

Spring Break in Raleigh

Christa Riley, Staff Writer



Carousel at Pullen park, image via photobucket.com

If you're not going on a cruise, road tripping across the country, or heading to the beach this spring break, you are most likely trying to find out what exactly there is to do in Raleigh. Truthfully, there is much more to do than one would think.

If you are hoping not to spend any money, there are many free things to do in Raleigh. Most of the museums, such as the North Carolina Museum of Art, African American Cultural Complex, North Carolina Museum of History, NC Museum of Natural Sciences and the Raleigh City Museum, are free to the general public, aside from special exhibitions.

Pullen Park was recently renovated and reopened in November; our own students assisted with parts of the renovations. The park includes the aquatic center mentioned above, a theatre, the arts center, playgrounds, picnic areas and paths surrounded by beautiful scenery. The Durant Nature Park has five miles of nature trails for jogging, hiking, or just enjoying the scenery. You can also fish in the lower or upper lake and, if you fill out an application, the park will lend you a fishing rod.

If North Carolina's weather is still a bit chilly for you in early March to head to the lake, an indoor pool is an ideal place to get your swim on. The Optimist Pool, Pullen Aquatic Center, and Millbrook Exchange Pool are all open to the general public and are only \$2-6 for each individual visit.

If you're willing to spend a little money, you can also check out the locally owned restaurants in the area by going to a new place every day of the week with a group of friends. Doing the same with local shops and boutiques will help support small businesses and the Raleigh community. While you are in downtown Raleigh, you can do a sort of scavenger hunt with your friends by sending them clues through picture text messages as to where you are.

The Carmike Blue Ridge 14 Cinema, which is about two miles from Meredith, shows movies that have just finished their regular run in theaters; the price for an individual ticket is \$2, with specials on food and drinks throughout the week. Since the tickets are so cheap, a group of friends could go see three or four movies in one day, and vote on which one was the best.

On March 10th and 11th, Michael Jackson: The Immortal by Cirque du Soleil will be coming to the RBC center. The website states, that it will be a "riveting fusion of visuals, dance, music and fantasy that immerses audiences in Michael's creative world and literally turns his signature moves upside down."

There are a lot of concerts occurring during the week of spring break with artists including Mayday Parade, We The Kings, The Nasty Habits, The Kollection and many more. For a complete list of concerts in the Raleigh area, check out <http://www.visitraleigh.com/visitors/concerts>. Venues include the Lincoln Theatre, Cat's Cradle, and the Kings Barcade. Be sure to support local bands and businesses of Raleigh.

Confessions of an Eating Disorder Survivor

Ashleigh Phillips, co-editor



image via Anna Kathryn Renfro

Anna Kathryn Renfro is an electrical engineering and math major in the class of 2014. She is a survivor of an eating disorder, with her lowest BMI near 16. These are her words.

1. When/why did you begin changing your eating habits?

I started restricting when I was a junior in high school because there were three major things which I could not openly deal with. My grandmother was dying which put a lot of stress on the family, especially my dad to whom I'm very close. The third was the presence of an emotionally abusive ex. I restricted as a way to deal, I guess control, what was

going on. I lived most of the time by myself from when I woke up to when I went to bed, so there wasn't really a moment when I said, "Gosh this is bad for me". I did actively get into restricting; it's like actively making a choice to jump, I was looking for some regularity and could find through micromanaging myself.

2. What did you do to lose weight?

I kept track of my food and caloric intake, all my meals were pretty much the same. Nothing was full-fat, or white. There are a lot of foods in the world which are white. Anything that was left out was made up for in vitamins. I went to the gym 5-6 days a week for up to 1.5 hours. At my highest point I could be on the elliptical at the highest setting for 50 minutes and then jump on the treadmill for another 20. I did weigh, but more often I did skin-fold tests. I cooked dinner every night for my family, so I could largely hide the issue through eating before they did.

3. What were some of the physical side effects of the disease?

Obviously I was anemic and my cycle stopped for a long time. I couldn't build muscle mass, and I lost a lot of strength in my arms. Headaches were more frequent, and I got dizzy easily.

4. What were some of the mental side effects of the disease?

My level of secrecy and denial was really high; I ignored any pretense of the issue and continued working out and being a perfectionist. One thing that prolonged the issue further was that I was getting almost 100's on everything in school. I had the best year in grades that I had ever had in high school, so I didn't see a need to stop what was working.

5. Was there a low point in your experience that you'd like to share?

When I was getting ready for Junior prom, I had an XXXS (yes 3 X's) dress and had to be corseted into it because it was too big.

6. Did you get treatment?

I did not get clinical treatment; it started with the funeral of my grandmother and the increased attention from my family but lagged until I went to the doctor for a check-up. The PA told me if I didn't get back on my cycle that I could get cancer. I thought that what I was doing was a safe way to lose weight and a controlled weight loss; I never thought that it could harm me in any way. After that day and two subsequent rounds of medicine I finally got on track.

9. How was the recovery process physically and mentally?

The hardest part of recovery was recognizing where I was and from where the recovery had to start. The obvious thing was not to just eat as some people told me to do; it was accepting those dysfunctional moments of life and to find other ways to deal with those moments. The issue with the eating disorder is it is almost all mental; it's only physical as a means to conquer the mental. So the mental recovery has taken much longer. The recovery gained speed the more I talked about it with my friends; it was nerve racking to talk about because talking made the situation real and definable. The hardest hurdle to jump was when I started back to school in the fall of my senior year. I had seen what I could do under immense pressure and how well I had done in that semester on AP's and general grades. I recognized it and wanted all that stress back so that my semester would be great. Sometimes that lack of that control would turn into what my mom called 'spinning,' which is where I would kind of break down and not be able to function for a day or two. I would just lie around and be incredibly indecisive. I felt like a balloon that is suddenly released after it was inflated.

10. Did you have any relapses? Or are there any times now when you struggle with your body image?

It's definitely not something that goes away like a cold. I had a relapse my Senior year for a span of time. I'm still very active and health conscious but not near to that extreme . . . I eat ice cream, which is something I would've never done because it was dairy based. That year is something that I think about often, but I don't want to repeat it.

11. Having been through this experience, how do you feel when you hear women talking negatively about their body image?

At first I scoffed because they had no idea what the difference was between talking and acting. The people who usually go through this don't talk, and if they do, it's not openly. I would tell them to be their own best ideal. Their body is a gift which they can abuse or strengthen. It's unique and will often do crazy things, but the link between their mind and body does not belong to another.

12. How do people react when they find out about the eating disorder you had in the past?

I think they may be surprised. Not a lot of people ask follow-up questions, but they do the quick body glance and the sympathizing upward movement of the eyebrows.

13. What are you looking forward to in the future?

Besides working in the electrical engineering field, I'm excited for more time with my family and a family of my own. Hard work and a career are important, but not at the total sacrifice of the people in your life and your own health.

Campus Calendar: 2/29-3/13

collected by Kristen Gallagher

Feb 29 – Mar 1 – The Vagina Monologues

Mar 1 – Study Abroad Deadline, Non-Meredith Programs

Mar 3-11 – **Spring Break!** Belize Service Trip, SLS Service Trip

Mar 13 – Faculty Distinguished Lecture, Dr. Bill Landis