# What does it take to make it to the top?



put out by those "with it" news organizations that use them for a quick, cheap traffic boost, branding or both.

The technique, whether it's Forbes, The Daily Beast or Modern Duvet, is pretty much the same: Establish a theme, assemble three or four criteria and call in the interns to dutifully pull some photos of the places that sort to the top along with a few fun facts from Wikipedia. Then watch the

Regular hits roll in as people link to the city in the country, as an example. list on social-network sites and the towns' public relations folks treat the information as if it's a Harvard Business School case study.

"Hey, Ma! Modern Duvet says we're best small town for floral comforters!"

At a press conference at Town Hall, Mayor Smith called the new study an important acknowledgement of the town's growing prowess in housewares.

Top lists are generally such cheap journalism that poking holes in them - as I am now doing - is becoming its own form of cheap journalism.

Let's take the most recent list from The Daily Beast, which named Durham the most tolerant

To compile its tolerant citythemed list for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Beast looked at cities with a population of more than 250,000, using the number of reported hate crimes in 2010, the diversity of the population according to the census, the diversity of religious adherents, the number of same-sex couples and "state-wide statistics on the scope of anti-discrimination laws, attitudes regarding same-sex marriage, according to projections by Columbia University professors, and religious tolerance, based on a Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life survey." Note the term "statewide."

I could be wrong, but I think into the white population. Really

that means Durham is the most tolerant city in the U.S. based on a low number of reported hate crimes in 2010; a diverse population; a large number of same-sex couples; and progressive, tolerant attitudes professed throughout North Carolina, a state with a marriage discrimination amendment slated for this year's ballot that is currently polling 60/40 in favor of passage.

Another thing that peeved me about The Daily Beast feature was that in the blurbs on each city, they did not break out the numbers of people of Hispanic origin. That would have underlined Durham's diversity. Instead, the Hispanic population is lumped irksome in the presentation of the list was that the Beast used a photo from about a decade ago of civil rights activist Ann Atwater with C.P Ellis, former head of the city's KKK chapter. The photo was a publicity still from An Unlikely *Friendship*, a 2002 film by Chapel Hill's Diane Bloom that details how the two enemies during the 1970s became friends. It's a complicated story and worth delving into (dianebloom.com). Ellis died several years back and Atwater has had some serious health issues. On the Beast site, Bloom isn't credited and there's no indication of who the people in the photo are.

All that said, yes, Durham does seem to be a more tolerant place than others and it's nice at the ready.

someone said so. And thankfully, a lot of my friends who posted the link to The Daily Beast's list did so with a comment along the lines of "I hate these lists but hooray for Durham."

No doubt Durham's leaders will herald the news and put a link to that sucker right on top of their website, just like we do here whenever we're awarded a top spot for something. You can't fault town leaders for trumpeting a little good news, as long as they keep it in perspective and remember the cursory nature of these lists.

It won't be long before some other place around here is named the best town for something or other. Best keep a few grains of salt

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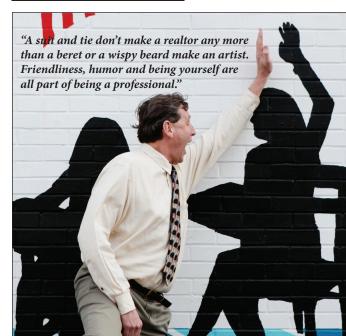
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**FARMERS' MARKET** 

WINTER What's at Market

### Recipe of the Week Super Soup with Lentils, Kale and Tomatoes

Serves 8-10

Recipe provided by Susan Reda

#### Ingredients

2 cups lentils, picked over and rinsed

- tablespoon olive oil
- I large onion, chopped
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped, with 1/2 cup of leafy greens
- I 28 ounce can of diced tomatoes
- 7-8 cups of water
- 3 cups of kale, rinsed well, deveined, finely chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste
- I tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

be nice and add extra protein.

#### Method

Bring six cups of cold water and lentils to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.

In the meantime, heat oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add onions, celery, carrots and carrot top greens. Sauté until tender, five to eight minutes. Stir in tomatoes, lentils and four cups of water. Continue cooking, adding remaining three cups of water to achieve desired consistency. Adjust seasonings, adding Worcestershire. Bring back up to a simmer and stir in kale. Cook until kale is wilted. Taste for seasonings. I like heat so I spice it up with Tabasco and/or red pepper flakes, which are sources of Capsicums, rich in vitamins A and C and carotenoids.

Top with a spoonful of yogurt, sublimely reinforced with baked and pansautéed sweet potato coins. A poached egg on top of the soup would also

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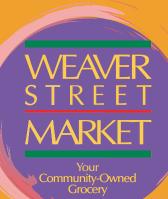
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**CRYPTOQUOTE ANSWER:** Never Too Late

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My grandmother is ninety. She's dating. He's ninety-three. They're very happy. They never

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DEER

argue. They can't hear each other. - Cathy Ladner

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