

AN EVENTFUL FALL

By ALISON HILL



FALL IS FAST APPROACHING and it's one of the best times to celebrate the culture and vibrancy of our wonderful city. September is packed with festivals, and this year, as always, there's an exciting lineup of educational and entertaining events right here in our backyard. From bluegrass, bikes and bugs, to art, pirates, technology and food, there's something to suit every taste.

Through the collaborative efforts of the **Raleigh M.A.I.N. Events** campaign, now in its sixth consecutive year, more than 20 events

come under one umbrella, making it easier for locals and visitors alike to find information and plan their outings. Music, Arts, Innovation and Noise (M.A.I.N.) are the common threads connecting the cultural festivities and family friendly activities that take place around downtown Raleigh almost every day in September.

"People just don't realize how many choices they have in the space of one month," says Jonathan Freeze, the marketing and communications director at the **Greater Raleigh Con-**

vention and Visitors Bureau and co-chair of Raleigh M.A.I.N. Events. "Our goal is to draw more people to our city and encourage them to visit more than one event."

The informal, grassroots initiative kicked off six years ago at a Raleigh Innovation Summit, when festival organizers recognized the need for collaboration and better promotional efforts since there was so much going on in September. Event organizers felt that such a wealth of cultural festivities deserved more attention, so they created Raleigh M.A.I.N. Events to help spread the word and plan more efficiently.

The organizers meet several times a year and assist each other through sharing ideas, resources and information (such as how to apply for a permit), cross-promoting events, growing attendance and crossover audiences, and discussing planning logistics, such as avoiding overlap. Any event that meets the following criteria can be involved: it must be held in Raleigh in September, it has to be an annual event and it has to incorporate Music, Art, Innovation and Noise.

The campaign has grown from an initial 8-10 festivals to more than 20 this year, with the addition of four new events, including The City of Oaks Pirate Fest at the North Carolina Museum of History. Visitors can meet Captain



Blackbeard and learn more about the history of pirates in North Carolina at this free, family-friendly festival. There's also a costume contest, re-enactions, music, food and crafts.

The best news is that 80 – 90 percent of the Raleigh M.A.I.N. events are free. Some, such as La Fiesta del Pueblo and the African American Cultural Festival of Raleigh and Wake County, provide amazing opportunities to get a taste of different cultures. The more adventurous (and brave) can taste bugs—yes, bugs!—that are on the menu at BugFest.

"I am impressed every year with how these mostly-volunteer organizers, who are already working so

hard to put on their mostly free festivals and events, stretch even further together in collaborating for Raleigh's greater good," says Freeze. "It benefits everyone's quality of life to have such a rich collection of annual events happening here."

For a full list of events, times and dates visit raleighmainevents.com

TENTATIVE LIST OF 2018 EVENTS:

- > 9/11 Day of Service
- > The African American Cultural Festival of Raleigh and Wake County
- > BugFest
- > Capital City Bikefest
- > CED Tech Venture Conference
- > City of Oaks Pirate Fest*
- > Groove in the Garden
- > Hopscotch Music Festival
- > IBMA's World of Bluegrass
- > La Fiesta del Pueblo
- > Marbles Makers Mash-Up
- > NC Open Pass Civic Camp
- > NC Pride at Night*
- > Raleigh Symphony Orchestra Fall Pops Concert*
- > SPARKcon

* new in 2018



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SUNDAYS

8:45am: Early Worship Service
9:45am: Sunday School (Bible Study for All Ages)
10:55am: Morning Worship Service

WEDNESDAYS

5:00pm: Fellowship Supper
6:00pm: Children's Choirs & Youth Discipleship
6:30pm: Adult Discipleship
6:45pm: Children's Missions
7:45pm: Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

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