



Les Dames d'Escoffier  
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

[Ideibirmingham.org](http://Ideibirmingham.org)

Fall 2020

## President's Note

Several months (and president's letters) ago, I encouraged you to figure out what you are passionate about; find a place to put that passion to work; and, perhaps most importantly, know that what you have right now is enough.

A lot has changed since then.

Some of us have struggled to keep our businesses going. Many have pivoted to make our businesses more viable (or simply viable) in this new normal. But passion keeps us moving forward. And what we have—what each one of us brings to our work and to our organization—continues to be enough.

We are resilient. We are not backing down from our challenges.

After about fifteen minutes of wondering if we needed to admit new members this year, the membership committee said, "Well, why not?" Then we got to work vetting prospective members and conducting Zoom interviews.

Even when faced with dwindling opportunities for raising money this year, we remained committed to our philanthropic efforts—awarding \$20,000 in grants and scholarships. It wasn't the amount we initially wanted to give, but—make no mistake—

*continued on page 4, see Letter*

## The Year of the Pivot: Rethinking the Fundraiser



*By Kathy G Mezrano*

This year's fundraiser will be a bit different but will still offer lots of delicious fun.

We had to pivot from our trademark Southern Soirée, but on Sunday, Oct. 18, 2020, from 3-5 p.m. we'll again offer Southern fare with a French twist! We're so excited to be presenting Champagne & Fried Chicken, a picnic supper for two

in a market basket with a bottle of bubbly (similar to above).

Guests will drive into Pepper Place Market and follow in a U-shaped pattern, picking up their market basket first, then a bouquet of dahlias from Dame Deborah Stone's Stone Hollow Farmstead, and lastly a bottle of Prince Alexandre Cremant de Loire Brut.

*continued on page 2, see Fundraiser*



There will be an optional choice of craft cocktails from two of our new Dames, Rachael Roberts of Atomic Lounge and Laura Newman of Queen’s Park. Music will be provided by Brian Less, formerly of the Taylor Hicks Band to add a festive atmosphere as guests drive by.

The menu, coordinated by chair Kathy G Mezrano and co-chair, Dame Kay Reed, IZ Café and IZ Weddings & Events, will include:

- Southern Fried Chicken
- New Potato Salad with Shallot Vinaigrette and Fresh Herbs, prepared by Dame Kathy G Mezrano of Kathy G & Co.
- Kale Salad with Snow’s Bend Organic Fall Vegetables and Dried Fruits, prepared by Dame Ashley McMakin of Ashley Mac’s using produce from Dame Margaret Ann Snow of Snow’s Bend Farm
- Corn Muffins, prepared by Dame Brittany Cheatham, pastry chef of Satterfield’s Restaurant
- Biscuits, prepared by Dame Jennifer Yarbrough of Crestline Bagel Co.
- Fresh pear and cheese
- French Sable Cookies, prepared by Dame Becky Satterfield of Satterfield’s Restaurant and El ZunZún

The ticket cost is \$150, and each picnic basket will serve two people.

Other accoutrements will include two French tea towels, stemless flutes, cutlery and bamboo plates, coordinated by event co-chair Dame Barbara Kenyon of Happy Event Company.

There will also be an online store coordinated by Dames Charbett Cauthen and Susan Swagler.

The store will feature virtual cooking classes from Dames Sheron Goldstein, Kathy G Mezrano, and Andrea Kirkland. There will be art including a framed Nall print

## Event Details

Sunday, October 18, 2020

Drive through to pick up your picnic basket  
3 - 5 p.m.

The Market at Pepper Place

28th St. and 2nd Ave. S.

Birmingham, AL 35233

Tickets: \$150

(each picnic basket serves 2)

[ldeibirmingham.org/fundraiser](http://ldeibirmingham.org/fundraiser)

(the direct ticket link is coming soon!)

## The Menu

Southern Fried Chicken

New Potato Salad with Shallot Vinaigrette and Fresh Herbs  
prepared by Dame Kathy G. Mezrano of Kathy G & Co.

Kale Salad with Snow’s Bend Organic Fall Vegetables and Dried Fruits  
prepared by Dame Ashley McMakin of Ashley Mac’s  
using produce from Dame Margaret Ann Snow of Snow’s Bend Farm

Corn Muffins

prepared by Dame Brittany Cheatham, pastry chef of Satterfield’s

Biscuits

prepared by Dame Jennifer Yarbrough of Crestline Bagel Co.

fresh pear and cheese

French Sable Cookies

prepared by Dame Becky Satterfield of Satterfield’s and El ZunZún

a bottle of Prince Alexandre Cremant de Loire Brut

and original art from Victor Bokas (Dame Sonthe Burge’s brother), books, a 3-day juice cleanse from Dame Andrea Snyder and Farm Bowl + Juice Co., a wine tasting from *Food & Wine* Senior Food Editor Dame Mary-Frances Heck, homemade baklava from Dame Sonthe Burge, a handmade ceramic fruit bowl from Dame Gia McCollister, a CSA box from Dame Margaret Ann Snow of Snow’s Bend Farm. Dame April McClung

of Emily’s Heirloom Poundcakes is offering two Variety Bite Trays (and local delivery).

The store also will feature a gift card to Queen’s Park from Dame Laura Newman, signed copies of all three of Dame Brooke Bell’s baking books (and the buyer can pick one recipe from any of the books and Brooke will bake that item and deliver it), Breakfast for a Year from Dame Jennifer Yarbrough of Crestline Bagel Co.,

chocolate and ricotta cakes from Dame Pat Terry, a year of Spotify dinner playlists from Dame Susan Swagler (each month the buyers get a link to a curated 1.5- to 2-hour playlist), Dame Jan Gautro will make shrimp or chicken/andouille gumbo for four and style the buyer’s dinner table. Dame Maureen Holt will do dinner for two from Southern Graze with a wine pairing from Dame Stefanie Maloney and Scout & Cellar.

We’ll also have a \$100 gift certificate from Dame Jan Walsh to one of the Dame Member Restaurants of [BirminghamRestaurants.com](http://BirminghamRestaurants.com): Ashley Mac’s, Bottega Cafe, Bottega Restaurant, Chez Fonfon, Dreamland Bar-B-Que, Highlands Bar and Grill, Hot and Hot Fish Club, OvenBird, Sol-Y-Luna, The Gardens Café by Kathy G, and Village Tavern.

There is still time to add to this list of store items if you haven’t already!

Finally, we are excited about having a couple of raffles. “Date Night” will include \$100 gift cards from 12 Birmingham restaurants including Satterfield’s, El ZunZún, Hot and Hot Fish Club, OvenBird, Bottega, Highlands Bar & Grill, Gianmarco’s, The Bright Star, and others.

A second “Family-Friendly Dinner” raffle will feature an additional dozen \$100 gift cards from more of Birmingham’s favorite eateries including Ashley Mac’s, Urban Cookhouse, The Gardens Café by Kathy G., Bare Naked Noodles takeout, and more.

We are asking members to sell or purchase at least four \$25 tickets for the raffle.

Tickets for the dinner, the items and experiences, and the raffles can be conveniently purchased through our online store. Link coming soon.

# Les Dames Market Takeover Returns to Pepper Place



Dame Kristen Farmer Hall and the team from Jones Valley Teaching Farm are masked up and ready for the happy Pepper Place crowds.

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

For the 4th year in a row, the Market at Pepper Place is teaming up with the Birmingham chapter of LDEI in September to shine a spotlight on Birmingham’s Top Women in Food.

Dubbed the “Les Dames Market Takeover,” the Market has focused the entire month on promoting female chefs, culinary instructors, and cookbook authors who are also LDEI members in its popular chef demo program.

LDEI members have also used the opportunity to build awareness of LDEI’s mission and sell tickets to our annual fundraiser. The weekly chef demos have been a hallmark event at the Market since it was founded 20 years ago and are often attended by over 100 people. This year, due to Covid-19, the live chef demos have been cancelled. Instead, the Market is featuring a different chef or food producer in its newsletter and on social media every week, inviting

him/her to sell a special dish or signature food product at the market on Saturday.

The Les Dames Market Takeover will launch the week of September 1, and spotlight multiple female chefs and food producers each week, and end on September 26. Member Dames will also be on hand each Saturday from 7am-noon promoting and selling tickets for Champagne & Fried Chicken (see page 1). For a list of Dames being featured and to read the interviews with each of them, subscribe to the Market’s newsletter, check out the weekly blog posts on [pepperplacemarket.com](http://pepperplacemarket.com), and follow @marketatpepperplace and @ldeibirmingham. Join us and post on your own social channels, using the hashtag #bhamwomeninfood.

Come every week, bring your family and friends, and support the female leaders of our amazing food community. It’s Women in Food Month at the Market. Spread the word! We’ll see you there!



we're still impacting lives.

When our entire world—in the midst of this pandemic—turned its attention to social justice, we responded with a statement of solidarity. We have always, through our giving to women entrepreneurs, hardworking students, and area nonprofits and educational programs, supported our underserved communities. We're talking now about what more we can do to back up our anti-racist statement with meaningful and impactful service.

And with events everywhere being cancelled or postponed, we're working on our own pivot—reimagining the Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser from a few years back as a fun, delicious drive-thru affair. (Leigh Sloss-Corra showed us it can be done when she pivoted to a drive-thru farmers' market.) Under the leadership of Kathy G. Mezrano, Kay Reed, and Barbara Kenyon, this event is rapidly taking shape.

We'll still need everyone to participate. To share the ticket link with all your friends (we are not limited by space this time!), help with cooking, work the day of to package these dinners and then hand them to our customers.

We have plans to include items and experiences in our virtual "store," too. So, things you donated last year for our silent auction (which raised more than \$6,000) are needed again. Maybe you have to tweak your item/experience to make it work now.

Whatever you can do and give will be most welcome!

We remain passionate. We are still strong. We are together and committed to something larger than ourselves.

This is my last president's letter to you. Our new president, Kathy G. Mezrano, will be writing them from now on. I can't wait to hear what she has to say to us.

Kathy is a natural leader, one we are all fortunate to follow. And she is exactly the leader we need right now.

Please know that it has been an incredible honor to serve this chapter. Thank you all, so very much, for that opportunity, for your trust in me and for everything you have done to make our chapter better.

## Annual Business Meeting Update

By Rachel West

The Birmingham chapter of LDEI held our annual business meeting on Sunday, August 16.

Officers and committee chairs shared updates. Here are some of the highlights.

VP of Membership, Leigh Sloss-Corra shared details about our new member process this year and that all 12 of the potential new members were approved for membership (for more information, see page 6).

Despite the atypical year 2020 has become thanks to Covid-19, Anne Cain said that the scholarship committee was still able to award \$20,000 in scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to women at the University of Alabama, Auburn University, Samford University, Alabama A&M, Jacksonville State University, and Lawson State Community College.

Additionally, our chapter has awarded grants to high school teams to help support their trips to national competitions. This year, it was decided that we would sponsor the ProStart competition as a \$2,000 sponsor. Rosemary Dallam and

I'll leave you with the final lines from my favorite poem, The Summer Day by Mary Oliver. It's a question that I invite all of you to ask yourselves.

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*

I hope whatever it is remains something we'll be doing together.

Stay safe and love,  
Susan Swagler

Rebel Negley served as judges of the competition.

The Entrepreneur Award went to Jennifer Ryan at Blue Root Co. According to Erin Isbell, this grant allowed her to pay her employees and keep her business alive during Covid. It was a big help at a needed time.

For the mentoring committee, there are upcoming plans to talk via Zoom on the committee's next steps. They do plan to do some Zoom meetings with the mentees, and then do mentor matches with each person.

Erin Isbell shared that right before lockdown, the mentoring committee met with the mentees at Bandit Pâtisserie. "I felt like the mentees walked away with a lot of information that was helpful," she said.

One of the biggest accomplishments of the meeting was the approval of new officers, including President Kathy G Mezrano, VP of Membership Erin Isbell, and Secretary Donna Cornelius whose two-year terms begin immediately.

Meeting minutes were distributed after the meeting. Contact Rachel West if you didn't receive them.

# Raquel Ervin Debuts her New Food Truck



By Susan Swagler

Dame Raquel Ervin launched her new food truck in front of a huge crowd (and several local news crews and a great DJ) in an Avondale parking lot on July 3. She told us she had 300 orders in the first hour and a half.

After that big, busy debut, the Eat at Panoptic truck is serving lunch Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Locations vary; check Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for details.

Chef Ervin's mobile menu includes specialty sliders ranging from a "classic" hamburger to a PB&J burger with smoked bacon, creamy peanut butter and a house-made blackberry jam. The 2 a.m. burger is topped with hash browns and a fried egg.



The crab cake sliders, with plenty of lump crab meat, are delicious. So are the ones filled with chicken and pesto aioli. The 12-hour brisket sliders are a fan favorite—made

with slow-smoked beef brisket, melted American cheese and a horseradish-brown sugar glaze. Her homemade potato chips are an absolute must.

Above: Raquel Ervin launched her Eat at Panoptic food truck on July 3 to long lines. At right: Several local news crews stopped by to interview her about her latest venture.



# Membership in the Time of Covid-19

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

The pandemic has forced many events and activities to delay or be canceled, but the LDEI Birmingham chapter members are a determined bunch and have not been deterred.

While some members worried in early April that “this was not the year to focus on growth,” the Membership Committee took the opposite view, that growth was exactly what would be needed to help each other through the crisis with new energy and more strong women shouldering the responsibility.

The committee, headed up for a second year by VP of Membership, Leigh Sloss-Corra, with support from committee members Brooke Bell, Mary-Esther Carpenter, Linda Croley, Susan Gilpin, Sherron Goldstein, Martha Johnston, Gia McCollister, Kathy Mezrano, Becky Satterfield, and Susan Swagler, decided to abbreviate the new member nomination period to 6 weeks instead of 8, but otherwise, stuck to the schedule and presented a slate of 12 outstanding new members to be voted on at the annual meeting on August 16 as planned. All were approved and have been notified, with much excitement and gratitude sent to the committee in reply.

How was this possible when in person meetings and gatherings were not an option? One word: ZOOM! The membership committee conducted all planning, discussion, and recap meetings on Zoom and the process worked better than ever. New member interviews were also conducted on Zoom, on two successive Sunday afternoons. For the in-person nominee interviews,



Thanks to Zoom, the new member interviews went ahead as planned.

normally the entire committee would gather in a member’s home or office conference room.

Each nominee is assigned an appointment time slot, and is ushered in and interviewed by various members of the committee for approximately 20 minutes. Committee members have often found these sessions tiring and nominees have likened the in-person meetings to the Spanish Inquisition. In this case, Zoom provided the “conference room,” and one Dame was assigned as interviewer for each nominee, since Zoom really works best when 1 or 2 people do most of the talking and everyone else watches and listens. There were technical difficulties, of course, but overall, the committee members rose to the occasion.

The interviews went smoothly and stayed on schedule and decisions were able to be made quickly since everyone had time to focus and take

good notes in the comfort of their homes. All the interviews and discussion were also recorded, so anyone who needed it could refer back. Less wasted paper, less stress, more efficiency, and the committee ended up with a great slate of prospective new members.

Once the board approved all 12 recommended nominees via email, a ballot was created for all members to vote using Google Forms. For those unfamiliar with it, Google Forms offers a free survey template that works a lot like the online app Survey Monkey. A proposed new member ballot was emailed to members a week before the annual meeting, and by the time the meeting began at 3 p.m. on August 16, enough ballots had been received to announce the approval of the 12 new members.

We are so excited to welcome these amazing new women to our group this year, and to have achieved it all virtually with almost no problems.

We have missed meeting in person and sharing a glass or two and conversation while getting to know each other in more relaxed settings, but those days will return. In the meantime, look for our new members in their places of business if they are open, follow them on social media, invite them to Zoom coffees and happy hours, and look for them in the trenches working alongside the entire membership in October when we host Champagne & Fried Chicken contactless drive-thru picnic pick-up fundraiser.

We welcome our 2020 LDEI Birmingham Chapter new members:

- Rita Bernhardt
- Kristal Bryant
- Aimee Castro
- Stacey Craig
- Lauren Gavin
- LaCrista Hutchinson
- April McClung
- Laura Newman
- Rachael Roberts
- Joy Smith
- Jasmine Smith
- Anna Theoktisto

# Dames Featured in Birmingham Home & Garden Magazine



Ten members of our chapter were featured in the July/August 2020 issue of Birmingham Home & Garden magazine, sharing their favorite kitchen essentials and recipes to go with them.



# Our New Lives: The Summer of Covid-19

compiled and edited  
by Martha Johnston

How are Birmingham Dames staying happy (and/or sane) during the pandemic? Here are some of their stories:

**Gia McCollister:**

I want to laugh a lot these days. I love seeing common, regular people making fun videos about dance, cooking, politics, and even language classes. So TikToc is where I go. Take a look at some of my favorites:  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJhotTjF/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk1jArB/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk1jkwB/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk12f1b/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk11Gem/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJK1dwk4/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk1j1u1/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJk1ew2e/>  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZM-JhocGBm/>

**Pam Lolley**

I’ve certainly had an interesting month!!! I am still working from home developing and testing recipes for Meredith Corp. In the past couple of weeks I developed “The Big White Cake” for the *Southern Living* December issue cover!! You can’t even imagine what my kitchen looked like most of the time!!! But, it is a real winner and is sure to please our readers!!

**Susan Swagler:**

A doctor friend of mine told me that in addition to wearing masks, frequent handwashing and smart social distancing, the most important thing we can do during this pandemic is get healthier. Strengthen our bodies, especially our hearts and our lungs. Lose a few pounds, if necessary. Be kind to ourselves and pay attention to our mental health.

So, I’m focusing on daily exercise. Some days I do a spin class. Some days I do yoga. Several days a week

I walk at least four hilly miles. And lately, when I walk, I’ve been listening to talks and meditations by Tara Brach. You can access them at [www.tarabrach.com](http://www.tarabrach.com) where you’ll find years and years of archived talks on subjects like compassion, fear, listening, gratitude, grief, relationships, happiness and lots more. She lately has led some great discussions on anti-racism.

Brach teaches a technique called RAIN: Recognize what’s happening/bothering you; Allow the experience to just be there; Investigate with interest and care; Nurture with self-compassion. This works for all kinds of things!

And I’ve found her multi-part series called “Sheltering in Love” especially helpful while sheltering in place during this pandemic.

**Cheryl Slocum:**

Here in Alabama, Bete and I are a two-person family and things can get a touch monotonous for both

of us. We’ve made the best of it by finding places we hadn’t discovered before and by looking forward to our weekly Sunday family meeting with my sisters and their families.

We learned about Orr Park in Montevallo and had a great time visiting there. We finally discovered the Homewood Forest Preserve, which is basically our backyard. [And I’m feeling a little foolish for not having known about it before now.] We were already well acquainted with Aldridge Gardens, but it has been nice to go back and stroll along the edge of the pond. We finally walked along the Vulcan Trail, and we travelled to the Sunflower Field in Autauga in July.

We have become very creative for our family ZOOM meetings—gathering our dispersed family from afar to connect and regroup during Covid-19. My sister and 11-year-old nephew are in Chapel Hill, NC. Another sister and my brother-in-law are in Bethesda, MD, and their daughter just graduated from college and has moved to Philadelphia.

We have held several different themes: charades (several times), Yahtzee, and “To Tell the Truth” (we played along with the TV show). We held a Birthday Dance Party for my brother-in-law where everyone contributed 2-3 songs for a playlist that we danced our butts off to. We have had craft nights, where we all painted and crafted.

We did a family cake baking challenge, where each family was assigned a cake to replicate, and then we all ate a piece after displaying our results and enjoyed chatting.

For my sister’s birthday we had a Jazz Brunch—we arrived with our brunch (my sister’s was ordered and delivered to her), and we enjoyed eating while listening to a curated jazz playlist. And we have held our



Left: Cheryl Slocum and her daughter, Bete, have gotten creative during Covid-19, including a cake-baking challenge with family across the U.S. Below: They’ve also discovered Orr Park in Montevallo where you can see Tim Tingle’s tree carvings.



first comedy night—where each person was required to tell 3 jokes or funny stories.

I am pretty impressed with how creative we’ve been. But what’s even

more amazing is this quarantine situation has made us all connect more often and in a more meaningful way!

*continued*



Pam Lolley developed *Southern Living’s Big White Cake* for the December issue, testing it in her home kitchen.





**Jan Walsh:**

What makes me happy these days is a picnic on a pontoon boat (above) with my favorite guy!

**Rachel West:**

Covid-19 has ruined my dog. In these days of safer-at-home recommendations, Mack—a 15-pound mini pinscher-beagle mix rescue—spends most of his time in my lap while I work, completely unconcerned if I have room for him or not.

He gets bonus food and walks around the neighborhood daily. He has also attended every Zoom call that I have been part of since March 12. If you’ve met with me virtually, you’ve also met with Mack. If I take a nap, Mack takes a nap. If I go to the kitchen, Mack goes to the kitchen.

All of this time together with my faithful (and sometimes needy) Mack has helped me weather the uncertainty of what we are all living through. Our daily walks in particular have been sanity-saving—they



got me out of the house on days when I needed a 30-minute break from the noise and demands of being both a work-from-home and stay-at-home parent (along with my husband, who held down the fort during those walks).

Mack never can contain his excitement when the signs of a walk start appearing, and I certainly benefitted

*Above: The incorrigible Mack West, who is even more spoiled than ever thanks to Covid-19.*

from that contagious enthusiasm. Covid-19 brought about many realizations, but one of those has been a simple confirmation: We are impossibly lucky to get to experience life with our pets.

# LDEI Birmingham’s Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter



*This statement lives on the homepage of our website at [LDEIBirmingham.org](http://LDEIBirmingham.org).*

The Birmingham Chapter of Les Dames d’Escoffier International supports Black Lives Matter and the global movement to end systemic racism, racial violence and police brutality.

We call for an end to racism and oppression in any form, in any society.

Maya Angelou said, “... lift someone up. Lift a stranger up—lift her up. I would ask you, mother and father, brother and sister,

lovers, mother and daughter, father and son, lift someone. The very idea of lifting someone up will lift you, as well.”

As an organization, we have always worked to lift up women who are under-recognized, underpaid, under-promoted, and underserved. We are committed to creating meaningful change in our communities through volunteer efforts, awarding scholarships and grants, mentoring, education and inclusion.

As a chapter, we support women of all ages and all colors with scholarships so they can

pursue their educations and their dreams and with grants to help them grow their businesses and better support their families and their communities. We will continue these efforts going forward, with an intentionally stronger focus on needs in the Black community.

These efforts are largely localized, so it’s important that we, as a chapter, join the wider community of people all across the world in support of justice, equality, accountability and change, in support of human rights and advancement for all people.



# Behind the Scenes with Dame Deborah Stone

compiled and edited  
by Martha Johnston

Entrepreneur Deborah Stone founded Stone Hollow Farmstead in 1999 with her husband, Russell, and daughters, Fallon and Alexandra. Today, the farmstead has grown to include several complementary businesses including Farmstead Laboratories and FarmStand by Stone Hollow Farmstead.

**Which family member influenced you the most as a child? How does life reflect that today?**

There were gardeners and farmers on both sides of my family. My granddad on Mom’s side owned the local grocery store in Hanceville, AL, Bland and Bland Grocer, where “Papa” was the butcher. One of my favorite childhood memories is arriving at their store on the weekends. Papa would greet us at the door, take our hand and lead us back to the meat counter where he would promptly carve off a beautiful slice of what you and I know as mortadella ... but he called it baloney. I remember removing the peppers and olives lamenting that I didn’t like them. Mema and Papa were very present in our lives and I absolutely adored them both and learned so much from them as well as my mom. This is so evident in everything we do today. But I have to say the most influential person in my life was my Dad. Possibly the greatest gift he gave me was adopting my brother and me a little while after marrying Mom. He retired as a Lt. Colonel in the Air National Guard. He was detailed, meticulous, and a hard worker. He was always outside when he was home.



*Deborah Stone is hands on in all aspects of her Stone Hollow Farmstead operation, but she always has time for Gracie, a rescue pet.*

Every evening while my siblings and I rode our horses, he would work in the garden or do yardwork, always careful to keep us in his sight. It was him who taught us to ride.

Dad believed I could do anything. Or at least that was how it seemed to me. He instilled confidence like when he taught me to drive his stick-shift pickup truck when I was only 11 years old. I would drive my siblings and the neighborhood kids to the Zamora pool in the summer. Times were sure different then!

Dad and I would cut firewood together in the fall. He would cut while I loaded with the sounds of

college football games blaring from the cab of his pickup truck. One Saturday when I was 13, we were cutting, and he slipped and cut his leg badly with the chainsaw—very badly. I was overcome with fear and he with pain, but somehow, I managed to drive him to my uncle’s home 30 minutes away, so they could get him to the hospital.

**Describe your home as a child and the home you wanted as an adult.**

My childhood home was always filled with fresh vegetables from the garden needing to be canned, frozen or served. We had a wonderful wood-burning fireplace during

the winter. Our 40 acres begged 4 kids to explore on horseback or on foot. It included a lake where we loved to fish. And there was always plenty of work if someone said they were bored.

My home now is much the same...filled with fresh vegetables and fruits from the garden. Thank goodness my husband Russell is very easy going because there is always something that needs to be held in the house overnight, like tons of fresh flowers in 5-gallon buckets, hand-picked elderberries steeping in alcohol, or fresh out of the field veggies with hitchhikers from local farmers heading to the farm for process the next morning. Occasionally it’s a baby goat or two that needs a little protection from the cold and it’s all fine with him. The Grandkids love it too because there is always a baby goat at the house for Thanksgiving. And no one ever says they are bored!

**Describe yourself as a teen.**

As a teenager and young adult, I dreamed about living life in the city. I had not had that experience, so it was intriguing. I loved the outdoors, but my favorite pastime was flipping through the pages of fashion magazines. I was obsessed with bell-bottom pants and platform shoes. I loved clothes and skincare. I think I was always a product junkie. When I turned 16, I wanted to earn my own money, so I attended cosmetology school on Saturdays. I told myself that when I graduated from high school, I would become a hairstylist because I thought they were the most stylish of people.

**What led you to the spa business?**

Fast forward to 1985 when I decided to shift to aesthetics. I made some calls and asked to train with

Lydia Safati of Repechage and the importer of Phytomer, Anneli Johnson. Lydia was launching her flagship store in New York and Anneli had the experience and wisdom she gained in Finland, her import business and an aesthetic business. I got really lucky that these European ladies both said yes and allowed me that opportunity. While working with Anneli I learned about the Day Spa concept. She explained how the European Spa concept was developing into a “day” of spa offerings.

In 1989, with Russell’s backing, I opened Deborah Stone Day Spa. It was the first day spa in the Southeast. Mom joined me some time later on that journey. When Dad retired from the military, he came to work there, too. He managed the shipping, receiving and inventory. A lesson he taught me at the spa was “if you want to know how your managers are doing, don’t ask the manager, ask the people managed by them.”

**Why did you start a farm?**

Ten years later a division of Health South purchased the spa. I immediately began looking for land. I was going back to the farm!

I wanted my children to have that same experience and knowledge that I had been so lucky to enjoy and asked Dad if he would help me build the farm. Thank goodness he said yes. He drove 50 minutes twice a day, every day, for a year to help me. Once the area was cleared and the trees were hauled off, it was time to pick up the remaining tree roots and branches. Alex, my then 10-year-old daughter, drove the truck, and yes, I had already taught her to drive. Dad and I had been walking side by side following her less-than-straight path while load-

ing sticks, roots and such as I felt a wave of uncontrollable tears. The memories and gratitude in that instant were overwhelming. Yes, I had been here before! This work was uncannily familiar. In that moment, I suddenly understood just what all I had learned from my Dad. It was a powerful awakening. I looked at him and said “You have taught me so much in my life, and I am so thankful. Now my child is the driver and here we are working on the farm again.” Life had certainly come full circle for us both.

**What is a day like on the farm?**

Today my life is filled with the same love of farm, food, and work that Mom and Dad taught me way back when. It’s just done on a commercial scale now.

When the Shelby County health inspector came to approve the kitchen, she saw all the green beans I had just canned for my family and promptly told me I couldn’t “can” green beans for resale. She explained that this low acid food could kill someone if not handled properly. I remember calling Mom and my grandmother to tell them what this “highly educated” lady had shared. We do not can green beans for resale as that is one battle I did not win. After several health inspector meetings, we became a legal and certified cannery adding to my then current list of inspectors: Dairy, FDA, AG, and now Shelby County Health Dept.

The farm life is rewarding, beautiful, and demanding and I can truly say I never have a day I regret this journey. The spa girl has long since passed and the perfectly manicured hands and feet have been toughened by boots and gloves. But farming is a challenge. It seems like not

*continued*



one day ever goes as planned. You must be a quick-change artist. You can be sure something is broken or someone (animal) doesn't feel good. The difficult days are worth it when we receive outstanding awards for our products. Our Fresh Chevre with Chive Blossoms and Goat milk feta have both received 2nd place awards from the American Cheese Society, and we have recently been notified of two new awards we will receive in days to come.

In addition to the 100-member CSA and the goat dairy, we grow close to 20 acres of vegetables, flowers, berries, figs, and herbs. We now grow year around and are always busy planting, harvesting, cooking, pasteurizing, cheese making, preserving, developing recipes, ordering, receiving, etc. The kitchen is always "on". It's a standard joke to tell visitors not to go in the kitchen or they may get pickled. Our offerings change seasonally, but there are some products we try to never be out of stock on such as our Bloody Mary's, cajeta, pickled champagne okra and pickled peaches. We try to put up enough of these items while they are in season to last a year.

The growing season for quality heirloom tomatoes, Chilton county peaches and local strawberries seems short when you're projecting and canning for the entire year. For example, heirloom tomatoes are available July through September so we put up as many tomatoes as possible during these months hoping to make it till the next July with our inventory of Bloody Mary's

Mondays and Tuesdays are dedicated to prep of what comes in from our fields for our Community Supported Agriculture subscription program (CSA). Wednesdays are spent planning and organizing.

We cover current issues, product development, food safety concerns, meetings about our online platforms with Faire, Food 52, etc. Thursdays are planning days. We reevaluate and adjust and then Alex works with our content creators to plan and schedule social media, blog post, etc. Fridays are spent cutting flowers and bouquet making for Saturday Farmers Market at Pepper Place.

#### **Tell us about FarmStand.**

In 2011 I opened a juice bar and retail concept called "The Pantry" by Stone Hollow. I had hoped this would be the venue to sell all of our "food in jar" products and more, but the lack of foot traffic at the chosen location was always an issue. Alex joined me full time in 2015 after she had studied product development at FIDM and graphic design at Samford. In 2019, we made the decision to move the retail location and rebrand. We are now known as FarmStand by Stone Hollow Farmstead. We discontinued the juice bar and focus on tableware, cookware, beautiful ingredients to cook with and local produce. It also has an apothecary and flower shop. We are located at Pepper Place.

Additionally, we have a small second location close to the farm in Harpersville at the intersection of Hwy 280 & 25. Check it out when you're headed to the lake. We operate a 100+ member CSA program from both locations. Alex prepares from the store, and I prep from the farm. Delivery vans and farmers are delivering on Mondays so as not to overwhelm the store and the staff on Tuesday, but it has to be fresh and it has to be packed before Tuesday at noon. Alex and I are super passionate about CSA because

we get to share our local farming community with our members. Our CSA features some of them each week. You can see how it works and learn what's included in a weekly bag here <https://www.stonehollowfarmstead.com/csa-notes>

#### **What's next?**

The wholesale business is growing quickly now. We took the line of food in jars to the Atlanta Gift Market in 2018, and last year Food 52 brought us into their online store. Due to Covid, these markets developed online platforms for store owners to do their "buying at market" safely. We have spent the last 2 months getting set up online with these companies. Alex is in charge of branding, social media, the retail shops and our gift box program. I manage the farm, gardens, product development and animals. Alex is at the farm several days a week so we divide and conquer.

We just completed an advent calendar exclusively for Food 52 for the 2020 holiday season. It will be available online through Food 52 and in our two stores. It is chock full of beautiful food in jars, and we are super excited about it.

In 2019 the farm was chosen to participate in the Alabama Hemp Pilot program. We grew 2 acres of hemp. There is so much to be said for the benefits of CBD and herbal tinctures. We just completed development of Farmstead Laboratories, a beautifully aromatic and delicious line of lifestyle and wellness products including drinking vinegars, tinctures, CBD oil, body care and candles. The link is <https://www.stonehollowfarmstead.com/farmstead-laboratories>

# A Trip to Selma to Honor Congressman John Lewis

By Susan Swagler

Paying our respects to a true American hero was reason enough for a short road trip—masks on, of course.

On Sunday, July 26, 2020, Congressman John Lewis crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma one last time, and this time the state troopers in attendance saw him safely across.

It was an extraordinary moment, and my husband and I made the trip from Birmingham (another place of significance in the Civil Rights movement) to Selma to witness it. There were other opportunities to pay our respects to this Civil Rights icon. He lay in state in Alabama's Capitol Rotunda. We thought briefly about traveling to Washington, D.C. where Representative Lewis was the first Black lawmaker to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. His coffin was placed upon the same catafalque that held President Abraham Lincoln's body.

We decided, instead, to go back to the beginning.

When John Lewis marched across the bridge with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Hosea Williams, and other Civil Rights leaders on their way from Selma to Montgomery, he was only 25. He carried a backpack with two books, an apple, an orange, and a toothbrush and toothpaste. The peaceful marchers demonstrating for voting rights in 1965 were met with violence. Lewis was beaten so badly by state troopers, his skull was fractured. The day became known as "Bloody Sunday."



*Above: Rose petals scattered on the Edmund Pettus Bridge ahead of John Lewis's funeral procession were a stark reminder of "Bloody Sunday."*

*At right: Downtown Selma was absolutely silent except for one voice raised in a gospel song as Lewis's coffin passed by.*



On this other Sunday, 55 years later, red rose petals were scattered across the bridge ahead of the horse-drawn carriage carrying Congressman Lewis's flag-draped coffin. The couple thousand people lining the streets of

downtown Selma were mostly silent except for a few voices raised in song. Some veterans—of wars and the movement—saluted.

So did the state troopers. And that, I believe, was poetic justice.



# Chowing Down in T-Town: Where to Eat When You're in Tuscaloosa



The recently opened Local Roots restaurant shouldn't be missed. It started as a food truck in 2016.

By Donna Cornelius

University of Alabama football is the biggest draw in Tuscaloosa. But in order to keep up our strength while we cheer on the Crimson Tide, we T-Town residents have to eat. And drink. And be merry.

Here are some of my favorite restaurants, which I hope you'll visit if you're in town. Note: If you need a dining partner, I'm always available.

Most people know about Dreamland Bar-B-Q, which got its start in Tuscaloosa. But locals also love Archibald's Bar-B-Q, where the hickory-smoked ribs are slathered with a tangy, vinegary sauce. The restaurant's beans, slaw, and banana pudding are pretty tasty, too. The building at 1211 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Northport isn't much to look at, but don't let

that deter you from picking up a large order.

One of the most successful young restaurateurs in town is Craig Williams, owner of **The Avenue Pub** and **Central Mesa** in downtown T-Town. At AvePub, 405 23rd Ave., don't miss the Thai nachos or the fish and chips—or the beers. Central Mesa, a short walk away at 519 Greensboro Ave., has a fresh take on Mexican food, including the street corn app (my favorite), pork belly tacos, and the best margaritas in town.

Be prepared to wait at another downtown restaurant, **DePalmas Italian Cafe**. The restaurant at 2300 University Blvd. is always crowded, and with reason: It has good food at good prices. I dream about the creamy gorgonzola salad dressing, the chicken and porcini calzone, and the lasagna, which is offered in different flavors daily.

The **Local Roots** food truck has been a hit since it hit the streets in 2016—and owners Dustin and Kacie Spruill just opened a brick-and-mortar restaurant at the Tuscaloosa Galleria, 1657 McFarland Blvd. N. Piadines are made with house-made dough, and the most popular dish—the chuck-and-brisket-blend burger—is even better with Granddaddy Fries (the name is a tribute to Dustin's grandfather, whose big garden always had potatoes) and Sriracha aioli.

**R. Davidson Chophouse** bills itself as a traditional American steakhouse, so it follows that the filets and cowboy rib-eyes are tender and tasty. Sides, meant for sharing, include creamed spinach, lobster mac and cheese, and the portobello fries (but I tend to be stingy with these and usually get an order just for myself). The Chophouse is at 2230 Fourth St.



Go to **River** for a lovely view of the Black Warrior—but especially for the food. I rarely make it past the apps, like fried okra in season, farm carrot hummus, and the salmon chips with fried capers. When I do, I usually opt for the Alabama catfish or etouffee-style shrimp and grits. Our own Dame Margaret Ann Snow's Snow's Bend Farm supplies River with its top-notch local ingredients.

If you're feeling a tad fancy, visit **The Side by Side** in the Embassy Suites, 2410 University Blvd. The menu is seasonal, but whatever the time of year, you can't go wrong with the vegetable plate. Even the most

dedicated carnivores won't leave hungry after they eat this, especially if they also get the skillet cornbread with honey butter.

A little advice: Most of these restaurants are open for dining in and for takeout orders. But with the ever-changing Covid-19 situation, I'd advise calling before you go.

Also, it never hurts to say "Roll Tide" to your server.

*Tuscaloosa might be world famous for its football team, but the local restaurants have their own enthusiastic fans.*





# Make-Your-Own Adventure Wines

By Alexis Douglas,  
certified sommelier

From my cooking to my clothing, I’ve become more *adventurous* over the past few months. My coleslaw is colorful, my cover-ups are crazy, and my wine choices are a reflection of my more adventurous side: happy, fun and bright. Whether you’re spending your nights at home or social distancing in a friend’s backyard, nowadays we are making our own adventures on repeat. So it doesn’t hurt to have an uplifting, colorful, interesting label to gaze at while relaxing with an equally jovial glass of wine. Many of my favorite selections for this season are happy on the outside and inside of the bottle and will help color your fall palate *and* palette.

*Wines available at Golden Age in Mountain Brook Village. Check out their new “wine garden” (full-service outdoor seating that allows for safe and comfortable social distancing), which opens at 3 pm daily (closed Sunday). Online ordering and curbside pickup is still available.*

**JF Merieau Brut “J’Ose Les Fines Bulles,” Loire Valley, France \$20.** A perennial favorite made from rich Chenin Blanc and bright Chardonnay. The cheery label makes for a fab hostess gift and the refreshing flavor profile allows for versatile entertaining. Made in the same method as Champagne, so a mineral vein indicates quality and sophistication...making this great on its own yet affordable enough to use as a mixer for a bubbly cocktail.



**Frischengruber Gruner Veltliner Federspiel “Steiger,” Wachau, Austria \$24.** Organically grown, this uplifting white offers crowd-pleasing fruitiness and balance yet enough complexity for more discerning palates. Excellent aperitif or a great match for bold, high-flavor foods such as curries.

**Pittnauer “Konig” Rose, Burgenland, Austria \$18.** Made with minimal intervention by one of the most celebrated winemakers in Austria, this fun-to-drink rose is light, zesty, and simply delicious. Impressive yet easy, pair it with your BFF on the patio or your favorite sushi (home-made or take-out).

**Lioco Pinot Noir, Mendocino, California \$22.** Incredible complexity and depth for the price point, with the most beautiful turquoise label to boot. Silky, spicy, berry, orange zest and a hint of sarsaparilla flavors match with pork chops or salmon.

**Martha Stoumen “Post Flirtation” Red, California \$26.** Naturally made from Zinfandel and Carignan grapes by rock-star winemaker Martha Stoumen, this friendly light red is spicy and herbal yet fruit-forward. Best served chilled with cured, grilled or smoked meats. Bring on the charcuterie and BBQ!

**Andrea Snyder** of Urban Cookhouse has partnered with Eagles’ Wings Inc. of Tuscaloosa to purchase the bulk of the romaine lettuces from the EW hydroponic farming operation. Eagles’ Wings is a non-profit that employs people with developmental disabilities. This partnership is a winning one for all.  
[www.eagleswingsoftuscaloosa.org/](http://www.eagleswingsoftuscaloosa.org/)



**Cathy Sloss Jones** was recently spotlighted in *Forbes* magazine and in the related podcast, “Leading with Genuine Care,” hosted by Rob Dube. In the article and recorded



interview, Jones discusses her career as an urban planner with heart. “For decades, she’s become a leader in creating healthy, vibrant, and equitable neighborhoods...that support diversity and inclusivity,” says Dube. “Cathy has also become a staunch advocate for bridging the divides made in communities after centuries of racial inequality and injustice. She encourages everyone to take action, be kind—and perhaps most importantly—genuinely listen to those being impacted the most.”  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rob-dube/2020/08/10/creating-stronger-communities-through-equality-and-conversation/>  
<https://www.donothingbook.com/introducing-the-leading-with-genuine-care-podcast/>

**Deborah Stone** and Stone Hollow Farmstead’s Tumeric Drinking Vinegar have won a Silver soft™ award in the Functional Beverage Class from the Specialty Foods Association. All the 2020 winners are celebrated for their culinary creativity and come from across America and around the world.



**April McClung**, a new LDEI member and owner of Emily’s Heirloom Pound Cakes, appeared on QVC on August 19 during four segments spotlighting small businesses.



## Events Calendar

September Saturdays	Les Dames Market Takeover The Market at Pepper Place	7 a.m. - noon
Sunday, October 18, 2020	Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser Drive through to pick up your picnic basket The Market at Pepper Place <a href="http://ldeibirmingham.org/fundraiser">ldeibirmingham.org/fundraiser</a>	3 - 5 p.m.

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