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From the Publisher

Can you believe that school starts in just a little over two weeks? If you hurry, you still have time for a week or weekend at the beach, or to attend a Charlotte Knights game (the Gastonia Grizzlies are done).

When I was a kid I used to dread school starting... I always wished for a little more summer, or even better, that summer would just never end. I never understood those freaks of nature that couldn't wait for school to start.

But as I've gotten older, I have begun to enjoy the things that fall brings. Besides football I mean. Fall means maybe eventually it will cool off. It means back to school, karate and dance, back to the car pool and waiting in the pick-up line... back to the rhythms of life.

But not yet. I intend on savoring every last drop of summer like the last bit of homemade lemonade in the bottom of the glass. There's still a drop of sweetness there that I don't want to miss.

Happy August, ~ David



PS Welcome to our quest columnist Heather McConnell Brown!

BEN DUNGAN HOT DOGGIN' IT! SCHOOL BAND ROCKS! RICK'S BEST BBQ RIBS SUMMER IN A JAR



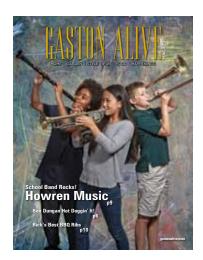






GARDEN STYLE FUN FOOD HAPPENINGS

on the cover



Since 1950 Howren Music has been supplying instruments to students in North and South Carolina. See related story page 9. Cover photo by Rick Haithcox, graphic design by David James.

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CHRISTMAS WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT. CALL AND SCHEDULE YOUR PORTRAIT SESSION NOW.









I'm probably romanticizing the experience a bit. In this day and age of streaming TV like Netflix and Hulu, not to mention the easy access to on-demand television, the days of mindless channel surfing is pretty much over. Now, I have to be intentional about what I want to watch. Now, I have to choose it. It can't choose me anymore.



I like when interesting TV chooses me. In a sea of bad, predictable television, you can always count on PBS to surprise you. And one day, back in 2004, it did.

It was called "A Hot Dog Program". Produced in 1999, it chronicled Documentarian Rick Sebak's journey across the country showcasing some of the coolest and most interesting hot dog joints. From Atlanta to Chicago to Cleveland to Pittsburgh, Sebak ventured far and wide

to introduce us to great hot dogs, the people that make them, and of course, the people that eat them.

From the channel that gave us the likes of Mr. Rogers, Big Bird, Bob Ross, and Ken Burns, of course, would give us a documentary on the hot dog.

But after watching this documentary from start to finish, all I could think about was hot dogs for at least a month after

least 100 hot dogs. That could take a while. But I'm in no hurry.

Rock n' roller Warren Zevon once remarked that the secret to life is to 'enjoy every sandwich". And I agree. I just want to enjoy every hot dog. However, the experts would debate whether or not a hot dog is even a sandwich.



I'm not stepping into the center of that controversial debate. I want to be a proud flag bearer of all things good about hot dogs.

If I can't be the Rick Sebak of North Carolina hot dogs, then I want to be the Dr. Seuss of hot dogs. I feel like he, of all people, should have written a book about them. Instead, he was too concerned about the green eggs and the ham.

I'll do it instead. My book would read:

I'll eat them on the go, or I'll eat them while I sit. I'll eat them at the ballpark. Or the flea market.

I'll buy them where they're bought, and I'll eat them where they're sold. I like my hot dog hot. I'll never eat one cold.

I'll eat one on my way into Home Depot, and I'll eat one on my way out. Extra slaw and chili please. Hold the sauerkraut.

THEN I WANT THE DR. SEU OF HOT DOGS.

And thus, that's the beauty of it all. All it takes is just one look. Or just one smell. And boom you're done. The hot dog has you right where it wants you.

No one wakes up one day being in the mood for a hot dog. They want a good steak or a tasty burger. People crave a lot of different things, but rarely do they crave the hot dog.

That's the secret of the hot dog. You may never be in the mood for a hot dog. But they're always in the mood for you.

You don't choose the hot dog. Like good TV, it chooses you. Every time.



But earlier this year, I thought about it again. I don't know why. I wondered if it would resonate the way it did 14 years earlier. And it did. And all I could think about a month after again was eating a hot dog.

But timing is everything. I had plans to hit every hot dog joint in Gaston County. That was my plan. Until real life got in the way - in the form of some blood work that said my triglycerides were elevated.

My diet would have to change. Drastically. And it has. But not to the point where I can't go out and enjoy a hot dog once in a while if I want. Now I look at it as a treat - a delicacy that I am able to delight in once in a while. And these days, it usually coincides with a little road trip.

I'd love to be the Rick Sebak of North Carolina and eat a hot dog in every county of the state. From Murphy to Manteo and Cherokee to Chowan, and all points in between. But that means I'd have to eat at

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We are talking today with Dennis Howren of Howren Music in Gastonia.

GA: Dennis, how long have you guys been in Gastonia-what's your history?

Dennis: My dad taught instrumental music at Belmont Central High School. He saw the need first hand for students to have affordable, quality instruments. He started Howren Music in 1950 and began supplying instruments throughout North and South Carolina.

GA: So you rent and sell band instruments?

Dennis: Parents are extremely supportive of their student's interests and activities, especially when it involves the arts. For 68 years we have refined our programs to fit into any family budget. Whether you rent or buy we will supply you with the perfect fit.

GA: Are the plans flexible?

Dennis: We have a monthly Rent-to-own plan whereby you can rent the instrument for as long as you wish with all rental payments applying to the purchase. The "Rental" feature allows you to return it if the child wishes to pursue another activity. But if you rent it long enough you'll own it. We also have a 12-month payment plan with a return option and a buyback feature, as well as two Cash Discount programs where you will save hundreds of dollars.

GA: What is the one thing most parents want to know about renting a band instrument?

Dennis: Some parents simply want to know the bottom line. Others want to know they are getting a quality instrument. But the trend today is "Do I want to deal with a cold National Chain, take a chance online, or do I want to deal with my local, neighborhood company?" Howren Music has been in the Gaston schools for decades. If you want to speak to the owner you can always reach a Howren. We're here, we're accessible and we're ready to help. Try that with a national chain.

GA: Do you rent instruments for band and orchestra?

Dennis: Unfortunately Gaston County Schools does not have orchestra programs but they have some fantastic bands and we supply Instruments, Accessories, Repairs and Lessons. But we also have orchestra instruments and rent them as well.

GA: Is the Rent-to-own program the way to go for most parents?

Dennis: There is no way to know how long your child will stick with band and parents don't want to end up with an instrument that no one plays. Our Rent-to-Own program allows you to rent an instrument monthly. You can return it at any time and have no further obligation. However, if your student loves it and sticks with it you will eventually own it as all payments apply to the purchase price. We also offer a Repair and Replacement agreement that maintains the playability of the instrument. Middle schoolers and moving parts. . .yeah you're gonna have repairs. But don't worry, our certified repair department has seen it all. We'll get your child's instrument back to like new condition in short order.

GA: What do parents need to do to insure they have an instrument for their child?

Dennis: Simple - They can go to www.howrenmusic.net and rent online or they can drop by the store on Garrison Blvd or in Charlotte to pick one up. The process is quick and streamlined. They can also secure any accessories and the beginner book. Look at the students on the front cover. They all just started their path to being musicians. They have a real, quality instrument and they are excited, motivated, involved and ready to play. . . Music!



RIBS ON THE BIG GREEN EGG

SMOKEHOUSE RIBS

Publishers Note:

These are without a doubt some of the best ribs I have ever eaten! You can make these ribs without a Big Green Egg, just adapt as necessary.

Select a nice couple racks of pork ribs from your local grocer.

Remove the membranes and cut racks in 1/2. The membranes are on the back side of the ribs (bone side). Use a spoon to loosen the edge then peel away. Make sure to remove all the membrane..it will not cook.

Cover the meat side of each slab with a thin coating of yellow mustard. (I use a mixture of mustard and olive oil, mix the 2 together in a small bowl). The mustard doesn't add any flavor, just gives the rub something more to adhere to. Generously coat both sides (2/3 on meat side, 1/3 on bone side) with the rub. (see below) Be sure to get the ends and sides of the Butt. . Let meat rest in fridge over night or up to 24 hrs. before grilling. Warm at room temp for about 30 min. before cooking.

Cook indirect in a rib rack at 325 deg. for 90 min. Use Hickory or apple wood chunks for smoke (I use a mixture of 2/3 Hickory to 1/3 Apple wood chunks soaked in water.) Place a good amount around the edges of your grill and a few on the hot coals.

RIB AND BBQ RUB:

- •1/4 cup salt
- •1/4 cup turbinado sugar

BY RICK HAITHCOX

- •1/5 cup brown sugar
- •1 tsp granulated onion
- 1 tb black pepper
- 1 tb chili powder
- •1 tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tb paprika
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp thyme leaves

*Store in air tight container in cool dry place.

Most important, prepare your favorite drink and sit in the shade and enjoy the smoke / meat smell of the ribs slowly smoking on your grill for the first 90 minutes.

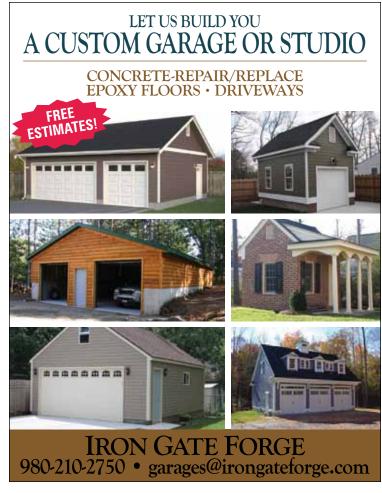
Remove ribs after 90 minutes and brush with mixture of melted butter, your BBQ sauce of choice and honey, then place in aluminum pan with about one inch of apple juice. Cover tightly and bake on grill or oven at 350 deg. for about 1 hour.

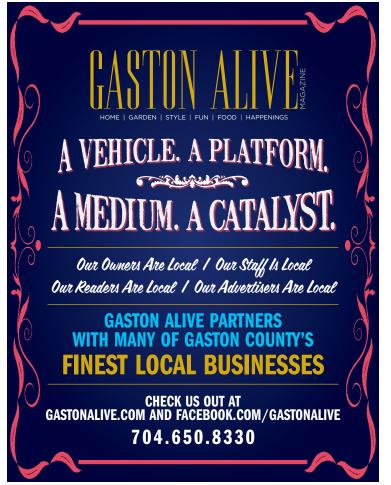
The final step.....coat with your favorite BBQ sauce and place on medium hot grill for a few minutes on each side and serve-yum!

Note: you really do not need a heavy BBQ sauce. Do Not use a smoke flavor BBQ sauce, your cooking method has already infused the great hickory smoke flavor to your ribs. I sometimes totally skip the very last step of putting them back on the grill after the covered step. You can always serve more sauce on the side...









PARTING THOUGHTS

SUMER NAMER



By Heather McConnell Brown

With the end of summer upon us, I started thinking about why this season means so much to everyone. Of course, for some of us...me included, summer is a time off from school, a time to recharge and renew. But I believe summer is even more special because of the influence it brings throughout the rest of the year.

Henry Thoreau once said, "One must maintain a little bit of summer, even in the middle of winter."

Summer is a burst of color, everything is alive and blooming and ready for harvest. One of my favorite things about summer is fresh produce. A quick stop by the roadside market at a farm near me is both aesthetically pleasing to my senses as well my taste buds. Every color of the rainbow can easily be found and the tastes are just as numerous and unique. Around this time every year, I find myself trying to seize the day and cling on to the last little bit of summer. If only we could bottle the extended daylight, the lightning bugs, the hydrangeas but most of all summer's produce.

Growing up in the South, my family would always have a huge garden and can. Let me explain, I grew up calling it "canning" or to "can". Other parts of the country, further North and across the pond, they often refer to this process as preserving, curing, infusing or processing. It's the same thing...trust me, but for the sake of this article, I am using what I grew up calling it.."canning". But first let me explain, when I say can...I don't mean one or two pint jars. I'm talking cases and cases of green beans, tomatoes, jams, pickles and enough bags of corn that one could make a highway to the beach.

Today not many people can. The loss of this art makes me sad. Technology and industrialization have altered the landscape of how we bring food to our table. But during the summer months, I love nothing better than planning our meals around harvest schedules and the colorful bounty of food offered at local markets. Don't get me wrong, I am happy that canning is not a necessity and an ample supply of food can be found year round with a quick drive to the nearest grocery store.

What I miss is the time spent on the porches, the kitchens and in the garden. There isn't an app for this...there isn't anything quick about preserving foods. Maybe this is why people today don't "can" as much anymore. Canning to me is more than just tradition and what it represents to my southern roots. Canning today is more like a hobby. People can for pleasure and to spend time with their family. The rewards are plentiful. To me opening a jar of jelly on a snowy day in January, allows me to taste a little bit of summer. It's more of a promise, of what will come in a few months.

It's not too late for you to preserve summer, too. Stop by our local farmers market and I'm sure you can easily spot some mason jars filled to the brim with summer. This fall you will also find these jewels at your local fairs. Try some of them - be brave, try something pickled. I have always thought of these Mason jars as beautiful reminders of summer - traditions, memories, and flavors...just think of it as love or in this case, "summer in a jar."



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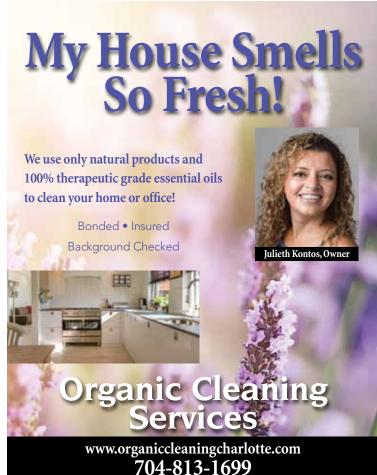
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