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A Family Tradition
Riverside Fish House
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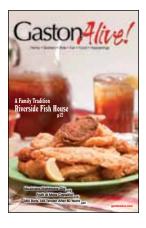
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about the cover



This month's cover was shot in studio by Rick Haithcox. Pictured is seafood from Riverside Fish House, owned by Jeff and Emily Comer. See related story page 12. Cover graphic design by David James, production assistance by Emily Comer.

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 $\perp \angle$ HOMETOWN TRADITION



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Riverside Fish House Is A

Family Tradition By David Hamrick

We're talking with Jeff & Emily Comer, owners of Riverside Fish House...

GA!: Jeff, you are young to have been in business so long-how long have you owned Riverside?

Jeff: We've been here for 22 years-both the building and business has really grown in that time!



GA!: Are you from Gaston County, and did you meet your wife Emily before or after Riverside?

Jeff: We met at 16 at North Gaston, and we've been together ever since. Actually we both started in the restaurant business when we were 15.



GA!: Your business had changed a lot since you started...tell us a little of the history.

Jeff: Emily went to Belmont Abbey and I attended UNC Charlotte. After college Emily was working at Carolina Freight in Cherryville and Carolina Country Barbeque nights and weekends. I worked as an engineer in Huntersville, but I didn't really like it. Every day going to work I would pass this little building that looked like it had potential, so one

day I quit my job and went home and told Emily that we were going into the restaurant business. She told me later that she cried for three days, but I think she is pretty happy about it now! As far as the business, in the beginning we could only seat 55, and now we can seat 280. We've added lots of equipment, coolers, expanded the parking lot, really too much to mention. We've been here 22 years now.

GA!: I know you have folks that come in every week, and have for 10 or 20 years and sit in the same booth...

Jeff: We do, actually Emily still has customers come in every week that were her customers at Carolina Country. Several of the other servers have loyal folks that have come in every week for years and years. They come in the same night of the week, sit in the same booth, and order the same plate of fish-they are like family at this point.

GA!: What makes Riverside special?

Jeff: I think Riverside is special because our customers are like familywe know them by name-plus the food is delicious!





Servers L-R, Shana Dease, 16 years, Victoria McClure, Pam Spencer, 8 years, Lori Turner, 16 years, Not Pictured-Adam Lane, 16 years

GA!: Some of your servers have been here 16 years or more-that's unheard of! Jeff: We love our employees-they are not kin but you would think that they were.

GA!: Everything looks and smells great-what are some of the favorites?

Jeff: Flounder, green (Calabash) shrimp, and believe it or not, chicken tenders. And we recently installed a fire grill, and our grilled items have really taken off. Lots of fire grilled flavor and healthy too!

GA!: What's the best part about being the owner of Riverside?

Jeff: I think Emily loves getting out and talking to folks, and I enjoy being a manager and leader, and seeing my ideas come to fruition.

GA!: Jeff, for folks that haven't been here-why should they give Riverside a try?

Jeff: Delicious food, great service and reputation, owned by local folks that are invested in the community, and the fact that we are not a bland, cookie cutter franchise-we're hometown!

GA!: What do you and Emily like to do when you are not working?

Jeff: We don't get to as much as we would like, but we love to travel, especially the Caribbean. I think Emily's goal is to visit every island in the Caribbean, and we have actually been to quite a few.

GA!: What is the funniest or most unusual thing that has happened at Riverside? Jeff: We had a pretty famous college basketball team come in

quite a few years ago. They came in the back door and ate in the back dining room so they wouldn't be mobbed by fans while they ate.

>>Article continued on page 32.





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music for the bulk of her life, she brings a lot of stories of her own to the table.

f everything in life went according to plan, things may be easier, but it sure would be boring.

Predictability may be preferred, but let's face it, the times in our life when things went just a little haywire is what we remember most.

There once was a man named Murphy, and he had a law. He stated that if anything could go wrong, it probably will.

Now, I don't know much about this Murphy fellow, but I would bet he was in the music business at some time in his life. And chances are if you are in the music business, your band has probably opened up for him a time or two before.



Here's a little word to the wise – if you're a control freak, don't get into the music business.

If that doesn't convince you, then I have over forty stories of how things can go awry. They are all nicely compiled in a brand new book entitled.

Another Nightmare Gig From Hell, by Nick Zelinger and Belmont native, Tammy Brackett.

Tammy Brackett has been in the music business for almost her entire life. She's been on the touring and performing end of things, as well as the behind-the-scenes/business side of things. Tammy is currently the owner of Moonstruck Promotions, where she is involved in all aspects of the music business from career development to band dynamics.

Since Tammy has lived and breathed all things

It wasn't long ago when a mutual friend introduced her to Zelinger. He had this idea to compile great stories from other hardworking musicians who make



a living playing music. Together, he and Tammy began to solicit these wild and crazy stories and compile them in a fashion where music and non-music people could enjoy them.

They say adversity introduces a man to himself. No matter what path you decide to embark upon, there is no guaranteed it will be paved. The music industry is no different.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to passion. It's the love of the music that gets musicians through the tough times.

Another Nightmare Gig From Hell, may sound like a collection of negative and depressing stories from the road. It's not that at all. It's touching. It's uplifting. And even better, it's funny. It's life as it happens between the music.

I like to think of this book as Chicken Soup for the Musician's Soul...After Their Nightmare Gig. But something tells me that title may be already trademarked.



COOKING

Trutti di Mare Capellini

Capellini pasta's full name is Capelli d'angelo or 'angel hair' pasta. And Frutti di Mare are the fruits of the sea. This traditional dish is found all over Italy's coastal regions. In this version I have substituted the traditional heavier fettuccini pasta for the lighter capellini. The sauce is light and the whole dish can be a perfect repast on the patio enjoying the sun setting with a nice glass of wine.

Ingredients

Capellini pasta (figure about a cup per serving, cooked)

Mussels (cleaned and de bearded) 5-6 per serving

Shrimp (medium) 6-8 per serving

2 Sardine Filets

2 TBS Capers

1/2 cup Onion finely diced

1 clove Garlic thinly sliced

2 TBS parsley finely chopped

1 TBS Butter

2 TBS Olive Oil

1/2 cup White Wine

1/2 TSP of flour

1 TBS Lemon Juice

In a medium skillet melt butter and olive oil. Add sardine filets. Yes, sardines. Why? Because we are building layers of flavor and richness. When butter foams, add the diced onions and sauté till translucent. Add garlic, capers and parsley. Then sauté for two to three minutes. Mix flour with white wine and lemon juice. Add to mixture cook for a minute. Add shrimp, cover the skillet and cook till all shrimp are pink.

I have to admit, at this point I use prepared mussels sometimes. The prepared mussels I use come in a vacuum packed container and are already cooked. If using fresh mussels, steam them separately after they are cleaned and de-bearded. I encourage this to minimize any grit or mud that might be in the fresh mussels.

To serve, I place the pasta in the bottom of the bowl, layer the shrimp and mussels next, and top with the sauce, which should be slightly thickened. If it appears too thick, add a bit more wine. Finish the dish with a grating of parmesan and enjoy.

Ciao, Glenn and Glenn GLENINS Vace



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There is a monument in downtown Gastonia commemorating Gastonia Police Chief Orville Aderholt, part of our history circa 1929. But there is no memorial to Ella May Wiggins, arguably a more significant character in that history. This omission is likely to change.

THE STORY OF ELLA MAE WISSINS, MOT

Born in a log cabin in 1900 in Sevierville Tennessee, Ella Mae Wiggins and her family followed logging camps from hollow to hollow. Like so many others in that place and time, they were dirt poor. Both her parents died when she was 18, and within a year, she was married to John Wiggins. Soon she was expecting what would turn out to be the first of nine children. In 1926 she ended up outside of Bessemer City without John, but with their children. Perhaps John left on his own; maybe Ella Mae kicked him out. She worked as a spinner for American Mill No 2, twelve hours a day, six days a week, making nine dollars a week.

Up to that point, Ella Mae was not much different from other women of her time, although that was soon to change. There was something in Ella Mae— a fire and passion, a willingness to go her own way. Looking at one of her pictures, you see an attractive woman, hand on her hip, staring with a little smile into the camera. You just know she was not somebody to be messed with.

Sometimes there is a price to pay for going your own way.

For one thing, Ella did not live in regular company housing, but rather on the edge of Stumptown, just outside of Bessemer City. Although mill owned, the houses were tiny in this section populated by black mill workers, and the rents were less. Probably the black community there helped care for her children.

Then in 1929 the hammer dropped. While the rest of the country was about to fall into the Great Depression, four of Ella May's children died, struck down by whooping cough. The mill would not let her switch shifts to take care of her children. Having made the wrenching decision to quit her job and take care of her children, Ella Mae was then unable to afford medical care when the sickness came.

The mills were also practicing what was called the "stretch out" Half of the mill workers were fired, and the balance were expected to do their work, but wages, instead of being increased, were actually reduced.





As a result, Ella Mae became politically active...she discovered her calling. Using her natural skills and intelligence she became a part of the labor movement. The country girl started moving in elevated circles. She delivered powerful testimony to the US Congress about the plight of mill workers; testimony that helped change existing labor laws. She wrote and performed protest songs - which were picked up by Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. She achieved inclusion of African Americans into her textile union. She was a powerhouse of energy and commitment.

It all came to a head later in 1929. Responding to what today would be third-world working conditions, Ella and the workers rebelled. Organized by the communist-backed National Textile Workers Union (NTWU), with whom Ella was associated as member and local bookkeeper, there was a strike.

Tom Weathers



HER, MILLWORKER, SOCIALACTIVIST

In an escalating series of events, 1,800 of Gastonia's Loray (later Firestone) Mill workers walked off their jobs; management evicted families from mill-owned homes, and Governor O. Max Gardner sent in 250 National Guard troops to restore order. When 100 men destroyed their headquarters, the NTWU erected a tent city outskirts of town.

The first death occurred on June6, 1929, after 150 workers marched to the mill to call out the night shift. They were dispersed by sheriff's deputies. Later that night four officers, including Police Chief Aderholt arrived at the tent city and demanded that the union guards hand over their weapons. An altercation ensued and Chief

Aderholt was shot and killed. There is some question that Aderholt, who is said to have been beloved by the community, may have been killed accidentally by one of his own people.

Unfortunately, another death was soon to follow, just over a week later on September 14, 1929. After a thwarted attempt to attend a union meeting in Gastonia, Ella Mae and her companions were stopped by a car full of armed men. Shots were fired; Ella Mae, riding in the open in the back of a truck, was struck in the chest and killed.



Ella Mae's children at her funeral.



Ella Mae's children were sent to orphanages and although five Loray Mill employees were indicted for her murder, no one was ever convicted of her shooting. After 80 years Ella Mae had all but faded into the mists of history.

That is what Kimberley Hallas of Gastonia and other members of the Ella May Wiggins Textile Heritage Council (EMWiTAC) hope to prevent. They want to educate people about the role of textiles in the history of Gaston County; erect a memorial to Ella May, and tell her story – the story of a brave woman who carried the torch for social justice.

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Map Pendant \$22



Sundrop Glass Pendant

Carry a bit of Gaston County with you with this fun pendant created exclusively for Gaston Alive! magazine. Kiln fired glass from upcycled Sundrop bottles, these pendants are each one

of a kind, handmade by a Gaston County Artist. The back of the pendant features a textured surface which magnifies through the front of the smooth round green glass. Approximately 1.5 inches in diameter, the pendant is finished with sterling silver wire and hung on a silver colored 2 mm, 24 inch ball chain.

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Vintage Silver Spoon Bracelet

This elegant handmade spoon bracelet is created from two vintage silverplate spoons. The 1954 pattern is called "Jubilee" and features a lovely floral design to grace your wrist. Very old spoons are upcycled into a beautiful new piece of jewelry with a history. Created just for Gaston Alive! magazine, by Gaston County Artists.

1954 Jubilee Spoon Bracelet \$50



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Jeff: Really quite a few. Jimmy Wayne stops in when he is in town, James Worthy has been in. The country singer Jake Owen actually called a radio station in Charlotte and asked where to get some great fried shrimp, and they told him to go to Riverside in Dallas..so he pulls his bus off of I-85 and came here. One of the servers told him that he looked like Jake Owen, and he said "That's because I am him!" He said

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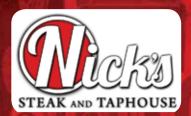
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