

WINTER 2020-2021

SALISBURY

t h e m a g a z i n e

VINE GAMES

Couples' farm provides
brewers with an essential — hops

Scouts' honor

Organization marks
its 100th anniversary in Rowan

Grains of truth

Hardwoods run
through home,
business of Fricks

Bridal paths

Couples, vendors
make weddings work
despite pandemic



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the magazine

PUBLISHER - John Carr
john.carr@salisburythemagazine.com

EDITOR - Mark Wineka
mark.wineka@salisburythemagazine.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR - Andy Mooney
andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com

EDITORIAL

Natalie Anderson
natalie.anderson@salisburythemagazine.com

Josh Bergeron
josh.bergeron@salisburythemagazine.com

Carl Blankenship
carl.blankenship@salisburythemagazine.com

Mike London
mike.london@salisburythemagazine.com

Shavonne Potts
shavonne.potts@salisburythemagazine.com

Ben Stansell
ben.stansell@salisburythemagazine.com

ADVERTISING

Dennis Davidson
dennis.davidson@salisburythemagazine.com

Andrea Fleege
andrea.fleege@salisburythemagazine.com

Malynda Peeler
malynda.peeler@salisburythemagazine.com

Jason Slusser
jason.slusser@salisburythemagazine.com

PRODUCTION

Susan Baker
susan.baker@salisburythemagazine.com

Lisa Jean Humphrey
lisa.humphrey@salisburythemagazine.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Cherrathee Hager, Linda Holshouser,
Cortland Hunter, Jon C. Lakey,
Kris Mueller, Lora Owen,
Mary Padavick, Marcia Parrott,
Alissa Redmond, Diana Storey,
Jenny Tenney and Ben White

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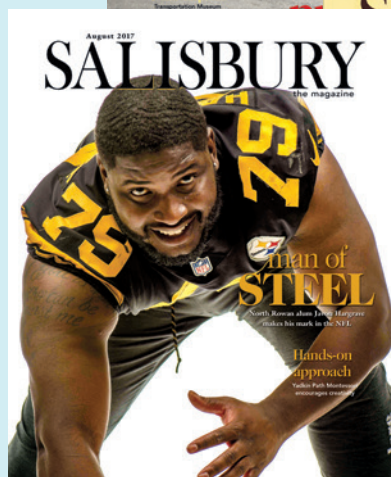
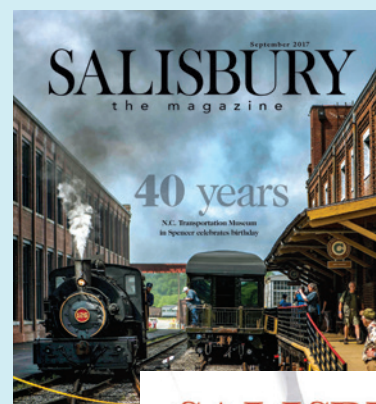
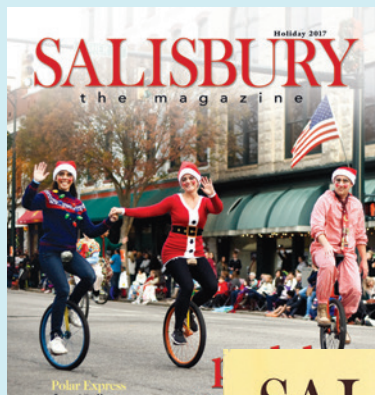
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*On the cover and this
page: A hops flower. Hops
provide the alpha and beta
acids to beer, while serving
as its bittering, flavoring
and stabilizing agent.
(Jon C. Lakey photos)*





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Six words are all it takes

Some years ago, a magazine editor named Larry Smith asked his relatives sitting around the Thanksgiving table to tell a story about themselves in only six words.

You probably know the rest. Smith turned his six-word idea into a best-selling book series, and he recently wrote a New York Times op-ed piece titled, “The Pandemic in Six-Word Memoirs.” (I notice the title is six words, too.)

The Times followed up on Smith's contribution by asking readers — in the face of a year filled with the pandemic and politics — to send in six words on what made them grateful. Smith himself told the Times, “I can't think of a time when expressing gratitude has been more important.”

It was an appropriate Thanksgiving exercise.

Many times I've heard people talk of 2020 in terms of how unusual, how tragic, how terrible, how unfair, how challenging, how kooky, how exasperating and how eye-opening it has been. I've heard it called the worst year ever — and that's being generous.

But in this issue Salisburian Diana Storey tells us how two big Rowan County weddings took place in 2020 despite the pandemic. The parents involved deserve a lot of credit, as do the vendors who took all the precautions needed — from masks, sanitizers and social distancing to many other changes made on the fly.

Six words for this: “I do requires can-do spirit.”

You'll also come to meet two Davie County couples who decided, pretty much on a lark, that they should go into the business of growing hops for the craft beer industry. In just three years, they have one of the largest hops farms in North Carolina with room — and dreams — to grow.

Six words: “Hops make the world go ‘round.’”

Contributing writer Kris Mueller pays interesting visits to the homes of Brenda Zimmerman and Daniel Thraikill, each with a passion for old books. Brenda's personal collection reaches back to the 1700s, while young Thraikill finds comfort in refurbishing well-worn Bibles.

Six words: “In any time, books are friends.”

Wood runs through the lives of Andy and Mabelle Frick. Andy owns Blandly Hardwoods in Gold Hill, and you'll see, thanks to photographer Jon Lakey's images, how some of the lumber from Blandly Hardwoods is incorporated into the Fricks' beautiful home outside of Rockwell.

Six words: “Life lesson: Never slumber on lumber.”

The pandemic has been hard, but folks find ways to keep going.

Elsewhere in this Winter edition of Salisbury the Magazine, read about the 100th anniversary of Scouting in Rowan County and also contributing writer Ben White's gripping recount on the 1930 Salisbury shootout that killed the infamous Otto Wood.

The magazine catches up with Rowan Original Karen Leonard for a quick Q&A. Cortland Hunter submitted

the Through the Lens photograph, and Cherrathée Hager provided the artwork for Salisbury's the Place.

In Bookish, Alissa Redmond gives us her favorite books from 2020 and, on a limited return, you'll find some Scene photos in back.

Meanwhile, how could you describe 2020 in six words? The phrase “A man walks into a bar” springs to mind. Interpret it how you will — from the notion the year turned us into heavy drinkers, or that we literally gashed our heads on a low-hanging bar, which we didn't see coming.

But we see 2021 coming, and here are six words to take it on: “It will be the best ever.” We're setting the bar high.



Mark Wineka,
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

| *through the lens* |

by Cortland Hunter



Cortland Hunter, a 2018 graduate of Catawba College, submitted this November morning photograph of the Rebecca at the Well fountain, centerpiece of the Robertson Gateway Park at East Innes and Depot streets. She used a Nikon camera.

Though challenging, 2020 still had its great reads

This year has challenged my patience to focus on the stories of others unless they contain narratives strong enough to transport my attention away from my own anxieties. Here are the four books that I not only completed reading this year but was able to wholeheartedly recommend to others for their dramatic power to provide escape.



by ALISSA REDMOND

All feature loss and grief, but end without you — hopefully — descending into tears (not to give too much away). Here is my absolute favorite book of this crazy year:

“The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue”

(489 pp. Tor Books) by V.E. Schwab languished on my desk for weeks, and I never felt compelled to pick it up. Yet customers kept pre-ordering it, and I knew I needed to understand the buzz surrounding this title for the sake of

my professional reputation as a bookseller.

I do not typically gravitate towards historical fiction, fantasy, romance — any of the genres in which this incredible gem of a novel can be categorized.

I devoured this book.

It is a delight, containing one of those rare storylines that I could not predict, did not want to end, and cannot wait to continue following via a sequel, if it is possible, which I think is very likely.

In a nutshell, Addie makes a deal with the devil in 1700s France to escape an arranged marriage — with the catch that no one she knows or will ever meet will be able to remem-

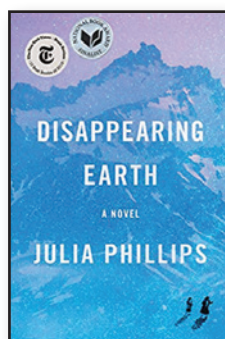
ber her for the rest of eternity. Addie experiences hundreds of years of historical events alone — with the devil checking in occasionally to see if she is ready to give up — but she remains enthralled with life despite her anonymity. What a fresh concept, a beautiful meditation on what truly matters most in life (time vs. love vs. recognition vs. power).

I most appreciated the love notes to literature and the arts Schwab dispersed throughout this novel. Addie’s quality of life starts to improve as she learns to read. She begins to view her greatest power as her ability to creatively shape art in her image (as she encounters difficulty creating objects herself due to her terms with, oh yeah, the devil).

I long for the extent of Addie’s powers, and depth of her feelings, to be further revealed. Hopefully, a sequel will not take 10 more years for Schwab to crank out, as this one did — but if it does, her next book will totally be worth the energy invested. This book is gorgeous, with a note perfect ending.

Other wonderful books I read in 2020 include:

“Disappearing Earth” (272 pp. Vintage)



by Julia Phillips is an incredibly suspenseful tale unlike any I have read before. Phillips’ first chapter describes the abduction of two young sisters; the subsequent 12 chapters contain narratives from 12 loosely connected women, all members of the girls’ remote Siberian society, who dole out tantalizing clues to the sisters’ fates, month by month, as life resumes in the aftermath of this shocking crime. Written by an American with significant professional ties to this, her non-native, community, Phillips’ tale brings fresh understanding of the ways any neighborhood can rally to protect, or

damage, its own.

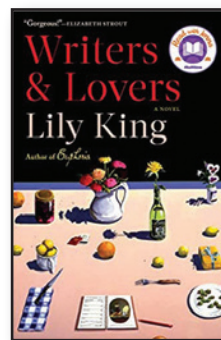
“Migrations” (256 pp. Flatiron) by an Australian debut novelist, Charlotte McConaghy, begins in Greenland with Franny Stone tagging some members of the world’s only remaining flock of arctic terns. Why is she alone in her research endeavor to track their migratory patterns? Why is she desperate to join any private fishing vessel that will have her aboard to follow these birds? Her motivations are slowly revealed as the book shifts back and forth between scenes from her mysterious life. This is a gorgeous tale of a woman literally adrift at sea.



“Writers & Lovers” (320 pp. Grove Press) by Lily King profiles protagonist Casey Peabody, a novelist with no novel under her belt, as she waits tables and dog-sits for months following her mother’s death. When her arrogant landlord states he finds it “extraordinary” that she

feels she has something to communicate to others through her writing, Casey slowly finds ways to bend her grief, anger, and despair into the written word. This is a beautiful work of fiction for those who appreciate the craft of writing, or just lovers of a good story demonstrating how one can find his or her own voice. **S**

These titles are available at Salisbury’s independent bookstore, South Main Book Company, located at 110 S. Main St. Call 704-630-9788 or email southmainbookcompany@gmail.com to confirm store hours and events. Alissa Redmond owns the store.



Living for the moment

Karen Leonard loves giving people adventures to remember

WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA / SUBMITTED PHOTO

Karen Leonard's life has been all about planning things for others to do, or at least giving them experiences to check off their bucket lists.

"I love giving people moments in time," says Karen, who most recently was activity coordinator for the Oak Park retirement community. She held that job for almost 11 years, and it wasn't unusual for the daredevil exploits of the Oak Park residents to make the news, thanks to Leonard's enthusiasm for seizing the day.

"I have worked with ages 0 to 97 over the years and have asked David Freeze to work with me in writing a book about my experiences," Karen says. "Living in the moment at all ages."

Karen Leonard's career has been devoted to recreation. She previously served as director of activities, wellness and transportation for Trinity Oaks, directed the Cornelius and Davidson Parks and Recreation Department and was acting director and program director of Salisbury Parks and Recreation.

Karen graduated in 1976 from East Rowan High, where she met her husband, Roger. He was the band's drum major; she, a majorette. With no warning, Roger died of a blood clot to his heart on Nov. 1 as this issue of Salisbury the Magazine was being put together.

The couple were married 42 years. They had twin children and now seven grandchildren.

A certified life coach, Karen attends First Presbyterian Church. Her parents were the late Bill Gobble and Evelyn Gobble Graham. She had a brother, Doug, who died when he was in college and for whom an annual scholarship memorial golf tournament is held.

Besides maybe writing a book about her many experiences, Karen says she's not retiring. "I still



plan on working — just starting another chapter," she says.

Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with this Rowan Original for a quick Q&A:

Q. You are a master at coming up with projects, events and activities for the people you have served through the years. What do you look back on as your top adventure?

Two adventures stand out. On one adventure, that's hard to even put into words, I worked with special needs children for the City of Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department. I picked smiling children up each day and engaged them

in activities like swimming, horseback riding and cookouts. This inspired me. I ended up working for the Parks and Recreation Department for 13 years after that. The other adventure that stands out to me is pursuing the "Bucket List" of retirement community residents. I would ask residents, "What is something that you have always wanted to do and you never had a chance to do?" I loved not only hearing their answers, but helping to fulfill their bucket list dreams of adventure: 81-year-old Irene Moeller finally got to skydive: the Oak Park ladies checked off parasailing at the Outer Banks: and veterans went sky high in the Ageless Aviation Stearman bi-plane. To see their eyes light up with excitement and full of life is what adventure is about.

What are the regular activities that retirement community residents look forward to the most?

In my experience, residents look forward to mystery trips the most. Those are trips where residents are surprised with the destination of the trip only after they get on the bus to depart. I always have fun engaging the residents by dropping hints on the mystery and find joy in seeing the excitement of the residents when the mystery destination is revealed.

You and your late husband, Roger, raised high-achieving, community-conscious twins, Justin and Michelle, who ended up as valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, in their 2001 graduating class at Salisbury High, then went on to Duke University. What are they doing today?

Justin lives in Holly Springs, N.C., with his wife, Sarah, and their three children, Logan, Ben and Riley. With an electrical engineering degree from Duke and a Juris Doctor from UNC-Chapel Hill, Justin practices patent law at Murphy, Bilak, and Homiller PLLC, in Cary.

Michelle lives in Fort Mill, S.C., with her husband, Ryan, and their four children, Hannah, James, Liam, and Connor. After graduating from Duke University and Campbell Law School, Michelle was an assistant district attorney in Rowan County for several years. Currently, Michelle and her husband own and practice at Monk Law Firm, PLLC. The firm practices estate planning, elder law, business law and estate administration with offices in North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida.

You faced an incredibly tough pregnancy with the twins, being confined to a bed for 11 weeks until they could be successfully delivered at 36 weeks. What, if anything, still sticks with you about that experience?

We were told we were going to lose the twins at 5½ months. The night before I was to deliver the twins premature, our prayers were answered and I did not deliver that long night. The hope and faith I had that night sticks with me to this day, with Justin and Michelle as constant reminders that miracles do happen.

What's it like to be a grandmother?

Being a grandmother takes my heart places it has never been before. It is truly like watching the sun come up for the first time. I feel so blessed to have seven beautiful, loving grandchildren. I have always gotten my joy by giving others joy. Having grandchildren has taught me how wonderful getting joy feels when you receive it. There is also a magic in watching my own children turn into young, caring parents. It is incredible witnessing the growth and expansion of my family.

What do you do for fun when you're not leading activities for other people?

I find joy in planning events that bring others joy. So, when I'm not doing that for residents,

I'm doing it for my family.

Name a couple of your all-time favorite movies or television shows ...

"Wizard of Oz." If you ever go looking for your heart's desire, you don't have to look any further than your own backyard. In other words, your roots are important. You can dream of escaping, or have a desire to leave the here and now to find a better place. But in the end, "There's no place like home."

I also enjoy watching college football and college basketball, in support of my children's alma mater.

Do you have any favorite books or one or two you would definitely recommend to someone?

"First Dream" by Jim Clayton. And in its day, it was "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People."

Who is the person or people who had the biggest impact on your life?

My father. He taught me the value of hard work, empowered me to solve my own problems and encouraged me. He believed in helping others and kindness to everyone. Growing up we would have people at meals that did not have family, and we would have children from the orphanage stay with our family. He was a man of faith. We lived beside a church growing up, so we would just walk to church. He and my mother made sure we did not miss a Sunday. He taught me to do justly, love mercy, and work humbly. He told me at an early age, "What if you fall? But oh, my darling, what if you fly?" My father died of a sudden heart attack at the age of 48, but he taught me lessons for a lifetime.

What has the annual memorial golf tournament for your late brother meant to you and its organizers over the years?

Doug's close friend Curt Thomas started the Doug Gobble Memorial Golf Tournament, and then later, close friend Jay Hill joined him. Curt, Jay, Doug's other friends and all of the golf sponsors and players have been unbelievable.

Doug was in college (when he died), so it means so much that young people are being helped to pursue their dreams of college. Family does not necessarily mean blood relatives, but often a description of community. It has meant so much to have a chance to give back. That's the kind of person Doug was. Doug's memory lives on through others.

How has the community supported your endeavors over the years?

I can't begin to list everyone and every organization that has said yes to me when I have asked for a sponsor or a donation for the "Bucket List" or other events or projects. They are the ones that made it possible to make such a difference in so many lives. Particularly memorable to me in that regard is Catawba College, its president and its many coaches, students, and professors who generously said yes. They said yes to cheerleaders and football players regularly tailgating with retirement community residents. They said yes to baseball players taking residents to the retirement community prom. They said yes to the baseball team wearing their uniforms to play bean bag baseball with residents. They said yes to the women's volleyball team playing balloon volleyball with residents and the men's soccer team coming each week to teach residents how to play soccer on a makeshift soccer field in the community dining room. I am so thankful for all the people that have the passion for making a difference in other people's lives and that said yes when they heard my voice.

What's your pet peeve?

Complaining. You can always find something good in everything.

What are two foods always in your fridge or pantry?


Chocolate. Cashews.

If you could go back 30 years and talk to a younger Karen Gobble Leonard, what advice would you give her?

Yesterday is gone.

Tomorrow has not yet come.

We only have today.

Let's begin. 



Brenda Zimmerman sits, surrounded by some of her old books, and reads aloud parts of her favorites.



This tiny dictionary belonged to Brenda's mother.



Daniel uses a crimping tool to pleat and crimp the rounded corners of a Bible cover.



Ties that bind

They cherish how books tell stories inside and out

WRITTEN BY KRIS MUELLER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY

It is said that books are like old friends. They enrich our lives in countless ways and we interact with them on many levels, not just as readers. Two Rowan County residents — one a collector in an eclectic sort of way, and the other who gives new life to Bibles — share their bonds with books and how they bring them joy.

• • •

Sometimes an old book can tell two stories — the one printed inside and the tale it reveals about itself. The search for both stories keeps Salisbury native Brenda Zimmerman digging through piles of old books in antique stores and thrift shops.

“The first book I will grab is the one you can’t read the spine of,” Brenda says. “If you can’t read the spine, that interests me. There is a reason,” she says. So, she looks closer for clues to its

past — often names or notations inside or memorabilia tucked between the pages.

With more than 800 books on her home shelves and packed away, Brenda is a book collector, but not in the traditional sense. She takes home books that are rarely valuable but that appeal to her visually and pique her broad interests and irrepressible curiosity. She also reads most of them.

“I have a lot of books that are really damaged, and they are not worth a thing — like this book from 17 whatever,” she says, holding up a book with a tattered spine and frayed edges. “This book wouldn’t be worth 100 bucks. It is old, but it has no real intrinsic value. But I am fascinated by the fact that someone else purchased or had it — they held it, they looked through it, they read it. And here I am, 100 or 200 years later, doing the same

| the arts |



Daniel Thrailkill shows the raised ribs on the spine of a Bible, made by inserting leather strips between the layers of leather.



Brenda points out the print date — 1711 — on her oldest book, an Old German to English dictionary.



thing. Where it has been all this time fascinates me.”

One of Brenda’s favorite and oldest books found her, taking a circuitous path from Germany to Salisbury via New York. About five inches thick, it is a religious book printed in Old German in 1723 and bound with an update printed in 1727. The book was given to Brenda in 2006 after its owner saw a display of her books at the Salisbury library. He told her he was not a collector and did not know how to care for it.

A brief history tucked inside the book showed it was placed in the rafters of a home in Wurzburg, Germany, in the 1930s when Nazis burned books they disagreed with. A German roofer, Alfred Pietz, found the book. In 1970, he sent the 250-year-old book to a good friend, A. Westerberg of New York, following their discussion about the German and American definitions for the word “old.”

Brenda’s most vintage book was printed in 1711 and is an Old German to English (and reversed) dictionary or lexicon. It was a “dumpster dive,” she says, plucked from a box of books left next to a trash bin. It caught her attention because of its illustrations.



Left: Book binding glue is used to rebind books. **Right:** Brenda's many bookshelves are full of her old books and other memorabilia she collects.

She also collects books that are significant to her family, including one owned by five generations. It belonged to her great-great-grandmother and contains songs she sang to her children, according to a note inside written by one of the daughters.

Her most profitable purchase was a book by W. A. Ratledge, "Poems from the Civil War," which she bought for 50 cents to read to seniors she worked with at Trinity Oaks. When she learned Ratledge was appointed South Carolina's Poet Laureate in 1934, she sold the book for \$1,800, despite its worn condition.

Conversely, she also has a unique book bound

with a candy box lid and a potato sack. "It was a book on mid-1800s Victorian manners that was one of my favorites, just because someone thought it was special enough to preserve, regardless of how meagerly," she says.

Brenda's fondness for vintage books was evident by high school when her grandparents bought her nine books by Lord Bulmer-Lytton, who penned the sentence that begins, "It was a dark and stormy night ..." The books were published around 1850 and she wanted them because they were "really old," she recalls. Thinking there were 10 books in the series, Brenda spent 30 to 40 years looking for the final book, only

to discover she already had the full collection, which they bought in Lewisburg, Tennessee, in 1972.

"I have such intimate (memories) about each book," Brenda explains. "I can tell you where almost every book came from."

Those are the details we remember about life-long friends and treasures.

•••

In the soft glow of two desk lamps, Daniel Thraikill bends over an old, coverless Bible, working intently as he wraps it in new leather and carefully pleats and crimps a corner. The college student has become a craftsman for the

Left: Brenda is often drawn to books because of their beautiful illustrations. **Right:** Daniel uses rebinding and woodworking tools in his work.



Lord, restoring old Bibles to extend their lives and gift to people who are special to him.

The subdued lighting underscores the quiet, solitary work which provides Daniel time for reflection and prayer, often for the person who will receive the Bible.

“I feel like this (type of gift) is a little more worthwhile,” Daniel says. “It is a way to glorify the word of the Lord and preserve it for people. ... It is a way to reciprocate with something meaningful that has a time investment (from me).”

Daniel’s interest in rebinding Bibles developed when his family had his father’s Bible rebound. His father is the Rev. Bill Thrailkill, longtime pastor at Mount Ulla’s Back Creek Presbyterian Church.

“Dad’s preaching Bible had been in disrepair for a long time,” he says. “Father’s Day and his birthday were coming up. I had heard of a Bible rebinder in Alabama, so I contacted him, and we sent the Bible off to him to restore. It was awesome to see the work he did on it.”

After watching instructional videos on YouTube and talking with several rebinders about techniques, Daniel ordered materials online and found an old Bible to work on.

As he searches for the first Bible he rebound, he warns apologetically, “It is somewhat of an atrocity to look at. The ribs on the back are not very raised and are kind of off center with the spine. The leather is not the most durable. There are a number of things wrong, but the first Bible is not really going to be what you dream of.”

But Daniel enjoyed the process and dug in to learn more. With each Bible, he improved his finished product. The sixth Bible met his standards for gifting to the first recipient — a friend in the bluegrass music industry who made one of Daniel’s personal guitars. Daniel is one of four musicians in “The Trailblazers” band, which has been recognized by the International Blue Grass Association.

“Rebinding does not add anything to God’s word, but (putting on a new cover and stabilizing the book) can help the Bible last longer,” Daniel says. “People often want to keep the Bible they have had with the same notes inside so



Top: Daniel’s first rebound Bibles sit on a small bookshelf in his room.

Above: Inscriptions in books and memorabilia tucked between pages provide clues to books’ previous owners.

that they can call that back to mind. That’s why we got Dad’s rebound. He has a lot of his notes and special things in it.”

The different steps involved in rebinding keep the process interesting, Daniel says. The punch list includes selecting leather types and colors, repairing and gluing pages, stabilizing the spine,

creating ridges in the leather on the spine, pleating the inside corners and hand-stitching the outside edges of the cover.

In November, Daniel was working on his 13th Bible and was confident enough in his skills to begin rebinding Bibles for several customers. After he finishes the contract work, he looks forward to rebinding and giving a Bible to another good friend and guitar maker.

“I will tell him to use it so I can rebound it again,” he says. “Wear it out so you will know what comes from the Word of God.” **S**

Freelance writer Kris Mueller lives in Salisbury.



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| at home |



Chairmen of the boards

Hardwoods run through Fricks' family business, handsome home

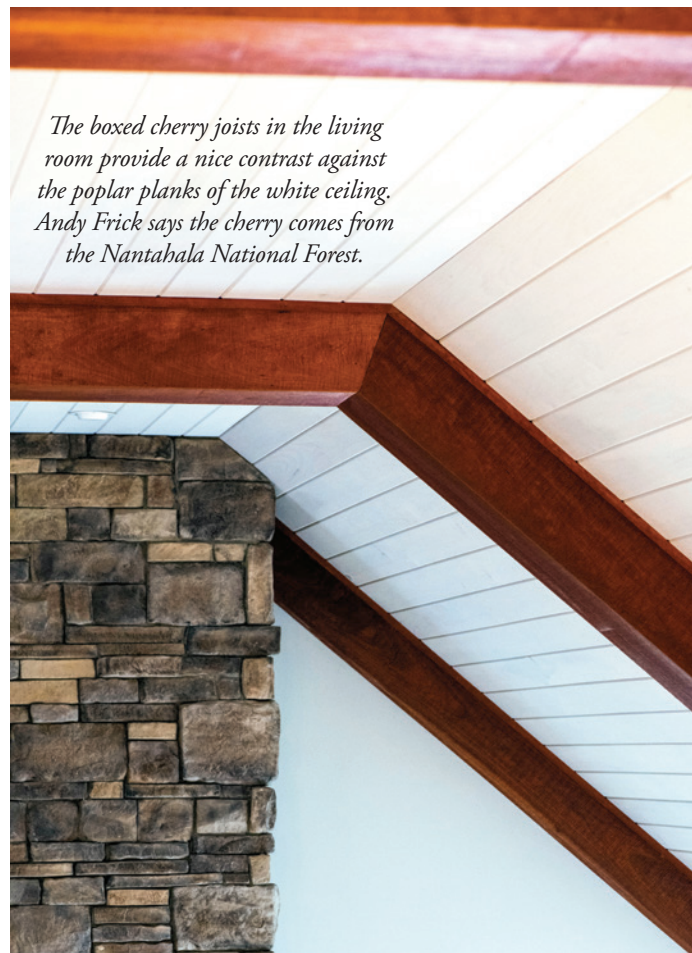
WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



A look from the Fricks' kitchen toward the living room.



The hard maple border on the flooring upstairs carries into the separate stairs to the garage.



The boxed cherry joists in the living room provide a nice contrast against the poplar planks of the white ceiling. Andy Frick says the cherry comes from the Nantahala National Forest.



A familiar sight at Blandy Hardwoods.

| at home |



Andy Frick describes how a lot of this wood will be shipped to Texas and be used for picture molding.

As he walks through the yard and buildings of Blandy Hardwoods in Gold Hill, Andy Frick knows the kinds of woods around him by their smell.

“Black gold,” he says, pointing to the stacked pallets of walnut. Andy then rattles off other varieties of hardwoods here on the Gin Road site, such as poplar, red oak, white oak, maple, ash and cherry.

When you have stacks of cherry and white pine in one of Blandy Hardwoods’ four dry kilns, “you talk about a nice smell,” Andy says, as though he’s describing the luscious aroma of hot dogs at a ballgame.

The lumber at Blandy Hardwoods comes mostly from saw mills in North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee, but some also arrives from Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York. “We have some of the best mills in the industry,” Andy says of his sources. “The biggest thing is having great relationships with



Just a few of the many stacks of wood at Blandy Hardwoods in Gold Hill.



Above: Andy Frick's 'man cave' upstairs features a custom bar incorporating curly maple and tiger maple with some inlaid walnut that matches the flooring. The ceiling is wormy maple.
Below: The stairs to the second floor feature wide, easy-to-navigate steps (made from hickory) with a spacious landing halfway.



Above: Andy and Mabelle Frick stand at the front entrance to their home. The door behind them, built by a company in Rock Hill, features African mahogany.

| at home |



Andy Frick, center, with his sons Nathan, left, and Lee at Blandy Hardwoods in Gold Hill.

people.”

Much of the wood is stacked, dried and finished here before being distributed throughout the country and across the seas to the Far East, where Vietnam, for example, has become a good customer for low-grade poplar.

The Fricks’ hardwoods are used mostly in flooring, ceilings, cabinetry and molding for homes and businesses. The family operation, which includes Andy; his sons, Nathan and Lee; and brother Roger, has a German-manufactured saw for cutting molding for picture frames, and much of it goes to a big distributor in Texas.

Picture molding is a more recent application for their lumber.

“It’s funny how this corona mess has created things we didn’t have before,” Andy says. “... Our biggest thing is a lot of specialty.”

Some of their wood goes to New York and is used specifically for art museum crates. At times, it has been incorporated into the building of sets for soap operas and movies.

But if you want to see an up-close-and-personal application of the woods from Blandys Hardwoods, take a visit to Andy and Mabelle Frick’s picture-book home, nestled on 52 wooded acres between Old Beatty Ford and Shive roads outside of Rockwell.

“It shows what can be done with wood,” Andy says. “... That’s the advantage when you own a lumber business. You can pick out the best.”

The long oak table, not far from the front-door entrance at left, provides room for the Fricks’ big family, which includes seven grandchildren.



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In the 'green' building, a conveyor takes wood toward a stacker for drying purposes.



The painted green cabinets in the kitchen contrast well with the ceiling's white planks of poplar.

Andy and Mabelle point out how wood — the family's livelihood — makes up integral components in every room. Andy notes, for example, how there are 5,000 board feet of lumber from Blandys for the molding alone.

When they built the house 10 years ago, Mabelle wanted a particular hand-scraped hickory (not from Blandys) for floors that run throughout much of the house. Plus, the flooring came with a 50-year warranty. Otherwise, the trim molding, ceilings, cabinets, stairs and some other flooring are made from woods off the Blandys lot.

Andy sometimes jokes and calls their house the "Frick-A-Rosa," a reference to the Cartwright family's Ponderosa on the old television show "Bonanza." Reid Link, a meticulous contractor, built the house, and architect Gray Stout designed it, based on trying to accommodate the things Mabelle was sure she needed.

"What was I thinking?" she asks today, remembering how she and Andy were trying to down-size and somehow ended up with a house of about 5,000 square feet. Even so, Mabelle claims she would still have a bigger kitchen if she had a do-over.

Andy shakes his head. "She got cornered like a kid in a candy store," he says, remembering her conversations with Stout. "You know when you have grandkids, you've got to

have room.”

The Fricks, who have been married 41 years, have seven grandchildren thanks to Nathan, Lee and daughter Aubrey. Their house, with its long oak dining table, separate downstairs playroom, upstairs bedrooms and grounds to explore outside, has become a natural gathering place for family.

“Of course, we’ve had a couple of weddings here,” Mabelle adds.

•••

Growing up off Dunn’s Mountain Church Road, Andy Frick was fascinated as a boy with the operation of a saw mill across the street from his parents’ house. He watched the cutting of timber and the shaping of round logs into flat boards. Representatives from furniture companies would stop in to grade the lumber, and often they would let Andy keep their tally books.

Andy’s dad, Norman, owned Frick’s Furniture, and his father-in-law, Joe Stirewalt, headed Piedmont Hardwoods. Andy became an expert in buying, grading and selling lumber. As a lumber inspector for Dixie Furniture in Lexington, he met Bill Brawley, who sold wood to Dixie.

Over time, Andy and Brawley went out on their own and founded Blandy Hardwoods in Statesville. “Blandy” was a combination of their names, Bill and Andy.

At first, it was just Andy, Brawley and a secretary. Andy likes to say he went into business with two lumber measuring sticks, a tally book and a marking crayon — a total investment of \$70.

Brawley, who was much older than Andy, died in 1986, and the business passed to Andy, who quickly adapted to a changing industry. Today, he’s thrilled his sons, Nathan and Lee, are devoted to the business, and he calls brother Roger his right-hand man.

Nathan oversees the processing side of the business, while Lee works with suppliers and distribution yards.

“We’ve been extra blessed,” Andy says.

The Fricks bought their property off Gin Road in 1995, and now Blandy Hardwoods has 24 employees. “You’re only as good as the boys around you,” Andy says.

In the “green building,” freshly cut and de-



A closer look at the custom bar upstairs.



Left: In the ‘man cave’ upstairs, the walnut floor has a border of hard maple. Center: This finished wood is ready to be shipped out for use as picture molding. Right: Cypress provides many of the wood accents to the Frick house’s exterior, including these porch pillars.





A pull-in breezeway (center) separates the garage from the main house.

livered lumber passes down a conveyor and is taken to a stacker, where workers insert specially grooved sticks, so the layers of wood are properly separated for drying.

“These sticks have got to be laid right,” Andy says.

The stacks then go to one of the two-story kilns, fully automated for temperature and humidity. A boiler generates the steam that heats coils at the top. Huge fans force air through

the lumber, and the moisture coming from the wood seeps onto the ground outside the kilns.

On this day, the poplar stacks inside a kiln are being dried at 150 degrees and 120 percent humidity. Each variety of wood is dried to different ratios in the kilns.

Andy considers the proper stacking, drying and finishing of wood an art. Drying alone can take from six to 12 days, depending on a lot of variables.

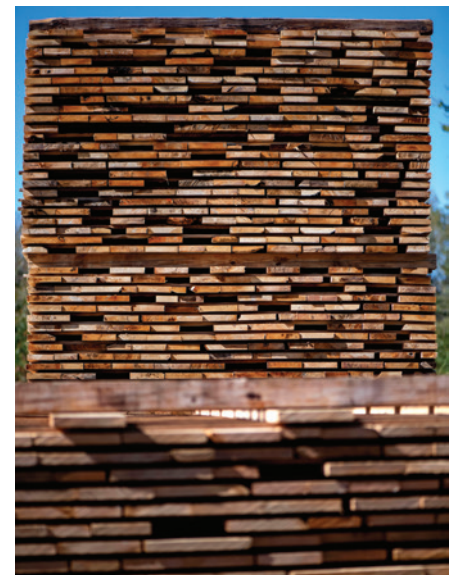
“You’re dealing with Mother Nature, and not every tree is the same,” Andy says.

The grades of wood are based on weight, grain and color.

On the yard, the Fricks have cherry, soft maple and red oak from the Nantahala National Forest in western North Carolina. Andy refers to other wood from the Cherokee National Forest. All the lumber harvested from these national forests are part of forest management plans, and



Left: The green cabinets in the kitchen also come close to the green exterior of the Fricks’ house. **Above:** Finished wood at Blandys that will be used for picture molding. **Right:** Blandy Hardwoods in Gold Hill deals in a variety of woods, including poplar, red oak, white oak, ash, walnut and cherry. They are used in many building applications such as ceilings, flooring and molding.



Andy says proceeds are supposed to go to schools in those particular counties.

•••

Andy and Mabelle Frick's house is worthy of a home tour. Highlights include its poplar ceilings; boxed cherry joists in the living room; touches of wainscoting; a two-story chimney with fireplaces for the living room inside and the patio outside; front doors of African mahogany, glass and wrought iron; and an attractive, easy-to-navigate stairway to the second floor.

Link, the contractor, made sure to provide the stairs with extra wide treads of hickory and short distances between the steps, besides a spacious landing halfway up. The talented Gary Curlee did a lot of the woodwork in the house, and F&G Molding of Spencer ran all the poplar molding.

A three-car garage is punctuated by three dormers. The house's roofline also includes a cupola, weather vane and chimney pots. Cypress has been used for many of the wood accents on the exterior.

An attractive, highly useful breezeway connects the garage to the house. There's a pine ceiling for part of the stone patio out back and an ash ceiling on the porch out front. Andy likes the ash better.

Back inside, the couple have a first-floor master bedroom with a fireplace. Mabelle also has a well-appointed sewing room downstairs, while Andy's man cave upstairs includes another fireplace, a custom bar, Skeet ball and Pac-Man machines, an old chess table from a beloved uncle and a framed Pat Mahomes Kansas City Chiefs jersey.

Andy retreats to the man cave with family and friends to watch games in a separate television viewing alcove. This whole expansive area has walnut floors with hard maple as borders. The ceiling is wormy maple.

"It really goes together well," Andy says of the dark flooring with the maple accents. The room has a separate stairway of hard maple going to the garage.

Billy Heilig crafted the bar, which features curly maple, tiger maple and an inlaid



A plank makes its way on a conveyor to where it will be stacked for drying.



Andy Frick likes the look of this wormy maple ceiling upstairs.

walnut that picks up the floor color.


"Nathan's house is also filled with beautiful wood," Mabelle says. It's an indication that the family love of wood runs deep.

The Fricks actually built two other houses between Old Beatty Ford and Shive roads before their present home — one in 1983; the second, in 1990.

The 52 acres have been in the family since Andy's dad, Norman, traded furniture for the property in 1966. It still has the original weath-

er-worn farmhouse, barn and smokehouse, long forsaken to the elements, though Andy keeps a tractor and firewood in the old barn.

He loves looking toward the buildings from his back patio, and they become more visible when the leaves are down. The old structures are surrounded by hardwoods, and to the Fricks that's like having a lake view.

"A lot of people don't realize how nice and pretty it rolls," Andy says of the land. "It's just beautiful." 

A photograph of a hop plant stem with green cones, held by a hand. The background is a blurred green field. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

FIELD *of dreams*

ENTERPRISING COUPLES
BRING HOPS
TO LOCAL BREWERS,
SUPPORT CAUSES

written by MARK WINEKA
photography by JON C. LAKEY



*Joe Martin,
who handles the
marketing duties for
the hops enterprise,
checks on one of the
bines.*



Nancy Faller talks with a visitor to the fields about the finer points of hops.

A look inside the hops flower. Hops provide the alpha and beta acids to beer, while serving as its bittering, flavoring and stabilizing agent.



Let your mind wander for a moment and picture driving through the German countryside, passing a field with hops growing as far as the eye I can see.

The truth is, you could be in Davie County off Boxwood Church Road in Mocksville. And you've come upon almost 5 acres that make up Hoppin J's Farm, a young endeavor by two couples who are old friends.



The harvesting of the hops takes several days in late summer.

In their field, hops vines — or “bines,” as they are called — grow on strings (or coir) some 20 feet high, supported by a vast network of similarly tall wooden posts and crossing wires. It provides the framing for more than 6,500 hops plants in five different varieties.

The partners started in 2018 with an acre of Cascade, the hops variety maybe most familiar to craft beer brewers, and now with 3.5 additional acres, they are growing four more kinds — Chinook, Nugget, Zeus and Canadian Redvine.

“We’re the largest hops grower in North Carolina,” says Joe Martin, one of the “J’s” in Hoppin J’s Farm.

Hops represent the flowers of the plant *humulus lupulus*, and these abundant, mostly cone-shaped flowers add alpha and beta acids to beer and serve as its bittering, flavoring and stabilizing agents. They provide the fruity, floral flavors and aromas a beer might have.

Martin, who has taken on the marketing responsibilities for the couples’ enterprise, notes how their growing of hops combines agriculture, craft breweries, restaurants, cosmetics and — most important to the foursome —



The partners also take the oils from hops to make their Hoppin J's beard balm.



Liz Phelps prepares a bine for the cultivator.

charities.

Their hops are sold to craft brewers in Salisbury, Charlotte, Statesville, Lexington, High Point and Greensboro, among others. Some Italian chefs in the region pay for hops sprouts in the spring to use in their recipes. Hoppin J's Farm also captures the oils from hops and adds it to lip balm, beard balm and hand sanitizer.

Part of the farm's proceeds will go to support two organizations: the Paradox Foundation and Wounded Warriors.

Joe's wife, Nancy Faller, is chief overseer of Paradox Farm, her personal animal rescue effort of more than 15 years. Joe and Nancy are anesthesiologists by trade — "Paradox" comes from "pair of docs" — and they have devoted their own large farm along U.S. 601 to the rescue and care of dogs and horses, but also pot-bellied pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, peacocks, mallards, geese and even emus.

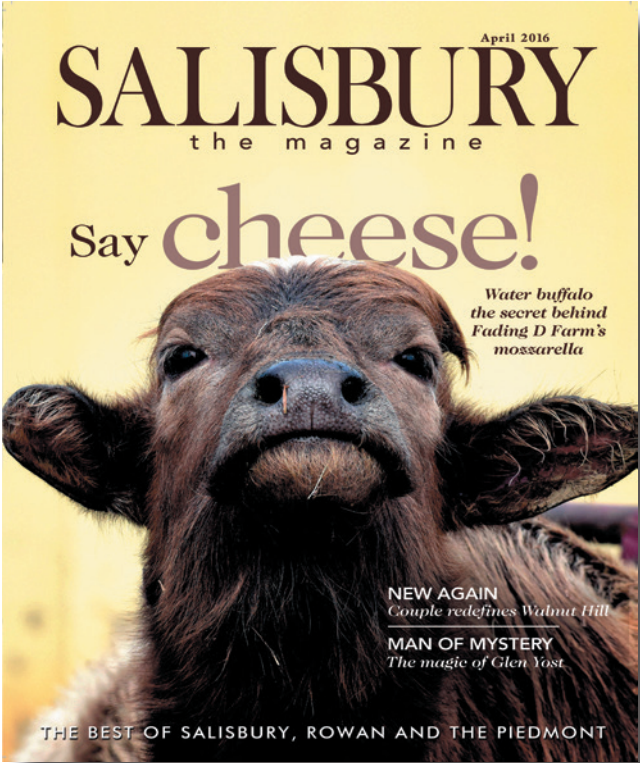
That farm is run as a not-for-profit foundation, also offering educational opportunities for visiting students. Salisbury the Magazine featured Paradox Farm in its September 2018 issue.

The other couple in the Hoppin J's Farm enterprise are J.W. "Jay" Phelps and his wife, Liz Phelps, a published and self-described romantic suspense novelist whose pen name

A New Sarum label shows that the hops for this beer came from Hoppin J's Farm in Davie County and the malt from Carolina Malt House in Cleveland.



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Above: Nancy Faller weighs a bag of 'wet' hops that will be shipped to a brewer in Greensboro.
Below: Jay Phelps keeps all the harvesting machines going.



Hoppin' J's hops farm has close to five acres of hops.

is Liz Shoaf.

Jay owns Phelps Wood Products off Redmon Road in Cleveland, and that served as a great connection to secure all the wooden posts needed for the hops operation. Jay served in the Army for five years and at one time was commander for the honor guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, Virginia.

He has a deep passion for wounded veterans and their families — the reason for monies going to the second charity.

A farmer at heart, Jay also is considered the hops operation's chief engineer and soil manager. While Joe does the marketing, Nancy handles the processing side, including the drying and pelletizing of the hops. A bookkeeper for Jay's lumber business, Liz also does the accounting for Hoppin J's.

When hops harvest time comes in late summer, Joe, Nancy, Jay and Liz all report to the fields for several days, along with some farmhands. "We go from sun-up to sundown," Nancy says.

The couples have been good friends for 25 years, and they learned quickly it probably would be three years before they could make any money with their hops. (Plants take up to three years to mature fully.) The fourth year, coming up in 2021, is when they think Hoppin J's will become profitable and they can start funneling some of the proceeds toward the nonprofits.

"I told him we're still figuring it out," Martin yells to



In late summer, the hops are ready, and a harvesting station is set up next to the fields.



A cultivator separates the hops from the bines.



The twine on which the bine is growing is called a coir.



These harvested hops are ready to be dried or shipped off immediately to brewers.

Phelps as he refers to one of the day's visitors.

"We are," Phelps yells back over the sound of a harvesting machine next to the fields.

• • •

So how did this wild idea ferment?

The couples were eating one night at La Cava, their favorite Salisbury restaurant, when La Cava owner Gianni Moscardini, also a principal in New Sarum Brewing, said he wished he could

find hops grown locally for the brewery instead of buying them from the Northwest United States.

A light went off for the men at the table. Jay looked at Joe and said, "I've got a tractor, you got a tractor, and we both have land." It was pretty much decided at that moment they would try growing hops on part of Jay's property, though they knew nothing about it.

The wives were on board from the start. Liz remembers that fateful dinner. "We were all pretty excited about it," she says. "It had potential to be a fun thing to do."

On this particular day in September, workers are going through the fields, taking down the bines and bringing them to a harvesting station the couples have set up nearby. Laden with hops, the bines can grow 20 to 25 feet high once they



Joe Martin, right, goes over some of the things happening with the hops harvest with Marsha McGraw, center, field crop extension agent for Davie County, and Susan Hawkins, horticulture agent for Davie.

are established. They are trained to grow up their twine or coir in a clockwise direction.

The coir is attached to the top crossing wire with an “S” hook. When harvesting comes, you cut each vine at the bottom and pull on the coir, which bounces it off the hook at top. The bines then go to the station.

The couples rely on a used hops harvester from Wisconsin that separates the cones from the leaves as the bines are stripped. “We’ve never been so happy as when we got this machine,” Nancy says.

Jay also adapted a fertilizer spreader, which is used to fill bags with the harvested hops.

• • •

Today, the couples are preparing 5 pounds of hops for the Pig Pounder brewery in Greensboro and 60 pounds for New Sarum in Salisbury. New Sarum requested at least 20 pounds of the Chinook, 10 pounds of the Zeus, 10 of the Nugget and all the Canadian Redvine harvested to date.

Hoppin J’s Farm usually receives its orders from craft breweries in these kinds of increments. For brewers wanting their hops “wet,” the hops are bagged in green mesh and immediately delivered. Any hops not sold wet are taken over to a new, air-conditioned build-



A cultivator separates the hops from the bines.

ing on nearby Paradox Farm, where the cones are placed on drying racks for 12 hours. A hop oast is the name for the drying room, where the temperature stays at 98 degrees with fans and a dehumidifier.

After they are dried, the hops are put in bags, flushed with nitrogen, vacuum-sealed and placed in a freezer for storage.

Again, Nancy oversees this processing side of the operation. She also is the pelletizer. “A lot of the brewers want pellets,” she says, even though pellets are more cost-prohibitive, because it takes five pounds of hops to make a pound of pellets.

In this same building, a distilling process captures oils from the hops that go into a Hoppin J’s lip balm and beard balm. In his dealings and communications with N.C. brewers, Joe noticed that most men in the industry sported beards.

At last year’s N.C. Craft Brewers Convention, Joe handed out free, hops-infused beard balm with the Hoppin J’s logo on it. It was a three-day conference and “the first day, they were gone,” Joe reports.

The hops oils also have gone into hand sanitizer made for New Sarum.

Joe says he has been in touch with every single brewer in North Carolina. He invites them to the fields, wanting them to see, touch and smell the hops they could be getting from Hoppin J’s Farm, which he thinks benefits greatly from the land’s having been covered thousands of years ago by the Yadkin River. It provided a soil today that’s “rich and loamy, a wonderful mixture of sand and clay,” Joe says.

The soil seems to be especially good for the Canadian Redvine, a lesser known variety than the farm’s other four. “Here, it’s doing great,” says Joe, who also gets excited about the idea that brewers such as New Sarum can go virtually 100 percent local with malt from the Carolina Malt House in Cleveland, hops from Hoppin J’s Farm, maybe even strawberries from Patterson Farm.

In the spring, the hops growers chemically burn back the plant when they first start to emerge, helping to eliminate bull shoots. But some of the sprouts are sold to Italian restaurants eager to have them.

“We have a chef in Charlotte — Chef Grigo Grigolon of Aqu e Vino — who went absolutely crazy when he found out we had hops,” Joe says.



A bine, laden with hops, grows almost two stories high before its ready for harvesting in the late summer.

“He is Venetian, and he said that as a boy they would go out and find hops shoots, since it was considered a delicacy. ... Each one has a different flavor.”

The couples’ hops operation also has become a laboratory for others.

During this day of harvesting, Susan Hawkins, horticultural agent for Davie County, is visiting the fields with Marsha McGraw, field crop extension agent for Davie. They are looking at options for weed control around the hops plants.

“You know, we’re still learning, too,” McGraw says, noting that broadleaf weed control doesn’t necessarily work. One of hops other enemies is mildew, because it can lead to fungus.

Before the pandemic, cooperative extension agents from a 20-county region visited Hoppin J’s Farm. “They had never had a hops tour,” McGraw says.

Hoppin J’s Farm will be part of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s three-year grant to archive the craft brew industry and its history in the region. Researchers plan to visit the hops operations for interviews and videos in 2021.


In addition, N.C. State University researchers are applying for a grant to test two new hops

varieties they are developing for this region of the country. “We will be the test site to do the research on the commercial application,” Joe says. “We think the grant has a real good chance of coming through, and we would be working with them this spring.”

Meanwhile, the multi-talented couples say they’re having fun pursuing their other interests as well. A wine connoisseur, Joe has adapted a lot of those skills toward becoming a certified cicerone, a designation showing that a person knows about proper beer service, storage, style, history and food pairings with beer.

Nancy competes in horse and carriage competitions. Liz is involved in dog sports with Mr. Bates, her Belgian Malinois. Liz, the author, reveals that husband Jay’s personality and military background serve as the basis for her character Austin McKean in her novel “Mirror Images.”

Jay and Joe say the economics of the couples’ enterprise will decide how much they expand, though Jay claims they have enough land to be as big as they want. The men smile, saying they’ll eventually figure out this hops-growing business and give their blessings to others who want to try it.

“We learned all this by doing,” Joe says. “All we had was land and tractors.” 

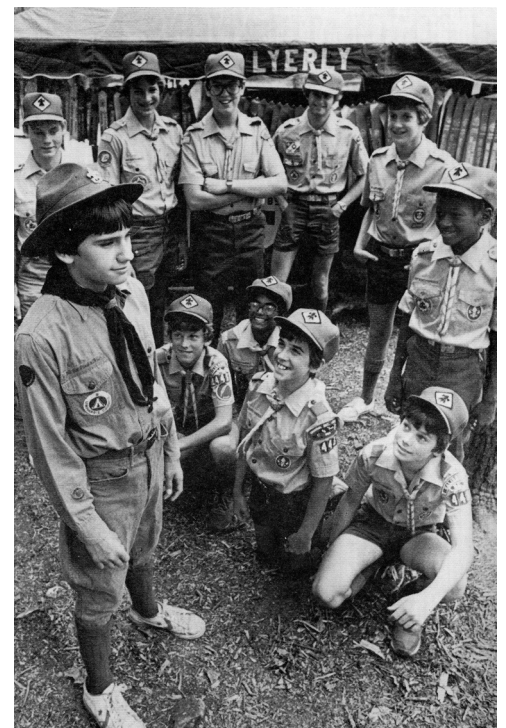


Above: Meeting recently at the Rowan District Scouting office in Salisbury were left to right, Henry Fairley, former District Executive Dieter Stoelting, Jack Kepley, Marny Hendrick and Terry Holt. The legendary Kepley has been involved with Scouting through Troop 448 for 83 years. *Below:* In 1982, during Troop 448's 50th anniversary, a Scout models a much earlier uniform for his fellow Scouts to take in.

LEADING EDGE

SCOUTING CELEBRATES 100
YEARS IN ROWAN COUNTY

written by MARK WINEKA



One of Terry Holt's highlights as a Scoutmaster — something he'll never forget — was a day when he received at random four different emails from Eagle Scouts who were once part of his Troop 375 in China Grove.



Troop 375 at First United Methodist Church in China Grove participates in the Scout Sunday service in February 2019. It's an annual service repeated in many Rowan County churches which sponsor Scouts packs and troops.

Each of the messages came from Iraq, where these four young men in the military were serving in harm's way. One of the guys worked on helicopters, two were infantrymen and a fourth was a fighter pilot.

By sheer coincidence, they had reached out to their old Scoutmaster on the same day.

"I'm sorry," Holt says, thinking back, "I'm wet about the eyes."

One of those men was his son, Justin Holt, who today the Veterans Administration classifies as 100% disabled. That hasn't stopped Justin's recent preparations to assume the role of Scoutmaster for Troop 375.

Another of those guys, now a commercial pilot, once was the captain for Air Force Two, the official plane for the vice president of the United States. Yet another of Holt's Eagle Scouts is a lieutenant colonel today. Holt remembers the time in that man's basic training when he was taken away from the base in a truck (with other soldiers on the same exercise), cast off in the middle of nowhere and told to find his way back to the barracks.

The former China Grove Scout beat the truck's return to the base, and he told his surprised superiors, "I'm an Eagle Scout. I know how to read a map."

"Those are the kinds of men we have nurtured," Holt says.

Despite a well-publicized bankruptcy and sex-abuse litigation against Scouts BSA as a national organization, Scouting in Rowan County continues to exert a positive influence on the lives of boys and girls, as well as young men and women. So say county Scout leaders.

"The principles of Scouting have not changed," says Jack Kepley, arguably the granddaddy of Scouts in Rowan County. The Scoutmaster emeritus of Troop 448 at Coburn Methodist Church has been involved in the organization as a Scout and state and nationally recognized leader for 83



This newspaper photograph from Sept. 8, 1929, shows the first three Eagle Scouts in Salisbury. Left to right are Clyde Sowers, Archie Coleman and Melvin Spencer. Sowers belonged to the troop at St. John's Lutheran; Coleman and Spencer, to the troop at First Presbyterian Church. Spencer is considered the first boy to become an Eagle Scout in Rowan County; Sowers, the second.

years.

The beauty of Scouting is that it brings together different kids with varying abilities, and they learn to work together as a team, says David Wilson, Scoutmaster for Troop 442 at First United Methodist Church in Salisbury.

Kepley, Wilson, Holt and other Scout leaders such as Marny Hendrick, Henry Fairley and former Rowan District Executive Dieter Stoelting sat down recently with Salisbury the Magazine and said Scouting will always stress leadership, character development, citizenship and personal fitness.

“It’s a universal program,” says Stoelting, an Eagle Scout who grew up in Indiana. “We hold them to a standard.”

This year — 2020 — represents the 100th anniversary of Scouting in Rowan County, which presently has 42 Scouting units. They encompass Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, newly established girl troops (not to be confused with Girl Scouts), Venture crews and Explorer programs.

Over the past century, Rowan County — known as the Sapona District — has had at least 140 Scouting units, most of which were affiliated with churches. Of those, 79 have produced Eagle Scouts.

In fact, Rowan County has had (as of this publication date) just shy of 1,900 Eagle Scouts over the organization’s history here, “which is kind of an impressive number,” says Fairley, a member of the Sapona District board, its historian and the Order of the Arrow advisor.

Some of the recent local growth in Scouting has come from girl troops, of which there are five in Rowan, with a sixth on the way. Females were first allowed into Scouts BSA in 2019. Again, these troops are not the same as Girl Scouts, a separate organization. There are no coed Scouts BSA troops, but joint activities between girl troops and boy troops belonging to the same chartered organization are allowed.

For Cub Scouts (ages 5-10), girls and boys can be members of the same pack, but there are separate dens for boys and girls. Venture crews are for high school-aged youth and can be coed.

Hendrick, also a member of the Sapona Dis-



Longtime leaders with Troop 442 in Salisbury, David Wilson, left, and Bruce Kolkebeck rest at the top of the Tooth of Time peak during one of the several trips they’ve led for local Scouts to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.



Scouts from Troop 448 take on some mountain whitewater.

trict board and its District Eagle Board, says the first Eagle project for a female Scout in Rowan was set to be reviewed in early November. She emerged from a Venturing program.

Fairley and Hendrick are co-chairmen of the 2021 District Banquet Jan. 30. The banquet will celebrate the centennial year of Scouting in Rowan while also serving as the annual leadership recognition event. New Eagle Scouts will be

noted, and the night will kick off the Friends of Scouting campaign.

If COVID-19 precautions allow, the celebration will be held from 6-9 p.m. at the Salisbury Civic Center. The alternate site will be the Rowan County Fairgrounds. Guest speakers will include Kepley, Salisbury Mayor Karen Alexander and Salisbury attorney (and Eagle Scout) Bill Graham.



Troop 442 Scouts take a break during a Uwharrie River canoe excursion.

“It will be a night to remember,” Hendrick promises.

•••

Think of Scouting in Rowan County over a century and a flood of memories and images come to the fore. The organization here is synonymous with popcorn sales, oyster roasts, Pinewood Derby races, district camporees, Scout Sundays at church, Camp Cards, Scouting for Food and other Eagle Scout projects that have made the community better.

Local Scouts, their parents and leaders know all about summer weeks spent at Camp Barnhardt in Stanly County, hiking on the Appalachian and Uwharrie trails, overnight visits to the USS Yorktown in Charleston, S.C., whitewater rafting, biking on the Creeper Trail in Virginia, canoeing and kayaking on state rivers, weeklong trips to Washington, D.C., and the National Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill.

Five times in the past, Kepley’s Troop 448 traded excursions abroad with a companion Scout troop in Wales. For high adventure, hundreds of other local Scouts have traveled to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico or Sea Bases in the Florida Keys, Bahamas or Virgin Islands.

“If you can think about it, Scouts have done it — and there’s a patch for it,” Hendrick says.

Scouts can earn a diversity patch, and the leaders say they are not sure whether there’s a more diverse organization than Scouting. In many instances, the diversity comes from the different churches and religious backgrounds participating in the sponsorship of troops.

Friendships made in Scouting tend to run deeper than



Members of Troop 448 posed for this 1994 photo on Brownsea Island, the birthplace of Scouting, during their second exchange program with Scouts in Wales.



Ebenezer Lutheran Church’s Pack 328, under the leadership of Cubmaster Kevin Fuller, center, learns the proper ceremony for retiring a U.S. flag. Also pictured are Curtis Furr, Maddie Godfrey, Joseph Clark, Morgan Clarke and Assistant Cubmaster Craig Clarke (seated).



In October, Troop 448 conducts an Eagle Scout ceremony for Alexander Maggard.



Local Scouts paddle down the Uwharrie River.

in other activities, Wilson adds. His troop has had Scouts from or with ties to South Africa, Germany, Poland, Iran, India, Vietnam, Korea, England, Ukraine and Russia.

“These are examples of how Scouting brings people together,” Wilson says. “It builds bonds and people learn lessons from these bonds. I have friends all over the country that I’ve met through Scouting.”

By policy if not practice, racial segregation in Scouting discontinued in the 1950s. Fairley reports that Rowan County might have had the first Black troop in North Carolina. Organized in 1931, Troop 15 met at the Lincoln School.

“The BSA has always been open to all without regard to religion, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status,” Wilson says. “Today, BSA is more diverse, more inclusive and safer than ever.”

While the abuse scandal has rocked the national organization, the Rowan County Scout leaders say the current vetting of adult leaders and the youth protection training in place are strong locally.

Rowan Scouting is part of an independent (not bankrupt) council — Central NC Council, which takes in Rowan, Cabarrus, Union, Richmond, Stanly, Anson and Montgomery counties. Rowan previously was part of the Uwharrie Council from 1924-1965.

• • •

It was the work and inspiration of T.B. Marsh Jr. who brought Scouting to Salisbury in 1920. He initiated Scouting programs out of his work with boys connected to the YMCA.

“The YMCA organized an older boys conference for Oct. 11, 1920, when 154 young people from this region came together to meet in First Methodist and First Baptist churches for a song service, speeches by community leaders and a barbecue at the fairgrounds,” Martha Hines Morehead said in a local history.



Clockwise from top left: From left, Dylan Harrington, Andon McCullough and Kyle Gillespie handle flag-raising duties for Troop 324 of Rock Grove United Methodist Church; On an outing this fall, Neal Powell led members of Troop 442 through the Olde English Cemetery as part of their efforts toward earning a Citizenship in the Nation merit badge; In 1983, Troop 448's Clay Lindsay met then Gov. Jim Hunt when Lindsay presented the Central NC Council's annual report.

“The purpose of the conference was to encourage an enthusiasm in the group to join their local Sunday School classes, high school clubs, employed brotherhood groups and the Boy Scouts.”

Two days later, Marsh had organized two troops — Chestnut Hill Troop No. 2 and Kesler Mill Troop No. 3. St. Luke's Episcopal apparently had tried to form the first troop in Rowan County a bit earlier but it had been abandoned “with a change of pastorates,” Morehead said. Troop No. 1 was later assigned to St. John's Lutheran.

But St. Luke's re-established a troop later, and other early units in Salisbury from the 1920s included those at First United Methodist, First Presbyterian and First Baptist churches.

According to Fairley's research, Melvin Spencer of Troop 44 at First Presbyterian was the county's first Eagle Scout, earning the distinction in 1929.

The numbers given to troops in Rowan County are confusing because they do not reflect the sequential order in which the troops were founded.

Leaders says the easiest way to think of the troop numbers today is that the “400” numbers are Salisbury-based units, and the “300” numbers are units



At Camp Barnhardt this autumn, Cub Scout Matthew Clark of Pack 328 at Ebenezer Church takes aim with a BB gun during target practice at a Sapona (Rowan) District Fall Family Fun Fest. Helping out is Assistant Cubmaster Jack Godfrey.

outside of Salisbury but still in Rowan County.

Rowan Scouting's largest membership numbers probably came in the 1970s, and that's borne out by the national organization, which says its peak came at more than 4 million Scouts in that decade. Reports put the current national membership in BSA Scouts at less than 2 million.

Fairley notes 1973 had the most Eagle Scouts in one year — 71. Today, the average is 25 to 30 a year.

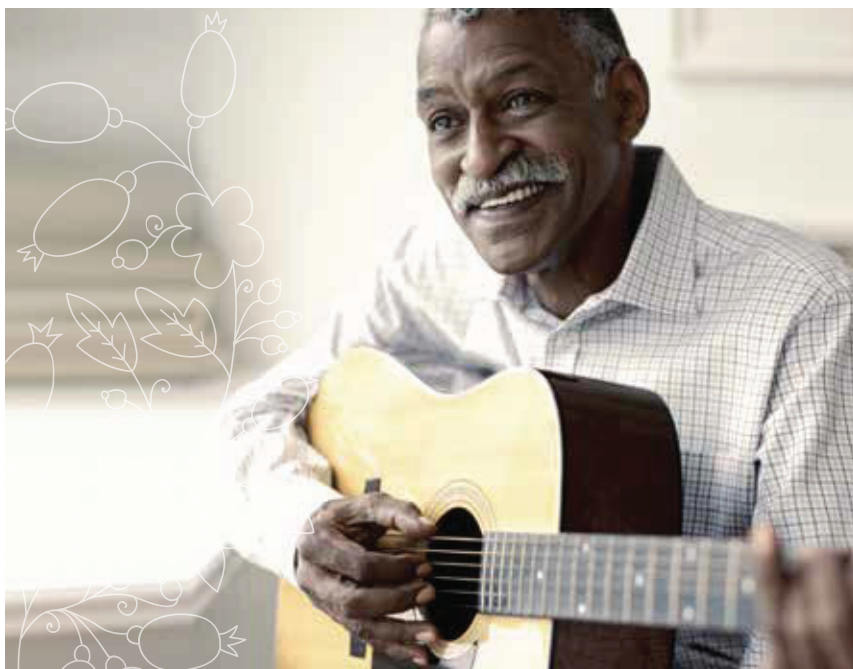
When it comes to earning merit badges and, if they desire, becoming Eagle Scouts, there are no shortcuts, the leaders say. Scouts do what is required of them, and they're fully vetted.

"We support our Scouts every step of the way," Stoelting says, but the accountability and responsibility to do the work is on them.

Speaking around a conference table recently, the handful of Sapona District leaders marvel at all the kids, leaders and families as a whole who have been involved in Scouting over 100 years.



From 1976, this boys and girls Sea Explorers Crew included, from left, Mark Eagle, Bill Weatherford, Annette Smith, Younger Mattox, Lisa Snyder, David Miller, Donald Byerly, Patty Tarlton and Worth Murdoch.



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“Scouting is just not us sitting here,” Fairley says. “It’s everybody. So many people have been part of the effort.”

The leaders credit veteran, dedicated leadership over the century during which sons and grandsons often have followed in the footsteps of the early Scoutmasters. Women also have played major roles in the success of Scouting, the male leaders say.

Kevin Fuller says Scouting has been a big part of his life since he moved here in 1976. Today, he serves as Cubmaster for Pack 328 at Ebenezer Lutheran, a Sapona Roundtable commissioner and training chairman for the Central NC Council.

“We have turned out some terrific veterans and community leaders over the past 100 years,” Fuller says, “and I am sure for the next 100 years.” **S**

EAGLE SCOUTS BY TROOP

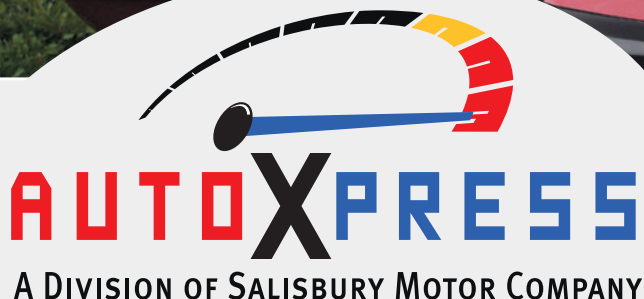
Rowan County has had at least 140 different Scout units over the past century. According to 2019 research done by Henry Fairley, these 12 Rowan County troops have produced the most Eagle Scouts:

- 1. Troop 443 (St. John’s Lutheran Church)** — 159 Eagles (including Explorer Post 443)
- 2. Troop 448 (Coburn United Methodist Church)** — 144 Eagles
- 3. Troop 442 (First United Methodist Church, Salisbury)** — 118 Eagles (including Explorer Post 442)
- 4. Troop 333 (St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church)** — 99 Eagles
- 5. Troop 303 (Mount Moriah Lutheran Church)** — 84 Eagles (not active)
- 6. Troop 315 (Grace Lutheran Church)** — 76 Eagles
- 7. Troop 301 (Mount Zion United Church of Christ)** — 73 Eagles
- 8. Troop 379 (Wittenberg Lutheran Church and Granite Quarry Civitan Club)** — 70 Eagles
- 9. Troop 401 (Sacred Heart Catholic Church)** — 66 Eagles (not active)
- 10. Troop 349 (Central United Methodist Church, Spencer)** — 63 Eagles (not active)
- 11. Troop 350 (Rockwell Civitan Club)** — 62 Eagles
- 12. Troop 375 (First United Methodist Church, China Grove)** — 61 Eagles



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Worth the wait

*Couples, vendors adapt during the pandemic,
find a path to wedding days*

WRITTEN BY DIANA STOREY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNY TENNEY PHOTOGRAPHY



Clockwise from left: A his-and-her signature cocktail sign custom made by The Lettered Lily, with flowers by Heirloom Floral Co.; Newlyweds Katelyn Storey and Alex Lee next to the F&M Trolley; There were temperature checks and pre-screening questions for guests who attended the Storey-Lee wedding; Heath van Wagenberg decorated the Omwake-Dearborn Chapel for the Graham-Weiker ceremony.

The plans were all made. We were ready for May.
 Every detail worked out for your wedding day.
 I sat there with Dad. We sat there we two
 And we said how we wish we had something to do.
 Should we go out? Should we walk the dogs?
 Should we sit in the house and do nothing at all?
 With all details arranged we could sit sit sit sit.
 And we smiled not knowing the mess yet to hit.
 And then ... something went bump. How that bump made
 us jump!
 We looked, and we saw it arrive — quite in shock.
 COVID put all our plans on a new clock.

That was the beginning of my toast at my daughter's rehearsal dinner for her wedding this past September. It was inspired by a favorite children's book when the kids were little — "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr Seuss.

As we look forward to a new year with hope, we also reflect back on a year filled with disruption. COVID-19 is much like that Dr. Seuss cat — arriving at our doors unexpectedly and wreaking all kinds of havoc. For many local couples, that



| rituals |



At the wedding of Katelyn and Alex Lee, bridesmaids make their entrance with masks and bouquets.

disruption manifested itself in being forced to delay their weddings — even into 2021.

Those who did embark on the adventure of a 2020 wedding found their original plans significantly modified with dates still pushed out, reduced guest lists, face masks, hand sanitizer, changes in venues — the list goes on. But they also had the support of local vendors that met chaos with calm and creativity. Here, I share some of the details of two such weddings — the September wedding of Katelyn Storey (the daughter of me and husband Andy Storey) to Alex Lee at The Arbors Events in Cleveland; and the October wedding of Caroline Graham (daughter of Bill and Shari Graham) to Russ Weiker at Catawba College's Omwake-Dearborn Chapel.

*Have no fear I told Dad. We can make a new plan.
We will not let this special day end up in the can.
We'll reschedule the photographer, caterer, flights,
Beauticians, musicians, transportation — sit tight.
Change flower themes, cake designs, rentals — don't stress.
Even make masks for the bridesmaids out of my wedding dress.*



Custom-designed cups by The Lettered Lily show that the original date of Katelyn and Alex's wedding had to be rescheduled because of the pandemic.



The Lettered Lily did the invitation and wedding program for the Graham-Weiker wedding.



Newlyweds Caroline and Russ Weiker outside the Graham home, where their Salisbury reception was held.



Peggy Fisher's Coyote Trails Cakes made this cake for the Graham-Weiker wedding.



The Grahams ordered masks and personal hand sanitizers for guests at the wedding of daughter Caroline and Russ Weiker.



Sugar Britches in Faith made some of the masks for the Katelyn Storey-Alex Lee wedding out of wedding dress of the bride's mother, Diana.

Megan Ferden, owner/designer at The Lettered Lily Design Studio, and her business partner and fellow designer, Taylor Durham, are one such vendor. “When the pandemic hit,” Megan says, “it was heartbreaking to see these couples and their families try to navigate this uncharted territory and replan their dream day with certain guidelines and regulations to follow.”

“We strategically worded and designed change-of-date cards, postponement invitations, COVID-19 updates along with custom hand sanitizers, masks and social distancing signage — all to coordinate with the original wedding invitation suites and celebration decor.”

Local florists that specialize in weddings were also impacted. Moving a wedding from spring to fall means an entirely new season of flowers and colors. In some instances, even the venue they were designing for changed with short notice, requiring them to adapt designs originally

planned for an indoor wedding and a church altar, into ones that would work for an outdoor wedding and a garden arbor.

“I had 10+ weddings that had to reschedule,” says Tracie Sells of Heirloom Floral Co. “Luckily none of them canceled. Several went ahead and were married on the original date in a small, family-only ceremony, and are planning a large celebration at a later date. Some had to completely change everything from the date to the venue to the caterers, etc.”

So, with spreadsheet in hand I set out on my quest.

Plan 1, then plan 2, 3 and 4 for our guests.

Letters and emails and new invitations.

Even last-minute changes to venue locations.

Ever heard the proverb “Man plans and God laughs”? Katelyn and Alex’s wedding was moved

back four months — surely enough time, right? We watched and prayed with other brides we knew as their rescheduled dates arrived.

With six weeks to go, we lost our reception venue. That’s when we discovered The Arbors Events in Cleveland, and were relieved to learn our date was available. There are several wonderful wedding venues throughout Rowan County, but this gorgeous location offers two fabulous venues on their property for weddings and other events.

After securing it for the reception, we never dreamed that with three days to go we would have to move the ceremony there as well. The team at The Arbors are pros — with complete calm and confidence they said, “No problem — we’ve got you covered.” And boy did they ever. Turned out, as usual, God’s plan was better.

One of the busiest local vendors during wedding season is the team at Venue Services

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and Virtual Sounds DJ. “Trying to help brides through this difficult time has brought on many challenges and changes for our company,” says Mike Shue, general manager at Venue Services.

“Yet here we are coming to the end of wedding season and have successfully married off many couples.

“I honestly felt like us vendors and clients were handed a bad hand but decided to take what we had and work together to make these amazing events take place. Through all the chaos we still stand behind our slogan, ‘We Make It Happen.’”

These guys can pretty much make anything happen. The Grahams relied on this team to transform their backyard to reflect the elegant “French Country” theme of their daughter’s wedding. “The Venue Services/Virtual Sounds team

An attractive boutonniere for the Storey-Lee wedding.



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Above: Custom cuff links from Windsor Gallery Jewelers in Salisbury. **Right:** Abigail's — a Cake Affair provided these cakes for the wedding of Katelyn and Alex.



worked tirelessly to incorporate all the necessary components needed to complement the couple's vision," Shari Graham said. "Remnants of Hurricane Delta brought rain on the wedding day but last-minute setup changes to protect guests from the elements did not rattle this group of professionals.

"We could not be more pleased with the talent and expertise of this company."

Caroline and Russ never thought about postponing their wedding. They watched many engaged couples in the spring and summer postpone their dates only to discover their re-

scheduled dates posed the same challenges.

As spring transitioned into summer, they thought about a small wedding at the Graham's second home in Destin, Florida, but ultimately decided to proceed with the ceremony on the lawn of Catawba College's Omwake-Dearborn Chapel and the reception at the Graham home.

The guest list was not shortened; rather the couple preferred the guests decide if they felt comfortable attending. "We wanted guests to

make the right decision for them personally and for their families," Caroline says. "Russ and I were OK if 50 or 300 people came; but on October 10, 2020, we wanted to be married."

When their date arrived, remnants from a hurricane, not COVID-19, slightly altered the ceremony plan. It was moved inside the college chapel with strict COVID-19 safety measures in place. As Rhodes Woolly, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, said on the couple's wedding

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Venue Services provided a custom tent and chandeliers for the Graham-Weiker wedding reception.

day, "And in this moment, everything was perfect and as it should be."

*Friends and loved ones pitched in with advice and support.
But let me get to the point / make a long story short
Tomorrow at 5 you two will be wed.
A lifetime of challenges and joys lie ahead.
You have family and friends that all hold you dear.
Your love for each other is strong that is clear.
As parents' we couldn't be prouder of you.
Forever we'll be in your corner that's true.
But when life throws you curveballs take full measure of
The fact even a pandemic is no match for your love.*

So for all those 2021 wedding couples out there, have faith. As you look ahead anxiously, even if we're still wearing masks and dealing with gathering limits by the time your special day arrives, you can still have a beautiful wedding.

Just like "The Cat in the Hat," this chaos will be just an entertaining story for your future children looking at your wedding album and asking why everyone was wearing masks. These caring and creative vendors helped reassemble key elements of weddings that left families and their guests forgetting, for just a moment, the chaos COVID created.

If you haven't already, give them a call. And when your day finally arrives, take a moment to note all the friends and family that have come to celebrate you and be grateful. It will be worth the wait. **S**


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VENDOR INFORMATION

Here is some contact information for local vendors who were used for the Storey-Lee and Graham-Weiker weddings:

Cakes: Abigail's — A Cake Affair — <https://www.facebook.com/Abigail-a-cake-affair-151316764917111/>

2) Coyote Trail Cakes: <https://www.coyotetrailcakes.com/>

Custom Printing: The Lettered Lily design studio — <https://theletteredlily.com/>

Wedding registry: Caniche — <https://www.shopcaniche.com/>

Florists: 1) Heirloom Floral Co — <https://heirloomnc.com/>

2) The Pink Peony — <https://www.facebook.com/thepinkpeonydistinctivefloraldesign>

Jewelry: Windsor Gallery Jewelers — <https://www.windsorgalleryjewelers.com/>

Hair & Makeup: Hair Associates



Heath van Wagenberg decorated the Omwake-Dearborn Chapel for the Graham-Weiker ceremony.

— <https://www.facebook.com/hairassoc/>

2) Greystone Salon & Spa — <https://greystonesalonandspa.com/>

3) Makeup by JTS — <https://www.instagram.com/makeupbyjts/>

4) MKUPWITHMB — <https://www.instagram.com/mkupwithmb/>

Rentals: Venue Services — <https://myvenueservices.com/>

DJ: Virtual Sounds Entertainment and Productions — <https://virtualsoundsdjs.com/>

Venue: The Arbors Events — <https://www.thearborevents.com/>

Photography: Jenny Tenney Photography — <http://www.jennytenney.com/>

Transportation: F&M Bank Trolley Cars — <https://www.visitsalisburync.com/plan/groups-and-reunions/trolley-tours/>

2) Salisbury Motor Company — <https://salisburymotorcompany.com/>

Craft beer: New Sarum Salisbury Brewing Co. — <https://newsarumbrewing.com/>

Monogramming: Ashlee's embroidery — <https://ashemb.com/>

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OTTO WOOD IS KILLED HERE

NOTED CRIMINAL SLAIN ON STREET BY TWO OFFICERS

Rankin And Kesler End Outlaw's Career.

OTTO WOOD, NOTORIOUS NORTH CAROLINA OUTLAW AND ESCAPED CONVICT WAS SHOT AND KILLED IN A SENATIONAL GUN BATTLE WITH CHIEF OF POLICE R. L. RANKIN AND ASSISTANT CHIEF J. W. KESLER ON EAST INNES STREET IN FRONT OF THE YANCEY BUILDING ABOUT 3 P. M. THIS AFTERNOON.

WOOD WAS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL WHERE HE DIED IN A FEW MINUTES. A COMPANION WAS LODGED IN ROWAN COUNTY JAIL, HE ADMITTED THAT THE SLAIN MAN WAS OTTO WOOD.

Information reached the office of Chief Rankin shortly before 1 o'clock this afternoon that Otto Wood was on East Innes street, near Lee street. The chief said although scores of reports of like nature had reached his office since Wood's escape from the state prison, he called to Assistant Chief J. W. Kesler and they got in the corner of Lee and Innes street, less than a block from police headquarters. He saw two men walking along the street in front of the Yancey building and at once picked one of them as Wood.

Chief Rankin stopped his car and called to the man saying: "Come here, buddy." The man said: "What the hell you want." The chief said: "Let me see your hand."

By that time Wood had raised out a pistol and whipped it toward the chief's car and whipped out a pistol and levelled it at the chief's head with the remark: "Damn it, here's my hand." Almost instantaneously the chief shot at the young man who gave his name as Roy Barker, jumped in the rear seat of Chief Rankin's car, with the chief and assistant chief in the front seat.

Wood kept his big 45 Smith and Wesson levelled on the chief and

INQUEST DISCOVERS SHOOTING OF WOOD WAS JUSTIFIABLE

Body Positively Identified By State Prison Official.

A coroner's jury composed of John Millholland, J. I. Haich, E. C. Gregory, Sr., Murray Smith, B. R. Martin and Z. Vintrow, summoned by Coroner W. L. Talum, to probe the death of Otto Wood, noted state outlaw here this afternoon, rendered a verdict that the shooting of Wood by Chief Rankin and Assistant Chief Kesler was "in self defense and justifiable."

Positive identification of Wood was made by Capt. S. F. Berry, superintendent of the state prison camp at Granite quarry, and for ten years connects with the state prison at Raleigh. Captain Berry said he had often worked Wood, and he positively identified the body laid here last of the man.

The inquest was held in Wright's undertaking parlor and in addition Chief Rankin, Assistant witnesses heard were: W. B. Dally and Benjie Ludwick who had seen Otto at previous times and identified him; W. R. Hartman, who saw Otto on the streets today and remarked to persons that: "I'll bet my hat that is Otto Wood"; Robert Mitchell, colored; J. R. Walton; and Dr. Edward Whipple, who was seen to use medical aid on Wood.

Chief Rankin said he and Otto Wood met at each other at practically the same moment when Otto was slain. Rankin was in a coaching position in front of his car, 714, was standing on the curb.

"I peeped around the side of the car at Otto. He fired at me and I fired at him at the same time. He killed me, and I got him," Chief Rankin stated.

Chief Rankin testified at the inquest that Wood uttered an oath

OTTO WOOD, "Houdini Of Cell Block A", Had Led Life Of Crime And Prison Escapes Without Parallel In State

IS DEAD

OTTO'S COMPANION HELD IN JAIL; NOT HURT IN GUNPLAY

Gives Name As Roy Barker, Of Virginia.

The Associated Press states that George Ross Pou, superintendent of the state prison, said this afternoon that Otto's

Wood was sent to state's prison from Guilford county superior court, Greensboro, where he was convicted of second degree murder of A. W. Kaplan, slain when he resisted Wood's attempt to rob his pawnshop.

After the killing Wood leaped on the running board of a passing automobile, forced the driver at the point of a pistol to drive into the country and there took the automobile himself. Captured near Princeton, W. Va., Wood was brought back to Greensboro, tried and convicted.

On May 10, 1924, just six months after he was committed to state's prison, Otto made his first escape. Obtaining a gun from some unknown source, he enlisted the aid of John Starnes, another convict, and overpowered a guard.

The prison physician's automobile was parked before the main prison building and the two forced the guard to drive them from the prison grounds in it.

Outside, Otto "stuck up" another motorist and took his automobile. A railway accident when Otto was a brakeman years previous had left him with a crippled foot and only one eye. Two denture pieces identification marks he retained as liberty for two weeks. Then he was captured at Roanoke, Va., where he was a liquor runner.

On November 14, 1925, he made his second break. This time he hid in a concrete culvert pipe on a freight car inside the prison and rode to freedom.

Officers found him after a few weeks near his old home in Wilkes county and returned him to the prison.

He remained on good behavior for a year and then on November 22, 1926, made a third break.

Left: Otto Wood in the aptly named Roarin' 20s. **Right:** Here is a sampling of the headlines and narratives from the Salisbury Evening Post after the shooting of criminal Otto Wood here 90 years ago.



Salisbury Police Chief R. Lee Rankin, left, and Assistant Police Chief J. W. Kesler, right, exchanged gunfire with Otto Wood in a shootout in the 100 block of East Innes Street on Dec. 31, 1930. Rankin is credited with firing the bullets that killed Wood.

Otto Wood

90 years ago, the 'one-armed bandit' met his fateful end in a Salisbury shootout

WRITTEN BY BEN WHITE



The day of Dec. 31, 1930, reached a high of 40 degrees by mid afternoon, although it was the coldest month on record dating back to 1917. As the clock on the Square approached 1 p.m., two strangers walked down East Innes Street set to stage a brazen robbery of a state government building close by.

It was the beginning of a true-life event that has been told and retold over the past 90 years. Pawnbroker A.W. Kaplan, legendary prison escapee Otto Wood, his companion Roy Barker, Salisbury Police Chief R. Lee Rankin and Deputy chief J.W. Kesler are all central characters in a story that ended abruptly on a street corner in a shower of bullets.

It began on Saturday, Nov. 3, 1923, when Kaplan unlocked his business on South Elm Street in Greensboro. The proprietor of Russian descent was careful to keep a wooden club at arm's reach behind the counter to protect himself from the occasional store patron desperate for cash.

One of those customers was Wood, a native of Wilkes County, with a long criminal history that began with a stolen bicycle at the age of 13. He was set to join a chain gang at 14 for breaking into a hardware store but was too young and sent home to his mother, Ellen, a God-fearing Baptist widow.

By the time he reached his 21st birthday, Wood was already wanted in several states for car and horse theft, moonshining, and eventually, murder. Law enforcement knew of him for having a club right foot from birth and the loss of his left hand at age 17 while working on the railroad in West Virginia. That accident graced him with a \$7,000 insurance check, but the money offered far too much freedom and ran out

Above: Salisbury Police headquarters, which were in this North Lee Street building in 1930, were just around the corner from where the shootout with Otto Wood occurred. (Photo by Ben White)

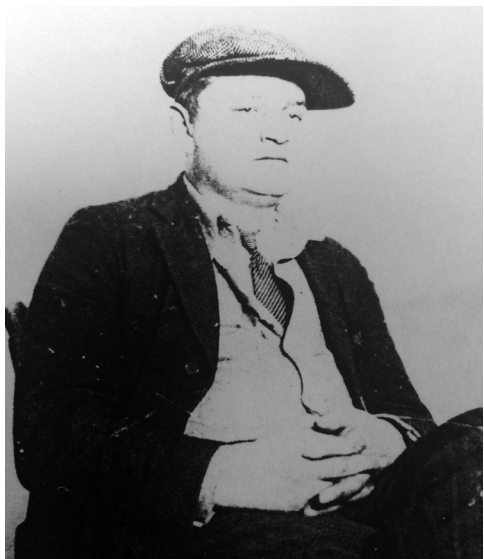
quickly.

Wood, convict No. 18602, visited Kaplan's Greensboro pawn shop after one of his many escapes to retrieve a pocket watch he had hocked a week earlier. The watch held his mother's photo inside its lid. Kaplan claimed to know



Above: Salisbury Police Chief R.L. Rankin, the man who killed Otto Wood. **Right:** During his criminal career, Wood gained notoriety as an escape artist and 'The Houdini of Cell Block A.'

Below: This photograph of Roy Barker, Otto Wood's traveling companion on the day of the Salisbury shootout, was taken back at the police station after he was in custody. Barker's gun jammed and never fired.



SCOVERS
IF WOOD
FIABLE

Otto Wood, "Houdini Of Cell Block A", Had Led Life Of Crime And Prison Escapes Without Parallel In State

(By The Associated Press)

Otto Wood, 34, brakeman, bandit, author and convicted murderer, escaped four times from the North Carolina state prison at Raleigh, where in 1923 he began a sentence of 22 to 30 years for slaying a pawnbroker. A nationwide search has been made for him since his last escape on July 12, 1930.

Wood was sent to state's prison from Guilford county superior court, Greensboro, where he was convicted of second degree murder of A. W. Kaplan, slain when he resisted Wood's attempt to rob his pawnshop.

After the killing Wood leaped on the running board of a passing automobile, forced the driver at the point of a pistol to drive into the country and there took the automobile himself. Captured near Princeton, W. Va., Wood was brought back to Greensboro, tried and convicted.

On May 10, 1924, just six months after he was committed to state's prison, Otto made his first escape. Obtaining a gun from some unknown source, he enlisted the aid of John Starnes, another convict, and overpowered a guard.

The prison physician's automobile was parked before the main prison building and the two forced the guard to drive them from the prison grounds in it.

Outside, Otto "stuck up" another motorist and took his automobile. A railway accident when Otto was a brakeman years previous had left him with a crippled foot and only one eye, but despite these identification marks he remained at liberty for two weeks. Then he was captured at Roanoke, Va., officers who stopped his automobile believing he was a liquor runner.

On November 14, 1925, he made his second break. This time he hid in a concrete culvert pipe on a freight car inside the prison and rode to freedom.

Officers found him after a few weeks near his old home in Wilkes county and returned him to the prison.

He remained on good behavior for a year and then on November 22, 1926, made a third break.

NOT
SLAIN
BY T

Rankin
Er

IS DEAD



Otto Wood

OTTO'S COMPANION HELD IN JAIL; NOT HURT IN GUNPLAY

Gives Name As Roy Barker, Of Virginia.

The Associated Press states that George Ross Poo, superintendent of the state prison, said this afternoon that Otto's com-

Otto Carolina vict was sational Police R Chief J. street in ing abou Wood tal whe A comp county slain m Infor Chief o'clock Wood near L though ture Wood on, he W. R chief's corner than quart along Yance one of Chi and "Come said The c hand." By toward out a chief's "Damn tant a you Roy B of Ch chief front Wood Wesn ord

nothing about the watch and ordered him to leave. A struggle broke out, leaving Kaplan dead and Wood in the worst trouble of his life.

Wood made his way onto the running board of a Ford driven by a man named Devane. After robbing him of his car and \$100, Wood hijacked two more vehicles and drove to Princeton, West Virginia, where he was captured and brought back to Guilford County, tied, shackled and heavily guarded. The widowed Mrs. Kaplan posted a \$500 reward and the Greensboro city council and county commissioners had put up

\$100 each for Wood's capture.

At trial, Wood claimed he struck Kaplan with his gun in self-defense. An eyewitness, A.S. Hodges, was prepared to defend Wood's claim but was never called. Citing no premeditation to commit the crime, the trial's judge handed down a manslaughter charge and a sentence of 22 to 30 years.

Wood had known nothing but trouble throughout his 36 years. He escaped a total of 10 times by way of open gates, hiding in a concrete culvert shipped from the prison, slipping

through a loose grate, taking a prison doctor's car and even had help from a guard, among other means in Tennessee and Virginia. Four of his breakouts came while incarcerated in North Carolina.

Before his third escape from Raleigh's Central Prison, Wood wrote a note to the warden as well as the local newspaper demanding several changes in how the prison was being operated. He ended the note by saying, "I hope you will do something about this in the near future, sir. But I will be fair with you and say that if you do



not, I will be forced to leave.” He was returned a few days later and placed in solitary confinement for 18 months. Good behavior gave him special privileges leading to a final mysterious escape on July 10, 1930, with the help of a female accomplice.

During the final afternoon of 1930, Salisbury-ans busied themselves going about their daily routines while anticipating evening New Year’s Eve celebrations. The Great Depression was in its second year and hope loomed that 1931 would offer some return to normalcy. Millions of Americans lost their life savings in the stock market crash of 1929 and the road back to prosperity would prove long and hard throughout the decade.

Rankin, head of the Salisbury Police Department, was highly respected and known as a fair and honest servant of the people. He was married to Susan May Belk Rankin and eventually became the father of six children. The Rankins became members of St. John’s Lutheran Church on Sunday, May 13, 1923, the place where his funeral was held during the first week of January

This Salisbury History and Art Trail marker is embedded into the brick sidewalk border on East Innes Street near the North Lee Street corner. Close to here 90 years ago, infamous criminal Otto Wood was shot to death in a shootout. Lyrics to a Walter ‘Kid’ Smith ballad about Otto Wood are quoted at the start of the text.
(Photo by Mark Wineka)

1940 due to a heart attack and pneumonia.

Sitting at the North Lee Street police headquarters, shared with the city Fire Department, Rankin was probably finishing paperwork while waiting for Assistant Police Chief Kesler to return from lunch. The smell of fresh baked breads, meats and vegetables in the air made Rankin anxious to get to lunch himself.

A few minutes before noon, Barker parked a stolen 1930 Ford sedan he shared with Wood on Innes Street before making their way to Salisbury Cafe on Council Street. On Nov. 4, 1930, Wood had eased the Ford off the Hayes Motor Co. lot in Claremont, Oklahoma, in the dark of night. While traveling through Missouri, Wood

lifted license plates 431-388 issued to an H.T. Fisher that were placed on the car’s front and rear bumpers. Barker was penniless and had fallen on Wood’s generosity to keep him fed and warm with his gray overcoat. The two were unfamiliar with Salisbury but knew the location of the North Carolina Automobile License Bureau where stacks of cash sat in tills just waiting to be taken.

As Kesler returned, an unknown gentleman was telling Rankin that he had heard Wood was in town. Rankin had little reaction to the claim, as written reports of Wood sightings filtered throughout police departments throughout the state. Rankin and Kesler got into Rankin’s 1929 Dodge sedan and headed 100 yards north on Lee Street and turned left onto East Innes Street toward the Square.

As Rankin turned, he spotted two men walking down the street toward the Yancy Building, the longtime home of Hardiman’s Furniture (Bangkok Thai Restaurant today). Instinct told him to make a U-turn and go back, stopping as he reached 131 E. Innes St.

| reminisce |

“Come here, buddy, we want to see you a minute,” Rankin yelled.

“What the hell you want?” Wood snapped.

“Let me see your hand,” Rankin answered.

“Dammit, here’s my hand,” Wood said as he pulled his .45 Smith and Wesson pistol from his right pocket and pointed it at Rankin. Wood and Barker took the back seat of the officers’ car and commanded them to head toward the train station. Rankin fumbled a bit as if he couldn’t get the car started, then tumbled out the door with the keys in his hand so Wood and Barker couldn’t drive away.

Rankin crouched down and took cover using the front of his car while Kesler stood at the front right side. Both Wood and Barker exited as Wood yelled several times for Barker to shoot. Barker’s gun, given to him by Wood, had a jammed cylinder and would not fire. Barker stood back and was never a part of the melee. A shot from Wood’s gun broke the right lower corner of the windshield, while another traveled through the car’s dashboard into the radiator.

Eleven shots exploded through the air from the guns of Rankin, Kesler and Wood. Four hit Wood, dropping him to the concrete with wounds to his head and chest. He died at 1:30 p.m. while en route to the “Rowan General Hospital” located on North Fulton Street, according to Wood’s death certificate.

Rankin suffered only minor cuts to his face from flecks of flying glass and blood from where Wood’s bullet grazed his head. A crowd quickly gathered to look upon the aftermath of the real-life Western gunfight. Rankin later told the coroner’s inquest, “I peeked around the side of the car at Otto. He fired at me and I fired at him at the same time. He missed and I got him.”

Woodleaf area residents William “Raymond” Barbee; his wife, Pearl, and children Brady, Lee, Martin, Don and Irene, were in town to buy new license plates for the family’s Model T Ford. While Mrs. Barbee and the children headed to O.O. Rufty’s General Store to buy candy, Raymond Barbee headed toward the license office and saw what was about to happen.


In a 2011 Salisbury Post article, the late Brady Barbee remembered his father telling his family to duck. Libby Owens, the daughter of Donald Barbee, also recalls stories told by family members through the years.

“My father passed away in 2018,” Owens said. “He was about six months old at the time and was being held by my grandmother when it all happened. He was too young to know anything that happened, but my Uncle Brady was about 7 years old and remembered quite a bit. My grandparents didn’t agree about the shooting. My grandmother said she didn’t like that he had been shot, but my grandfather said they were just following the law. My dad hardly said anything about it at all until very late in his life.”

Wood’s body was taken to Wright’s Undertaking on Fulton Street and put on display to a line that stretched to West Innes and past the Square. A day later, the Post offered a report, stating “Thousands of persons, some estimates placing the number as high as 20,000, have filed past Wood’s body. Otto’s left arm, minus a hand,

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has been the subject of much comment, as well as his three upper front gold teeth.”

Wood’s older brother, Luther, and brother-in-law Claude Blizzard came to retrieve the body on Jan. 2, 1931, but didn’t have the money to ship it. They stated they were afraid to leave it due to possible souvenir hunters and the disgrace of placing him in a potter’s field. Wood’s few personal belongings were collected from his pockets, including an empty wallet. Numerous bullets were also found in his possession.


Salisbury citizens raised \$24.68 to send Wood’s body to his mother in Coaldale, West Virginia. Salisburians also contributed an additional \$39.44 to help bury her son. Upon her death, she was buried next to her son on Coaldale Mountain in Mercer County.

After extensive interviews, Barker, of St. Pauls, Virginia, stated he was a hitchhiker and hardly knew Wood when picked up near Rocky Mount, headed for Wilmington to work on a boat. He was ultimately sentenced to six months in prison for carrying a concealed weapon, even though it was inoperable.

Wood wrote a book in 1926 while imprisoned called, “Life History of Otto Wood.” In 1931, an anonymous author added nine pages of text and six photographs that included an update of Wood’s history as well as details of the fatal shootout in Salisbury. Three printings of the 1931 edition are known to exist.

Soon after Wood’s death, songs told of his exploits and a play was writ-

ten and performed in North Wilkesboro about his life and shooting. Wood had grown up in the small hamlets of Dellaplane (now Antioch) and Ronda.

Despite his crimes, Wood was beloved by many people in a time of severe economic hardship because of his generosity in that he often stole from the rich to give to the poor. His exploits are still recalled throughout Wilkes County nearly 100 years later. 

Ben White, an award-winning NASCAR writer, lives in Salisbury.

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Her support for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is a highly personal thing for yard sale volunteer Peggy Rose, who has two grandchildren with CF.



Christina Vair faces many decisions during her shopping.



Leigh Anne Powlas mans the yard sale's check-in station.

CF Yard Sale

With 17 years of Cystic Fibrosis Yard Sales and Estate Sales under their belt, volunteers took on a new challenge in October. Huge inventory was a result of COVID-19 precautions not permitting the May sale. The cleaning and purging going on with homebound folks filled the lower gym at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center on North Fulton Street. The sale was held on back-to-back weekends in October with merchandise being replenished throughout the four days. Volunteers not only had the usual setup with an enormous volume of items but worked hard to meet the state standards for COVID-19 while running the sale. Steadfast customers showed up rain or shine, quite willing to follow the guidelines to shop one of the best-known yard sale events in Rowan County. Under the direction of founder Helen Brown, a team of 20-25 volunteers has now raised over \$300,000 for Cystic Fibrosis Research since the first yard sale.

—Brenda Zimmerman, volunteer. Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: Susan Beaver navigates down one of the rows. Left: As with all others attending the yard sale, Davey Fesperman, Brina Wertz and Rosalee Fesperman were asked to wear masks because of the pandemic.



Above: Volunteers Melanie Shumaker and Robin Edmiston. Right: Anna Robinson gives an item an closer look.



Above: Helen Kiker takes a closer look at one of the many tables of donated items that are for sale. Right: Brian Morrow examines some of the items priced and ready for purchase.



Above: Long-time yard sale volunteers Brenda Zimmerman, Kaye Brown Hirst and Jeniffer Totten wait at the checkout station. Left: The Cystic Fibrosis Yard Sale's founder Helen Brown poses with her husband and strong workhorse through the years, Ralph Brown.



Tina Daniels made this 'hippy' scarecrow.



Derby and Linda Holshouser put together these young scarecrows. The one on the left is wearing a Faithful Friends hoodie.



Derby and Linda Holshouser fashioned this little guy scarecrow, who looked to be trick-or-treating.

Faithful Friends' Scarecrow Festival

As pandemic restrictions continued, Faithful Friends Animal Sanctuary Director Mary Padavick came up with a safe and fun event for supporters — a drive-through Scarecrow Festival. "I'm not sure how the dogs like them because they think they are real people," volunteer Lora Owen said, "(but) it makes me smile each time I pass them." The free drive-through festival was held at the sanctuary (220 Grace Church Road) from Oct. 17-31, and visitors could register to win a gift basket at the end of the scarecrow drive.

— Photos by Marcia Parrott, Lora Owen, Linda Holshouser and Mary Padavick



Lora Owen did this version of a Cat in the Hat scarecrow, complete with books for reading.



Left: Scarecrow creations by Katherine Dunham, 11, and Margaret Dunham, 13.



Right: Scarecrows made by Elliott Parrott, 7, and Anna Parrott, 9.



Above: Cat volunteers Terry and Yvonne Etheridge called this scarecrow creation 'The Vixen Dog Walker.' Note the poop bag in the scarecrow's right 'hand.' Right: On the festival drive-through, there was a good chance you saw Elvis with the cocker spaniel Pup Pup, modeled after a dog adopted from Faithful Friends. Lora Owen did this display.



Leah and Abby Campion made this scarecrow couple.



Angela Vagner created these grandmother and grandfather scarecrows.



Director Mary Padavick's scarecrow masterpiece.



Left: Gene Krueger and Kathleen Dunn created 'The Traveler.' The couple enjoy traveling when the world isn't dealing with pandemic restrictions.

Right: Derby and Linda Holshouser built the recycling lady. Recycling cans is a way to support Faithful Friends.



Faithful Friends volunteer Linda Shapleigh provided this scarecrow take on Darth Vader.

| *salisbury's the place* |



Hager says this is a custom painting she did for Gigi and John DeMarcus of China Grove. It features their 'grand-dogs' and hangs in their river home where the family, including the dogs, loves to gather.

'GET THAT BALL' By Cherrathee Hager — Acrylic

Artwork of local scenes for Salisbury's the Place may be submitted to mark.wineka@salisburythemagazine.com
Vertical orientation is preferred.

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