

MAY 2020

CHARLESTON

Home & Living



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Resource Centre

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*Looking Back:
at the Governor's Mansion*
P10

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Cover photo courtesy
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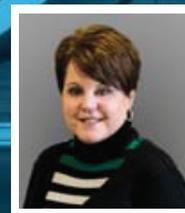
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HAPPENING

Around Town



It goes without saying the world will never be the same after COVID-19. Virtually every single concert, sporting event, and religious service has been cancelled. In February most people hadn't heard of "Zoom" meetings online. But "Zoom", along with "social distancing" and "essential workers" are terms widely used today and they are not likely to be retired any time soon.

Typically, May is a month of celebration and a warm-up to summer activities. Mother's Day weekend ALWAYS resulted in Capitol Market having hundreds of customers buying hanging baskets and other beautiful flowers for their mothers and sweethearts. College and high school graduations were cause for parties and dinners to celebrate loved ones' achievements. The West Virginia State Capitol grounds was the site for the "Vandalia Gathering" during Memorial Day weekend. "Live on the Levee" concerts every Friday evening at Haddad Riverfront Park were a fun opportunity to get together with friends and enjoy the free music on the banks of the Kanawha River. None of that is going to happen this month.

Everyone is giving up a lot these days. The activities already mentioned, no relaxing with friends over drinks after work, and no romantic date nights. School has been cancelled indefinitely and thousands of West Virginians are out of a job.

However, there is a LOT happening. Life is moving slower than molasses and people have no choice but to take a breather. Neighbors are more "neighborly" and looking after each other, friends and families are re-connecting, and the word "HERO" looks completely different these days. There is long overdue and much deserved respect for the medical professionals, first responders, and grocery store workers. There is an atmosphere of patience and kindness palpable when we go out on those "essential errands". None of us will ever look at the world in the same again. "Normal" next year will be extremely different from "normal" in 2019.

There is a strong effort to support local businesses during the time of the shut-down and afterwards, as well. Two owners of popular local restaurants were interviewed for this column. Tracy Abdalla, owner of "Soho's", and Frank Gonzales (Mi Cocina de Amor and Gonzoburger) talked about the effect the pandemic has had on their establishments.

Tracy Abdalla had been the new owner of "Soho's" at Capitol Market for only a few weeks when COVID-19 caused the pandemic that basically shut down the world. After purchasing the iconic Italian restaurant located in the "turn of the century" train station and thankfully being able to retain 95% of the staff, business was good. It was doing very well, then the shut-down took place. While part of the waitstaff had to be temporarily laid off, those who remained got busy and took the opportunity to deep clean and sanitize the entire

restaurant, literally from the ceiling to the floor. Like many other restaurants, Soho's began serving the entire menu as carry-out and available with GrubHub and Door Dash.

While Tracy intends to keep the classic Soho's menu, he has plans for some new additions to the menu when the restaurant is able to be completely open to the public. He added a few televisions and high-top tables to the bar area to expand the available seating. Paying homage to the historical importance of the train station's structure, he was able to acquire several original photographs of the building and the surrounding area which were taken during the early 1900's. They have been enlarged, framed, and will be hanging throughout the restaurant for diners to enjoy.

Last fall, Frank and Julia Gonzales expanded their dining capacity at Mi Cocina de Amor to include the outdoor area next to the establishment. The "Margarita Garden" was constructed with a stage for entertainment. They invested a lot of money and time in the project expecting to offer outdoor dining along with a terrific entertainment venue by spring. Frank and Julia also own Gonzoburger, which is around the corner from Mi Cocina de Amor. They opened the Mexican restaurant 6 years ago and have staff who have been with them the entire time. When the pandemic made its way to West Virginia, they also had to make painful decisions by laying off staff who've been with them from the beginning. At the time this is being written, they've just opened back up for curbside carry-out.

As businesses slowly re-open, "social distancing" will still be observed. Some policies may be different. Tables will be farther apart and there may be longer than usual wait times to be seated. Let us all simply be grateful we can get out and enjoy a meal.

These are just two of the terrific restaurants in Charleston locally owned. These gentlemen were the first ones I called on and both were so kind as to give me a bit of their time and tell me a little of their stories.

It is clear there is a spirit of sharing and caring for each other. Instead of competing for customers, there is a desire to SHARE the customer base. The local restaurateurs are looking out for each other. That same quality is showing up BIGTIME in so many ways in the Charleston community. I am willing to bet it continues long after COVID-19 is gone.

Stay safe!



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Looking Back

...AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

By: M. Lynne Squires



The West Virginia Executive Mansion, or Governor's Mansion, is part of the State Capitol Complex in Charleston's historic East End. Ephraim F. Morgan, the state's governor from 1921 to 1925, was the first to occupy the new mansion. He lived there a mere seven days before moving out. His term expired, but he went in the history books as the mansion's first occupant.

As plans to build a new capitol were being discussed in 1921, a permanent residence to house the state's governor and family was also considered. Before the construction of the mansion, West Virginia's governors had to house themselves. The land for the present day executive mansion was purchased on July 7, 1921. At the time, the decision of where to build the new capitol had not yet been decided. The Capitol Building Commission would decide to erect the new capitol only a block from from the proposed state house location.

The mansion was built in 1924-1925 under the supervision of architect Walter F. Martens. Martens was not certain he would be considered, but was chosen nonetheless to draw up and present plans for the structure. He consulted with capitol architect Cass Gilbert, and presented his sketches for the Georgian Colonial edifice that is today the West Virginia Executive Mansion.

The West Virginia Executive Mansion is clad in red Harvard colonial brick laid in Flemish bond with black headers. The Georgian Colonial building's entrance is a central, two-story portico supported by six Corinthian columns, ornately decorated with acanthus leaves. The arched entranceway, frames a delicate fanlight above the door. On either side of the home are porches surrounded by a low balustrade and rows of columns which rise to support a flat roof onto which several second floor rooms open. The porch to the east is open, while the one to the west is enclosed. A single story entranceway at the rear balances the central, front portico. A bracketed cornice circles the house above the second floor, and third floor dormers adorn the

slate-shingled mansard roof. The third story was not included when the mansion was initially built. The original plans called for it and it was added in 1946. Until then, the building was capped above the second floor with a flat tin roof.

Entering through the main portico, visitors are immediately struck by the checkered black Belgian and white Tennessee marble floor. The lovely foyer floor is flanked by dual Georgian staircases, a design inspired by architectural studies of the White House. The main floor also houses the elegantly designed and furnished drawing room, ballroom, a State dining room, a sitting room and the library. Eight bedrooms and four baths, including the Governor's private family quarters are located on the second floor, and the third floor contains two additional bedrooms.

The mansion has been redecorated several times since its construction, in 1937 and 1958 and also in more recent years. The close proximity to the Capitol building is softened by the attention to the surrounding landscaping and old growth trees on the grounds. Recently, a wrought iron fence circumventing the home was installed for security reasons. The fence design perfectly complements the homes architectural style.

The stately mansion has welcomed many visitors throughout the years. Business leaders, heads of state, national and global dignitaries, and ambassadors have enjoyed West Virginia hospitality within its walls. Most importantly, the mansion welcomes the residents of mountain state to visit. Tours are available, but be sure to call ahead to schedule.

Next month, Looking Back visits Laidley Field in Charleston's East End.



Email your responses about the Governor's Mansion, or requests for locations you'd like Looking Back to visit to thewriter@mlynne.com.

Squires' book *Looking Back at Charleston* is a compilation of 24 essays and color photos from her column and is available on Amazon. Visit www.mlynne.com.

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\$649,900



IMMACULATE-KEPT HOME ON SOUGHT-AFTER STREET IN SOUTH HILLS! This beautiful home features a spacious kitchen w/ Thermador range & granite counter tops, two-story family room w/ large windows, stone fireplace, & wet bar, & first floor master suite w/ screened in porch! Upper level features loft that overlooks the family room & is perfect for artist studio or office! Updates & upgrades include newer roof & appliances. Minutes to downtown Charleston, Southridge, or Berry Hills Country Club!

\$339,900



PENDING

BEAUTIFUL, TWO-STORY HOME ON DEAD END STREET IN SOUTH HILLS! This home features a circular flow on the main level with gleaming, pegged hardwoods, dining room with custom built-in, and a kitchen with stainless steel appliances. The lower level has been recently finished and features a fireplace with gas logs, full bath, and spacious utility room. Other features of this lovely home are a large deck perfect for entertaining and an attached, two-car garage!

\$305,000



PENDING

CHARMING TWO-STORY IN DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOOD IN SOUTH HILLS! This updated home is conveniently located on the front of the hill and is just minutes from the Carriage Trail, Bridge Road Shops, and downtown Charleston! Features include a custom kitchen designed by Darin Fisher, den with custom built-ins, flat backyard, and professional landscaping. Walk-up, finished attic space could be used as storage or additional living space!

\$289,000



LOVINGLY MAINTAINED HOME PERFECTLY LOCATED ON A PRIVATE STREET IN ROLLING HILLS. This home is located in a prime school district and boasts four bedrooms and newly finished lower level with newer heating and cooling units. Private, wooded backyard & plenty of storage! Large, unfinished room on lower level that's perfect for exercise room or additional storage. Fantastic buy for all that is included!

\$229,900



BEAUTIFUL, ALL-BRICK RANCHER ON CORNER LOT IN SOUTH HILLS! This home features an open concept living area that flows into the kitchen, which includes a breakfast bar and SS appliances. Spacious master suite with a second master down the hall. Three additional bedrooms with the possibility of one being used as an office/study. Other features of this home include a covered back patio area & an attached, two-car garage!

\$185,000



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\$165,000



GREAT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY IN SOUTH HILLS! Convenient Oakwood Road location! The home features 3 beds, a large kitchen, two fireplaces, tons of storage, and a back deck with wooded views. The detached garage features a one bedroom apartment upstairs and an efficiency apartment downstairs. Live in the home while leasing the two apartments, or lease all three!



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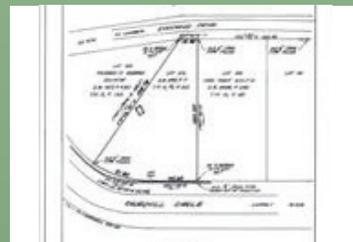
3BR, 2BA. Freshly updated two story w/ beautiful HW flooring, new laminate in kitchen & dining area, and bonus room that could serve as a fourth bedroom! \$80,000



REDUCED

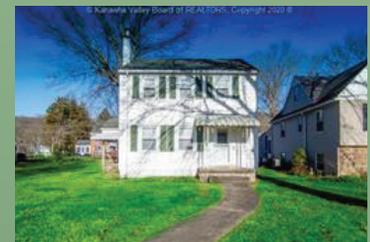
907 Laurel Rd

4 BR, 2.5BA. Offers main floor living w/first floor laundry. Original hardwoods under carpets! \$85,000



940 Churchill Dr

This is a build able lot w/separate address from 942 Churchill Circ. Lot offers 2 means of egress from Evanwood Drive or Churchill Circle. \$15,000



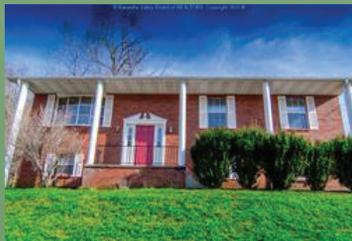
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12 Fox Chase Rd

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312 Crestview Dr

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REDUCED

1589 Hampton Rd

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REDUCED

935 Harmony Lane

3Br 3.5BA Well maintained two-story home in the beautiful Thousand Oaks subdivision. Award winning school district! \$174,900



850 Alta Rd

4BR 2.5B Stunning mid-century home w/ quality updates throughout. Featuring a Darin Fisher custom kitchen w/heated floor and tile imported from Italy. \$289,000



1906 Wooside Circle

3BR. 2.5BA. Stunning 2-story home located in the South Hills area of Charleston. Home offers beautifully modern updates throughout, large master suite, lower and main level decks as well as a flat front yard! \$269,900



1010 Greenland Circle

4BR 3BA Spacious, updated two-story situated on a beautiful corner lot! A must see! \$170,000



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As I looked around the neighborhood yesterday evening, I noticed kids playing in front of their homes. I saw neighbors sitting on their front porches and later by fire pits. I thought to myself, this is how we came up. Neighbors knew their neighbors and their children. I'm seeing old fashioned community seemingly sprout up from the ashes of this fire of which we have all endured. So, instead of losing your minds over the what-ifs of the future, let us all rise up, be thankful and celebrate this day of rebirth. Easter is upon us. Like some of you, I haven't missed an Easter service for at least 40 years.

However, that one on one relationship with Him doesn't have to be confined to the walls in which you worship. Wherever you may be this day, be grateful and have faith.

Everything is going to be alright.

The dreams of your tomorrows will greatly depend on the work and effort you put into the reality of your todays. Regardless of what it may look like, don't give up on yourself.

Where there is no light, be the light. Where there is no hope, bring hope into the room.

When others feel like giving up, show them how to continue moving forward.

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6647 ROOSEVELT AVE

KANAWHA CITY - Great family home on corner lot in quiet neighborhood. Large master suite with laundry room on second floor. 2 additional BD and bath on first floor. Large deck with hot-tub and a separate two car garage with 80% complete studio apartment above. MLS 235175

\$199,900



9107TH AVE

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We're continually on the hunt for experiences that add richness to our lives. In the spirit of the revival of road trips, we are proud to feature a monthly section featuring destinations within driving distance of Charleston. We feel that our smart and savvy readers will find these trips interesting and entertaining.



CHAPEL HILL, NC



UNC Chapel Hill



Driving four hours forty-five minutes southeast of Charleston brings you to Chapel Hill. Filled with all things Carolina Blue, Chapel Hill is known for its prestigious college, liberal culture, and Southern charms. Chapel Hill has a vibe that is relaxing and inviting, and a music scene that has been prevalent for over 50 years. With gas prices at an all-time low, there is no better time than now to enjoy North Carolina's small-town gem.

WHAT TO SEE & DO IN CHAPEL HILL

The main artery of Chapel Hill is Franklin Street. Posh boutiques, locally owned eateries and shops, and art galleries line the famed street, as well as hordes of students from the University of North Carolina's campus (UNC). Sports are a big part of Chapel Hill's culture and you can learn more about UNC's six NCAA basketball championships at the Carolina Basketball Museum. Depending on the time of year, you may be able to catch a polo

Weekend TRAVELER

match or a soccer or lacrosse game.

At the Morehead Planetarium (one of the largest and oldest in the country), explore the solar system and look at the stars. Many NASA astronauts trained at this planetarium for essential missions of the past.

Chapel Hill has abundant parks and hiking trails, also great for bicycling. Progression Climbing Walls, a Boulding gym, offers beginner or advanced opportunities for climbing 14-16 feet walls.



Photo by Melody Pittman.

One of the most popular attractions is the North Carolina Botanical Garden with 1100 acres of incredible flowers and plants. A fun fact is that the Venus Fly Trap is a native plant of North Carolina. You can buy one to take home with you.



Photo by Melody Pittman.

If you are traveling with kids, be sure to stop by Kidzu Children's Museum. It is an interactive treasure for infants through tweens with a wide array of exhibits to inspire minds, creativity, and imaginations. Kids might enjoy watching a movie with the company of goats at Spring Haven Farm, open for special events only. You can bring your own food and drinks for the event and lawn chairs.

Laugh the night away at the People's Improv Theater (known as The Pit Comedy Theater) or enjoy live music at the nearby Cat's Cradle in Carrboro, a long stay part of the community for fifty years. If you need a rainy-day activity, take in a movie at Silverspot Cinema, running 13 films and serving a full menu plus cocktails, beer, and wine.

Sample your way around Chapel Hill on a Taste Carolina gourmet food tour with substantial bites from four to five local restaurants. Downtown, check out designer Alexander Julian's flagship store, Julian's, famous for men and women's distinguished fashions since 1942. While you are there, admire the many impressive murals and art installations.



Photo by Melody Pittman.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

Chapel Hill is a purveyor of farm-to-table restaurants. For upscale dining, check out Bin 54 Steak and Cellar (dry-aged NY strip), or Crossroads Restaurant (signature meatloaf or shrimp & grits) at the Carolina Inn. Burgers, milkshakes, and fries are especially good in a retro setting like Sutton's Drug Store, a Tar Heel tradition. Carolina Coffee Shop (North Carolina's longest-running restaurant) serves yummy dishes such as chicken & waffles, deviled eggs, and fried green tomatoes. It also has a full bar.

Crook's Corner is Chapel Hill's iconic dining spot, serving chef-inspired dishes like Hoppin' John, jalapeño cheddar hush puppies, and a cracker plate with hot pepper jelly, veggies, crackers, and pimento cheese. Brunch is also a real treat with steak & eggs, a hot chicken biscuit, or Croque madame. Lastly, pick out meal from the selections at Blue Dogwood Public Market, Chapel Hill's only food emporium.



Photo by Melody Pittman.

Two unique offerings for beverages in Chapel Hill are Honeysuckle Tea House and Cat Tales Cat Cafe. The tea house is "an open-air oasis" with views of the gardens and berry fields, perfect for sipping a hot or cold herbal blend tea. At Cat Tales, enjoy a beverage (adult libations offered, too) amidst adorable adoptable cats.

There are five craft breweries in Chapel Hill to get your beer fix, or you can sip organic vodka, gin, or Carolina whiskey made from locally grown wheat at TOPO Distillery.

WHERE TO STAY IN CHAPEL HILL

There are plenty of places to enjoy a comfortable stay in Chapel Hill. Choices range from the Siena Hotel, a boutique offering in Marriott's Autograph collection, to the AC Hotel Chapel Hill Downtown, the city's newest hotel. Aloft Chapel Hill is another excellent choice and is in a great location. The premiere offering in town is the Carolina Inn, a historic four-diamond hotel established in 1924 and UNC's only on-campus hotel. The elegant venue offers afternoon tea, stately grounds, luxurious rooms, and is one block from Franklin Street.

CHAPEL HILL: A LITTLE TOWN WITH BIG OFFERINGS

Halfway between North Carolina's coastal beaches and magnificent mountains is the real pulse of the state, Chapel Hill. I hope you will find this small town with huge opportunities as fantastic as I do.



Photo by Melody Pittman.



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