

COBB

in

focus<sup>®</sup>

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015



# Sparking an Interest

Steering Cobb  
Students Toward  
a Future in STEM

Ending Domestic  
Violence

De-mystify a Merger  
or Acquisition

The Decisions Surrounding  
Alzheimer's



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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

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On the cover: Students at the Peach State STARBASE program at Dobbins Air Reserve Base fly simulators in the Lockheed Martin Technology Center.

Photo courtesy Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

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I remember numbers, especially attention-grabbing ones, were something that my journalism professors always encouraged that we as future journalists pay very close attention to—mostly because they help drive a point or make readers understand the importance or significance of a story topic.

With regards to our first issue of 2015, we at *Cobb In Focus* wanted our readers to take a look at some of the numbers that impact each of us in some way—nearly 60,000 crisis calls were made to the state's certified domestic violence agencies in 2013; approximately 130,000 people statewide struggle with Alzheimer's disease; and according to the U.S. Department of Education, only 16 percent of American high school seniors are proficient in mathematics and interested in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

These figures may not all be correlated, but it sure does make us want to take a second look at how we can be advocates for victims of domestic violence, find the best care for loved ones diagnosed with Alzheimer's or mentor young people who aspire to study fields related to STEM. And it is our hope that our January/February issue does just that.

Readers will also have the opportunity to learn more about how exactly mergers and acquisitions work, the best way to set realistic goals and achieve them in the New Year, the 24th Annual American Craft Council Atlanta Show and some local restaurants we recommend you and your sweetie try out this Valentine's Day.

Hello 2015!  
Lindsay Field, Editor



**Contact**  
***Cobb In Focus***

We want to hear from you! Share your story ideas and comments with our editor, Lindsay Field. Visit [cobbinfocus.com](http://cobbinfocus.com) or send your suggestions to:  
[editor@cobbinfocus.com](mailto:editor@cobbinfocus.com) or  
Lindsay Field, Cobb In Focus,  
9040 Roswell Road, Suite 210,  
Atlanta, GA 30350

Here's a snapshot of what's going on in your community.

### Walker Expands Property

The Walker School in Marietta has acquired 18 acres of contiguous property at 815 Allgood Road. It was purchased from Tatung Company of America, Inc., for \$4.6 million, and when added to the school's existing 32 acres, the campus will encompass approximately 50 acres and is part of the school's plan for continued growth. Learn more at [thewalkerschool.org](http://thewalkerschool.org).



### South Cobb Redevelopment Project to Create Jobs

Cobb's Competitive EDGE and Oakmont Industrial Group of Atlanta has broken ground on a 600,000-square-foot job center in Austell. The redevelopment project will invest more than \$25 million in south Cobb, creating new jobs and keeping Cobb competitive as defined in the Cobb's Competitive EDGE strategy.

### Cornerstone Prep Breaks Ground on New Campus

Cornerstone Preparatory Academy broke ground on its new campus at 3588 Hickory Grove Road in Acworth this fall. The new facility is scheduled to open Fall 2015. The \$7.5 million, 39,000-square-foot campus will have 18 classrooms, plus two science labs and four specialty classrooms—a computer lab, music room, art room and multi-purpose room. There will also be a full gymnasium, athletic field and playground. Learn more at [cornerstoneprep.com](http://cornerstoneprep.com).



### ArtsBridge Foundation and KSU Expand Partnership

ArtsBridge Foundation, the arts education outreach arm of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre and Kennesaw State University's College of the Arts, has signed a memorandum of understanding outlining a new collaborative effort to create programs that will enhance arts education opportunities for this region's students. Through this collaboration, arts education and talent development opportunities will benefit not only high school and college students, but also the broader community.



### More Than \$25,000 Raised for Cobb Libraries

The Cobb Library Foundation's cornerstone fundraising event, the Booked for the Evening Gala and Silent Auction held at the Marietta Country Club, raised \$27,000 for the Cobb County Public Library System. Also during the event, Best Selling Author Emily Griffin was named the fourth recipient of the Jim and Carol Ney Literary Award, which was designed by Thom Lillie of Lillie Glassworks. The award is presented annually "to honor extraordinary books and exceptional authors who not only enrich readers but move hearts and souls and change lives."

### Cobb EMC Makes Large Solar Power Purchase

Cobb EMC's Board of Directors recently approved execution of a 25-year power purchase agreement with Southern Power to purchase solar energy from a photovoltaic solar project to be constructed in Taylor County. The facility will be the largest single-site project in Georgia, 911 acres, and among the largest east of the Mississippi River. Cobb will receive 77 percent of its output. Construction is scheduled to begin in September, and the project is expected to achieve commercial operation in 2016.

### Leading Health IT Company Brings 150 Jobs to Cobb

Carrollton-based Greenway Health, LLC, a health information solutions company, will create approximately 150 jobs in Cobb County with the expansion of its innovation team. The company's new development center will be located in the Atlanta Galleria Office Park. Greenway Health is focusing its current jobs expansion on the research and development, customer support, professional services and financial services areas that most directly benefit its customers. The new development office is slated to open in early 2015. Learn more at [greenwayhealth.com](http://greenwayhealth.com).

# JANUARY

1/4

## Georgia Bridal Show

Brides can meet face to face with wedding professionals and find everything they need to create the wedding of their dreams at the Cobb Galleria Center event. More info: [eliteevents.com](http://eliteevents.com)



1/13

## Historic Gardens: From the Roman Empire to Colonial Empire

The Cobb Master Gardeners will focus on some of the most important gardens that represent dramatic changes in garden design during these time periods. It will be hosted at the East Cobb Library, 7 p.m. More info: [cobbcat.org](http://cobbcat.org)



1/19

## Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

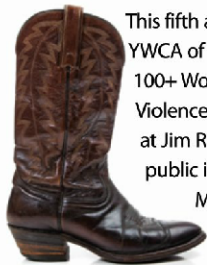
The public is invited to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Cobb County's 28th anniversary celebration. This year's event, themed "Celebrate the Life, the Dream, the Legacy" and sponsored by the Cobb County chapter of the NAACP, will feature the "Living the Dream" award. More info: [cobbnaacp.org](http://cobbnaacp.org)



# FEBRUARY

2/7

## 'Boots, Bluejeans & Country Music'



This fifth annual event for the YWCA of Northwest Georgia's 100+ Women against Domestic Violence Fundraiser will be held at Jim R. Miller Park and the public is welcome to attend.

More info: [ywcanwga.com](http://ywcanwga.com)



2/7

## Collage Scholarship Concert

The Kennesaw State University School of Music is proud to present the 9th annual Collage Scholarship Concert, the signature production of the program and a primary fundraising event for supporting scholarships for music students. More info: [arts.kennesaw.edu/music](http://arts.kennesaw.edu/music)



2/8

## Daddy Daughter Dance

One of the City of Marietta's Parks and Rec Department's most popular events, this dance is open to girls, 5-12 years old, and their fathers or another special man in their lives. The afternoon is filled with music, dancing, games and activities at The Mansour Center. More info: [mariettaga.gov](http://mariettaga.gov)

2/25

## Celebrate Black History Month

Join the Kemp Library staff for an afternoon of fun as they tell African-American folktales and stories, sing songs, show a short film and make crafts. It is for ages 3 and up and begins at 3:30 p.m. More info: [cobbcat.org](http://cobbcat.org)

An illustration on a light blue background. On the left, a man in a blue shirt and black pants stands on the ground, reaching up to touch a large yellow ring. To his right, two other men in blue shirts and black pants are shown in mid-air, appearing to be in a tug-of-war or a similar physical struggle, each holding onto a ring (one yellow, one purple). The background is filled with large, overlapping, abstract shapes in shades of green, yellow, and purple, resembling stylized letters or geometric forms.

# De-mystify a Merger or Acquisition

By Pamela A. Keene

**I**s a merger or acquisition in your business' future? What can you do to prepare your company to be purchased or sold? While the process can be complex, mergers and acquisitions are a very real—and positive—part of the life cycle of the growth for many successful businesses.

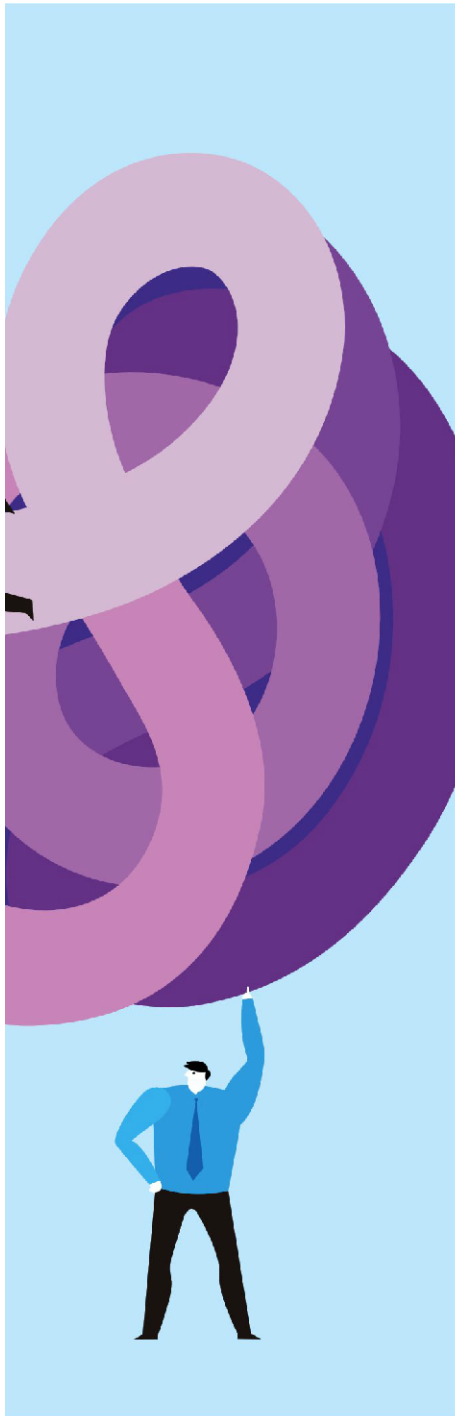
A sale or purchase may start over a

casual lunch conversation or after months of research by a firm seeking to broaden its market reach. The key is planning and building the right team to assist with legal and human resources aspects of what can be a complicated pathway to growth. Once the leadership of the respective entities identifies their desired results of the transaction, involve professionals in the

contract negotiations.

"A cobbler sticks to his trade, and most business owners are good at their industry," says Adam Slipakoff, a Cobb-based attorney who specializes in mergers and acquisitions. "That being said, it's important for business owners to bring in attorneys and accountants in the process, because they can be excellent resources





‘Get ahead of the curve to retain valuable employees because they are an important part of the business—whether they’re concerned about further employment, new leadership or continuation of benefits, it’s crucial to keep them informed as much as you can.’

—Lisa Hughes  
Nobis Works

Vice President of Human Resources

to hear about possible upcoming changes from their employer than from the media or the grapevine,” says Lisa Hughes, vice president of human resources for Nobis Works of Marietta and an instructor in Kennesaw State University’s College of Continuing and Professional Education. “Get ahead of the curve to retain valuable employees because they are an important part of the business—whether they’re concerned about further employment, new leadership or continuation of benefits, it’s crucial to keep them informed as much as you can.”

In two recent business transactions involving Cobb-based businesses, the proper planning and consideration for each firm’s stakeholders—customers, employees and shareholders—accomplished the transactions with minimal interruption of business processes, customer service and staffing. By involving legal and human resource expertise from the beginning of the process, executive leadership was able to successfully move their companies into the next level of growth.

### **Broadening a Vision Through Acquisition**

As owner of the largest Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) in the Southeast, Thomas Huff realized that his vision for Cobb County’s McCollum Field in Kennesaw had reached a plateau. “When we began developing Atlanta Executive Jet Center almost a decade and a

half ago at McCollum Field, there was only one public bathroom for the entire airport,” he says. “Now, \$42 million and 14 years later, there’s 500,000 square feet of hangar space, 65,000 square feet of office space and a restaurant. And we plan to have a U.S. Customs operation here by the middle of 2015. We’ve worked hard and brought direction and vision to the airport with excellent encouragement from the county. I realized that I had taken the vision for the airport as far as it could go.”

Enter Hawthorne Global Aviation Services, a national FBO looking to expand into the Southeast. After nearly a year of negotiations and transition, Hawthorne Global finalized an asset purchase acquisition of portions of Atlanta Executive Jet Center last summer. “We kept some hangar space that Hawthorne manages for us, the aircraft charter business and the restaurant,” Huff says. “We were able to sell the part of the business that Hawthorne was interested in and kept the parts of the business that we wanted to focus on. It was an excellent transition for everyone concerned.”

Huff attributes the success of the acquisition to planning and vision, then involving the attorneys to execute the plan that he and the leadership at Hawthorne conceived. “It’s wise for both sides to involve attorneys to ensure that there are no misunderstandings. Once we had our plan in place, the attorneys formalized it,” he

to help structure and formalize the transaction. I advise business owners to bring professionals in early to make the merger or acquisition smoother.”

Experts also recommend building a strong communications strategy directed toward employees—many businesses’ chief asset—from the onset of the negotiations. “It’s much better for employees

says. “Also, it was important for us to consider our employees and our customers as we moved forward.” Representatives from Hawthorne came to Cobb to manage the transition of employees. “We had a great team in place and Hawthorne did too, so all of them kept their jobs,” Huff continues. “Some went with me in the new business and the others went with Hawthorne. It worked out really well.”

Hawthorne Atlanta’s General Manager Tom Auten took over management of the newly opened FBO late last summer, having spent nearly 50 years in the aviation business, most recently as general manager of the FBO at Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. “The acquisition is Hawthorne’s foray into the metro Atlanta market,” he says. The firm now has FBOs in five markets; in addition to Atlanta, locations in New Orleans, Chicago, New York and Eau Claire, Wisconsin, provide a network of aviation services.”

“Our goal is to honor the commitments to the people who were formerly doing business with Atlanta Executive Jet Center and to grow our business,” Auten adds. “We’ve been standardizing policy and processes as we move forward and have also offered extra training for employees. We’ve already upgraded and purchased new equipment as we continue to improve this part of Hawthorne’s market plan, making it an even stronger company.”

### Strength in ‘A Merger of Equals’

For the leadership of two north Atlanta financial institutions, a merger of equals made perfect sense from a number of aspects. Both Midtown Bank & Trust Company and First Landmark Bank operated as community banks; Midtown had branches in Atlanta and Sandy Springs, and First Landmark served customers in Cobb. “We blended our management teams and used the best of both of our institutions to create something that’s even greater,” says Terrence DeWitt, former First Landmark president who now serves as the new entity’s executive vice president and chief financial officer.

Talks began in the summer



Terrence DeWitt and Stanley Kryder now oversee operations at First Landmark Bank.

of 2013, with DeWitt and Midtown Bank’s then-President and CEO Stanley Kryder meeting to discuss a possible merger. “The more we talked the more we realized that the sum of the parts was worth much more if we combined the businesses,” Kryder says. “Both entities have strong community roots and are well capitalized with clean balance sheets. A light bulb went on for both of us how similar we were and what the potential could be by bringing our specific lines of business together.”

The process included extensive work by attorneys for both entities with executive leadership involved from the outset. Separate counsel, who first fashioned a document called a merger proxy that was distributed to all shareholders, represented each bank. Once shareholders approved the merger proxy, attorneys also worked as liaisons with regulatory agencies, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and

the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance to navigate the complex compliance issues related to financial institutions.

The merger, announced last spring, resulted in each of the banks retaining individual branding under the umbrella of First Landmark Bank, which was named the acquiring institution and surviving charter. “There was really not a compelling reason to rebrand the institutions because of their already-strong presence in their own communities,” Kryder says. “Each is operating as a division of First Landmark Bank, but we agreed early on in the process that the local community connections for our customers and shareholders were very important in each of the three markets.”

Once again, consideration for employees was an important part of the process. “There was not a great deal of overlap in our business lines,” DeWitt says. “No customer-facing staff changed, and we were able to enhance our services and achieve something unique while using the talents that were available to maintain our community presence and confidence.”

In all, mergers and acquisitions can be challenging. No matter the size of your company, reaching out to legal and human resources experts can help assure that the process considers all parties, stakeholders and customers as a new entity is born. ■



Hawthorne Global Aviation Services acquired Atlanta Executive Jet Center in Kennesaw last summer.

# Resolve to Change Your Lifestyle



By Jacqui Frasca

**T**he New Year's resolution circuit is a strong one: Year after year people of all ages and walks of life resolve to change or introduce something in the new year, be it a bad habit like smoking or a positive upgrade like volunteering with a charity. One thing that is always at the top of the resolutions list is losing weight. Due to yo-yo and crash dieting, the latest weight loss pill or eating fad, people who try to break into a healthier way of life in the New Year tend to fail every time. What's the secret to living well and feeling your best? It's all about ditching dieting—for good. It's your lifestyle that has to change.

"Lifestyle changes take time and are found to be more effective if expectations are realistic, timing is right, there is a commitment to change and there is a supportive

environment," says Lisa Mize, a supervisor at Northside Hospital Behavioral Health Services. "Resolutions often fail because they tend to be made more impulsively without a clear plan for success in place." This year, instead of saying you're going to cut out carbs or finally lose 20 pounds, resolve to start changing your eating and exercise lifestyle right now. The timeline for positive life changes doesn't begin January first—it starts when you make the decision to change.

## Taking the First Step

Tami Drotleff, M.Ed., exercise physiologist at Northside Hospital Cardiac Rehabilitation, says, "One of the most common New Year's resolutions is to begin an exercise program to become healthier. It is true that a regular exercise program consisting of both cardio-

vascular exercise and resistance training can lead to positive changes in cholesterol, blood pressure and blood glucose levels—it can increase one's energy and assist in decreasing stress. Yet, with all of these positive outcomes, it always seems to be such a daunting task to initiate and continue a regular exercise program."

Often the first step is the toughest, and for some, habits come quickly after that. For others, old habits die hard, especially involving food, which affects everything about us internally from blood sugar and energy to mood.

Among Drotleff's recommendations for staying on track with a lifestyle change in exercise is to be realistic and flexible. Know yourself and what you absolutely will and will not do and sustain. "Review your lifestyle, including your likes, dislikes and

# Health

schedule," she says. "Try to find an activity that you enjoy. If you are a solitary person, an exercise class is not for you. If you don't have time to do a 30-minute walk four days each week, break it up into three 10-minute segments throughout the day. One day of exercising is better than none at all!"

For Andrea Addington, RD, LD, system clinical nutrition manager at Northside Hospital, resolutions are as effective as they are realistic. "Resolutions are a good 'starting place,' but must be seen as more than a quick fix, short-term goal," she says. "A resolution would be 'lose 20 pounds,' whereas a lifestyle change would be to exercise three times per week and increase water intake to 64 ounces per day; the lifestyle change would hopefully help support the resolution of weight loss, but it's more specific and tangible."

Sometimes it takes a village, and change from a sedentary lifestyle to an active one can often necessitate in support from those around you. Write down your goal and share it with your family, friends and co-workers who can help keep you on track in times of need. Getting a friend involved can



also be wildly beneficial in keeping both of you motivated on the healthy track you've started. "We all have days where we are not motivated to exercise," Drotleff says. "Having someone else expecting us to be there aids in keeping one on track and motivated to achieve our intended goal."

And, of course, reward yourself—every exercise routine you complete is one more

than you had previously been doing, and it matters. When the numbers on the scale won't move or you feel it's all for nothing, remember that weight loss that stays off is a lifetime achievement and every effort towards it counts.

## Everything in Moderation

There's a deceptively simple formula for weight loss, and yet losing weight and keeping it off eludes most. That's where complicated diets like Nutrisystem and Atkins come in, when all that's really required is knowing what you're eating and consuming in moderation.

"A lot of times it's worse to yo-yo diet. That's how people fall off the wagon—they don't eat in moderation," says Adriane Larson, owner of Adriane's Delectables, a full-service catering company in Marietta. Foods that are traditionally unhealthy—pizzas, refined carbohydrates like pastries, fried foods—can be made with healthier substitutions to be more nutritious and eaten much less frequently to get you started on a healthier overall lifestyle. "If you implement more vegetables and fruits into your diet it will not only make you more satisfied, but it's healthier for you," says Larson.

While one calorie will always equal one calorie, the foods you eat are not at all equivalent. Fat, salt and refined carbohydrate percentages vary greatly from food to food, and making healthier choices rather than cutting out entire food groups will help you sustain weight loss once you've achieved it; cutting out all carbohydrates, for example, rather than significantly limiting high glyce-

Laura Cooke

Sadie Wang

Nicole DeBonte

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mic index carbohydrates like breads, pastas and rice will make it more likely that you will gain weight back when you eventually reintroduce those foods.

### For the Whole Family

“There’s no time like the present to take stock of where you want your family’s health to be in 2015 and further down the road,” says Wendy Palmer, MS, RD, LD, CHES at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA). “As part of taking stock, we suggest parents consider ways to take simple steps toward healthier habits, like eating better and getting more exercise. It’s easier for kids to set realistic goals if we help them keep it simple.”

Focus your family on being active and eating well together by planning dinners and lunches and making activity fun and consistent. Call exercise fun time or play time and get the kids involved in new activities like dancing, hiking and long walks. “When it comes to eating better, instead of setting rules or limits on what you can’t eat, focus on what you can eat more of—the healthy stuff!” Palmer says. “Pick a new fruit

‘As parents, it’s our job to teach our children healthy habits, so choose something that you think your family could get started on and take one small step.’

—Wendy Palmer  
Children’s Healthcare  
of Atlanta

or vegetable to try as a family and come up with new ways to prepare it. I bet your kids will enthusiastically try something they had a part in making.”

Dicting often increases restriction of foods and nutrients that growing bodies and brains need—plenty of fats like coconut and avocado have numerous health benefits and react differently with the body than the saturated and trans fats found in junk and fast foods. “As adults who have tried fad diets before, we know they don’t work,” Palmer says. “We need to role model more consistent healthy behaviors for our children such as eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, being more active and limiting screen time. Everyone in the family will benefit.”

In the new year, “Figure out what’s getting in your way; you might be surprised to find you can do something about it!” Palmer adds. “As parents, it’s our job to teach our children healthy habits, so choose something that you think your family could get started on and take one small step. For example, if it’s your family’s habits with screens (TV, computer, smart phones, etc.) that prevent you from being physically active, then set a screen-free hour each night (more on the weekends), where you can do something fun together.” ■

On top of being alive with abundant green space, great shopping and restaurants, we have fabulous things to do all year long and room for your fabulous things, too. Getting married? Do it here and be glad you did. Once you visit, you’ll want to stay.

# SMYRNA

Join us for an active and lively outdoor event season that kicks off in April and runs strong through summer with concerts, food trucks and so much more.

Underneath, we are alive with community spirit, diverse and thriving neighborhoods, parks, sports, festivals, concerts, our own library, cool events like food truck gatherings, beautiful streetscapes, great services, and so much more. Looking for a place to call home or start a business? We are sure there is top-to-bottom abundance for you in Smyrna.

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[www.twitter.com/SmyrnaNews](https://www.twitter.com/SmyrnaNews)





Pope High School  
FIRST Robotics Team

# Sparking an Interest

By Lindsay Field

In response to what some are calling a “STEM crisis,” or the shortage of young people pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and math in college, companies, both locally and nationally, are turning to school robotics programs to spark an interest in these fields of study. Shan Cooper, vice president and general manager at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company in Marietta, says it takes time to grow leaders in STEM careers, and as a nation, the United States is falling behind, which puts technical leadership roles at risk. “For instance, almost half of the Lockheed Martin employees around the world are engineers or have critical STEM skills, and about half of our employees are eligible for retirement over the next five years,” Cooper says. “This means we are facing a seri-

‘Technology is how we create wealth, how we cure diseases, how we build an environment that’s sustainable and also gives people the capacity to pull more out of this world and still leave it better than when they found it.’

—Dean Kamen, Founder of FIRST

ous shortage of qualified people with STEM educations and skills to keep us competitive in the world market.”

According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 16 percent of American high school seniors are proficient in mathematics and interested in a STEM career—and only half of those ever pursue a career in this area. And Cooper says this is not just a concern they have at Lockheed. “Competition for qualified STEM-educated talent will be intense across all business sectors—manufacturing, cyber, defense industries and many more,” Cooper adds. “Our colleagues in the business community all worry about this issue. It directly affects us all as we face the prospect of diminishing STEM skills in the workforce. So I encourage—and challenge—all business leaders to help us

build tomorrow’s workforce, strengthen our nation’s technological advantage and help create a constant supply of highly trained, highly capable technical talent.”

### Stepping Up to the Challenge

In addition to Lockheed, companies like Novellis, General Electric, Cobb EMC, UPS, The Coca-Cola Company, Georgia Aquarium and Kennesaw State University, just to name a few, have partnered with local schools to support STEM-related programs. Specifically, Novellis has supported Kell and Walton high school’s programs for three years—both are close to the company’s Global Research & Technology Center in Kennesaw. “Novellis has been so impressed with the achievements and future potential of the young individuals comprising these two teams,” says

Jack Clark, senior vice president and chief technical officer at Novellis, adding that they believe their partnership could inspire the next generation of engineers, scientists and technologists. “Who knows?” he asks. “We might have a few of the students we mentor currently on Novellis teams who end up joining our talented workforce one day.”

Novellis provides funding for the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) teams, which helps students pay for registration and travel fees for their competitions year-round, and their employees give their personal time helping students build robots. FIRST is an international youth organization that operates the FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST Lego League, Jr. FIRST Lego League and FIRST Tech Challenge. Nationally, there are about

**OPEN HOUSE 2015**  
January 29 and February 19



# character

# REVEALED

“‘Cause Jesus lives in my heart,  
I bring him to school every day.”

— Landon (MPCS Advanced Pre-K Student)

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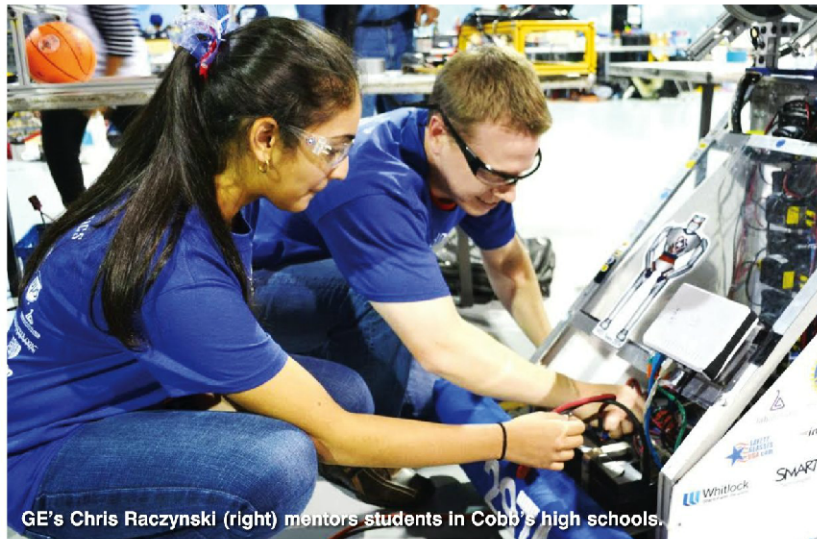
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# Education

37,000 FIRST teams, including several here in Cobb, and the ages of student participants ranges from kindergarten to 12th grade. "Programs like FIRST are really adept at developing the leaders of tomorrow within our community," Clark says. "Contributing time, talent and funding to FIRST is a smart investment for any business wishing to secure its talent base for years to come."

GE supports programs at Wheeler, Kell, Walton, McEachern, Pope and Lassiter high schools, as well as teams at Dodgen, Dickerson, Mabry, Daniell and Simpson middle school and at Bells Ferry Chalker and Sedalia Park elementary schools. The international company provides mentors, sponsorship and opportunities for students to visit GE to share their experiences and learn a little about the company. Nearly 20 GE mentors are involved in robotics, providing more than 2,000 hours of mentoring annually, by way of engineering guidance, as well as help with the design process, outreach activities and coaching students to be more effective leaders.

Eric Kauffman, software product manager with GE, says their partnership began in



GE's Chris Raczynski (right) mentors students in Cobb's high schools.

2008. "GE has long recognized the shortage of engineers in the future," he says. "Mentoring and sponsoring is also a great way for GE and its employees to give back and support the local communities in which we work and live." He adds that it also connects area students to GE. For example, a recent Walton graduate will do his intern-

ship at GE's aviation business in Cincinnati this summer. "It is very rare for a student to get an internship after only their freshman year, but GE specifically made the exception because of the student's involvement in FIRST," says Kauffman, adding that increasing support for programs like FIRST is a great way to build the future pipeline of the country's engineers.



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### Developing an Interest

One of the oldest FIRST programs in Cobb, and one that's won several national awards, is Kell Robotics. The team is now independent of the school but was founded a little more than a decade ago as a club and includes students from a number of area high schools. Ed Barker, assistant director of Advanced Computer Services at KSU, joined the team as its director shortly thereafter. He personally believes that FIRST is one of the most powerful informal ways to educate young people about STEM. "We have to come up with a model for STEM activities, where the students can try things out in the informal space; and they have the time and room, whether it's in science or robotics," Barker says. "Once they try that out, they develop an interest and build their confidence, and confidence is crucial for many students in making a good career choice."

Like many robotics programs countywide, Kell's team is funded by dozens of private businesses, but Barker encourages school districts and the state department to invest more in programs like these. "Get behind the teachers, support the funding mecha-





Walton High students help introduce STEM to kids of all ages.

large pools of students are academically qualified for a STEM career today, we just don't harvest them," Barker says. "There's a connection between engineering and health care, national security, energy, public safety, many things ... many good things in life come out of engineering and if we don't support that, we are going to be in a world of hurt. There are a lot of issues to solve, so we have to communicate to the public why engineering is important."

### Other Successful Programs

Started by Walton's engineering teacher and current team coach, Brian Benton, the Walton Robotics Team was founded in 2008. Senior Rishi Raj is one of 39 members on this year's team. "The overall goal of our team and FIRST is to spread recognition of the importance of STEM and prepare our students for a future in STEM," he says. "The country needs more people in STEM to meet its needs. This starts with programs like our team. Our team also aims to increase the number of girls interested in joining the STEM workforce as well."

In their continued efforts to show others the significance of STEM, Walton's team participates in nearly 50 outreach events annually to promote it in his community. Raj's team has also been awarded for their designs and builds, winning the most prestigious award in FIRST, the Chairman's Award, twice in 2013 and 2014, in addition to qualifying for the World Championships for four years in a row.

Thomas Cooper, technology integration specialist and upper school technology

nism," he advises. "We need these informal learning opportunities ... There's close to zero support from the school systems and that has to get fixed. Why? Because there is a financial burden, but they also haven't discovered how important this is." He went on to say that teachers, like athletic coaches, should be paid extra to teach clubs or programs after or during school. "If you want to get economic development going in this state and you want to create a lot of jobs, we have to get that done," he explains.

A testament that students and the community are interested in STEM was clear at last year's FIRST Atlanta Science Festival, which was attended by about 30,000 people. "There's plenty of evidence floating around that says that if these students have the opportunities to try these things out ... that



Mount Paran Christian Schools' Eagle Robotics team built this 7373 Robot. More than 30 students participate on the team, which was started in 2002.

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# Education

department chair at The Walker School, a private pre-K3 through 12th-grade school in Marietta, started Walker School Robotics six years ago. "I believe that computational thinking, programming and robotics give students the opportunity to do more critical thinking than traditional technology fluency courses," he says. "Animatronics gives students the opportunity to also incorporate principles of art and design into their electrical engineering and programming projects."

In the past three years, Walker has added a full-year class in the upper school and various class units in each grade starting in preschool. The school has also hosted a regional tournament each January to support VEX, a robotics competition program similar to FIRST, and STEM. Previously, Walker has won many regional competitions in Georgia, made it to the VEX World Championships and placed in the first VEX state competitions.

One of the newest FIRST robotics teams in Cobb was formed at Pope High in 2013, although there had been teams in Pope's feeder middle and elementary schools. "This was seen by students, parents and the community as a distinct gap that needed to be

filled," says Jeff Cobb, Pope's program director. After getting the green light from the administration and staff, who were enthusiastic about the addition, Cobb says they are now serving nearly 30 students. "During our rookie year's regional competition, we were honored with the Gracious Professionalism award for demonstrating the guiding principles of the program," he says. "This year, we won the Outreach Award for promoting STEM and recruiting new members."

Jeff Cobb, who has worked in telecommunications for more than three decades and has seen first-hand the incredible advances in technology that allows programs like FIRST, adds that the allure of this program for him has been to help students develop well-rounded, practical experience in STEM, business, marketing and community service. "It helps them to experience and evaluate STEM as a viable future, and gives them an appreciation of how technology shapes our future," he concludes. "Too often, children take today's technology for granted, not recognizing how much farther we can go, and that they can be a part of those advancements." ■

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**Phone:** (770) 971-0245  
**Website:** [mtbethelchristian.org](http://mtbethelchristian.org)

**Open House Dates:** Main Campus, Jan. 11 & 28; North Campus, Jan. 15

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**Phone:** (770) 578-0182  
**Website:** [mtparanschool.com](http://mtparanschool.com)

**Open House Dates:** Preschool, Jan. 15;  
 All Grades, Jan. 29 & Feb. 19

### **North Cobb Christian School**

**Location:** 4500 Lakeview Drive NW  
 Kennesaw, GA 30144

**Phone:** (770) 975-0252  
**Website:** [ncchristian.org](http://ncchristian.org)

**Open House Dates:** Jan. 10 & 27; Feb. 8 & 11; March 5 & 21; April 21; May 7; June 4; July 7 & 23

### **The Walker School**

**Location:** 700 Cobb Parkway N  
 Marietta, GA 30062

**Phone:** (770) 427-2689; (678) 581-6891  
**Website:** [thewalkerschool.org](http://thewalkerschool.org)

**Open House Dates:** Lower School, Jan. 10; Middle/Upper Schools, Jan. 25; Preschool, Feb. 7

### **Whitefield Academy**

**Location:** 1 Whitefield Drive SE  
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**Open House Dates:** Jan. 24 ■

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# Leader of Cobb



Since its establishment more than 180 years ago, Cobb County has become defined by its people. Some of these individuals have made their mark by becoming pioneers of business, captains of industry and heads of state.

And if you're reading this, you likely know why Cobb is so attractive to so many. It hosts exceptional schools, is within close reach to the world's busiest airport, has all of the

convenience of proximity to the big city and is fertile ground for entrepreneurship. The list goes on, but it always comes back to the people who have built this county into what it is.

On the following page, we have profiled an individual who is one of Cobb's premier leaders. We wanted to find out about her job, delve into her personal life and gain some words of wisdom. And of course, we asked: Why have you picked Cobb County?

## Dawn R. Levine

Lyle & Levine, LLC

Attorney, Estate Planning and Probate



**The Story:** I grew up in Georgia. I went to Washington State University for my undergraduate degree. While away from the South, we lived in New Mexico for a short time where my husband and I experienced some estate planning gone horribly wrong. We watched a college-prep boarding school for Native Americans get run into the ground. The founder left his third wife and his daughter from his first marriage to run the school together. They hated each other. The estate planning of the school's founder failed to take into account the human dynamic. Long story short, the school was bankrupted in 11 months. We got the attorney general involved, but since we were not attorneys we mostly had to sit on the sidelines. It was very dissatisfying not to be able to fight the good fight. After that, we came back home to the South and went to law school together at Emory University School of Law.

**Why Cobb County?** We have lived in Cobb County since 1996. We came here because we got the best bang for our buck when buying a house. After law school, we both worked in other parts of Atlanta. In 2007, we both decided we wanted to live, work and play without a commute. We have found the community in Cobb to be warm and welcoming. It's like Mayberry with all the perks of a metropolis.

**What do you love about your job?** People are the best part of my job. At my firm, our benchmark of success is when a client, as they are walking out, spontaneously says, "I feel so much better after talking to you." Whether they are seeing us because they lost a loved one or because they are doing estate planning, it is so satisfying to make the experience of visiting an attorney's office one of comfort.

**Leisure Time:** That question will make the people who know me laugh. I am prone to take "leisure time" and fill it with projects that other people think of as work. I like gardening, cooking, traveling and any projects that take me to Lowes.

**My Best Advice:** Make sure that taking care of yourself and your family doesn't stay at the bottom of your to-do list. I struggle with

this, too. I have friends who postponed travel plans thinking they would travel in retirement only to find themselves unable to go because of poor health. Don't procrastinate on experiencing joy or protecting your loved ones. We often see clients who say they have been meaning to get documents done or insurance in place for years. Sometimes, that postponement does not work out so well.

**What's Next?** My career has been filled with unexpected opportunities and experiences. I will be president of the Cobb Bar Association next year. That is a big, challenging job. I am focusing on fulfilling those responsibilities. I haven't planned beyond that yet. Personally, I am continuing to try to improve my work/life balance. Maintaining optimal fitness gets short shrift when the business is growing so fast.

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# It Takes a Village:

Ending  
Domestic  
Violence



**By Lindsay Field**

**C**obb County is rich with organizations, professionals and law enforcement whose goals are ending domestic violence and supporting the victims of these heinous crimes locally and at the state level.

In fact, Cobb resident Holly Tuchman, CEO and executive director of YWCA of Northwest Georgia that delivers programs and services that increase the awareness and reduce the occurrence of domestic violence and sexual assault in our communities, was recently named chair of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV). The state committee is tasked with multiple duties, including studying and evaluating the needs and services related to family violence in Georgia, monitoring the effectiveness of family violence laws and developing models for community task forces on family violence. "I am honored to be part of the commission and have a small role in impacting how this state addresses this very important issue as well as have a part in advocating for very important legislation, such as HB911 which was passed last year and signed by [Gov. Nathan Deal] to add language to the existing aggravated assault statute to make strangulation a felony offense," Tuchman says.

## **Domestic Violence** – A pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.

### **7 Common Abusive Tactics**

- physical violence
- sexual violence
- isolation
- economic abuse
- emotional abuse
- intimidation
- reproductive coercion
- stalking

### **Need help or know someone who does?**

- YWCA 24-hour Crisis Line  
(770) 427-3390
- 24-7 Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline  
(800) 33-HAVEN (42836)
- Child Protective Services  
(855) GA-CHILD (422-4453)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline  
(800) 799-SAFE (7233)

She has worked with victims of domestic violence since getting involved in the YWCA in the late 1980s. “I volunteered for the rape crisis hotline at the time—one of my first volunteer experiences in Marietta,” Tuchman recalls. “Then, I was honored as a Academy of Women Leader and served on the Tribute to Women Committee when I was back in the for-profit world. In 2007, the executive director decided to retire and I was approached about taking the position and the rest is history, as they say.”

Tuchman adds that ending domestic violence cannot be achieved by one system alone. “Family Violence Task Forces are an important component to addressing family violence at a local level,” she says. “GCFV provides technical assistance and support to the 38 Family Violence Task Forces across Georgia.” It is made up of victim advocates, law enforcement, the local Department of Family and Children Services, judges, prosecutors and many other systems responding to family violence victims and offenders. Recently, the Cobb County Family Violence Task Force was awarded “Task Force of the Year” by the GCFV.



### **Domestic Violence Unit**

In his continued efforts to support domestic violence victims, Cobb District Attorney Vic Reynolds is working to create a unit within his office that is specially designed to handle domestic violence cases. “It is important to have a specialized unit handling these cases because of the nature of domestic crimes,” Reynolds says. “Frequently, the victims of these incidents are often reluctant witnesses, there are usually children involved, and the family dynamics separate these prosecutions from any other crimes.”

The unit would consist of a prosecutor, investigator, victim-witness advocate and support staff. Reynolds says, “All cases would be assigned to the unit, and that is the only type case the unit would handle. The unit would be comparable to our existing special units, such as Narcotics, White Collar and Crimes against Children.” Since being elected as DA, Reynolds’ office also now tracks the number of victims they work with—2,992 in Fiscal Year 2012; 1,127 in 2013; and 1,481 in 2014. The office has a victim-witness advocate assigned to the Cobb County Police Department who works with these victims at the initial onset of the case as well.

In addition to his role with the DA’s office, Reynolds and his wife, Holly, will chair the annual YWCA 100+ Women Against Domestic Violence Fundraiser set for Feb. 7 at Jim R. Miller Park. The “Boots, Blue Jeans & Country Music” event kicks off at 6 p.m. and raises money for the

**SafePath provides a safe place like its child therapy room for law enforcement to talk to children about alleged domestic violence.**







Holly Tuchman, CEO and executive director at the YWCA of Northwest Georgia, presented Cassandra Buckalew with the 2013 Woman of the Year Award.

for the battered women's shelter. Learn more at [ywcawga.com](http://ywcawga.com). The couple is also involved with fundraising events for Marietta-based SafePath Children's Advocacy Center.

### Ending Child Abuse

SafePath, which has existed since 1996, is a non-profit that offers a comprehensive, professional and child-friendly approach to the intervention and investigation of alleged child abuse by bringing law enforcement, the DA's office, DFCS, mental health and healthcare professionals and other agencies together to help solve a child abuse case.



The Cobb County Domestic Violence Task Force won the Georgia Commission on Family Violence's Task Force of the Year In September.

The Marietta location provides a neutral and safe environment for children and families. In 2013, SafePath served more than 750 children and provided services for their caregivers and siblings. Of the over 750 children SafePath served, almost 200 of those children were involved in family or domestic violence.

"Some people may think family and domestic violence is not prevalent, just because it's not happening in their home or in their neighborhood," says Jinger Robins, executive director at SafePath. "If you are concerned that a child is being abused, maltreated or neglected, call the police or local child protective services. Suspicions of child abuse, including family violence, should be reported."

In cases where SafePath is called in to help, professionals with the organization will conduct a forensic interview with a child at their kid-friendly location and meet with caregivers

### Domestic Violence in Georgia (2013)

- 118 deaths as a result of domestic violence
- 58,955 crisis calls made to domestic violence agencies
- 7,807 victims and children who were provided refuge in Georgia domestic violence shelters

## Myths and Facts About Domestic Violence

**MYTH:** Victims have done something to cause the abuse.  
**FACT:** Abusers choose their actions. Abuse is **never** the fault of the victim.  
**MYTH:** Domestic violence is rare.  
**FACT:** Domestic violence affects one out of four women at some point during her lifetime. Men can also be victims of domestic violence, but women make up about 97 percent of domestic violence survivors. Domestic violence happens equally in heterosexual and homosexual relationships.  
**MYTH:** Domestic violence is not a serious problem in the U.S. or in Georgia.  
**FACT:** Battering is the single largest cause of injury to women in the United States—over mugging, automobile accidents and rape, combined.

**MYTH:** Victims of abuse are crazy if they choose to stay in an abusive relationship.  
**FACT:** Many survivors do not exhibit behaviors that, to those of us outside the intimate relationship, may seem unusual or even bizarre. It is important to remember that, as an outsider to the abusive relationship, we are not living with the daily threat and fear of abuse or death. What may appear to be bizarre behaviors are often survival strategies women use to keep themselves safe.  
**MYTH:** Middle-class women do not get battered as frequently or as violently as poor women.  
**FACT:** Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic groups. In fact, middle-class women often face barriers to get public assistance when they decide to leave because of their family's above-the-poverty-line financial status.

**MYTH:** Drinking and/or drug abuse cause battering.  
**FACT:** There seems to be a correlation between alcohol and battering. Although alcohol abuse may increase the likelihood of violent behavior, it does not cause or excuse it.  
**MYTH:** Domestic violence only affects the adults in the household.  
**FACT:** According to a recent American Bar Association report, experts estimate that 3.3 to 10 million children witness domestic violence annually.

Source: *Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence*, [gcadv.org](http://gcadv.org)

to help them find necessary resources, including safe housing or domestic violence support groups, all at no cost. Robins says SafePath is able to do this because of the financial support they receive from generous donors in the community, as well as competing for federal and local grants. “Monetary gifts truly help to carryout and fulfill SafePath’s mission,” she adds.

To enhance the mission of SafePath, they utilize the expertise, talents, resources and charitable acts of volunteers. If you are interested, please contact their volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@safepath.org](mailto:volunteer@safepath.org).

### Business Community Taking a Stand

Kim Gresh, president of S.A. White Oil Company, Inc., in Marietta and one of many local professionals advocating for domestic violence victims in Cobb, believes that if she and others in the community didn’t get involved, no one would. “Why wouldn’t I want to get involved, if I could help the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault?” she asks. “As a business leader, I know that domestic and sexual assault have an effect on everyone in our community. The more people who

**‘As a business leader, I know that domestic violence and sexual assault have an effect on everyone in our community. The more people who get involved can only help us reach our goal to put an end to domestic violence and sexual assault.’**

**—Kim Gresh, President  
S.A. White Oil  
Company, Inc.**



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get involved can only help us reach our goal to put an end to domestic violence and sexual assault.”

She recommends business leaders reach out to groups like the YWCA or SafePath and how they can get involved. Gresh has personally been associated with the YWCA for six years, specifically helping the organization transition from what it had historically been known for, to focusing solely on domestic violence. She has served as the capital campaign manager for the past five years, and this year, she is board chair. “After talking with [Tuchman] and realizing the focus of the YWCA was very different from what it was when I was young, I understood how important the struggle against domestic violence was and felt that I could do something to help,” Gresh adds. She also serves as a member of the WellStar Board of Trustees, which partners with the YWCA to provide services for victims of sexual assault. ■

# The Decisions Surrounding Alzheimer's

By Lindsay Field

**E**ven though Kennesaw resident Suzanne Boesl's mother Winifred Adair, formerly of Powder Springs, was barely showing signs of Alzheimer's disease, she decided to take her to a neurologist to be examined. "I wanted the neurologist to be aware of her family history—six of her 13 siblings have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's—and be proactive with her treatment if necessary," Boesl recalls. "The doctor ran a number of tests and determined that she had mild cognitive impairment, which is the first stage of dementia. He started her on medication to help slow the progression of her memory loss. At the time of her diagnosis, she was living independently and was still driving within a 10-mile radius of her home."

Dr. Shrivantika Reddy with WellStar Medical Group Family Medicine in Marietta says Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia and is the general term used to describe several disorders that cause significant decline in two or more areas of cognitive functioning that are severe enough to result in functional decline. Additionally, she says that Alzheimer's is a progressive disease beginning with mild memory loss and progresses to complete loss of the ability to carry out a conversation. Dementia is a disease of later life, beginning after 65 years of age. The incidence of the disease doubles every five years after age 60. The number of people in Georgia projected to have Alzheimer's in 2014 was 130,000 and it is expected to increase to 190,000 by 2025. This is a significant change from 2014 to 2025. The number of patients is rising as the cause of this condition is still under research.

In early 2013, Boesl says she and her brother began noticing some memory problems and changes in their mother's behavior, including a time when Mrs. Adair didn't recognize a photo of her husband, the late

## Senior Living

Doyle Adair. At about that same time, Boesl also realized that her mother was forgetting to take her medication and ended up in the hospital as the result of an accident. A home healthcare provider was hired shortly thereafter and eventually, she was moved into an assisted living home—Hearthstone at Presbyterian Village in Austell. “My mother loves being around people and being involved in activities,” Boesl says. “She had been very depressed for the last year or so living alone. I think as her disease started to progress, she became less able to take care of her household responsibilities and became fearful of living by herself.”

Hearthstone, which opened in 2005, is a secured, supporting living center for people who need support and oversight of conditions such as Alzheimer’s. Modeled after the Montessori concept of self-directed activities, Hearthstone meets the special needs of those with memory loss by using a person-centered care approach. Each day’s schedule is personalized, so residents choose when to rise, dine, prepare for the day and retire. Staff also provides assistance with all activities of daily living and it is across the street from Presbyterian Village’s location, which makes for a smooth transition if someone is in need of memory care support.

“My mother moved into Hearthstone in June of 2013 and has been happy since the first day,” Boesl says. “I never dreamed she would transition into her new home so easily. I have never heard her say one negative thing about Hearthstone. She loves all of the

### Protective Factors for Alzheimer’s:

- Physical activity
- Maintaining strong social connections
- Keeping yourself mentally challenged
- Avoid head trauma with wearing seat belts while driving
- Treating risk factors like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes

employees, the facility and all the programs that are offered. Every time I see her, she tells me how fortunate she is to live in such a nice place.” She adds that Hearthstone has also been a better financial choice for her family and has cost less than in-home care.

“If anyone asked my advice about dealing with a family member with Alzheimer’s, I would say that early intervention is key,” Boesl says. “Find a good neurologist, one that has experience with dementia patients, and make an appointment for your loved one to get tested. Even if there are few symptoms in the beginning, the doctor will at least have a base line in which to compare future tests. Work with the doctor to find medication that will hopefully slow the progression of the disease. Also, talk openly and honestly with your loved one about the future.” She also recommends visiting assisted living facilities and comparing them. “My mother did not make the decision to give up her

home and move into assisted living immediately, but with encouragement from friends and family members she ultimately made the decision to move,” Boesl says.

### Help is Key

Lisa Meeks, owner and geriatric care manager for SeniorCare Options in Marietta, says that working with Alzheimer’s patients or any diseases related to dementia can be tricky and that loved ones shouldn’t try to tackle it alone. “Families need skilled and trained providers to assist in the care of their loved one,” she says. “Eventually, most people with Alzheimer’s will need a higher level of care—usually provided by professional caregivers and other providers. It is better to have the loved one cared for by multiple people to get them used to having others provide care. It reduces the discomfort of unknown or new caregivers. Earlier care is better in the long run.”

She adds that outside help is beneficial because it can include 24-7 care for your loved one, in addition to your family member being more accepting of help from someone who is not related to them. “No one will argue that you know your loved one better than anyone else, however, a provider may know how to address the disease process and challenging behaviors better than you do,” Meeks says. “Certain kinds of care you might not even want to provide for your loved one, and that is not a judgment of character—not everyone is cut out to help shower or change disposable undergarments.”

There are an abundance of options for Cobb families, too, including county provided assistance and senior centers. “There are retirement living communities, assisted living and personal care homes, memory care, non-skilled home care and adult day care available all over Cobb County,” Meeks says. “We have excellent hospitals, home health and hospices as well.”



Presbyterian Village’s Hearthstone is a great option for families looking to place their loved ones in a home that takes good care of Alzheimer’s patients.

### Signs of Alzheimer’s:

- Repetition of questions
- Language problems
- Difficulty with routine tasks
- Poor planning and judgment
- Withdrawal from social activities

Additional tips for caregivers, provided by Dr. Reddy, include motivating a loved one to plan ahead with preparing their living will and advance directives before decision-making capacity is affected. She also recommends keeping your loved one pain free and comfortable; try keeping them oriented with the help of clocks, calendars and to-do lists; provide them with adaptive strategies like use a stop sign on the door; use pictures such as food for dining room; and use simple sentences to speak and create a calm environment. "Several resources are available to relieve caregiver stress such as home meals delivery, respite care, geriatric care managers and adult day care centers," Reddy concludes. These are available online at alz.org and healthinaging.org, just to name a few.

### Legally Unpredictable

When it comes to Alzheimer's, a loved one's progress is never predictable and often, an attorney is contacted to help with any long-term planning before someone's mental capacity becomes a problem. "Alzheimer's often causes a great deal of emotional and financial stress to the family," says Dawn

Levine, an estate planning and probate attorney with Lyle & Levine, LLC, in Marietta. "Waiting to make decisions once the family is in crisis mode can lead to significant strife. This can result in permanent rifts in the family, as well as large legal bills. It can be very difficult and expensive for the family."

Levine says far too often they have clients who wait until the last minute to put documents in place, maybe after they realize a family member's home needs to be sold because he or she can't remember their own address and it's time to be placed in assisted living. "We can still help them," she adds. "It is just more expensive and time consuming."

It's also important to keep in mind the minimum capacity requirement to sign legal documents, or update existing ones. "Often we hear from client's loved ones that the mental decline happened far faster than they expected or more suddenly than they expected," Levine says. "Waiting too long means signing new documents is no longer an option. The earlier the loved one sees an attorney the more options they will have available." Delaying could also result in spending more money. "If

**Legal Tips:**

1. Don't wait until you have a problem. Early planning is less expensive.
2. Choose an attorney who practices in your area.
3. Do not be afraid to ask questions.
4. Choose an attorney who listens to you and is a good fit for your family.

someone has lost the capacity to execute documents the only alternative may be going to court to get a guardian or conservator appointed," Levine continues. "They can still be helped, it is just more expensive than early planning."

Levine warns of problems that could arise if an attorney is not involved early on in the process. "We have seen clients engage in self-help to save money or protect themselves from horrors, real and imagined," she says. "This self-help can and does result in nasty legal battles, accidental disinheritances, financial exploitation and other unpleasant experiences." ■

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# Top Players in Fine Art Come to Cobb



Bradford Smith



Kate Rothra Fleming

By Lindsay Field

One of many area artists featured in the 26th annual American Craft Council Show (ACC) at the Cobb Galleria Center the first week of March is east Cobb resident and ceramic artist Beth J. Tarkington. She has participated in the yearly show for about a decade. "I choose to do the ACC shows because they represent the top players in the fine craft field," Tarkington says. "There are so many amazing artists doing these shows, from all over the country. They are strongly juried, which makes them hard to get into, which just makes getting in even more special. There is no doubt in my mind that it is the top-level show in Atlanta and, beyond that, in the Southeast."

On top of that, Tarkington says that the American Craft Council is deeply committed to educating people in the fine crafts and supporting the fine craft communities and individual artists and their work. "What I personally enjoy most about participating in any show is connecting to my audience, watching people respond to my work, or



Beth Tarkington

not!" she adds. "Hearing their comments and sharing all of this with other artists."

As an artist, she was personally encouraged by Debra Fritts, a well-known ceramic artist from Roswell, to pursue her unique approach to ceramics by transferring her drawing and painting skills from paper and canvas to the clay surface. "My work is very narrative; pieces tell stories, pursue themes," Tarkington says. "My work is hand built, which means I do not use a potter's wheel. It's a slower process, each piece is one-of-a-kind. You'll never see rows and rows of pieces in my studio! But I absolutely love using the clay colorants—slips, stains, under glazes, glazes in a very painterly fashion."

Her career as a full-time ceramic artist began after spending 16 years teaching art at the high school level. Tarkington earned

degrees from the University of Georgia and Georgia State University with an emphasis on drawing and painting and surface design. She and her husband live in the Atlanta Country Club, where her studio is also located.

This year's show will be held March 13, 10 a.m.–8 p.m.; March 14, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; and March 15, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Advance show tickets are \$14 for a one-day pass or \$28 for a three-day pass. On-site admission is \$14 per day, or \$30 for a three-day pass. Children 12 and under and American Craft Council members get in free. Tickets may be purchased ahead of time at [craftcouncil.org/atlanta](http://craftcouncil.org/atlanta). ■



Hsing-Ting Yang

### Check it out

**American Craft Council Show**  
Cobb Galleria Center  
March 13–15  
[craftcouncil.org/Atlanta](http://craftcouncil.org/Atlanta)

# Cobb's Most Romantic Eateries



By Jacqui Frasca

**L**ucky for Cobb County residents, you never need to head to the big city for a beautiful meal. Featuring every type of cuisine imaginable, Cobb has no shortage of petite cafes, alluring bistros and locally inspired kitchens available. As we near one of the most romantic days of the year—Valentine’s Day—some of the county’s best restaurants are getting ready for menu specials, prix fixe meals and lots of reservations. While a home-cooked dinner for two always makes for a great night in, here are some snapshots of some of the area’s most romantic eateries to check out.

## Common Quarter

1205 Johnson Ferry Road, #101  
Marietta, GA 30068  
(678) 809-4040; [commonquarter.com](http://commonquarter.com)

If you’re looking for a gorgeous bar with inventive drinks and modern American comfort food, look no further than east Cobb’s own Common Quarter. Beyond the gorgeous interior, the menu at Common Quarter is inspired by all things Cobb: Locally supported and seasonally driven, Executive Chef Jeffrey Gardner focuses on comfort and savory. Their menu details that they are in the

business of saying “yes;” any dietary or allergy restrictions are happily accommodated.



On the restaurant’s back wall is a giant map of the Georgia coast, inspired by owner Chris Talley’s childhood. Growing up in Georgia and planning trips along the Georgia coast, Southern comforts and culture were part of his heritage, and ultimately inspired Common Quarters simple, delicious focus: Food inspired by the Southeastern coast, farms and travel. The atmosphere is invitingly unpretentious; designed for comfort instead of speed, every corner of the restaurant has its own feel, from the marble bar to the rustic-chic patio filled with light.

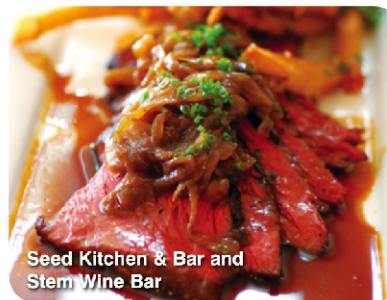
On Valentine’s Day, a prix fixe menu will be available. More information will be avail-

able closer to the date at [commonquarter.com](http://commonquarter.com) or at [facebook.com/commonquarter](https://www.facebook.com/commonquarter). Their day-to-day menu includes classic foods like crispy chicken livers, “loaded” tater tots, collard greens and creamy mac and cheese, as well as some unique and seasonal specials like butternut squash risotto with kale, pecans, apples, pomegranate and lemon; Scottish salmon tartare with truffle aioli, capers and house potato chips; or their “Look West” grass-fed burger complete with their “secret” sauce.

## Seed Kitchen & Bar and Stem Wine Bar

1311 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 504  
Marietta, GA 30068  
(678) 214-6888; [eatatseed.com](http://eatatseed.com)

What first hits you walking into Seed Kitchen



Seed Kitchen & Bar and Stem Wine Bar





**Douceur de France**

& Bar is the amount of natural light that floods the space. White accents and natural wood surfaces lend to the elegant atmosphere that's homey, modern and inviting. The booths feature comfortable loveseat-like cushions, large art featuring natural subjects decorate the walls and floor-to-ceiling curtains and bookshelves make the space feel like you could be in someone's very stylish (and very large) dining room. Seed features all-things boutique and modern American, from the setting to the mixology. Chef-driven by chef/owner Doug Turbush, the expansive wine program, vintage and modern cocktails and American and international craft beers on tap welcome all tastes.

Seed is ideal for both dining couples and large groups alike—their private dining area accommodates up to 25 guests, while their semi-private dining is available for 10–25 guests and the patio comfortably seats 30. This year may be the one to try out a couples' outing with all your friends and family to see what their group menus are all about. The attached Stem Wine Bar inspires dinners with its interpretation of travels to wine and tapas bars in Spain, Italy, France, San Francisco and New York. From boards of artisan cheeses and charcuterie to tapas

plates and some truly great wines, food and drink pairing is considered an art here.

On Valentine's Day, Seed goes all out: Chairs are decorated and Turbush's wife Franee completes beautiful flower displays on every table. A prix fixe menu will be available at both Seed and Stem, and diners will leave accompanied by chocolate covered strawberries. Their regular dinner menu features inspired dishes for all types of diners, so whether you're craving oysters or mussels, a veggie grinder or sweet potato ravioli, the fresh flavor innovations crafted by Turbush and chef du cuisine Brendan Keenan are sure to fit the bill.

### Canoe

4199 Paces Ferry Road SE  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
(770) 432-2663; [canoeatl.com](http://canoeatl.com)

Canoe offers diners the full package: The scenery, service and cuisine are one-of-a-kind, and close proximity to nature and the beautiful views of the Chattahoochee River make it the ultimate date spot. Dinner is the most intimate meal, especially as the sun sets over the river. While you can expect all seats filled (a reservation is in your best interest), the noise level is never a problem, especially in the lawn chairs down by the water. The high ceilings (designed to look like the inside of a canoe) and large windows make this tucked away restaurant feel like a weekend getaway destination in high-class dining.

The manicured, yet natural, landscape of Canoe is highlighted by colorful gardens and walkways ideal for an after-dinner stroll, while the interior artfully blends brick, ironwork and wooden surfaces to a setting that is expertly elegant. Every turn of their regular menu offers flavor combinations both beautiful and delicious; combinations like hickory smoke duck pastrami, blood orange and rye or jumbo lump crab cake, yuzu and Napa cabbage slaw open the meal while entrees



**Canoe**

boast everything from Atlantic salmon and Australian lamb to Georgia rabbit and a duck n' beef burger.

Canoe will host a special menu for Valentine's Day, featuring signature Canoe dishes Cobb diners have come to love, as well as decadent additions and desserts. The most romantic spot in the restaurant is in the dining room, close to the windows so that the river is in full view while you dine.

### Douceur de France

French Baker and Café  
277 South Marietta Parkway SW  
Marietta, GA 30064  
(770) 425-5050; [douceurdefrance.com](http://douceurdefrance.com)

The art of true French patisserie is alive and well in Cobb, and Douceur de France French Bakery and Café is a fine romantic dining destination if you're looking for something sweet to share over a cup of coffee. Highlighting recipes from all of the regions of France, the level of sophistication these delectable treats are elevated to are sure to delight any palette. Combining local ingredients and a passion for French pastries, chef Luc Beaudet learned his cooking skills and interest in dessert-making from his mother, leading him to train formally at the Art of Patisserie. After cooking in France, Japan and Texas, Beaudet settled down in Marietta with the opening of Douceur de France in 2000.

The full menu is available until 3:30 p.m. and features brunch favorites that are truly decadent, both savory and sweet. Panini breakfasts include the panini benedict and the panini salmon, both with poached eggs. The eggs ratatouille is a true chef signature and their Le Pain Perdu (French toast) is made with brioche dipped in crème brûlée. In true café style, hot and cold sandwiches, as well as soups and salads, are featured with lots of fresh ingredients, as well as open-faced sandwiches (Les Tartines) with tuna, chicken and vegetarian options. With specialties like chicken pot pie and beef bourguignon and desserts galore (including crêpes, of course) you and your sweetheart have the world of French cuisine at your fingertips.

Valentine's Day at Douceur de France is complete with heart-decorated macarons with fresh raspberries, heart-shaped cakes, cookies and mousse and, of course, their confiture de l'amour—apple, raspberry and rose petal jam. ■

# Move Over Smartphone

By Lindsay Field

**M**ost New Year's resolutions revolve around weight loss or quitting a nasty habit, but I've decided to steer mine in a different direction this year—limiting my cell phone use. I admit that I don't act like a lost puppy when I forget my phone at home or it dies when I'm away from home, but I find myself relying on it way more than I'd like and I think it's time to step away from the smartphone.

I think I'll start with baby steps, like deleting the Facebook and Pinterest apps, then maybe move to a larger scale later on—leaving it at home when I take my son to the park or turning it off for half a day on the weekends. I come from a time when cell phones weren't all the rage. (I was born in 1981 and didn't even have a phone until I was 23.) Many of you are probably the exact same way. This should be an easy resolution to tackle, correct?

The No. I reason I've decided to take this route is that I find myself way too often checking Twitter when I should be playing Legos with my son; scrolling through Facebook updates while simultaneously talking to my mother on the phone; and even checking my phone while I should be working. It's time to practice a little self-control and figure out what's more important in my life: My phone, or family and work. I think we all know the answer to this one—family AND work.

It also annoys the crud out of me to see people, especially young people, playing on their phones non-stop while having dinner with

their parents or ignoring phone calls but texting back quickly. Also, as of late, I've seen on numerous occasions parents who are out and about with their young children and instead of giving them their full attention or "playing back," they have their noses in their phone or insist on taking 100 pictures on their phone.

I'm sure the gods at Apple or Samsung wouldn't be fond of my resolution, but in a way I think it'll be a great testament to my family and friends that a personal connection is way more important than an electronic one. In other words, if you don't hear back from me on Facebook, Twitter or even by email or text, don't be offended. I'm on the map but off my phone! ■





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**A few tips to keep your New Year's resolution**

- **Start small:** Make resolutions that you think you can keep.
- **Change one behavior at a time:** Replacing unhealthy behaviors with healthy ones requires time.
- **Talk about it:** Share your experiences with family and friends.
- **Don't beat yourself up:** Perfection is unattainable. Remember that minor missteps when reaching your goals are completely normal and OK.

Source: [apa.org](http://apa.org)



[cobbemc.com](http://cobbemc.com)





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