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On this page: Whiskey bottles are lined up in the bottling room awaiting the next run at Southern Grace Distilleries.

On the cover: Black Labrador Buster retrieves a bumper for the Williams sisters at S&S Outdoors in Cleveland. — Photos by Jon C. Lakey.

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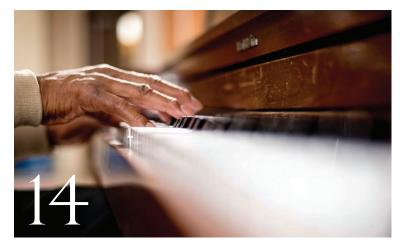
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Behind bars — today's place to find corn liquor

ack in 1968, the Concord Tribune described the illegal still uncovered on a farm near Midland as the most sophisticated and largest whiskey operation N.C. lawmen had ever raided.

Bob Martin, a revenuer who would later become Rowan County sheriff, said it was housed completely underground in a huge, carefully designed room. It had a mash capacity of almost 13,000 gallons (12 different stills) and could produce roughly 600 gallons of white liquor a day.

Moonshiners accessed the stills from a concealed hatch in an old log barn on the property of Willis Efird, who was arrested that day along with Leo Gregory of Wilkes County.

Yes, Cabarrus County had primetime moonshiners, and Southern Grace Distilleries Inc. provides us with one of the biggest ironies of today. The young company makes legal, award-winning corn whiskey in the former minimum-security prison in Mount Pleasant.

In fact, another Cabarrus moonshiner, Max "Red" Rowland — practically a neighbor to the prison — ended up serving one year and a day at the facility for his whiskey transgressions.

In this issue, Salisbury the Magazine takes a visit to the prison-turned-distillery and explains how politics, of a sort, lie at the root of its founding.

Beyond moonshine, our winter edition introduces you to sisters Sloan and Samantha Williams, who have quietly built a business near the Rowan-Iredell line that specializes in training dogs for the hunt.

The young women are hunters themselves who bring lots of experience to their profession.

With the help of Deirdre Parker-Smith, dive into the lucky foods you need to eat for the new year, Shavonne Walker tells us about piano man Joe Ponds, a fabulous local talent, and Elizabeth Cook visits the interesting East Bank Street home of Carol and Acey Worthy.

Amanda Raymond and photographer Jon Lakey show us the local style behind tweed and steeds (bicycling). And did you ever want to know more about Rita Foil, that voice school children long to hear on bad-weather days? Foil is our Rowan Original, and you'll enjoy her conversation with Rebecca Rider.



Dicy McCullough brings us the story of Dr. Johnny Graham, whom she first met during a 2015 luncheon at the Rufty-Holmes Senior Center.

Cosponsored by the Elizabeth Maxwell Steele Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Military Officers Association of America, the luncheon commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Honored were local men and women who served, including Graham.

"Dr. Graham's wife, Anita, and I developed a friendship while working on projects

and activities for the DAR," Dicy said. "From our conversations, I knew a little of her husband's story, but learned even more during the luncheon.

"When Kim Edds, the Elizabeth Maxwell Steele regent, called Dr. Graham forward to receive his certificate, I noticed he was walking with a cane. I asked Anita if the limp was service-connected, and she said it was. The injury happened when Johnny's helicopter took enemy fire over the A Shau Valley in Vietnam. The more I learned, the more I knew I wanted to talk with him."

Dicy interviewed Graham one chilly morning in the sunroom at the back of his house. During their talk, he asked her why she wanted to write his story.

"I told him it was because I had seen firsthand the pain and despair of war through the eyes of my dad, a World War II veteran," Dicy said. "He, too, was a radio operator and suffered mentally, physically and emotionally. It doesn't matter the war, the stories are all too familiar. If one soldier can gain strength and discover that life is worth living from Dr. Graham's story, then it was worth the effort."

We'll drink to that — but outside of jail. S

Mark Wineka, Editor, Salisbury the Magazine



Save on snowman noses and fresh ingredients for all things winter.

FOOD #5 LION

Two debut novels show off style

n the bleak midwinter, we need good reads, reads that take us away and challenge us, give us a reason to stay awake when darkness falls so early.

"Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan," by Ruth Gilligan, Tin House Books, will be published Jan. 24 in America, though it is already published in Ireland.

It should be one to look forward to. Praised by Colum McCann, and compared to McCann, Ruth Gilligan writes of the unknown story of the Jews in Ireland. It's been called "a heartbreaking portrait of what it means to belong, and how storytelling can redeem us all."

At the beginning of the 20th century, a young girl and her family emigrate from Lithuania, headed for America, but land in Ireland instead.

In 1958, a mute Jewish boy locked in a mental institution befriends a man consumed by the story of the love he lost nearly 20 years ago.

And in current-day London, an Irish journalist must confront her ideas of family when her Jewish boyfriend asks her to make a leap of faith.

The interweaving narratives combine to tell the story of Jews in 20th century Ireland.

McCann calls the book "a wonderful new novel from a writer to look out for."

"History of Wolves," by Emily Fridlund, Grove Atlantic, Atlantic Monthly Press, could be a real bone-chiller.

The novel is about isolation and awakening. Kirkus calls it "an atmospheric, near-Gothic coming-of-age novel [that] turns on the dance between predator and prey."

The first chapter of the book won a prestigious award in 2013. Four years later, the story focuses on a teen named Mattie, who calls

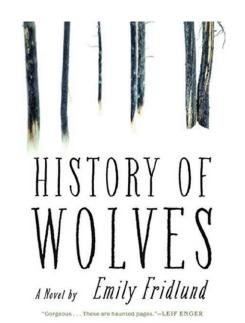
herself Linda. She lives in a failed commune in Minnesota and finds little to feed her body or soul. When a young woman moves in with her 4-year-old son, Linda is the babysitter.

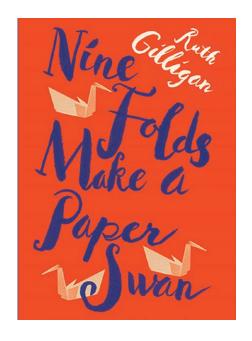
The novel slowly reveals its secrets in the frozen world, one about an eighth-grade science teacher accused of having child porn, another the newcomer's Christian Science beliefs.

The novel blurs the lines of good and evil, with an almost fairy tale tone, but the serious consequences for its characters, Kirkus says, "make it singe and sing."

Here's one more winter offering: "Dorothy Day: The World Will be Saved by Beauty," by Kate Hennessy, her granddaughter.

Day was a controversial and celebrated





Catholic woman, a writer, social activist and co-founder of a group dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor. Pope Francis called her a "great American."

Her own writings revealed much of her life, as have historians, academics and theologians.

This more personal account from her granddaughter is a heartfelt, yet frank portrayal.

Day's books are still in print and widely read. Hennessy shows her grandmother as "driven to do good but dogmatic, loving but judgmental, in particular with regards to her only daughter, Tamar. She was also full of humor and laughter, and could light up any room she entered."

It's also the story of New York, from the 1910s to the 1980s, and shows what a profound impact Day was able to make. S

Deirdre Parker Smith is book editor for the Salisbury Post and a regular contributor of other content for Salisbury the Magazine.

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The voice

When it snows, thousands in Rowan wait to hear from Rita Foil. / By REBECCA RIDER

hey call her the Snow Fairy.
On winter nights, after the transportation crew has roamed the back roads of the county looking for ice or snow and after the superintendent has rendered a decision, Rita Foil makes a phone call.

Foil is a behind-the-scenes celebrity. For almost a decade, her voice has been heard by every parent, child and teacher in the county when a snow-day notice is sent out. When the meteorologists are calling for snow, students are waiting for a call from Rita.

"Are you the Rita Foil that makes those phone calls about the weather?" She says people ask her when they hear her name.

People are often surprised to find out that Foil is a "real person." But there she stands, with her bright red hair, brilliant smile and familiar voice. Foil says her family has fun watching strangers' reactions.

She can still remember the first time she sent out a snow day announcement.

"It is very intimidating knowing that once the message is recorded and the 'send' button is pushed, that the message is going to approximately 25,000 people. That is still scary – even after all these years," she says.

But there's a lot more to Foil than just a voice on the other end of the line. Currently, she serves as Rowan-Salisbury Schools' public information officer. Before that, she worked for the county government, as a director for religious education and as a stay-at-home mom.

Foil is from Rowan County and a graduate of Rowan-Salisbury Schools, as are her three children. Her six grandchildren also attend district schools. Foil attended Appalachian State University, earning a bachelor's degree in business.



Snow, schools and Rita Foil go together. As public information officer for Row-an-Salisbury Schools, Foil sends out the recorded message on bad weather days informing students and parents whether the day is canceled or delayed. — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

Foil is passionate about public education. She says she's honored to work with devoted professionals, parents, community members and elected officials, who together push forward to "make a better life for our children."

"It is all about students," she says. "I have often said that I have 20,000 bosses, and I am one lucky person!"

How would you explain your job to a student?

Oh gosh! Students often refer to me as the "snow fairy!" I love the fact that students recognize me and get excited when they meet me. That is the best part of my job – love the selfies! But my job is so much more than making the snow calls.

I would tell students that my job is all about communications through public relations and marketing – and what does that mean?

- Working with the media to answer questions and conduct interviews about our schools and issues facing our schools.
- Keeping the public informed about all the great things that are being accomplished in our schools through website, social media, press releases, Connect-ED phone calls, the parent-teacher magazine, Peachjar flyers and emails.
- Gathering and presenting the facts through research for Freedom of Information Act requests.
- Creating publications, brochures and announcements. And the list goes on.

Most importantly, I am the voice of the superintendent to the public and perform special assignments per her requests.

What are your hobbies?

I love to read, exercise and spend time with my family and friends. I love tennis and my goal is to get back into playing!

What's something people probably don't know about you?

I love to write poetry and have a goal of publishing a book one day.



Erwin Middle School students Sammy Pinckney, Katherine Otten, Andrew Long and Itzia Pena wear #ThanksRita shirts. A warmly dressed Foil joins the group. — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

Who do you consider one of your mentors and why?

Through the years, I have learned that my heart is my best mentor. My "gut" lets me know – gut spelled backwards is "tug" – God "tugging" at my heart! Short answer: my faith in God.

Five words you would use to describe Rowan County:

Home, family, friends, roots and life.

What's your pet peeve?

That there are just not enough hours in a day!

Name three of your all-time favorite books:

- "A Woman of Substance" by Barbara Taylor Bradford.
 - "Anything" by Dr. Wayne Dyer.
 - My poetry book, when it is published!

What two foods are always in your fridge or pantry?

Salads and coffee creamer.

What's the best advice you could give a young person today?

Learn to love to read and you can be anything you want. Aim for a college degree or credentials after high school. Once this is under your belt, there are no limits!



IIIPHANO MANIII

Joe Ponds lives and breathes his music.

Written by SHAVONNE WALKER Photography by JON C. LAKEY

t doesn't take much prompting to get Alvis "Joe" Ponds to the piano — an instrument he taught himself to play at the tender age of 10 after seeing child prodigy Frank "Sugar Chile" Robinson on the "Ed Sullivan Show."

It was something about the way Sugar Chile used his fists and elbows to bang on the keys that made Ponds think he could do that.

"I told my mama, 'If that baby can play, I'm sure I can, too,'" he says.

Today, at age 83, Ponds can be seen accompanying blues and gospel singer Rebecca Stinson. He also has appeared at the Rowan Blues and Jazz Festival during its run, but now

he mostly plays piano at a few local churches and for special occasions.

But there used to be a time — and sometimes, still is — when music was like breathing for Ponds.

As a boy, Joe would sneak onto the bench of his grandmother's organ, which sat in her living room.

"She would say, 'don't bother anything," he recalls, but when

his grandmother left the house for downtown Albemarle, Ponds moved quickly to the organ and began teaching himself how to play.

Ponds didn't know what he was doing at first, but he figured the way to get the organ to respond had something to do with the knobs and foot pedals, so he tried pretty much all of them.

"I pulled a knob and it made a sound. I hit

THE ARTS / joe ponds



the pedal and it made a sound," he says.

Ponds saw the pretty ivory keys, and he touched those, too.

In time it was as though he knew what he was doing, Ponds says, because he began making melodies without the intention of making them.

Ponds was mesmerized because there wasn't an organ at his home. There wasn't even a piano at his church.

"They sang shape notes," he says, demonstrating.

His grandmother would eventually give his mother the organ, and it didn't take long for Ponds to continue his self-teaching.

The first song he learned was "Coon Shine

Baby," a simple song, which he played on all the black keys.

Ponds doesn't read sheet music, but "if you sing your song I can find you," he says with a hearty laugh.

He has never taken a piano lesson and even taught himself the saxophone.

Later in his musical career, Ponds would play with The Five Keys, a popular 1950s rhythm and blues vocal group. Over the years, the group would add more instrumentation to its act, including talented people such as Ponds.

Still, many perplexed fans who heard him play without any sheet music would ask, "Ponds, how do you do it?"

"I would tell them, 'I feel it. I hear it," he says of the music.

And feel it he does.

During every song he plays, Ponds sways side to side on the bench, and every now and then he throws his head back with a smile on his face.

Music for Ponds truly is like breathing — "you have to exhale and inhale." he says.

Ponds was born in 1933, 15 minutes after his twin brother, Alvin. Someone eventually coined the monikers "Big Joe" and "Little Joe."

Ponds was Little Joe, and over time the "Little" was dropped and he would from then on be known as Joe Ponds.

In elementary school, Ponds had the op-



On Dec. 6, 2000, Joe Ponds (on piano) and Ken Carroll sing Christmas carols during the Christmas Happiness party. — File photo by Joey Benton.

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And feel it he does.



portunity to skip a couple of grades, including third and fifth.

His father was a sharecropper, and Ponds often spent time in the cotton and corn fields, forcing him to be absent from school. Ponds would rely on his classmates to catch him up on what he'd missed. Ponds graduated second in his high school class.

He attended an all-black school, Kingville High, during a time of segregation and when his Albemarle school went only to the 11th grade.

In 1952, a 19-year-old Alvis Ponds was drafted to serve during the Korean War. He traveled to Richmond, Va., for an entrance examination.

"I said, 'I'd like to fly planes,'" he told military personnel.

Ponds was tested and passed. He was sent to Sampson Air Force Base in Geneva, N.Y.



He completed basic training and would serve in the military for eight years, two months and 13 days.

"I met my first wife in Virginia — Newport News," he says.

In 1970, his wife, Odell Edwards, died at the age of 32 from cancer. The two never

had any children, and so Ponds eventually returned to his home state of North Carolina.

"When my wife died, music is what consoled me," he says.

Years would pass and Ponds would meet his second wife, the former Mary Strawder. The now-divorced couple had three children together, one of whom died in 2011.

Playing music will often bring to mind fond memories and special moments in his life.

Ponds doesn't particularly write or record original songs. More frequently, he simply sits down at a piano and creates "what sounds good to me."

When he plays an original song and someone asks for the name, Ponds says, without missing a beat, "It don't have a name."

But it should. S







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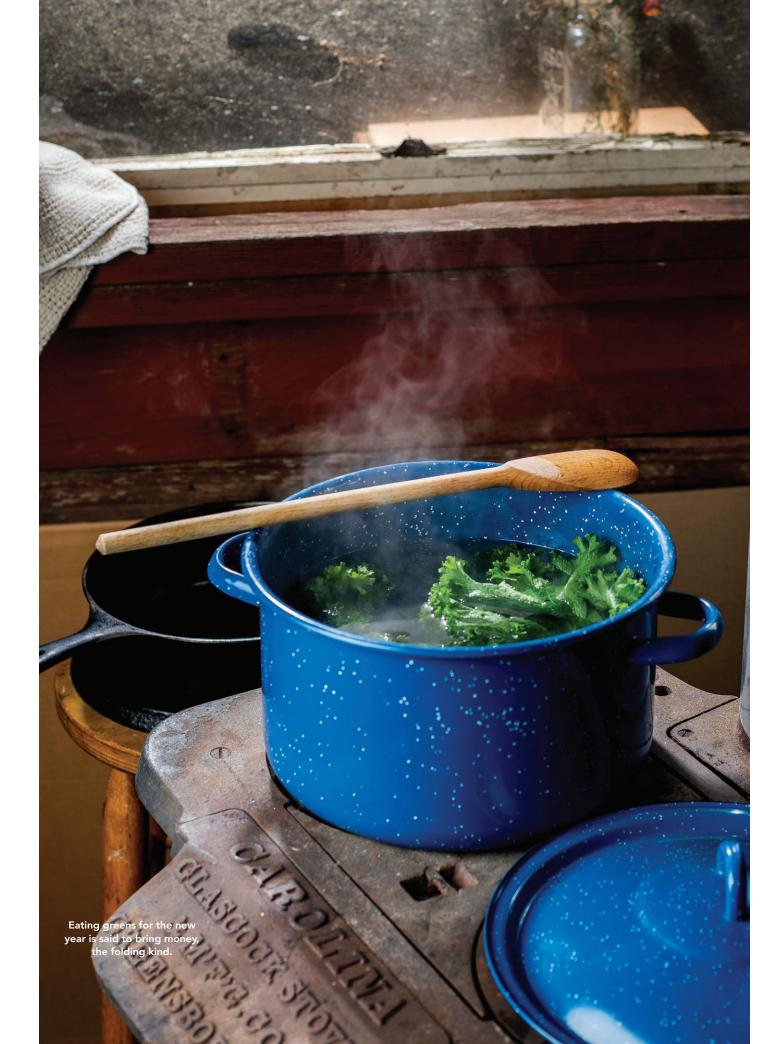
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Fine FORTUNE

Lucky greens and peas must be on the menu.

Written by DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH | Photography by JON C. LAKEY

hen welcoming 2017, remember to give yourself a good start.

Eat a mess o' greens and a bowl of black-eyed peas.

Soak up the pot likker with cornbread made in a cast iron skillet.

Any true Southerner knows the reason why — you do know, why, don't you?

It's a story with many sources, and many theories. One thing seems certain — somebody, sometime, thought blackeyed peas (or a number of other peas) looked like coins. Eat peas so money will come your way.

Greens? Folding money. In some parts of the world, sauerkraut is the vegetable. In the South, it's usually collards, but it could be mustard or turnip greens as well. In a pinch, spinach or kale will do.

It's widely believed that the more greens one eats the larger one's fortune next year. And some folks feel they must eat 365 black-eyed peas so the money will come every day.

What else would you wish for in a new year? How about

gold? Cornbread is the perfect accompaniment to those greens and peas. Ideally, you fix that cornbread in a treasured cast-iron skillet, melting the butter or bacon grease or what have you in the bottom so you get a crispy crust underneath that golden goodness.

Pea lore offers a couple of inspirations for the meal. A traditional and widely accepted story is the black-eyed peas, like so many other delicious Southern foods, came to us from Africa with the enslaved peoples. They did not eat high on the hog, but had to make do with things like black-eyed peas, once considered nothing more than livestock feed, and greens for food.



Then the cook moved into the house and fixed the dishes she knew for the family. It turned out even the wealthy appreciated the richness of peas and the heavenly pot likker from the greens.

Black-eyed peas and similar legumes grow well in Southern soil, with the nearly-tropical weather. Peas can even adapt to droughts.

Peas for good luck originated in Africa, as well. Or did they? One theory is that the custom dates back to the Talmud, written in 200 A.D. It mentions eating black-eyed peas when celebrating Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. This story gives credit to Sephardic Jews for bringing the tradition when they arrived in Georgia in the 1730s.

Some say eating the peas shows humility, as they are a humble food. Others make the coin connection. Others say the way the peas swell when they cook symbolizes growing wealth.

And we have that hog to thank for the flavoring of both the peas and the greens.

Eating pork is good luck because pigs push forward when foraging, and that symbolizes moving forward in a positive motion for the year.

Most folks who study food habits in history say the greens-n-peas tradition in the South is more than likely due to the influence of Africans and African Americans, particularly after the Civil War.

In the Savor the South cookbook, "Greens," author Thomas Head writes, "In North Carolina, a person is said to be guaranteed to earn five dollars in the new year for every collard leaf eaten; in Louisiana, we were always told you'd get a dollar for every blackeyed pea you ate."

We should be so lucky.

Don't mess with the tradition. And don't worry about recipes. Easy peasy, as the saying goes.

BASIC BLACK-EYED PEAS

- 1 pound dried black-eyed peas
- 1 meaty smoked ham hock
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped

- 3 cloves of garlic, smashed
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 2 bay leaves

In a large bowl, soak peas overnight, covering with at least 2 inches of water. Drain and rinse.

Place beans, ham hock, onions, garlic, salt and bay leaves in a large pot and add just enough water to cover beans. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, stirring occasionally, until beans are tender, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Remove from heat. Remove ham hock to a cutting board and allow to cool slightly. Discard the skin and bones and chop meat. Add back to the pot.

Serve peas immediately.

Some folks add a splash of vinegar to the peas just before serving. Others add cooked, chopped bacon. If you like heat, toss in a jalapeño during cooking or serve with your favorite hot sauce.

SOUTHERN GREENS

- 2 pounds greens (collards, mustard, turnip, kale or a combination)
- 1 pound ham hock or smoked turkey wing or 6 strips thick-cut bacon, chopped
- Water or chicken stock
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 large or 2 small garlic cloves, minced or run across a microplane
- 2 Tbsp. vinegar
- Salt, to taste

Cut out stems, or rip greens from stems and cut into pieces. Submerge in plenty of cold water at least twice, then drain in a colander. If using bacon, sauté until cooked, but not crisp in a large pot. Remove bacon, then add onion and at the last minute, garlic. If using a ham hock, soften the onions in a little oil or butter, adding garlic at the last minute.

Add the greens and meat and add enough water or chicken stock to cover. Bring to a boil and simmer until the greens are tender, up to an hour or more.

Stir in vinegar just before serving and check for salt.

SKILLET CORNBREAD

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup white or yellow cornmeal
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda

- ¹/₄ tsp. salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 additional Tbsp. butter

Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder and baking soda and salt in a bowl. Stir in the buttermilk, melted butter and eggs, just until mixture is moistened.

Place 1 Tbsp. butter in 10-inch cast iron skillet and melt in oven. Carefully remove skillet and pour batter in. It should sizzle. This will give a nice, crispy crust.

Bake 15-20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Allow to cool 10 minutes before cutting. S



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WaRTHY home

Move from California landed couple right where they want to be.

Written by ELIZABETH COOK
Photography by JON C. LAKEY

s soon as Carol and Acey Worthy saw Salisbury, they knew they wanted to make it their home.

The two Californians started visiting after Carol's son, Mikey Wetzel, moved here so he and his family could enjoy lake living at High Rock. He later opened Go Burrito! restaurant in downtown Salisbury.

The Worthys dreamed of moving East after retirement. When that freedom finally came, they started looking at houses in and around town. That included taking in OctoberTour every year.

During the historic house tour in 2010, the last house the Worthys visited was the cute Victorian cottage at 321 E. Bank St.

Historic Salisbury Foundation was working its revolving-fund magic on the property. Called the Hamill-Thompson-Kessler House, the 1899 cottage was move-in ready, thanks to a top-to-bottom restoration that the foundation funded to spur more renovations in the Brooklyn-South Square Historic District.

The house was smack in the middle of the area where the Salisbury Confederate Prison stood during the Civil War, near the railroad tracks on the east side of town.

When Carol and Acey came through that October afternoon, the tour was pretty much over for the day. But docent Sue McHugh told them to take their time and look around.

The Worthys zipped through the house. The property also included an older cottage out back and a garage with storage space above.

On the drive back to California the next day — somewhere around



Oklahoma, Acey recalls — they discussed the pros and cons of all the houses they were considering.

Acey prodded. What about that little house on the tour?

They went through their checklist.

Single story. Check.

Large porch. Check.

Big lot with plenty of room. Check.

Detached garage with space for a shop. Check, check.

"Plus we love to walk," Carol says now. They had looked at some houses out in the country, but a neighborhood with sidewalks was enticing.

That was the house for them, they decided, 321 E. Bank St.

They called Mikey's wife, Lily, who was a real estate agent. Make an offer for us, they said.

Acey gets a hug from Carol as he stops for moment while working on their outdoor kitchen.

Carol remembers that Lily balked; she said the house was in the wrong part of town.

"No, this one has our name on it," Carol replied. "We'll make it our neighborhood." And so they have.

Brooklyn-South Square Historic District takes in parts of East Fisher, East Bank, South Lee, South Long and South Shaver streets.

It was once an industrial area; the Confederate Prison started in an old cotton mill.

Homes eventually popped up after the war. As historians describe it, the district includes "large, elaborate houses built for prosperous businessmen and merchants," as well "more modest" homes, all on the edge of Salisbury's downtown.

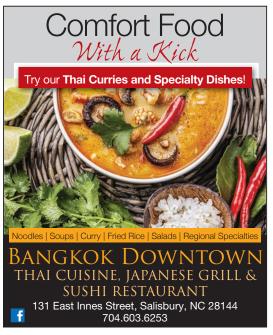
The epicenter for the Worthys is the 300 block of East Bank, where they have close neighbors (in friendship, as well as proximity) on either side of them and across the street. And they get along with the residents on the other side of the tracks, too, they say.

When they go out on their regular walks, people in one house up the street call out hellos to "Mr. and Mrs. California."

The Worthys' house first belonged to a prosperous saloon owner, J.W. Hammill. It is Italianate in style, with a Victorian porch, and by modern standards it might fit somewhere between "large, elaborate" and "more modest."

But it is rich in detail and — thanks to the Worthys — rich in character.







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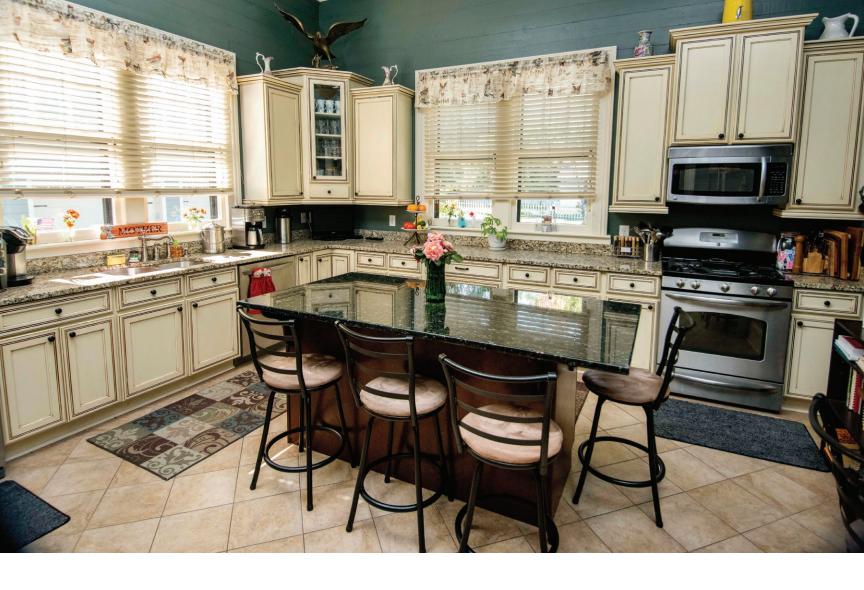
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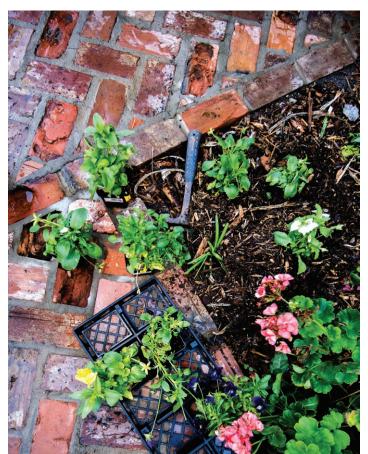
FODS DINIGS





Above: Historic Salisbury Foundation restored the 1899 house, including the kitchen, and the Worthys added the island. Right: Keeping the yard filled with flowers takes time and ingenuity; Carol likes to scout the garden shop discount section for plants to add fresh color. Below: In the parlor, family photos fill a tabletop. The nearby chair's pillow bears the image of the house.









Above: A smaller cottage in the back yard, built in 1891, will be restored for a guest house and art studio, complete with kiln. Left: The the living room alcove holds chairs now and is the perfect spot for their Christmas tree during the holidays.







Above: The metal fountain produces a distinct sound as the water falls onto the surface. Right: The Worthy master bedroom.







The Worthys have several comfortable spots where they can sit and sip coffee — the rocking chairs and Cheerwine bench on their wide front porch. The stools around the island in their roomy kitchen. The sunroom that looks

They have even set up a little table and chairs on the porch of the 1891 cottage out back.

out on a unique fountain in their side yard.

But good luck finding them sitting idle.

"Want to see what I'm working on now?" Acey asks one November morning, after a chance encounter out by the sidewalk. He invites his visitor to the back yard, where two freshly poured cement panels are drying in the sun.

They are to be parts of a wood-burning pizza oven Acey is building — to go with the outdoor kitchen he built, to go with the

Above left: Old tile and a pedestal sink give the hall bathroom an old-fashioned look. Above right: The outdoor kitchen on the side of the garage is a central part of the backyard experience.

patio he built, all situated beside the two-story garage and workshop that he ... you get the idea.

A retired electrician — or "dumb wire jerker," he says — Acey is one of those people who can fix or build nearly anything, or is eager to try. He says Carol is the organizer and he just makes messes.

"I don't want to really finish anything completely," he says. "Then she won't have any reason to keep me around."

The pizza oven panels inspected, it's time

to leave.

"Want some coffee?" Acey says, and soon the visitor — who really was just passing by — is perched on one of those kitchen barstools, sipping coffee brewed from freshly ground beans and snacking on Carol's zucchini bread.

Historic Salisbury had updated the kitchen with new cabinets and counters, and the Worthys added the island. It's one of their favorite spots.

Most rooms in the house have the original pine floors, except the hallway. When the restoration began, that area had fallen through. Now aged cypress salvaged from a house in New Orleans runs down the center of the house.

Once divided into a duplex and later left empty for many years, the house lacked some significant details when its restoration began.

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AT HOME / worthy house

Doors and mantles saved from other historic homes took their place.

The Worthys have continued that resourcefulness — putting salvaged materials to new use — as they gradually made the property their own.

Take the garage, for example.

Not long after they bought the property, Carol and Acey pulled into their driveway one day to see the door to the old garage askew. They wondered, had someone broken in?

Then they looked again and realized the whole building was off-kilter. After a heavy rain with strong winds, the building had started to collapse. It would need to be demolished before someone got hurt.

Carol cuts fabric in the room where she sews and Acey works on stained glass, above their garage.

"We had to start from scratch then," Carol says.

The top of the new building had to be lower than the house's roofline, but that left plenty of room to build a garage and workshop, with living space above.

"New" includes a lot of old materials that the Worthys salvaged from other buildings that were being demolished or updated — bricks from the Cannon Mills plant in China Grove that was demolished, a cabinet from the defunct Step 'n Time gift and antique shop, a blackboard from the Carousel restaurant that Go Burrito! replaced, mats from the old



Benchwarmers bar, granite steps from City Hall.

They bought a door with etched glass at a yard sale in Pennsylvania. One cabinet came from the Habitat ReStore, and another from City Consignment

An old porcelain sink in Acey's workshop came from a neighbor, and another one in the outdoor kitchen was retrieved from the woods near



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her sister's place in Pennsylvania. You can fix chipped porcelain, he advises, with Bondo and epoxy, sprayed with appliance finish.

Naval Jelly will remove the rust. And one other ingredient, he adds.

"It's called elbow grease."

All these materials went into building their home away from home, in their own back yard.

In addition to space to park two cars — or large tables, if you want to hold a party the structure includes a machine shop and a garden room on the first floor. Upstairs you'll find a craft room (he works on stained glass and she sews), a large bathroom (she laid the tile), a huge closet and — the most important part — a roomy man-and-wife cave with comfy chairs, a big TV and décor that reflects their devotion to the Carolina Panthers and the San Francisco 49ers.

It's a second home, just a few steps from

their first home.

The next big project is the small cottage with a "Grandpa's Workshop" sign. Now being used for storage, the 1891-vintage structure needs a complete restoration. The Worthys are game. They plan to make it their craft house, complete with a potter's wheel and kiln.

They just have to work it in around everything else.

They have been together 32 years. In earlier marriages, she had four children and he had three. Together, they have 21 grandchildren and 11 greats scattered from California to Idaho to Pennsylvania and beyond.

One of Carol's daughters, Tami File, a nationally known breeder of Netherland dwarf rabbits, moved to Salisbury soon after they did. Her daughter, Stephanie Jennings, also

lives here and works at Go Burrito!.

Another daughter, Lori in Idaho, has been on their hearts a lot over the past year after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Thanks to the treatment — or countless prayers for healing, Carol says — Lori's progress has surprised doctors.

For the Worthys, there is always a birthday to celebrate, a holiday to share or someone who could use their help and comfort. They hop in their pickup and travel all over the country.

Some trips are just for their own enjoyment. At the beginning of their retirement, they made a list of things they wanted to do — travel down the Mississippi on a riverboat, for example, which they hope to do in the spring.

The Worthys' want-to-do list is long. "We have to live to 155," Carol says, "and we're just getting started." S



Whiskey

Southern Grace Distilleries makes its moonshine in a former prison.

WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



MOUNT PLEASANT — In many ways, it's a perfect marriage — a onetime prison now serving as home for the making of moonshine. Legal moonshine. Corn whiskey, to be exact.

In the fall, Southern Grace Distilleries Inc. moved its operation to the former Cabarrus County Correctional Center at 130 Dutch Road. The facility had served as a minimum-security prison from 1929, the height of Prohibition, to 2011.



Now visitors are coming for tastings and tours, which start in the old prison chapel, accommodated with rooms off to the side for booking and holding.

In holding, you can stand behind bars without the fear of a jail door slamming shut behind you.

Booking affords a chance to have your mugshot taken in front and side views against a height chart. Folks seem to enjoy these photo opportunities and sharing the results on social media.

Back in the chapel, an introductory video covers the prison's history, including interviews with former guards. You can watch from one of 14 pews as sunlight streams through stained glass behind the old altar.

"Now is when I normally say, 'Do you want to go to jail?" Southern Grace Distilleries President Leanne Powell says as the video ends.

The tour that follows goes past a guard tower and into the old prison yard, secure behind fence and barbed wire.

Visitors walk by the hot box, a remnant from the days when a prisoner might be stuffed into the uncomfortably close, intolerably steamy space as punishment.

The tour gives a look inside the original 1929 dormitory, which will become the Southern Grace barrel house. It is here corn whiskey will be aged in oak barrels until it becomes bourbon. Iron rings, to which prisoners were chained, are still on some of the walls.

On the other side of the prison yard, the 1987 dormitory has become Southern Grace's manufacturing facility. The old "F" Dorm is now used for fermentation; the "D" Dorm, distillation; the "B" Dorm, bonded storage; and so forth. Sun Dog 130, the company's 130 proof corn whiskey, is made, bottled and labeled here.

"There are a lot of cool things to take pictures of," Powell says.

Farther down a side hall, visitors enter the old segregation area — a row of individ-



Above: The desirable part of the alcohol is collected in glass containers. Opposite: One of the weekend tours makes its way through the former prison.

ual cells where troublesome prisoners were separated from the general population. Here they are allowed to taste Sun Dog 130 in quarter-ounce plastic cups.

Powell says the best way to appreciate the whiskey is to take a quick sip, just to numb the palate. With the next sip, she says, you really taste the Sun Dog 130. She hands out prison pens and tasting wheels to people on the tour and encourages them to write down the flavors they're sensing.

Judges' tasting notes have mentioned flavors such as caramel, sweet corn and jalapeño, to name a few, while saying the finish has hints of honey, cinnamon, allspice and pepper.

It's definitely a bold spirit — crafted and homegrown, which is important to Powell and head distiller and chief operating officer Thomas Thacker.

"We're really, really proud that people have

liked it," Powell says. "American whiskey is something that's never going to be outsourced. We want to go back to a time when 'Made in America' meant the best in the world.

"We won't put it in a bottle if we wouldn't drink it on our own back porch or sell it to our family and friends."

Sun Dog 130 has won a gold medal at the San Diego Spirits Festival and a silver medal at the American Craft Spirit competition in Louisville. It also captured a 2016 "Fifty Best" gold medal in New York in the Best American Whiskey competition.

A gift shop stands near the segregation room. It sells T-shirts, flasks, shot glasses, coasters and even jewelry made from whiskey mash. Powell points out a display of some of the prison contraband, including numerous "shanks" that were left behind by inmates who had stashed them in the walls.

At the distillery, Southern Grace is allowed to sell one bottle of its whiskey per person per year. Otherwise, it's available in North Carolina, South Carolina and Washington, D.C., in ABC stores and some bars and restaurants.

The Cabarrus Correctional Center held upwards of 400 prisoners, serving as a work camp for prison road gangs. Wherever possible, Southern Grace has kept the bars, signs and institutional look of the former prison.

Every job at the prison was handled by the inmates, from yard work to cooking. Besides road gangs, some prisoners worked in a nearby quarry. The Cabarrus prison also was a home and training ground for bloodhounds, and inmates themselves trained other dogs — a six-week program that ended with a graduation and adoption ceremony.

Former guard Ken Mendoza says the guard-to-prisoner ratio was about one-to-70. After it closed, the prison site became a favorite place for Operation Robin Sage Special Forces exercises for the military.

For Powell and Thacker, the birth of Southern Grace Distilleries is rooted in politics.





Above: The still is where the corn whiskey is produced. Left: A group walks through the gate to tour the distillery. Opposite: Bottles are lined up in the bottling room awaiting the next run.

A Concord native, Powell was a political science major at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She worked in her first campaign as a high schooler in 1984 and had her initial political job as an intern for the late U.S. Rep. Bill Hefner in 1988.

She would go on to work for Hefner and former U.S. Rep. Larry Kissell, besides heading election campaigns for local candidates such as former State Rep. Lorene Coates of Rowan County. She became Kissell's chief of staff, dividing time between Concord and Washington.

Thacker, a former Anson Record reporter, became



Kissell's deputy chief. A string of events, starting with Kissell's re-election defeat in 2012, led to Powell and Thacker trying their hands at liquor.

Powell's longtime friend and mentor, Hector Henry of Concord, passed away. And as Powell and Thacker tried their hands at consulting jobs, Thacker's dog, Mia, died of a blood disease when she was only 7.

It all caused Powell and Thacker to ask themselves where they were headed.

"It was a life-decision type of conversation," Powell recalls.

Powell says she wished to do something that was made in America. Thacker, a bourbon aficionado, wanted to make to make liquor. By March 2014, they had formed Southern Grace and secured a lease in Concord for the old Warren C. Coleman Mill. By Sept. 8 of that year, the newly formed company held its license to be a distillery.

It was the 19th licensed distillery in North Carolina. Now the state has more than 50.

Thacker crafted his first batch of Sun Dog 130 on Oct. 4, 2014, and the corn whiskey, which was inspired and has the likeness of Mia on the label, hit the shelves of ABC stores by the last weekend of February 2015.

"Mia enjoyed a party," Powell says.

Employing what she had learned in government and politics, Powell made sure Southern Grace's paperwork and applications were being processed in a timely fashion by state and federal regulators.







Above: Sebastian Correa, assistant distiller, sniffs a new batch. Left: Betsy Culp of Gold Hill takes a picture of Paul Culp and Michael Gibson, posing behind bars of the 'holding cell.'



Above: Promotional items, such as these flasks, are available in the gift shop. Right: With special tubing, a copper tub cools the alcohol vapors back into a liquid.



Want to go?

What: Southern Grace Distilleries Inc.
Where: 130 Dutch Road, Mount Pleasant
Tours: "Visiting hours" to the prisonturned-distillery are offered by appointment
between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Learn about the history of the prison
and how Southern Grace's Sun Dog 130 corn
whiskey is made. There is a tasting part of
the tour for visitors 21 and older. Participants
20 and younger must be accompanied by a
parent or guardian.

Tour tickets: \$14. Group rates are \$10 per visitor for groups of 10 or more. Group tours can be booked Monday through Saturday.

For more information: Contact Leanne Powell at 704-622-6413 for reservations, and also check out www.southerngracedistilleries.com.



"The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and it was just knowing to be persistent," Powell says.

When the time came to move from their original Concord site, Powell and Thacker investigated Mount Pleasant, which over recent years had lost two mills and the prison as top employers and water users.

The minute they were shown the prison site, owned by Mount Pleasant Properties, Powell knew this was the place. They purchased a highly secure, 5-acre site for \$350,000 and set about moving their opera-

Now Southern Grace relies on two stills, an 118-gallon capacity steel-copper contraption dubbed Keith Richards, after the Rolling Stones guitarist, and a bigger one of 330 gallons called Fats Domino, again a musical reference.

Of the distilling operation, Thacker likes

to say everything used in the process would be familiar to an old moonshiner except the laptop computer.

And that's the thing about corn whiskey in the South. It seems everybody had a uncle, grandfather, cousin or neighbor who made moonshine. Powell's great-great-great grandfather, Matthew Moyle of Gold Hill, retired from the mines, opened up a saloon and made his own corn whiskey.

Powell likes to watch old-timers shake up a bottle of Sun Dog 130 and turn it upside down to see how fast the bubbles dissipate. They know the faster the bubbles disappear, the better the moonshine and the higher the proof.

Southern Grace stayed away from the Mason jar image for its corn whiskey and went instead with bar-top bottles because they knew it was good for mixing.

Powell says Sun Dog 130 goes well with Sun Drop, Cheerwine, Sprite, Mountain Dew, cranberry juice, pineapple juice and lemonade. In honor of Mia, a donation is made to an animal shelter for every bottle of Sun Dog 130 sold.

Southern Grace operates with only three full-time employees — Powell, Thacker and Sebastian Correa — and hires up to eight part-timers as they are needed. Correa, the assistant distiller from Winston-Salem, is a recent graduate in fermentation science from Appalachian State University.

It's an all-hands-on-deck operation. "I've done every single bottling of our product," Powell says as an example.

Southern Grace's expansion into bourbon could come within nine months. The old dormitory — a.k.a., the new barrel house — will be perfect for the aging process.

"It will be ready when it's ready," Powell says. "... Tom likes to remind me constantly — you can't rush this." S

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operate S&S Outdoors on

Amity Hill Road.

Opposite: Foxy dives into the

pond to retrieve a bumper.

He covers the ground as fast as a racehorse, quickly locating the bumper on the ground and bringing it back to Sloan.

"He does the blind stuff, too," Sloan says. Still a good distance away, Samantha hops into a golf cart and drives to a new location, where she hides another bumper in some tall Above: Sisters Sloan (left) and Samantha Williams

Sloan sends Buster off toward the far hill with a blast from her whistle. He runs until he hears another whistle, turns and looks back at Sloan for directions. She motions with an arm the way she wants him to go.

Another whistle and another look back to Sloan refines the search, and it's not long before dog and trainer have combined to find the bumper. Four sounds of the whistle call Buster back to Sloan.

There are more exercises. Sloan commands Jake, an-

other Lab, to sit, mark and retrieve a bumper thrown into the far side of a pond. As he reaches the water, Jake goes airborne, hitting the water like an Olympic

Sloan says only three words as a thoroughly soaked

Jake comes back with the bumper in his mouth: "Here. Heel. Sit."

Later in the day, the sisters take rifles and shoot blanks next to the dogs, getting them used to the sounds they will hear during real hunts.

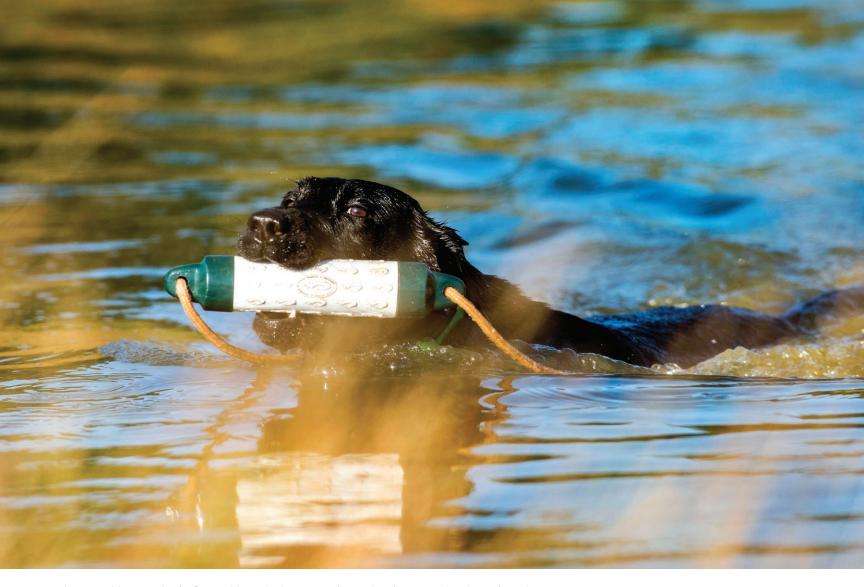
Sloan and Samantha established S&S Outdoors, their dog training and boarding business on Amity Hill

Road, in 2011. They specialize in retriever and gun dog training, events training and obedience training.

S&S Outdoors also has a large kennel for boarding, and the women offer puppy socialization and Labrador breeding. Their office is filled with ribbons

diver but with a lot more splash.

WINTER 2016-2017 **45**



Above: Buddy swims back after grabbing the bumper. Below right: Sloan gives hand signals to direct a dog to the hidden bumper. Below: Decoys and bumpers are used to train the dogs.





their dogs have won at Hunting Retriever Champion events.

Kansas, Sloan's oldest Labrador, won many of those ribbons, and now 13 years old, she pretty much has the run of the place.

Sloan bagged both the 10-point deer on the office wall and the turkey nearby while bow hunting. That's her favored method of hunting these days, but both women are skilled with rifles and shotguns.

Sloan first went hunting with her dad, Scott, when she was 3; Samantha, when she was 5. They have hunted over the years for dove, deer, duck, geese, swan, pheasant and squirrel.

Their profession and pastime are still mostly dominated by men, but they see themselves as part of an ever-changing dynamic in which young girls and women are part of the dog and hunt scene.

"I think it's growing," Sloan says. "It's gradually getting bigger and bigger."

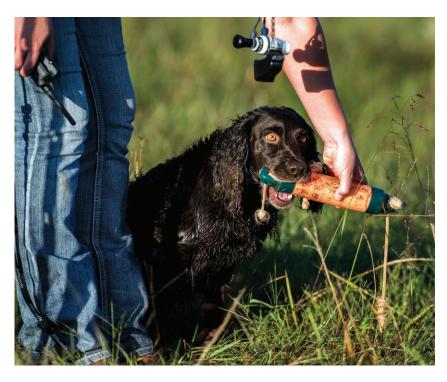
Crissy Williams, the women's mother, said their



Foxy is ready for some training by Samantha.



During a recent Lake Norman Delta Waterfowl Youth Day at S&S Outdoors, the kids had a chance to race black Labrador Buster to the bumper out in the field for a chance to win a \$100 bill. With a head start of a few seconds, a shoeless Timmy Massey, 14, of Franklin County, Va., almost had his hand on the target before a speeding Buster swooped in to snatch the bumper with less then six inches to spare.



biggest obstacle at first was that hunters didn't know they had at least eight years of experience working with dogs. "When we got started, there really weren't many people in it," Sloan says.

It helps, of course, that they're also experienced hunters. Sloan was 9 when she killed her first deer; Samantha, 8.

"I like it all," Samantha says, "but deer hunting is more peaceful, I guess."

Boykin spaniel Gucci after bringing back a blind thrown bumper.

In a deer stand, Sloan adds, you're by yourself, relaxed and able to think. She likes the solitude at times.

Duck hunting, by contrast, is more of a fun, social event. There can be several people in a duck blind, and it's a joy to watch the dogs you trained run and work. Sloan was

still hunting with Kansas as late as last year

"She gets mad if you leave her at home," Samantha says.

It's Kansas' pawprints that are in the concrete at the kennel, symbolic in a way that she rates as one of the family's hall of fame dogs, and there have been several.

The women oversee a 4,000-square-foot facility on 61 acres,



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Sloan Williams and a yellow Labrador retriever, Dream, head to the field for training.

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Buster makes a big splash after jumping into the pond.

They also have access to an additional 1,500 acres of training land with technical water. Their kennels offer 56 suites, including two luxury suites with heated floors, and four exercise yards.

Sloan, 25, lives in a small apartment connected to the office and kennels, and Samantha, 22, is married and resides in a house next to the business, so things are tightly under the sisters' control. Their parents, Scott and Crissy, also live on the property.

Crissy Williams handles the paperwork for S&S Outdoors, which this past fall invited kids and their parents to its fourth annual Delta Waterfowl Foundation Youth Day.

Sloan and Samantha became obsessed with dogs quite naturally. Scott and Crissy Williams used to breed golden retrievers. Back when the sisters were just beginning to duck hunt, the family's two cherished goldies died of old age, and Scott and Crissy thought a Labrador retriever would be a good fit as the next family pet.

That first Lab was Sharkey, named for her really sharp teeth. She became the sisters' first hunting dog, and they also ran their first hunting tests with Sharkey, who was trained by Charlie Jurney of Beaverdam Kennels.

Jurney became the girls' mentor. Thanks to his tutelage, Samantha was the youngest girl to pass a dog (Bogey) at a HRC event and the first to claim back-to-back passes, earning Bogey a grand title. (In what is a passor-fail test, a dog has to pass twice to earn the grand designation.)

Sloan was the youngest girl to pass multiple dogs at a single HRC grand event, which is held twice a year.



Sloan and Bay, her Jack Russell terrier.

At Beaverdam Kennels, the girls learned from Jurney and his dog Scoop, while also helping with the cleaning, feeding and working of clients' dogs. In time, Crissy Williams began home-schooling her daughters so they could spend every afternoon helping Jurney and learning how to train.

In business together, the sisters say they rarely get into arguments with each other. For now, they handle everything in the care, feeding, cleaning, boarding and training of the dogs, but they know they eventually will have to find help.

Sloan laughs, thinking about the people who often tell her, "I wish I had your job — all you do is play with dogs all day."

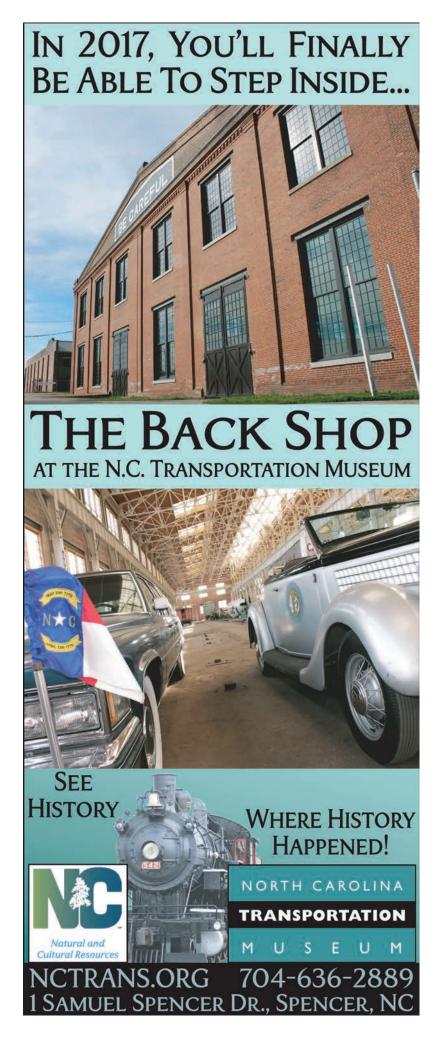
But the reality is, Crissy says, that's it's hard to find and keep help because of all the work involved in the kennels.

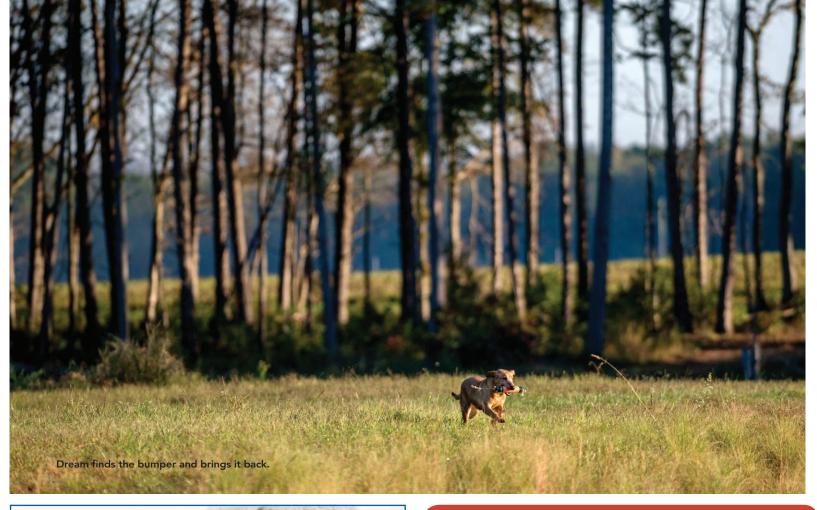
The women's weekends often are consumed by hunting or taking their dogs and their clients' dogs to HRC events. They have a 14-hole trailer for transporting the dogs. They also have a 10-hole topper on top of a pickup, so theoretically they can travel with 24 dogs.

"Ours kind of take a back seat," Sloan says of when the sisters go to competitions. "We make sure we do everybody else's first."

In the initial training, dogs stay with S&S at least two weeks before the owners are allowed to visit. The training can start when dogs are about six months old, and the owner visits — and their own instruction — increase as the weeks of training go on.

For each hunt season, the sisters often provide tune-ups for the dogs. The vast majority of hunting dogs are Labradors, but the sisters also have











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trained Boykin spaniels and Jack Russell terriers in the fine arts of retrieving.

Owners from many different states, such as Texas, Alabama and Virginia, have brought their dogs to S&S Outdoors for training.

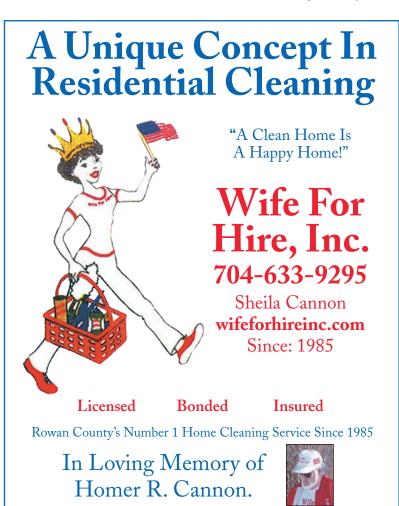
At present, the Williams family owns a host of their own dogs. Samantha has Buster, Dude and Buddy; Sloan has Kansas, Dream, Gucci (a Boykin spaniel) and Bay (a Jack Russell terrier); Crissy has Zoey and Hootie; and Scott has Spook and Foxy.

It's Foxy who is part of the S&S Outdoors logo.

"Every dog is different," Sloan says. But they sure like to hunt. S



A little camera shy, Kansas peers over the back of the couch in the office.





Weisler Norvell

OMWAKE DEARBORN CHAPEL • SALISBURY • CHRISTOPHER RECORD PHOTOGRAPHY

Meredith Elizabeth Weisler and Philip Barbour Norvell, both of Charlotte, were united in marriage Saturday. Oct. 22, 2016 at Omwake Dearborn Chapel at Catawba College. The Rev. Doctor Robert Milton Lewis officiated the 5 p.m. ceremony, assisted by the Rev. Robert William Black, Jr. The music was provided by organist Matthew Brown, harpist Rose Abernethy, and vocalists Debbie Hubbard Pastore and John Brincefield.

Following the ceremony. the parents of the bride hosted a reception, dinner and dance at Boxwood Estate, Mocksville. The wedding planner was Dina Berg Blazeh Events: caterer Dave Byron/Best Impressions; florist Carrie Poole Designs and John Lupton Events. Entertainment was provided by The After Party Experience Band: printed materials and designs by Taylor Sexton and the Lettered Lily: cake. The Wow Factor; hair and makeup by Jami Svay and Hair Associates Andrea Smith and Brandy Frye; tent and rental items by Party Reflections.

The bride was escorted by her father. Paul Weisler and wore a Sareh Nouri designed dress and veil made of the House of Sophie Hallett lace. She was attended by her maid of honor, Ashley Buchanan and her matron of honor, Mallory Whitley. Bridesmaids were Mary Linn Norvell, Elizabeth Anne Ashley. Ellen Emerson, Grace Herrin, Laurel Meeks, Audrey Mosley, Kelsey Nussenfeld, Anne Treschitta, and Susie Wear. Flower girl was Madison Dixon. Ring bearer was Grayson Sullivan.

The groom chose his father. Edward Novell. to serve as his best man. Groomsmen were Kyle Butler. Ben Fisher. John Jacob Fisher. Ran Lassiter. Alex Messinger. Max Messinger. Alex Mowery. Vishal Patel, Jesse Reaves, and Julian Scarborough.

Guest registrars were Elizabeth Anne Collins. and Daniela Solorzano.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Weisler and the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hodge and the late Irving and Rita Weisler. A 2007 graduate of Salisbury High School, Meredith graduated from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill as a dean's list student, with a bachelor of arts in journalism and mass communication in 2011 and was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority. She was a magna cum laude graduate from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 2016 with a Juris Doctorate. She was a member of The Order of the Coif Law Honor Society and The South Carolina Law Review. She is employed as an associate attorney by Fisher and Phillips, LLP.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Norvell and the grandson of the late Edwin and Judy Norvell and the late D.C. and Frances Linn. A 2005 graduate of Salisbury High School. Philip graduated from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington as a dean's list student, with a bachelor of science in business administration with a dual concentration in marketing and operations management in 2010, with a minor in German and was a member of Kappa Sigma Fraternity and an honor graduate from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte with a masters in business administration with a concentration in marketing in 2015. He is employed as a Sales and Operations Analyst at United Beverages.

The groom's parents hosted a rehearsal dinner the evening of Oct. 21, 2016, at the Norvell Theater.

Following the ceremony the couple took a trip to the island of Bora Bora and now reside in Charlotte.





















Written by AMANDA RAYMOND Photography by JON C. LAKEY

honda and David Harrison have collected the various pieces of their tweed outfits over the years, mostly from thrift stores.

"You find something when you're out and about." Rhonda said.

"You find something when you're out and about," Rhonda said. Rhonda found a genuine tweed jacket for \$3 at a thrift store. She hemmed different parts of the outfit to emulate the style, including shortening her pants to show off her dress socks.

David ordered goggles from Amazon to add to his outfit, along with arm garters.

There were plenty of vests, wool caps, bow ties and dress socks to match the old-fashioned tweed theme of the bike ride.

This fall, Bike Salisbury and Skinny Wheels Bike Shop organized "Tweeds and Steeds, the Salisbury Tweed Ride," for the fourth year.

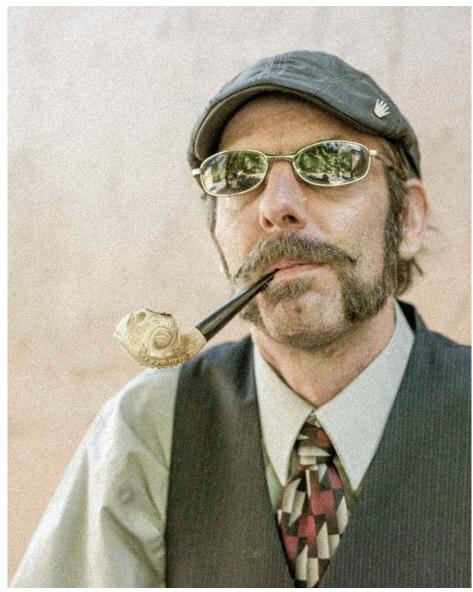
It was the second time the ride was coordinated with OctoberTour, adding another historical feature to the tour of the city's historic homes.

WELLNESS / tweed ride



Above: Eric Phillips from Skinny Wheels is ready for the Tweed Ride. Right: Scott Phillips sports a tie and pipe for the ride.





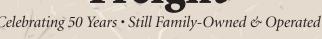


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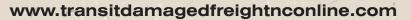
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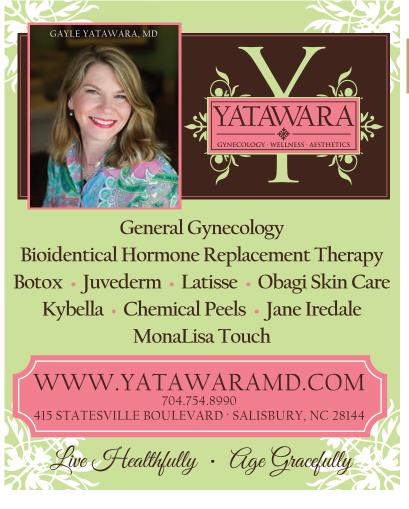
Bicycling while wearing tweed is said to have originated in London in the early 1990s, according to Bicycling.com. The first official Tweed Run took place in London in 2009, with 300 cyclists wearing their "well-pressed best" while weaving around the city visiting local landmarks.

Since then, cities across the world have organized their own tweed bike rides, including cities in New York, California, Florida, Pennsylvania and countries like Canada and Australia.

Sharon **Earnhardt** shows the label of her Harris Tweed jacket.

Every place puts their own spin on the ride. During the Missoula, Mont., Tweed Ride, participants go on a 5-mile trip with stops at a park and bakery, according to an article on Bicycling. com. The ride ends with a street fair that includes refreshments, games and mustache painting. They also give out awards for the best-dressed rider and the







most authentic beard.

In San Francisco, there are people who stand at intersections with signs that say things like "pardon our tweed" and "excuse me, gov'nor" to appease drivers.

And one tweed ride in Victoria, Canada, donates registration fees to Bicycles for Humanity, an organization that sends bikes to African countries.

One common thread connect them all trading in lycra for tweed. London's Tweed Run encourages woolen plus fours, Harris Tweeds jackets, cycling capes, cravats or ties and even hip flasks.

Like most other tweed rides, Salisbury's Tweed and Steeds is a social ride so that anyone who wants to join in, from those who ride for fun to serious racers, can do so.



Sean Meyers sports striped socks.

Eric Phillips, owner of Skinny Wheels Bike Shop, said he has ridden in Durham's tweed ride, and Charlotte also has one.

For Phillips, it is just about doing something a little different. He even brought a mini speaker to play early jazz music to set the mood for fellow riders.

The first Tweeds and Steeds ride happened

in the spring. Phillips said it rained, but that wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Tweed is just a really good fabric against the weather," Phillips said.

They moved it to the fall so that the weather would be a little cooler, plus the riders could ride through the colorful autumn leaves.

Though this year's ride only brought out about eight people, Phillips said there were about 30 riders last year.

This year, the riders rode through the city and stopped by Catawba College to take pictures. They then went to Sweet Meadow Café for refreshments.

Other tweed rides stop for tea and picnics on the way to their destinations or end at a park or garden for refreshments and yard games.





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Back at Salisbury's tweed ride, Sharon Earnhardt wore an authentic Harris Tweed jacket that she found lying around her house and horseback riding pants that "went with the look."

She found her hat at the Salisbury Square antique store years ago.

Tweeds and Steeds was Earnhardt's fourth ride; she also rode in Charlotte's and Durham's tweed rides.

"I love social rides anyways," she said.

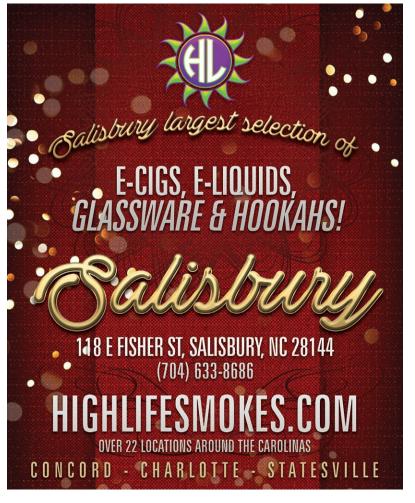
She said she enjoyed getting together with people who she might not have seen in a while.

From those gathering with a few friends to those riding together with hundreds of strangers, dressing up in tweed and snazzy outfits seems to bring people together to have fun while channeling the past.

"They're just a lot of fun," Phillips said. 🛐

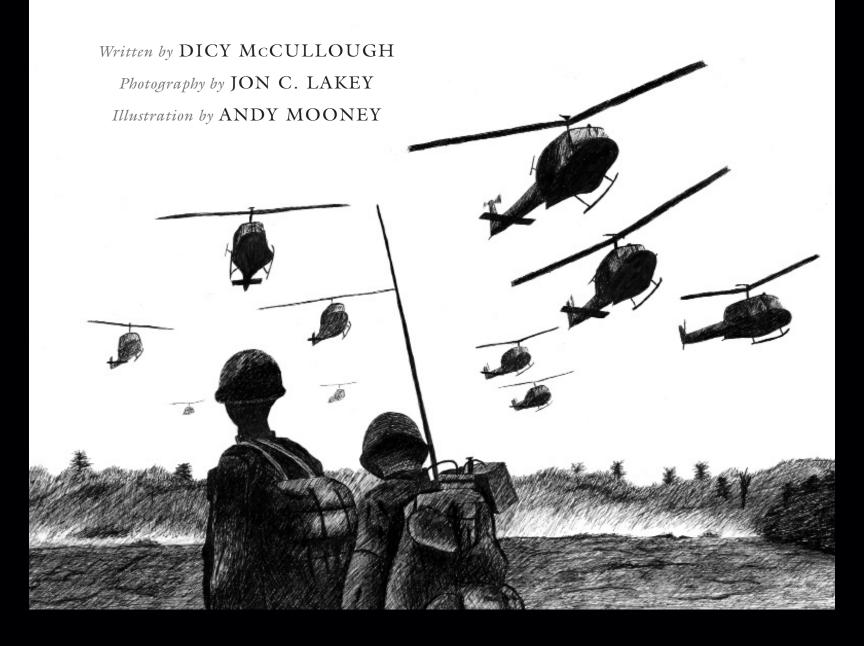


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When Johnny came marching home

After Vietnam, Graham found purpose in family, teaching.





Above: Dr. Johnny Graham and his wife, Anita, at their home in Salisbury. Graham was a radiotelephone operator (RTO) in the Vietnam War. In the illustration on the opposite page, Graham would have been the RTO with the antenna.

r. Johnny Graham's story begins a lot like that of other teenage boys in the '60s. Not necessarily dodging the draft, but knowing as long as they were in school their number wouldn't be called, many went off to college.

Johnny graduated from East Rowan High School in the spring of 1965 and that fall started as a freshman civil engineering major at N.C. State University. Not having a plan or purpose, he flunked out after two semesters.

When he returned home, Graham went to work at Fiber Industries in Salisbury as a production operator, then as an apprentice mechanic. Drafted the next year, he joined the Army, going to Fort Bragg for basic training, followed by advanced infantry training at Fort Polk, La.

In early January 1968, now a soldier in Vietnam, Graham was assigned to A Company, 1st and 7th Cavalry, the same outfit Gen. George Custer led into the Battle of the Little Big Horn. But instead of horses, the Cavalry was using helicopters, and Johnny's assignment came just in time for the Tet Offensive.

An inexperienced and scared Graham quickly became part of the action. On his first day in the field, he took over the duty of RTO (radiotelephone operator) for his platoon. It was well known the RTO was one of the main targets during enemy firefights. Graham learned the previous radio operator had been killed in action the day before.

Helicopters almost guaranteed daily contact with the enemy. During his tour in Vietnam, Johnny participat-







From left: Graham's dog tags, combat infantry badge and his First Cavalry patch from his military service during the Vietnam War; award after being inducted into the UNC-Charlotte Alumni Hall of Fame; Graham's mother was sent a Purple Heart medal after he was wounded.

ed in more than 30 air assaults, during which he repelled or jumped into the jungle.

After the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam, he was sent to the Central Highlands and Khe-Sanh, eventually taking part in the First Cavalry's air assault into the A Shau Valley, one of North Vietnam's main entry points from the Ho Chi Minh Trail into South Vietnam.

Combat was so intense only one person in Graham's unit completed a whole tour. To cope with the large number of casualties, troops learned not to build relationships or get close to a comrade because chances were high they might be gone tomorrow.

"Vietnam was different than other wars," Graham says, "In previous wars, soldiers had down time waiting for orders or the next battle. They often became friends with members in their troop." In Johnny's Vietnam experience, there was no down time. Everything was high energy. Fellow soldiers usually were known only by their first or last name

because it was easier to build up a wall than lose someone you cared about.

That kind of loss came for Johnny during a helicopter mission into the A Shau Valley after only five months in Vietnam. When their helicopter came across the mountain, Graham and the rest of the crew could see anti-aircraft artillery in the air.

The helicopter took several hits and went down, killing six of the 10 men in Johnny's platoon. The crash knocked Graham unconscious, but a fellow soldier pulled him out of the burning wreckage.

Although proud to have earned two Purple Hearts and been nominated for a Bronze Star, Graham couldn't erase the events of that day. With a leg totally shattered, a nose broken and shrapnel in his face, Graham spent the next year recovering — as much as his mind and body would allow.

The years have taken their toll physically, mentally and emotionally. At times he still struggles to breathe because of lung damage

from chemical exposure in Vietnam. Every day he deals with pain; every night, vivid memories.

"No matter what I'm doing, day or night," Graham says, "the images are only a thought away. I never know what may trigger a flashback."

Johnny still believes he's one of the lucky ones because he made it home, but in the early years, the pain and depression were so bad he didn't know how he would make it through the day.

"One does not return from war the same," Graham says. "My newly acquired skill-set after Vietnam did not prepare me for the marketplace. The demand for snipers, radio operators or quick-kill artists was minimal."

Graham credits his success to a faith in God and to Anita Stepp, a young girl he met at a Catawba College dance the summer of 1966. Having kept in touch during his tour and while she was at Appalachian State studying to be a teacher, they were engaged

on Valentine's Day 1970 and married later that year.

Johnny thinks the Lord, in leading him to Anita, provided the support he needed for life to become meaningful again.

"Anita quietly balanced a life of family, friends and work, while giving her husband support and encouragement through the years," says a friend, Jane Smith-Steinberg.

While she and Johnny were dating, Anita says, everything was new and exciting.

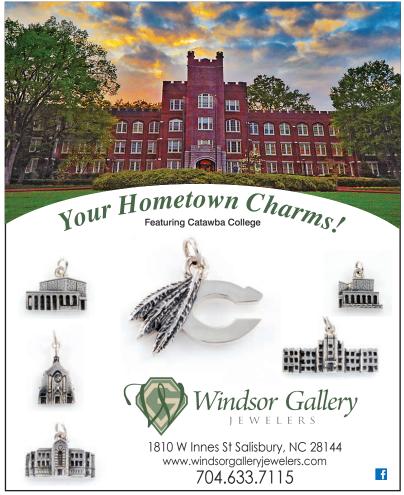
"I didn't realize until later that Johnny wasn't the same young man I had met four years earlier and that war had changed him," she says. "If I had known the depths of his despair I might not have married him. The scars on the outside were visible, while the unseen scars on the inside ran deep, only to be discovered as time went by."

Graham went back to work at Fiber Industries as a computer operator. As he worked around engineers, he discovered he liked that kind of work. Anita was teaching by now, and with her blessing Johnny applied to the civil



Dr. Johnny Graham shows off a card trick at his home. He sometimes will show a new trick to his wife's bridge club.





REMINISCE / dr. johnny graham

engineering department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Johnny went on to earn both his bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from UNC-Charlotte. As a teaching assistant, he realized how much he enjoyed teaching others. It meant going back to school one more time for a Ph.D.

Graham applied and was accepted to the same N.C. State University department he had flunked out of as a freshman in the '60s. He earned his doctorate and became an engineering professor at UNC-Charlotte.

Thanks to his students, Graham received the highest honor — the Alcoa Foundation Outstanding Faculty Award — at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Graham thinks he was selected because his students viewed him as a caring teacher they could approach with their struggles, because he had struggled, too.

One of his proudest moments came in 2015, when he was selected from over 130,000 alumni as an inductee into the UNC-Charlotte Alumni Hall of Fame

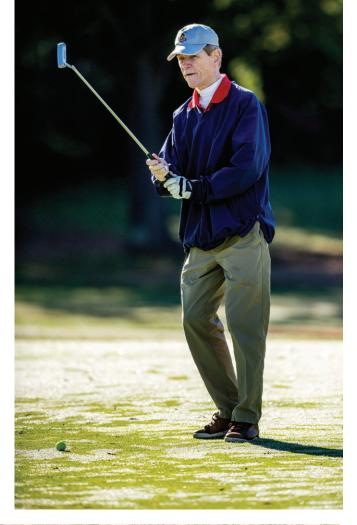
ductee into the UNC-Charlotte Alumni Hall of Fame.

"Johnny has come a long way from his experiences in Vietnam," Anita says.

"When we were first married, I didn't understand and began to wonder if I had made a mistake because he was so cold. It was hard for him to open up and let me

"Over time I came to realize that was part of why he survived as a soldier. He had to build up those walls. And yet that survival technique in marriage doesn't work.

Dr. Johnny Graham plays golf every Monday with the Golf Association of Rowan Seniors (GARS). Graham was recently paired with fellow GARS members John Mitchell, Guy Wirt and Gordan Correll for a round at Rolling Hills Golf Club in Salisbury.











I'll never forget being excited about decorating our new home and disappointed Johnny didn't share in that excitement. I didn't understand he couldn't be excited, because his mind was on the battlefield with feelings of guilt for having survived. To him, decorating a house was frivolous. That's tough for anyone to understand."

Johnny says one of he breakthroughs for him was when their daughter, Jennifer, was born. "I knew if I wanted my daughter to love me," he says, "I had to love her back and be involved in her life."

In retirement, Graham has enjoyed golf, reading, performing magic and sailboat racing, though the sailboat racing now means keeping up with it on television. He golfs with buddies every Monday and sometimes will try his magic tricks on Anita's bridge club.

Besides his faith and family, Graham thinks his work as a teacher is the glue that held him together and gave him a purpose.

"Healing comes faster when you find a way to help others," he says. "Teaching and being a good dad was that way for me. When I focused on my students and my responsibilities, my body didn't hurt so much. When I was helping a student accomplish a goal, or when my daughter looked into my eyes and said, 'I love you daddy,' I knew life mattered."

Dicy McCullough is a local children's author. Check out her books at www.dicymcculloughbooks.com, or for speaking engagements, contact her at 704-278-4377.





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Chandler Mays, Greysen Pressley, Glen Pressley, Tracy Pressley and Trent Pressley at last year's New Year's Eve at the Bell Tower. — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

January-February 2017

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area

DEC. 31-JAN. 1

New Year's Eve at the Bell Tower

• Bell Tower Park

8 p.m.-midnight. Free. Say goodbye to 2016 and ring in 2017. Festivities include live music, video feed from Times Square, hot chocolate and other goodies, as well as ringing of the bell at midnight.

DEC. 31-JAN. 1 Old Stone House Christmas • Old Stone House

Dec. 31, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jan. 1, noon-4 p.m. Tours of the historic house and the reenactment of a Colonial family's Christmas celebration in Rowan County. Guides in period costumes will be on the site, and guests can learn about customs and participate in crafts, musket-firing, woodworking, weaving, candle-making, open-fire cooking with lots of samples, music, children's games, goats and chickens. Located at 770 Old Stone House

Road near Granite Quarry. Contact 704-633-5946, or go to www.rowanmuseum.org for more information.

JAN. 1

Resolution 5K Run

• The Forum

8 a.m. start. Benefits Rowan Helping Ministries. Start the new year with exercise and an activity to help others. Sponsored by Salisbury-Rowan Runners.

JAN. 7

Big Band Bash

Catawba College

"Music through the Ages," presented by Salisbury Symphony. Begins at 6:30 p.m. at Hedrick Little Theatre on the campus before moving (orchestra and all) to the Crystal Ballroom for the balance of the evening. Snow date: Jan. 14. For information: 704-637-4314, or ljones@catawba.edu, or www. Salisburysymphony.org.

JAN. 12

Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala

• Livingstone Hospitality Center 6 p.m. The Chamber is celebrating its 91st year. The Livingstone Hospitality Center is the former Holiday Inn on Jake Alexander Boulevard.

JAN. 19-22, 26-28 'Viva Las Vegas'

• Lee Street theatre

This musical revue brings back the days of show girls, Elvis and neon lights. Go to leestreet.org, or call 704-310-5507 for more information.

JAN. 26-29, FEB. 1-4 'Act One'

• Meroney Theater

Tony Award-winning writer and director James Lapine has adapted 'Act One' for the stage, creating a funny, heart-breaking and suspenseful play that celebrates the making of a playwright and a Broadway legend. All shows at 7:30 p.m., except 2:30 p.m. Jan. 29. Adults, \$17; students and seniors, \$14. Go to www.piedmontplayers.com, or call 704-633-5471 for information.

JAN. 28

Waterworks Oyster Roast

• F&M Trolley Barn

12th annual event. This is a major fund-raising event for Waterworks Visual Arts Center. For more information: www.waterworks.org,



Trish and Tim Proper during last year's Big Band Bash. — Photo by Susan Shinn.

or 704-636-1882.

JAN. 29

34th Annual Winter Flight 8K Run, 5K Health Walk and Half-Mile Fun Run

• Catawba College

1:30 p.m., Half-Mile Fun Run start. 2 p.m., start of 8K Run and 5K Walk. The oldest 8K in the state. For more information: www. salisburyrowanrunners.org, or 704-310-6741.

FEB. 2-MAY 4 Rowan County History Course

• Rowan Museum

The 10th edition of the Rowan County History Course lasts for 13 weeks, meeting every Thursday except over holidays. The first meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Rowan Museum, but there will be different speakers and locations throughout the course, which covers Rowan County from pre-1753 days to the present. Sponsored by the Rowan Museum and Historic Salisbury Foundation. Call the foundation at 704-636-0103 for more information.

FEB. 4 'Look Who's Joining Us'

• Catawba College

Family concert, 4 p.m. Salisbury Symphony is joined by the Rowan County Fifth Grade Honors Chorus, members of the Rowan All-County Band and the Rowan Youth Orchestra. Go to Salisburysymphonync.

weebly.com, or call 704-637-4314 for more information.

FEB. 4

Father-Daughter Dance

• Salisbury Civic Center

6-9 p.m. The 21st annual dance sponsored by Salisbury Parks and Recreation.

FEB.9

Empty Bowls

• North Hills Christian School

To benefit Rowan Helping Ministries. A simple soup meal reminds us of all who are hungry in our community. Participants receive pottery bowls made by school students and guests in the homeless shelter. Contact Rowan Helping Ministries at 704-637-6838 for more information.

FEB. 17-18, 24-25 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

• Meroney Theater

Piedmont Players production of a comedy by William Shakespeare. School show dates are Feb. 13-16. Ticket prices: adults, \$12; students and seniors, \$10. Box office is open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday, or by phone at 704-633-5471, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

FEB. 21-25 'The Children's Hour'

• Catawba College

7:30 nightly. Hedrick Little Theatre on the college campus. Ticket prices: adults, \$17; students, \$10. A Lillian Hellman play presented by Catawba College Theatre Arts. For more information, go to www.catawba.edu/theatre.

FEB. 23-26, MARCH 2-4 'The Diary of Ann Frank'

• Lee Street theatre

Lee Street theatre presents a Center for Faith & the Arts' production by the St. Thomas Players. Go to leestreet.org, or call 704-310-5507 for information.



Sandi and Bob Scott of Kannapolis

The Duke Dash 5K & Healthfest the third annual MURDOCK Study community appreciation event — drew hundreds of people to the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis on Sept. 24, including 251 runners and walkers who completed the race. Other popular activities included Zumba, line dancing, yoga, health screenings and entertainment, all free as Duke University's way to thank the community for supporting the MURDOCK Study.

— Photos by Emily Ford



Jamie Anderson and Josh Yoder of Salisbury

KE DASH



Left: Gigi Curry of Harrisburg and Dorothy Curry of Kannapolis.

Right: Selina Baker, Ilene Barge and Abha Singh, all Duke University employees based in Kannapolis.





Juan Pablo Bautista, 10, with Claudia Marquez, twin 2-year-olds Jan and Jordi Bautista, Eduardo Bautista, 7, and Mercedes and Juventino Marquez, all of Kannapolis.









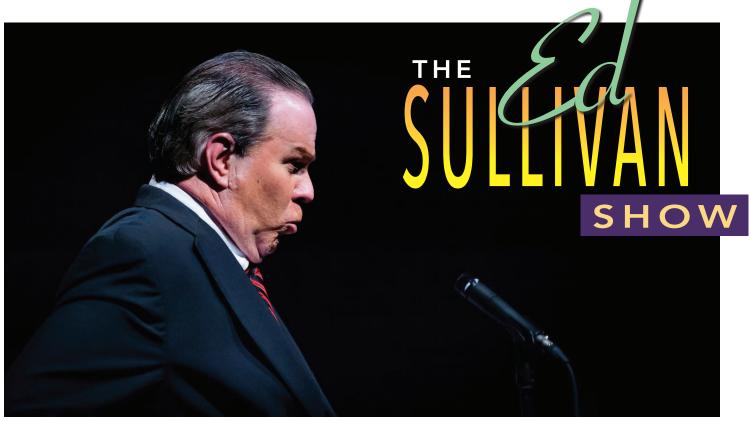


Kollin Petty, 11, and Amy Petty of Kannapolis.





Above: Anne Clark and Marsha Fitgerald, both of Concord. Left: Kirsten Bahnson, a Duke University employee, and Catherine Kruse, a volunteer.



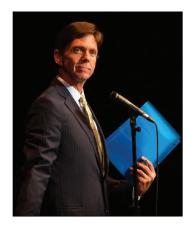
Kent Bernhardt as Ed Sullivan.

"The Ed Sullivan Show" Tribute was a fun and successful fundraiser for the Salisbury Symphony. It was held at the Norvell Theatre, which for one night became the CBS Television Studio. Laura Lewis chaired the committee that included Kent Bernhardt, who played the role of Ed Sullivan; Andrea Anders, Rosemary Kinard, Ashley Shoaf, Kaye Peeler and Randy Overcash. Over 16 acts — including singing, dancing, comedy and magic — entertained a sold-out crowd.

— Photos by Sean Meyers Photography



Bethany Sinnott, Jerry Cochran, Tim Gudger and Russell Stevens share a laugh during a break in the show.



Above: David Whisenant served as the announcer, introducing Ed Sullivan after each commercial break.

Right: A large crowd enjoyed the Ed Sullivan Show at the Norvell Theatre.





Left: Dan and Winnie Mikkelson dance the night away during the 'Ed Sullivan Show.'

Right: At intermission, Dr. Joel Goodwin speaks with Laura Lewis.





Left: Part of the 'Ed Sullivan Show' crowd spends time in the Norvell Theatre lobby during intermission. Right: Ed Sullivan welcomes singer Wendy

Scott.





Smoke rises from the fired rifles of a company of Civil War reenactors who marched in the Gold Hill Founders' Day Parade.



Joseph Faulkner of the Stanly County Hillbillies waves during the Gold Hill Founders' Day Parade.

FOUNDERS' DAY

The 27th annual Gold Hill Founders' Day celebrated the history and culture of the once famous 19th century gold mining boom town. Events included a morning parade, arts, crafts, live music, heritage living exhibits and Civil War reenactors.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Sophia Perry, 2, takes stock of the bubble gum and candy she collected during the parade.



Most members of the Gold Hill Men's Club found comfy seats on hay bales during the parade.





Above: Handlers with Cooper's Australian Shepherds of Gold Hill show off a couple of their dogs. Left: Members of the Stanly County Hillbilly Tour Bus cruise by.





Above: Bob Coleman rides his Allis-Chalmers tractor in the Gold Hill Founders' Day Parade. Left: Members of the Dimensions Dance Arts school perform during the parade.



Above: Crystal Heath. Below: Waterworks staff members Anne Palmer and Jean Willis.



Waterworks Visual Arts Center held its 8th Annual Big Chili Cook-off at the F&M Trolley Barn. The evening offered a wide variety of chili recipes and cooks in a competition judged by those who attended. Proceeds support Waterworks' efforts to provide diverse opportunities in the arts through exhibitions, education and outreach.

— Photos by Tim Coffey



Keith Knight, Chris Fowler and Sarah Knight

Big Chili Cook-off





Beverly Fowler, Greg Shields and Kristen Shields









Clockwise from above: Rachel Griffith,
general manager of Go Burrito!, and owner
Lily Wetzel; Yorke Reynolds and Chase
Reynolds; Susan Wear, John Safrit and
Arlene Hankins; Rachel Cornacchione, Cody
Veros and Allison Veros; Paula Mead and
Amy Foote; Waterworks volunteers Peter
Euto and Don Moore; Ralph Wear and
Donnie Clement.









Main Street Mission



Above: A catered dinner was served on two long tables. Right: Colleen Welday, Jamie Welday and Audrey Oliphant stand in front of cakes which were auctioned off to benefit Main Street Mission's capital campaign.



Main Street Mission held a dinner to kick off its capital campaign on Sept. 24 at the mission in downtown China Grove. The \$400,000 effort will convert a former laundromat next

door to the mission into a food pantry. The existing building will then be used for community programs. China Grove native Tom Smith is the campaign's lead donor, with Fred Corriher

serving as the project's informal fundraiser. For more information about the campaign, visit mainstreetmission.org.

— Photos by Susan Shinn



Jack Untener, right, a retired HVAC business owner, talks to Main Street Mission Executive Director Anne Corriher about architectural plans for renovating and expanding the former laundromat.

Right: Friends attending the dinner included, from left, David Wootten, Joyce Thomas, Penny Wootten, Stephanie Bourdier and Jennifer Caraccio. Below right: Alan Goodman, owner of Goodman Farm and Supply, sits with his dad, Walter. Below: Ciera Williams hugs her mom, Lauren Lee.









Salisbury native and former U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Hanford Dole, left, stands with Sydney Sides. Dole's Salisbury home was a stop on this year's OctoberTour.

The 2016 OctoberTour Patrons' Party had "A Night in Havana" theme at the Salisbury Station. Historic Salisbury Foundation's Patrons' Party is traditionally held on the Thursday before the weekend OctoberTour. The night included cocktails, a dinner catered by Mambo Grill & Tapas and dancing.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Jane Smith-Steinberg, Dianne Hall, Elaine Howle and Martha Bostian

HANATIN HANGHT IN



Amber Watson and Alice Rich pose in a vintage car at 'A Night in Havana.'



Lina and Steve Drinkard



Above: Jeff Matthews, Johnny Behrooz and Gloria Matthews. Right: Megan Ferden, Taylor Sexton and Maggie Behrooz







In October, Grievous Gallery organized the first East End Food Truck Rally in the 300 block of East Council Street. The free event featured several food trucks from the area, including two which had recently made Buzzfeed.com's "10 Best Food Trucks in North Carolina" list. The event also featured live music.

— Photos by Mark Wineka





Top: A good-sized crowd kept the food trucks busy on East Council Street. Above: Becky Long, Michael Downum, Amy Morgan and Lashonna Geter.





Left: Elizabeth Plumley, Aaron Plumley, Skylar Plumley and Lexsa Turchin. Middle: Andrew Beck, Shawn Lloyd and Maggie Vang. Right: Brad Cox, Erica Postlewaite, Tim Demers, Griffin Demers and Elysia Demers.



Powles Staton Funeral Home sponsored a free Veterans Appreciation Breakfast at its headquarters in Rockwell. For military veterans, the breakfast included sandwiches, juice, coffee and doughnuts. Krispy Kreme provided a dipping station for its doughnuts, and the funeral home also gave away a basket filled with gift cards as a door prize.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



All of these guys came to the Veterans Appreciation Breakfast from The Gables residential development in Salisbury. They include, from left, George Bass, H.J. Kesler, Jack Bilson (standing), Chuck Campbell (seated), Jack Taylor, Baxter Mowery, Richard Snyder, Mel Sealy (seated in the middle), Steve Mozolak, Don Tuller (seated), Robert Parker (saluting) and Carl



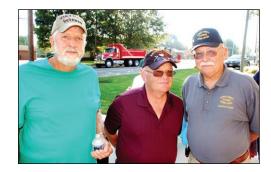
Randy Allen, Charles Cauble, Melissa Waller, Jim Deal, Margaret Cauble and Bill Lane.

VETERANS Appreciation Breakfast



Above: Robert Parker and Jack Bilson. Right: John Evans, Howard Myrick and Gary Gardner.







Above: Dean Carlson, Larry Ketchie and Steve Taylor. Left: Luke Morgan, Randy Allen and Charles Cauble. Right: Thelma and Lewis Reid.



Reeled in by a little town

'Getting away' brought me home.

I remember it starting just as the days began to lengthen after a snowy Pennsylvania winter.

"We'll go look at colleges this summer. You should start thinking about where you want to go," declared my dad. Suddenly, I realized I'd better start seriously thinking about where I DID want to go. Many of my classmates wanted a college close to home but I wanted to get away. Little did I know that "getting away" would bring me home.

We visited a number of colleges and universities that summer — some new with modern buildings, while others featured ivy-covered walls. Then we arrived in Salisbury.

My family pulled into the Howard Johnson's Motel in mid afternoon. My appointment to meet with the admissions rep at Catawba had been scheduled for first thing the next morning. With time to spare before dinner at the Howard Johnson Restaurant (I couldn't wait to get my favorite — peppermint stick ice cream!), we all piled back into the station wagon to go find the college.

We drove up East Innes Street. "Typical little town," I thought as we passed a shopping center, a motel, some fast-food places and a bus station. However, the closer we got to downtown, the more intrigued I became.

There was a great old school building on a corner, a grocery store called "Food Town" across the street and a wonderful Spanish style train station you could see from the bridge. As we drove through, I could tell the downtown was really pretty nice.

There was O.O. Rufty's General Store, a

drugstore in a great old building on the square and a very impressive seven-story stone building across the street. It looked like it was on the highest point of land and I thought, "Boy, what a view you could get from the top."

We passed a beautiful marble post office and the most amazing round brick church I had ever seen. As we continued on our way to find Catawba, there was a mixture of old houses, apartment buildings, banks, a car dealer, gas stations – and another one of those Food Town grocery stores.

I knew the minute I saw the campus, with its interesting brick buildings and large trees, that Catawba was the place for me. Thankfully, the interview went well and my application was accepted.

However, to paraphrase Paul Harvey, here is the rest of the story.

It was through Catawba that I really got

to know Salisbury and its people. Betty Ann Stanback invited us to her home where we met "the locals." I met a huge variety of people by working with Piedmont Players.

When I handled publicity for the Catawba theatre department shows, I got to know George Raynor and Helen Cheney at the Post and Tom Harrell at WSTP. Through my part-time job of working events at the College-Community Centre,

I worked with the Salisbury Symphony, the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association and the Community Concert Association. Learning to know these wonderful individuals was one of the best parts of my Catawba education.

I really LIKED these people. I really LIKED this town. I decided I did not want to leave.

My first job was working with Ed Clement at Security Bank. He introduced me to Historic Salisbury Foundation, then a fledgling organization

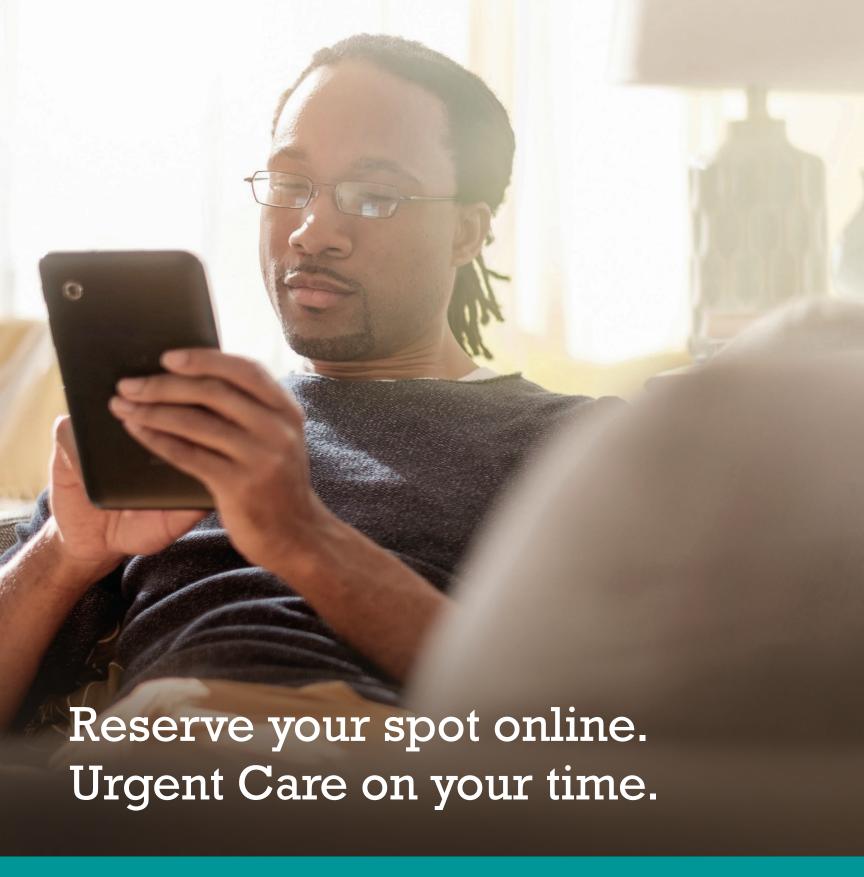
trying to preserve what makes Salisbury special.

The rest, as they say, is history. I have been home ever since. S

Diane Dillon Hooper, who couldn't decide what she wanted to be when she grew up, is retired and lives in Salisbury's Fulton Heights neighborhood.



by DIANE DILLON HOOPER



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