



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

Ideibirmingham.org

Summer 2022

President's Note

Dear Dames,

I'm so proud of our chapter! We've given \$33,000 in grants and scholarships this year which is the largest amount we have ever given and increases in support of our mission to further create opportunities for women in our industry of food, beverage, and hospitality.

We gave \$18,000 for scholarships to students in community college and four-year universities. This includes scholarship dollars from the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama and the Becky Satterfield scholarship. We also gave three \$5,000 Entrepreneurship Grants to three women-owned Alabama businesses. Then we celebrated them on May 22th at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

As far as the treasurer position, Dames Susan Swagler and Martha Johnston will assume those duties until our annual meeting on Sunday August 14th when a new treasurer will be elected. Dame Jennifer Yarborough will be available for guidance to this new treasurer. Jennifer has not only laid the groundwork for this position, she's also been instrumental in growing our endowment to over \$150,000. This will perpetuate interest to fund an additional schol-

\$33,000 in Scholarships and Grants Awarded

Our chapter awarded \$18,000 in scholarships to seven recipients and \$15,000 in grants to three women-owned businesses.



On Sunday, May 22, we celebrated our scholarship and grant award recipients during a reception at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. See page 2 to learn more about all of them.

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Enterprising Women: Meet the Winners of Our 2022 Grants

by Donna Cornelius

It won't be hard to drink a toast to this year's grant winners. All three of these inventive and determined women own a business that features beverages. Lindsay Whiteaker of Harvest Roots, Aquilla Stanback of Lillie's Cup, and Rebecca Denson of Sachai Tea Benefit Corp. each were awarded a \$5,000 grant by LDEI Birmingham. Here's a little more about the award recipients and their ventures.

Lindsay Whiteaker Harvest Roots

www.harvestrootsferments.com

Lindsay, the co-founder and CEO of Harvest Roots, graduated from UAB with a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology with a focus on food and culture. Her passion for food and fermentation led her to launch Harvest Roots.

She started selling kombucha and fermented foods at the Market at Pepper Place. The company has sourced 75,000 pounds of local produce since 2013.

Harvest Roots' Taproom in Avondale features 15 draft lines of kombucha. Their products can be found at a variety of stores and restaurants in the Birmingham area and also in other Alabama cities.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am from Harvest, Alabama (hence the name). I became interested in food around the age of 16 and began spending my free time preparing food for my family and friends.



Lindsay Whiteaker, co-founder and CEO of Harvest Roots, plans to use the grant to source a 294-gallon stainless steel brite tank, which would allow the company to increase production by 200%.

My mother is a single parent who worked full time while raising my brother and me. My brother is differently abled, and from a young age I've learned the importance of care and service and how food can be a perfect way to illustrate those things. I have an extensive background in small-scale farming, and I have a deep love of native plants. These interests inform my fermentation practice. Recently I started hand-dipping beeswax candles. **How do you describe kombucha to someone who's not familiar with it?**

Kombucha is a fermented tea, specifically camellia sinensis, that is legally considered to be non-alcoholic (meaning it contains less than 0.5% alcohol by volume). It is tart, effervescent and contains probiotics, prebiotics, and enzymes. To me,

kombucha is a craft, non-alcoholic, functional beverage experience. Kombucha is estimated to be a 2,000-year-old practice, but it's a relatively new industry with the first commercially produced brand being available in the U.S. in 1995. There are many styles and techniques for producing kombucha, much like wine, beer or coffee. I always tell folks that if they tried kombucha and didn't like it, they should experiment with other brands to find a style that fits their palate.

What are some fermented foods that you offer?

In addition to 15 taps of kombucha, our taproom in Birmingham also offers a small-plates menu exploring seasonally produced pickles. Right now, our market pickle plate has a preserved beet salad with parsley oil, pistachio and mint. We also make

lots of kombucha vinegar; my current favorite is a chanterelle mushroom kombucha vinegar that has a wonderful apricot-like aroma.

What's the most fun thing about what you do?

I love having the opportunity to be inspired by Alabama ecology and agriculture to produce kombucha and fermented foods. Most recently we created a small-batch bottle of kombucha inspired by the endemic Cahaba lily that grows in the watery shoals of the Cahaba River in select spots in Alabama and Georgia. Proceeds from this bottle release benefit Cahaba Riverkeeper.

What's the hardest thing?

The hardest part of my job is balancing my desire to be a food and beverage artisan with the demands for administrative responsibilities that come with running a growing business. I've recently been stepping

more into the administrative side of the business as we grow, but I'm still a creative at heart, and I love physical labor.

Why did you decide to apply for an LDEI grant?

I applied for the LDEI grant not only for the financial gains and benefits that the money could provide my business, but also for the community and mentorship that is associated with this organization. As my company is in a pivotal phase of growth, I am looking more and more to female entrepreneurs in my community for inspiration and wisdom.

Do you have any specific plans for the grant money?

We are planning to use the funds to source a 7bbl, or 294 gallon, stainless steel brite tank. This tank is used to flavor and carbonate our kombucha and would allow us to increase our production capacity by 200%.

Aquilla Stanback Lillie's Cup LLC www.lilliescup.com

Aquilla's company sells artisan loose leaf teas, tea by the cup, tea accessories and baked goods. The products are sold at The Market at Pepper Place, or you can get in touch with Aquilla by emailing her at aquilla@lilliescup.com. Lillie's Cup also hosts afternoon tea at Birmingham's historic Arlington House.

Aquilla started her company in 2019 with a pop-up at a Birmingham area small business.

Lillie's Cup supports the community by collaborating with other small businesses and organizations to provide products and services. They presented a Black History Tea for young people through a partnership with the YMCA Youth Center. During the holiday season, Lillie's

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Named after founder Aquilla Stanback's grandmother, Lillie's Cup sells artisan loose leaf teas, tea by the cup, tea accessories, and baked goods.

Cup invited “Cool Santa” to a holiday tea with families.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was raised in the suburbs of Chicago. My family has roots in Florence in north Alabama. I graduated from UAB, moved away for a few years, and then returned to Birmingham. I enjoy baking, cooking, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

How did you get the idea for your business?

By traveling with my mom and visiting tea rooms in different areas.

Where did the name of your business come from?

Lillie was my grandmother’s name. Her home and personality remind me that she definitely would have been a tea-room lady. My family still maintains her home with most of her furniture in place. On my last visit, I saw a picture of a teacup hanging in the kitchen and a small teapot. Those items were confirmation that I should continue to move forward with my vision.

How have kids reacted to your tea parties?

They love the experience! The teas are an opportunity for them to learn and in many cases drink teas and experience foods that they have not tried before.

What’s the most fun thing about what you do?

Connecting with different people, watching them enjoy the experience and hearing their family and tea stories. I like my experience at Pepper Place. It’s great to connect with other vendors and of course the customers.

What’s the hardest thing?

The early mornings and late nights.

Why did you decide to apply for an LDEI grant?

Someone encouraged me to apply. I did without hesitation. I know that if you don’t try for something you definitely will not get it. I tried and was awarded the grant.

You’ve said you’ll use the grant money to expand your products and services. What’s on your wish list for your company’s future?

On my big list: a brick and mortar store. On my small list: additional merchandise to sell and items that can be used during the tea parties such as cute teapots, vintage items, etc.

Rebecca Denson

Sachai Tea Benefit Corp.

www.sachaiteacompany.com

Rebecca is from India and came to the U.S. to go to graduate school at Samford University. She earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism in India and master’s degrees in theology from Samford and in education from UAB. She and her family live in Titusville.

She started the company in 2015 after a tea-sourcing trip to India. She wanted to have a connection to India, to promote Indian tea and culture, to bring diversity to the marketplace, and to inspire, empower and lower the barriers to starting culinary businesses.

Her company launched its authentic chai concentrate in 2018. Rebecca started 2022 by working with a statewide distribution company and thinks the next step is to go regional.

How is chai different from the teas that most people in this area are familiar with?

We make a chai concentrate with all-natural ingredients, including whole spices, fresh pressed ginger and tea from Assam, India. When we started brewing the concentrate, we would use a 4-gallon stock pot. We realized that we would have to find something bigger soon, so we transitioned to Cahaba Brewing and started brewing 90-gallon batches and recently scaled again to 200-gallon batches. The chai is made shelf stable with tamarind, which is a

fruit. Therefore our chai concentrate has nothing artificial or any additives to make the chai shelf-stable, which is one of the reasons our chai is unique compared to even national brands of chai. Most chai concentrates use a lactic acid or citric acid to make the chai shelf-stable.

Your website says that your husband is from Mississippi and thus grew up drinking iced tea. Is he now a chai lover or is he a sweet tea loyalist?

My husband and kids are chai lovers. He still loves his sweet tea and we drink it often, but not as much as chai. Chai is a great afternoon-time drink to pause and take a break after work or as a recovery drink after workouts, as an ingredient to make a cocktail and share with friends, or even just to start your day with in the morning.

Are your products available anywhere other than your website?

Our products are available at several coffee shops in town (Seeds Coffee, Baba Java, Makers) and some local stores like Piggly Wiggly and Local Source in Southside.

Tell us a little about your family.

My family is such a huge part of running Sachai. Clint, my husband, does most of the behind-the-scenes setting up, moving, and prepping which are often late night or early morning hours. My kids are huge supporters of my work and love to go along with us when we have to get things done for work.

What’s the most fun thing about what you do?

I love going to markets (Pepper Place Farmers Market) and sharing chai samples with people. I love when people try the chai and their eyes light up and they respond with excitement about how they love what they just tried. I also love our production days when we have



Rebecca plans to use the grant to purchase a commercial juicer to juice ginger for chai production as well as product development, and eventually to share with another start-up in need of a juicer.

to get a hundred details together and during the brewing when the whole brewery smells like warm spices and Christmas also at the end of the brewing when I get to taste a sample and it’s just so perfect tasting!

What’s the hardest thing?

The harder things include not being able to make more frequent sourcing trips to India due to budget reasons and the pandemic and also not being able to create more tea and health-based drinks due to the lack of Sachai’s own test kitchen.

Why did you decide to apply for an LDEI grant?

I know that the women in LDEI are

passionate about empowering other women in business and women in general! I know they have deep and inspiring stories themselves and can see and identify other women that are in similar journeys.

Do you have any specific uses in mind for the grant money?

A commercial juicer to juice ginger for chai production but also to use for product development and to eventually share with another start-up that has a need for a commercial juicer. Also for professional development for myself and my team and finally for obtaining a WOB (Women-Owned Business) certification.



Sachai Tea’s chai concentrate contains no artificial ingredients or additives—it’s made shelf-stable with tamarind. It’s one of the reasons this chai is unique, even among national brands.

Meet the 2022 LDEI Scholarship Winners

by Donna Cornelius

LDEI Birmingham awarded \$18,000 in educational scholarships to young women attending community college and four-year universities. That includes named scholarships from The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama and Dame Becky Satterfield.

We also partnered with Fiesta, Inc., to award a \$3,000 scholarship to a woman from the Hispanic community. That scholarship will be awarded in September.

Community College

The community college scholarships

were awarded to mother and daughter **Sabrina Murray** and **Emily Murray** of Pelham, Alabama.



Sabrina is a native of Birmingham and currently studying at Jefferson State as a Culinary and Nutrition Science Management major. She has a 4.0 GPA and is considering a bachelor's degree in Nutrition at the University of Alabama at Birmingham upon graduation.

Emily is a freshman at Jefferson State majoring in Culinary and Nutrition Science Management. She has a 4.0 GPA.



The two plan to open a meal prep and meals-to-go company. They plan to focus on zero waste and collaboration with other Birmingham businesses to help feed the homeless

population of Birmingham. Both mother and daughter love to spend their free time enjoying the outdoors with their family.

Four-Year Universities

Morgan McGehee is a native of Mobile, Alabama, and currently a rising senior at Samford University studying Nutrition and Dietetics. Upon graduation she plans to pursue the Registered Dietitian credential, with the possibility of a graduate degree in Nutrition, Exercise Science, or English. Regardless of the field, she is passionate about helping people improve their quality of life through food and exercise. Morgan enjoys reading period literature, practicing yoga, and eating sweet potatoes. Her GPA is 3.82. She was awarded both the Community Food Bank and Satterfield scholarships.



Kaylie Murphree is a junior at Auburn University in the Hospitality program and specializing in Event Management. She aspires to be an event manager for a municipality, corporation, or country club. She is from Tampa, Florida, and loves surfing, sunsets, and sushi. Her GPA is 4.0.



Tommye Alaniz is a rising senior at Samford University studying Nutrition and Dietetics. Ms. Alaniz plans to pursue a master's degree while working rotations to achieve the Registered Dietitian credential. She intends to use her training to work internationally with medical teams assisting the less fortunate in developing nations, both through nutrition and spirituality. Her favorite food is escargot, particularly when paired with lots of garlic butter and a flaky biscuit. She was born and raised in Houston, Texas, and she holds a GPA of 3.82.



Dionna Gilbert is a native of Dothan, Alabama, currently enrolled in the University of Montevallo, where she studies Exercise and Nutrition Science. She plans to become a dietitian specializing in pediatric and maternal nutrition. She has been vegetarian and vegan since her teenage years and is passionate about exploring new plant-based foods. Her GPA is 3.8/4.0.



Make Your Plans Now for Our Annual Champagne & Fried Chicken Fundraiser

by Susan Swagler

It's on! Champagne & Fried Chicken 3.0 is set for the afternoon of Sunday, October 2nd at Pepper Place.

Chapter President Kathy G. Mezrano says: "This year's event will be even more special with our very own Dame Crystal Peterson of Yo' Mama's restaurant frying the chicken for the baskets on site!"

The chicken at Yo' Mama's draws customers from around the country and is simply amazing, so we're sure our guests will be wowed! We will again offer a vegetarian option in addition to that tasty fried chicken. And this year, we'll have real Champagne.

We will follow the event recipe that has worked for us in the past, providing an almost contactless drive-through pick-up picnic for those who want to do that. Additionally, we will host an in-person option with plenty of chairs and decorated tables and a fun band. We'd like to encourage our guests to join us on site this year, Kathy G. says. "We want to make it a real party!"

We will have a few changes this time around, too.

We're replacing the baskets with reusable, insulated totes with our LDEI Birmingham logo. Friends of our chapter—Gary and Jane Youngblood who enjoyed the picnic with us last year—are donating these for us. They will allow us to assemble our picnics more easily; and we won't have to hunt down all those baskets, which are becoming increasingly harder to find.



One of the changes for this year's fundraiser will be encouraging our guests to join us at Pepper Place for a picnic in the streets.



As in the past, the money raised through sponsors (100% of this money) will go toward our grant and scholarship giving and our endowment. The money from ticket sales will help us operate and allow us to continue our outreach efforts.

That's why this fundraiser—our biggest one of the year, by far—is so important. That's why your participation is so vital.

Figure out where you want to volunteer—preparing food, assembling

baskets, wrapping flowers, checking in guests, running food, working one of the tents, securing sponsorships, helping with publicity.

There's a job for every talent, and we are quite the talented group!

And, finally, we'll plan to welcome our new members with a celebratory toast when all our hard work is done that day.

Tickets will go on sale this summer. They will be \$150 for a basket for two. You can start spreading the word now!

Nominate New Members Now!

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

It's that time of year again, when members of our chapter are invited to nominate accomplished women in our community who may become future Birmingham Dames.

Erin Isbell, chapter VP of membership, has streamlined the nomination process to make it easier. Her one caveat: The only nominations that will be considered are those whose submissions are complete by the deadline, June 3rd. Any letters or documents received after that date will cause the application to be disqualified. So mark your calendars and get those nominations going!

Potential new members must have five consecutive years of professional experience in the culinary, beverage, or hospitality fields. If the nominee's work is not completely culinary in nature (such as PR, writing, event management, etc.), 75% of her work for those five years must be culinary-related.

As a nominating Dame, if there is someone you think would be a good addition to the group, refresh your knowledge of the organization (we have a website full of great information!). Meet for lunch or coffee and talk to her about LDEI—its mission, operations, and commitment to philanthropy.

Describe the types of gatherings offered, and opportunities to learn and develop strong relationships locally and internationally. If she's interested in joining, you can start the actual process.

The nomination period this year is May 2nd through June 3rd. Erin sent an email in April with the application forms and step-by-step instructions. If you didn't receive it, email her at elisbell29@gmail.com.

Each nominee will need to complete the application, and provide a resume and two professional letters of recommendation. As the nominating Dame, you will also need to write a letter of recommendation for the nominee, including the nominee's name, current occupation, contact info, and why the nominee is qualified to be a Dame. and send that to Erin BY MAY 25th. The nominating Dame must also identify a second Dame who can write a similar letter of recommendation; it also must be sent to Erin BEFORE MAY 25th. So you and a second Dame will each send a letter of recommendation on behalf of the nominee to Erin by May 25th, and the nominee will send a completed application plus 2 additional professional letters to Erin by June 3rd. (That's 4 total letters of recommendation.)

It is the responsibility of the nominating Dame—that's you!—to shepherd the nominee along, answer her questions and make sure she gets her application and letters (and yours) in on time. Easy!

Once the nomination period is closed, the Membership Committee will meet to review the completed applications. They'll interview each of the nominees, vote, and then send their slate of recommended new members to the Chapter Board for consideration and approval. Once approved, the final slate of nominees will be voted on by the entire membership at the annual meeting on August 14th.

The Birmingham Chapter of LDEI is quite large and active. Our group is composed of outstanding professional women who work hard to keep programming interesting and meaningful. If you are not as engaged with LDEI as you could be, start now. We have work to do!

Nominate women you respect who reflect the creativity, strength, and diversity of our community. Volunteer to help at the next program or event. Ask about becoming a Board Member. Start thinking about who you'd like to nominate to LDEI, and start the process this week. It's a great year to be a Dame!

Girls' Night at Dame Joy Smith's Sorelle Cafe

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

There was much to celebrate in February, including the opening of Dame Joy Smith's dream café, Sorelle, in the heart of Homewood. Sorelle means "sisters" in Italian, and the café's name perfectly defines the family welcome Joy offers to each of her customers.

Joy opened Sorelle Café—her first brick and mortar location—in the heart of Edgewood, in the fall of 2021, during Covid. While it might have seemed like a risky decision, Joy knew it was the perfect time. From her years of experience as a Montessori teacher and a sought-after caterer and food producer at the Market at Pepper Place, she knew her customers well. She'd seen how hungry they'd become for someone else to take care of dinner. Working from home and supervising kids' virtual schooling day after day had sent sales of take-out casseroles, healthy salads, soups, sides, and her award-winning cheesecake through the roof.

Her life-long dream of owning her own café became possible right before Covid, when she befriended Bobby Cobb, a Birmingham catering icon nearing retirement. He saw Joy first as a collaborator, but eventually as the person to whom he could pass not only decades of cooking and business tips, but also his location. He closed his business, and within a few months, she had remodeled it and opened Sorelle. It's been "100 hours a week" every since.

To celebrate and reconnect with her sister Dames, whom she'd hardly had a second to see since the café opened, she invited everyone there for an evening of "girls gabbin' and snackin." It was a standing-room-



only affair, and she and her fellow chef and helpers never stopped.

There was plenty of gabbing, but the Dames also made sure to sample everything on the copious grazing bar, from cheeses and charcuterie, to sliders, salads,

slices of her famous cheesecake, and even bite-sized Pavlovas. In true sister fashion, at the end of the evening, she sent her guests off with a few treats to take home. Each of us felt well-fed and cared for. And we can't wait to go back to Sorelle again.

Dames gathered at Dame Joy Smith's Sorelle Café in Homewood to celebrate its opening. Members sampled sliders, salads, cheeses, charcuterie, and slices of Joy's famous cheesecake.

Party Pics from the Food Bank Gala

On March 5, The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama held their first fundraising Feast for Hope gala. Dame-owned catering companies and businesses created a delicious tasting menu with wine pairings (selected by Dame Alexis Douglas) for each course. At right: Kathy G. Mezrano gave members their marching orders at the start of the evening. At right, middle: Dames were on hand at the event to speak to attendees about our mission. Bottom right: Dame Kay Reed prepared Tuna Crudo in a Can. Very bottom: Dames Rebel Negley and Sherron Goldstein.

- Menu
- First Course—Tuna Crudo in a Can (Iz Catering)
 - Second Course—Empanadas (Hastings Catering)
 - Third Course—Braised Boneless Beef Short Ribs (Tre Luna) on Spring Risotto (Kathy G) There was a vegetarian option available.
 - Fourth Course—Fennel Arugula Salad (Tre Luna)
 - Fifth Course—Cheese Plate (Kathy G and Stone Hollow Farmstead)
 - Sixth Course—Bitesize Desserts (Iz Catering, Telia Johnson Cakes, Emily's Heirloom Pound Cakes)



GirlSpring: Mentoring Future Female Entrepreneurs

On April 30, Dames teamed up with GirlSpring for a program called Wonder Women in the Culinary and Hospitality Industries. Dames Charbett Cauthen, Crystal Peterson, Andrea Kirkland, Kristal Bryant, and Stefanie Maloney shared information about culinary and hospitality careers with girls in fourth grade to high school, and their moms. The career-focused event gave these girls an idea of many aspects in our industry. Our Dames not only brought dishes for them to sample, but also provided exclusive recipes for them to try at home.



Super Sweet! Two Dames Open Delicious New Sweets Shops

by Susan Swagler

Two of our entrepreneurial Dames recently opened new shops full of sweet treats. Susan Notter opened Elizabeth Moore Chocolates, a bean-to-bar chocolate shop in Pelham, and Kristal Bryant relocated her popular K&J's Elegant Pastries from Alabaster to Uptown in Birmingham.

On May 2, a few of our members joined Susan for some sweet and savory bites and a chocolate tasting at Elizabeth Moore. (Elizabeth is Susan's middle name, and Moore is her maiden name.) Leigh Sloss-Corra; Stefanie Maloney; Maureen Holt and her daughter, Jamie Jean; Linda Croley; Charbett Cauthen; Martha Johnston; and Susan Swagler (and her husband, Rick) enjoyed homemade chicken salad, sausage balls, curried carrot salad, tomato salad, hummus, cheeses, homemade biscuits and more plus Susan's amazingly rich chocolate cookies and ice cream and homemade toppings. The group tasted the various signature chocolate wafers that Susan is planning to sell to local restaurants. Ranging from a creamy white to really dark, these chocolates are specially mixed to go with coffee, white and dark liquors and wine.

Susan's shop is beautiful—the gorgeous floor looks like chocolate, the chocolate creations on display (a little hat, a chocolate-filled chocolate jewelry box, a chocolate handbag) are as fanciful as they are tasty, and all the medals and awards from Susan's long, successful culinary career are inspiring.



Dames gathered at Susan Notter's new shop, Elizabeth Moore, where they sampled and saw all of her unique creations available for purchase and items that will be available to local restaurants. One of those creations was an exquisite chocolate handbag (at right).



Susan, who has worked all over the world (including as the Director of Pastry Arts at Culinary Institute of America) and currently coaches the U.S. Culinary Olympic Team (she's also competed in these Olympics and has medals to show for it), knows how to get things done. And quickly. She started looking for retail space about six months ago. She stopped working

for the Swiss chocolate company Max Felchlin AG on March 18 and opened her shop on April 12. "It's been great," she says of her new retail space. "It's really wonderful to be able to make things and have people appreciate them, too. The first job I had was like that. When I was in culinary school, I worked in a bakery. It was father and son owned, and on

Saturday afternoons I'd work in the retail store." There is a certain sense of pride and accomplishment, she says, when you make something and then get to meet the people who are going to enjoy it.

...

On May 7, Kristal Bryant and her husband, Jonathan, held a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony at her beautiful new store, K & J's Elegant Pastries & Creamery, in Uptown. Friends and family gathered around to celebrate the official opening and then crowded in for cupcake and cookie samples and to purchase shakes, cakes, ice cream and cupcakes. Martha Johnston and Susan Swagler were part of this happy crowd.

Kristal's store features a cool icing motif on the outside and inside with sparkling chandeliers, a stylized Magic City mural, cases filled with colorful confections, an ice cream case and a pretty-in-pink office for Kristal to take orders for her amazing custom cakes.

Kristal says, "The shakes are the best seller for walk-ins, but for return customers, it's definitely the cakes." She says she's done cakes for some kids since they were babies and now they are 9 or 10 years old.

"The cakes are my favorite things to do," she says, "because I can be more creative. That's where I can express myself the most. They can just tell me the theme. They can just say 'I'm doing lady bugs; I'm using red, black and white; and I need it for 20 people.' That's all I need. I customize based off of that."

"I'm just super excited to be in Birmingham," Kristal adds. "This is my hometown; this is where I'm from. After being in a store for nine years in Alabaster, it has always been my dream to bring a store back home. So, I'm super excited."



Dame Kristal Bryant held the grand opening of her beautiful new store, K & J's Elegant Pastries & Creamery in Birmingham's popular Uptown district. Opening a location in Birmingham—Kristal's hometown—has been her dream since her store opened in Alabaster nine years ago.



Dames Judge ProStart 2022

by Jan Walsh

The Birmingham Chapter of Les Dames d’Escoffier International is an annual sponsor of Alabama ProStart Student Invitational. ProStart® is a nationwide, two-year high school program that reaches approximately 130,000 students in more than 1,700 high schools across 50 states, Guam, and the District of Columbia.

Hosted by the Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Association Foundation (ARHAF), this is an annual competition for Alabama ProStart students to showcase their culinary talents and creativity.

Dames Rebel Negley and Pat Terry were among the judges for the 2022 Alabama ProStart Student Invitational, which was held in Orange Beach on March 6-8, 2022.

Student teams competed in both culinary and management events. The top winners in the culinary and management events were crowned



Dames Pat Terry and Rebel Negley (with Mindy Hanan, President Alabama Restaurant & Hospitality Association in the middle) judged this year’s ProStart competition in Orange Beach.

state champions, may receive multiple scholarships, and will move on to the national competition.

This year there were 16 high school hospitality and culinary

teams competing from across Alabama. Pat was a judge in Safety and Sanitation and Rebel was a judge in Tasting, both in the Culinary Competition.

Kombucha Class Featured Flights of Fermentation

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

A sparkling evening was enjoyed by all who attended Kombucha Class, hosted by Dame Nancey Legg at her Better Kombucha production facility at Innovation Depot in downtown Birmingham on a weeknight evening in February.

Nancey moved into this larger production space because sales have grown so quickly. This company, which started with her desire to wean her family off soft drinks, has evolved into a sophisticated operation with distribution in multiple grocery stores, award-winning restaurants, and beyond.

The secret to Nancey’s success seems to be a combination of things. She is super scientific and smart about her flavors and products (she has a master’s degree in public health). She is energetic, with a sparkling personality (like her kombuchas). She is passionate about good food, seasonality, and local sourcing (a perfect match for the culture of Birmingham and the food industry in general). Her work—making kombucha and building her company—is fun for her and that comes across in everything she does.

The dozen Dames who heard her story, got to tour her impressive facility and taste flights of some of her latest brews transformed into Better Kombucha superfans by the end of the night. It was a sparkling success.



In February, members got to tour Dame Nancey Legg’s facility where she produces Better Kombucha. Attendees also had the chance to taste a flight of some of her latest flavors.

Southern Living, Sweet Rolls and Smoked Mullet

Pam Lolley looks back on her ‘dream job’ in the test kitchen

by Donna Cornelius

Pam Lolley recently retired from a job she never expected to have. But thanks to a good neighbor, the ability to survive a grueling interview process, and maybe her delicious orange rolls, she spent almost 20 years in the *Southern Living*—and later, the Time Inc. and Meredith Corp.—test kitchens.

What led her into a full-time culinary career?

“It was just the love of cooking,” Pam said.

She was a teenager growing up in Memphis when her mom decided to go to work, and Pam would often start dinner for her family, which included three siblings. When she and her husband, Elmer, moved to his native Louisiana after they got married, her interest in food really took off.

“His mom wasn’t a good cook, so she turned all the cooking over to me for family occasions,” Pam said. Pam boosted her cooking chops even more when the Lolleys moved back to Tennessee.

“I loved making cakes and sweet rolls, and I did special occasion baking when we lived in Germantown,” she said.

The family moved to Alabama when Elmer took a job with a Trussville-based company. Intending to build a house in the suburban city, they instead found the perfect home in a friendly neighborhood. Right next door lived John Floyd, then the editor-in-chief of *Southern Living*. Pam made some birthday cakes and other baked treats for the Floyds, who quickly

became close friends as well as neighbors.

“In 2003, John called me and asked if I’d be interested in applying for a job in the *Southern Living* test kitchen,” Pam said.

The interview involved a pressure-packed performance. “I had to cook four recipes: two that I had developed and two that they gave me,” Pam said. “Then I had to present what I’d made. It was pretty nerve-racking.”

For her two original recipes, Pam made her orange rolls—John Floyd had tasted them and urged her to make them for the interview—and a salad with a dressing she had come up with. The *Southern Living* panel charged her with making a Million Dollar Pound Cake and a chicken pot pie with biscuits on top.

“A month later, I was hired,” Pam said. “But by then, the job in the test kitchen had been frozen. So I went to work as an editorial assistant first but spent most of my time in the kitchen, and I went there officially a few months later. There were eight of us in the test kitchen then.”

Pam still isn’t sure if one of her first tasks at *Southern Living* was the real deal—or a sly initiation into the

rigors of the job. In the early days of her employment, she and other staff members would start the day by getting folders with cooking assignments inside.

“When I first went down to the kitchen, there was a folder nobody had taken,” she said.

As she soon found out, there was a reason for that.

“It was for a column called ‘Taste of the South,’ and it was assigned to me,” she said. “It had a recipe for smoked mullet.”

Immediately Pam was faced with two challenges. First, she’d never smoked any kind of food, including fish.

“We had a barbecue guru who taught me how to do that, and I smoked mullet for days,” she said. “Also, our fish for the test kitchen usually came cleaned and cut into filets that were ready to go. I got a box full of mullet on ice, and I had to clean it, gut it, and cut the filets myself.

“For a week, I smelled like smoked fish every day when I came home.” In 1985, Time Inc. bought Southern Progress, which owned *Southern Living*.

“In 2015, Time Warner spun off from Time Inc., and we became

Time Inc. Food Studios and moved into our new space,” Pam said. “Before that, I strictly did developing and testing for *Southern Living*. We worked really closely with the editors. *Southern Living* always did development but tried to use a majority of reader recipes. In 2007, we started to rely on development alone.”

The new food studios were a cook’s dream, with plenty of elbow room plus the latest equipment.

“The new kitchens were set up to accommodate four people,” Pam said. “Each had their own island, and two would share a sink and fridge.”

Another change came in 2017 when Meredith bought Time Inc. “We became Meredith Food Studios, and now they are DotDash Meredith,” Pam said.

During her career, Pam earned a reputation as a talented baker. Her orange rolls proved to be an enduring favorite as did some of her other creations. Her red velvet white chocolate cheesecake was the most popular Big White Christmas Cake—that’s the stunning cake traditionally featured on the December issue’s cover every year—that’s ever run in the magazine. Her pumpkin pie cheesecake recipe was another winner.

The recipe that wins the prize for “best name” also was a big hit: Pancakes, which are her special pancakes that were often requested for staff birthday parties and events. “It’s just a really good buttermilk pancake,” she said. “The secret is in your wrist. You don’t want to overwork the batter.”

In August 2016, Pam had a big hurdle to overcome outside the kitchen when she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Her treatment meant she couldn’t work



A cover mock-up celebrating Pam Lolley’s career and contributions in the test kitchens.

from September to January, but she found strong support from her employers and co-workers.

“Everyone was absolutely wonderful,” she said.

The best news of all is that she now has a clean bill of health.

“My oncologist ‘fired’ me last November,” she said.

The Covid-19 pandemic was one of her last work-related trials.

“I tested and developed recipes from home when the test kitchens had to be closed,” she said. “We never missed a lick.”

Her house turned into a sort of Grand Central Cooking Station. “Groceries were everywhere, and Elmer had to build me shelves in the garage for all the equipment I needed,” Pam said.

A crisis arose during the summer of Covid, when she was working on *Southern Living*’s holiday Big White Cake.

“My oven broke,” Pam said.

“We got a new one, but the door wouldn’t close right. We tried to tell

*On testing a recipe for smoked mullet:
“For a week, I smelled like smoked fish every day when I came home.”*

—Pam Lolley, retired recipe developer and tester for *Southern Living* and Meredith Food Studios

continued on page 18, see Pancakes

the company they'd sold us a lemon, and that they needed to fix it because this was my livelihood."

Unfortunately, workers couldn't figure out how to solve the problem. "Finally, I figured out I could prop a broom against the door to keep it closed," Pam said. "Thankfully, they did finally replace my 'broom door' oven with a new one."

Southern Living gave her a framed mock-up cover when she retired, and one of the headlines beside Pam's picture said: "DIY Oven Maintenance: Get Out Your Brooms."

Pam said the time was right for her retire in March, and she's already looking forward to spending more time with her large family. She and Elmer have four children and 10 grandchildren. She recently visited daughter Melanie in Holland, Michigan, for the city's annual Tulip Time festival.

"Melanie and her family have been there for five years, and I've never been able to go to the festival before now," Pam said.

She's also planning a trip to Paris this fall with her friend and former co-worker Kate Nicholson, who also introduced her to Les Dames d'Escoffier.

"Kate asked if I'd be interested in becoming a member," Pam said. "I thought it sounded like so much fun, and now I'll have more time for it. I was recently able to work at the Food Bank for the first time. Since we do that on Wednesdays, I couldn't go before due to work."

Pam also is thinking about returning to her culinary roots a bit by taking on small jobs.

"I'm not one to sit around," she said. "I'll probably do some baking and cooking."

She's leaving the test kitchens with lots of happy memories.

"If there was ever a dream job, this one was," she said.

We're so grateful to Pam for sharing the recipes for some of her most popular creations. The recipe for Pamcakes is to the right.

You can find variations for these treats at <https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/original-pam-cakes>.

Here are links to follow if you'd like to make her orange rolls and red velvet white chocolate cheesecake: <https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/orange-rolls>
<https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/red-velvet-white-chocolate-cheesecake>

PAMCAKES

Ingredients

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon table salt
2 cups buttermilk
2 large eggs
1/4 cup butter, melted

Directions

1. Stir together flour and next 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk together buttermilk and eggs; gradually stir into flour mixture. Gently stir in butter. (Batter will be lumpy.) Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Pour about 1/4 cup batter for each pancake onto a hot (350°) buttered griddle.
3. Cook pancakes 3 to 4 minutes or until tops are covered with bubbles and edges look dry and cooked. Turn and cook 3 to 4 minutes or until golden brown. Place pancakes in a single layer on a baking sheet, and keep warm in a 200° oven up to 30 minutes.

Dames Judge 17th Annual Gumbo Gala

by Jan Walsh

I have been judging Gumbo Gala since 2006. And in 2019, when I became a Member of the Birmingham Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International, I invited other local members to join in the fun. This annual fundraiser for Episcopal Place brings both professional and backyard cook teams together to compete for the "Best Gumbo in Birmingham." This year's event was the 17th Annual Gumbo Gala and was held on April 30 at Cahaba Brewing Company from noon until 3:00. This beautiful spring day brought 1,500 attendees, 30 cook teams, and 20 judges, including Dames Roz Bloomston, Charbett Cauthen, Rosemary Dallam, Martha Johnston, Stefanie Maloney, and me.

Gumbo Gala's roots go back to 2005, shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, displacing New Orleans residents who moved to Birmingham's Episcopal Place, which provides low-income seniors and disabled adults safe and afford-



Judges at the 17th Annual Gumbo Gala, from left to right: Martha Johnston, Roz Bloomston, Amber Hooks [blogger], Charbett Cauthen, and Rosemary Dallam judged two categories at the Gala.

able housing and access to related services in a home-like environment. To welcome their new residents the staff threw a gumbo party in their honor, and it quickly became an annual fundraiser for Episcopal Place.

Since that time, Gumbo Gala has grown to become one of the largest gumbo competitions in the South as well as the largest Episcopal event in Alabama. Read More at Episcopal-Place.org.

Women and Finance Workshop

by Jessica Bennett

Dames and their guests attended a seminar on a wide variety of financial topics affecting women on March 10 at the Merrill Lynch Brookwood offices.

The class was co-hosted by Julie Helmers of Merrill Lynch and Elizabeth Brasher of WA Asset Management (previously affiliated with Warren Averett), both previous

sponsors of our Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser.

Elizabeth guided Dames through a variety of topics often faced particularly by women, such as planning for retirement and the role of social security, spousal social security benefits, elder care strategies, and power of attorney.

Julie demystified fiduciary responsibility, market volatility and resilience in unprecedented times,

and tailoring investment strategies to achieve long-term goals. She also generously provided lunch catered by Ashley Mac's.

Dames left with a booklet recap-ping and expanding on the seminar topics, as well as an invitation to choose subjects on which to receive supplemental documents through email. A big thanks to Julie and Elizabeth for their time, diligence, and expertise!

From the Farm: The Big Flavors of Summer



Sunflowers are harvested by the bucket-full during the summer season.

By Margaret Ann Snow

The transition from spring to summer happens quickly in Alabama. One day the first strawberries are ripening and the next you are covered up in squash and zucchini. In early summer, our days are full of pruning and trellising tomatoes. The smell of tomato plants never gets old to me. The tomato tar that sticks to my fingers after hours of pruning, sometimes does, but it is worth it.

When they begin to fruit, hours are spent harvesting and then sorting. I pack hundreds of bags for CSA members, boxes for restaurants, and crates for farmers’ markets. Each

tomato is looked over several times; when harvested in the field and again in the packing shed. I see them in my dreams. What can drive me crazy is the amount of slightly blemished ones and what to do with them. These are the only ones we ever eat in our house. They are the ripest and most delicious, and mostly unmarketable. We make gallons of sauce for ourselves and offer seconds to chefs and CSA members, but there are still more. They are so fragile and perishable.

After the madness that comes with the onset of the first tomatoes, we’ll settle into a rhythm. Harvest, pack, sell. Less showy vegetables—but

equally as delicious—are in abundance. Eggplant is one of my favorites. I love to slice it thinly, fry the slices in olive oil, and marinate them overnight in vinegar, garlic, and basil leaves. I make po-boys with breaded and fried cubes of it. For these recipes, I favor the Japanese varieties. They typically have less of the bitterness that eggplant sometime has. When making a dip, such as baba ghanouj, I prefer the larger, classic varieties. Yotam Ottolenghi’s eggplant dip, which also includes diced cucumber and halved cherry tomatoes, is my go-to.

Farmers’ markets are busy until August, when they level out again.



We harvest buckets of sunflowers, zinnia, and filler for bouquets. Summer is marked by big plants, with large leaves, taking up lots of space. Vining cucumbers and melons, towering okra and corn. Many of the plants have defense mechanisms that leave skin itchy. Okra is notorious for this. We have to wear long sleeves and gloves when we harvest it. Sweat comes on early and I have to acclimate. I tell myself it is cleansing and healthy. By August, there is nothing I can do to convince myself it is a positive thing still. I am more than ready for a cool breeze at that point.

By late summer, we are planting arugula and harvesting some heat-tolerant items we have found to do well in August in Alabama: edamame, yard-long beans, scallions, shiso, and roselle. We have to diversify this time of year because often the southern blight has hit the tomatoes

Above: Scallions do well in the late summer heat of Alabama. At right: “Tomato tar” sticks to fingers after hours of pruning.



and pests such as cucumber beetles and squash bugs have taken to the cucurbits, spreading disease. It is just about that time that we

begin dreaming of fall and the return of lower temperatures and seeding of greens and root vegetables commences.

“Whites of Reds” ... and One Red of Red

By Alexis Douglas,
certified sommelier

The color of wine is determined by the grape skins, not the juice. There are only a few red grapes that produce red juice when pressed. White wines are made by pressing the grape, then taking away the skins; this is why white wines can be made from any color grape! Rosés are made from red grapes, but the skin is only left in contact with the juice for a short time. Red wines are made from red grapes by leaving the skin in contact with the juice for an extended amount of time. Orange wines (super trendy at the moment) are made with white grapes but the skin is left in contact with the juice, creating a gorgeous color and more texture. If you haven’t tried a white wine made from red grapes, here are a few to seek out:

Mousse et Fils “L’Or d’Eugene” Perpetuelle Blanc de Noirs, Champagne, France \$52 Piggly Wiggly

Champagne can legally be made from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and/or Pinot Meunier or any combo of the three. Blanc de Blancs is only made from Chardonnay (a white grape), while Blanc de Noirs is made from the two red Pinots allowed (one or both). This example is hard to find, and absolutely delicious and a steal at this price.



Left Coast White Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon \$20 Piggly Wiggly
This is an easy-to-find, affordable treat from this stellar producer. Also look for the super-limited Reserve (Classic and Hop City sometimes get a few bottles).



Garage Wine Co. Pais-Carinena “Blanco de tinto,” Chile \$22 Classic Wine Co.
My inspiration for writing this article, this intensely flavorful, rich yet elegant white is made from grapes harvested from 150+ year old vines in a high-elevation coastal range in the Chilean mountains. Even a Master Sommelier would have a hard time guessing this wine if tasted blind, since it’s made from the dark, inky, full bodied Carignan grape. A must try!



Division l’Orange, Willamette Valley, OR \$25 Greenwise
Although made for thousands of years, orange wines are having their moment. With a natural yet pleasant funkiness, pretty floral notes and amazing texture, this version is made from a blend of Chardonnay, Chenin, Gewurztraminer, Viognier, Riesling, Roussanne and Pinot gris.



Darting Pinot Meunier, Pfalz, Germany \$22 Hop City
I just had to include a red wine for all of the year-round red drinkers out there...and this crowd-pleaser could potentially please all palates! I also included it because Meunier is one of the red grapes usually used for colorless (or rosé) Champagne! Dark in color, big on flavor, rich in texture but still silky and versatile with food.



Letter, continued from page 1

arship or grant for next year. Our annual fundraiser, Champagne & Fried Chicken, will take place on Sunday, October 2, 2022. This year we hope to expand the event to a “Picnic in the Streets” by adding additional seating and encouraging guests to park and enjoy their picnic on site. Dame Crystal Peterson of Yo’ Mama’s will fry the chicken on site and Dame Betsy McAtee of Dreamland will provide the Banana Puddin’ dessert. We look forward to making this signature event bigger and better each year and having our entire membership participate. Our partnership with The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama was so successful that they would like to continue that relationship. Our catering Dames collaborated to produce a six-course “tasting menu” paired with wines secured by Sommeli-

er Alexis Douglas. This was a truly unique concept with a first-time-ever event in the actual Food Bank warehouse with flowers and a Champagne wall and chandeliers. We’re looking forward to working on the event next year on March 4, 2023. Our annual meeting is mandatory and will be held at The Birmingham Botanical Gardens on Sunday, August 14th at 4 p.m. in the Auditorium. All dues are required to be paid by that time. The Annual LDEI International Conference will be held in New York City, October 20-23, 2022. It’s been an amazing two years to see our chapter continue to move forward—increasing our giving, building alliances in the community and continuing our mission to empower women across our state. It’s been a joy to serve as President, and I’m excited to see what all you amazing women will continue to do.

with love and gratitude,
Kathy G

Kauai: A Paradise of Natural Beauty

by Margaret Ann Snow

Disembarking the plane after 15 hours of traveling with two children was a relief. The moment the island breeze blew across my face through the open-air terminal, I was filled with happiness.

Until then, Kauai had been a place in a guide book or on the internet. Now, it was real.

A shuttle picked us up and took us to Kauai Beach Resort, a short drive from the airport. As I checked us in, David followed Maxwell and Flora, who ran straight for the courtyard and elaborate pool complex, where they commenced a favorite activity on Kauai—chasing chickens. They have the healthiest chickens I have ever seen. With no predators on the island, they strut about freely and unabashed. So much so, that the following day, as we were eating lunch with my parents, a chicken stole a French fry right out of my mom’s hand and preceded to jump on the table, knocking David’s beer over and stepping in Flora’s ketchup, in an attempt to take a bite out of Maxwell’s fish sandwich. In general, the chickens are not a nuisance. It was just that one.

After a swim in the pool and a glance at the beach, I had my first ahi, macadamia nut-crusted with a ‘jade pesto’ made from cilantro, for dinner. There was a purple sweet potato puree on the side. We had just recently grown purple sweet potatoes for the first time and knew a bit about them. They are very different texturally from the orange sweet potatoes we are accustomed to here. Once they are mixed with coconut milk, they become a velvety treat,



Beautiful shellfish were just one of the new creatures to discover on Kauai.

retaining their vibrant color as well.

The four-hour time change meant that we were all awake at 5 a.m. the next morning, so we grabbed our flashlights and hit the beach, hoping for a nice sunrise. Maxwell and Flora chased sand crabs, just as they do on Dauphin Island each summer. Maxwell gathered driftwood, coconut shells, and other natural items to create a sculpture.

Before the sun fully rose, a light shower began to fall. We hurried back to our room, not yet familiar with the regular showers that occur throughout the day in Kauai. They typically last only as long as it takes you to pack up your things and retreat inside, then it is over. You don’t get very wet either. After a day or two, we stopped reacting and just sat through them. Almost every time we were rewarded with a rainbow!

Though we missed the sunrise, or maybe because we did, I ordered a

dish named after it for breakfast. It was eggs benedict with crab cakes and slices of fresh papaya on the side. Maxwell and Flora merrily gulped down glasses of POG juice—passionfruit, orange and guava.

The beach was beautiful, but rocks and sea urchin made us hesitant to swim. Instead, we found a place where the water washed into the sandy beach, making a sand canyon with a creek running through it. There were all kinds of creatures to discover there. Flora found the most beautiful shellfish. It was bright purple and pink, like nothing I had ever seen before. High hills covered in lush tropical plants met the shore to the left of us. I found myself constantly in awe.

After my parents arrived, and after the chicken and French fry incident, we drove to Poipu beach. There were dramatic waves crashing upon rock walls, as well as calm pools that had



Waimea Canyon held many wonders, including a waterfall cascading down into a small pool you could swim in.

been created by walls built out of black basalt boulders.

These pools were perfect for kids to swim in and for snorkeling. You could sit and watch the green sea turtles “shore up.” Maxwell and David watched for a long time as one moved slowly out of the water. I immersed myself under the water watching the brightly colored fish, some with the most intricate designs, move fluidly about. There was no sound, just the mesmerizing fish. A bright green trumpet fish appeared directly under me. I followed it around for a while because I had nothing more important to do. Under the water was an escape from politics, from work, from our busy schedules. In Kauai there was no need for watches or for email.

Lunch our first day in Poipu was the first of many poke bowls and my favorite meal of the trip. The Koloa Fish Market is just 10 minutes from Poipu. They let you build your own

poke bowl, selecting from various meats, salads, toppings, and sauces. I chose ahi with fried onions, a cucumber kimchi, ocean salad (seaweed), and wasabi aioli. It was all served over sticky brown rice. That first bite of fresh ahi mixed with the flavors of the cucumber kimchi was nothing short of mind-blowing.

Waimea Canyon was at the top of everyone’s list. We stopped at a couple of overlooks and decided to risk the impending showers, the muddy path, and the whining of a 5-year-old in order to take on the Canyon Trail. It was a bit precarious at times and I did have to resort to doling out peanut M&Ms to keep Flora going, but it was worth it.

After two miles, we arrived at a breathtaking view of a steep red canyon walls, dotted with trees and white, long-tailed birds soaring through. I could have easily sat and taken in the vast landscape all day, but there was also a waterfall right

around the corner. The waterfall, surrounded by lush, tropical flora, cascading down into a small pool that you could swim in was exactly how I envisioned Hawaii. I had not brought a suit, but my dad got right in. Despite his yelps at the frigid temperature of the water when he entered, 8-year-old Maxwell followed him, declaring “Now I am a man!”

On our drive to the canyon, we had stopped at a store called Isahara’s, in the town of Waimea. There we bought a cooler, ice, take-out poke bowls, taro donuts, and other treats to enjoy picnic-style at the canyon.

We were all tired on the drive back and another shower fell and another couple of rainbows popped out. My dad said “Just another day in paradise,” a refrain we found ourselves repeating often.

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The next day we visited the Tropical Botanical Gardens, which are actually three gardens; two that you can stroll through on your own and one that is only available through a guided tour. Because we had our young children with us, we chose to go through the ones we could do on our own, at our own pace. After a shuttle ride through a locked gate, we entered a place that seemed otherworldly. There were huge trees, enormous hibiscus flowers, but I was most mesmerized by a Chinese Tulip Flower tree. On our way back to the condominium we had rented, we stopped at a farmers’ market because whenever we are traveling, if there is a market, we go. It was in a shopping center and there was a lot to choose from. We bought a couple of fresh papayas and a sugarloaf pineapple. The pineapple was hands down the sweetest pineapple I have ever had.

One day everyone wanted to hike the Heritage Trail. Everyone except Flora. Hike is often considered a four-letter word among our children. I sat on the beach near the trailhead and played in the sand, watching surfers, with her. Suddenly, I saw something out on the horizon. A black hump rose out of the water and then went back under. I pointed it out to her. We saw it again and again. A whale! Water shot out of its blowhole straight up. She was thrilled and I was hooked. From that moment on, I constantly scanned the horizon for more whales.

Days later we stopped at a lighthouse known for whale sighting and saw several. Maxwell couldn’t sit still, or keep his attention on just looking. He would look for a moment, then get distracted and start finding things in the rocks. “There is one” someone would yell. He would look



Poipu beach was the ideal spot to watch sea turtles “shore up.”

up and say “Where?”, but it would be back under the water. It happened again and again until he became so frustrated, he cried and wanted to leave. This is what I needed though. To simply sit and stare off, then be given the gift of seeing a wonder of the natural world.

I was dubious about attending a luau, afraid it would be hokey. I am always searching for authenticity, but both our children and my parents wanted to go, so I bought tickets to the Luau Kalamaku. The day of the luau we were all full of anticipation, especially Flora. Upon arrival, women and girls had a lei of fresh flowers placed around their necks while boys and men had a shell necklace similarly placed around their necks. There were tables with crafts, instruments, photographs. I was more interested in finding a refreshing cocktail. Most people were drinking Mai Tais or Blue Hawaii’s, but I chose a guava cocktail, which was perfect.

The band summoned any children or adults who wanted to learn a hula dance to the round stage in the center of the room. They were teaching us the ‘Hukilau’, a dance I had learned in high school through a dear friend of my ballet teacher. It didn’t feel hokey, it felt fun.

Maxwell, Flora, and I all danced and sang together, huge smiles on everyone’s face.

We had a front row table for the main event and they quickly got everyone through the multiple buffets. The pork was phenomenal! We all tried the poi, but no one loved it.

The performance told the story of the first people that arrived on the Hawaiian Islands. It was dramatic, including flame throwing and lots of dancing, including with the audience. One of the main characters asked Flora up to dance with him!

We returned to the Kauai Beach Resort the night before our departure. They had a king crab buffet. I am usually hesitant at buffets, but the crab was fantastic, and it was all I ate. My parents, children, David, and I walked out to the beach for one final Hawaiian sunset.

We flew back on February 24th, 2020. There were a few people wearing masks on the flight. We wondered about them, talked about them. At that moment, we were aware of what a magical experience we had just had, but were still unaware of how fortunate we were to have made it right on the cusp of what was to come.

England: A Road Trip with Kids

by Rachel West

I caught the travel bug when I was 14 on a trip with my family. Our first stop was England, my first foreign country, and it was there that I understood in a much deeper way than before why people get on planes to see the world. I have been mesmerized by travel—and England in particular—ever since. With that deeply rooted enthusiasm, I always knew that my husband and I would take our children to England, and this, thankfully, was the year we got to go.

My sons are 6 and 8. They are old enough to get excited about certain things like the Tower of London (my youngest really wanted to see the ghost of Anne Boleyn—no luck there), the London Eye, and castles, and they also know themselves well enough to say they couldn’t handle two hours at the Churchill War Rooms or the National Gallery. Their curiosity, or lack thereof, was the driving force behind most of the things we did. I wanted the memories of their first trip to be stamped with magic.

We started in London, headed south to Brighton, then drove westward along the sea to Bournemouth, up to Bristol (and into Wales for a day trip), and ended back in London.

Like many siblings, my two have some opposite interests, but there were a number of things they (and my husband and I) particularly enjoyed:

• **Bodiam Castle:** This is a castle found in fairytales. It has towers, winding staircases, a wide moat, and holes in the ceiling of the



Bodiam Castle is a 14th-century castle in East Sussex, England, that has it all: a moat, winding staircases, and plenty of towers.

entrance to pour boiling tar on advancing enemies.

• **Corfe Castle:** Built more than 1,000 years ago, this castle was partially destroyed in the mid-1600s. That history is still mind-boggling for our American brains to fathom.

• **King Alfred’s Tower:** This tower is a folly—such a fun word. It was essentially built for decoration and to show the wealth of the estate’s owners. It was certainly impressive. There were lots of locals there walking and playing fetch with their dogs.

• **The Blue Pool:** The star attraction of a nature reserve in Wareham is a lake that is always changing colors. The fine minerals suspended in the water reflect light in different ways,

changing color from green to turquoise as the light changes.

There are walking trails through the woods that surround it, where kids (and adults) can look for the magic fairy doors among the trees. There’s also an obstacle-course playground.

• **Brighton Palace Pier and its beach:** This pleasure pier was established in 1899. There are fair-like rides and roller coasters at the end that are open during the summer, but the large, enclosed arcade filled with games and the pebbled beach were what my kids adored.

• **Bournemouth Beach:** This wide sandy beach with its colorful beach huts and views of white cliffs on

continued on page 28, see England

either side was the best way to spend a sunny afternoon.

- **SS Great Britain in Bristol:** This ship, which is dry docked in the harbor, was the first iron passenger steamer to cross the Atlantic. Every level of the ship was open for viewing, and there was an excellent museum that shared how the engine worked, the quirks and considerations of an iron ship, its routes and history, and what life was like aboard. The number of women who gave birth on this ship while at sea was astonishing.
- **The Tower of London:** The canons, armor (for men, children, and horses), and Crown Jewels as well as the castle itself were all tremendously popular.
- **The London Eye:** I didn't expect to like this as much as I did, but there's something about being in that quiet, slowly moving pod, hearing others pointing out sites, looking for landmarks, and people watching from above that is its own kind of magic. My 8-year-old spent most of his time studying all the angles and pieces of how it was constructed.

Favorites with *some* of us:

- **The walk to Old Harry Rocks:** The mile-long walk proved "too long" for one unnamed family member, but it was a gorgeous, mostly flat path that overlooked Poole Bay, ending at the three white chalk formations. It really couldn't have gotten better.
- **Zig Zag Road:** This was a serendipitous experience. My husband saw Zig Zag Road on the map in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and he knew we must drive on it. We were rewarded with beautiful views overlooking the English countryside, including a stop at Box Hill, where we encoun-



Above: The walking path out to Old Harry Rocks
Right: There were fairy houses to be found among the trees surrounding the Blue Pool.



tered the most well-behaved dachshund I have ever met. His name was Frank, and he was celebrating his fifth birthday. Box Hill is also the site of an important scene in *Emma*, which was thrilling for this Jane Austen fan.

- **Westminster Abbey:** There is a wonderful kids' audio and video

tour that was incredibly interesting for one of our children, not so much for the other.

My boys are still talking about the things they experienced, the big things as well as the small things. My hope is those memories will fill their minds for many years to come.

Let's Toast

Mary-Frances Heck is the new Senior Brand Director for Food & Nutrition at Outside Inc. overseeing all their food brands and initiatives. She is also a 2022 James Beard Journalism Award Nominee in Home Cooking Category for "The Way of Clay" in *Food & Wine*.



Wesley Lassen, owner of The Cook Store, celebrated the store's 47th year in business on April 1. She has owned the business for 23 of those years.



Christiana Roussel won first and second place in the Travel Feature category at the Alabama Press Association's 2022 Media Awards for articles that appeared in *Vestavia Hills Magazine*. The article that won first place was "Rediscover Gatlinburg" and second place was "The Great Carolina Outdoors."



Patricia H. Terry, PhD, RD, LD, FAND, was named Professor Emerita by Samford University in April. She retired in 2020. Pat had served as professor of nutrition and dietetics since 1990. She was the director of the undergraduate Didactic Program in Dietetics for 25 years, and she twice served as department chair.



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Newsletter committee members:
Martha Johnston (co-chair), Rachel West (co-chair), Jessica Bennett, Donna Cornelius, Leigh Sloss-Corra, Margaret Ann Snow, Susan Swagler, and Jan Walsh.

Events Calendar

Thursday, June 2	5:30-7:30 p.m. John Hand Building 17 20th Street N, Suite 2000, 2nd Floor	Favorite Things \$10 + Favorite Thing (value \$10 or less) + bring an appetizer
Thursday, July 21	5:30-7:30 p.m. 7575 Parkway Drive, Leeds	Earthborn Studios, Inc. Tena Payne, Owner
Saturday, August 13	Details to follow	Rane Center at Auburn University Field Trip
Sunday, August 14	4 p.m. Birmingham Botanical Gardens	Annual Business Meeting (mandatory)