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CORNELIUS LAKESIDE LIVING

COVER PHOTO BY WORDS & PICTURES BY JEANNIE DESENA



THE HOFFMANNS:
Life Is but a Game

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Meet the Town's New Leaders • Celebrating 30 Years of Parks & Recreation • Apple Picking

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Where to Pick Apples

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL

September is apple season in North Carolina. Enjoy everything apple (apple donuts, apple slushies and good ol' apple pie) at the 2026 North Carolina Apple Festival in Hendersonville from Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 7. It's just 85 miles away! It is one of the best-known street fairs in North Carolina with arts and crafts, live entertainment and, of course, festival food. For more festival information, visit *www.ncapplefestival.org.*

Here's where to go apple picking:

Carrigan Farms, Mooresville, NC
Beginning in September
Market and U-pick or pre-picked apples
www.carriganfarms.com/the-farm/apples

Apple Hill Orchard and Cider Mill, Morganton, NC
Beginning mid-August
Market and U-pick or pre-picked apples
www.applehillorchard.com

Justus Orchard, Hendersonville, NC
Beginning early August
Market, petting zoo, U-pick or pre-picked apples
www.justusorchard.com

Sky Top Orchard, Hendersonville, NC
New this year, U-pick apples by reservation only
Mountain views, barnyard animals, playground, U-pick or pre-picked apples
www.skytoporchard.com

Stepp's Hillcrest Orchard, Hendersonville, NC
Beginning August 15
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www.steppapples.com

Granddad's Apples and Such, Hendersonville, NC
Beginning early August
Barnyard animals, corn maze, trampoline, cow train, pre-picked apples and pumpkin patch
www.grandadsapples.com

Coston Farm & Apple House, Hendersonville, NC
Check for opening date
U-pick and pre-pick, market, bakery
www.costonfarm.com

Jeter Mountain Farm Apple Orchard, Hendersonville, NC
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www.jetermountainfarm.com

Mountain Fresh Orchards, Hendersonville, NC
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www.mtnfreshorchards.com

Perry Lowe Orchards, Moravians Falls, NC
Opens Labor Day weekend (tickets required)
U-pick or pre-pick, market, cider
www.perryloweorchards.com

Please visit each location's website for the most current information, dates and hours of operation.



NC APPLE FESTIVALS

September 4-7 North Carolina Apple Festival, Downtown Hendersonville
September 26 Apple Fest at Historic Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem
October 3 Brushy Mountain Apple Festival, North Wilkesboro
October 17 Lincoln County Apple Festival, Downtown Lincolnton
October 17 Taylorsville Apple Festival, Main Street, Taylorsville



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DEAR NEIGHBORS,



While another amazing Lake Norman summer has come to an end, there is so much to look forward to. Cornelius Parks & Recreation is celebrating 30 years, which comes with a lineup of events for the whole community! From BBQ & Bingo for the 55+ neighbors to 'Tawba Walk for the whole family (and so much more), it's time to fill those fall calendars. Don't forget to add the North Carolina Apple Festival to that calendar, too, and plan a day of apple picking at one of dozens of nearby orchards. We've included quite a few options in this issue.

Speaking of fun things to do, we have some fun neighbors to introduce you to this month: Glen and Sandy Hoffmann of Bahia Bay. Don't let their backgrounds as educators fool you—these two have introduced a pinball league to their neighborhood, host the music bingo and trivia nights at Torrence & Knox, and much more. Their pup, Gus, even has a following. Thank you, Hoffmanns, for sharing your positive energy and story with our community.

Do you have a pet at home who's just the cat's meow (no offense to our canine or exotic friends)? We would love to feature them on our Lakeside Pets page! Email us at jbaker@bestversionmedia or ccampbell@bestversion media with a name, story and a couple photos.



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Cheers to 30 Years!

Fall Fun in Cornelius Starts This September

BY MARY CURCIONE, CORNELIUS PARKS & RECREATION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

The temperatures may be cooling down, but we're turning up the fun in Cornelius! This fall, Cornelius Parks & Recreation is bringing the community together with a jam-packed lineup of special events, programming and plenty of reasons to celebrate.

September is an especially exciting month as Cornelius Parks & Recreation commemorates its 30th anniversary with 30 for 30—30 programs and activities throughout the month in honor of 30 years of serving the Cornelius community.

From fitness and recreation to family-friendly activities and opportunities to try something new for the first time, 30 for 30 ensures no one in the family will be bored. Whether you've been enjoying Cornelius parks and programs for decades or are just discovering them, 30 for 30 is the perfect time to experience all that Parks & Recreation has to offer and join in on the celebration.

If you want to go the extra mile and celebrate on the move, take on our 30-Mile Challenge! Throughout September, we're challenging the community to walk, run, bike or roll 30 miles in 30 days for a chance to win a free commemorative t-shirt (while supplies last). Complete your miles wherever and however you choose, and use the tracker available on our website to track your progress along the way.



All American Dog Show



Greenway

The month wraps up with one of Lake Norman's most adorable annual traditions, the 26th Annual All American Dog Show, which takes place on Sunday, September 27, from 2-5pm at Robbins Park. Hundreds of dog lovers and their four-legged friends will gather for an afternoon featuring pet-related vendors, concessions and crowd-favorite contests such as Best Pooch Smooch, Best "Puppy Dog" Eyes, Best Dressed and, of course, Best of Show. The event is free to attend and enjoy, with a small registration fee for pups competing in the contests.

The fall excitement continues as we head into October with the 14th Annual Laketoberfest on Saturday, October 10, from 3-8pm at Bailey Road Park. This free community celebration has become a favorite way to welcome the season with live music, local beer and wine, food trucks and a Kids Zone filled with crafts and games. Event proceeds benefit Lake Norman Wildlife, giving you one more reason to feel good about joining in on the fun.

For 30 years, Cornelius Parks & Recreation has been bringing people together through exceptional parks, greenways and community experiences, and this fall is no exception. We hope you'll join your family and neighbors as we celebrate this milestone and yet another memorable fall season in Cornelius.

To explore the full 30 for 30 schedule and learn more about upcoming Cornelius Parks & Recreation special events, visit cornelius.org/pr.



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THE HOFFMANNS: Life Is but a Game

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL
PHOTOS BY WORDS & PICTURES BY JEANNIE DESENA



Glen and Sandy Hoffmann

Cornelius residents Glen and Sandy Hoffmann have a gift: they bring people together, they create experiences and they foster a deeper sense of community—over games. Pinball games, trivia, euchre, music bingo and even beerster egg hunts (picture adults hunting for cans instead of Easter eggs) are just a few ways they meet new people, unite a community and create a sense of home in a new town.

Both Illinois natives, Glen and Sandy met at Illinois State University (ISU), where they both earned Master's degrees—Sandy's in College Student Personnel Administration and Glen's from ISU and Bradley University in Education Administration and Foundations. They spent their entire careers in education, commanding classrooms and inspiring students. Glen worked in special and alternative education, while Sandy taught preschool and later adult learners at Heartland Community College. Outside the classroom, Glen was honored to serve as president of both the Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) and the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA).

So how did two educators who had lived in Illinois their entire lives find their way to Lake Norman? Glen and Sandy's North Carolina adventure started more than six years before they relocated here. They were visiting the Outer Banks, which was much too crowded for their liking, and decided to take a "detour" to Denver, NC to visit a college friend (little did they know it was seven hours out of their way). But this grand detour turned out to be a gift. They fell in love with Lake Norman, which reminded them of a more expansive version of their lake in Illinois. After snooping around LKN, they found Cornelius, which had everything they wanted: walkability, easy access to the airport for international travel and the lake life.

They originally purchased a "dream" Cape Cod-style home in Bordeaux, which they rented for years while still in IL and never actually lived in, knowing Cornelius would be their next life adventure. In the meantime, they embarked on an emotional rollercoaster—they both retired from their lifelong careers in education, said goodbye to friends and family in Illinois, and moved to North Carolina feeling a bit uneasy about finding the same social scene and community they were leaving behind. This next chapter was largely unknown.

But one thing Glen did know was that "whatever work I took on in retirement needed to have a social element." And then he started saying YES! "That's how I ended up as a Gameshow Host at Gameshow Battle Rooms in Ballantyne. I had no idea what the job required, but it sounded fun... and it was! It sparked a whole new way of thinking," Glen laughed. From there, his YES! mindset led to a job sampling spirits at Total Wine, another introducing games in a seven-week experiment at Eleven Lakes Brewing and several other yes moments—and eventually Glen had five part-time jobs at once. He's since reigned it in a bit.

Also after relocating, they realized they were waterfront instead of waterview people. They found a home and settled into the Bahia Bay neighborhood, where their new neighbors had no idea their newest residents were known in

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IL for running pinball tournaments. Glen and Sandy found themselves playing pinball in the garage with the door wide open. When neighbors walked by and took notice, the couple invited them in for a beverage and a game. Things spiraled quickly, and Glen and Sandy are currently up to six (their max, they promise!) pinball machines, formed the Bahia Bay pinBallers social club and host tournaments at their home. Many of their neighbors are now ranked nationally and statewide through the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA). They've even shared their pinball expertise with new Cornelius business Lock Is Lit Pinball, who hosted a 50-person tournament on August 1.

Glen's exuberance, Sandy's brains and the couple's commitment and excitement for meeting new people led to the creation of something else big: Games With Glen (gameswithglen.com). A year and a half ago, they were inspired to bring their enthusiasm for games to the larger community, and it's grown into something they never expected. You will now find this couple of 39 years running games at Torrence & Knox every Tuesday and Wednesday night, which they consider their "new classroom." On most Tuesday nights, Glen and Sandy host Music Bingo. Neighbors come to sing and dance, families play music bingo together and there's zero intimidation factor or prior knowledge necessary (the answers are revealed after set time). The last Tuesday of the month is reserved for euchre tournaments, which have grown so popular that reservations are recommended.

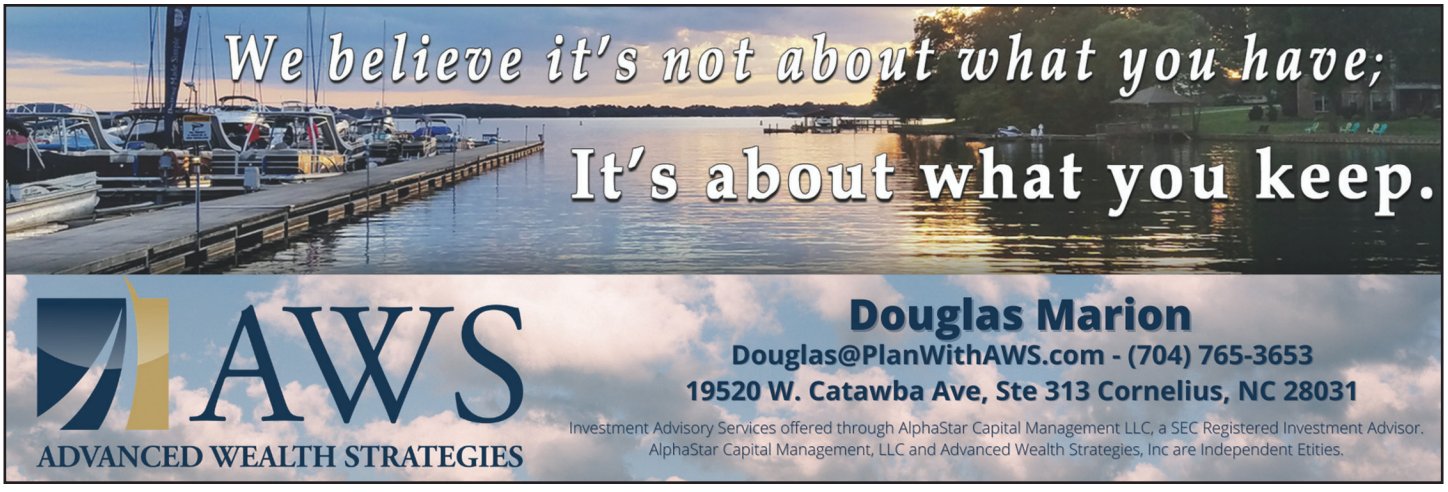
On Wednesdays, the Hoffmanns host Trivia Night at Torrence & Knox, and this brings out the regulars (and serious



Bahia Bay pinBallers

competition). What's unique about Glen and Sandy's trivia is that Glen writes all the questions himself. He spends time researching, fact-checking, creating patterns in groups of questions and even beginning new "subjects" teaching the players as if in a classroom again. The goal is to keep things fresh and challenging for those who go home and "study" each week. But one thing is guaranteed—it's always going to be fun, even for a new team.

Though gaming is a huge part of their lives, they never lose sight that the most important thing is being retired. You'll find the couple boating, walking and doing anything social. They also have a 13-year-old rescue puppy, Gus, who is famous in his own right for his travels from coast to coast. Gus, a former





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therapy dog who worked at the same community college as Sandy, leaves Google reviews of places that are dog-friendly, which have racked up over a million views. His fans can also follow his "Tales of Gus" Facebook page (www.facebook.com/talesofgus). And when Gus approves of a space (prompt water service, good patio, friendly people, etc.), it gets a Gus sticker of approval, which you may find posted on your next brewery visit. Gus is enjoying retirement in North Carolina now too.



Speaking of coast to coast, the Hoffmanns travel extensively. They've visited 49 of the 50 states—with Alaska being the last on the list—explored the Caribbean, owned a property in Belize and are looking forward to a month in Spain to fully immerse themselves in the culture. (But don't worry, trivia and music bingo will continue with a substitute in their absence!)

As for their uneasiness about leaving all things known in Illinois? Glen says, "Our relationship has grown stronger because of this move. Every day offers something new if you choose to see it that way. We went from having great doubts to feeling fully at home in Cornelius."

From Glen and Sandy: "If you're ever at Torrence & Knox on a Tuesday or Wednesday, please say hello. And if you're trying to find us, just ask anyone in Bahia Bay where 'the pinball people' live—they'll point you in the right direction. And remember, every day holds a new adventure if you take a moment to make it happen."



Handcrafted chessboard at their Bahia Bay home



What do you love about Cornelius?
"We love Cornelius for the sidewalks. We chose this town because we like to walk, and our range goes from Ace Hardware all the way to Harris Teeter on Jetton. There are many communities around the lake, but Cornelius fit that desire best."





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HOME THEORY:

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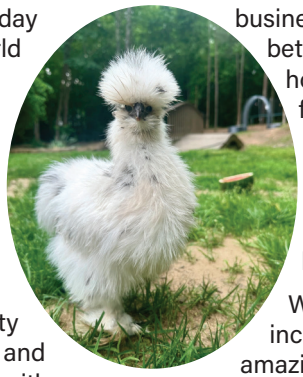
BY SARAH FIEL, OWNER



When you need to hire a contractor, what's your first thought? Dread? Fear? Anxiety? Yep, we completely understand… that's why we decided to do construction differently. Hi, we're Home Theory, your Boutique Design + Renovations Company. To earn your trust, we know we have to be different than the rest. There's no dishonest contractors or back-of-the-napkin sales pitches here. We cross every "t" and dot every "i" so you can rest assured knowing your home and your investment are in great hands. From the moment we start talking about your wish list until we reveal your new space, you have a full team by your side—even if you just need someone to talk to. Construction is inherently stressful, and we are here to take that off your plate. All you have to do is approve your plans, sign your documents and pay your invoices. We handle everything else. Imagine home renovations being that simple. They absolutely can be.

Part of our magic is the structure of our team. I'm Sarah, Owner of Home Theory and Professional Interior Designer. You'll always start the renovation journey with me. We can keep it quick and simple, or chat away like old friends while we dream up your new space. I'm married to our incredible Licensed General Contractor, Eric. I'm not just saying he's great because we've been married 20 years; if you know Eric, you love Eric. Because we are under the same roof, we're always on the same page. We keep that flowing to the client by offering a portal that is updated regularly with messages and photos and a team lead on site for day-to-day questions. That makes a world of difference when it comes to renovations where there are surprises around every corner, and the budget, timeline and scope of work are always shifting. Plus, we've been doing this forever. Eric's been working in the industry in one capacity or another for over 30 years, and I've been renovating houses with him since we got married.



At our core, we're just a small-town pair of old souls from Wisconsin who jam out to 90s country music. We both have a deep Midwest work ethic that doesn't quit. I spend my limited free time digging into the 'grandma hobbies' as our teenagers call them. Sewing, gardening, baking, crafting up herbal concoctions, reading and a newly acquired hobby, embroidery. Eric is a diehard outdoorsman—fishing, hunting, target shooting and mountain biking. Together, we live on a full-blown homestead complete with ducks, chickens, bees, three homeschooled free-spirited teenagers and a labradoodle. The kids all have their own businesses too, so I guess entrepreneurship runs in our blood. There are a total of seven businesses under our roof. In between the businesses and the homestead, there's very little free time, but when we get antsy, we hop on a plane to who knows where (usually on a whim) because why not. Life is too short to not live an adventure.

We can't wrap up without including a shout out to the amazing staff and subcontractors on our team. These guys keep the wheels rolling. We only hire teammates with strong values of integrity and excellence, people we would invite into our own home, so that we can be 100% confident in providing our clients with the best of the best in the industry.





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What Makes the Topgolf Swing Suites at The Serve Worth Trying?



BY TREVOR FILO, THE SERVE

When people hear about our Topgolf Swing Suite bays, one of the first things they ask is, "Do I have to be a golfer?" The answer is absolutely not. While the simulators offer a realistic golf experience, they're designed for everyone, whether you've played golf for years or have never swung a club before.

The golf simulators let you play on famous courses from around the world using technology that tracks each shot. It's a great way to practice your game or simply have fun with friends in a relaxed setting. Since everything is indoors, you don't have to worry about the weather affecting your plans.



What surprises many guests is that golf is only part of the experience. The Swing Suite bays also include interactive games like baseball, football, hockey, carnival games and other fun challenges that are easy for kids and adults to enjoy. Because of the variety of games, the bays are popular for birthday parties, family outings, date nights and teambuilding events.

Another question we hear often is how many people can use a bay. Each suite can comfortably accommodate small or larger groups up to eight, making it easy for everyone to play, eat and spend time together. Food and drinks can be ordered while you're playing, so there's no need to leave the bay once your game gets started.

If you're wondering how much time to reserve, it really depends on your group size. An hour works well for a couple of people, while larger groups usually enjoy having two hours so everyone gets plenty of turns without feeling rushed.

One of the things that makes the Swing Suite bays stand out is how flexible they are. Every group uses the space a little differently. Some people come in to work on their golf swing, while others are just looking for a fun place to hang out after work or on the weekend. I've seen families with young kids, couples on date nights and coworkers celebrating together, and it's always interesting to see how everyone makes the experience their own. That's one of the reasons I enjoy working here—no two visits are ever the same.

One thing I enjoy seeing while working at The Serve is how quickly people get into the games. Even guests who say they're "not golfers" usually end up having a great time. The games are simple to pick up, and the atmosphere is all about having fun rather than competing.

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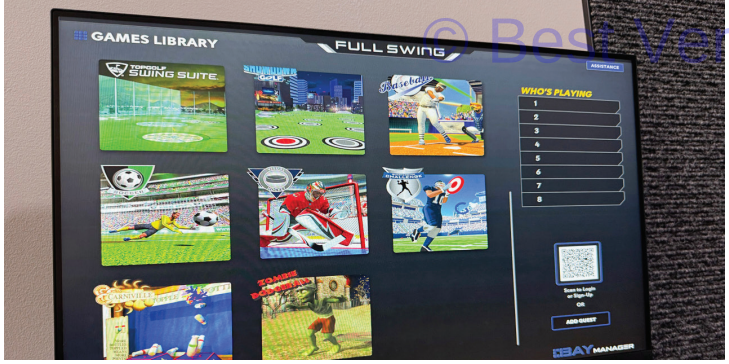

around Lake Norman, the Topgolf Swing Suite bays offer an experience that's entertaining for all ages and skill levels. It's a fun way to spend time with family, friends or coworkers, and it's a great reminder that you don't have to be a golfer to enjoy everything the Swing Suites have to offer.



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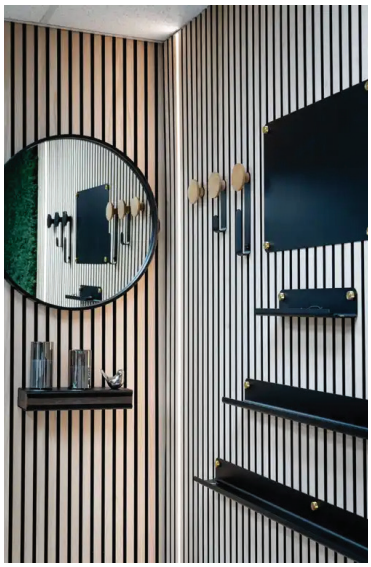
Modern Acoustic Wall Panels —Where Style Meets Everyday Function



By Annie Hanson, CEO, The Closet Niche

Today's homes are designed to be both beautiful and practical, and modern acoustic wall panels are the perfect example of that balance. Once viewed simply as a solution for reducing noise, acoustic wall panels have evolved into a sophisticated design feature that enhances the look, feel and functionality of any space. With clean lines, contemporary finishes and endless customization accessory options, they have become an essential element in modern home design.



The Closet Niche offers a variety of wood species, stains, paint colors and finishes so your acoustic wall panels can complement virtually any interior style—from warm, rustic farmhouse aesthetics to sleek, minimalist designs. Whether installed in an entryway, home office, living room or bedroom feature wall, they create a striking architectural feature while improving the acoustics of the space by helping reduce echo and unwanted noise.

What truly sets today's acoustic wall panel systems apart is their versatility. They're no longer just decorative walls...they're customizable organization systems that adapt to your lifestyle. We have a growing selection of movable and interchangeable accessories that allow homeowners to reconfigure their wall whenever their needs change. Instead of committing to permanent shelving or hooks, accessories can be repositioned in seconds, creating a solution that evolves with your family.

One of the most practical applications is transforming an entryway or drop zone into an organized command center. Adjustable coat hooks provide a convenient place for jackets, hats and umbrellas, while floating shelves hold keys, wallets, sunglasses or decorative accents. Add a stylish planter box to introduce greenery or install adjustable lighting or a lamp to create a warm and inviting welcome as you enter your home. Because every accessory is movable, refreshing the layout is simple whenever you want a new look or additional storage.

Garage entry walls have also become a popular location for these multifunctional systems. Busy families know how quickly backpacks, lunch bags, sports equipment and everyday essentials can pile up near the door. Acoustic wall panels provide an organized



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solution by giving every item its designated place. Hooks can be arranged for backpacks, shelves can store essential items and shoes, and black magnetic boards can keep important notes or tasks written neatly for reminders as you exit to start your day. Everything is visible, organized and ready to grab on the go, making hectic mornings far less stressful.

The flexibility extends beyond organization. As seasons change, accessories can be swapped to suit different needs throughout the year. This adaptability means your wall continues to serve your family instead of becoming outdated or cluttered.

Modern acoustic wall panels prove that great design should work as hard as it looks. They combine sophisticated aesthetics, improved sound control and customizable organization into one innovative solution. Whether you're creating a stylish entryway, an efficient garage entry drop zone or an elegant feature wall, these panels offer a timeless design that grows with your home. Beautiful, practical and endlessly adaptable, modern acoustic wall panels redefine what functional wall décor can be.









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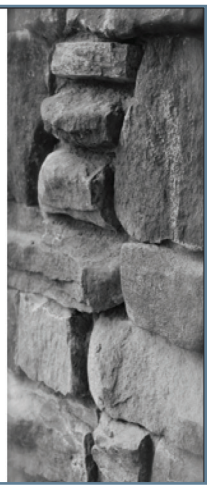

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AROUND TOWN *with Mayor Bilodeau*

Hello Cornelius!

Let's meet the new leaders!

As mentioned last month, change is inevitable, and we now have three critical leadership position changes at Town Hall. Two individuals are new to our community while one is a returning familiar "man about town." Here is a little bit more about these individuals:

WELCOME BACK, DR. SCOTT HIGGINS!



Dr. Scott Higgins

Dr. Scott Higgins returns to the Town Board, filling the vacancy created by Commissioner Sansbury's move out of state. Scott has been a force in promoting quality-of-life activities. He's extremely active in our town and very involved with anything related to outdoor activity. Scott previously served as Cornelius Mayor Pro Tem from 2023–2025, and was also a past chair of the Cornelius Park and Recreation Board. Scott earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida, a master's degree at Indiana University and his doctorate in Higher Education Administration at the University of South Carolina. Commissioner Higgins has been a sought-after speaker and has earned numerous awards throughout his illustrious career in education at Western Carolina College.

MORE ABOUT OUR SENIOR LEADERS



Cynthia Broomfield

Cynthia M. Broomfield recently moved to Cornelius from Michigan with her husband and two young sons. She has replaced recently retired Wayne Herron as the town's Deputy Town Manager.

Cynthia earned her bachelor's degree in communication from Ashland University in Ohio. She is anxious to begin assisting the Town Manager with oversight of daily operations. More specifically, she will be overseeing NCDOT transportation projects, monitoring recently received federal grants and staying abreast of federal and state legislative matters that impact our town. Projects such as addressing affordable housing and economic development are also important areas of focus for Cynthia.

Steve Bridges has joined the Cornelius Management Team as Director of Public Works. Steve previously served in the same capacity in Statesville where he led infrastructure operations, capital projects, budget development and long-range planning. He also held leadership roles with NCDOT, managing transportation engineering, intelligent transportation systems, development review and regional operations. He holds an MBA from Pfeiffer University and a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering technology from Western Carolina University. Steve is originally from Waynesville and is married with two children.



Steve Bridges

FUN FACTS ABOUT CYNTHIA AND STEVE

Q: HOW WOULD THOSE WHO REALLY KNOW YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONALITY?

Steve: *Kind, a little nerdy and fun.*

Cynthia: *I think the people that know me best would describe me as someone who really cares...about people and about doing things really well for the betterment of the community. I enjoy building relationships, solving problems creatively and genuinely connecting with the community I am serving.*

Q: FAVORITE PASTIME/HOBBY?

Steve: *Anything involving aviation, flying a plane (lessons).*

Cynthia: *I am an avid book reader (when I have time!). I also enjoy running and hope to sign up for another half marathon soon.*

Q: FAVORITE MUSIC GENRE?

Steve: *As a previous music major in college, this is a tough one. I learned to love all different types of music. However, I have a real love for Doo Wop/50s and 60s era.*

Cynthia: *With two young kids, I mostly listen to sing-a-long songs, but when I have the chance, I enjoy soft pop.*

Q: SPORTS TEAMS YOU FOLLOW?

Steve: *Carolina Panthers, Carolina Hurricanes, NC State, Auburn, Western Carolina.*

Cynthia: *As a Michigan transplant, I plan for my annual heartache of the Detroit Lions letting us down.*

Q: OTHER THAN CORNELIUS, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT?

Steve: *North Topsail and Holden Beaches.*

Cynthia: *I love Michigan's Upper Peninsula. I've been several times, and every spot is just as beautiful as the last.*

So now you know! I hope you take the opportunity to ask your questions soon and connect with Scott (shiggins@cornelius.org), Steve (sbridges@cornelius.org) and Cynthia (cbroomfield@cornelius.org). Our town remains in very good hands!

Cheers! Mayor D
dbilodeau@cornelius.org

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Early Action vs. Early Decision: What is the Difference?

COMPILED BY JOANIE BAKER, M.A. SECONDARY ENGLISH EDUCATION & GIFTED EDUCATION (THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY), CERTIFICATE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS



Early Decision vs. Early Action: What is the difference?

With the Common App open since August 1, seniors should be busy working on their college applications and should already have chosen their decision deadlines for the schools on their list. The first decision deadlines to arrive are Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED) deadlines in early fall, followed by Regular Decision deadlines in the new year. EA and ED options are often confused and used interchangeably, but they are VERY different and not fully understanding the differences can cause big issues for you and your high school.

Early Action (EA)

The Early Action deadline is offered by many schools and is that school's earliest deadline for submitting applications; you can submit your application anytime between August 1 and that deadline. Most schools offer EA or ED but not both, although a few offer both. You want to make sure that you make that deadline for any schools offering it, as most schools admit a larger percentage of students at that deadline as opposed to the Regular Decision deadline, so you have a better chance of getting in if you are early. You also find out more quickly if you are accepted, which can alleviate a lot of anxiety and help you make decisions about where you want to go faster. If you are rejected, it allows you to apply to other schools before the Regular Decisions deadlines. If you are deferred, all you can do is wait for RD to find out where you stand. You can apply to as many schools as you want by the EA deadlines. If you are accepted EA, you do not have to accept right away as it is non-binding, meaning you are not required to go there if you get in. Applying EA also allows you to compare offers from multiple schools well before the official acceptance deadline of May 1. There is really no downside to applying by the EA deadlines.

Some schools have multiple EA deadlines, and some have Restricted EA (or Single-Choice EA), which means you cannot apply ED elsewhere or EA at other private schools if you apply there, but you can apply EA at public institutions and RD elsewhere, even if you get admitted at the REA school.

Early Decision (ED)

The Early Decision deadline is the one where you need to be careful. ED means if you apply early and get accepted, you MUST ATTEND that school and you agree to pay whatever they offer in terms of Cost of Attendance (COA). This is a **binding agreement** you sign (along with your school counselor) committing to attend no matter what, so making sure you have completed the Net Price Calculator (NPC) for that school and have confirmed your COA with the college before submitting an ED application is imperative. The only way to get out of this commitment is for the NPC to not to match your offer or to have some other uncontrolled circumstance arise. While the college cannot make you attend, if you renege on the agreement, your school can be blackballed from future admits and/or you can be rejected from other schools to which you apply.

ED is often a good way to prove that a certain school is your number one. More students are accepted at ED than at RD, so if you have just one dream school, can afford the estimated COA and meet the requirements of a top candidate for their school, it is a great option for some students, especially students with no financial barriers or low-income students who apply to schools that cover 100% of demonstrated need. On the downside, ED does not allow you to compare multiple offers and merit opportunities from other great schools, to apply by other schools' earlier deadlines and may reduce your chance of getting any financial aid or scholarships from the school. While you can apply EA to any other schools as fallback options for your ED school, you cannot accept any of the other schools' EA offers if admitted.

Whatever option you choose, submitting early is always a good idea because it shows initiative and responsibility, gives the best chance for acceptance and gets a lot of work out of the way so that you can enjoy your winter break and your senior year with most of your applications behind you.

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Why Hiring a Professional Pest Management Company

Is Better Than Doing It Yourself

BY BRYAN VAUGHAN, OWNER & ENTOMOLOGIST, VACO PEST MANAGEMENT

If you've ever walked down the pest control aisle of your local home improvement store, you've probably noticed shelves full of sprays, traps, granules and "miracle" pest solutions promising fast results. While these products certainly have their place, many homeowners around Lake Norman eventually discover that pest problems are rarely as simple as they appear.

As a locally owned pest management company serving the Lake Norman community, we've seen firsthand the frustration that comes from homeowners spending hundreds of dollars on do-it-yourself products only to find that the ants return, the spiders keep building webs or the cockroaches never completely disappear.

The biggest difference between professional pest management and DIY treatment isn't simply the products—it's the knowledge behind them.

Professional pest technicians are trained to identify the exact pest species, understand its biology, locate where it's nesting and determine why it's invading your home in the first place. Treating visible pests without addressing the source is much like pulling weeds without removing the roots. You may see temporary results, but the problem usually returns.

Our area around Lake Norman presents unique pest challenges. Warm summers, mild winters, abundant wooded lots and proximity to the lake create ideal conditions for ants, mosquitoes, spiders, cockroaches, termites, rodents and many other nuisance pests. Every season brings different pest pressures, and each requires a different management strategy.

Safety is another important consideration. Many over-the-counter products are effective when used correctly, but improper application can expose children, pets and even beneficial insects to unnecessary risks. A licensed pest management professional understands where products should—and just as importantly, should not—be applied. Today's professional pest control emphasizes targeted treatments that solve problems while minimizing product use whenever possible.

Another advantage is early detection. During routine service visits, technicians often identify issues homeowners haven't noticed yet. Small termite activity, moisture problems, rodent entry points or developing wasp nests can often be addressed before they become expensive repairs. Catching these issues early can save homeowners thousands of dollars over time.

Professional pest management is also about prevention rather than reaction. Instead of waiting until pests become a nuisance, a customized maintenance program creates a protective barrier that helps keep pests from becoming established in the first place. Preventative service is typically less expensive—and far less stressful—than dealing with a full-blown infestation.

Choosing a locally owned company provides additional benefits. Local technicians understand the seasonal pest activity specific to the Lake Norman area because they live and work in the same communities they serve. They know when termite swarmers begin to emerge, when mosquitoes become most active and how weather patterns affect local pest populations. They are your neighbors, and their reputation depends on providing honest service and lasting results.

While DIY products may appear less expensive initially, repeated purchases, wasted time and unresolved infestations often make them more costly in the long run. Investing in professional pest management provides expert knowledge, customized treatment plans, ongoing monitoring and the peace of mind that your home is being protected by trained professionals.

Your home is one of your family's largest investments. Protecting it from pests isn't simply about eliminating bugs—it's about preserving your property, safeguarding your family's comfort and preventing problems before they start. Give us a call today at 704-313-5076 to experience the difference!

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Cornelius Early Scholars: Changing Lives Before Kindergarten

BY REV. DAVID JUDGE, CHAIRMAN

A child's future often begins long before the first day of kindergarten. At Cornelius Early Scholars (CES), that future starts with a strong academic foundation, caring teachers and a community committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Founded in 2022 by a group of local community and faith leaders who recognized that many children were arriving at kindergarten unprepared, Cornelius Early Scholars is a nonprofit Christian preschool dedicated to giving children the educational foundation they need to thrive. Today, the school serves families throughout Cornelius, Huntersville and Davidson, with a special focus on children whose families may not otherwise be able to afford a quality preschool education.

More than a preschool, CES provides a comprehensive approach to early childhood education built on three guiding principles: academic excellence, a foundation of Christian faith and strong parental involvement. Students develop early literacy, math, critical thinking and social-emotional skills through an engaging curriculum designed to prepare them for kindergarten and lifelong learning. Parents also participate in educational programs that strengthen learning at home, creating a true partnership between school and family.

The impact extends well beyond the classroom. By helping children enter school ready to learn, Cornelius Early Scholars strengthens local schools, supports working families and helps build a brighter future for the entire Lake Norman community. Thanks to generous community partners, volunteers, churches, businesses, foundations and individual supporters, most students receive full scholarships that make this life-changing opportunity possible. Every success story represents an investment in the future of our community.

Residents looking to become involved will find many opportunities. Community members can volunteer their time, attend fundraising events throughout the year, introduce families who could benefit from the program or simply help spread awareness of the school's mission. Every connection helps open doors for another child.

Families considering preschool for the current school year aren't too late. Applications are being accepted for all age groups 2, 3 and 4-year-olds, Pre-K and T-K. Parents and guardians are invited to schedule an appointment where they can tour classrooms, meet teachers and learn about scholarship opportunities and enrollment.

To learn more, schedule a visit or explore ways to become involved, visit corneliusearlyscholars.org. When a community invests in its youngest learners, the benefits last for generations.





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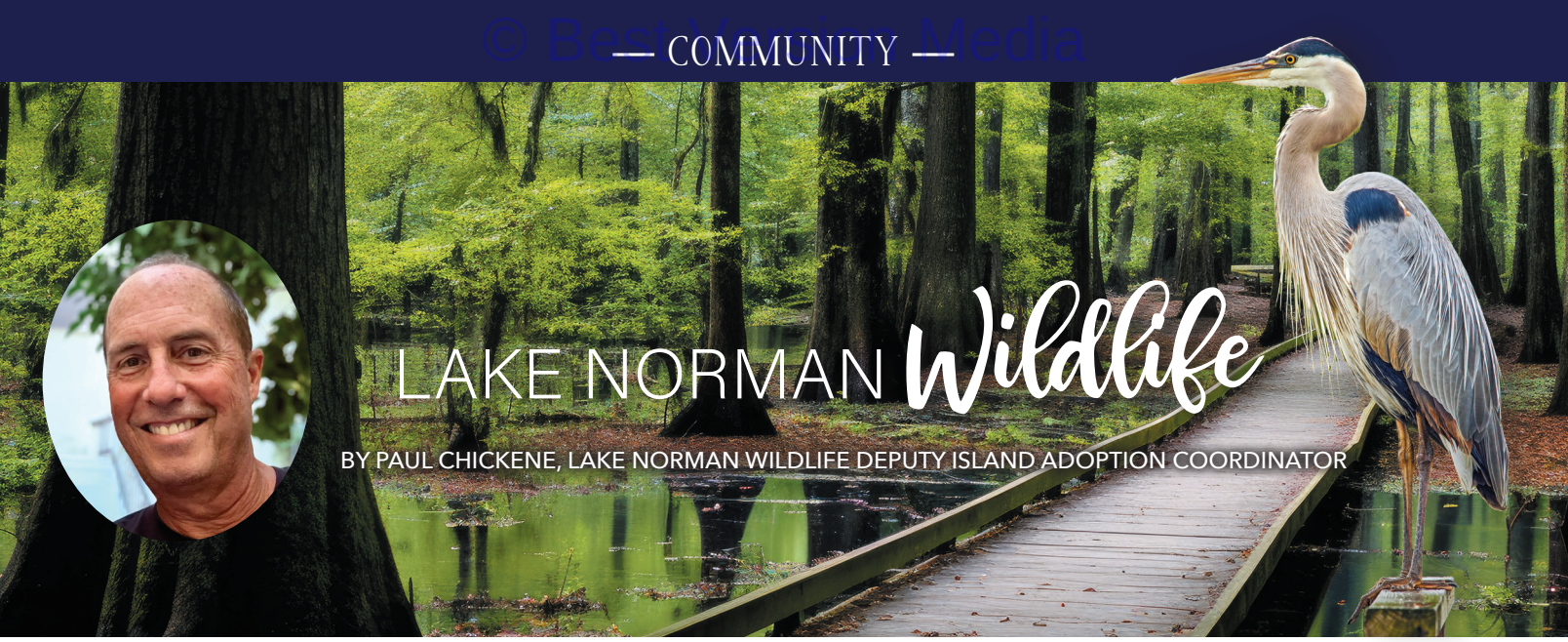

LAKE NORMAN Wildlife

BY PAUL CHICKENE, LAKE NORMAN WILDLIFE DEPUTY ISLAND ADOPTION COORDINATOR

"Lake Norman Wildlife" is a community-based, volunteer, non-profit organization whose mission is to protect, conserve and restore wildlife and habitat on and around Lake Norman.

In partnership with the North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) and Duke Energy, our flagship Island Habitat Program invites community members to help keep Lake Norman's islands clean. By adopting an island, volunteers help reduce litter, protect wildlife and raise awareness about conservation. An added benefit is the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with like-minded conservationists.

Lake Norman Wildlife has installed more than 80 osprey and great blue heron nesting platforms throughout the lake, helping support these iconic bird species for decades. The organization also enhances Lake Norman's fisheries through innovative fish habitat reef projects, including both permanent artificial reefs and annual Christmas tree reef installations. Following Hurricane Helene, Lake Norman Wildlife led one of the lake's largest volunteer cleanup efforts, mobilizing community members to remove more than 50 tons of storm debris from the shoreline and islands. In recognition of its outstanding conservation leadership and community impact, Lake Norman Wildlife was honored with the NCWF's 2026 Governor's Conservation Achievement Award for Chapter of the Year.

Lake Norman Wildlife operates as a chapter of the NCWF. By joining us through the NCWF, you'll support local conservation efforts on Lake Norman while also enjoying the benefits of NCWF membership, including statewide programs, advocacy initiatives and subscriptions to the *Quarterly Journal and Annual Report*.

We're always looking for passionate individuals to become part of our leadership team. Whether your strengths lie in event planning, project coordination, volunteer management, fundraising, communications or community outreach, there are meaningful opportunities to help shape the future of Lake Norman Wildlife while making a lasting impact on conservation in our community.

We invite you to peruse our website and follow us on Facebook at www.LNWC.org.

If you like what you see and would like to learn more or get involved, we'd be delighted to welcome you and help you find the opportunity that's right for you.



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September North Carolina Festivals

COMPILED BY JAYNE DEKU

Festival Name	2026 Dates	Location	Website / Contact Info
North Carolina Apple Festival	September 4–7	Downtown Hendersonville, NC	ncapplefestival.org
Matthews Alive Festival	September 4–7	Stumptown Park, Matthews, NC	matthewsalive.org
Hellbender Festival	September-26	Downtown Spruce Pine, NC	hellbenderfestival.org
John Coltrane International Jazz & Blues Festival	September 5–6	Oak Hollow Festival Park, High Point, NC	coltranejazzfest.com
Hopscotch Music Festival	September 10–12	Downtown Raleigh, NC	hopscotchmusicfest.com
Historic Morganton Festival	September 11–12	Downtown Morganton, NC	morgantonfest.org
NC Freedom Fest	September-26	Downtown Goldsboro, NC	ncfreedomfest.org
North Carolina Mountain State Fair	September 11–20	WNC Agricultural Center, Fletcher, NC	wncagcenter.org
North Carolina Folk Festival	September 18–20	Downtown Greensboro, NC	ncfolkfestival.com
Blue Ridge Mountain Heritage Festival	September-26	Downtown Sparta, NC	alleghanycountychamber.com
International Festival Morrisville	September-26	Morrisville Community Park, Morrisville, NC	townofmorrisville.org
Beer, Bourbon & BBQ Festival	September-26	Winston-Salem Fairgrounds, Winston-Salem, NC	beerandbourbon.com
CenterFest Arts Festival	September 19–20	Downtown Durham, NC	durhamarts.org
Breakaway Music Festival (Carolina)	September 25–26	zMax Dragway at Charlotte Motor Speedway, Charlotte, NC	breakawayfestival.com
Festival in the Park	September 25–27	Freedom Park, Charlotte, NC	festivalinthepark.org
Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival	September-26	Downtown Elkin, NC	yadkinvalley.org
Carrboro Music Festival	September-26	Various venues, Carrboro, NC	carrboromusicfestival.com

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Your Home Isn't Standard. Why Should Your Pergola Be?

BY JUSTIN ADAMS, PRESIDENT, STRUXURE NC

Great architecture rarely conforms to standard boxes. When designing high-end outdoor living expansion, you are often working with a canvas of complex angles: multi-tiered decks that follow the natural topography, historical exterior walls with unexpected projections or poolside pavilions meant to frame a specific view. Yet, standard factory pergolas demand rigid, 90-degree simplicity.

The Pergola X was created to eliminate those compromises, ensuring the space is tailored precisely to the vision. This system is engineered to solve the most demanding spatial puzzles, from wrapping seamlessly around historic brick chimneys to cantilevering flawlessly over glass-walled modern vistas. True luxury outdoor living requires a structure that handles these architectural anomalies with absolute grace, turning what could have







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been a clunky afterthought into the most striking feature of the property.

What Does True Customization Mean?

The outdoor living industry often uses pre-determined sizing tiers disguised as personalized design.

True custom fabrication operates on an entirely different level. True custom fabrication is the precise process where every size, shape and angle is intentional. In a luxury outdoor setting, this design philosophy applies to every element, ensuring that built-in stone kitchens, custom fireplaces and high-end furniture layouts fit together in absolute harmony.

For pergolas, that means every structural beam, post, louver and gutter system is cut to the exact dimensions to match a property's unique digital blueprint. This uncompromising approach ensures that the final structure functions as an organic continuation of the home rather than a standalone addition. When you design without standard limits, you're able to account for the exact spatial variables of your property footprint. This meticulous engineering transforms the outdoor lounge into a perfectly tailored environment.

When you audit a property for a luxury extension, the design must account for specific site variables:

Clearance Zones: This is the precise vertical space available beneath roof eaves, below second-story window sightlines or above exterior light fixtures.

Architectural Obstructions: These include physical home details like chimney switchbacks, bay windows, downspouts and decorative stone bump-outs that a structure must safely navigate.

Unobstructed Spans: This refers to the distance a structural beam can cross without requiring an intermediate support column.

Partnering with Dwell Outdoor means home and business owners do not have to navigate these complex structural calculations alone. Experienced design consultants will help translate complicated physical property constraints into a flawless, custom-engineered blueprint, removing the guesswork and ensuring a precise architectural fit.





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Is Rescued Your Favorite Breed?

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL



Tank is a loveable, goofy 1.5-year-old Rottweiler with a huge heart and a bigger personality. He absolutely adores people and loves attention, affection (especially butt scratches) and being included in whatever his humans are doing. If you get to his level, he will twirl in your lap and playfully nudge your hands. He is confident, loyal, playful and has the self-assured, unhurried demeanor you often see in a Rottweiler. He can be a total goofball and has a way of making you laugh with his larger-than-life personality.

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Tank

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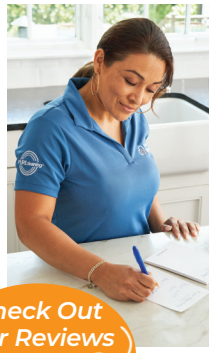



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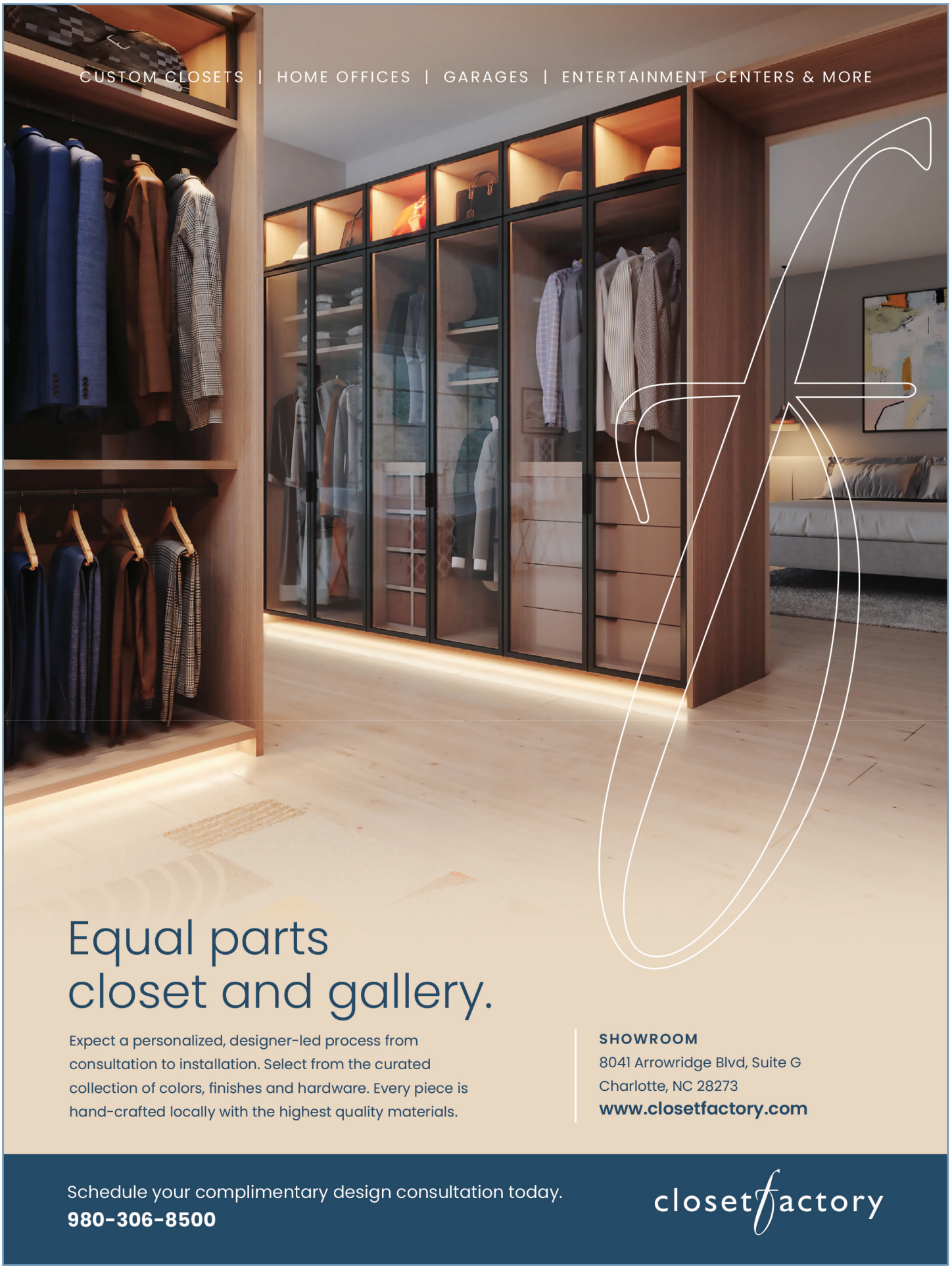

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HONORING VETERANS IN OUR NOVEMBER ISSUE

SUBMITTED BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL

Each November, we dedicate *Cornelius Lakeside Living* to honor those in our community who have selflessly served in the US military. If you are a veteran or have a neighbor you would like to honor, please email us at ccampbell@bestversionmedia.com by October 1, 2026. We would love to include and honor you in our feature.

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SEPTEMBER

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FARMERS MARKETS

NORTH MECK COMMUNITY FARMER'S MARKET

Every Wed. in September

@Cornelius Town Hall
You'll find a variety of high-quality produce, meats, dairy and other goods from over 20 local farmers and growers, plus cooking demonstrations and recipes.
Time: 9am-12pm, rain or shine (5-7pm on last Wednesday of month)
www.charlottefoodpolicy.com/nmcfm

DAVIDSON FARMERS' MARKET

Every Sat. in September

@Downtown Davidson near Town Hall
Come out and support local with the Davidson Farmers' Market. No pets allowed.
Time: 9am-12pm
www.davidsonfarmersmarket.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Every Thurs., Fri. and Sat. in September

RIVER JAM

@U.S. National Whitewater Center
A talented line up of national musical acts provides the perfect backdrop for a fun summer evening outdoors each Thurs., Fri. and Sat.
Time: 7-10pm
Cost: $13 parking
whitewater.org

Wed., September 2

LA PROFESORA

@Cain Center for the Arts
Teatro En Español presents the encounter between a cultured, arrogant teacher and an uneducated fishmonger, which provides the perfect showcase for two giants of Mexican acting: Sylvia Pasquel and Alberto Estrella. *La Profesora* arrives in the United States following a resounding success across Mexico. Performance In Spanish.
Time: 7:30pm
Cost: $57.15-107.50
cainarts.org

Sat., September 5

CONCERTS AT THE CIRCLES

@Jetton Street near Clean Juice in Davidson
Enjoy local fare, drinks and live music at Concerts at the Circles. Fun for the whole family!
September 5: Rivermist (Variety)
Time: Acoustic artist from 5-6:30pm; headliner from 7-9pm
Cost: Free
concertsonthegreen.com

Thurs., September 10-Sun., September 27

THE COTTAGE

@Armour Street Theatre
Davidson Community Players presents The Cottage, which offers a perfect showcase for six actors with endless laughs, hilarious twists, daring physical comedy and a happy ending for lovers everywhere. Recommended for ages 13+ due to adult language and themes.
Time: Various showtimes
Cost: $15-27
davidsoncommunityplayers.org

Fri., September 11

9/11 ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY

@Cornelius-Lemley Fire Station #1
The Cornelius Fire Department will host the annual 9/11 anniversary ceremony at the Never Forget | 9/11 Monument, which includes a piece of steel from the World Trade Center and honors first responders, citizens and miliary personnel who were affected by September 11 events.
Time: 8-9am
Cost: Free
cornelius.org

Sat., September 12

CORNELIUS FESTIVAL OF CULTURES

@Cain Park
This event is a great opportunity for people to experience the many cultures that make up Cornelius and the surrounding areas. Attendees can enjoy delicious food, drink, beer/wine vendors, handmade items from various arts and craft vendors, live performances from local groups, kids' crafts and more!
Time: 11am-2pm
Cost: Free
cornelius.org/park

Sat., September 12 & Sun., September 20

CONCERTS ON THE GREEN

@Davidson Town Green
Bring your family, friends, picnics and chairs, and join the community for the spring, summer and fall concert series. Dancing optional!
September 12: The Chain (Fleetwood Mac Tribute)
September 20: September (Earth, Wind & Fire Tribute)
Time: 6-8pm
Cost: Free
concertsonthegreen.com

Sat.,September 12

ON MY 6

COMMUNITY GATHERING

@Baily Road Recreation Center
In partnership with Cornelius Parks & Recreation, you're invited to be part of our community that stands together in support of our active military, veterans and first responders. Join us the second Saturday of each month to be part of something meaningful. We're open to everyone in the community
Time: 10-11am
Cost: Free

Wed., September 16

BBQ & BINGO

@Cornelius Town Hall
Calling everyone ages 55+! Join the community for a delicious barbeque lunch from GGC Smokehouse and play to win one of five awesome prizes during bingo. Registration required.
Time: 11am-1pm
Cost: $10 residents, $15 non-residents
cornelius.org/park

Sat., September 19

CORNELIUS BRICK RACE

@Cain Park
Kids ages 7-14 will compete in constructing their very own toy brick car, then race one another in multiple heats until a champion is crowned. Registration required.
Time: 10-11:30am
Cost: $5 residents, $10 non-residents
cornelius.org/park

Sun., September 20

CIOMPI & LARKSPUR QUARTETS

@St. Alban's Episcopal Church
The Ciompi String Quartet returns to Music at St. Alban's and will be joined by the Larkspur Quartet for Mendelssohn's stunning Octet. The Ciompi Quartet will also play works by J.S. Bach, Charles Ives and more.
Time: 3pm
Cost: $15-20, youth & students are free
www.musicatstalbansdavidson.org

Sat., September 26

'TAWBA WALK ARTS & MUSIC FESTIVAL

@Old Town Cornelius
'Tawba Walk is a multidimensional, eclectic art crawl, which snakes through the heart of Cornelius, featuring dozens of local vendors, live street performances, shopping, amazing food and more, showcasing the best Cornelius and the surrounding areas have to offer.
Time: 2-8pm
Cost: Free admission
cornelius.org/park



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SCHOOL CALENDAR



CMS: 9/7 & 9/12, No School
Cannon: 9/7 & 9/21, No School
Community School of Davidson: 9/7 & 9/21-9/22, No School
Davidson Day: 9/7 & 9/21, No School; 9/14-9/15, US/MS No School; 9/18, LS No School
Lake Norman Charter: 9/4, eLearning; 9/7 & 9/21, No School
Langtree Charter: 9/7 & 9/18, No School
Pine Lake Prep: 9/7 & 9/21, No School
Woodlawn: 9/7 & 9/21, No School



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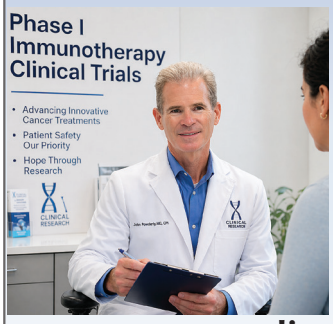

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