

ECHOES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CHAMPION HILLS

FEBRUARY 2026

championhills.com | [@ChampionHillsCommunity](https://www.instagram.com/ChampionHillsCommunity) | 828.696.1962

FROM THE GM'S DESK

GENERAL MANAGER



I would like to sincerely thank the members and staff for the warm welcome I've received. Meeting so many of you at Thirsty Thursday gave me a wonderful opportunity to connect with the membership and get a feel for the spirit of the Club.

I feel fortunate to be part of Champion Hills and to work alongside such a dedicated group of managers, staff, committees, and Boards. Coming from my most recent assignment in Florida's Panhandle to the Blue Ridge Mountains has been a dramatic change, but the setting here is just as spectacular and the pride in this Club is immediately evident.

Champion Hills is built on a strong foundation, and we remain focused on elevating the experience for our members, residents and guests.

What stands out most is the strength of the people who bring the Club to life every day: the Champion Hills Staff.

You are extremely fortunate to have an outstanding team in place. Across the golf course, clubhouse, and all areas of Club and POA operations, our staff bring deep knowledge, consistency, and pride to their work. Every day, they are focused on delivering a high-quality experience with care and professionalism.

Building on that strong foundation, my background in Food and Beverage allows me to support continued refinement in consistency, quality, and service. Positive momentum is already underway, and our culinary team is doing excellent work. Our new dinner menu balances comfort and elevated selections, and I invite you to join us for dinner and experience it firsthand!

We're also introducing a variety of experiences designed to bring members together in fresh and enjoyable ways. Tuesday 2-2-2 Dinners offer a convenient take-home option, while our Fireside Dinners provide an intimate, elevated dining experience in the Wine Room. The Pub will also be buzzing on February 8 as we gather for a lively Super Bowl celebration with great food, friends, and fun.

Champion Hills is truly a special place—defined by its members, families, and dedicated staff. I look forward to being part of what makes Champion Hills special and seeing you around the Club.

Warm regards,
Jerome Louie
Interim General Manager



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Stu Holcombe, Club Board President

Members often remark on how fortunate we are to enjoy a spectacular golf course, breathtaking mountain views, and outstanding amenities. Yet the experience we truly cherish is made possible by the people who bring it to life every day. Each of our staff members are the heart of Champion Hills—welcoming Members and guests, caring for our grounds, delivering exceptional dining and services, and creating the sense of comfort and belonging that defines our club and community. Their professionalism, dedication, and genuine care transform our facilities into a place marked by pride, warmth, and excellence.

In recognition of this essential role, the Board of Governors has refined the Club's Vision, Mission, and Values statements to more clearly acknowledge and support our staff. This thoughtful update reflects a shared understanding that exceptional Member experiences are inseparable from the people who provide them. By affirming mutual respect, trust, and appreciation between Members and staff, we reinforce a common purpose and celebrate the team whose daily contributions ensure Champion Hills remains a place where Members feel welcomed, confident, and proud to belong.

CHAMPION HILLS CLUB VISION

Champion Hills Club provides the best year-round private club experience in Western North Carolina because Members . . .

- feel instantly at ease in our exclusive, yet welcoming community.
- are delighted by our superior golf course, excellent dining and social activities, engaging wellness amenities, and the outstanding service delivered by our dedicated and professional staff.
- are confident knowing our vision for the future has earned us a waiting list of prospective golf members.

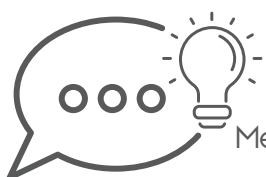
CHAMPION HILLS CLUB MISSION

Champion Hills Club's mission is to exceed the expectations of our members and guests each day. We accomplish this by empowering and supporting our dedicated staff to deliver exceptional service, create memorable experiences, and offer activities that enrich Champion Hills Club and the broader community.

CHAMPION HILLS CLUB VALUES

United by an ongoing commitment to our Club's success, our Members and Staff genuinely care for each other, fostering a sense of belonging and respect.

A few reminders to note...Get ready for an exciting month at the Club! February marks the return of Trivia, Music Bingo, and wine tastings as well as seasonal events such as the Super Bowl Party, Chili Challenge, and Fireside Dinners. Check out the Upcoming Club & Dining Events on page 8 for more details!



PULL UP A CHAIR - LET'S CHAT! APRIL 6 | 10 AM

Meet with the Board President to ask Club-related questions, share ideas & suggestions, or raise any topics important to you. Your voice matters!

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: GREGG HAGUE (CLUB)



I was born in Pennsylvania. Growing up we lived near Pittsburgh, and then in Connecticut near New York City, before my family moved to the Chicago area when I started high school. I lived there for most of my life, except for college (Carleton College in Minnesota) and law school (Washington University in St. Louis). In St. Louis, I inexplicably became a Cardinals fan for a while. Notwithstanding that lapse in judgment, I am a die-hard Chicago sports fan (Cubs – but I don't hate the Sox), Bears and Bulls, and the Blackhawks when they are winning (yes, I am a fair-weather hockey fan). I solidified my midwestern roots by marrying Leslie, a Hoosier who graduated from UNC Chapel Hill, as well as IU Business School.

I spent most of my legal career in Chicago with the commercial litigation law firm now known as Sperling Kenny Nachwalter. Early on I handled complex business litigation, including a modicum of business fraud and antitrust work. Eventually, the bulk of my practice centered on insurance recovery and coverage work for private businesses, especially for “buy and hold” turnaround specialists who sought aggressive use of insurance portfolios in helping to resurrect previously moribund businesses. Every now and then, I would prosecute larger scale property damage claims for good measure. I enjoyed the intellectual challenge, and the occasional courtroom circus, such as when a well-known Chicago Judge offered a witness a flask of whiskey in open court.

As much as Leslie and I love the Midwest, eventually warmer weather (but still with four seasons) beckoned. I didn't play as much golf as I might have liked while working and helping to raise a family, so a worry I had when we joined Champion Hills was my golfing ability – and as my friends in the Lundahl group will testify, that's an ongoing concern! But the welcoming nature of the membership here made us immediately feel comfortable and at home.

Leslie and I have three adult children. Our daughter and son-in-law have two little ones, and we cherish our time visiting them in Bozeman, MT. Our two adult boys each have developed mental health challenges, and we spend significant time helping them and planning for their future. We've come to understand how mental health issues can touch anyone at any time. Through her extensive time helping our boys, Leslie has become a support group leader for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). She additionally volunteers with St. James Episcopal Church. I volunteer an afternoon a week with Interfaith Assistance Ministry in their food pantry. We spoil our two dogs, and when we can, we enjoy time at Leslie's family's lake house in Culver, IN.

I'm honored to be on the Club Board. The Board has some immediate challenges before it as we look to fill some key staff positions. However, the process is well underway, and the Board is very focused on how impactful these hires will be. As a Board member, I am committed to addressing these and other issues facing the club with the diligence and study the membership deserves.



FOR 2026, WE LOOK FORWARD TO INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBER PROFILES & MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHTS. PLEASE EMAIL JOSIE AT JOSIE@CHAMPIONHILLS.COM TO BE FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING ECHOES!

GOLFWEEEK'S BEST 2026

Champion Hills Ranked #47 *Top Residential Courses in the U.S.*

This makes us the #1 year-round course in NC!

Champion Hills has been ranked #47 among the Top Residential Golf Courses in the United States, according to Golfweek's Best 2026 Rankings. This marks a meaningful rise from last year's ranking of #53.

What makes this recognition even more special is the context here at home. While three other North Carolina clubs are ranked ahead of us, all are seasonal communities. That distinction makes Champion Hills the highest-ranked year-round private residential golf course in North Carolina.

This achievement is a testament to the enduring brilliance of our Tom Fazio design, the exceptional work of our agronomy and golf operations teams who care for the course year-round, and the pride, engagement and support of our Members.



CONGRATULATIONS AUSTIN GILBERT: 2025 CH EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR!

Since his arrival in June 2024, Austin Gilbert has been an asset to the Champion Hills team. Whether assisting with major storm cleanups, collaborating with Mackenzie to bring Pickleball to fruition, overseeing the parking lot renovations, or conducting routine Club maintenance, Austin is willing to approach each task with enthusiasm and a "can-do" attitude.

We express our sincere gratitude to the CH Grounds & Facilities and Security teams as they worked around the clock to ensure the community remained safe during the recent snowstorms.

PET PROFILES

Bob Leitner

OWNERS: RUSSELL & ANSLEY LEITNER

AGE & BREED

4 ½ year-old Labradoodle. He knows all of his commands in English & Italian (Yes, Bob speaks Italian).

FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

Bob's favorite things to do are dine on the patio at Champion Hills (pictured), sleep (pictured), and travel to Charleston on a regular basis, where he visits his human brother & sister-in-law, Ben & Haley.

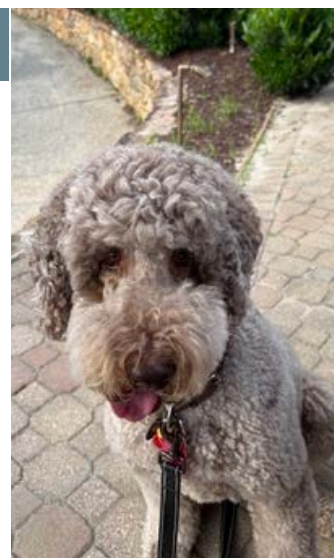
Bob also likes hanging out with his nephew dogs (pictured).

FAVORITE TOY

The green corduroy cactus (pictured).

COMMENTS ABOUT BOB

Bob loves everybody and has a wonderful spirit! Come say hello if you see him at the Club!



Bob won "Scariest" at Howl-O-Ween 2025!

WHAT IS YOUR PET'S STORY? TELL US! WE ARE ACCEPTING 2026 PET PROFILE SUBMISSIONS. EMAIL JOSIE@CHAMPIONHILLS.COM FOR MORE DETAILS!



STAY CONNECTED WHILE YOU'RE AWAY!

As you travel and explore the world this season, stay connected with your Champion Hills family through our "HOW FAR CAN YOU GO?" social media campaign.

Here is how to participate:

1. Be sure to pack your favorite CH logo shirt/apparel
2. Take a photo of you with the CH logo wherever you travel
3. Email josie@championhills.com telling us where you are traveling

It's that simple! At the end of March, we will award two winners:

1. Who traveled the furthest from the Champion Hills Clubhouse with their CH logo
2. Most Unique Destination traveled with their CH logo

All submissions must be submitted by February 28, 2026.

The winners will receive a feature in the April Echoes issue and a gift. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Admin Office!



Image by Steve Hoffman



Image by John Rolland



Image by Gregg Hague

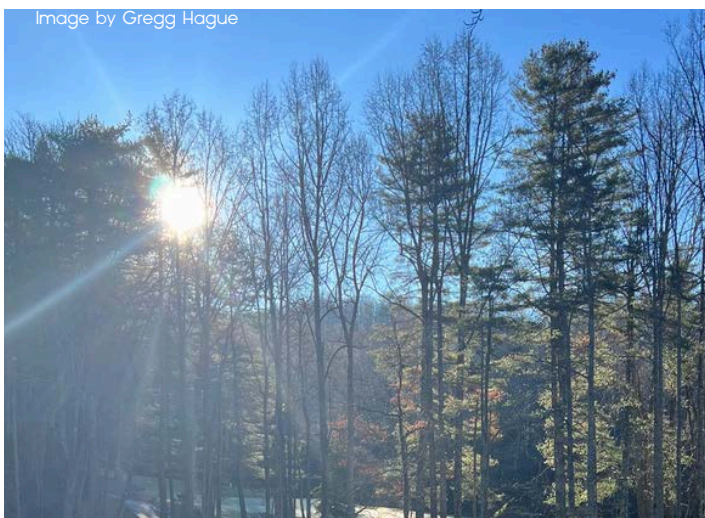


Image by Carson Graham

AROUND THE CLUB

Upcoming Events at Champion Hills!

FEB
4

TRIVIA | 5:30 PM *

Can our reigning champions, Practicing For Jeopardy be defeated or will they kick off the 2026 Trivia season with bragging rights?!

PRACTICING FOR JEOPARDY

(LTR) Glenn & Terry Strow | Steve & Karen Imhof
Dave & Laudette Doudna



FEB
5

COOKIES & COCKTAILS | 4 PM - 6 PM

Enjoy delicious cocktails & bar bites inspired by the iconic Girl Scout cookies at Thirsty Thursday! Cookies will be available for purchase at the event (cash or card welcome). Your purchase supports the local Girl Scouts.

FEB
7

FIRESIDE DINNER | FIRST SEATING 5:30 PM *

Spend a cozy winter evening by the fire for this fine dining experience. The menu offers an exquisite three-course dinner, rich in flavor and quality, and a Sommelier-recommended wine pairing flight.

NEXT FIRESIDE DINNER: February 21 (see details on page 9)

FEB
8

SUPER BOWL PARTY | 5:30 PM - 10 PM

Are YOU ready for some football? It's an evening of sportsmanship, camaraderie, and game day bites as the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots will go head-to-head at Super Bowl LX!

FEB
12

THIRSTY THURSDAY WINE TASTING | 4 PM - 6 PM

Jessica (Empire Distributors) will introduce Substance Wines of Washington State. These wines have a reputation for high-quality and affordability, so "wine" not indulge in complimentary wine?!

FEB
14

VALENTINE'S DINNER | 5 PM - 8 PM

Make a date at the Club for swoonworthy Valentine's Day dinner specials. The a la carte menu will be available.

FEB
18

MARDI GRAS MUSIC BINGO *

5 PM | COCKTAILS & 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM | DINNER BINGO STARTS AT 7 PM

Don't miss a chart-topping evening of singing, laughing...and even some dancing.

FEB
19

CHILI CHALLENGE | 4 PM - 6 PM

Warm up in the Fazio Pub with homemade chili prepared by your fellow Club members & vote for your favorite chili. The chili contest is open to ALL members! Please reach out to Shelly Metcalf to enter your chili.

FEB
28

PRIME RIB & OYSTER NIGHT | 5 PM - 8 PM

Don't miss out on an evening of assorted oysters, slow roasted prime rib, and complementary sides. Make your reservation on chmember.com.

VISIT CHMEMBER.COM FOR FULL DETAILS AND TO REGISTER.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO OUR 24-HOUR CANCELLATION POLICY.

The background of the top section features a close-up of two wine glasses filled with red wine on the left, and a warm, glowing fire on the right. The title 'Fireside Dinner' is written in a large, elegant, orange script font across the top.

Fireside Dinner

FEBRUARY 21
RESERVATIONS BEGIN AT 5:30 PM

- Menu -

AMUSE BOUCHE

APPETIZER (CHOICE OF)

She Crab ^{GF}

- or -

Highlands Harvest Salad ^{GF / V}

arugula, heirloom tomato, cucumber, apples, bleu cheese crumble
black walnut, sherry vinaigrette

- or -

Tuna Tataki

- or -

Tableside Caesar Salad

ENTRÉE (CHOICE OF)

Miso Glazed Pacific Cod ^{GF}

lobster fried rice, shiitake mushrooms, snow peas

- or -

Pearl Barley Stuffed Quail

apricots, marcona almonds, vegetable mélange

- or -

Elk Chop ^{GF}

blackberry demi-glace, honey glazed carrots, potato fondant

- or -

Bone-In CAB Filet ^{GF}

certified angus beef filet, parsnip silk, crispy potato stick, asparagus, brandy veal reduction

- or -

Mushroom Bourguignon ^V

button mushrooms, root vegetables

DESSERT (CHOICE OF)

Mille-Feuille | Sachertorte | Pavlova ^{GF}

UPCOMING CLUB & DINING EVENTS

VISIT CHMEMBER.COM FOR FULL DETAILS AND TO REGISTER.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO OUR 24-HOUR CANCELLATION POLICY.



FEBRUARY WINE OF THE MONTH

Torres Rioja Altos Ibericos Crianza, Tempranillo

FAMILIA TORRES (SPAIN)

TASTING NOTES

Dark cherry red in color, very opaque. Intense and fragrant, with exquisite raspberry jam and spicy green peppercorn aromas, as well as a pleasant note reminiscent of toasted bread. Warm on the palate, with velvety, juicy tannins well rounded by oak aging.

ENTRÉE PAIRING: Classic Ropa Vieja (Recommended by Cole, Level 1 Sommelier)

Cuba and Spain share similar roots in terms of the spice blend and flavor profile. The light juiciness of the beef & sauce will make a harmonious pairing with the Rioja.

GLASS 11 | BOTTLE 38

A TASTE OF WHAT'S TO COME IN 2026

Here is just a taste of what's to come in 2026. Mark your calendar for these exciting Club events! Stay tuned to future Echoes and Happenings for more details!

Ladies' Night Out | March 11*

Men's Night Out | March 25*

Easter Brunch | April 5*

Mother's Day Brunch | May 10*

Ladies' Fashion Show | May 22*

Memorial Day Celebration | May 25*

Summer Soirée | May 30*

July 4th Celebration*

Casino Night | July 25*

Luau on the Lawn | August 15*

Murder Mystery Dinner | August 22*

Labor Day Celebration | September 7*

Autumn Affair | September 26*

Spooktacular | October 31*

Thanksgiving Day Buffet | November 26*

Champion Hills Holiday Party | December 4*

Ladies' Holiday Tea | December 15*

New Year's Eve Celebration | December 31*

EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CLUB.

VISIT CHMEMBER.COM FOR FULL DETAILS AND TO REGISTER.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO OUR 24-HOUR CANCELLATION POLICY.

GETTING INTO SHAPE: THE BEST WAYS TO DO IT

Researchers say starting a fitness routine after 40 is as beneficial as being active from adolescence through adulthood. It's never too late to get in shape and reap the health benefits of physical fitness.

Getting active later in life can also provide additional benefits. While benefits vary on an individual basis, general benefits include an overall sense of well-being and psychologically feeling better with less depression and more energy.

Older populations can also benefit from improved balance and fall prevention and improved strength and function. However, when returning to or starting a fitness routine there are some key factors to consider.



EASING INTO FITNESS

Start low and go slow!

First, see your physician for an evaluation. With physician approval, begin an exercise program that includes:

Stretching before and after every workout. A slow starting routine that includes aerobic exercise, like biking or a treadmill, and sensible weight training that builds up to a 30 to 60-minute workout, five times a week.



BEST WAY TO GET INTO SHAPE

- Moderate aerobic activity for 30 minutes, or more, daily (100 steps per minute) like a Tabata or Power Sculpt Class.
- Muscle strengthening with all major muscle groups three days a week like Strength 45, Strength 60, Slow Flow + Core Yoga, or Golf Core.

• Balance and stretch exercises two days a week at minimum like one of the Yoga classes or the Strength through Stretch class.



Keeping a robust social calendar that's centered around healthy activities can help keep you on track with your fitness and health goals.

Plan to play Pickleball or golf with a friend! It's never too late to get in shape and improve our health.

WHAT'S STOPPING SO MANY OF US?

The main barrier to success is mindset. Making the connection between fitness as it relates to daily life activities is key.



The success factor is an ability to connect the dots between one's diet and exercise routines and their ambitions in life. The "why" will keep you going when others quit. Focus on your fitness goals as they directly relate to your ambitions.

Don't fret...

The pool may be closed until May, but there are plenty of ways to stay warm and active during the winter at the Wellness Center.

Check your Wellness Wednesday email or visit chmember.com for Wellness information!



PICKLEBALL LESSONS & CLINICS

To book a private or semi-private lesson, please contact Katie at 262-492-9783. Register for all clinics on chmember.com

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRO SHOP

PAR 36 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM:

The start of the next session is postponed until the weather improves. Watch your Friday Golf News Updates for further information.

LUNCH & LEARN: RULES OF GOLF

FEBRUARY 6 | 11:30 AM

We will be presenting the upcoming golf course markings changes as it relates to the future course rating and playability of the course. We will cover how to navigate the changes, how to take the proper and appropriate relief in certain areas, and how to be knowledgeable about the Rules of Golf in general.

\$16 per person (lunch included)

Men & Women are invited to attend.

Registration is OPEN on Foretees. Please indicate your lunch choice at registration.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE LAST LUNCH & LEARN SESSIONS: MARCH 4 & APRIL 8



The Hall of Fame Golf School for Women event is waiting list only!

We look forward to bringing more events like this one to Champion Hills.



HOLE-IN-ONE

BRIAN FITZGERALD

JANUARY 6, 2026

Congratulations to Mr. Brian Fitzgerald on his 7th hole-in-one!

HOLE #2 | 124 YARDS | PITCHING WEDGE

SIMULATOR USAGE

Please reserve the simulator for individual use by contacting the Pro Shop.

For small groups (3-4 players), please visit ForeTees.

GOLF SIMULATOR EVENTS : FEBRUARY

Available when the weather outside is frightful.

Watch the Friday email from the Pro Shop for details & dates/times.



2026 MAJOR GOLF EVENTS

APRIL

Greens Aerification | April 6 - 8

MAY

Ladies' Summer Opening Day | May 5

Men's Summer Opening Day | May 6

Couples' Summer Opening Day | May 17

Men's 2-Person Match Play | May 23

Ladies' 2-Person Match Play | May 23

Memorial Day Mixed ABCD | May 25

JUNE

Ladies' Member-Guest | June 3 - 5

Men's Member-Member | June 10 - 13

Queen Bee | June 16 & 18

Men's Individual Match Play | June 20 (Rd. 1)

JULY

4th of July Mixed | July 4

Men's & Ladies' Club Championships | July 17 - 18

AUGUST

Husband & Wife Championship | August 16

Ladies' Member-Member | August 26, 28 & 29

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day Mixed | September 7

Greens Aerification | September 8 - 10

Ladies' Summer Closing Day | September 29

Men's Summer Closing Day | September 30

OCTOBER

Men's Green Tee Cup | October 2

Couples' Summer Closing Day | October 4

Men's Member-Guest | October 7 - 10

FOR EVENT DETAILS & REGISTRATION, PLEASE VISIT FORETEES!

CHILLY CHALLENGE GOLF EVENT

FEBRUARY 19 | 2 PM SHOTGUN START

9-HOLE EVENT, 2-PERSON MODIFIED CHAPMAN FORMAT

Warm up at the annual Chili Challenge in the Fazio Pub after the game!
Enjoy assorted chilis, bar bites and drink specials at this fun Third Thursday event.

Registration is available on Foretees | Weather permitting



SMALL CHANGES THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE WHEN SELLING

One of the most interesting takeaways from recent national data is this: some of the highest return improvements sellers are making right now are not major renovations. In many cases, they are simple, visual updates like replacing a front door, refreshing paint, or updating light fixtures. That matters, especially in today's market.

With more homes available, buyers have options. When buyers are comparing choices, they tend to gravitate toward homes that feel well-cared for and move-in ready. Even small signs of deferred maintenance can quietly work against a seller.

The encouraging news is that making an impact does not require tackling every project or spending a fortune. Often, the most effective improvements are the ones buyers notice immediately.

Interior designer and home stager, Mallory Slesser shared this perspective with the National Association of Realtors. When asked about affordable updates that deliver strong value, she pointed to painting, changing light fixtures, updating hardware, and refreshing window treatments. These are relatively simple changes, but they can completely shift how a space feels.

Those details help buyers focus on the home itself rather than the list of projects they think they will need to take on after closing. Homes that feel updated and well-maintained often command stronger interest and, in many cases, higher offers.

It is also worth remembering that improvement data is a starting point, not a strategy. Buyer expectations vary by location, price point, and even neighborhood. An update that adds value in one market may be unnecessary or excessive in another. That is why thoughtful guidance matters before starting any work.

In Champion Hills, buyers often place a premium on condition, natural light, and strong first impressions. Understanding what truly matters in this community can help sellers avoid over improving while still positioning their home to stand out.

The right questions to ask are simple but important:

- What updates do buyers in this market expect?
- What can be skipped without hurting the sale?
- Where will a smaller investment make the biggest visual impact?
- Is it better to update or sell as-is?

In many cases, the answer is not a major renovation. It may be addressing the repairs that have been easy to put off. A front door that needs attention. Shutters that could use paint. Leaves that have collected in the yard. Scuffed walls in high traffic areas. These details signal care, and buyers notice them.

If you are considering selling this spring, there is still time to make meaningful improvements without taking on a full overhaul. A focused plan, tailored to your home and the Champion Hills market, can help you prioritize what truly matters.

If you are not sure where to start, we are always happy to walk through your home and offer guidance. Whether you plan to sell soon or simply want to understand how buyers view your property, a quick conversation can help you decide which updates will make the biggest difference.



February

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1

2

Clubhouse
Closed

3

4

Trivia

5

Thirsty Thursday
Cookies
&
Cocktails

6

Lunch & Learn
Golf

7

Fireside
Dinner

8

Super Bowl
Party

9

Clubhouse
Closed

10

11

12

Thirsty Thursday
Substance (WA)
Wine Tasting

13

14

Valentine's
Dinner Specials

15

16

Clubhouse
Closed

17

18

Mardi Gras
Music Bingo

19

Third Thursday
Chili Challenge

20

21

Fireside
Dinner

22

23

Clubhouse
Closed

24

25

26

Thirsty Thursday

27

28

Prime Rib
&
Oyster Night

NOTES: