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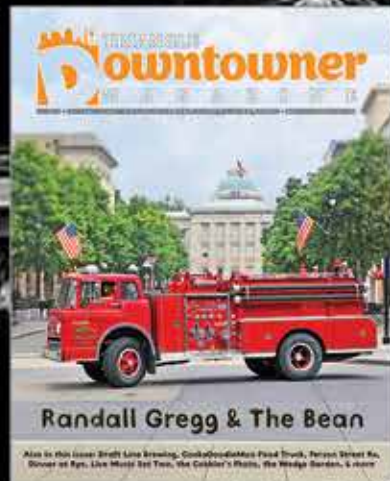
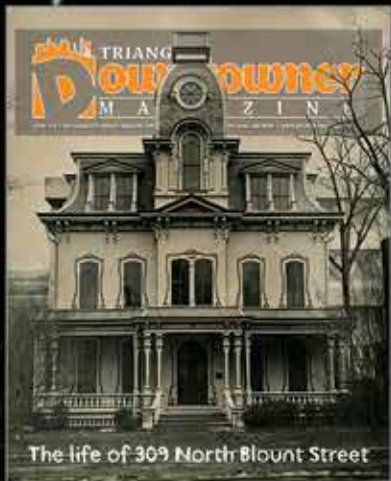
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Did you spot our Downtowner mascot Truman on the cover? He's hiding on every cover, so if you spot him, let us know where and you'll be entered in our monthly drawing to win one of our new vintage Raleigh T-shirts! (Read about our new shirts on page 10).

You can also follow Truman's exploits on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/trumandowntown](http://www.facebook.com/trumandowntown) and Instagram at [www.instagram.com/trumandowntown](http://www.instagram.com/trumandowntown). Enter Truman's contest here: [www.triangledowntowner.com/truman](http://www.triangledowntowner.com/truman)

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# CELEBRATING 15 YEARS!



BY CRASH GREGG, PUBLISHER

**I**t's hard to believe it's been 15 years since Sig Hutchinson, my brother Randall, and I launched the *Downtowner* in November of 2005 as *Raleigh Downtowner Magazine*. Our initial focus was primarily on downtown Raleigh, which was a very different place then. There were very few restaurants and bars, retail and shopping options were mostly non-existent, and Fayetteville Street – which was still closed to traffic – was a ghost town after 6pm after all the daytime workers left.

Only two other magazines were published in late 2005: the *Independent Weekly* (which was still locally owned then) and *Metro Magazine* (which was run by Bernie Reeves, who previously owned *Spectator Magazine* and founded *Triangle Business Journal*). Bernie is much of the reason for the *Downtowner's* existence as I had the pleasure of working with him at *Spectator Magazine* after college. That experience further fueled my journalism bug and gave me the unique opportunity to work with and learn from other publishing professionals. Now there are more than 14 other magazine publications across the Triangle.

We saw a need for a non-political magazine that focused solely on the positive aspects of all the growth and revitalization that was going on around us. We featured articles on dining, nightlife, shopping, business, charities, breweries, history, and much more. Launching in 2005, we were a bit ahead of our time in



predicting the dramatic growth of downtown Raleigh. Not more than a year after we launched, Fayetteville Street was transformed from a deserted pedestrian mall to the modern main street of downtown it has become. Unfortunately, the closures caused by the pandemic and civil unrest in downtown have caused

many local businesses to shutter their doors and windows, pushing much of the restaurant and bar traffic to the more unaffected Glenwood South District. However, in time, downtown proper will surely become the bustling hub of our capital city once again.

In 2005, Durham was far more known by lovers of good food, having many more popular restaurants than Raleigh. It took more than a decade before that finally began to change as more and more chefs and restaurateurs began to open new spots in downtown Raleigh. Skip forward a few more years, and the foodie scene has spread to all corners of the Triangle, in both large and small cities and towns. Now, you can find great dining options, along with craft cocktail bars and breweries, and unique retail shops in virtually every downtown throughout the Triangle.

We've seen a fantastic amount of change across the Triangle in the last 15 years. Downtowns have become centralized hubs of activity, not only with restaurants and bars, but shopping, condos and apartments, and commercial ventures, with businesses choosing urban areas where their employees can walk to work, eat, drink, and visit. In 2005, much of downtown Durham's commercial space was empty, as was the case in downtown Raleigh. It grew every year, with fewer and fewer spaces remaining open. North Hills has grown from a sleepy mall to an entire community unto itself, with re-





tail, entertainment, residential, and commercial spaces. A bit of trivia: the old North Hills Mall was torn down, and the new project started the same year we founded our magazine.

The *Downtowner* organized and hosted Raleigh's first Food Truck Rodeo in 2011, which we called Food Truck King, allowing diners to vote on their favorite food truck fare. It was a fundraiser for the local charity, Meals on Wheels – a worthy nonprofit organization and one with the perfect name for a food truck event. Local artist Matt McConnell fashioned an amazing metal crown trophy sculpture, which we presented to dumpling experts Chirba Chirba, beating out 21 other food trucks (almost every food truck in the Triangle at the time). In 2012, we lost our office due to a devastating fire, and with no time to organize another event, we offered the Food Truck Rodeo to a friend, who took it to massive heights in the following years.

After a few years of promoting downtown Raleigh, Jim Goodman, owner of WRAL TV, FOX-50, the Durham Bulls, and the incredible American Tobacco Campus, asked if we would be interested in creating a Durham *Downtowner* to help promote the Bull City. After considering it, I thought it best to instead change the name (and therefore the coverage area) to *Triangle Downtowner Magazine* and include downtown Durham, Cary, Apex, Wake Forest, North Hills/North Raleigh, and everywhere in between. It made sense to include all the high-density areas in the same magazine to encourage inter-city travel, partnerships, and the ease of sharing news. Many residents live in one city and commute to another for work, and others who live in one city but frequently travel to other parts of the Triangle regularly for dining, shows, events, and shopping. Perhaps not as much as before COVID, but that will increase slowly as the pandemic affects wane into 2021.

Over the last 15 years, we've had the pleasure of interviewing so many community leaders, chefs, nonprofit directors, business owners, artists, and others. Our restaurant profiles have always been the most popular of all articles (who doesn't love reading about good food), and they're definitely the most fun to "research" and write about. We've reached almost nine million readers since 2005, and with our social media channels, we're able to reach even more to promote Triangle businesses, charity events, startups, good news, and more. We always try to find the positive around us to remind locals and inform new transplants and visitors alike to explore, experience, and appreciate all that the city has to offer. We want our readers to have that feeling of community pride after reading an article in the *Downtowner* or seeing one of our social media posts, and we truly hope we've succeeded. With your help, we plan to continue on this same path. >>>



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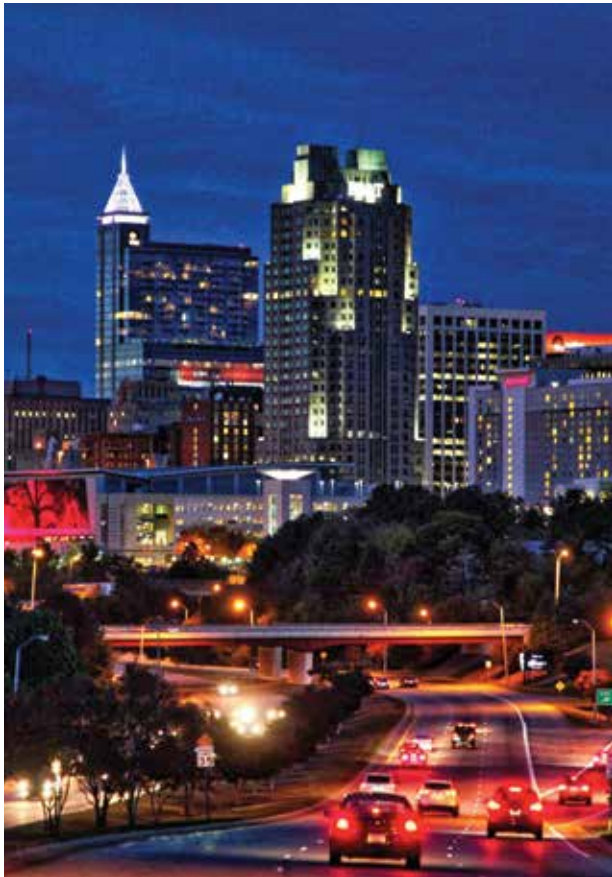
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clients, some of which have been with us since the first issue. All our advertisers have opened back up again, and we're thankful they're still with us. Locally owned businesses are what give a city its personality, its authenticity, and help keep the roots deep and wide. We will always support and promote local because that's who we are and what we do.

What's on the horizon for Triangle downtowns? Even during the economic downturn, the Triangle has continued to grow. Residential home sales are at all-time highs. New homes, apartments, and office buildings are underway and are still being planned. Conversely, the commercial occupancy percentage has dropped a few points, but we're still in the top rankings across the country. Many companies are still allowing their employees to work from home, so the demand for new commercial space has declined somewhat, plus the hospitality industry is hurting more than others, decreasing the need for commercial space. However, new restaurants are continuing to open, new businesses are launching,

and the economic numbers are slowly starting to climb. The road to recovery will be long and difficult, but the Triangle's sense of community and desire to support local are strong. One of the best aspects of the Triangle is its people. Collectively, we share, support, help, and care. I've seen a remarkable outpouring of encouragement for struggling businesses of all kinds, and these acts of kindness are what give us hope for the future.

We're thankful to still be here with you and are working on some new ideas for 2021. We appreciate and are deeply honored by the support we've received over the past 15 years from our readers, advertisers, area leaders, and the community. We're excited to see what the next 15 years has in store for all of us.



Cheers,

Crash Gregg

*Publisher, Triangle Downtowner Magazine • 919.828.8000*

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*P.S. Want to be part of the Downtowner team? We're searching for contributing writers to help with articles on local restaurants, charities, business, shopping, the arts, history, food trucks, breweries, and much more. Visit [www.triangledowntowner.com/contact](http://www.triangledowntowner.com/contact) to send us an email on the topic(s) you're most interested in and be sure to paste a writing sample in the comments box, so we can get a sense of your writing style. We look forward to talking with you!*

# HERE'S TO 15 MORE YEARS







Burny Wild's Sauce with some of the ingredients

# Local Guys Get Saucy With Burny Wild's Adventure Sauce

A downtown Raleigh company launches their new condiment heat sauce to satisfy the foodie in all of us

Local design company MRC has been building client-based food and beverage brands for 10 years, so it's not much of a surprise when they decided to craft their own brand, Burny Wild's Adventure Sauce. It was the perfect lateral move, if for nothing more than flexing their creative muscles in a way that could be both fun and informative. In October, they launched a successful Kickstarter campaign to push their new chef-made condiment heat sauce into production for the world to enjoy.

When they set out on this adventure, Creative Director, Mike Rosado saw an opportunity for their team to use every ounce of their skills. "It really started out just as an internal project," Mike said. "We thought, 'What if we created a sauce that was totally unique, 100% craveable and pummeled with fun branding?' Researching also helped us think through all of the aspects about what a hot sauce brings to the table. A sense of dare, adventure, and fun," Mike explained. Tying in his love of the classic mascots of mid-century brands with their sauce guide Burny Wild helped give a human element to channel their storytelling. "Burny represents our brand's ethos, personality, and promise in a playful way. He's sort of a mix between Indiana Jones and Ron Swanson, but forever the optimist. He represents what we are today as a brand and what we aspire to be – adventure-seekers with food and beyond, and lovers of life and the planet.

Although lovers of traditional hot sauces as well, they didn't want to compete in the same space. Instead, the team wanted to create a sauce that could bring more people into the fold who were not the



die-hard, mouth-burning daredevils. "We wanted to appeal to those who crave flavor, who love to try something new and who enjoy a little spice with their meals. As foodies ourselves, our goal was to focus

on flavor, using heat as a support, not a distraction. That's why we call Burny Wild's a 'heat sauce,' not a hot sauce," Mike warmly affirmed.

The idea really picked up steam when Rosado pulled in his friend and chef consultant, Chef Bobby McFarland to help craft an incredible sauce.

"We had some clear goals with the recipe that was reflective of the brand. It needed to be jam-packed with flavor, unique in its taste – familiar but unexpected and made with simple, clean ingredients." The results are a creamy, delectable sauce that's vegan, gluten-free, and imperatively restaurant quality.

But the momentum came to a sharp halt once the pandemic hit, putting Burny Wild's on the back burner as MRC looked to find ways to help clients – and themselves -- navigate through uncharted waters.

"Like everyone else, the first couple of months were sort of a blur. Our team was essentially hunkered down, working from home," Mike explained.

"Despite that, Burny Wild's kept showing up on his plate and his mind. "Bobby had recently made a new batch for testing right around the time when I wasn't able to go out to restaurants as much, of course. I'm a decent cook at the house, but I was bored as hell with my own ad hoc recipes! I kept finding myself adding it to all of my home-cooked meals and even take-out and was pleasantly surprised to find how versatile it was. It's become a staple for tossing into salads, topping on burgers and tacos, and dipping my fries and even sushi."

After months of great feedback from family, friends, and fellow foodies, they were ready to take their >>>



next leap into funding. “We’re really excited our Kickstarter campaign was successful, which will get our little baby into actual production and out into the market.” Rosado said. “We’re so excited to get the word out as much as possible, and having a blast creating a community on social media. We cannot wait to get this out to the masses!”

So what’s on the horizon for Burny Wild’s Adventure Sauce? Mike explains, “Now that we’ve reached our goal, our next steps are: production then partner-



*The minds behind Burny Wild’s Adventure Sauce: sauce-wrangler Chef Bobby McFarland and creative guru Mike Rosado of MRC Design.*

ing with local markets for bottle sales, potential restaurant partnerships and largely selling online. Our hope is to grow this into a major brand offering this as a foodie centric condiment and grow our line with other

chef-made offerings that are plant-based and flavor packed. The plant-based market is exciting, creative and growing exponentially and we feel there’s room for us to be a part of that. We will continue to be a brand for the foodie in all of us.”

We hope to see their Adventure Sauce out in the wild as early as first quarter next year.

Give them a follow online to keep up with their progress and when ordering is available: Insta @burnywilds and www.burnywilds.com. Congrats guys and hurry up; we need a refill on our sample bottle! 🍷

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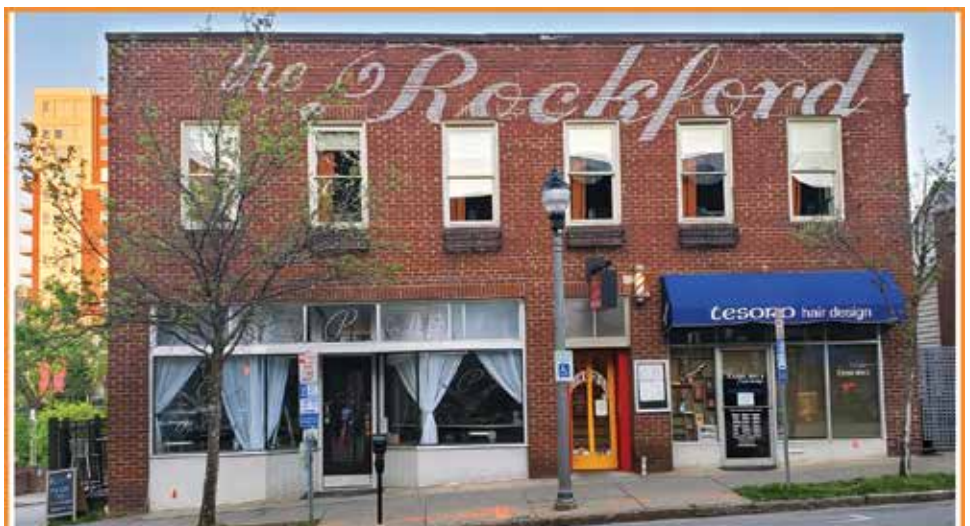
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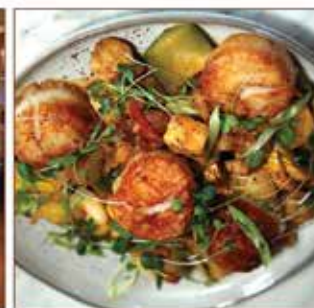


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# Women Helping Women Succeed in Business



BY MORGAN GARRETT

As the chilling days of January 2019 rolled in, Denika Seymour suddenly found herself divorced, with three children, no job, and no help. The harsh reality set in quickly. She had a limited amount of funds from her old 401K and just enough to live for three months tops.

As she contemplated her new reality, she honestly had no idea how she got there, how it got this bad. In the blink of an eye, she went from a prestigious job in corporate sales to being overcome with unexpected medical issues that changed her world. She needed a way to launch herself into a new and better life.

Despite having a successful career in sales and owning a business, Denika needed something new. She began pursuing a career in financial services – generally a male-dominated field – and she realized gender obstacles were not just her own. It's a battle for women to make it to the top, and there are limited resources to help guide them to do it. "I was going nowhere fast and had so many questions with no one to answer them. Google was definitely my best friend back then," Denika explained.

She knew she wanted to help women and minority-owned businesses because it resonated with her, but she felt stuck without any mentors and resources. This desire became her inspiration, and at the lowest point in her life, Denika dared to dream.

Things began to change for Denika after joining the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce. She immersed herself in her community and the issues that plagued it. She quickly became an advocate for economic growth as well as issues that minorities and women faced daily; issues she had experienced herself firsthand. Through her newfound connections, she started on a new career path as a Financial Professional with MassMutual North Carolina.

"I feel very blessed. What I am most excited about is that I can give back to other women just like me. I will be able to share lessons I have learned with someone else because we all need help at one point or another in our lives," Denika said, speaking on the opportunity.

In her new role, she is receiving the kind of support and mentorship she has longingly been searching for. With the help of Agency Managing Director, Mathew Griffith, and 10x Zone



Launch HER Founder Denika Seymour

CEO Janis Petit, Denika launched her dreams into action. After a long, hard road, she was finally able to form *Launch HER "Hack the She Suite" by Kingdom Wealth Forum*, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to help marginalized and underserved women build their businesses. "There are so many talented, smart, amazing women out there that feel stuck and alone without the resources or direction they need to be who they are truly called to be. I want to help fix that in any way I can," Denika said when explaining her inspiration for the organization.

"Launch HER has designed a program that is truly unlike any other women's business organization out there," Denika said proudly. She and her team of mentors work to find women who want to change their paths, start a business, and build it into a six-figure company. "Launch HER is designed to provide a nurturing environment for its participants; they're motivated to become successful business owners who positively affect their families and communities. What can I say, these women are amazing! We've partnered with women CEOs and Industry leaders to develop specific strategies to overcome those inevitable hurdles, helping them persevere on their journeys into breaking the proverbial 'glass ceiling.' I am these women, and they are me. We are going to do this thing together, and I will learn as much from them as they will from me," said Denika, when speaking on her drive and purpose for this first-of-its-kind nonprofit organization.

So how do you "Hack the She Suite?" Denika's method is through government contracting, which had not been done before through an organization

like hers. In North Carolina, government contracting is a \$5.8 billion-dollar industry, leaving an enormous amount of potential open for women. The Launch HER program is designed for 12 women who are then connected with mentors in their specific field and given guidance through bidding on government contracts and building a business. Since she formed Launch HER a month before the COVID-19 global pandemic began, the program has pivoted to becoming completely virtual. Denika launched weekly online tabletop forums in which participants gain wisdom and experience through one-on-one mentor sessions from qualified women CEOs in industries such as social impact, financial technology and services, healthcare, and commercial real estate.

This newly-formed nonprofit is beaming with ideas and has plans for adding a virtual business accelerator to its platform by mid-2021. This would provide participants with the resources they need to take their business to the next level. "We want to help these women attain six-figure revenues within the next three years by providing them with the resources they need. We intend to help create economic stability for their families and communities. This, in turn, will create a legacy and increasing future success within those marginalized communities. These are predominantly women of color and have overcome so many obstacles in their lives, ranging from social injustices to extreme poverty," Denika said.

Studies have shown that these types of accelerator programs play an intricate role in improving distressed economies worldwide. With the >>>





Sandra Lewis

number of women- owned businesses rising at an astonishing rate, Denika's program could play an important part in that. National data cited by SCORE in 2020 revealed that women of color start 79% of new women-owned businesses. That number is expected to rise as the data indicates that 10-12 million American women are expected to become business owners and entrepreneurs in the next five years. "Since women-owned businesses currently make up 39% of the 28 million small businesses operating across the US, we feel this demographic would be truly well served through the Launch HER program."

As a strong, successful woman herself, Denika knows it takes a village to make dreams become a reality, which is why she has built her team of advisors that serve as personal and business mentors for Launch HER.

To make the program a success, she connected with a group of accomplished and empowering women, each bringing something unique to the table. Denika's mentor team brings an impressive background and careers that speak for themselves, making them an extraordinary asset for the organization.

Sandra Lewis, founder and executive coach of Positive Shift Coaching has had 20 years of experience in positive psychology and helping people grow their businesses and themselves. Sandra is not only a successful business owner, an accredited author of several books, and one of the first 80 people in the world with a Master's of applied positive psychology. She has been instrumental in guiding Launch HER to success. Sandra and Denika met through The Women's Advantage, a Raleigh-Durham organization to help women expand their businesses. A sisterhood formed quickly between the two, and Sandra became a real support to Denika, inspired by the idea for Launch HER. "Business is a place where people can flourish. Passion and drive are important but again, you need help, and doing it together can make it so much better." Sandra said.

Denika's team is also lucky to have on her team Dr. Joy Lough, CEO of Joy Lough Enterprises and successful author of five books. Dr. Joy has more than 20 years of experience in business and human resources. Denika and Dr. Joy met on LinkedIn, after being inspired by her work and finding her words inspiring. Dr. Joy was equally inspired to join Denika with Launch HER as she instantly clicked with the idea of helping women and being a part of the process in teaching people. "All of our stories are different and sharing how we overcame can hopefully inspire other women." Dr. Joy stated. With a business success strategy background, Dr. Joy has become an asset to the organization and has much to offer the women in the program. "For these ladies who come into the program, I will be ready for them to dare to dream and support them," she said.

Another inspiring woman working with Denika is Krista Moore, founder and CEO of K. Coaching and author of "Race to Amazing" Before founding her own coaching business, Krista had over 18 years in successful sales leadership roles. Krista has a great deal of experience in the women's nonprofit world as she was a co-founder and president of Of-

fice Products Women in Leadership, a nonprofit specializing in connecting women in leadership roles in the office products industry. Denika also met Krista through LinkedIn, and the timing couldn't have been better. After successfully growing the nonprofit, she had just decided to pass the torch on to another larger organization after 11 years, so she was thrilled to open a new door by joining Launch HER to continue her support of women in business. Krista brings a variety of skills to the table with her experience and success in coaching, business sales, and marketing strategy. "There's no need to do it alone. Mentors, coaching, and like-minded women can give you confidence, hope, and the ability to soar," she said.

Denika didn't stop there and was thrilled to team up with the founding partner of Forge Communications and NC State University communications professor, Roger Friedensen. After meeting at the annual Raleigh Chambers Chair's luncheon, Roger approached Denika about the idea of volunteering as a client for his course at the university. The course, which is a practical analysis and development of public relations and campaigns, would assist Denika in building communication strategies for Launch HER. The team-up couldn't have been more perfect. Three driven, young students – Morgan Garrett, Dana Erickson, and Laurel Hecht – were thrilled to work with Launch HER as a client for the semester. The NC State students were excited to create detailed PR campaigns and communication strategies for the organization and were honored to help build connections within their community.

Launch HER has hit the ground running thanks to the valuable network of professionals Denika attracted. The organization has already begun working with five inspiring women in various industries, including commercial real estate, financial services, and trucking. "We'd like to source as many as we can from economic or socially disadvantaged graduate platforms like Dress for Success and existing community launch programs, as well as women's business centers within the Triangle and surrounding area. These women already have a vested interest in building their businesses, ensuring even greater success for their involvement in our program." Denika said.

In addition to all her numerous efforts and accomplishments, Denika has also launched a new podcast, "Bid at the Table." She will be interviewing minority and women business owners to serve as a platform for guidance. She has big dreams of her own and is certainly doing her best to turn those dreams into reality. Denika hopes that within five years, Launch HER will go national, serving as an inspirational organization that helps women across the country to create a path for themselves in business. Speaking on growth culture, Denika explained, "We want to provide a support system for these women, not only in business but also emotionally, helping in their daily lives. We want to create a growth culture to take Launch HER to the top."

Visit [www.LaunchHER.org](http://www.LaunchHER.org) if you would like to learn more about The Launch HER "Hack The SheSuite Program." 📺



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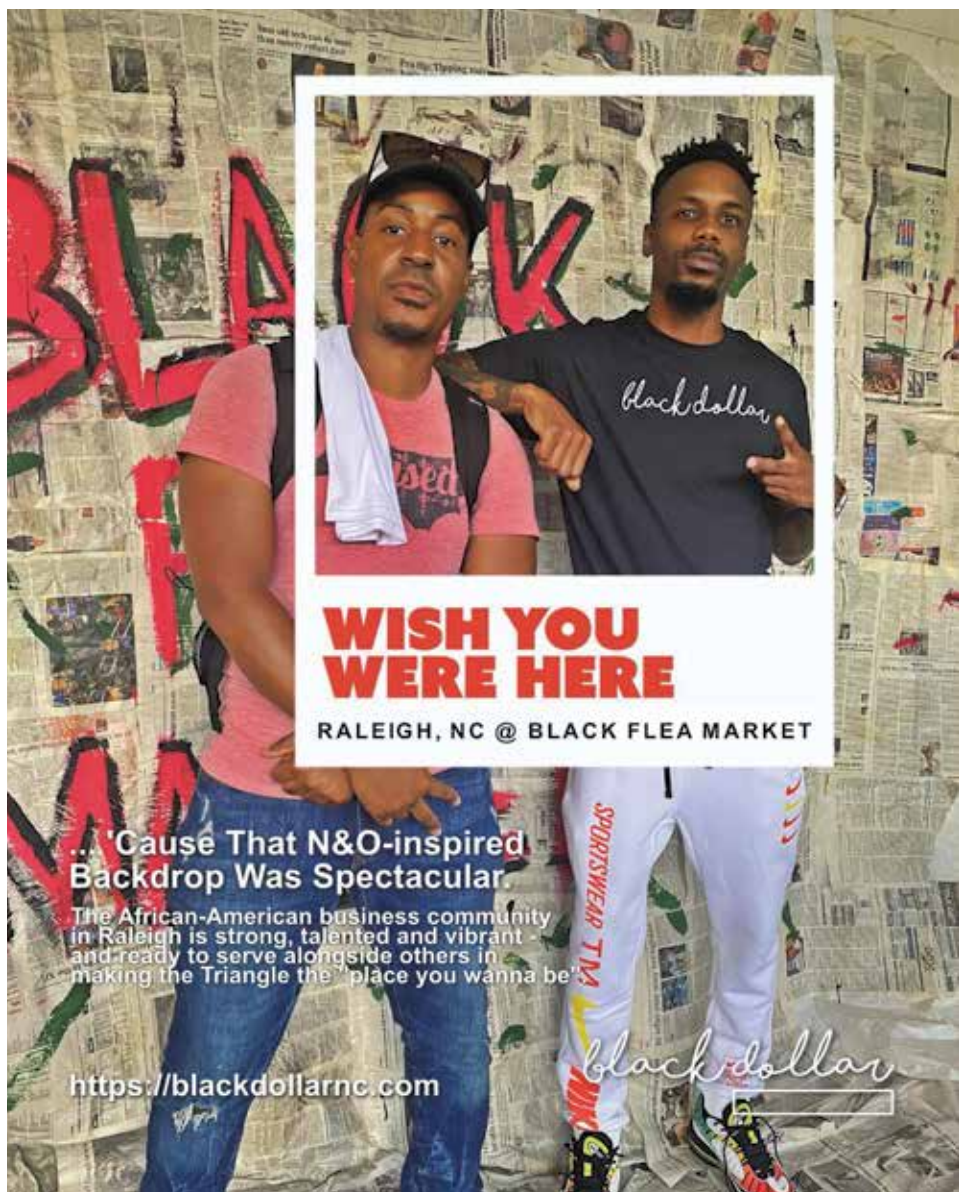
Pictured: Neuse River Greenway Trail

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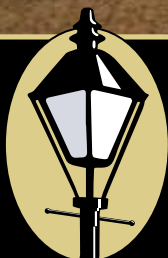
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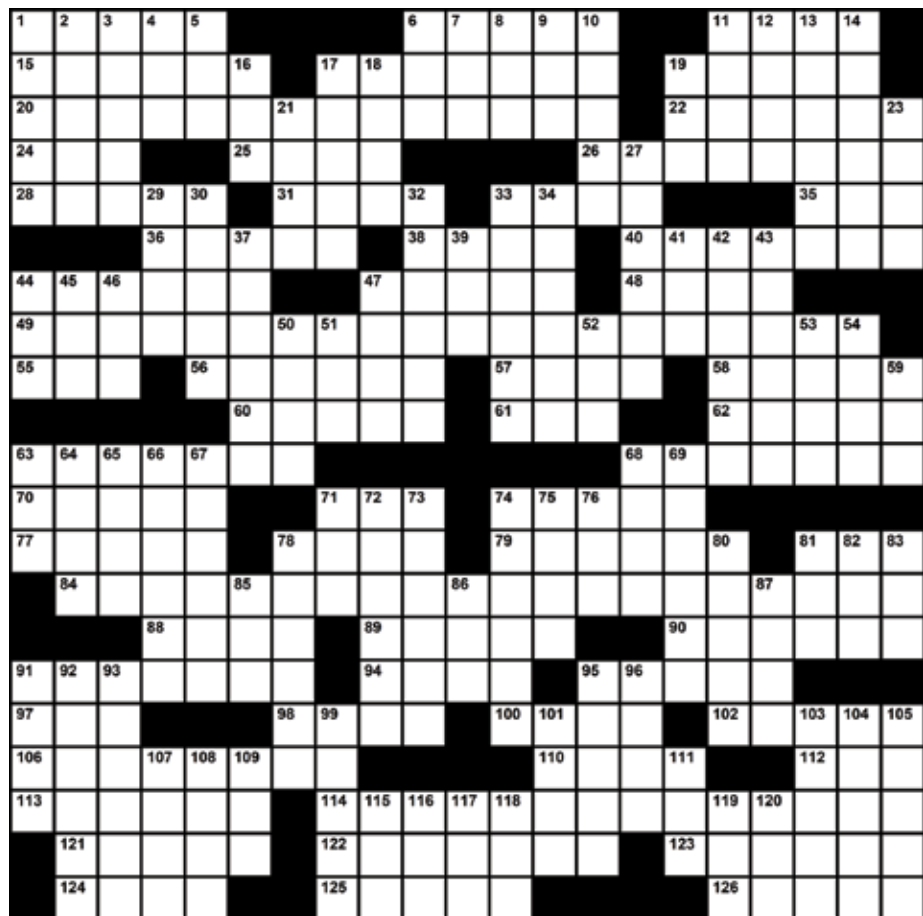
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**It's Only Human**

**ACROSS**

1. Setting for some van Gogh paintings
6. Single-named singer with many Grammys
11. Depositor's holding, abbr.
15. Eastern religion
17. Looks
19. Cause for a blessing?
20. Shakespeare work
22. Tennis serves that didn't cut it
24. Plastic \_\_\_ Band
25. Delicate
26. Ballpark figure
28. Space X founder
31. Tubular pasta
33. City in the SW Russian Federation
35. Raiding grp.
36. Antique auto
38. California winery locale
40. Tangle up
44. "The magic word"
47. Use, as a dining table
48. Dog in Oz
49. John Legend sang about them
55. "Help!"
56. Frustrate
57. Rear
58. Parkinson's drug
60. Gallery displays
61. Motivation for Manoleta
62. Frequent subject of impersonators
63. South American cowboy
68. Adjusts, as a bathroom fixture

70. Broadcaster
71. Morse-code signal
74. Concluding stanza
77. Sesame Street grouch
78. A Turner
79. Tidily
81. Sorority letter
84. Messes up as a QB
88. Jewel of the garden
89. Sap sucker
90. Goes off
91. Sediment
94. After-bath powder
95. Trident features
97. Sack
98. Perceived
100. Dutch cheese
102. Desert lizard
106. Elated
110. Med. school class
112. Office computer link, for short
113. A ghostly error?
114. Goof that can't be overlooked
121. Short gig
122. They may be taxed
123. Oklahoma native
124. Bridge hand
125. Like 007, not Austin Powers
126. Amphibious hoppers

**DOWN**

1. Tie for a toff
2. River of Lyon
3. Red carpet cars
4. Suffix with methyl
5. Most-used edition, abbr.
6. Credit card interest rate
7. Article written by Freud
8. System starter
9. Paper size

10. Twisty turns
11. Medicinal berry
12. Bud
13. Strained, to a bartender
14. Sway
16. Sounds of woe
17. Stick
18. Badger's homestead
19. Toward the tiller
21. Exude
23. 1995 triple Grammy winner
27. Draw
29. Plant part
30. Long-eared equines
32. Sulking
33. Port city in Portugal
34. Showing strength
37. Zone
39. Had a bite
41. "Just kidding!"
42. Fence crossings
43. Italian staple
44. Letter abbr.
45. Sign of summer
46. Speech stumbles
47. Arab chieftain
50. Printing error
51. Personal statement intro
52. Compass direction
53. Stellar sighting
54. Saliva
59. The law, for Dickens
63. \_\_\_-tzu (Chinese philosopher)
64. It may be ticked off
65. Shoe part
66. Approaching
67. Flaws on a diamond
68. Univ. drilling gp.
69. Space shuttle commander Collins

71. Domingo, for one
72. Not learned
73. Classic Clavell novel
74. Inveigle
75. Sine qua non
76. River near Nice
78. Feared African fly
80. Belgian city in W.W. I fighting
81. Die spot
82. Word with "potato" and "pepper"
83. Social connections
85. Chinese calligrapher \_\_\_ Qing
86. Ice hockey org.
87. Elephant tooth
91. Produce amateurish art
92. Smoke out
93. Ball game
95. Biting tastes
96. Eastern leader
99. Just wins over, with out
101. Denmark citizen
103. Comedy Central's Broad City star, Glazer
104. A natural juice
105. Leg joints
107. Sacred bird in ancient Egypt
108. Roman or Arian
109. Wobbly walker
111. Advice
115. Baton Rouge campus, briefly
116. Words with distance or glance
117. Toyota SUV
118. Ending for anchor or graph
119. Used a bench
120. Wee hour

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