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The Pink Bow Campaign!



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Fall Into the Season

Dear Neighbors,

September is here, bringing the excitement of a new school year and the bittersweet end of summer. As routines begin again and we settle into a new season, we hope everyone had a wonderful summer filled with fun, family and special memories.

As we look ahead to the holiday season, we're excited to announce our upcoming Holiday Event on Thursday, November 5 at Zinicola! Everyone is warmly invited to join us for an evening of celebration, connection and holiday cheer.

Mark your calendar now! We'll have an RSVP link available in our next issue, and you'll also receive RSVP information by email. Be sure to check your email regularly for updates and upcoming events.

For the latest information, visit StrollingFirethorne.com.

We look forward to celebrating with everyone at Zinicola on November 5!

Warmly,

Ashley and Nathan Grimm
Publishers, *Stroll*



Please share your stories and photos with us by scanning the QR code here and tagging us on social media @strollingfirethorne.

Staff and Contributors



Ashley Grimm,
Publisher

ashley.grimm@n2co.com



Nathan Grimm, Publisher

nathan.grimm@n2co.com



Delia McMullen,
Content Coordinator

ballantyne@strollmag.com



Julia Riddle,
Ad Coordinator

ballantyneads@n2co.com



Andrea Powell,
Content Assistant

apowellclt@gmail.com



Svetlana Baker,
Photographer

svetlanabakerphotography@gmail.com



Rondasia Lamaria
Contributor and Photographer
Royal Lilac Productions

dasia@royallilac.com

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

PUBLISHERS	Ashley and Nathan Grimm ashley.grimm@n2co.com nathan.grimm@n2co.com
AD COORDINATOR	Julia Riddle - ballantyneads@n2co.com
ADVERTISING SALES	Nathan Grimm - nathan.grimm@n2co.com Ashley Grimm - ashley.grimm@n2co.com
CONTENT COORDINATOR	Delia McMullen - ballantyne@strollmag.com
CONTENT ASSISTANT	Andrea Powell

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TIED TOGETHER BY

Pink Bows

Firethorne neighbors unite each October to raise awareness, support breast cancer patients and turn their community pink

Each October, Firethorne gets a little pinker. Pink bows begin appearing on mailboxes, along the golf course and tennis courts and throughout the clubhouse at the Country Club of the Carolinas. But for the Firethorne neighbors who make it happen, those bows represent much more than Breast Cancer Awareness Month. They are signs of support, remembrance, hope and a community coming together for a cause that has touched so many lives.

The Pink Bow Campaign first came to Firethorne in 2018. Today, Firethorne resident and breast cancer survivor Deb Galli helps coordinate the neighborhood effort, carrying on a tradition that has become a familiar and meaningful part of October. “Breast cancer has touched everyone in some way, either personally or someone close to them,” Deb says.

The campaign is simple in concept but impressive in its reach. Each year, neighbors receive an email announcing the campaign and inviting them to make donations. Volunteers then “pink out” the neighborhood, placing bows throughout Firethorne. Residents have been so generous that contributions typically go well beyond the cost of the bows themselves.

The effort begins in earnest on October 1, when a group of volunteers (including Deb) gathers: Pam Kubik, Kelly Coleman, Stephanie Menkhaus, Marda Kornhaber, Deb Sokol, Jonna Davis and Ranjitha Manchukonda. They fan out across the community to decorate mailboxes, the golf course, tennis courts and areas throughout the clubhouse. The bows remain up through the month before volunteers take them down on October 31.

For Deb, one of the most rewarding parts has been seeing just how enthusiastically Firethorne embraces the tradition. The response, she says, has been “overwhelming,” both from neighborhood residents and from the Country Club of the Carolinas. One memory in particular illustrates just how visible the campaign has become. While volunteers were putting up a banner at the neighborhood entrance, at least six people stopped their cars, jumped out and handed them money to support the cause.

That kind of spontaneous generosity is exactly what makes the Pink Bow Campaign feel at home in Firethorne. It isn’t simply a fundraiser organized by a few people; it’s a neighborhood effort, with residents donating, volunteers decorating and the community as a whole helping spread the message.

Front row (L to R): Cathy Kane, Ranjitha Manchukonda, Stephanie Menkhaus and Deb Galli. Back row (L to R): Fergal O’Shea, Allison Doane, Pam Kubik, Deb Sokol and Brian Reppart (Photo by Melinda de la Vega)





NEIGHBORING SUPPORT

INNISBROOK JOINS THE PINK BOW TRADITION

The Pink Bow Campaign reaches beyond Firethorne, with neighboring Innisbrook proudly participating since the campaign's first year. The community's 40 homes are part of the annual October effort to turn the area pink.

Led by Innisbrook resident Maureen Calloway and supported by neighborhood volunteers, residents raise enough each year to place a pink bow on every mailbox. Innisbrook uses the same campaign materials as Firethorne and donates all proceeds to the Firethorne Pink Bow Campaign.

It's a small neighborhood with a big show of support — and another example of nearby communities joining together to make a greater impact for those affected by breast cancer.



And Firethorne is part of something much larger. Since 2021, the Pink Bow Campaign has donated more than \$130,000 to Go Jen Go, which helps ease the financial and emotional burdens faced by people diagnosed with breast cancer. It has also contributed more than \$25,000 to MBC Thrivers and Travelers, helping provide bucket-list trips for patients with metastatic breast cancer.

The campaign's impact can also be measured in bows. More than 1,000 have been donated to fighters, survivors and thrivers through events including Run Jen Run, The Pink Cupcake Walk and My Breast Friend's Wedding. Another 500-plus bows carrying messages of hope have gone to breast cancer patients at Novant Health.

The movement now reaches nearly 80 neighborhoods in and around the Charlotte area, while its Adopt A Neighborhood Program helps bring bows, breast-health information and resources to underserved communities.

For 2026, the larger campaign remains focused on supporting Go Jen Go and MBC Thrivers and Travelers, expanding

breast-health awareness in underserved communities and continuing to donate bows to local patients, fighters, survivors and thrivers.

In Firethorne, however, the impact is also deeply personal. Deb knows firsthand what it means to face breast cancer, and other neighbors have their own stories of diagnoses, treatment, survivorship or supporting someone they love.

That is why the bows matter.

Individually, each one is a simple decoration. Together, hundreds of them transform the neighborhood into a highly visible reminder that those affected by breast cancer have an entire community standing with them.

And perhaps that is what makes the Pink Bow Campaign such a fitting Firethorne tradition: neighbors aren't simply putting bows on mailboxes. They're tying a community together.



To recommend a family, please email Delia at ballantyne@strollmag.com.



SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG ACHIEVERS!

Do you know a young neighbor who deserves to be celebrated? Whether it's sports, the arts, academics or giving back through community service, we want to hear about it!

Our *Athlete of the Month/Young Achiever* section is dedicated to highlighting the incredible talents and accomplishments of local kids and teens.

This is your chance to showcase their hard work, inspire others and give them the recognition they deserve. Submit your nominations, story ideas or even a quick note about your child's achievements—we'll take it from there!

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PROTECTING YOUR GAME

Understanding Golfer's Elbow

BY MATTHEW GESWELL MD, SPORTS MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP-TRAINED ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON AT MUSC HEALTH

One of the greatest things about golf is that it truly is a lifelong sport. Whether you're playing nine holes with friends or competing in club tournaments, golf provides exercise, camaraderie and enjoyment at every age. However, even this low-impact game can lead to injuries such as *medial epicondylitis*, better known as "golfer's elbow."

This condition can develop in golfers of any skill level. It occurs when the tendons on the inner side of the elbow become irritated from repetitive stress/microtrauma. A tight grip, poor swing mechanics and overuse at the driving range can all contribute to the problem.

The first symptom is often a mild ache on the inside of the elbow. It is more common on the dominant arm, often the trail arm in the golf swing. Over time, discomfort may become more noticeable during the swing, at the time of impact or early follow through. Golfer's elbow can also cause problems with everyday

activity, such as shaking hands, lifting objects or even turning a doorknob. Ignoring these early warning signs can allow a minor tendon injury to become a chronic condition that takes much longer to heal.

The good news is that most golfers recover without surgery. Resting the elbow, modifying practice routines, applying ice after activity, elbow braces and participating in a structured physical therapy program are usually very successful. Certain adjustments to equipment can also help, especially appropriately sized grips, which can take pressure off the forearm muscles and tendons during the golf swing.

It is possible to prevent golfer's elbow. Before every round, spend five to ten minutes warming up with gentle stretching and a few easy practice swings. Try to avoid gripping the club too tight and gradually build up your practice sessions.

As an orthopaedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine, my goal is not simply to treat injuries but to help golfers stay on the course. Listening to your body, addressing discomfort early and practicing smart injury prevention can keep your swing healthy for years to come.

Dr. Geswell sees patients at the following locations and is the sports medicine provider for Indian Land High School:

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Tyrion Reiter may weigh just 35 pounds, but he has never let his size keep him from being in charge. The 10-year-old Boston terrier/cavalier King Charles spaniel mix belongs to Logan, Tanya, Finnley (7) and Greyson (4), and he has been part of the family almost from the beginning.

“We got Tyrion right after we got married,” Tanya says. At the time, the couple was living in Pittsburgh, and bringing home their new puppy required some serious dedication. Tanya drove five hours each way in one day to pick him up from an Amish farm in Lancaster, PA.

His name, however, had been settled long before they met him. “We are obviously Game of Thrones fans,” Tanya says. “We chose the name before we had him. We just needed a dog to fit the name. He fit it perfectly!”

Tyrion proved early on that his personality was every bit as big as his namesake’s. When he was younger, his best canine buddies were a pit bull and a husky — both considerably larger than Tyrion. “He ended up being the ringleader of the pack,” Tanya says. “The two other dogs followed his lead all day. We laughed about him being the mob boss.”

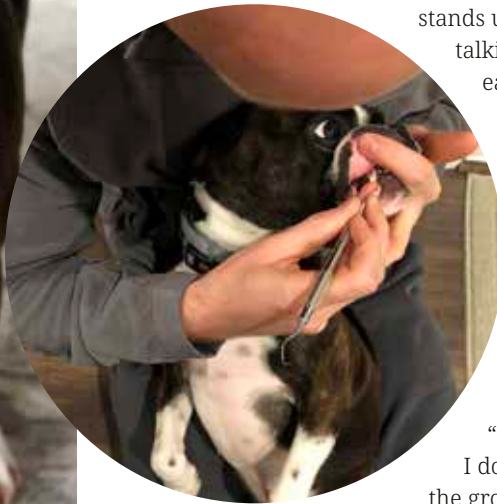




These days, Tyrion enjoys a somewhat more leisurely lifestyle. He has dog beds in most rooms of the house, although he is equally happy sleeping on the family's couches. At night, he retires to his own little bed in Logan and Tanya's bedroom, where his loud snoring occasionally wakes them up.

He also has a built-in snack delivery system thanks to Finnley and Greyson. "He enjoys cleaning up after the kids and is constantly helping himself to the food they drop on the floor," Tanya says.

One of Tyrion's most endearing features is his ears — or, more specifically, one ear. Only one stands up, and if he hears the family talking about him, that single ear immediately pops to attention.



He also has a distinctive way of expressing mild annoyance. If someone hugs or bothers him while he is trying to relax, Tyrion lets out a funny little groan. "That's all he will do," Tanya says. "It's pretty funny. Sometimes I do it on purpose just to hear the groan."

Despite his grumbling, Tyrion is exceptionally easygoing and affectionate, particularly with Finnley and Greyson. "He has an amazing temperament and personality," Tanya says. "He is so chill and cuddly. He loves the kids and will never ever retaliate against them no matter what." When he has had enough activity, Tyrion simply retreats to his bed for some quiet time.

Walks, however, are another matter. The family has learned not to even say the word "walk" unless they are prepared to follow through because Tyrion immediately gets excited. He also loves simply being with his family and becomes anxious if he suspects they might be leaving without him.

Although car rides aren't his favorite, Tyrion tolerates them if it means joining the family on an adventure. He has visited Logan's family's lake house, where he enjoys being outside, chasing wildlife, spending time with other dogs and swimming in the lake.

Back home in Hunter Oaks, Tyrion has a girlfriend named Sadie, who belongs to the Sanders, close friends of the family.

And while Tyrion takes his front-door security duties very seriously, his career as a guard dog generally ends as soon as a visitor crosses the threshold. "He is protective against anyone coming to the front door and barks constantly," Tanya says. "But once they are inside the house, he is licking them and jumping up to kiss their face. So he's a terrible guard dog overall. He just has too much love."

That loving nature is exactly what has made Tyrion such an important member of the family for the past decade. "He is my favorite cuddle buddy," Tanya says. "My nights watching TV on the couch next to him are so comforting."

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Personalized Pet Care with Heart

BY CONTENT COORDINATOR DELIA MCMULLEN, PHOTOS BY CHARISMA AT A BREW & YOU HEADSHOTS

For Terrell Torian and Anna Agisilaou, caring for animals is more than a business—it's deeply personal.

Although they grew up in different parts of Kentucky, their paths eventually led them to Charlotte after reconnecting later in life. Anna spent a decade as an entrepreneur in Dallas before moving to Charlotte in 2023, while Terrell's career took him to cities across the country through work and basketball. Today, they share not only a home and family, but a passion for providing exceptional care through their pet care business, Whisker Watchers.

Whisker Watchers officially launched nearly two years ago and has since grown into the couple's full-time business. For Anna, its mission is rooted in both healing and purpose; she lost her mother three years ago. "Although I question every decision I make without my mom's guidance," she says, "I know that showing up for anything living is one thing I find passion in that simultaneously honors her and how she lived her life.

After multiple tragic losses, Terrell and I have found healing in animals."

That philosophy shapes every interaction with both pets and their owners.

Whisker Watchers offers pet sitting, daily drop-in visits, dog walking, medication administration, waste cleanup, companionship, playtime and regular photo and video updates while families are away. Their clients include dogs, cats, fish and even bearded dragons. They also have extensive experience caring for senior pets, animals with medical needs and handicapped pets that require extra patience and attention.

What truly sets Whisker Watchers apart, however, is their belief that every pet deserves individualized care. "We know every pet has its own routine, personality and preferences," Anna says. "Pets are not robots, and our care isn't either."

Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach, they tailor every visit to fit each animal's schedule, personality and comfort level. They even include thoughtful extras during visits at no additional charge and make it a priority to keep owners connected through daily updates, photos and videos.

The couple has accumulated plenty of memorable stories along the way—from unexpected baths after muddy walks to solving last-minute challenges for traveling pet owners. They laugh that many of their favorite stories revolve around simply being flexible and finding creative solutions when pets (or life) throw a curveball.

They've also learned that successful pet care goes beyond feeding schedules and walks. Some pets need reassurance. Others need extra playtime. Some simply need someone willing to sit on the floor with them until they feel comfortable. "We've laid down on the floor with them and given them positive words of affirmation," Anna says with a laugh. "Every single animal has different needs. We take pride in figuring them out."

That level of compassion extends to their clients as well. One of the most rewarding aspects of the business, they say, is watching relationships grow over time. Conversations that begin with feeding instructions eventually evolve into sharing funny videos, exchanging stories and celebrating the unique personalities of beloved pets.

For families looking for a pet caregiver, Anna recommends choosing someone who takes the time to truly know your pet. "Look for a committed caregiver who invests in getting to know your pet's personality," she says. "Attention to detail makes all the difference."

When they're not caring for four-legged (and occasionally scaly) clients, Anna and Terrell enjoy exploring farmers markets, browsing estate sales, trying new restaurants and, in Terrell's case, watching plenty of basketball.

At the end of the day, their mission is simple: provide the kind of loving, dependable care they would want for their own pets. After all, as they like to say, "Their lives are short, but our love is long."

For more information, call 270-925-2838.



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Navigating North Carolina's Business Landscape

Key Updates for Small Business Owners

BY MELISSA CASSELL, PARTNER, MORTON & GETTYS

Running a small business in North Carolina requires staying informed about evolving legal and regulatory requirements. Morton & Gettys is here to offer a handful of critical updates and current issues affecting operations.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CLAUSES IN CONTRACTS

Business owners should carefully review dispute resolution provisions in their contracts. Arbitration and mediation are common alternatives to litigation, but do these options suit your needs and prove practical for your business? Ensure your contracts clearly specify dispute resolution procedures, arbitrator or mediator selection processes and venue to avoid ambiguity or unintended applications.



CORPORATE TAX CUTS CONTINUE

North Carolina continues its phased reduction of corporate income tax rates for corporations chartered or doing business in North Carolina. For 2026, the rate has dropped to 2%, down from 2.25% in 2025. This reduction is part of a multi-year plan that will further decrease the rate to 1% in 2028 and ultimately eliminate corporate income tax in 2030.

CONTRACTOR LICENSING: STRICT COMPLIANCE REQUIRED

Under current North Carolina law, any construction project valued at \$40,000 or more requires an appropriately licensed general contractor. Limited and intermediate licenses authorize projects up to \$750,000 and \$1,500,000, respectively, while anything above generally requires an unlimited license. Failing to follow these requirements and qualify for the level of licensure can result in unenforceable contracts. Small business owners in the construction industry must ensure project scope is within their license tier before signing contracts.

DATA BREACH NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

Under North Carolina General Statutes section 75-65, businesses that own, license or maintain personal information must notify affected residents “without unreasonable delay,” following a security breach. This requirement applies whether information is stored electronically or in paper form. Small businesses should implement robust data security measures and establish breach response protocols to ensure timely compliance.

ANNUAL REPORT FILING REQUIREMENTS

All domestic and foreign corporations, LLCs and limited partnerships doing business in North Carolina must file annual reports with the Secretary of State by April 15 each year. The filing must include current registered office and agent information, principal office address, officer details and business description, and be accompanied by a small filing fee. Even corporations with no business activity or income during the year must file the report to stay in good standing with the state. Failure to file can result in administrative dissolution or revocation of authority to do business.

LOOKING AHEAD

North Carolina's business environment continues to evolve with tax incentives and strict regulatory compliance requirements. Small business owners should review their corporate structure, licensing status, contract provisions and data security practices to ensure alignment with current law. Consider consulting with legal and tax advisors to maximize benefits while maintaining compliance.

This information should not be construed as establishing a client-attorney relationship or as legal advice. For advice about your specific situation, please consult one of our attorneys.

To have your business featured in an upcoming issue, please email ashley.grimm@n2co.com.

With our business and corporate team, you're covered.

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VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

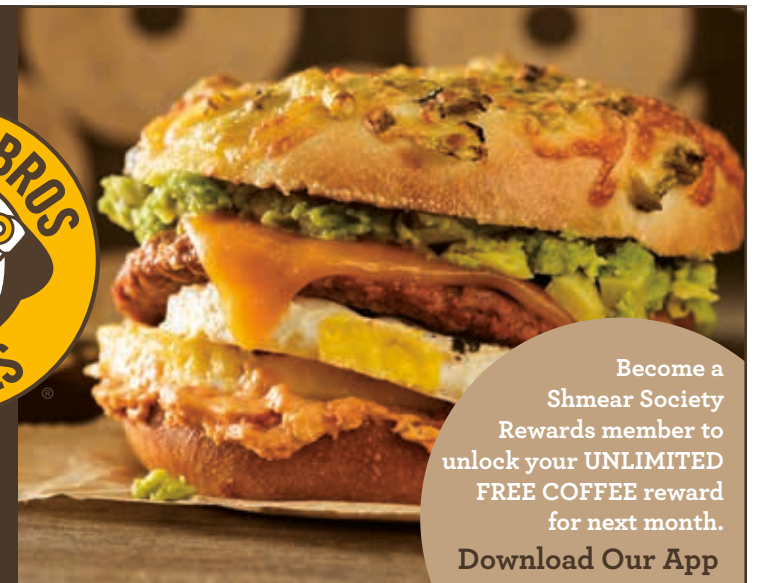
As America celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, we'd love to honor the Veterans in our neighborhood.

Whether you served in wartime or peacetime, at home or abroad, we invite you to share your story, military photos (past or present) and memories of your service. Help us recognize the men and women who have served our country and inspire future generations through their stories.

Email Delia at ballantyne@strollmag.com!



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Giving on the Green



BMOF (Bloody Marys on Five) is a charity golf tournament led by the Meck South Rotary Club. This tournament started in 2014 in honor of our friend and esteemed Rotarian Steve Baune. Steve lived on hole #5 at Piper Glen and would text his friends regularly on Saturday mornings saying, “Bloody Marys on Five!” and then leave a table setup for golfers to stop by and grab a Bloody Mary as they passed by #5 in their carts. Steve passed away in 2014 of cancer, and his Rotary club created the tournament to honor him in both name and legacy. Over \$500,000 in donations have gone to our community, primarily to Beds for Kids, an organization Steve was deeply committed to and supported by serving on their Board.

Our 2026 tournament on September 28 will be our 12th, and this year, we are back at Piper Glen. Beneficiaries include Families Forward, Feeding Charlotte and Beds for Kids. This tournament is *awesome* and includes breakfast and drinks on the range, on-course lunch, banquet dinner after the round, tee gift and, of course, drinks and Bloody Marys on the course. Visit birdease.com/BMO5 for more details, including sponsorship opportunities and foursome signups.

THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE



WE LOVE YOUR IDEAS!

Recommend a neighbor, pet, nonprofit, student, Veteran or other story for *Stroll Firethorne*. We also welcome your favorite neighborhood photos—family gatherings, celebrations, travel adventures, sports, holidays and everyday moments.

Email: ballantyne@strollmag.com

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Welcome! We'd love to get to know you.

Email ballantyne@strollmag.com to be added to our invitation list and receive calls for content, events and magazine updates.

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STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Ashley Grimm, Publisher

407-435-8611

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WHAT WE'D LOVE TO SEE

- **Back to School** – First-time bus rides and new classmates make for lots of excitement. We'd like to see your favorite back-to-school photos.
- **Fall Sports** –Share your favorite fall action shots with us.
- **Labor Day/Fall Break** – Long weekends are great for getting out of town for a few days. Whether an exotic getaway or a quick trip to our nearby mountains, lakes and beaches, we'd love to see your pics.
- **Breast Cancer Awareness** – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We'd like to see how you showed your pink ribbon support.
- **Halloween** – SCarowinds, haunted houses, block parties and costume parades... sure signs that Halloween is right around the corner. Please share your spookiest and kookiest Halloween photos with us.
- **Milestone Celebrations** – Do you or a loved one have a milestone birthday or anniversary coming up? Send us a memorable photo!
- **Weddings** – We'd love to share photos from summer and fall weddings in our community. Share the love by sending your special wedding day pictures to us!

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