

# A city where the vibe is relaxed and friendly

■ RALEIGH

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and a sculpture made entirely of crowd-control barricades.

Rebelliously, we biked off-path to cruise through local artist Thomas Sayre's three gigantic earthcast rings. We couldn't help it — just being in the park makes you feel like a kid. Check the schedule for park tours and a summer outdoor concert series. (Past performers have included Earl Scruggs, Rosanne Cash, Wilco, and local fave Tift Merritt.)

The free museum has the Southeast's largest collection of Rodin sculptures and hosts Art in Bloom, a spring festival with floral interpretations of the museum's pieces.

EAT

## Guidebook must

One night, I gathered five local friends at the buzzy Brewery Bhavana, a striking, high-ceilinged space that houses a little flower shop (you can build your own bouquet) and a small book shop. There's a vast lending library to enjoy while dining, including Tennyson's poems, Ai Weiwei's art, and the 1,364-page compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, should you find yourself debating a definition over dim sum. The brother and sister owners, who grew up in Laos, also own Bida Manda next door. Over dinner, my friends talked about their city, and we shared beautifully plat-

ed items such as scallion pancakes and edamame and ginger dumplings, and I wanted the food and conversation to last all night.

SHOP

## Local fav

At Oak City Cycling Project, you can buy a new or refurbished bike, accessorize your ride, or simply hang in the groovy, underground garage space and gab. You can also tinker with your own bike, using their workspace and tools, for \$5 an hour. And best of all, you can sit at the bar and enjoy a local, cycle-themed beer like Unicycle pale ale from Crank Arm, a brewery in the Warehouse District that organizes a



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Katherine Frey  
Washington Post

weekly group ride. OCCP, as it's known, is a short spin from the Greenway and the beautiful Oakwood (don't miss the cemetery) and Mordechai neighborhoods. The shop rents hybrid and

mountain bikes, hosts a free bike maintenance class, and a Third Thursday Cruiser Ride, affectionately known as the slowest ride in town, because all cyclists and speeds are welcome.

# She helps bring the written word to people unable to read

■ DUNNE

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Hospital. Today our volunteer producing the one-hour news show is totally blind. He will read the weather in Braille.

This is our talk studio where we produce two talk shows. We have a program hosted by a gentleman who is deaf and blind.

**Q: What do they talk about?**

**A:** Issues important to people with disabilities, such as whether the polls are accessible and private for voting. We talk about health and depression. We do a show called Positive Futures. It focuses on people with disabilities who have found employment. People with disabilities have a low employment rate.

**Q: Do you have any numbers on how many blind people there are in your listening area?**

**A:** Census wide, we know 2 percent of the population is blind. But we serve people with other disabilities as well. There are many reasons people can't read. People who are hospitalized and under medication. People with cognitive impairments. There are some prolific readers of current events who become impaired and stop engaging with their families. CRIS Radio can help them

tremendously. It can be life changing for people. We hear that all the time.

**Q: Does TV take away the place of a radio station for the blind?**

**A:** There are tons of news programs and talk programs on TV, obviously. We are not replicating that. Television news sometimes will only give you the lead and a few sentences.

**Q: There are definitely people who like print a lot better.**

**A:** There are a lot of uninformed people. But there are people for whom not having print access and not having access to the op-eds, for example, would be very difficult. There are also people who would really miss People magazine or Cosmo. My dad had dyslexia and read National Geographic for years. He was an orphan and his teacher told him to leave school. He joined the Coast Guard. He went to adult education and learned to read better. He was a prolific, but very slow reader. He loved National Geographic. He was hospitalized at the end of his life at St. Francis. I thought, I can't even get him National Geographic. It is grueling to be a patient for a long time.

**Q: It's lonely, too.**

**A:** And it is boring. You have to like TV.

**Q: It's hard for the person who doesn't like TV, with the roommate who runs the TV at full volume.**

**A:** Being able to listen to a person read is pretty neat.

**Q: Language is a listening skill, in the beginning. Kids learn to talk before they ever learn to read. Some sick people seem to stop reading. If that has been a big part of your personality or your life, it's a scary thing.**

**A:** Human narration is huge. Everything we broadcast is human narration. We have surveyed our listeners with the radios. Our results showed that 83 percent of people preferred human narration over computer generated text-to-speech. We had a similar result in the schools. The kids picked the human voice.

**Q: Do you have room for volunteers?**

**A:** We actually have a wait list. Some of our volunteers have been with us for more than 30 years. People generally don't stop being volunteers here unless they relocate or pass away. We have volunteers who come in multiple times a week. We are adding volunteers in our regional studios such as Norwalk.

**Q: Some of your volunteers are older?**

**A:** Part of it is they have the

time. Our regional and local newscasts, which include the JI, are probably one of the main go-tos for people who want local news or news from their town. We also record local obituaries. They are on the hit parade. How can you pay your condolences or respects to families if you don't know somebody down the street passed. It's not like somebody runs around and announces it. What's on sale in the circulars is also on the hit parade. If we goof up, we get a phone call. If we read the wrong one, we get phone calls.

**Q: It sounds like some of these volunteers drive a ways to get here.**

**A:** They do. There is currently a wait list for volunteers. But we have forms for people who are interested in volunteering on our website. We will have spots for people who need to get here early to record. We also schedule people who want to come in and pre-record. You have to audition and then we see if we can plug you into our available times.

**Q: People want to know what's in the grocery circulars, right?**

**A:** People with disabilities are on such a limited income that what's on sale matters. Some people only buy on sale.

**Q: How do you think peo-**

**ple find out about you?**

**A:** The news media. Celebrities help us. We do public speaking. We go out to civics groups and senior centers. We had a grant to go out to senior centers. We go out to assisted living facilities.

**Q: Do you know how many people you serve?**

**A:** We are available to 86,000 people. We are adding hospitals. We serve the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind. They have about 10,000 clients. The people who come here want to be here. It is a really nice culture.

**Q: How long have you been here?**

**A:** I've been here nine years. I am a former journalist. I wrote for Education World, the Hartford Business Journal, and the Hartford Courant. This was a huge leap.

**Q: You have to fundraise here? That's the hard part, right?**

**A:** Fundraising is always the hard part. You are responsible for making sure the whole thing works, that the services are made available to everybody and that our paid staff gets paid. The culture here is very collaborative. We have more than quadrupled the amount of content that we generate. The staff is passionate about the mission.