

# Digital divas sponsor mixers

Summer of get-togethers for professionals

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between clubs and restaurants. This is an outlet to bridge that gap, it's something positive. People come in and share their goods and products. We have a good time and have fun and mingle. But it has a purpose too

in the grand scheme of things," said Godfrey. "People are exchanging business ideas, they're making connections and it's something that's non-traditional. You don't have to go out to the club and have music banging in your ear, but you can still socialize with your peers."

**Want to Go?**  
**What:** Digital Divas Summer Series

**When:** Every first and third Friday through September

**Where:** Gilda Bar & Lounge 2901 N. Davidson St.



Harold Cogdell shakes hands with Kirsten Bowden while Sammy Hicks and Jones look on at Gilda's.

# Summer reading

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later this month, offers a book pick of the month on its website. This month's it's "Digging to America" by Anne Tyler.

This timely novel deals with a topic that's been getting a lot of press lately, immigration.

Two families who would otherwise never have come together, meet by chance at the Baltimore airport - the Donaldsons, a very American couple, and the Yazdians, Maryam's fully assimilated son and his attractive Iranian wife. Each couple is awaiting the arrival of an adopted infant daughter from Korea. After the instant babies from distant Asia are delivered, Betsy Donaldson impulsively invites the Yazdians to celebrate: an "arrival party" that from then on is repeated

every year as the two families become more and more deeply intertwined. Even Maryam is drawn in - to a point. When she finds herself being courted by Betsy Donaldson's recently widowed father, all the values she cherishes - traditions, privacy, her otherness - are suddenly threatened.

**Book signing schedules:**  
 Victoria Christopher Murray: Joseph Beth Bookseller, June 26 at 6 p.m.  
 Omar Tyree: Joseph Beth Bookseller, June 29 at 6 p.m.  
 Tarrion Ferguson: Dynasty Bookstore, June 24 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
 Anjanette West: RealEyes Bookstore, June 24 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

# Avant's ho-hum



Avant Director  
 Avant, others, producers  
 Geffen Records



Avant's fourth CD is much of a departure from his previous work, but that's not such a bad thing.

Avant has proven he's more than R. Kelly Jr. (some even suggested he was Kelly's younger brother). His voice, though not great, is distinct and you don't mistake him for someone else.

Yet he hasn't grown much musically. There's not a thing wrong with any of these songs. Each fits with the current glut of radio-friendly R&B songs that neither offend nor delight. "Four Minutes" is a case in point. It's a standard ballad but instead of promoting his macking skills, he's begging his love interest to tell him how he can make things right. Nothing new, but a small break from the monolithic theme of lovemaking. "GPSA (Ghetto Public Service Announcement)" is also different, but it's annoying mostly because of Jermaine Dupri.

The rest of these songs seem to meld with each other. Nothing stands out. I wish Avant would be a bit more aggressive from time to time. The laid back crooner mode is OK, but it wears thin without strong songs. The remix of the Pussycat Dolls' "Stickwitu" has some charm, and the remix and main versions of "You Know What" add some spice.

But if you are looking for more than just soothing bedroom chatter, don't stop here. This outing is but a little better than OK.

# Mint exhibit

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Very striking is the two shades of green 1929 cameo vase from the Pisgah Forest Pottery which features a simplistic drawing of an Indian pursuing a buffalo with an arrow.

A Meissen china plate from 1740 surprisingly features a fierce tiger in its design. Delightful and somewhat unexpected is the generous ceramic "Lioness" from 1997 by North Carolina potter Billy Ray Hussey. This lion's power is in its blood red growl. This piece is very handsome with its very contemporary light tan glaze and contrasting dark brown markings.

Another surprising lion is the lion-shaped coffin sized for an adult by Paa Joe of Ghana made of wood, enamel, raffia and bright orange fabric. These highly personalized coffins became popular in the mid 1970s and the

shapes refer to the interest of the deceased.

Very haunting, minimal and elegant is "Evening Cow" by Daisy Youngblood from the Chasanoff Collection. This simple clay form with a profound backbone and no legs is sitting on a substantial steel rectangle. This work is like a nature meeting a post-modern sculpture fabricated by Carl Andre or Richard Serra.



Viola Frey's "Scream Monkey Soup Tureen" features an animal that is too much like an obnoxious human. The beauty of animals is that they usually have a natural dignity. This exhibit supports us in appreciating that dignity.

Hours are the Mint Museum of Craft + Design are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from Noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free the third Thursday of each month from 5-8 p.m. For additional information, call (704) 337-2000.

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