

The Harmonizer

Vol. 2, No. 3

Monthly Newsletter for Music City Couples

May 2003

Egg-Stravaganza

by Risa and Angela

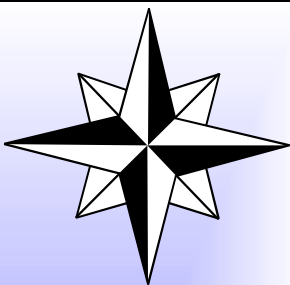
Despite weather reports all week forecasting rain, Mother Nature shined on us with a beautifully sunny day. The arrival of Becky at 11:00 started off the festivities right on time with all the other couples, including four of Holly and Barb's kids C.J., Michael, Heather and Jenise following right behind. Several couples enjoyed the shade of the umbrella on the patio including Holly and Barb who were seen talking with new members Mel and Chris while we waited for everyone to arrive. We all feasted on a variety of breakfast casseroles, quiches and muffins along with fresh lemonade and sangria while awaiting the real reason

we were all there -- The Egg Hunt!!

Over 300 colorful Easter eggs were hidden throughout the yard. The fun began as everyone picked up an Easter basket, the rules of the game were explained, and everyone both young and old took off in every possible direction. People were everywhere. Our chair couple Donald and Jeffery, could be seen at least twice discussing which way to

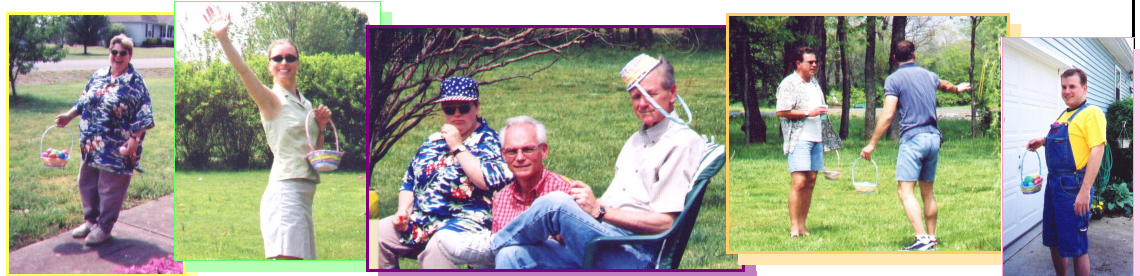
and Elaine seemed to enjoy their new erotic art book and female model playing cards, while the kids collected kites, planes, and other toys. John was spectacular modeling his new "Easter Bonnet" for all to see. Maybe next time we should have an Easter Bonnet contest.

After all the prizes were handed out, everyone was glad to come back inside to cool off and enjoy dessert. A coconut cake in the shape of a bunny and a carrot cake finished off the event and were big hits; there was just enough left over to send a few people home with goodies for later. Good food, good conversation, and more than a few laughs were enjoyed by everyone who attended, so with Easter Brunch such a success, we can now turn our attention to the next upcoming event. We want to thank everyone who attended, this event has been long in the planning and we are so glad everyone, including us had such a good time.



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Credits: by Angela and Risa

Top photo: C.J., Michael, (New Members—Chris & Mel), Elaine, Ana, Jenise, Holly, Barb, & Stefan.

Bottom photos (L-R): Becky, Elaine, Becky, Herb, John, Jeffray, Donald, & Stefan

TENNESSEE OUTDOORS

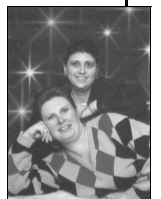


With the upcoming MMC camping trip in May, Marcus and Brian wanted to include some information that might help you make the trip more fun and interesting. Tennessee

(Continued on page 2)

SPOTLIGHT

This month's spotlight focuses on our Member Services Couple, Angela and Risa. They just celebrated their 5th Anniversary last November and currently share a house in Murfreesboro with the four "children": two dogs, Cheyenne and Belle; and the two cats, Dallas and Dakota. Angela and Risa



Rock Island Ready or Not!



by: Marcus (Brian)

(Continued from page 1)

has so many beautiful parks and recreational areas. Rock Island State Park packs plenty of sights and activities for all ages. Not only is hiking and camping a great draw, but also: Badminton, Basketball, Horseshoes, Ping-

Pong, Playground, Softball, Tennis Courts, Volleyball, Board Games, and Swimming at the park's natural sand beach (located on the headwaters of the beautiful Center Hill Lake. Adequate parking space and a modern bathhouse are provided. No life-guards are on duty.)

The park has four hiking trails with the gorge area below the dam being the most popular:

- **Caney Fork Gorge**
A beautiful limestone gorge runs between the Great Falls Dam and the Twin Falls. This is a popular area for rock hopping, swimming and fishing. The area is populated with Great Blue Herons, wildflowers and waterfalls.
- **Collins River Nature Trail**
A three mile loop along the outer edge of the Collin's River peninsula. The trail winds beside the riverbank and gives the hiker a chance to view white-tailed deer, Pileated woodpeckers, Christmas ferns and a wide variety of wildflowers.
- **Eagle Trail**
This 1 1/2 mile trail runs from the Blue Hole picnic area to the Badger Flatt picnic area down by the park's natural sand beach on Center Hill Lake. This trail is naturally stocked with an abundant array of wildflowers and songbirds. Flowers include mountain laurel, pink and white trillium, little brown jug, bloodroot and yellow violet. Some birds which can be seen include prothonotary warblers, belted kingfishers and osprey.
- **Moonshine Trail**
This short half mile trail runs past the base of an old moonshine still and is teeming with wildlife. Hikers on this trail might get to see firepink, jack-in-the pulpit, deer and barred owls. This trail begins at the tennis court parking lot and ends beside of campsite 39.

Rock Island has 60 campsites, each equipped with electrical and water hookups, grill, and picnic table. Three modern bathhouses (with hot water showers, lavatories, and commodes) are located in the camping area. There is a dump station at the far end of the campground for the convenience of self-contained camping rigs. Campers must register at the park office. Campsites can be reserved, maximum stay limit is two weeks. This facility is open year round.

Laundry facilities are available in the campground area.

There is a \$3 per day vehicle fee. You may want to consider the MVP (Multi-Visit Pass) for the entire season.

Directions From Nashville: Take I-40 E to Exit 239, Lebanon/Watertown, and take a right on Hwy 70 toward Watertown.

Proceed for 33 miles until you reach the town of Smithville. Turn right on Hwy 56 and proceed for 10 miles and take a left on Hwy 287. Drive 10 miles on Hwy 287 and the park entrance will be on the left.

For Reservations: 931-686-2471

Detailed information was obtained from the Tennessee State Park website at:

<http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/>

Photo Credit: Brian (Marcus). Rock Island Falls below dam



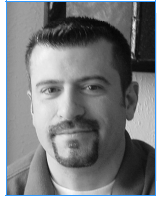
Editor's Note: One of the great 'benefits' of being a member of Music City Couples are the friendships that you form with other members outside of formal group events. Many times these close friends share excursions or trips to see something new or do something where a shared experience makes it all that more fun or special. We'd like to know about any kinds of excursions that our member couples might undertake...whether it be a hike, a shopping trip, concert outing, etc. Just submit an article (pictures would be great as well!) to us for this new section of the newsletter.

The Fiery Gizzard Trail

Four member couples got together the last weekend in March to hike the Fiery Gizzard & Dog Hole trails in the Grundy Natural Area of South Cumberland State Park. Julia & Tara, Bill & Jerry, Andrew & Joe, and Marcus & Brian set out early that morning from Nashville (well, after a hearty breakfast at Cracker Barrel first!) southeast to Monteagle to do one of the best hikes in the Southeast. The weather was a little on the chilly side, but everyone's spirits were high as we began the hike atop the Cumberland Plateau.

Immediately, the trail drops down into a canyon that is more reminiscent of a temperate rain forest of the Pacific Northwest than somewhere in Middle Tennessee! Ferns are emerging already from their long winter's rest and the sound of the Fiery Gizzard Creek greeted us as we descended down the steps into the canyon. Within a short distance we came upon Blue Hole Falls, a lovely waterfall that dropped into a pale blue plunge pool. A little farther down the trail we encountered another fall called the Black Canyon Cascade. Crossing the creek, we started the hike in earnest as we came upon Chimney Rock - an impressive column of rocks that Joe and Andrew immediately went to climb to see how high they could make it!

Leaving Chimney Rock, we took a short spur trail to another lovely waterfall called Sycamore Falls. We then headed off on a steep hike back up to the Plateau called the Dog Hole Trail. The trail gets its name from the small opening (about only big enough for a dog to make it in!) of a coal-mining cave right off of the trail. We then had a hard hike up to the top of the trail and were then treated to some impressive views from Werner and Raven Points. The whole gulf was before us and the pale colors of spring were painting the landscape with beautiful hues. It was a lot cooler up in this area and also intermittent snow showers were coming down. Winter still seemed to have a grip on the plants up



Excursions OUT

by: Brian (Marcus)

here and was in stark contrast to the canyon below where signs of spring were everywhere.

After the impressive views of Raven Point, it was time to head back down the Fiery Gizzard trail into the canyon. Right off the bat, the trail was a steep, difficult hike down with steep switchbacks and mud from the rains the night before. It was easy to see that spring was coming fast here as wild violets and trillium were making an appearance on this segment of the trail. As we got lower into the gulf, dense drifts of white trillium carpeted the sunny areas of the gulf and were quite spectacular. As we descended lower back into the canyon, it became apparent why the trail is rated as one of the most difficult hikes in the Southeast. Millions of small rocks littered the canyon floor and just about everyone of them that you stepped on moved, requiring everyone to take things a little more slowly and carefully (I think it was at this point that the blisters started popping up on my heels!). This allowed us to also enjoy more of the wildflowers and the scenery of the Fiery Gizzard Creek.

Finally after six hours and 12 miles of an intense hike we made it back to the trail head and our vehicles. Needless to say, everyone was happy to come to the end and our thoughts immediately turned to food! The selections are slim up in this area, so we went to the first Outback Steakhouse that we could find in Murfreesboro and

had a great dinner. We talked about the hike and how hard it was, but at the same time how incredible it was. It may have been a little ambitious to take on this hike, but everyone came out of it pretty well. Talk did turn to doing another hike soon...but one that is not so strenuous and long!

There are a lot of hiking opportunities in close proximity to our area of the state, and the Fiery Gizzard Trail is one of the most spectacular I've seen. I encourage anyone who wants to see a whole lot of beauty packed into a small area to try this hike. The hike is rated as strenuous and is definitely a challenge. Just give yourself plenty of time to see and appreciate all the scenic delights that the area has to offer. Oh yeah, pack a hearty lunch, take lots of water, wear some comfortable hiking boots, and set out for a real adventure!

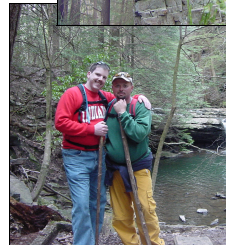


Photo Credits: by Marcus & Brian.

Top: Chimney Rock

Left: Bill & Jerry

Right: Tara & Julia

Bottom: Fiery Gizzard Creek in the Grundy Natural Area.

Buying a New Home?



by: Donald (Jeffray)

Every day, any day of the week, we can switch on the radio, turn on the TV or read the newspaper and we're constantly reminded of the recession that we're in. Where the number of unemployed rises on a daily basis, jobs are lost, wages are cut or lowered, benefit packages are taken away, but prices keep soaring. The cost of gasoline, food, personal items such as cigarettes and toiletries, bills such as electric, water, natural gas and taxes seem to skyrocket. This seems to happen month after month and year after year.

So with this in mind why are the number of new home sales at an all time high? Interest rates **are** at a 30 year low or could it be that the family unit is growing? Growing, not only by the number of children but we're now coming of an age where we must think of having to care for our aging or ailing parents and must consider purchasing a larger home in which to accommodate all of them. Whether or not these are a couple of reasons I really couldn't say or even wish to speculate but I would like to give some words of advice before you set out to buy that new home.

1st, you must get "your house" in order. By this I mean to say your credit history. Whether you buying a new home, buying that new car or making any kind of a large purchase it is recommended that you get a copy of your personal credit report and review it. With all of the identity theft and fraud that occurs day to day you can verify any inaccuracies by pulling your personal credit report like your past & current residence, current & past employment and your personal debt. It is recommended that you do this at least once a year. This debt can range from a small credit card purchase to your current mortgage lender. It will also show your monthly installments and how well those payments are made (ie: timely, late, etc). It will take everything that is reported to the credit agency and give you a credit rating as well as a credit score. Of course, this credit rating is based on how well your payments are made in which case you'll received a good rating if payments are made on time however, your credit score loses ground with the more debt that you have, no matter how well your payments are made. How this all works is be-

(SPOTLIGHT Continued from page 1)

are both in the printing business, Angela for twenty years and Risa for 18. "This gives us an understanding alot of couples don't have, when one of us talks about our job, the other has a total understanding of what is going on," says Risa.

In the beginning, Risa says, "Angela and I moved to Nashville together in 1998 from Ft. Lauderdale. Her parents live here and wanted her to move back to Tennessee which she let me know on our first date. By our 2nd date she had asked me to come with her and within three months of our dating, I told my family I was moving to Tennessee, they thought I was crazy."

They met while participating in a yard sale. "I like to tell people I got [Angela] at a yard sale (at her ex's house)." Risa goes on to say, "Her ex's new girlfriend kept telling her all about me and urging Angela to talk to me, well a week later we got together to work on crafts, a mutual hobby of ours (just as friends since technically I was still living with someone, but that's another story). Well to make a long story short, a week later I was single and we went on our first date."

"Angela says she knew that I was her soul-mate the first night we slept together, when she asked if it would be alright if she turned on the fight on HBO and I said she could," says Risa. "Angela and I have always been able to finish each other's sentences from the very beginning and we always seem to be thinking the same thing at the same time, on several occasions we have even bought each other the same anniversary or valentine's day cards even though we don't shop together."

Angela says, "[Risa] is the sweetest, kindest and most patient person I have ever met and she must be to put up with me." For Risa, "it's the little things that Angela does that I love: the way she takes care of me when I'm sick, the way she packs my lunch with little love notes or a piece of chocolate (she knows I have a sweet tooth)."

"I guess our ideal evening for us would be



(Continued on page 5)

yond me.

If you find, on your credit history, that something is inaccurate (ie: credit card balance on a card you've never been issued or a name and amount of an installment loan that you do not recognize) call one of the credit reporting agencies immediately! If possible, fix anything that is incorrect on your credit history and decrease the amounts of purchases being made and make sure your payments on made on time. This will help you when it comes time to pre-qualify for financing on your new home. What a segway, huh? This brings me to the 2nd piece of advice I can give. Pre-qualify. This means to head to your local bank or mortgage lender to see what amount they're willing to lend you on the purchase of a new home. And, don't just go to on bank or lending institution but go to several and see which institution offers you the best rate. By completing a short application form, most lending institutions don't charge

for this, they'll be able to tell you what amount they're willing to lend you and at the same time give you the current interest rate and the monthly installment amount that is based on that loan amount. If you don't know where to start then ask somebody you know. Chances are there are several people you know that have probably already been through this process and can suggest a local bank or lending institution. Below, you will find the names and phone numbers of the 3 credit reporting agencies. There will be a fee to receive a copy of your personal credit report but the charge is minimal.

TransUnion (615) 376-7776
Equifax (888) 202-4025
Experian (888) 397-3742

Hope these words of advice and wisdom will help when it comes time for you to buy your next home.

www.musiccitycouples.org

(Continued from page 4)

coming home, having a glass of wine on the patio and enjoying quiet time with each other," they say; however, to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, this couple would rather be "renting a cabin in the mountains, ALONE (without the children), drinking mimosas in the morning in the jacuzzi and wine in the hot tub in the evenings after enjoying an afternoon of antiques, art galleries and shopping."

When asked about their secrets for a good relationship, they say "It's easy if you remember a few things — when you fight, say your peace and move on, don't dwell on it. Second, we always kiss goodbye in the morning and hello when we get home from work and every time we talk on the phone we say 'Drive safe and I love you'."

In the future you might find these two working their dream job, "opening our own business: a combination cafe and artsy gift shop," but they are still working on the idea.

Angela and Risa offer advice we can all use: "don't be afraid to have a relationship with someone you consider a friend. Friendship is the best basis we can think of for a relationship. And communicate, when you merge two different personalities with different habits and ideas, not to mention two households, complications are bound to arise, how you deal with them, will determine how to deal with bigger problems down the road, and remember to compromise."

Not wanting to leave out the important loved ones, Angela and Risa talk about their "Children." Lets see, "our cat Dallas moved here with us from Florida, he's lovable when he wants to be and a real loud mouth in the morning when his bowl is empty. We adopted Cheyenne from a rescue league a couple of years ago, she's momma's girl. Our second cat Dakota just showed up on the back deck when he was about twelve weeks old (boy did he pick the right household) and last of course, our newest addition, Belle. We adopted her also from a rescue league back in February after we lost Adamus. We named her Belle, because she was quiet and demure and reminded me of a southern belle, but as she has gotten to know us, she's come out of her shell. Now, she is one big ball of energy that never stops. But we love them all and Angela would love to have a few more!"

It is clear this couple is a vital part of our organization. They have a great enthusiasm for life! Angela and Risa leave us with, "We've only been apart less than a week since then and have been happily together for over five years. We're planning our wedding for 2005. (And you are all invited)."

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Chair Couple
Donald & Jeffery

Finance Couple
Elaine & Ana

Vice Chair Couple
Stefan & Steve

Media Services Couple
Brian & Marcus

Events Couple
Barb & Holly

Member Services Couple
Risa & Angela

Web Services Couple
Larry & Bobby

Announcements

- May 9-11, Rock Island Camping Trip. Reservations were to be made by May 1. This month's social should be exciting with this planned getaway!
- May 20, 3rd Tuesday Dinner Night Out. Come enjoy the good company with good food. Bring along any friends that might have an interest in the group as well. RSVP recommended. Location TBA.
- May 23, Call for Newsletter Submissions! Time put together what happened and will happen in the group!
- May 23-25, National Couples Convention. Hosted by the Golden Gate Couples affiliate in San Francisco. This event Email Brian & Marcus for an application form if you are interested in attending!
- June 2-7, Nashville Pride Week. Mark your calendars early! The week of festivities ends with the annual parade on that Saturday. MCC plans to man a booth and generate a lot of interest. Be There!

Anniversaries

- Elaine & Ana - May 7, 1999



New Members

- Barb and Jane
- Becky and Yvette



Birthdays

- Herb (John) - May 10
- Tara (Julia) - May 29
- Bobby (Larry) - May 31



If you know of any couples that are interested in our organization, this is a great time to bring them to scheduled events so they can get to know the members and learn more about our organization. The success of our organization depends not only on addressing the needs of our current members but also in attracting new members. We must build upon the foundation of the current members and encouraging other couples to see what we are all about. This effort has to be a combination of group gatherings, member support, and involvement by *you*.

Contact any of the Chair Couples for further information!

**AS OF PRINT DATE, THESE ARE THE MOST CURRENT EVENTS.
PLEASE CHECK THE MESSAGE BOARD FOR UPDATES OFTEN.**

Good Food & Company



Photo by: Brian (Marcus)

Music City Couples once again got together on the third Tuesday of April for "Dinner Nite Out." Everyone met at Fudruckers in Westend.



Mission Statement:

Music City Couples is an organization in which the members are committed gay and lesbian couples in the Greater Nashville and Middle Tennessee area.

The organization serves to provide a forum for those member-couples to strengthen their own relationships while also providing a social and supportive structure for their fellow member-couples. Music City Couples holds no religious or political affiliations and makes every attempt to respect the privacy of its members.

The Harmonizer is a monthly publication of Music City Couples. Production of the newsletter is the responsibility of the Media Couple. We encourage all members to submit articles to appear in the newsletter. The Media Couple reserves the right to select and edit all articles for publication.



Coming Soon!

MCC gears up for the upcoming PRIDE in Nashville. Plan on spending time manning our booth, attend the parade, and look forward to the potluck-in-the-park social to follow.



The Nashville affiliate of Couples National Network



A Social Organization For Committed
Gay and Lesbian Couples

www.musiccitycouples.org

May 2003

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Elaine & Ana	8 	9 Rock Island Camping	10 Herb (ohn) 
11 Rock Island Camping	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 MCC Dinner Out	21	22 	23 National Convention	24
25	26	27	28	29 Tara (Julia)	30	31 Bobby (Larry) 

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GOOD STUFF



From Shane & Greg's Kitchen

Oriental Slaw

Ingredients:

- 1/2 c sugar
- 3/4 c oil
- 1/3 c vinegar
- 2 pkgs chopped slaw
- 2 pkgs BEEF flavored Ramen noodles
- 1 pkg sunflower seeds
- 1 pkg slivered almonds

Mix dressing several hours in advance using sugar, oil, vinegar, and the flavor packs from the Ramen noodle packages. Shake well.

To make the slaw, crush the uncooked Ramen noodles and mix with the chopped slaw, sunflower seeds, and almonds.

Pour the dressing over the slaw mix and mix well. Serve.

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