned and operated.



## **GA!: Your family also ran a watch business, does your shop still work with watches?**

**Christina:** Complete Watch Repair is now located in Meese Jewelry Company. We offer watch repair for most brands including Rolex and our repairs are done in house. We can do complicated repairs such as overhauls, or simple repairs such as band adjustment and batteries. We treat your piece as if it were our own.



## **GA!: In addition to repair and custom design, what other types of jewelry do you sell?**

**Christina:** We have a large selection of sterling silver in store. We also carry pieces that are estate and consignment in store. We can have diamonds, gemstones, and gold pieces that meet your taste overnight. We literally have thousands of items to choose from; if you can dream it, we can create it, in a matter of days.



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**Christina:** We have quite a few options for you. We can redesign it into something you would wear. We can remove the stones, and buy the metal as credit. You can even use all of it as credit to have brand new piece. We can help you make something that you would wear, at a fraction of the cost. Why leave those pieces to gather dust, bring them in and find a piece that you can love again!

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# TRAIL BLAZING MOUNTAIN BIKERS

*By David Hamrick*



We're talking today with Josh Taylor, Vice President of PASA, a local group of mountain biking enthusiasts that build trails all over our area for hikers, runners, and mountain bikers.

**GA!:** Josh, tell us a little about PASA?

**Josh:** PASA (Piedmont Area Singletrack Alliance) is a cycling advocacy and volunteer mountain bike trail building club. As a club we strive to promote land access and trail preservation, to secure land for new trail development, and to help manage and maintain both new and existing trail systems. Currently we're on that mission in Gaston, Cleveland, Lincoln, and Mecklenburg County. Public land and trail advocacy is very important to us but so is our play time. We will always also be about having fun, riding our bikes, building camaraderie, and promoting recreation throughout the communities we encompass.





## **GA!: The trail at Poston Park is one you seem to be especially proud of – how did that trail come about?**

**Josh:** Poston Mountain Bike Trail is our mothership. It's the place where we first really rallied, got organized, and even surprised ourselves with the outcome. Poston is line one of our resume. Want to see what happens when a small tight group of friends with a common vision and

good trail building knowledge dedicate themselves to building something for all the community to enjoy? Go bike or hike Poston. At over 3000 volunteer hours and growing PASA volunteers spend almost every Saturday of the fall/winter expanding the trail at Poston. It was a ground-up initiative; there was nothing there when we started. It was an amazing experience to take a blank canvas and create the vision in your mind across the park landscape. The only thing more rewarding than building that trail (and all our trails) is seeing people enjoying it and of course, getting to enjoy that sweat equity ourselves as well!

## **GA!: The trails seem like a great benefit for folks that love hiking or mountain biking-what is the cost to taxpayer for what you do?**

**Josh:** We cost the community next to nothing. We are 100% volunteer and proud of it! Short of Gaston County Parks & Recreation spending some nominal funds on things like trail signage (which we hang for them) and lumber for bridges (which we build for them) our trail is built free and clear of the taxpaying public.



## **GA!: What is a good beginner trail for folks that want to hike or bike locally?**

**Josh:** Sticking with Gaston County I would have to say that the South Fork River Trail is a good launching point for someone who has never ridden a bicycle off-road. It's flat for the most part and the trail stays about 6-feet wide on average. This out and back two-way trail is only 4 miles total so the distance won't be too much for a newbie. This is also a perfect place to get your legs and lungs in good working fashion from a hiking standpoint. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Crowders State Park for the hikers (no bikes allowed) as well which we're very lucky to have so close by.

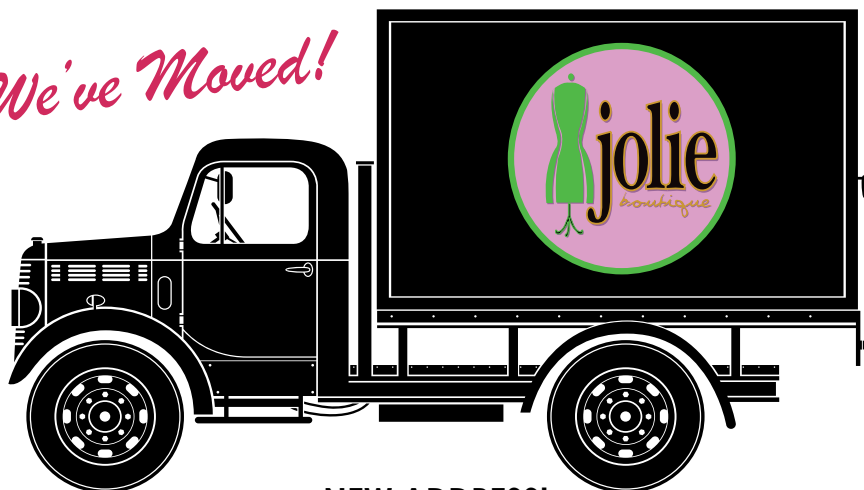


>>Article continued online [www.gastonalive.com/2012/02/pasa-mountain-biking](http://www.gastonalive.com/2012/02/pasa-mountain-biking)

**For more information on PASA please visit: [www.bikepasa.com](http://www.bikepasa.com)**

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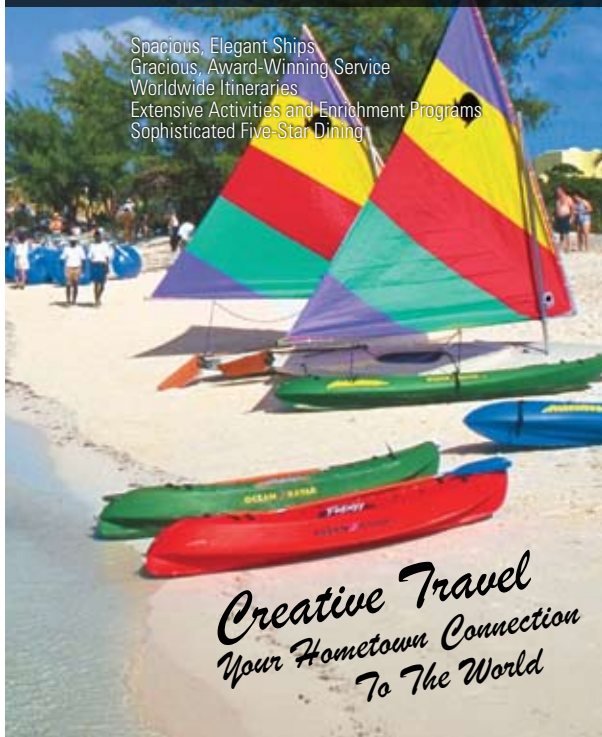
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# COOKING



## Panna Cotta

If you find you're having guests tonight and have a couple of hours for something to chill, let me suggest making a little Italian gem called Panna Cotta – or literally cooked cream. Or if you have a party in a couple of days, but time right now, it is a great make ahead dish, as it stores well in refrigeration for several days.

This dessert originated in Northern Italy, the Piedmont, and it's beauty is that it uses fresh ingredients in season. So if it's time for raspberries or blueberries, or even peaches or no fruit at all, Panna Cotta has you covered. Because it uses gelatin and not eggs, it gives you the ability to infuse the recipe with just about anything, Coffee, Fruit, Spices, Extracts, etc.

### Here is the basic recipe:

*2 cups of heavy cream*

*1 cup of half and half*

*½ cup of sugar*

*1 teaspoon of Vanilla extract (or other flavoring)*

*2 packet of powdered Gelatin (use 1 packet if serving in a container)*

*3 Tbs water PER packet of Gelatin*

### Method

Measure the water into your saucepan and pour the gelatin over the water let it absorb (5 minutes), meanwhile measure the other ingredients and combine with gelatin. Heat the mixture till the sugar is completely dissolved but do not boil.

If you are going to turn the Panna Cotta out to be free standing you have to lightly oil the ramekins or molds so they will release, I like to serve them directly out of small fruit cups or even Martini glasses because It's just easier.

Let the hot milk mixture cool off the heat for 5-10 min if a skin forms just remove it prior to pouring into the ramekins. Let the ramekins cool for another 10 minutes then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours; chill 4 or more if you are turning them out to be free standing.

At this point if you have extra time, you can make a coulis or even sweet wine syrup to drizzle when served. Other options include some curls of chocolate, just fruit, a sweet coffee reduction just use your imagination. I have made them with spices at Christmas and with Hazelnut paste and fresh berries just the other week. The options are almost limitless because it is such a malleable dessert waiting to be shaped by your culinary wishes. (You could even do a savory version with onion to serve as a side)

Once cool, if serving free standing, run a sharp knife around the edge of the mold, and turn them over on the plate, if they are stubborn to release it's a male Panna Cotta and you just have to soak it in some hot water for 30 seconds and try to turn it out again. Most men will do anything to stay out of hot water. Till next month.

Ciao, Glenn and Glenn

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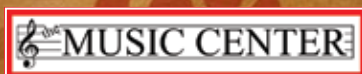
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## MUSIC

# The Next Great Songwriter



by Ben Dungan  
bdungan@charter.net

When I think about song writing and songwriters, one person instantly comes to mind - Bob Dylan. Whether you love him or hate him, you can't deny his song writing ability and the influence he has had on musicians that have come after him



Song writing is more than just writing great lyrics. Being able to craft the right music to complement those great lyrics requires hard work, persistence and skill. And it

usually doesn't happen overnight. Unless, perhaps, your name is Bob Dylan.

After Dylan emerged as the great songwriter, the musical world has been in search of the 'next Bob Dylan'. Many have been given that title, but no one has quite stood out the way Dylan and his music has.

Dylan is now 70 years old, and unfortunately, is not getting any younger. So now we look to the kids of today to find that next great songwriter.

Do you know who this could be? This is the question that organizers of Playing For Others are asking.

Playing For Others is a leadership program for teens that are passionate about the arts. This program is multi-faceted in what it does, and one of the great events they host each year that helps raise awareness of the program and serves as a great recruitment tool is its annual song writing competition.

The song writing competition, now in its fourth year, is open to all teens between the ages of 13 and 18 in any style of music. All you have to do is record a video of you performing your song and then post it to Youtube.com. (For more details see article end note). The deadline to enter is April 1.

Submissions are judged on a variety of criteria including music composition, musicality, lyrics (if applicable), originality, and more. After all submissions have been judged, the top ten finalists will be selected to perform on Saturday, April 28 in Charlotte at the Neighborhood Theatre for the live competition where the winners will be selected by a panel of judges and audience votes.

The prizes for this year's competition are still being put together, but if last year was any indication, they should be top notch. Last year, the prizes that were awarded included recording studio time, and a performance spot at a Tosco Music Party, and more.



The song writing competition is an event for teens organized and hosted by teens. It gives these young adults who are enrolled in the program a glimpse of the work it takes put on an event of this caliber.

But more importantly, it gives these kids confidence - the confidence to take a big idea and make it come to life one detail at a time. Songs don't just magically appear overnight, and neither do large scale productions like this song writing competition.

Playing For Others fosters passions and builds confidence. And in a world where it's easy for a kid to get off track, Playing For Others is an organization worth lifting up and celebrating.

***To learn more about Playing For Others and their 4th Annual Song writing Competition, visit them online at [PlayingForOthers.org](http://PlayingForOthers.org).***

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# LIVING OUTSIDE

By Anna Hastings



I know what you are thinking...it's too cold to think about creating an outdoor living space! But, believe it or not, this is the perfect time to get that ball rolling. The reality is that most any home improvement project, even when there's no construction involved, takes on the average of 8-12 weeks. So, if you want to enjoy a new or updated outdoor area when the flowers are blooming, now is definitely the time!

Here, in North Carolina, we are blessed with weather that allows us to enjoy the outdoors for nine months out of the year. And, for those who often wish for a little more space in their house, creating an outdoor living area could be the perfect and most cost effective answer. For years now, the line between indoors and outdoors has diminished as the manufacturers of home products have developed more and more appliances, furniture, lighting and accessories that can be used outside.

Creating or renovating an outdoor space has many elements. Landscape design, stonework and carpentry, as well as furniture, lighting and accessories, are all critical components of designing your outdoor haven. The best way to get started is by gathering the family together and creating a wish list. As with any room, you need to know who is going to use the space and what activities will take place there.

Your outdoor space should accommodate all your needs throughout the year. **Do you entertain outdoors?** Make sure there will be enough seating for your larger parties. **Do you spend time outdoors in the evenings and at night?** Make sure you have adequate lighting and bug control included in your plan. **Is the outdoor grill seasonal for you or all year round?** How and when you use the grill will



# the BOX



determine where you place the grill and whether it is under a protective roof. ***Do you plan to have your family meals outdoors often?*** If so, make sure that your dining area comfortably accommodates your family and then some.

Outdoor furniture and fabric have improved greatly over the last several years and are able to hold up nicely against the varying weather. Many pieces look just like indoor furniture but are constructed and designed to stand up to the North Eastern outdoor elements, if necessary. Thanks to the array of outdoor fabrics, the wonderful elements of throw pillows and even draperies can be included in the plan, giving your outdoor space a custom and cozy look.

And, be sure to consider lighting. It can be an important aspect in creating an inviting outdoor space that works at anytime. As more and more people move outside for their relaxation and socializing, companies work even harder to introduce products that make this possible. Lighting companies now offer an array of beautiful outdoor lighting, from lamps to overhead lighting.

Of course, don't forget the more natural forms of light, such as tiki torches, portable fire pits and fireplaces.

Lastly, consider adding an element of water. Even if your space and budget do not allow for a pool or anything substantial, add in some type of water accessory. You can choose from a wall mounted "waterfall" feature or use something as small as a tabletop fountain sculpture. It is the sound of water bubbling and flowing that is what creates an atmosphere of escape and relaxation.

If you remember all of the above elements, all that will be missing is your personal masseuse! This is a place for you to relax and where your family and friends will gather, share life and create memories!



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|--------|---------------|----|----------------|---|----|----------------|
|        | LUNCH         | L  | OUTDOOR DINING | T | \$ | \$11-\$20      |
|        | DINNER        | D  | BEER/WINE      | T | \$ | \$21 AND UP    |
|        | SUNDAY BRUNCH | SB | LIVE MUSIC     | ♪ | \$ |                |
|        |               |    |                |   |    |                |

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704-824-5502 • [www.amberjackseafood.com](http://www.amberjackseafood.com)  
\$-\$\$\$ **L D SB C T**

## Backwoods

119 North Main Street, Mt. Holly  
704-820-8088  
\$-\$\$ **D SB**

## Center Street Tavern

115 Center Street, Cramerton  
704-823-3000 • [www.centerstreettavern.com](http://www.centerstreettavern.com)  
\$-\$\$ **B L D SB C T ♪**

## Christy's Place

1015 West Catawba Avenue, Mount Holly  
704-827-2411  
\$ **B L**

## City Café

128 South Main Street, Mount Holly  
704-822-1450 • [www.citycafe.us](http://www.citycafe.us)  
\$-\$\$ **L D SB C T T ♪**

## Hickory Tavern

1925 Hoffman Road, Gastonia  
704-917-0450 • [www.thehickorytavern.com](http://www.thehickorytavern.com)  
\$-\$\$

## Friends Sports Bar & Grill

16 North Main Street, Belmont  
704-825-1401 • [www.friendsportsbarandgrill.net](http://www.friendsportsbarandgrill.net)  
\$-\$\$ **L D T ♪**

## JAX Backstreet Tavern

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704-825-1776 • [www.JAXBackstreet.com](http://www.JAXBackstreet.com)  
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## Johnny B's Pizza Pad & Watering Hole

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704-825-8900 • [www.jbspizzapad.com](http://www.jbspizzapad.com)  
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## La Fuente Mexican Grill

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\$-\$\$ **L D C**

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704-922-8360  
\$-\$\$\$ **L D C**

## Rodi

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116 N. New Hope Road, Gastonia • 704-864-4466  
349 W. Charlotte Ave. Mt. Holly • 704-827-4819  
[www.thesakeexpress.com](http://www.thesakeexpress.com)  
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## Sakura Japanese Restaurant

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\$-\$\$\$ **L D T**

## Tequila's Mexican Grill & Taqueria

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