

GASTON ALIVE

MAGAZINE

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

I believe it was Will Rogers who said "There was an old woman that had three sons. One was a preacher, one was a lawyer, and the other one turned out no good too". I have a son who is an attorney, and he is a great guy. But my point is that folks don't usually appreciate politics, or religion, unless it's their own.

As the publisher and editor of Gaston Alive, we avoid politics and religion, and try to focus instead on local charities, interesting people, the arts, and well... food (seems like no one is offended by food). Occasionally I feel remiss in that I have a bully pulpit and could weigh in on some of the meatier matters that affect our national and local well-being, but that's really not what Gaston Alive is all about.

You may have seen the television commercial hawking orange juice with the Donald Sutherland voice over. They picture a dog and his owner, and when the owner throws a stick for the dog to fetch, the dog doesn't move. The voice over says, "Sometimes doing nothing is the right thing to do."

I hope that by bringing you positive stories and trying to feature local arts and charities we are doing something positive- by building up instead of tearing down.

As always, we enjoy hearing from you. Be sure to continue to support your local small businesses that give our community their special color and flavor.

Wishing you a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year!

David

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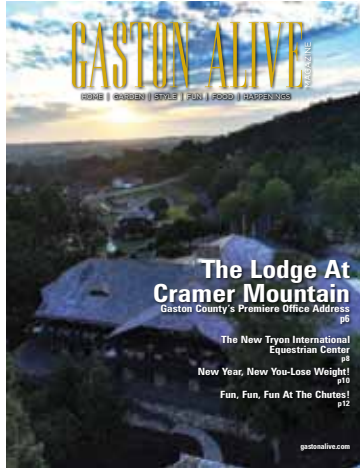
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SNOWLESS TUBING AT THE CHUTES



HOME | GARDEN | STYLE | FUN | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

on the cover



Featured on the cover is The Lodge At Cramer Mountain, which has undergone extensive renovation. Memberships are available at The Cramer Mountain club. See more on page 6.

our staff

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CRAMER MOUNTAIN-REIMAGINED!

By David Hamrick

GA is talking to today with Eric Vargosko, a Cramer Mountain resident and developer with Lenox Development Group who redeveloped the former Cramer Mountain Clubhouse into the Lodge at Cramer Mountain, as well as Joe Campbell, the General Manager and Head Golf Professional at the new Cramer Mountain Club:



GA: The Lodge looks great, tell us about the changes and what's new?

Eric: We essentially took the existing structure and started from scratch with a \$3 Million Dollar full renovation. The building, totaling 35,000 square feet, now includes 17 Class A office condominiums upstairs and the downstairs includes conference facilities, a new Salon & Spa and the new Pro Shop & Locker Rooms for the Cramer Mountain Club.

GA: Tell us about the customizable office space you have available- how does that work?

Eric: Of the 17 suites, we had enormous success with our initial sales. Currently, we have one fully finished suite ready for occupancy as well as one suite that can be fully customized to the owners liking. The suites are very unique in their appearance and high end finishes and offer dramatic views of the Club and property. High end technology driven conference facilities are also available at no cost to owners within the Lodge.

In addition, owners also receive a Full Golf membership with their purchase of an office condo. It's a one of a kind environment unique to both the Charlotte and Gaston County area where office owners can enjoy a high end office environment while escaping the typical



office environment. Current owners include Financial Planning, Technology, Investment Firm, Development Firm, Physician and general office.

GA: So you now have a spa section?

Eric: Yes, Phase I included 4 suites that are home to 2 hairstylists, a barber and an esthetician. Due to the success, we are getting started on Phase II which includes 7 additional suites for more hair salons, massage, yoga and related uses. We have incorporated the salon suite model which allows proven, successful operators to essentially own and operate their own business within the Lodge. The salon owners and their client are extremely happy with the luxurious environment. We will begin taking reservations for qualified stylists and operators for Phase II in February. Phase II should be complete by Summer of this year. Anyone interested can contact Ryan Drye at ryan@lenoxdevelopment.com.

GA: What does Cramer Mountain offer in the way of golf?

Joe: Cramer Mountain Club is a hidden gem, just 14 miles from Charlotte. 18 Championship golf holes that offer extreme elevation changes and a truly unique design. The topography and shot making required makes our course one of a kind. You truly feel like you playing in the mountains and away from the stress of city life.

GA: It's a little cold right now, but what about tennis and pool amenities?

Joe: Our social facilities are a fantastic club amenity that were designed with families and children in mind. We boast a brand new zero entry 132,000 gallon swimming pool with splash pad and 15ft water slide. Combine this with four har-tru clay courts a playground and multi-use sports court, there is an activity for everyone. One can grab a bite to eat or cold drink from our family friendly restaurant whilst overlooking the whole social facility.

GA: Tell us about the kinds of memberships available...

Joe: We offer four types of membership at unbeatable prices. All membership include the whole family.

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cramermountainclub.com or call 704-879-4888.

GA: What is the best thing about Cramer Mountain?

Eric: The location and atmosphere. You essentially have a high end luxury mountain environment less than 30 minutes from downtown Charlotte and 15 minutes from the Airport. Regarding the Lodge, there is nothing close to the amenities and quality of the office environment to buyers interested in the benefits of owning, rather than leasing an office space.

GA: What is one thing that folks would be surprised to know about Cramer Mountain?

Eric: The quality and affordability offered in such a unique environment. With the \$10 million in overall renovations to the mountain environment, The Lodge and Cramer Mountain Club are unmatched in value.



For more information log onto
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PLAN A DAY TRIP TO TRYON INTERNATIONAL EQUESTRIAN CENTER

By David Hamrick

Unless you are a horse lover, you may not have heard of The Tryon International Equestrian Center. Located in Mill Spring on highway 74 about 30 minutes west of Shelby, TIEQ is a premiere Equestrian Lifestyle Destination showcasing some of the top riders in the Hunter/Jumper, Dressage, and Eventing disciplines. Coming back from a recent trip to Tennessee, we stopped in recently, and were really surprised at how large the complex is. I was fortunate enough to speak with Sharon Decker, Co and VP about the center, and wanted to find out more.

GA: Sharon, what is the purpose of TIEQ?

Sharon: To make equestrian sports more accessible to everyone, and to grow the sport.

GA: Who owns the facility?

Sharon: Five families put together a \$150 million dollar investment to bring the Center to fruition. They have other resort projects, including golf courses and the Winter Equestrian Festival in Palm Beach Florida

GA: So who attends your events?

Sharon: Competitors of course, but also horse owners and their family and friends...and people who just love horses.

GA: So what kind of events do you have?

Sharon: Olympic level hunter jumper, dressage, saddle bred, and soon to offer western events-reining, barrel racing, cutting horses, etc. We also offer specialty events, such as Gladiator Polo.

GA: I understand that several college equestrian teams practice here?

Sharon: Yes we have several collegiate teams that train here, including Clemson, University of South Carolina, University of Georgia, among others.

GA: So what do you have to offer for families with children?

Sharon: We have a carousel, and on Saturday nights from May through October we have pony rides, magicians, mini-golf, and face painting. I would mention that our Pony Club events for children have proven to be wildly popular.-check it out, it's a hoot!

GA: So what if we want to make a day or a weekend out of our trip?

Sharon: We have six restaurants on site, four are year round. We have one bedroom tiny houses for rent, a fifty room hotel, as well as luxury homes for



rent on the property. We also have lots of specialty shops, as well as a general store with a deli, snacks, gifts, etc.

GA: I understand you have a really big event coming up in September?

Sharon: We do! September 11-23rd we are thrilled to host The FEI World Equestrian Games™. They are held every four years in the middle of the Olympic cycle, and are one of the biggest events on the global sporting calendar combining eight equestrian World Championship caliber events.

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NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNINGS!

By David Hamrick

It's the New Year, and almost everyone is interested in losing weight and being healthier in the New Year. We are talking today with Dr. Lidia Adkins, owner and CEO of Carolinas Weight Loss Institute.



GA: Congrats on your new location!

Dr. Adkins: Thank you. I am extremely excited that I was given the opportunity to move CWLI into our new home. For the last 10 years we have grown the Carolinas Weight Loss Institute. We have had the pleasure to help so many people from our previous location but we simply outgrew the space. So the Carolinas Weight Loss Institute and our proprietary protocols that I developed have all moved with us to our new beautiful location with additional services now being offered.



GA: What are some things one should consider when starting a weight loss plan or diet?

Dr. Adkins: Each one of my patients understands that she or he is about to embark a wonderful journey and they will see fantastic results—results that many of them never thought possible. But this transformation requires work, commitment and communication. At our first consultation, a lot of patients are telling me “it sounds too easy” or “it sounds too good to be true” or “I’m afraid I will lose the weight too fast”. Well, it may “sound” too good or it may “sound” like you may lose too fast. But once we get started, patients understand that it takes work in order for those impressive numbers to happen. Losing weight is not always as simple as counting calories. If it was, I would not see half of the patient population that I do.

GA: We have seen lots of success stories, what is your secret to helping folks lose weight?

Dr. Adkins: I’m not sure that I have a secret... I take a functional approach when it comes to addressing weight loss. Because everybody’s physiology is unique, I think it is unfair to expect that everyone would lose weight by simply taking a diet pill or reducing their calorie intake. While calories are important, not everyone responds well by counting calories in and out! So I like to take in consideration everyone’s physiology. That is where I start. Then I create a plan that is individualized for every patient. So if I had a secret, I think that is it.

GA: Are all of your weight loss plans the same?

Dr. Adkins: No, I don’t believe in a cookie cutter plan or using the same product on everyone, expecting to obtain the same results. After I review my patients’



information, I put together a personalized plan, which I then present to the patient. This plan takes in consideration the patient's metabolic make up as well as their health status and previous medical history. That is the reason why we average the great results that we do with our patients.

GA: What would you say is a trait of people that lose weight and successfully keep it off?

Dr. Adkins: I am so glad you asked this question! I would say people who understand that discipline and knowledge needs to continue after the protocol ends, those people do fantastic with maintaining. One aspect of my care includes educating my patients when it comes to maintenance. I feel the success of my weight loss approach is not necessarily only by how much a person loses but by how well they maintain. When patients leave my office they know what they need to do in order to maintain. Unfortunately, some patients don't take this phase as seriously as they should and they end up regaining some weight back. But those who do, are successful at maintaining and actually many continue to lose. This is what I wish for everyone.



GA: Do diet and fitness have a part in your weight loss plan?

Dr. Adkins: My main focus is on diet and metabolic work. As for the diet, patients are given a clean protocol that is safe and appropriate for their metabolic needs. We always make sure our patients are not on a dangerously low calorie intake and everyone is instructed to eat at the level of their comfort. Losing weight on my plan is not dependent on working out. That is not what I do as I am not a fitness trainer. I do refer patients out for fitness when necessary. I certainly agree that fitness is a huge part of achieving an optimal metabolic function, but my work does not start there. As we accomplish functional goals, we proceed with fitness. Some patients get there sooner and some have to wait until we start maintenance. It depends on everyone's starting point, health status and their conditioning level.

GA: How would one get started?

Dr. Adkins: The easiest way is by calling us at 704-271-9757. We offer a free, no-obligation weight loss consultation. This gives me an opportunity to sit down with the patient, learn their goals and suggest the best plan for them.

GA: Do you have a favorite healthy recipe you can share with us?

Dr. Adkins: I would love to. The chicken salad with avocado is a favorite for sure and it is extremely simple to make. To view that recipe and others, check out our social media outlets. Our Facebook page is Carolinas Weight Loss Institute and it is a great resource for recipes, fun events, specials and simply witnessing our patients real life success stories.

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CASE STUDY



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After

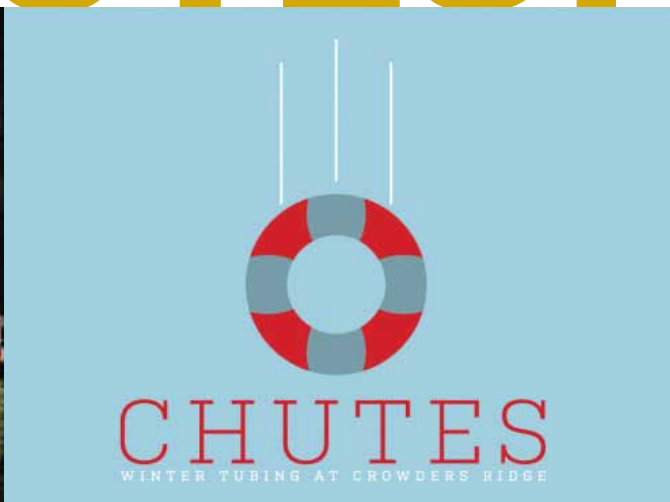
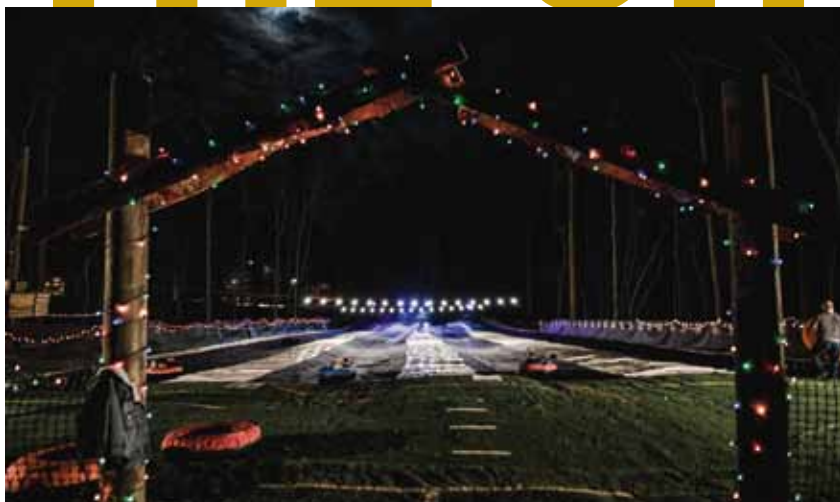
BEAT THE WINTER DOLDRUMS



FUN AT THE CHUTES!



BY BEN DUNGAN



Fundraising is not an easy job. Ask anyone that's had to do it for a living, and they'll be the first to tell you that it's not for the faint at heart.

It requires a special skill set that not all of us were blessed with. Sure, you have to be passionate about your mission, organized, flexible, and willing to put in the long hours to achieve your goal, but you also have that intangible 'IT' factor that not everyone has - you have to be creative.

Getting people to hand over their hard-earned money to something that they may not directly benefit from is both an art and a science.

There are amazing causes everywhere you look. There will never be a shortage of needs that have to be met in this broken world.

Thus, the reality is, everyone is asking for money. And we are all competing for those same dollars. So in order to be successful in this line of work, you have to be willing to think outside of that fundraising box. You have to engage and inspire the people so they may first know about your cause, and then feel compelled to support it.

We just got through December - which just so happens to be the best month for giving. Money leaves our hands easier in December. But once the calendar year flips, the grip tightens.

But that hasn't stopped the good folks at Crowders Ridge Camp and Retreat Center. They've been hard at work fundraising since Thanksgiving, and will continue to do so through February 19.

But they're not organizing a winter 5K at the campsite or selling scores and scores of BBQ plates to friends and neighbors. They aren't even badgering you to buy a 50/50 raffle ticket. They thought outside of the fundraising box and have found an idea that has gained some traction, which is ironic, since the whole idea is built around the absence of traction.

Jay Oliver, the founder and executive director of Crowders Ridge Camp and Retreat Center, has taken the whole snow tubing phenomenon and has turned it on its head.

This idea was borne out of a long, expensive snow tubing trip to the mountains with his family a few years ago. Some ideas sound great in our mind. However, upon execution, it didn't end up



quite how he had envisioned it. It was way too cold and no one had any fun.

So Jay and his team created Chutes - a type of snowless tubing for people of all ages. And even better yet, you don't have to drive all the way to the mountains to experience the thrill.

I've been twice now and I'm not even a thrillseeker. However, there's something

invigorating about hopping on a tube at night and letting gravity take over.

Gravity took over in more ways than one. I had so much fun the first time, I had to hand over my money again and experience it a second time.

I know it sounds cheesy, but that's truly putting the fun into FUNdrasing. And as a result, this fundraiser will help them turn it into a "BARNraiser".

Crowders Ridge is a camp and retreat center for students and youth. That's their primary focus. However, they are in the middle of a capital campaign to build a climate-controlled building on-site that can be used year-round as a dedicated worship space.

Monies raised through the Chutes will also provide scholarship opportunities to those summer campers who may need some financial assistance.

They've been Gaston County's best kept secret for a couple of years...until now. The Chutes have attracted people and

families from all over the Charlotte metro area.

They say, 'If you build it they will come'. Only instead of turning an old corn field into a baseball field, Crowders Ridge has taken a nothing-happening sloped wooded area and has turned it into an amazing tubing experience.

And as a result, they did come- in droves. Sure, they came to tube first and foremost. But you can't go there and not wonder how you never heard of this place before.



Awareness is everything when it comes to fundraising. And thanks to the Chutes, they have people taking notice. But the tubing will come and go. And before long, it will make way for spring retreats and summer campers.

In the meantime, don't let the winter doldrums get you down. The Chutes are still going on through February 19. Put down those electronic devices and pick up a tube. And let gravity take you (and your money) away. For a good cause.



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Investment Strategist

From Founder & Chief Investment Officer JoePat Roop:

We do things differently here at **Belmont Capital Advisors**, and it all stems from our belief that every retiree deserves a retirement that's filled with health, wealth, and happiness.

In an effort to help as many people as possible achieve this reality, we're happy to announce our new weekly radio show, "**A Retire(meant)TM for Living.**" The program is dedicated to helping hardworking citizens in our area -- and beyond -- build comfortable retirements and lasting family legacies.

We hope you'll join us!

Tune In:
WBT 1110 AM and 99.3 FM
Saturdays 1-2 PM
You can also listen online at
www.belmont-capital.com/radio

CALL US TODAY TO SCHEDULE A COMPLIMENTARY, NO-OBLIGATION
CONSULTATION: **704.825.1560** www.belmont-capital.com

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