

Healthy Living

WINTER 2026



Healthy *Living*

GENERAL MANAGER

Serena Bowman • serena.bowman@mtairynews.com

SALES MANAGERS

Holly Lamm • hlamm@elkintribune.com
Samantha Turner • sturner@mtairynews.com

MULTI-MEDIA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Bob Ward • bward@mtairynews.com
Dawn Bagale • dbagale@elkintribune.com
Nathaniel Blevins - nate.blevins@mtairynews.com
Kimberly Cagle • kcagle@mtairynews.com
Caysee Schmidt • caysee.schmidt@thecarrollnews.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Bonnie Davis, Kitsey Burns

CONTENT PROVIDED BY

Metro Creative Services

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319 N. Renfro Street • Mount Airy, NC 27030
336.786.4141 • mtairynews.com

DESIGNER

Darla Allen



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CHANGING THE WAY

Elkin Feels About the Dentist

CONTRIBUTED COLUMN

For many people, the dentist's office can be a place of anxiety. At Yadkin River Dental Spa, Dr. Kamaira "Dr. K" Philips is changing that—creating an experience defined by gentleness, trust, and human connection.

Formerly Dr. Gavin Harrell's office, the practice now reflects a renewed philosophy of care: clear communication, a calm environment, and treatment that helps patients feel at ease.

A North Carolina native originally from Pinehurst, Dr. Philips trained at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and now serves as the owner and lead clinician of Yadkin River Dental Spa. Her husband, Dr. Brian Delehanty, is also a dentist and currently practices in Mount Airy. The couple now call State Road home and continue to operate the practice as a privately owned, family-run small business.

What is a "dental spa"? It is full-service general dentistry combined with spa services and comfort amenities to transform the patient experience. Yadkin River Dental Spa provides preventive care, fillings, crowns and bridges, dentures and partial dentures, extractions, and comprehensive treatment planning. Dr. K also offers therapeutic Botox to help relieve TMJ-related pain and chronic headaches, supporting patient wellness and quality of life.



Dr Kamaira Philips

ON THE COVER

Michelle Hamby-CDA; Gina Wilmoth-CDA; Carol Minton-Administrative Assistant; Teresa Norman-Practice Manager; Dr. Kamaira Philips, DDS; Abigail Johnson-RDH; Olivia Bryant-RDH; Katie Andrews-Administrative Assistant.



The practice is actively modernizing its technology, including new computer systems, an electronic medical record, intraoral cameras that let patients see concerns in real time, and advanced 3D CBCT imaging for more precise diagnosis and safer treatment planning. These upgrades also support expansion into advanced services, including future dental implant care closer to home.

A unique feature of the practice is its on-site wellness partnership with Body & Sole Wellness. Licensed massage therapists Kimberley Mathis and Alexa Carter offer services ranging from chair massage to private therapeutic table massage, helping patients incorporate relaxation into their visits.

The practice is powered by an experienced local team: Teresa Norman (business manager), Katie Andrews (dental administrative professional), and receptionist Carol Minton, along with hygienists Olivia Bryant, RDH, and Abigail Johnson, RDH; sterilization technician and aspiring hygienist Cassidy Simmons; and certified dental assistants Michelle Hamby and Gina Wilmoth.

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HE GOT HIS LIFE BACK

A minimally invasive procedure helped Ronald Bell reclaim his active life

BY BONNIE DAVIS | Contributing Writer

Ronald Bell starts every morning with the same kind of excitement most people outgrow by kindergarten.

"I wake up like a 5-year-old with the toys in the sandbox," he says.

At 67, Bell owns a small hobby farm in the far western part of Yadkin County, where retirement is looming on the horizon and filled with plans to spend more time "playing" – tending his garden, canning his own vegetables, and working his apple and peach trees. His sawmill, bulldozer and hay baler keep him busy and happy. A land surveyor by trade, Bell prefers life close to the land.

But for years, one health issue quietly took over his life.

Bell was living with a benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), commonly known as enlarged prostate, that made it nearly impossible to fully empty his bladder. This condition affects approximately 50% of men aged 51 to 60 and 80% of those aged 70 or older, leading to symptoms such as frequent urination, urgency and difficulty in emptying the bladder.

Bell had all these symptoms and was waking up every hour throughout the night to use the bathroom. When he did go, it was often just a trickle – never enough relief to feel comfortable.

"It was exhausting and frustrating," Bell said. "You don't realize how much it controls your life until you can't get a good night's sleep."

His primary care provider referred him to Dr. Paul McClain and Dr. Oliver Benton, urologists who practice at Novant Health Urology – Kimel Park in Winston-Salem. They recommended a newer treatment option called Aquablation – a minimally invasive, robot-assisted procedure that uses

a precise water jet to precisely target and remove excess prostate tissue while preserving important functions.

Both doctors performed the procedure in September 2025, and for Bell, the results were life changing.

"For a patient like Ron, who leads a very active life, it's been very gratifying to offer a treatment that could make such a difference in his quality of life," said Dr. McClain. "Aquablation offers relief without the tradeoffs many men worry about and he experienced exactly the kind of outcome we hope for – a quick recovery and meaningful relief."

Almost immediately, he noticed a dramatic improvement in his sleep. His smartwatch confirmed what his body already felt – his sleep score jumped significantly. Nights were no longer interrupted by constant bathroom trips, and days were no longer fueled by fatigue.

While Bell admits the experience itself requires a sense of humility because "they're working on your privates," he laughed, adding that the pain was manageable and the recovery was quick. Just as importantly, his sexual function returned and continues to do well.

He is also quick to point out how important it is to follow the doctors' orders to not do anything strenuous for at least six weeks following the procedure. "You have made a mistake if you do what Ron Bell did," he said, admitting he over did it just a bit.

Now back to full strength, Bell is back to his regular routines on the farm and at work. He's also looking forward to getting back on his bike. As an avid cyclist, he's missed the exercise and travelling the back roads near home.

"The procedure worked great. It gave me my life back," he said. "I would recommend it to anyone who needs it and urge them to get help."

For more information, visit www.novanthealth.org/healthy-headlines/

Embark on a path to **SELF- IMPROVEMENT** THIS YEAR



There is always room to develop, grow and become a better person. With a new year on the horizon, setting self-improvement goals now can help anyone navigate a path to a better version of themselves.

Here are some New Year's resolutions that can help a person grow and nurture their well-being.

- **FOCUS ON IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT.**

Feeling rushed and that you don't have a handle on how you spend your time can exacerbate stress. According to Indeed, making better use of time can enhance productivity, make it easier to meet deadlines and reduce stress. Time management isn't just about work performance. It's also an important tool for getting things done at home. Key aspects of time management involve delegating tasks, focusing on one thing at a time (as opposed to multi-tasking) and setting priorities.

- **BECOME A BETTER LISTENER.** You must be able to communicate effectively in all aspects of life to make sure your message is understood. But it's equally important to be able to receive and adapt to the messages of others. Take advantages of opportunities to slow down and receive

visitors. Seek input when planning, and ask colleagues how they feel something can be completed effectively.

- **PAMPER YOUR MIND OFTEN.** According to Vaughn College, feeling calm and in control often means nurturing yourself from the inside-out. Keeping a mind-body balance is essential. Reading excerpts from motivational books or passages, turning off notifications on the phone, taking a break from social media, carving out time for spiritual enrichment or meditation, or working on a puzzle can help fuel the mind.

- **LEARN TO STOP PROCRASTINATING.** Procrastination can lead to increased stress and unhealthy means to managing stress, according to research published in *Frontiers in Psychology*. Procrastinators are more likely to exhibit avoidant behaviors as deadlines draw closer. To overcome procrastination, breaking down tasks into smaller steps or making short-term goals can help tall tasks feel more achievable.

Focusing on self-improvement at the beginning of a new year can help set the course for productive months ahead.

Regular physical activity is often associated with immediate effects, and rightfully so. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, physical activity can improve cognition and thinking, reduce short-term feelings of anxiety, and make it easier for people to manage their weight. But physical activity also boasts some notable long-term benefits, particularly in regard to disease prevention. The CDC notes that regular exercise can reduce risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, infectious diseases like COVID-19 and pneumonia, and various forms of cancer, including cancers of the breast, colon, kidneys, and lungs.



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I don't like the gym **NOW WHAT?**

Exercise is an important component of overall health. Experts say that adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise each week, along with muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week. Some believe heading to the gym is the best way to get the exercise they need, and it very well may be... unless it's not. Some people don't like going to a gym and are therefore unlikely to do so with enough consistency to benefit from a membership. However, the gym is not the only place where individuals can meet fitness requirements.

Those who are not necessarily enamored with the idea of exercising at a gym for a variety of reasons can rest assured that it's still possible to be fit and healthy. In 2023, Civic Science polled thousands of Americans on how they chose to exercise and found that exercising at home is more popular than heading to the gym. Fifty-two percent of respondents said they exercised regularly at home, while 28 percent exercised regularly at a gym. At-home exercisers also were 21 percent more likely than gym-goers to say they worked out once a week or more.

People who want to find ways to stay fit without a fitness club membership have plenty of options.

- **GET AT-HOME EQUIPMENT.** Setting up gym equipment in a spare room, the basement or the garage can help at-home fitness fans exercise. All it takes is some compact weights, perhaps a treadmill or elliptical and a

few additional items to exercise effectively at home.

- **TUNE INTO STREAMING SERVICES.** Many content providers upload exercise videos online so people can follow along at home or elsewhere. A quick search of YouTube offers a variety of options that fit with the type of exercise one desires. From 30-minute aerobic walking workouts to rebounding to yoga videos, content is there and also may be free to watch.

- **HEAD OUTDOORS.** Walking or jogging around the neighborhood or on local trails can be effective. Plus, it exposes a person to sunlight and fresh air, and provides an opportunity to see people in the community.

- **PLAY A SPORT AND/OR JOIN A CLUB.** Individuals may want to take up a physical activity, like joining a sports team or participating in a club that has physical activity, such as a hiking club. The Better Health Channel says exercising with a friend is a great way to stay motivated, as each person can spur on the other.

- **TURN ON SOME TUNES.** Dancing around to favorite songs is a fun way to engage in physical activity. If other exercise ideas seem uninspiring, upbeat songs that get a person moving can help. Union Health says keeping one's heart rate between roughly 114 to 135 beats per minute is a good workout. Search for songs that will help achieve that rate.

If heading to the gym isn't a person's first choice for exercise, there are several other ways to exercise.

The nutritional value of **PEARS**



A journey through the produce aisle at a typical grocery store offers shoppers a chance to pick up a wide range of healthy foods. The nutritional value of fruits and vegetables is undeniable, and some produce aisle staples garner more glory than others.

Unlike apples, pears might not be touted as a daily means to avoiding doctor visits. But pears are a nutritional powerhouse nonetheless. Recognition of the many health benefits of eating pears may compel more people to eat more of this often unheralded yet highly nutritious fruit.

- **PEARS ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF DIETARY FIBER.**

Dietary fiber benefits the body in numerous ways. Dietary fiber increases the weight and size of stool, helping people avoid constipation. A diet high in dietary fiber also helps to lower cholesterol levels and reduce risk for colorectal cancer, hemorrhoids and diverticulitis. A single pear contains roughly 21 percent of the daily recommended value of dietary fiber, placing it among the most beneficial fruits a person can eat in an effort to ensure adequate fiber consumption.

- **PEARS ARE AN IDEAL LOW-CALORIE SNACK.**

Healthy snacks can help anyone maintain energy levels throughout the day, while less healthy items consumed between meals can contribute to fatigue and other adverse side effects. Pears are fat- and sodium-free and a single, medium-sized pear contains roughly 100 calories. That makes pears an ideal snack for those who need a low-calorie snack to keep their energy levels up between meals.

- **PEARS ARE A GOOD SOURCE OF POTASSIUM.**

The National Institutes of Health notes that potassium helps to ensure proper nerve function and maintain a regular heartbeat. The NIH also notes that a diet rich in potassium can offset some of the harmful effects of sodium, particularly in regard to blood pressure. That's good news for pear lovers, as USA Pear reports a medium-sized pear contains roughly 190 milligrams of potassium, or about 4 percent of the daily recommended intake of this important mineral.

- **POTASSIUM PROVIDES A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF VITAMIN C.** Vitamin C is a notably beneficial antioxidant that the Mayo Clinic notes performs a variety of important roles in the human body. Vitamin C helps with the formation of blood vessels, cartilage, muscle, and

collagen and also helps to protect the body against cell damage. A medium-sized pear provides roughly 8 percent of the daily recommended value of vitamin C, which serves as another reason to include pears in your dietary regimen.

Pears pack a nutritional punch that can benefit anyone looking to eat healthier and reap the rewards of a nutritious diet.

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GREAT WORKOUTS

on days when a trip to the gym isn't feasible

The right workout routine can make a world of difference in a person's life. When people like their fitness regimens, they're more likely to commit to routine exercise, which can help reduce their risk for chronic diseases, make them less vulnerable to injury and improve their mental health.

No two people are the same, so a workout regimen that's enjoyable and effective for one person will not necessarily appeal to another individual. Some people have no qualms about exercising in a gym, where strength-training machines and cardiovascular equipment facilitate full-body workouts that promote healthy minds and bodies. But others find gyms intimidating or can't fit daily gym excursions into their schedules. Others may find working out in the same facility each day a little boring. That's why it can be beneficial to find alternative means to exercising on those days when a trip to the gym isn't feasible or appealing.

- **TAKE TO THE TRAILS.** The great outdoors can be a gym unto itself. Various outdoor activities can build strength and promote cardiovascular health. Hiking is one such activity. According to Harvard Medical School, the uneven terrain hikers encounter on trails requires more energy to traverse, which in turn burns more calories than walking on level surfaces.

- **COMMIT TO INTERVAL TRAINING.** Interval training has long been recommended to busy adults with hectic schedules. Interval training is exercise that involves periodic short bursts of intense physical activity followed by periods of rest or low-intensity activity. Interval training sessions tend

to be shorter than moderate-intensity continuous training (MICT), but the periodic bursts of intense physical activity make interval training sessions highly effective workouts. In fact, a 2021 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* found that interval training provides similar health and performance benefits as MICT. Challenging hikes can mimic the effects of interval training, as can additional activities such as jumping rope, cycling and swimming that do not necessarily need to be performed at a gym.

- **EMBRACE YOUR INNER YOGI.** Yoga is another physical activity tailor-made for busy adults who don't have time to get to the gym each day. The characterization of yoga as a niche activity is no longer applicable, as participation among males in the United States alone grew from four million in 2012 to 14 million in 2022, according to [Yogkulam.org](https://www.yogkulam.org). Though global participation figures are hard to determine, market projections estimating the valuation of the yoga industry at \$215 billion in 2025 are a testament to the popularity of this activity, which Johns Hopkins Medicine credits with improving strength, balance and flexibility. Yoga also has become increasingly accessible since the pandemic, as [Yogkulam.org](https://www.yogkulam.org) notes 40 percent of yoga practitioners prefer virtual classes available through platforms such as YouTube that can be streamed from the comforts of home.

There's no shortage of ways to fit exercise into your daily schedule, even on days when a trip to the gym is not in the cards.

PROBIOTICS

may provide a healthy boost

It's easy to view bacteria and yeasts through a particular lens, without realizing that these microorganisms serve various functions. Certainly, bacteria can lead to infections, but certain bacteria also are important for maintaining health.

Probiotics are live microorganisms (mostly bacteria and some yeasts) that may offer various health benefits. Probiotics are sometimes referred to as "good" or "beneficial" microbes due to their role in balancing the gut ecosystem. The Mayo Clinic reports that research suggests probiotics may be helpful, but it hasn't yet been proven that probiotics improve health and are safe for everyone. While side effects from probiotic supplements seem to be rare, it's best to consult a physician before taking such products.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON PROBIOTICS?

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health says the most common probiotics are bacteria that belong to groups called Lacobacillus and Bifidobacterium. Others are yeasts such as Saccharomyces boulardii. Probiotics are found in various foods, including fermented dairy products like yogurt, kefir and cheese as well as other fermented foods, including sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles, tempeh, miso, sourdough, salami, olives, and kombucha. Additional forms of probiotics include probiotic capsules and powders.

WHAT ARE PREBIOTICS?

The terms prebiotics and probiotics cannot be used interchangeably. Harvard Health says prebiotics are ingredients in certain foods that the intestines cannot fully digest. One can think of prebiotics as the food upon which probiotics feed. Prebiotics also may trigger the growth of good microbes in the digestive tract.

POTENTIAL PROBIOTIC BENEFITS

Probiotics may benefit health through several mechanisms. They may restore gut microbe balance after a poor diet, illness or antibiotic use. Probiotics can help crowd out harmful pathogens in the gut. They may reduce "leaky gut" by supporting gut barrier integrity. Probiotics also may calm inflammation and help boost the immune system.

ADDITIONAL USES FOR PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are largely known for their use in the digestive tract, but probiotics also come in topical versions or suppositories to target specific areas. Harvard Health says vaginal probiotic supplements are hugely popular and are designed to promote beneficial bacteria. Some common gynecological conditions are

thought to be caused by an imbalance of bacteria inside the vagina.

However, as of now, the benefits of suppositories like these are unknown and should be discussed with a gynecologist before use.

Topical probiotics have demonstrated beneficial effects for the treatment of certain inflammatory conditions like acne, rosacea, psoriasis, and others, says the National Institute of Health. But again, caution should be heeded and any new products should be discussed with a doctor.

Probiotics are an all-natural alternative that many people consider when seeking to improve personal health. It's important to speak with health care providers about the efficacy of probiotics and whether they are safe and effective for particular needs.



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2026

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Low-calorie, nutrient-rich foods to help you maintain

OVERALL HEALTH

A nutritious diet is a notable foundation of a healthy lifestyle. When paired with routine exercise, a healthy diet can help people feel better physically and mentally and reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

Temptation combined with the accessibility and convenience of unhealthy foods makes it easy to compromise a healthy diet. When planning meals and snacks, adults looking to stay a nutritious course can incorporate a variety of low-calorie, nutrient-dense foods into their diets.

The Mayo Clinic notes that most vegetables are naturally very low in calories but high in volume or weight. The weight in many vegetables comes from water and fiber, not calories. The fiber content in vegetables also can make people feel fuller longer, reducing the likelihood of between-meal snacking on unhealthy but convenient foods like potato chips. The Mayo Clinic cites these vegetables as low-calorie options that are high in water and fiber:

- Salad greens
- Asparagus
- Carrots
- Tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Zucchini

Incorporating more low-calorie and water- and fiber-rich vegetables into your existing diet is not difficult. For example, the Mayo Clinic recommends adding vegetables to pasta dishes as a replacement for meat and cheese.

When reaching for a between-meal snack, opt for carrots or broccoli over chips, pretzels or baked goods.

Fruits also make a healthy addition to a daily diet, though the Mayo Clinic warns that some fruits are better than others for people looking for low-calorie, nutrient-dense options. The online medical resource Healthline notes that avocados typically contain 161 calories per 100-gram serving, which equals about half of a medium-sized avocado. That makes avocados a high-calorie fruit compared to some alternatives. Bananas also tend to be higher in calories than other fruits, as Healthline reports a medium-sized banana (105 calories) contains 27 grams of carbohydrates. Avocados and bananas pack a nutritional punch, but it's important that people seeking low-calorie fruits to add to their diet recognize that each fruit tends to be on the high end in regard to calories.

Fortunately, there are plenty of low-calorie and flavorful fruits that can make great additions to a healthy diet. Strawberries are loaded with flavor and rich in vitamin C and fiber, and a 100-gram serving of this popular fruit contains around 32 calories. Watermelon (30 calories per 100 grams), cantaloupe (34 calories), honeydew melon (36 calories), and peaches (39 calories) are some additional low-calorie fruits that make great additions to a nutritious diet.

Eating right involves consumption of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, which tend to be low in calories and nutrient-rich.

Finding a fitness facility that **PULLS ITS WEIGHT**

There is no secret formula to guarantee a healthy life, but eating a balanced diet that prioritizes nutrient-dense, low-calorie foods and getting the recommended amount of exercise each week might be as close as it gets. For a good portion of the population, physical fitness involves visiting a fitness facility.

There are an estimated 205,180 health and fitness clubs worldwide and approximately 185 million gym memberships, according to data from Statista. Around 25 percent of the United States population had a membership to a gym, studio or other fitness facility in 2024, according to a recent survey from the Health & Fitness Association.

Considering the vast array of gyms and fitness facilities available to consumers, finding a place to start or continue one's fitness journey may require a little leg work. To find the right place, individuals can consider these points when touring locations.

- **IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS AND WANTS.** First, decide what is most important to you in a facility. Do you want a location that prioritizes group classes? Do you prefer a traditional gym where free weights are more abundant than machines? Are you in need of a facility with early-morning hours or one that has a pool? Make a list of your preferences to narrow down the options.

- **CONSIDER CONVENIENCE.** Although a gym three towns over may have all of the bells and whistles you want, consider the likelihood that you'll travel there often enough when the exercising bug bites you? A facility that is relatively close to home or the office makes it much easier to stay consistent with your workouts.

- **IDENTIFY FITNESS GOALS.** Shedding weight is a primary goal for many people. Others may want to build muscle. The former may require a fitness club that offers a mix of cardiovascular exercises and even specialized weight loss programs. Nutrition counseling also might be a feature to look for. For the latter, a facility that features comprehensive weightlifting equipment and offers resistance training classes might be a better fit.

- **SEEK SOME EXPERT GUIDANCE.** If you don't know where to start getting fit, a gym with personal trainers can be a wise investment.

- **EVALUATE THE LOOK AND FEEL.** Visiting various gyms can help you compare apples to apples. Look for things like cleanliness and maintenance in all areas, including locker rooms and workout spaces. Check to



see if there is enough equipment to accommodate everyone during your typical workout time. Evaluate the atmosphere and vibe of the gym. You want it to feel

comfortable and welcoming.

- **CHECK OUT THE GYM SCHEDULE.** Be sure to see if class schedules or operational hours align with your workout needs.

- **LEARN THE COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP.** Fitness on Demand says the average cost of a gym membership is \$59 per month. Budget gyms can cost as low as \$10 per month, while elite or boutique clubs may be as much as \$100 monthly. However, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association says nearly 40 percent of gym members pay less than \$25 monthly for membership.

Fitness-minded individuals have different factors to consider when shopping around for fitness facilities.

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