



Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau

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NATJA Coming in 2017

The 2017 North American Travel Journalists Association 15th Annual Conference & Marketplace will convene in Orange County, NC from May 15-19, 2017. The host hotel is the Sheraton Chapel Hill. The event brings together travel journalists from throughout the US, Canada and Mexico for a combination of business meetings, educational seminars and a media marketplace. It also provides a perfect showcase for Chapel Hill and the surrounding areas through activities and events scheduled each afternoon and evening.

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau's bid was selected to host this prestigious group and it was a countywide effort. Officials from Carrboro, Hillsborough, Chapel Hill and UNC were all involved in the initial site tour provided for NATJA's CEO. The 2017 conference is expected to draw up to 125 attendees with the majority being professionally accredited travel journalists. To read more click [here](#).



Hotel News

Chapel Hill's The Franklin Hotel won Hilton's 2016 "Connie Award" for the Curio brand. This award is given to the #1 hotel globally in each of Hilton's brands every year, based on their quality assurance audits and combined performance in Overall Guest Experience and Overall Guest Service. There were 18 hotels (still a new brand) in the Curio Collection worldwide during 2015. The prestigious Connie Award

(photo) is named after Hilton Worldwide's founder Conrad Hilton.

Construction will begin within a month on the OTO Development, 4-story **AC Marriott** hotel with 123 guest rooms and 2 levels of below grade parking (112 spaces) at 210 West Rosemary Street. The Hotel's construction, which will be adjacent to La Residence restaurant, is anticipated to last approximately 14 months with a Fall 2017 opening. The General Contractor for the project will be Lend Lease (US) Construction. During construction pedestrian traffic will be re-routed to the South Side of Rosemary Street to maintain pedestrian safety.

Work continues on the 110-room, five-story **Southern Village Hyatt Place** which will be located on 15-501 South, adjacent to Southern Village and near the entrance to Market Street. Officials say a February 2017 opening is possible.

Photo credit Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership



Orange County Speedway

Experience exciting racing at the [Orange County Speedway](#) 3/8 mile track at 9740 NC Highway 57 in Rougemont. Regular Racing Season General Admission is \$10 for Adults, \$8 for Discount tickets (Seniors 65+, Students with ID and Military with ID) and \$1 for Youth 10 & Under. OCS's regular racing divisions will be running every second and fourth Saturday of the month through October. All races unless otherwise noted will be held at the traditional start time of 7 pm. Front Ticket Gates and Grandstands open at 5 pm.

The next race is **May 14** with the OCS Family Fun Day/Kid's Ride Along - Late Models, Limiteds, Pure Stock, Street Stock, Super Mini trucks, Allison Legacy Series and Smokey Dave's BBQ Mod 4.

Photo by Thomas Lee



Cardinal Directions BeerFest

[Cardinal Directions Beer Festival](#) is back for a second year, now held at The Carrboro Town Commons at 301 West Main Street. The event is rain or shine on **May 29** from 2 pm - 6 pm. Additionally, there will be food trucks, non-alcoholic beverage vendors and live music. Tickets are \$20 and include a festival glass and 5 sample pours with additional samples available for \$1 each. You must be 21 years and over to purchase tickets and I.D. will be checked upon entry.

Breweries Attending - Bond Brothers Beer Co. (Cary), Burial Beer Co. (Asheville), Fonta Flora (Morganton), Fullsteam (Durham), Haw River (Saxapahaw), Mystery (Hillsborough), Southern Pines (Southern Pines), Starpoint (Carrboro), Trophy (Raleigh), YesterYears (Carrboro) and many more.

Food Trucks include Pho Nomenal Dumplings, Belgian Waffle Crafters, Napoli Pizza, American Meltdown and Al's Burger Truck. Live music is by Stray Local, Counterclockwise String Band and The Holland Brothers.

Cardinal Directions Beer Festival raises money for Farmer Foodshare, a non-profit supporting local farms and feeding hungry people in the community.



Triangle Charity Polo Classic

Join the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce on **June 3** from 7 pm - 11 pm at the The Cloth Mill at Eno River, 437 Dimmocks Mill Rd #3, for an evening of fun, food and excitement at the [Jeans & Jewels](#) pre-party for the annual Triangle Charity Polo Classic. Tickets range from \$40 - \$80. There is music by All King Entertainment, hors d'oeuvres and entree stations, silent auctions to support Caregivers Guiding Lights, "Pretty Woman" Hat Contest and Meet the Polo Players for the next day's Charity Polo Match.

For the first time, Orange County will host the [The Guiding Lights Triangle Charity Polo Classic](#) at Triangle Area Polo Club, 9239 Robert Hester Road, Hurdle Mills, NC. The event is **June 4** from 12 pm - 6 pm. General Admission is \$20.



Farm to Fork Picnic

Come join a remarkable group of Piedmont farmers and cooks for an evening of food, live music and fun at the [Farm to Fork Picnic 2016](#) on Sunday, **June 5** from 4 - 7 pm. The Farm to Fork picnic is in a field next to the W.C. Breeze Farm Extension & Research Center at 4909 Walnut Grove Church Road in Hurdle Mills, NC - a few miles north of Hillsborough. The event is rain or shine.

Farm to Fork Picnic will feature more than three dozen chefs and farms paired together and another 14 food artisans, craft brewers, wine distributors and coffee producers offering the best the Triangle and beyond has to offer.

Tickets are \$100 for adults (drinks included), \$50 for youth (13 to 20) and children 12 and under are admitted free. Farm to Fork is an initiative of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) and the WC Breeze Family Farm. The Picnic is the final activity of a three day event.



Summertime Outdoor Movies

Warm weather means outdoor movies in Orange County. Come to see the Movies in the Park in Hillsborough's River Park at 140 E. Margaret Lane. Beginning **May 27** enjoy The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water at 8:30 pm. Others include Finding Nemo - 8:45 pm **June 11**, Max - 8:45 pm **July 9** and Jurassic World - 8:15 pm **August 13**. Admission is free with concession items available for purchase. Bring your blankets and chairs. Sponsors include the Hillsborough Chamber, OCDEAPR and Ashton Woods.

In Chapel Hill, head downtown to Wallace Parking Deck Plaza at 150 E. Rosemary Street for the Movies Under the Stars Series (photo) beginning **June 9** at 8:30 pm with Disney's Lilo & Stitch. Movie-goers of all ages will enjoy free popcorn and fun activities. Movies continue twice monthly into August. Check out the complete schedule [here](#).

Friday & Saturday [Movies on the Green](#) in Southern Village begin at dusk begin Memorial Day weekend and continue through the summer. Cost is \$5.



Bar-B-Que Throwdown

The Carolina Inn's [Bar-B-Que Throwdown](#) is Saturday, June 11 from 1 pm - 4 pm. There will be eight competitors and five judges at this epic food battle on the lawn at the Inn.

Tickets are \$55 for each adult, \$25 for ages 7-20 and 6 and under enter free. Enjoy live music by the Gravy Boys and Bull City Cigars rolling and selling. Tickets are available through the website above.

For more information, call 1-800-962-8519.

Photo - The Carolina Inn



Travel Writers Explore OC

Six travel writers from the Society of American Travel Writer's Eastern Chapter spent April 27-29 in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and a side trip to Hillsborough experiencing our food, beer, spirits, coffee, history, art, farms, shopping and much more. The visitors bureau hosted a post media tour following the SATW Eastern Chapter Conference held in Raleigh on April 24-26. Writers attending including Kim Button and Judy Wells from Florida, Martha Steger from Virginia and North Carolina Writers Jason Frye (Wilmington), Jayne Cannon (Charlotte) and Randy Johnson (Banner Elk).

Special thanks to host hotel The Carolina Inn and the Crossroads Chapel Hill Restaurant. The writers toured more than a dozen attractions and venues in Orange County and also dined at Top of the Hill Restaurant & Brewery, Crook's Corner, Il Palio and Weathervane.

SATW is a professional association made up writers, photographers, editors, broadcast/video/film producers, bloggers, website owners, public relations experts and hospitality industry representatives from the United States and Canada.

Photo - Travel writers get tour and spirits tasting at the TOPO Distillery



Orange County Spotlight

This month's spotlight is [Al's Burger Shack](#). You'll find exceptional burgers, dogs, and shakes from the best local ingredients. That means pasture-raised beef, all-pork hot dogs, custard and cheese from local dairies, and vegetables from local farms. And every day there's a tasty special created by the mad scientist of the grill, Al Bowers. Check out The Classic (photo) with bacon, lettuce, tomato, red onion, dill pickle and Al sauce.

Al's Burger Shack is located at 516 West Franklin Street in Chapel Hill, NC and is open Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 10 pm. There are a few bar seats inside as well as covered picnic tables and a few uncovered to sit in the sunshine.

News & Notes

Damon Barham has joined Southern Season as Corporate Executive Chef. In this role, he oversees daily company-wide culinary operations. He also will plan and operate programs in new locations as Southern Season continues to expand, including Atlanta this summer.

The Visitors Bureau 2016 Official Visitors Map is ready for distribution. The map is a companion piece to the 2016 Visitors Guide which was published earlier this year.

You have one more day to check out the [22nd Annual Art in the Garden Sculpture Invitational](#) in Hillsborough on May 14.

Come to the Burwell School at 319 N. Churton Street in Hillsborough for their Fifteenth Annual Fundraising Auction on May 14 Featuring Celebrity Auctioneer Author Michael Malone and Special "Fund a Need" Auctioneer Sara Stephens. Music is by The Jazztones. The [FIESTA's](#) Silent auction opens at 5:30 pm, Buffet supper at 6:30 pm and a Live auction follows at 7:30 pm with raffle prizes. Tickets are \$40 through the day of the event.

The Orange County Historical Museum will celebrate Orange County history at a family event featuring delicious food and drink from Hillsborough BBQ Company, Mystery Brewing Company and Bona Fide Sandwich Co. Admission is free with reasonably priced food and drink. [History, Mystery & BBQ](#) is May 21 from 4 pm - 7 pm at Mystery Brewing Company, 437 Dimmocks Mill Rd, Suite 41, Hillsborough. Enjoy an open-mic history storytelling hour and try your luck in a raffle for fabulous prizes and experience the excitement of a mini live auction. Twenty percent of food and drink sales (*\$10 BBQ plate or vegetarian plate, heritage beverages: \$5 beer, \$2.50 non-alcoholic cider) and all proceeds from the raffle (\$2 raffle tickets!) and auction will go directly to the museum.

Comings & Goings

Correction - In Hillsborough, [Fetch Hot Dog Co.](#) is opening soon.

Keep up to Date

Check out the [Orange County Farmers' Markets](#).

Chapel Hill's downtown parking locations can be found at www.parkonthehill.com.

Like [Visit Chapel Hill & Orange County, NC](#) on Facebook. Follow and tag the Visitors Bureau on Twitter [@visitchapelhill](#).

Media Mentions

[Zagat](#) calls Chapel Hill one of the 16 Best Under-the Radar Southern Food Destinations to visit on your next Southern Road Trip.

Read Maggie Brown's [blog](#) Travel Back thought Time in Beautiful Hillsborough, NC.

Writer Shayla Martin notes Three Ways to Weekend in Durham and Chapel Hill in the [Atlanta-Journal Constitution](#).