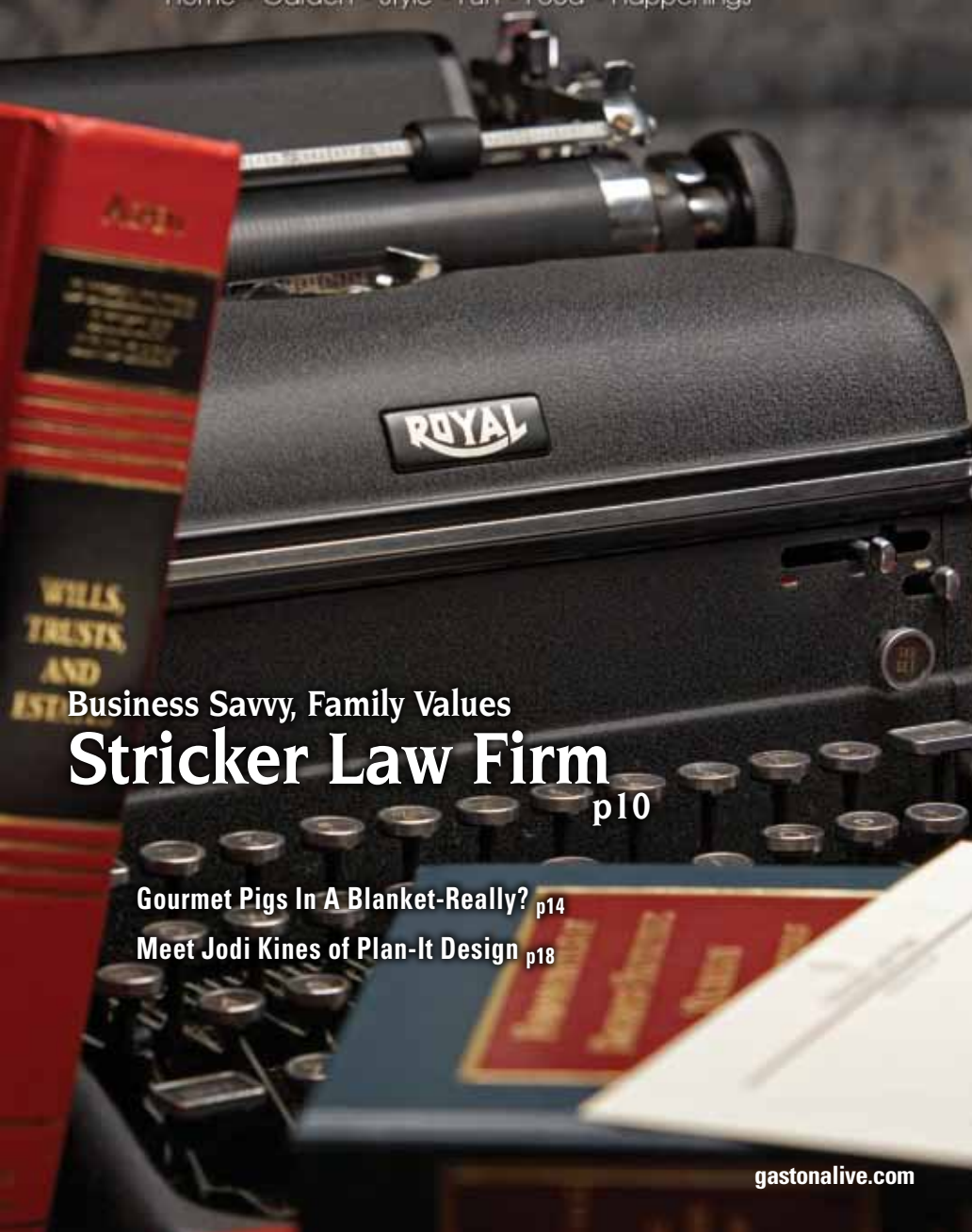


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p10

Gourmet Pigs In A Blanket-Really? p14

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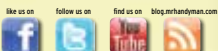
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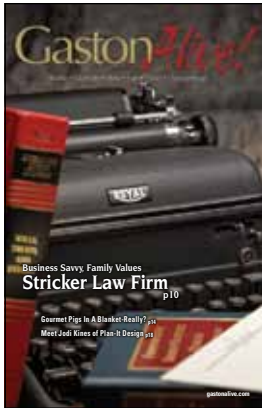


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# about the cover

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This month's cover was shot in studio with an antique typewriter, law books, and stationery from Stricker Law Firm of Belmont N.C. See related article page 10. Cover photo by Rick Haithcox, production assistance by Pam Goode, cover graphic design by David James.

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CATCHING UP WITH  
DESIGNER JODI KINES

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14

GOURMET PIG IN  
A BLANKET?



## FROM THE PUBLISHER

Happiest of New Years to you! Although it is frosty outside, January is the time we think of new beginnings. We have just closed out the old year, and collectively we take a breath and think about what is possible in the potential that the New Year holds.

For Gaston Alive! that means fresh ideas, energy, and optimism in the form a new publisher. I am excited and happy to announce that Pam Goode is the new owner and publisher of Gaston Alive! magazine. Many of you already know Pam as the owner of ARA Marketing Solutions LLC, and publisher of The Real Estate Magazines of Gaston County, Lake Norman, as well as other custom publications. She brings a wealth of publishing experience and business savvy to her new role as publisher of Gaston Alive! I feel very confident in passing the torch to Pam, knowing that she has a passion for the people and small business owners of Gaston County, as well as lots of fresh ideas and enthusiasm for the Gaston Alive! brand. I can't wait for her to make GA! "her baby".

For me, it has been a great ten year run, and I truly treasure the many friends I have made. I have said in this space before; when starting a business in Gaston county, I hardly knew anyone here. Like many of you, I drove to Charlotte every morning, and all of my days were spent there. Now I can literally say that I have friends in the hundreds, and many of my dearest friends I have met through and because of the magazine. It has been a pleasure to get to know so many of you, and to share your many joys and occasional sorrow. It has been my sincere privilege.

Going forward, I am looking forward to new business challenges and opportunities, but also to having a little more time to play music with my friends, and catch up on my honey-do list. I will be around and available to assist if needed in the transition of GA! into Pam's capable hands.

Recently I looked up the meaning of "nostalgic", which is a bittersweet longing for the past, and closely related to the word "homesickness". In all honesty I do feel some nostalgia, but like high school and college, it was wonderful, but then it's time to move on. For everything there is a season...and I am excited to see what cool ideas and projects will present themselves in the upcoming days.

For the New Year I wish you the courage to dare the things you have dreamed of, the strength to rise from failure and try again, and most of all, I wish you peace.

All the best,

David

*dhamrick@gastonalive.com*





*When only a diamond will do*

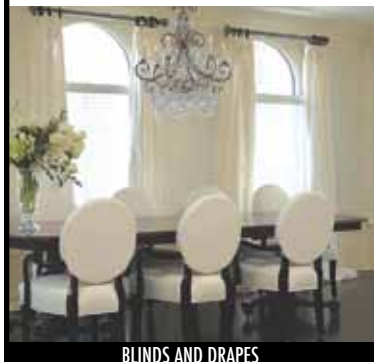


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# *Business Savvy & Family Values, Meet Stricker Law Firm*

By David Hamrick



**GA!: I know you have an office in Murphy N.C., but tell us about your new office in Belmont...**

**Marguerite:** After almost 8 years practicing estate planning, probate, real estate, and family law in Murphy, NC at "Stricker-West" in October, 2012, we proudly opened what we are affectionately calling "Stricker-East," in Belmont at 203 Glenwood Street, directly across from the Belmont Post Office.



**GA!: So you will be in practice there with your son Larry Simonds, and Andrew Brandt...so it's sort of a family affair?**

**Marguerite:** I will be practicing with my son, Larry G. Simonds, Jr., who will be admitted to the practice of law in 2014 and Andrew M. Brandt, who was admitted to NC practice in fall, 2013. I have had a dual license to practice law in FL and NC since 1999. I practiced in St. Augustine, Florida after graduating Florida State University College of Law and finally decided to come back to my roots in North Carolina in 2006. As James Taylor sang, I was always "going to Carolina in my mind."

I, like Larry and Drew entered the practice of law after successful careers in other arenas, but were drawn to the practice of law as second careers in our mid-30s. I think we each entered law school with a strong sense of helping others; myself in helping others in family crises, such as death and divorce; Andrew in estate and business planning and management; and Larry was drawn to righting wrongs as a litigator in civil and criminal matters. We saw that as a team we had a lot to offer.

My son Larry was born to be an attorney. He and I have always had vigorous debates on any issue, with him playing the devil's advocate for sheer pleasure of argument. When Larry found

out there was a new law school opening in Charlotte, NC., he admitted that he had always wished to become a lawyer.



Andrew is a very pragmatic, matter-of-fact, planner. He is our financial and technological guru. He and Larry met the first day of law school and both came to Murphy to work for me during school breaks, assisting me with preparing wills and legal documents for senior citizens on a fixed income. I knew after that project that we would make a great team.

## GA!: Marguerite, tell us a little about yourself....are you from Gaston County?

**Marguerite:** While I love the Western NC mountains, I was born in Germany to a German mom and a U.S. Army dad from Belmont, NC. I came to Belmont with my mom and dad at the age of one and lived in Gaston County until 1985. I attended East Belmont Elementary School, Belmont Jr. High, South Point High School, Gaston College and UNCC. My parents and grandparents all worked in the textile industry. I am a proud bi-product of that culture and the first member of my father's family to graduate from college.

Although, I have lived many other places, I have always thought of Belmont as my home. When Larry, Andrew and I were searching for a new location, I was drawn to the idea of bringing our talents to my home-town of Belmont. We looked at a lot of possibilities, but always came back to Belmont.

## GA!: What is important to you as far as your relationship with your clients?

**Marguerite:** Our number one priority is seeing that our clients are cared for, that they understand the law as it applies to them, and that they know they can sleep well, knowing we have are dealing with their problems as if they were our own.



## GA!: What does the future hold for your firm?

**Marguerite:** 2014 looks very exciting for Stricker Law Firm! As I head up Stricker-West with the assistance of my full-time right arm, Robin Garrett, Andrew and Larry will carry on the tradition at Stricker-East in Belmont. However, I must admit that I love it there so much that I am in attendance enough that I would love to find an old mill house there to renovate and call my second home. Beyond 2014? I know the guys have a dream of bringing our down-home client-based kind of law practice into other parts of North Carolina in the not so distant future and they each have very bright children that could keep our family-based business going for many years to come.

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# Pigs in a Blanket

This dish calls to mind refrigerator roll biscuit dough and hotdogs, but the original dish invented in Germany called *worstenbroodjes* were actually sausages wrapped in a pancake. Although there is historical reference back to the 1600's of food being wrapped in dough for a quick meal on the go.

Today we think of this as an appetizer and with one of the biggest finger food days approaching "the big game" I felt it fitting to take on the challenge to put my own spin on these little bites. So, rather than utilizing puff pastry, or crescent roll dough I wanted to return to the spirit of the original recipe.

To create my gourmet PiB version it will be in two parts first the blanket and then the filling. My blankets are closer to a crepe and for my pig I'll hand roll some fresh sausage. I like mine with a bit of kick so I used the hot, but feel free to use the regular, or sage or even maple.

## Ingredients

- Sausage (I buy a square package but the tube works fine)
- Sweet Vidalia Onion
- Swiss or Gruyere cheese optional
- 1/3 cup buckwheat flour (if you don't have use regular wheat flour)
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 cup of milk
- 1 egg
- 4 TBS butter melted

Thinly slice the onion and cook till translucent (add a dash of sugar) in 1/2 a stick of butter, save the other half for the blanket. While the onions cook slowly roll the sausage into links about 2-3 inches long and 1/2 an inch thick, once the onions are translucent add the sausage links and continue to cook till the sausages are done and the onions have a nice color. Drain any fat and set aside.

Mix dry ingredients in one bowl and whisk all the moist ingredients in another. Combine and whisk till smooth. (It will be a thin batter) In a 6" non stick skillet over medium high heat put a few drops of the reserved sausage fat and 3 TBS of the batter, I found a 1/4 cup to be too much, roll the pan a bit to let the batter cover the bottom of the pan to create a very thin pancake. As the edges brown and it stops steaming, flip it over in the pan and cook just a bit longer. Repeat till blankets are done.

To assemble place a piece of sausage, a few strands of onion and a few shreds of the cheese on one edge of the blanket and roll like a burrito folding the ends in to seal. Place in a baking dish so you can warm them in the oven. To serve spear each PiB with a toothpick and plate them with some dipping sauces. I recommend a Dijon mustard, a Cajun Rémolade or even a spicy pepper jelly. Since I'm writing this ahead of playoffs I hope the Cats are still in the hunt for the ring. I can't help but root for the home team, Go Panthers!

Till next month, Make it Your Own!



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# The Home Stylist

By Jodi Kines



**Jodi Kines** –Jodi has a degree in Interior Design from Winthrop University, and is the owner of Plan-It Design, LLC in Belmont, N.C.  
Contact Jodi: [jodi@planitdesign.us](mailto:jodi@planitdesign.us)



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography.



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography.

## Catching up with our talented designer, homemaker, mom and marathon runner Jodi Kines

**GA!:** Jodi, let's start at the beginning-where are you from, where did you go to school, etc.?

**Jodi:** I am a Belmont native! My family moved here when I was just six years old, so I grew up in Belmont, graduated from South Point High School and went on to get my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree just down the road at Winthrop University.

**GA!:** How long have you owned a design business?

**Jodi:** I began doing residential design consultations while still in college, so I have had a small 'side' business since 1998. However, I left a corporate design job in 2005 to completely focus on my design business while juggling the start of a family.

**GA!:** What types of design projects do you specialize in?

**Jodi:** Most of what I do is residential design – everything from assisting the architect during the design phase of new construction drawings to selecting furnishings and finishes for the home. We take on projects of all scopes, scale and budget. Some of my clients have had small renovation (or revitalization) projects going on with me for over 10 years! Others will call for just a simple consultation and then do all of the implementation themselves. We also do some small commercial design work as well. In 2013 we designed and managed the relocation of a local law firm and are thrilled about one of our most exciting projects in 2014 – a local dentist office just beginning new construction here in Gaston County.

**GA!:** You are so creative! Where do you come up with your ideas?

**Jodi:** Inspiration is everywhere – especially in this digital age; like most of my clients and friends I love to flip through design magazines, Pinterest and Houzz! Mostly, though, I listen to my clients; that's where the inspiration becomes personalized. I had a wonderful mentor straight out of college, Mr. Bill Little,



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography.

who always encouraged us to 'hear what our clients didn't say' just as loudly as we hear what they do say. I really try to take this to heart when meeting to kick off a new project. For example, a client may ask me about rearranging or replacing their family room furniture, often saying it just doesn't feel like it fits or doesn't feel cozy. I could choose to hear 'needs new furniture' or I can hear them saying the room feels out of proportion, disconnected and uninviting. Adding a well-fitting rug to the space could easily solve these design challenges without ever rearranging a single piece of furniture. I feel it's my job to see past what clients think they may 'need' and keep an open dialogue throughout the design process to ensure we far exceed their expectations when the project is complete.

## **GA!: What first interested you in interior design?**

**Jodi:** I have always loved art and been a creative, crafty person, but I am NOT at all artistic! I also love people and thrive on the collaborative process. My high school art teacher, Allison Hall, suggested I look into an interior design career. I began researching the industry and collegiate programs and never looked back. I love the combination of creativity and project management. It's a perfect fit for my personality and talents; I honestly can't imagine doing anything else!

## **GA!: How does design make a difference in people's daily lives?**

**Jodi:** I think our lives are more impacted by design than we realize; that's why I am so passionate about what I do. The way a space is configured as well as the colors, textures, and patterns used to furnish it have a direct impact on the people that live and work in the environment. I genuinely believe a well-designed space can make you more relaxed, generally calmer, happier and more productive.

## **GA!: What parts of design do you most enjoy?**

**Jodi:** Connection and collaboration. I love working with other design professionals and clients to find the best solution to design challenges; it's incredible to see varied backgrounds and perspectives come together to solve simple, everyday problems. I also love getting to know my clients on such a personal level. Helping someone put their personal touch on their personal space is, well, very personal and I love connecting with each client, understanding how their family lives in their home or staff works in their office and helping them find ways to do it better, more efficiently and within their financial means.

## **GA!: What is the design mistake you see most often?**

**Jodi:** So many people are too intimidated to even start making changes to their space; they feel overwhelmed with ideas and become too paralyzed to do anything at all. While the internet and social media are wonderful tools that inspire many ideas, they also leave many people feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. Most design decisions are not permanent, don't be afraid to go for it, just start somewhere!

## **GA!: When you are not doing design work, how do you spend your time?**

**Jodi:** Most of my time away from work is spent enjoying my two young boys and husband. I stay busy with school, sports & church activities. Over the past few years, I have become an avid runner and triathlete and can usually be found hitting the pavement in the wee hours of the morning! Some of my most creative ideas happen when I am alone with my thoughts on a long run or bike ride.



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography



Photo courtesy of Abbe McCracken Photography

# Gaston County Restaurant & Dining Guide

LEGEND	BREAKFAST	B	CATERING	C	LESS THAN \$10
	LUNCH	L	OUTDOOR DINING	SS	\$11-\$20
	DINNER	D	BEER/WINE	SSS	\$21 AND UP
	SUNDAY BRUNCH	SB	LIVE MUSIC	♫	

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704-824-5502 • www.amberjackseafood.com  
\$-\$\$\$ 1 1 1 1 1 ♫

## Center Street Tavern

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704-823-3000 • www.centerstreettavern.com  
\$-\$\$ 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 ♫

## Friends Sports Bar & Grill

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704-825-1401 • www.friendsportsbarandgrill.net  
\$-\$\$ 1 1 1 1 1 1 ♫

## Glenway Premium Pub

55 Glenway Street, Belmont  
704-829-7717 • www.joestouchofitaly.com  
\$-\$\$ 1 1 1 1 1 ♫

## Joe's Touch Of Italy

503 S. Central Avenue, Belmont  
704-825-2805 • www.joestouchofitaly.com  
\$-\$\$ 1 1

## Johnny B's Pizza Pad & Watering Hole

106 N Main Street, Belmont  
704-825-8900 • www.jbspizzapad.com  
\$-\$\$ 1 1 1

## La Fuente Bar & Grill

3070 E Franklin Blvd, Gastonia  
704-866-7744  
\$-\$\$ 1 1

## Nick's Steak & Taphouse

182 S South Street, Gastonia  
704-867-6777 • www.nicks Gastonia.com  
\$\$-\$\$\$ 1 1 1

## Old Stone Steakhouse

23 S. Main Street, Belmont  
704-825-9995 • www.oldstonesteakhouse.com  
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## Riverside Fish House

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704-922-8360  
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349 W. Charlotte Ave. Mt. Holly • 704-827-4819  
www.thesakeexpress.com  
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