

# GASTON ALIVE



MAGAZINE

HOME | GARDEN | STYLE | FUN | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

## Christmastown Gallery Adds New Artists

p6

Savory Blue Cheese Brulee

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Principal Of The Year

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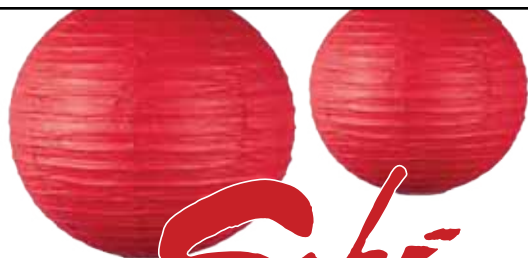
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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

It has been an eventful couple of months. As many of you know I have had some health issues, but every day I get stronger, and hope to make a full recovery. They say "a friend in need is a friend indeed", and I want to express my heartfelt thanks to so many friends and family who have really stepped up- with cards, visits, food and flowers. But special thanks to my wife Linda first and foremost, and then to David James, Rick Haithcox, Ben Dungan, and Aaron Suttentfield, for keeping the magazine on track and viable. I am truly blessed to have the love and support of so many folks..and I am grateful.

As we enter the holiday season, I hope that you will take time to remember who and what is really important... and really love on those folks that you love.

Wishing you peace, hope, and joy,

David

featured this month

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PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR  
JOEY CLINTON



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# on the cover



This month's cover features a painting by Abraham Hunter entitled "Feathered Friends III". Hunter is one of several new artists now being featured at the Christmastown Thomas Kinkadee Gallery in McAdenville. See related story page 6. Cover painting by Abraham Hunter, cover graphic design by David James.

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## Social Security Secrets

By Todd Van Der Meid, MBA, CFP®

A growing number of Financial Advisors are advertising that there are secret Social Security filing options available, and you may be giving up significant amounts of money unless you contact them or attend one of their secret-revealing seminars.



Let me state definitively, there are no secrets. The information concerning your filing options is public information and can be obtained by visiting the Social Security Administrations website. Just because you are not familiar with a particular topic doesn't mean the information is secret. I liken it to when you bought your first home. The whole process was foreign and a bit intimidating but the home buying process is not a secret. By the time a person has bought their second or third home the process is somewhat familiar. Filing a claim for your Social Security benefits is usually something you only do once, so naturally many have questions. It's something you've never done before. So how do you get your questions answered? You can contact the Social Security Administration directly or you can engage a Financial Advisor. You may be able to engage a Financial Advisor free of charge, but keep in mind that nothing is really free and the answers to your questions may include a recommendation to buy a financial product. You can also hire a Financial Advisor to answer your questions by paying a fee for the services you require. If you choose to engage a Financial Advisor, it is a good idea to verify the Advisor's credentials and record thorough the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority at [www.finra.org](http://www.finra.org). Through the Broker Check service, a detailed report is provided outlining the Advisor's qualifications and other information that should be considered before relying on financial advice.

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The Christmastown Thomas Kinkade Signature Gallery had reached a crossroads with the loss of Thomas Kinkade in 2012. But owner Jay McCosh is adding three new artists to his gallery in McAdenville. Gaston Alive spent some time recently with Jay to find out more.

*By David Hamrick*

**GA: First, what's up with your Thomas Kinkade pieces?**

**Jay:** Since Thom passed away in April 2012, most of his galleries have seen some changes. His work is still in high demand worldwide and since he has passed his paintings are selling out more quickly. Thom left over 100 paintings that he had yet to release. Some of those have since been released. His nephew Zac Kinkade is picking up where his uncle left off and has had his first painting, Noah's Ark published in very low numbers, which make it collectible and rare.

**GA: We were excited to hear that you are adding new artists....**

**Jay:** I have been approached over the years by several artists wanting us to carry their art. I had to be very careful however as I wanted art that would complement Thom's incredible body of work; something our collectors would get excited about as well as attract new collectors. I found that and more in Robert Finale, Mark Keathley and Abraham Hunter.

**GA: How would you compare the work of Thomas Kinkade and your new artists?**

**Jay:** On some paintings many people will see many similarities, but others are very different as there are many subjects Thom never painted. The color palettes are also different. Abraham is very detailed in everything he does, even to the individual details on the leaf of a tree. Thom's palette in his early pieces was much softer than in later years and both Mark and Abraham have very vivid color palettes, whereas Robert Finale's is in between the soft and vivid.

**GA: What is the demand and collect-ability of work by Keathley, Hunter, and Finale?**

**Jay:** The three new artists have much lower edition sizes than we are used to with Kinkade. We have had Robert Finale in the gallery now a little over a year now and have had the embarrassing experience happen a few times where a customer will come in and really fall in love with a painting and need to go home and measure or wait until next month, only to find that because of such rarity in these paintings not only is the painting sold from here but also completely sold out nationwide. I fully expect the same kind of demand from Mark Keathley and Abraham Hunter as well.



## GA: So do you have work by Hunter and Keathley in the gallery?

**Jay:** Yes we have quite a nice selection of all three new artists work here in the gallery as well as an original painted by Abraham Hunter that he painted in Pigeon Forge.

## GA: How does the cost of paintings compare to Kinkadee?

**Jay:** Mark and Abraham's Standard Numbered (S/N) 18"x24" framed paintings are only \$750 as compared to \$995 both Thomas Kinkadee and Robert Finale.

# You're Invited!

## Meet Abraham Hunter!

Abraham will be here in the gallery Saturday Dec. 12th from 1-5pm for a sketching event. If you buy one of his canvas paintings, he will sketch on the back of it for you free of charge while you watch. He will also set up his easel somewhere here in Christmastown USA while the lights are on and paint one of our towns iconic scenes. The original image will be on display in the gallery afterwards and prints will be made but only 25 copies will be available and will be sold first come first serve.

## Meet Abraham Hunter



Abraham Hunter said that he first began to realize that God had given him a talent at 12 years old. At 14, he began to hone his skills and pursue his artistic talent as a career. Abraham works in oil, acrylic and occasionally watercolor and strives for extreme photorealism most of the time because he feels it properly honors God's handiwork by showing all the intricate details. He often portrays somewhat "utopia" like scenes because he likes to imagine what

it would have been like in the Garden of Eden and wants his viewers to have an encounter with a world lacking of death and turmoil.



## Meet Mark Keathley



Mark Keathley (born 1963) grew up on the family cattle farm in East Texas and loved romping through the woods and across open fields. In the early 1990's, he entered a couple of paintings in the Cheyenne, Wyoming "Old West Museum Show" and won a couple of awards for his work. He also attended the "Texas Ranger Hall of Fame Art Show" in Waco Texas and twice won the "Popular Vote Award" for a couple of his pieces two years in a row. Everywhere he has gone, he has found

great acceptance for his work, and his paintings hang in many homes around the world. In April 2010, "Quiet Encounter" was selected for the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) 2011 core art program. The art program helps to further NWTF's mission to conserve the wild turkey and preserve the heritage of hunting. Keathley's prints will raise funds via auctions held at more than 2200 banquets throughout North America.



## Meet Robert Finale



Robert has been painting about 13 years and has received no formal training. He says he started painting when he and his wife visited a Thomas Kinkadee Gallery, and his wife fell in love with a Kinkadee painting-but they just couldn't afford it. Robert, who had been sketching and drawing his whole life, told his daughter "I will just paint her one!" And so he did, and a career was born!







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# COOKING WITH GLENN

## SAVORY BLUE CHEESE BRULEE

Recently, I was lucky enough to spend two weeks in Scotland. I always enjoy visiting Europe and this was my first time to visit the home of William Wallace, (think Mel Gibson in Braveheart), Scotch Whiskey and Haggis. Great food and wine were not the focus of my visit nor did I have any expectations to be wowed as Scotland is not known for Haut Cuisine.

Scotland does have an abundance of great seafood, I had the best mussels I have ever eaten in a little restaurant called Ee-usk. The sunset was beautiful and Oban was a charming little seaside town on the west coast of Alba (the Gaelic and original name for Scotland). As a country they really don't produce much wine as the climate just doesn't seem to suit the vinifera. Fortunately for me they do import quite a bit of Italian and French wine, and even an occasional American so finding the right pairing was rarely a problem.

Other great meals included an excellent dinner at Two Fat Ladies at the Buttery, combining Scottish ambience with Italian and French inspired food and a wonderful chefs tasting in Glasgow at Rogano. It was in 1935, as the ocean liner 'Queen Mary' took shape in the docks of the river Clyde, that this restaurant was refitted in the same Art Deco style. With its unique 1930's ambience, Rogano is the oldest surviving restaurant in Glasgow.

My featured recipe is inspired by a dish from the tasting, Savory Blue Cheese Brulee.

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups Heavy Cream	Salt
2 oz Blue Cheese	Walnuts
1 medium Shallot	6 Figs
4 Egg yolks	Red wine
White Pepper	Sugar

### METHOD

Pre heat oven to 350 degrees, dice the shallot, mix with the cream and blue cheese in a sauce pan place over medium heat, stir to integrate the blue cheese and warm till bubbles form around the edges of the pot (do not boil). Season the cream with salt and the white pepper. While the cream is heating separate the egg yolks in a heat proof bowl and whisk till combined.

Remove the cream from heat and strain to remove the shallot, temper the egg yolks by whisking a small amount of the hot cream into it at a time, when half a cup of the cream has been added to the yolks pour the yolk mixture into the remaining cream. Divide this mixture between eight small ramekins. Place ramekins in a baking pan, then fill the baking pan with warm water until it reaches half way up the ramekins. Bake until the brulee will jiggle in the ramekin when tapped on the side, you want them firm, but not solid, about 30 min.

While the brulee cooks chop the walnuts and toast. Place the figs (fresh are best) in a sauté pan with a cup of red wine and the sugar. Poach the figs rolling them in the wine to keep them moist.

To serve, slice the figs place on the brulee, sprinkle with the toasted walnuts and serve warm.

Let me leave you with a comparison, not related to this recipe, on our perception of Haggis. It's made from offal (hearts, livers, kidneys, etc.) mixed with grains, cooked in the animal's stomach and our thought is oh gross. But let me give you a different point of view, we Southerners love our liver mush (made from offal and grain) why not just think of Haggis as Scottish liver mush.

Till Next Month, Make it Your Own!  
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### SCOTLAND



Scotland's name originates from the Roman term for the residents of Ireland and the area of Great Britain north of the Firth of Forth. The Roman's called these people 'Scoti' or Scotii' which was made official by the Papal decree of Leo X (1513-1521). In Medieval time Scotia became the way the land of the Gaels was referenced, like Angli and Franci for Anglia (England) and Francia (France).

# GASTON'S TOP PRINCIPAL DREAMS BIG, STAYS GROUNDED

*By Amanda Memrick*



**As the bell rings, students flood the hallways of Ashbrook High School, making their way to the next class.**

In the middle of that sea of students stands Ashbrook High Principal Joey Clinton. "My philosophy's always been to be visible, especially in this role," Clinton said. "And I think this has helped garner some success in this school."

Ashbrook, one of the largest and most diverse schools in Gaston County, has seen success in boosting the number of students who graduate in four years or less to 90.3 percent for the last school year. "We really pushed to create a culture of acceptance. It doesn't matter who you are. We want you to come to this school. This is a level playing ground. Getting an education, earning a diploma, everybody's equal. It doesn't matter where you come from, what you look like, who you are," Clinton said. "You have a lot to do with your success." That success is one reason Gaston County Schools leaders chose Clinton to be Principal of the Year.





Clinton grew up in York, S.C., in a family of educators. Clinton knew in high school and college that he wanted to become a coach. He played sports in high school and coached there as a college student at Winthrop University. After graduating with a degree in physical education, he applied for a job at neighboring school systems, including Gaston County. The day before school started, Clinton received a call offering him a position at Highland Junior High School. "I can recall that first day of school, I was teaching health and physical science, and I remember just whipping through like four or five chapters because I was so nervous, and I didn't want any down time," Clinton said. "That first year was a great learning experience." That was 1993. Clinton continued to teach and coach sports, though he knew he wanted more. "I knew I wanted to be in that leadership role," Clinton said. "I wanted to make a larger impact." He decided to get a master's degree in school administration from Gardner-Webb University to become an administrator. He started as an assistant principal at Forestview High, then moved to Grier Middle. He became principal at Grier before coming to Ashbrook in 2011.



Clinton likes a routine and keeps a to-do list, but he never knows what the day will bring at a school with 1,500 and 130 staff members. Being flexible is key, he said, because the main focus has to be kids and instruction. Clinton's philosophy as a principal is on servant leadership. He won't ask a staff member to do something he won't do. "There's a lot of days I sweep the floors between classes," he said.

// I knew I wanted to be in that leadership role... //

Getting to know the students and being a part of their lives is the best part of the job. That's why he's outside the school in mornings, in the hallways during class changes and in the cafeteria during lunch. He wants students to see him and not be afraid to approach him.

Nearly all of his 22 years in education have been in schools that feed into Ashbrook. He sees students he used to teach, and in some cases, he's taught their parents. Clinton wants to continue climbing the career ladder. He'd like to become superintendent of a school system. "That's what I want to do. That's the track I want to do," Clinton said. "I want to move on because I want to make an impact."



Clinton lives in Filbert, S.C., about 25 minutes away. When he's not overseeing Ashbrook, Clinton spends time working on the 200-acre farm where he was born and raised. Clinton took charge of the farm work after his father died while Clinton was in college. The farm has about 50 to 60 beef cattle and a few chickens. His nephews raise pigs and show them for 4-H. Farm life keeps him grounded. "You grab a set of post hole diggers, I mean that's work. And I enjoy it," Clinton said. "It's been a part of who I am all my life."

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