

October 2019

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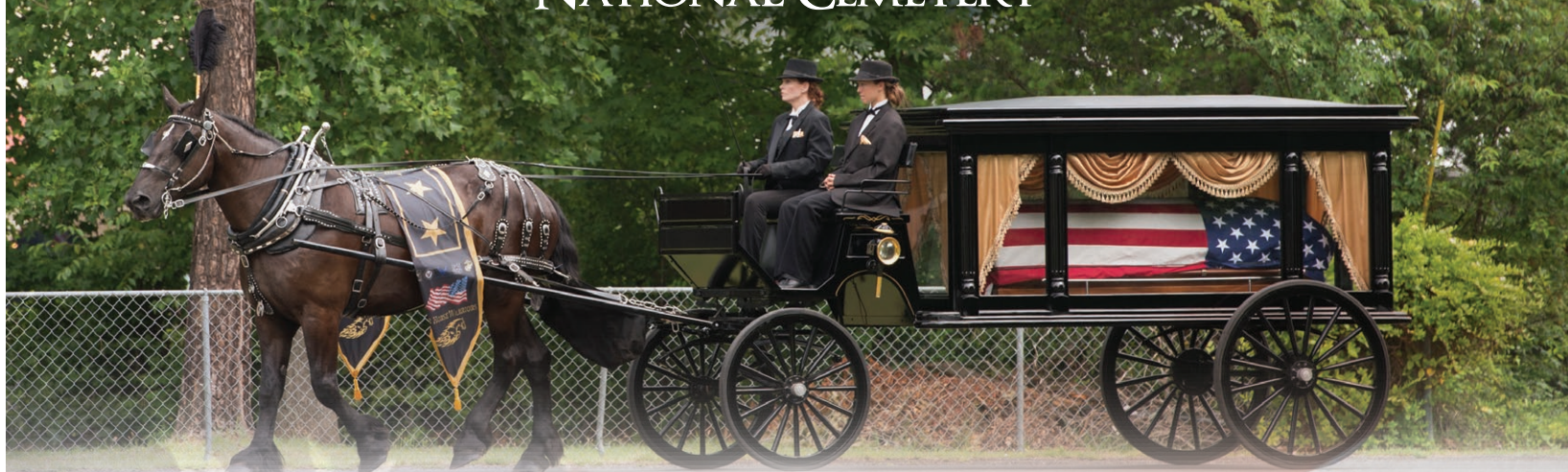
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# SALISBURY

the magazine

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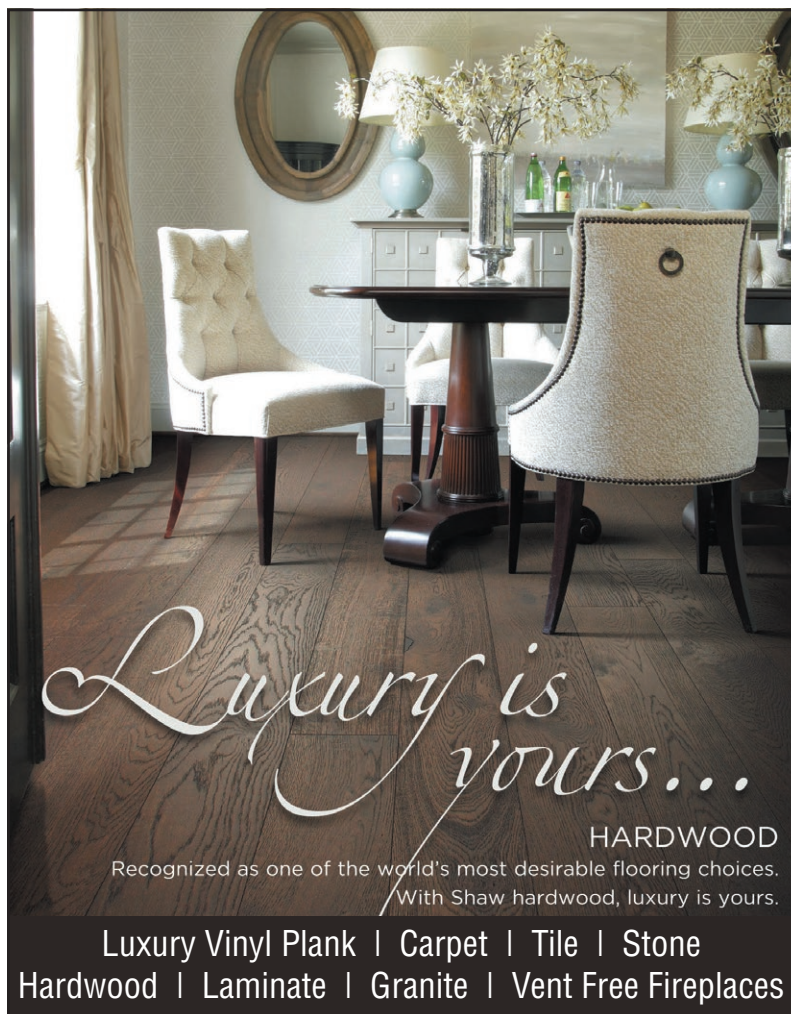
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**Salisbury the Magazine**  
P.O. Box 4639  
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**Value \$3.99**  
Published 9 times / year



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Davises put their stamp on home

by ELIZABETH COOK



On the cover: Sharon Forthofer paints with Plein Air Carolina at Hurley Park.

On this page: Four crosses sit in the window of the Rev. Lara Musser Gritter's office at First Presbyterian Church.

— Jon C. Lakey photos



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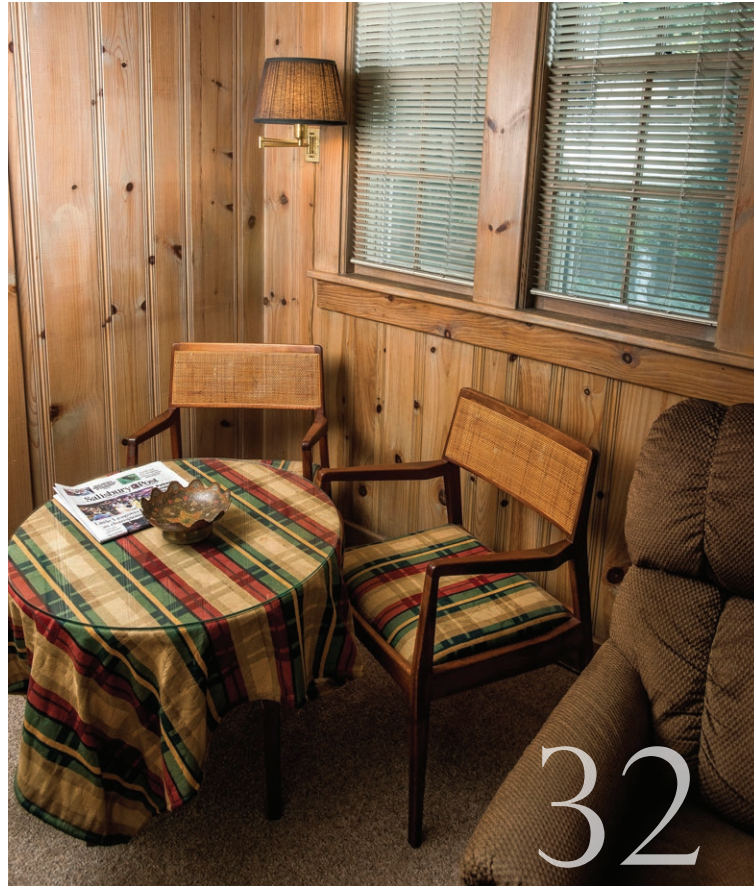
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# Salisbury glows under a harvest moon

I've lived in these parts long enough to associate autumn with certain things.

I can't help but think of strolling through the livestock barns at county and state fairs, checking out the ribbons and greeting a lot of proud 4-Hers tending to their hogs, lambs, goats, sheep and cattle.

High school bands, football teams and proud parents fill the stadiums on Friday nights. It's good to feel the thump, thump, thump of drums in your chest or rise with the crowd in anticipation of a completed pass down the sideline or a breakaway run up the middle.

Alumni make their pilgrimages to Livingstone and Catawba colleges on Saturday afternoons for tailgating and homecoming games.

The fall brings the year's last hurrahs of yard work — the weed-and-feed applications, the raking of leaves, the final swipes with the mower.

Autumn has a crispness, for sure. It's nice to pull on a sweater or jacket again. The season has its colors, too. Painters like to see all of summer's shades of green replaced by the bursts of red, yellow and orange.

I always enjoy riding down South Fulton Street in the fall or taking in the shoreline colors around High Rock Lake.

This season in Rowan County also means Autumn Jubilee at Dan Nicholas Park. It comes with ghost tours, scary attractions and trick-or-treating. In Granite Quarry, there's the Fiddlers Convention.

And in the city, autumn becomes synonymous with Historic Salisbury Foundation's OctoberTour.

In this issue of Salisbury the Magazine, you will find, thanks to writer Elizabeth Cook and photographer Jon Lakey, stories on two different OctoberTour houses.

Our thanks go to Kathy and Jerry Short at the Slater-Miller-Martin House on West Fisher Street and Rachel and Ken Davis at the Rufus G. Hunt House on South Ellis Street for allowing us to invade and share their homes with you. It's also a nice way to

remind you of this year's OctoberTour (Oct. 12-13) and all the events around it.

This issue introduces a feature we hope to be doing now and then called "The Big Five." It will give readers five things they should know about a certain place, and it so happens we start out with writer Susan Shinn Turner and Lakey giving us five things to know about China Grove.

With luck, we'll eventually get to all towns in Rowan County and various other places over the course of time. Again, it won't necessarily be an every-issue kind of installment, but expect to see more of them.

Elsewhere in the October issue, writer Maggie Blackwell tells us how the young husband-and-wife team of Josh and Lara Musser Gritter became senior pastors at First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury. The couple clearly have re-energized their congregation.

We also visit with well-known local singer Rebecca Stinson, who additionally has become an author with her memoir about growing up in China Grove.

You'll hear from artists of Plein Air Carolina, whose members take on the challenge and relish the camaraderie of painting outdoors on a weekly basis.

In the Food department, be sure to read Darrell Blackwelder's account of his and friend Mike Jacobsen's personal tour of almost 30 breakfast spots in Rowan County.

Hurley Family YMCA Executive Director Richard Reinholz is our Rowan Original, and Connie Eads provides the artwork for Salisbury's the Place.

So here's October. Everyone, fall in.



**Mark Wineka,**  
Editor, *Salisbury the Magazine*



through the lens | by jon c. lakey



*An adult dragonfly sits on a  
curling twig. This vine was  
growing near a home on  
East Ridge Road.*



# Treats and tricks for fall

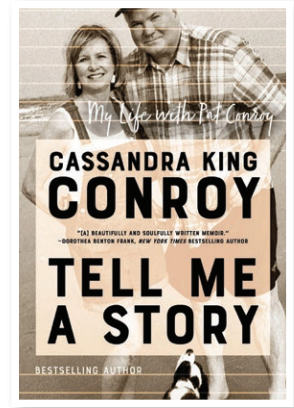
## "Tell Me a Story: My Life with Pat Conroy"

By Cassandra King Conroy

Cassandra King was divorced, leading a quiet life as a professor and debut novelist when she met Pat Conroy.

Their friendship bloomed into a tentative, long-distance relationship. Pat and Cassandra ultimately married, partly because Pat hated the commute from coastal South Carolina to her native Alabama. It was a union that would last 18 years, until the beloved literary icon's death from pancreatic cancer in 2016.

In this poignant memoir, the woman he called King Ray looks back at her love affair with a natural-born storyteller whose lust for life was fueled by a passion for literature, food and the South Carolina Lowcountry that was his home. As she reflects on their relationship, cut short by Pat's passing at 70, Cassandra reveals how the marshlands of the Lowcountry cast their spell on her, too, and how she came to understand the convivial, generous, funny and wounded flesh-and-blood man beneath the legend — her husband, the original Prince of Tides. On sale Oct. 29.



## "Olive, Again"

By Elizabeth Strout

"It turns out — I just wasn't done with Olive," said Strout. "It was like she kept poking me in the ribs, so I finally said, 'Okay, okay...'"

Olive struggles to understand not only herself and her own life but the lives of those around her in the town of Crosby, Maine. Whether with a teenager coming to terms with the loss of her father, a young woman about to give birth during a hilariously inopportune moment, a nurse who confesses a secret high school

crush, or a lawyer who struggles with an inheritance she does not want to accept, the unforgettable Olive will continue to startle us, to move us, and to inspire moments of transcendent grace.

The character of Olive Kitteridge has achieved an iconic place in the imaginations of millions of readers since the 2008 publication of Strout's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "Olive Kitteridge." Coming Oct. 10.

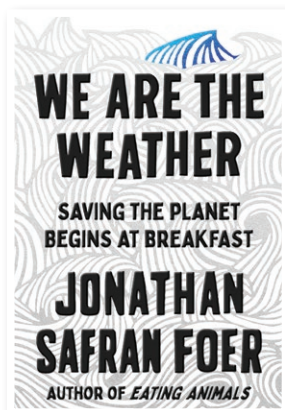
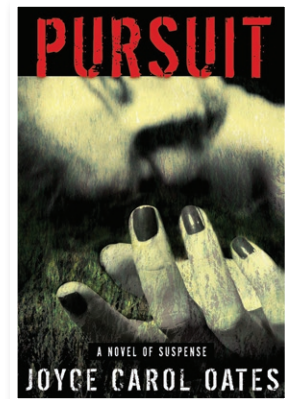
## "The Pursuit"

By Joyce Carol Oates

Turn on the lights and crack open this suspenseful book that's coming out just in time for Halloween. As a child, Abby suffers from a recurring nightmare in which she wanders through a field of human bones. And then, just before her wedding to Willem, the dream returns with a vengeance. Less than 24 hours before they say "I do," she steps into traffic.

Willem tries to determine whether this was an absentminded accident or a premeditated plunge, and he quickly discovers a mysterious set of clues about what his wife might be hiding. Why, for example is there a rash-like red mark circling her wrist? What does she dream about that causes her to wake from the sound of her own screams?

Slowly, Abby begins to open up to her husband, revealing to him what she has never shared with anyone before — the story of a terrified mother; a jealous, drug addled father; and a daughter's terrifying captivity.



## "We are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast"

By Jonathan Safran Foer

Some people reject the fact, overwhelmingly supported by scientists, that our planet is warming because of human activity. But do those of us who accept the reality of human-caused climate change truly believe it?

In "We Are the Weather," Foer explores the central global dilemma of our time in a surprising, deeply personal and urgent new way. The task of saving the planet will involve

a great reckoning with ourselves — with our all-too-human reluctance to sacrifice immediate comfort for the sake of the future. We have, he reveals, turned our planet into a farm for growing animal products, and the consequences are catastrophic. Only collective action will save our home and way of life. And it all starts with what we eat — and don't eat — for breakfast.

In his earlier book, "Eating Animals," Foer explored the origins of many eating traditions and the fictions involved with creating them. On sale Sept. 17.





*Richard Reinholz came to Salisbury as a German foreign exchange student in 1993.*

# Trade secret

*YMCA's Reinholz proved to be a brilliant exchange.*

Written by **Mark Wineka** | Photography by **Jon C. Lakey**

**R**ichard Reinholz became executive director of the J.F. Hurley Jr. Family YMCA in 2015, but many newcomers to Salisbury may not know his first visit to the city came as a German foreign exchange student in 1993.

He was 16 and attending Salisbury High at the time. What was supposed to be a nine-month stay turned into his decision to attend Pfeiffer College, and that led to a career with the YMCA in North Carolina.

“I had a great host family, the Lomax family, who supported me right away,” Reinholz says. “In addition, the support received from Salisbury High staff and coaches made it a welcoming experience from the beginning. I enjoyed the culture of school athletics (soccer and tennis) and being able to skip 11th grade, being

able to experience prom, graduating early and through academics and athletics receiving a full ride to go to college.”

Other than his freshman year, the 42-year-old Reinholz has lived in Rowan County since coming from Germany.

“Because I feel it is my home,” he says. “Salisbury has been good to me and it is also where my wife, Kelly, grew up and has roots, so I have never thought about living anywhere else.”

Richard and Kelly live in Faith, where she teaches at Faith Elementary School. They have a son, Ayden. Richard’s parents still live in Germany, but they come to visit often. He also has a sister who lives in Sherrills Ford.

Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with Reinholz for a quick Q&A:





***How much of a cultural shock was it back in the 1990s to come to the United States from Germany, and to the South in particular? Was it a difficult adjustment?***

Well, it was quite a bit different. I arrived in Charlotte mid-August in 1993 on a late evening and was picked up by my host parents. They brought me to Salisbury where I lived on Ellis Street in a pink house and my room had flowered wallpaper. Rather than having a host sibling of similar age, I had very young sisters, which was certainly an immediate shock.

The following morning my host father, Chuck, took me to breakfast where I ate grits, eggs and bacon, not generally something we eat in Germany for breakfast. Then we went to Salisbury High for my first day of school. I had confidence in my ability to speak and understand English, but that changed quickly as I had quite a difficult time understanding everyone due to the strange accent I had not heard before. Once I adjusted to that, everything else was easy to adjust to. Now, I say “y’all,” and “ain’t” and feel that I am as Southern as anyone else — even though I probably still have an accent.

***After all these years, what’s your better language — English or German?***

Definitely English! I still claim to be a foreigner and that English is my second language when I speak in front of an audience, but that is just so I have an excuse if I mess up.

***What about the YMCA struck a chord with you and led you into making the Y a career?***

Honestly, I did not know much about the YMCA. However, the Rowan County YMCA gave me my first full-time opportunity after college. My current boss and CEO, Jamie Morgan, hired me at the South YMCA in 1999, and I fell in love being able to serve the community while upholding our Christian mission: “To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”

I left the Rowan YMCA in 2002 to gain experience with the YMCA in Winston Salem

and then with the YMCA in Charlotte, but always hoped that I would be able to return back to work for the YMCA of Rowan County. Fortunately for me, Jamie followed my career and hired me back in 2015 and I could not be happier.

***What kind of void would there be if Salisbury didn’t have this Y that so many have come to appreciate?***

You tell me! I would love to hear from the community about this. As far as I am concerned, the J.F. Hurley Family YMCA is one of the biggest assets to our community as we serve nearly 10,000 members and many more individuals through our programs such as soccer, flag football, summer camp, before and after school, swim lessons, swim team, Special Olympics, etc. In addition, we are open to all regardless of age, sex, race, socioeconomic status, religion, and we do not turn anyone away due to the inability to afford our membership or programs. Who else does that?

Many people believe that we are the most inclusive business in Salisbury and that is something my staff, board and I are very proud of.

***In general, what are the top two or three challenges ahead for the Salisbury Y?***

Our top challenge remains the slow economy in Rowan County, even though that is improving. The financial assistance we provide is over 20% of our operating budget (over \$400,000 of financial assistance provided in 2018), and that makes it challenging to balance the budget while maintaining a 90,000-square-foot building with two pools.

***What kinds of things has the Salisbury Y done or have planned with renewable energy or solar energy in making the facility more cost-efficient?***

We have recently been blessed by a wonderful gift from Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stanback. The gift allowed us to repair our roof and also allowed us to install a 284kW STC DC system that is estimated to offset our kWh by 23%. That is an estimated savings of \$25,000-plus annually.

In addition, the YMCA has been able to update 95% of our lighting to LED, and that investment paid for itself over the course of 12

months. We are hoping to install energy-efficient HVAC units and water heaters/boilers to reduce operational overhead, as well as reduce our carbon footprint.

***What are your favorite pastimes or hobbies outside of work?***

I have fallen in love with pickleball. While I don’t get to play very often, it is a great sport and I have met so many wonderful people playing it. I have to put in a plug here — with the help of Jon Post, we hold a pickleball tournament at the YMCA for our annual campaign that has generated \$6,000-plus each year for the past two years.

Other than that, I try to spend time with my family. We love boating, jet-skiing, riding 4-wheelers and are going to try camping this year — just normal stuff.

***A two-part question: What are two of your favorite German foods, and what are two of your favorite foods here in the States?***

Pflaumenknoedel (Plumballs) — it is basically a potato gnocchi with a plumb in the middle. They are boiled, then fried in bread crumbs and served with sugar, cinnamon and cream. Awesome!

Wiener Schnitzel with pommes. I am certain you all know what that is. If not, Google it and then try.

I like chicken wings and Mexican food. We did not have that in Germany.

***What person or people have had the biggest influence in your life?***

My mother and father! They have always been there for me and always will be there for my family and me.

***What’s something most people don’t know about you?***

I was born in Transylvania, Romania. While we are German, my family lived in Romania until I was born, then moved to Germany.

***What good words of advice could you give the Richard Reinholz of 25 years ago?***

Invest in Microsoft, Amazon and Google! Other than that, come to Salisbury, start working for the YMCA and marry Kelly Corriher — then all will be well!



# Belle of the blues

*Singer Rebecca Stinson is now an author. Her memoir takes you down to 'Booga Town.'*

Written by Mark Wineka

*Rebecca Stinson,  
Salisbury vocalist,  
grew up on China  
Grove's Westside.*

— Jon C. Lakey photo





When Rebecca Stinson sings the blues, it makes you happy.

When she belts out a time-worn standard, such as “Over the Rainbow,” it sounds new again. When she flows into “At Last,” it’s the best version of the song you’ve heard since Etta James.

And at church, when she sings an old gospel tune such as “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior,” or a spiritual such as “God Smiled on Me,” well, you’ve died and gone to heaven.

Over the last couple of decades, most people know Rebecca Stinson as the person who sang at a wedding or funeral they attended. Or maybe she did the heavy-lifting as second soprano at their church’s homecoming. You could have heard her perform with the Salisbury Symphony or at local events such as Dr. Martin Lutheran King Jr. days, the Mayor’s Spirit Luncheon, Chickweed, Ministers of Comedy or Pops at the Post.

If you saw her sing as part of the PCS Trio — which stood for Joe Ponds, the late Ken Carroll and Stinson herself — you saw Stinson at her happiest as a performer.

“The Trio was the most fun,” she says.

But few people know Rebecca Stinson the pianist, or Rebecca Stinson the author. That’s all about to change with a new memoir she has written with the help of Yolanda Price and her Agape Voice Publishing.

The book is called “Booga Town,” a not-so-flattering name once given to the African-American side (the Westside) of China Grove. It’s where Stinson grew up as the only child of Elijah and Odessa Blakeney, and a place filled with — as a tagline for her book says — “lots of love and nosy people.”

“Everyone knew everyone else’s business,” Stinson says, laughing and remembering the party-line telephones.

The Booga Town Stinson knew was full of honest people who worked hard. It was a place that was quiet, she says, until the weekends when some residents would start drinking, cutting up and fighting on occasion.

She recalls the neighborhood bootlegger, the busy cafe, the



*Above:* Rebecca Stinson poses on campus at Livingstone College, where she earned a degree in religious studies. *Below:* Stinson performs on stage.

— Jon C. Lakey photos







*The Salisbury Ecumenical Choir presented several musical selections at the 2013 MLK Breakfast at the Hurley YMCA. Rebecca Stinson sings in front.*  
—Wayne Hinshaw photo

four-room school, the dirt streets, the all-dirt basketball court and baseball games in the spacious school yard. “I thought it was the best place in the world,” Stinson says.

She’ll never forget the red clay: “It used to be so muddy there when it rained.”

The best food Stinson has ever eaten was in Booga Town.

Stinson knows people might be taken aback that she used “Booga Town” for her book’s title, but she says her community came to embrace it. “After a while,” she says of those days of segregation, “you just laugh it off.”

If you want a little flavor of Booga Town and be drawn into her memoir, all you have to read is the book’s prologue. Stinson writes of being 5 or 6 and waking up to the smell of fresh rain, her mama’s brewed coffee, sizzling sausage, smokin’ hot biscuits and bacon “popping like music.”

Then she describes how that perfect morning changed when her father and drunken grandfather got into an argument. When Elijah Blakeney thought his father’s shooting into the air and demeanor was endangering Rebecca, he shot the elder Blakeney in the leg.

Elijah then shot his brother — Rebecca’s Uncle Dan — in the leg, too, when he came to their



*Singers Alexis Greer, Rebecca Stinson, Teresa Moore-Mitchell, and Virginia Rush at the 2018 Pops at the Post.* — Wayne Hinshaw photo

father’s defense.

Elijah Blakeney went to state prison in Rockingham for about a month before his father’s conscience got the better of him and he told the judge the whole story and what had provoked Elijah. Elijah was released.

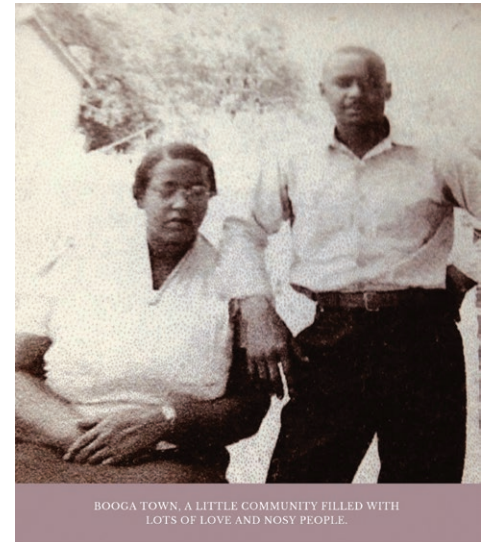
“It’s not like he shot any white people,” Stinson explains.

Elijah came home carrying candy sticks for his favorite little girl, Rebecca, who thinks she cried the whole time he was gone. It was only years later she learned her father and granddad-





**Left:** Rebecca Stinson and Kathy Hill were best friends in Booga Town and remain close today. In this photograph, they were attending the Westside School's end-of-year program when they were in the first grade. — Photo courtesy of Rebecca Stinson. **Right:** Rebecca Stinson and the late Ken Carroll perform in the Rowan Regional Medical Center lobby. — Joey Benton photo



## BOOGA TOWN

FRESH AIR, PAIN, RED DIRT, RAIN

BY REBECCA STINSON

*The cover of Rebecca Stinson's 'Booga Town' features a picture of her late parents, Odessa and Elijah Blakeney.*

— Courtesy of Agape Voice Publishing

dy's argument was over land. Her grandfather fancied himself as the chief landlord in Booga Town, and he didn't like learning Elijah had bought some land from under him.

She smiles, thinking how her father explained he was a good shot and knew he was only wounding his dad and brother that day.

Stinson, now 71, still owns that plot of land in China Grove. She says it never really amounted to much, except for use as a garden.



Stinson speaks with reverence and love for her parents. They are buried in a small China Grove cemetery that used to be part of Booga Town. Elijah Blakeney worked well into his 80s as an important cog in China Grove's public works department. Odessa Blakeney was the greatest cook and mother any girl could have had, Stinson says.

As she practiced the piano as a little girl, Odessa would sing with the tunes from the kitchen. "She was the best," Stinson says. "I've been trying to be a good mother like her. But she had one (child). I've got three."

Stinson started taking piano lessons when she was 6 at her mother's urging. "I really wasn't too crazy about doing it, but I loved her," Stinson

says.

After a while, her teacher became Francis Emerson, who rode his bicycle to their house on Saturday mornings. "He would sing while he was teaching you," Stinson says. "He said, 'It will train your voice,' and he was right. He was a genius.

"I didn't really realize I could sing until much later."

By age 10, Stinson was traveling to St. Luke's Baptist Church in Salisbury on the second and fourth Sundays to be the congregation's pianist, accompanying and singing with the choir. She would handle that job for 17 years.

Her dad was hunting buddies with the pastor, W.C. "Willie" Wilkerson. "They decided I was going to play there," she recalls. Her mother joined the choir with her own pretty alto voice.

Whenever Stinson received money for playing the piano as a girl, she would take her cash to Noah's Five and Dime in China Grove and buy comic books, drawing paper and colored pencils.

Stinson attended a four-room school, Westside Elementary, where two grades were taught in each room. She left after the eighth grade for Aggrey Memorial High School in Landis.

Stinson hated Aggrey Memorial High at first.

She didn't know most of her fellow students, and high school only became more tolerable when she joined the glee club. She sang first soprano and accompanied the choir on piano.

"I didn't sing much until I got to high school," Stinson says.

Because of her dexterity as a pianist, Stinson became Aggrey Memorial High's best typist. She went on to attend North State Business College in Kannapolis and would work off and on as a secretary at Cannon Mills.

Years later after her children were grown, Stinson earned a bachelor's degree in religious studies at Livingstone College. She married Toby Stinson and raised three children — Theresa, Michael and Tiffany.

Rebecca and Toby had been married for 27 years when he died of cancer. She has never remarried and describes herself as hardheaded. "I don't think I'm good wife material."



Stinson's singing career first took off when she was asked to sing at funerals by the late A.R. Kelsey. People soon began asking her to sing at



weddings, then banquets. “It just sort of flourished after that,” she says.

Most people know her from the PCS Trio.

“After losing Ken, we don’t do as much,” Stinson says. “We’re getting old, and Joe doesn’t hear as well. And I don’t get around as well.”

Stinson has performed on cruises, at Elizabeth Dole campaign events and for actor George Clooney. She has a close connection with the N.C. A&T University choir, where her longtime friend Travis Alexander is the director. And she sings regularly for the concert choir at Gethsemane AME Zion Church in Charlotte.

Blues and jazz greats such as Ella Fitzgerald, Pearl Bailey and Sarah Vaughan are her influences. She still sings for Noble & Kelsey Funeral Home in Salisbury and Clark Funeral Home in Kannapolis.

Not many people know this, but Stinson was pronounced dead for a moment in 2003 after she suffered a seizure. She had contracted diphtheria as a 5-year-old, and the fevers left scars on her brain, prompting the seizure as an adult.

Daily medication prevents the seizures now.



*With Joe Ponds on the keyboard, Rebecca Stinson sings at the most recent Chickweed festival in Salisbury.— Mark Wineka photo*

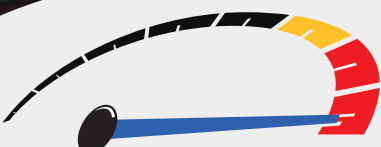
It’s been quite a life, but why the memoir? Some time back, Stinson started writing things down late at night, hoping that someday she could pass on her memories of a childhood in Booga Town to her children. Price learned of her writings and saw their potential.

“She’s my ghostwriter, and I make sure she stays with my story,” Stinson says.

To Stinson, Booga Town overall was a happy place, full of love, good food and good people.

“And it was a safe place,” Stinson says. “Even if Daddy shot you, it was a safe place.” **S**



  
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A photograph of a stone waterfall cascading down a mossy hillside. The water flows over several tiers of large, grey, moss-covered rocks. In the background, a modern building with a glass and metal facade is visible, partially obscured by trees and foliage. The scene is set in a lush, green forest.

THE ARTS

# Plein air speaking

*Artists love the challenge of painting outdoors.*

Written by Mark Wineka | Photography by Jon C. Lakey





*Celia Jarrett paints with  
Plein Air Carolina at  
Catawba College's Center  
for the Environment.*



## THE ARTS



Sarah White-Harvey says plein air — described simply as painting in open air — is like the difference between recording a song in the studio vs. doing it live in front of an audience.

“The live version isn’t going to be perfect — but it’s live!” White-Harvey says.

The immediacy of it is the challenge. When you paint a scene outside, you face changing light, shades and colors as the morning, afternoon or early evening progresses in front of you.

You have to catch it quickly, which means you can’t over-paint and you live with your mistakes. This isn’t like working off a photograph in your studio back home.

Plus, it can be physically challenging. You might start painting in the shade but end up in the hot sun. The bugs could make you their snack, and it’s not easy to leave many of the best spots for painting and go to the bathroom.

“It’s kind of a sport,” White-Harvey says.

Celia Jarrett takes up the sports analogy and compares plein air painting to another one of her favorite pastimes — fishing. You dream about it, she says, when you’re not doing it.

As you leave to paint outside, you load your “tackle box,”

making sure you have the right brushes and paints. Like a fisherman, a plein air painter investigates many different spots before dropping his boat’s anchor.

With stroke after stroke, you’re casting a line into the water in

front of you.

“At the end, you hope you get a nice 5-pound fish,” Jarrett says, but sometimes the fish just aren’t biting for you that day — that is, in a plein air painting kind of way.

“We catch a lot more minnows than we do 5-pound bass. It’s just a journey. You’re always after that big fish.”

White-Harvey and Jarrett are among the members of Plein Air Carolina, a group of artists formed in 2003 by three artists, including Phyllis Steimel. She and Sharon Forthofer provide much of the leadership today for this laid-back group.

There are no officers, no dues, no real meetings — except to gather and paint somewhere outside on Friday mornings. The plein air artists also have become regular participants at OctoberTour.

To become a member, all you have to be is interested. You send your email address to Steimel and you’re part of the group, which also has a Facebook page.

On about Wednesday of each week, Steimel sends a mes-





*Above: Beth Taft, from Concord, joins the artists at Catawba College. Below: During a recent morning at Elizabeth Holmes Hurley Park, Phyllis Steimel painted this scene, which she titled 'Lib's Lilies,' an 11-by-14-inch oil.*

— Submitted photo

sage to all the members giving the details for when and where the Friday “paint out” will be. Then, if you want, you just show up at that location, choose a spot and paint.

Steimel says about 40 people — amateur and professional artists — are part of Plein Air Carolina, and about 10 artists are fairly regular attendees at the Friday morning destinations.

Steimel had taken plein air workshops in Vermont and France and thought there was a need for a plein air group in Rowan County.

“You see colors you don’t see in a photograph,” she says. “You’re smelling it. You’re feeling it.”

The beauty of having this plein air group, Steimel adds, is the variety of locations, the security and safety of painting together, the companionship of other painters and the chance for painters to grow.

“We just get together and paint,” Forthofer says, as she tackles an oil-on-panel scene at Elizabeth Holmes Hurley Park, “and it’s practice, the way I look at it. Since it’s weekly, it’s more practice.”

Carolyn Blackman agrees. “James Taylor (a Salisbury artist and instructor) says you’ve got to practice, and he’s right,” she says. “And you learn a lot from each other.”

The group varies widely in experience, from beginners in plein air to the well-trained and art-educated such as Steimel and Forthofer.





## THE ARTS



*Above: Diane Fisher paints at Hurley Park. Below: Sharon Forthofer captures a scene at Catawba College.*



Jarrett became a more recent member of Plein Air Carolina after seeing Steimel and Forthofer at a Waterworks Visual Arts Center show, walking up to them and acknowledging how much they had always inspired and impressed her.

The women encouraged Jarrett to join the plein air group.

“The first couple of times is very intimidating,” Jarrett says. “You’ve got to be brave. I know how scary it is. ... But they’re so accepting of artists (at any level).”

The “sport” of plein air painting is forgiving as well.

“There are no errors,” Blackman says. “It’s just an opportunity to make mistakes less important.”

Diane Overcash, who has a degree in art, her own studio/gallery in Concord and also a spot at the Railwalk studio in Salisbury, says plein air painting forces you to make quick decisions and live with the decisions you make.

Besides painting, the plein air Fridays allow the



members to talk about the process of painting and share ideas, Overcash says. Toward the end of each morning, some of the artists will walk around to see what the others have captured.

Or you might just pack up and leave.

If they wish, artists are welcome to post what they painted that day on the Facebook page.

“We just enjoy it a lot, and there are so many beautiful places around Rowan County to paint,” Overcash says.

Some of Steimel’s favorite spots include the farms and old barns of western Rowan County, the buildings of downtown Salisbury and Hurley Park, where on this day she chose a spot filled with lilies.

“The light today on these flowers is just amazing,” Steimel says. “There are a lot of yellow and oranges on these flowers I want to capture.”

The members who participate frequently in the



Sharon Forthofer painted this scene at Hurley Park during a Plein Air Carolina session.  
— Submitted photo

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## THE ARTS



**Above:** Joyce Cavanagh-Wood works on a piece at Hurley Park with Plein Air Carolina.  
**Right:** Plein Air Carolina member Celia Jarrett painted this 15-by-30-inch oil on canvas during a morning at the Catawba College Environmental Center. — Submitted photo

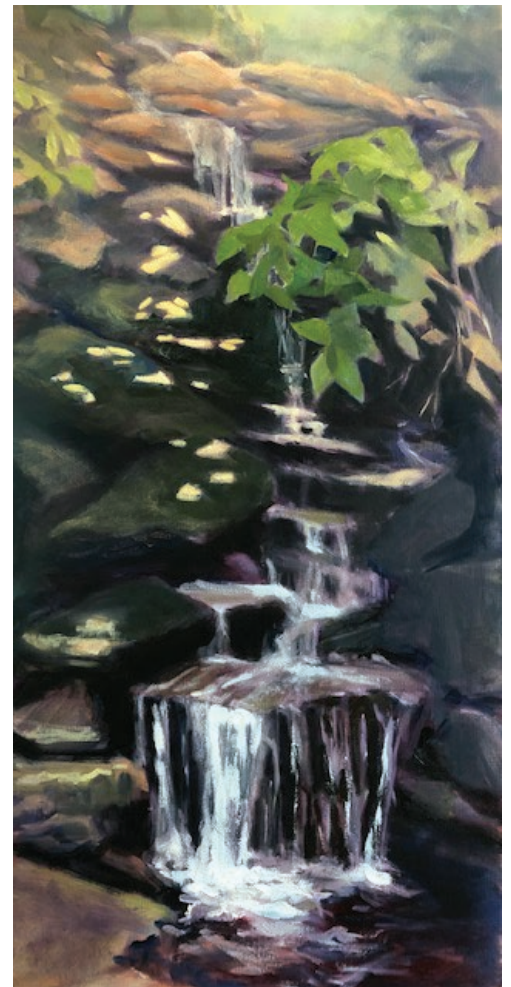
Friday paint-outs each receive a month for which they are responsible for four different weeks of locations. This process sparks variety and has taken the plein air painters to the Yadkin River, private cabins, public lakes, greenways, parks, gardens, historic properties, farms, colleges and nature preserves.

“My month was April,” Joyce Cavanagh-Wood says. “It rained every Friday in April.”

When Cavanagh-Wood joined Plein Air Carolina, she discovered it was a good way to learn Rowan County.

“I would have never known about the Bullhole, for example,” she says of the dam, falls and swimming spot on the South Yadkin River.

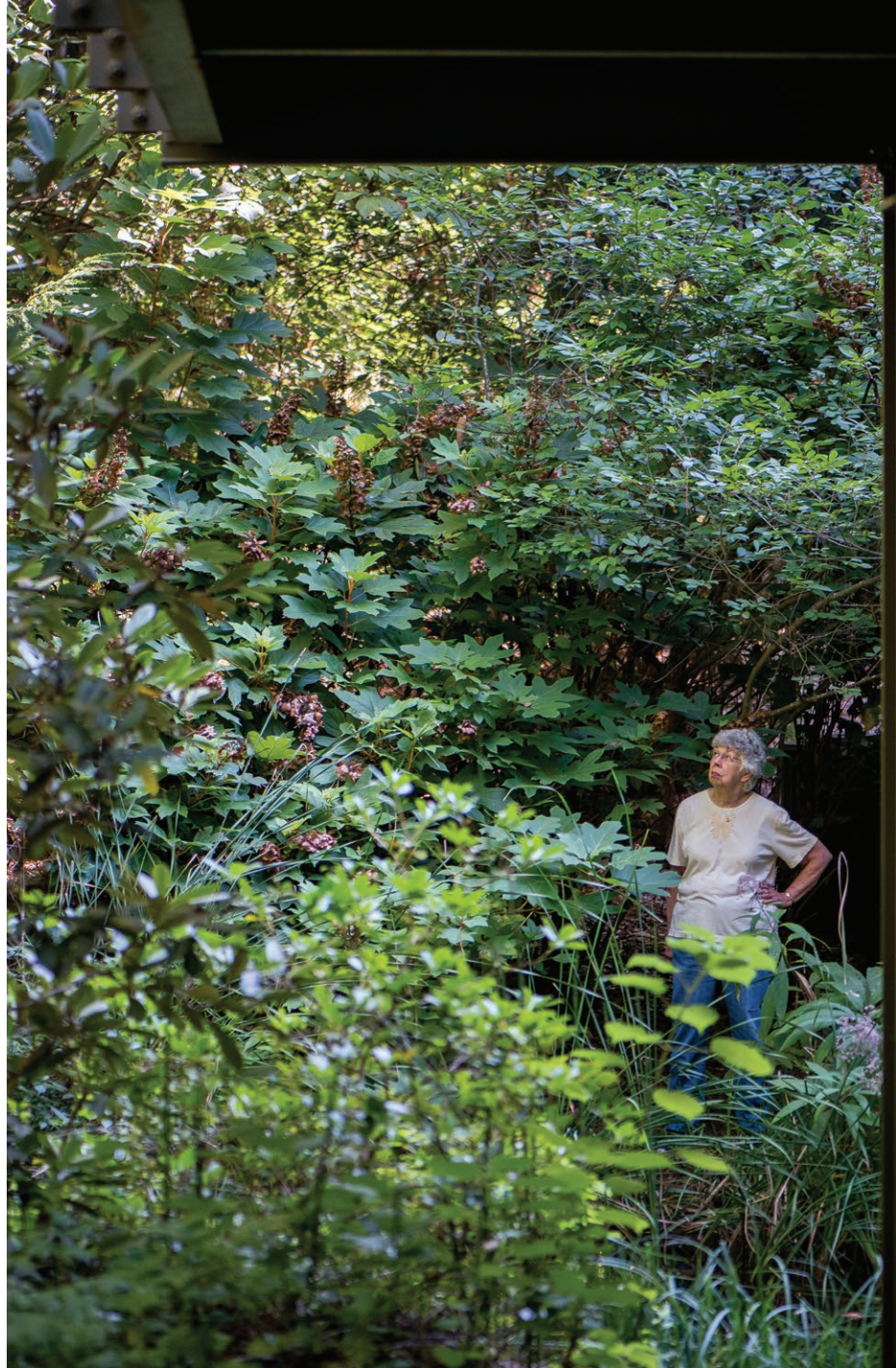
Cavanagh-Wood remembers showing up at her first Friday morning plein air location as an inexperienced artist. She was terrified, knowing how good some of the painters were.







**Above:** Phyllis Steimel at Hurley Park. **Right:** Carolyn Blackman looks for a location to paint at Catawba College. **Below right:** Joyce Cavanagh-Wood shows some of the work she has done with Plein Air Carolina.



“Their whole lives have been art — and they were so willing to share,” Cavanagh-Wood says. “They’re very supportive.”

At Hurley Park, Diane Fisher finds a spot along Annandale Avenue that starts out shady but later puts her in direct sunlight. That illustrates the challenge. “I’m not a fast painter, and the light always changes,” Fisher says.

Fisher loves the casualness and flexibility being a member of Plein Air Carolina offers.


“I’m not a regular, but they don’t care,” she says.

The other artists tend to be “more plugged in” with the local art scene than she is, Fisher adds, so they share what events are coming up. Fisher also likes knowing she can ask someone for help if she’s having a problem.

“Sometimes people will pair up with that in mind,” she says. “... I just need to dust off my paints. It’s practice, that’s all it is. It’s not a competition.”

What happens with the art created each Friday morning by the plein air artists?

Jarrett says a lot of it ends up in stacks or boxes back home. Some artists might sand down their panels so they can use them again. Some of the art goes as gifts to friends. The better pieces might even be sold.

Those are the 5-pounders. 







*Above:* Darrell Blackwelder and Mike Jacobsen take up their regular spot at Richard's Bar-B-Q in Salisbury. *Opposite:* Blackwelder's order of a toasted biscuit with a single slice of tomato, a single strip of bacon and a side cup of mayonnaise.

# Morning glory

*Two intrepid explorers take on their own Rowan Breakfast Challenge.*

Written by Darrell Blackwelder | Photography by Jon C. Lakey



Eating breakfast out every morning is a well-defined habit for many, and I fit easily into this category.

I've had lavish breakfasts in the finest restaurants in New York City, dined with the Irish featuring every breakfast food imaginable, and even experimented with unknown foods in Third World countries, but I never pass up a breakfast at local diners in Rowan County.

Most patrons tend to gather early in the morning for the friendship as much as the food. The experience generally starts the day on a good note, especially for those who are retired.

My friend Mike Jacobsen and I have enjoyed breakfast at Richard's BBQ almost every Monday morning for well over a year. It's a habit like the Irish have of breaking for the pub at 4 in the afternoon.

One morning we were discussing our unusual breakfast fixation and decided to explore breakfast at other restaurant locations. We developed the Rowan Breakfast Challenge, a Monday morning meal at every breakfast restaurant throughout Rowan County.



In the challenge there were no score sheets or checklists.

Our only rule was to dine at every local, family-owned restaurant within the county, omitting chains, convenience stores and gas stations. Starting in January, we visited 28 restaurants beginning in Faith and ending in North Kannapolis.

As you can imagine, there were quite a few similarities, but some were vastly different. Here are a few of our unique discoveries:





*Above: Breakfast regulars Tom and Susan Waller, left, join Margaret and Joe Simmerson, right, for breakfast. Susan Waller, waitress Brenda Myers and Wayne Vellines move a table closer to allow more regulars to join in the fellowship. Left: Richard's Bar-B-Q cook Doug Veitch will make a custom pancake for his younger customers if the kitchen is not too busy. Veitch enjoys making the pancakes in the shape of trains, trucks and even a dinosaur.*



All but two eateries had television screens playing news channels continuously.

Coffee cups were available in only two restaurants, as mugs were the norm. Some mugs were so big, they had ads on the side. One ad was for roach control!

Two locations served on paper plates and had only plastic utensils.

Two restaurants featured tablecloths as part of their décor.

One restaurant set aside space in the restaurant as a home gift shop.

Three breakfast restaurants were cash only, no debit or credit cards.

Most of our eateries had ceiling fans, some blowing hard enough to ruffle my sparse hair.

Prices for a typical breakfast plate varied from \$3.50 to \$11 for a similar order. However, most costs were very reasonable.





Most decorations had themes of local sports, stock car racing or rail-ways.

One location was so dark we almost had to use a flashlight to order our meal.

During the winter months, three locations were very cold. Waitresses were bundled with scarfs and sweaters taking our orders; a sure indication it was almost too cold to eat.

As you can imagine, patrons of each restaurant in different parts of the county varied quite a bit. Retired patrons were a staple at most, and of those, most were older men. But some restaurants' patrons were retired couples or groups of ladies. Women's Bible study groups, veterans' groups, law enforcement officers and other groups were observed meeting for breakfast on a regular basis.

On a few occasions, patrons definitely sensed we were outsiders. More than one restaurant patron gave Mike and me the ole "You're not from around here" stare as we were seated.

Most restaurants had a friendly wait staff, but there were a few servers who you could tell were having a bad hair day. Smaller restaurants often had waitresses waiting tables, cleaning and checking out patrons by themselves. One became overtly annoyed when I requested directions to the restroom. One waitress completely forgot about putting in our initial order.

*Daryl Rich, 3, was excited to see his dinosaur shaped pancake that Doug Veitch made for him. Daryl and his grandmother Myrtis Trexler frequent Richard's for breakfast.*



At each, it seemed the same group of patrons generally arrived at the same time, even ordering the same menu option every day. A waitress at one of my favorite restaurants brings my drinks and asks if I want the usual as soon as I'm seated.

Some waitresses are very candid and will tell you to avoid certain food items. Others provide valuable tips such as "The 'A' cook" is not here today, so stay away from the omelets."

I've also learned to ask, "How big is your typical serving?" at all the



## FOOD

### BREAKFAST CHALLENGE RESTAURANTS

- Richard's BBQ
- Hendrix-West Innes Street
- Checkered Flag
- Darrell's — Rockwell
- Faith Soda Shop
- College BBQ
- Wink's BBQ
- The Palms
- Jeter's
- M&K, Granite Quarry
- Hendrix BBQ, Highway 70
- Porky's, China Grove
- Johnson's, China Grove
- East Rowan Café
- Breakfast Time
- Marlow's
- East Rowan Café
- Jimmy's, China Grove
- Wahoo's Diner, Granite Quarry
- Johnny's BBQ, Rockwell
- Simply Southern Bakery and Grill/Graham's Grocery
- Hoff's Grill
- Hendrix BBQ, Spencer
- Sunshine Café, Cleveland
- West Rowan Grill, Barber
- Lane Street Grill, within walking distance to Rowan County
- Lakeview Restaurant
- Lee's Sandwich Shop, Kannapolis, within walking distance to Rowan County.



*Juanita Eagle takes an order from Darrell Blackwelder for breakfast.*

restaurants. A normal serving in a few establishments will easily feed two to three people, especially the scrambled eggs, and often the pancakes or grits. A single scrambled egg order at one diner is closer to a half dozen eggs and the pancake is often the size of a hubcap.

Also, be careful in describing how you want your order. I was kidding with a waitress one morning and told her I wanted my biscuits “burnt, burnt, burnt.” What I meant was well toasted. When she delivered them, they appeared as smoking, charcoal briquets on a plate.

Breakfast cooks were as varied as the wait staff, with some doing well with one item, while other cooks were not so good. Coffee also varied tremendously at certain restaurants. Mike is a coffee connoisseur and was sometimes taken aback. I, on the other hand, can't really tell the difference in coffees.

Once we thought the ham and eggs looked great, but as we began to dig in, the waitress brought our coffee holding the mug by the rim. We quickly recognized the taste of hand cream she had just applied before serving.

That being said, one of the most interesting observations of the breakfast challenge were the patrons themselves and the atmosphere they created. One

*Brenda Myers delivers a birthday pancake to Alexis Helms, who was celebrating her 12th birthday.*



waitress said her customers were essentially part of her family.

It was truly amazing, as I have been in Rowan County now for 40 years and I still seem to learn something new every day, especially about the people and their eateries. Visiting local restaurants for breakfast is a great way to learn about our county — a must for newly arrived transplants. **S**

*Darrell Blackwelder is the retired director of the Rowan Cooperative Extension Service.*



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*Kathy and Jerry Short sit in their recently renovated home on Fisher Street.*

# Opportunity knocks, again

*Shorts renovate second historic house and make it home.*

Written by Elizabeth Cook | Photography by Jon C. Lakey





*Clockwise from top: The living room flows into the dining room; the guest bedroom has its own fireplace; the living room hearth is made of brick.*



## AT HOME



*Left to right: Brick is exposed outside the master bedroom; a painting by Kathy's brother, Darryl Corriher; a decorative piece sits in the dining room bay window.*

**K**athy and Jerry Short didn't buy any furniture or knick knacks when they went to an estate sale at 427 W. Fisher St. a few years ago.

Instead, they bought the house.

Not immediately, mind you. Many months passed before the late Ben Martin's house was put up for sale. But as people at the estate sale navigated a narrow path through the cluttered house, Kathy spied something that appealed to her — potential.

And she wanted to uncover it.

Jerry was wary. They had already downsized from a large home in the county to a Victorian cottage they renovated at 412 S. Jackson St. Retired after 40 years as a licensed contractor, Jerry figured the Jackson Street house was it for them.

"I realized, five years later, that wasn't it," he says. "She found this one great opportunity to do another one."

Preservation fans can see the result on Oct. 12 and 13 as the Shorts open their home for Historic Salisbury Foundation's October Tour.

Called the Slater-Miller-Martin House, the frame structure was built in the 1850s on a nearby lot and later moved to its present spot. That's the Slater connection. The house is Greek Revival in style, with the later addition of some Victorian flourishes, such as the front porch.

Most recently, the house belonged to acclaimed photographer Ben Martin, a Salisbury native who sought broader horizons. Working for Time magazine and other clients, Martin traveled the world and captured iconic photos of such notables as President Kennedy's widow and children at his funeral and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he marched to Montgomery, Ala.

Divorced, Martin eventually returned to the Fisher Street home where he'd been reared by his uncle and aunt, William and Wilhelmina Miller. He died in September 2016 at the age of 86. The Shorts bought the house in December 2017 and moved in last Nov. 1.

Between Martin's long absences and his later declining health, the house had deteriorated. The Shorts knew that, but they were still surprised when they first saw the house





*Clockwise from top: The living room is viewed from the house's wide central hallway; a new granite countertop provides a kitchen work surface; the living room mantel overlaps with the window trim.*





*The Shorts spend a lot of time in this panel-lined den at the back of the house.  
Below, a beveled mirror original to the house is on the back of the master bathroom door.*



empty.

“It was quite a shock when we came in,” Jerry says. Wallpaper was peeling off walls and ceilings. Plaster had crumbled; cracks were everywhere. Floors were so uneven that going to the kitchen was an uphill trek.

Outside, the bushes and hedges had grown so ungainly that neighbors cheered when they were removed.

Jerry and Kathy knew this was no easy flip with mere cosmetic improvements, he says. Nor could they afford to carry out a true restoration and take the house back to its original 19th century state.

But they were prepared to roll up their sleeves and make the house a home again.

While they left the plumbing, wiring and roofing to the experts, the Shorts did the bulk of the repairing and painting themselves. Jerry, now 82, has had Parkinson’s disease for a decade and says staying ac-

tive is the best thing he can do. Kathy, 75, also takes a high energy, do-it-yourself approach to life — and to walls.

Three layers of wallpaper had accumulated through the years, even on the 11-foot ceilings. It had to go.

“Kat’s up on a 6-foot scaffold, removing the wallpaper,” Jerry says.

He remembers another house they built, where Kathy climbed an 8-foot ladder, shouldering one end of the heavy rafters that they installed for a vaulted ceiling, one by one.

They made the rebirth of the Fisher Street house their full-time job for 11 months, going in each weekday morning and working through till dinner. Saturdays were half days.

They are of one mind when it comes to doing the work themselves, but they differ on how they size up building projects, Jerry says.





*Above: To make up for crumbling plaster, the hallway chair rail was moved up.*

*Below: The colorful wallpaper and banquette make the breakfast room like a little jewel box.*



*Above: Flowers bloom outside the back door.*

*Left: A family heirloom table fills a nook in the kitchen.*



## AT HOME



*Clockwise from top: The guest room is viewed from the hallway; the dining room has a round table; the back yard includes a shed.*

“She has the ability to look at what it could be,” Jerry says. “What I’m looking at is how you’re going to do it.”

Meshing the two together can be a challenge.

The house had two bedrooms with one Jack-and-Jill bathroom between them and, in the

back of the house, a commode room — less than a half bath without even a sink. The Shorts’ plan of action was to give the master bedroom a private bath by closing off the guest room doorway. They installed a full bathroom at the end of the spacious central hall and turned the

commode room into a laundry room.

That sounds simpler than it was.

Taking up the bathroom’s black-and-white tiles required muscle and sledgehammers. Part of renovating an old house is discovering what’s under the surface. In this case, floor tiles were



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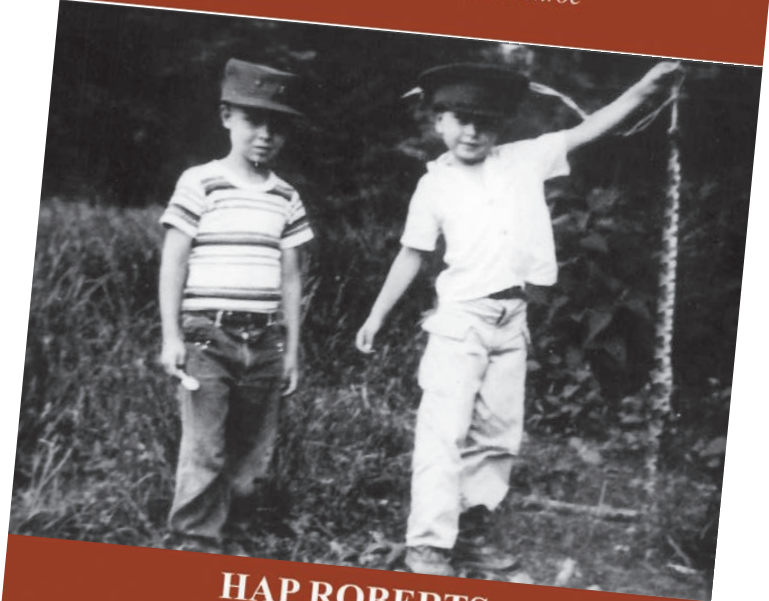
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## AT HOME



*An umbrella shades a cool spot in the Shorts' back yard.*

laid on concrete that was 1 to 2.5 inches thick. Likewise, wall tiles were backed by plaster that varied. Some was thin, and some was thick and hard as concrete, Kathy says.

“We realized in that day and age nobody had levels, obviously,” Jerry says. “Nothing was plumb, nothing was level. ... Plaster was used to fill the walls and make it flush.”

The same had been done in other areas, with the plaster nearly level with window moldings.

The hallway's plaster walls had crumbled beyond affordable repair. Jerry's solution was to raise the chair rail up several feet and cover the walls with plywood and sheetrock. Wood strips were added to echo a design over a doorway.

A section of brick wall was uncovered in the back of the hall, perhaps a sign that the house once ended there. It also showed where the hole for a stove pipe had been covered up. The Shorts decided to leave that narrow section uncovered as a nod to the past.

Kathy says what drew her to the house was the flow



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of the rooms and special features here and there. Some of those features might have been the beveled mirror on the back of the bathroom door, the huge storage cabinets in that room and the built-in ironing board that unfolds from a slim kitchen cabinet.

"I love it," Kathy says, pulling the board down.

What did mesh easily were the house's layout and the Shorts' furnishings, including paintings by Kathy's brother, Darryl Corriher.

And the rooms do flow, from living room to dining room to breakfast room to kitchen and beyond.

"This is the little jewel box," Kathy says as she steps into the breakfast room. The room is nearly full with lime colored banquette seating around three sides of a large trestle table. The wallpaper is wall-to-wall parrots. "We'll give you

a hundred dollars if you tell me how many parrots are on these walls," Jerry says.

In the kitchen, they replaced ancient linoleum flooring with vinyl tile. They kept the existing cabinets and had Steve Corriher build more in the same style, along with an island for the room. Sadly, he died right as the project was nearing completion.

The most-used room now is the cozy, panel-lined den at the back of the house, which may have been a sunroom at one time. Two recliners are angled toward the television, which occupies part of the room's spacious cabinetry. "She reads and I watch sports," Jerry says.

He has what he considers just the right amount of yard now — a postage stamp compared to the acres they maintained in the county. He used to be raking up fall leaves well into February, he says.

Their new old house has shed its white exterior paint and now is a khaki color, with black doors and shutters, and cream trim.

Its quaint appearance could fool you, according to Jerry.

"Looking at the house from the outside, it's a small little cottage. After you go through it, you're going to be kinda changing your mind about how much room it had. It's much larger inside than it is outside."

And restoring the house was a larger task — inside and outside — than they first anticipated. But Kathy and Jerry were committed, maybe Jerry most of all.

"Want to know what my real motivation was?" he says. "Because she wanted to do it." **S**

*Elizabeth G. Cook is former editor of the Salisbury Post.*

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# JOB SHARING

Pastoring couple energize the congregation  
at First Presbyterian Church.

Story by Maggie Blackwell | Photography by Jon C. Lakey



*Lara and Josh Musser Gritter  
pause for a prayer before  
heading in for a Sunday  
service.*





Josh and Lara Musser Gritter are not your typical pastors for a large, mainstream downtown church. They're really young — Lara is 28 and Josh is 30 — and they're a married couple. They started serving as full-time senior pastors at First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury just over a year ago.

Lara is the first female senior pastor in the church's 198-year history. Both Josh and Lara are ordained Presbyterian pastors, and they equally share the duties of serving the church.

The Presbyterian Church, USA denomination provides an online resumé service. "Basically it's online dating for pastors and churches," Lara says with a wry grin.

Before coming to Salisbury, they were residents at First Presbyterian, Greensboro, improving their pastoral skills. Josh says, "We were looking anywhere in the country for any two churches that were 'near enough' to each other."

Lara adds, "We didn't think we'd get the opportunity to serve together again. We had talked to churches in Illinois, Seattle, California and Colorado."

They'd preached their ordination sermons at First Presbyterian in Salisbury a year before. "We knew they were looking for a pastor," Josh says, "but we thought there's no way. It's established; it's historic; it's big. We didn't even think of submitting our resumés."

So while the Musser Gritters had their resumés posted and First Presbyterian had its position posted — all on the same website — neither considered the other, until Katie Garner got involved.

Garner, a Salisbury native and TV personality, grew up in First Presbyterian, Salisbury.

"I was on a committee with them at First Presbyterian in Greensboro," Garner says, "and they were just very kind people. I knew they would be a great fit for FPC Salisbury, because it was close to Greensboro, and I know how wonderful FPC Salisbury is. I prayed about it, and sent Stephen a message."

Stephen Bullock, president at Power Curbers and an elder at First Presbyterian, chaired the search committee. "Our committee had searched for months





*Above: Josh and Lara relax in their Salisbury home.*

*Right: The couple impressed the search committee with, among other things, their knowledge of Scripture.*



when Lara and Josh's names were referred to us," he says. "We weren't seriously considering a co-pastor couple; they didn't meet our years' experience requirement, and they weren't even Southerners! Then I watched videos of their sermons and knew we had to talk to them."

Josh says, "We had been interviewing ceaselessly for months. We decided to just go forward and be ourselves."

Bullock recalls meeting them for the first time. "We knew they were it for us. Their hearts for people, love of the Lord and knowledge of Scripture blew us away. And in spite of being so talented, they are incredibly humble. The committee's vote to call them was unanimous and enthusiastic."

Lara recalls the experience, too. "They reached out to us for co-pastoring — to share the position 20 hours a week each. We said that's not what we're really looking for now, but we notice you're looking for a youth pastor; maybe we could work that out as well."





*Above: Josh and Lara check their week's busy calendars.*

*Right: 'The first thing you have to do is show people love,' Lara says.*

They got really excited, and it went from there. It just felt like this really beautiful fit for all of us. Honestly, it was the Holy Spirit doing what the Holy Spirit does in a way we could never have guessed.”

Lara doesn't characterize First Presbyterian as conservative, calling it more “purple” in nature. “Yet,” she says, “I realize how much change and disruption we bring by our presence — and I mean disruption in a good way.”

Josh agrees: “Many people expect new pastors to come in and change everything. But we have recognized by virtue of being husband and wife, and our age — that's a big change in and of itself.”

Lara says it takes time to build trust with a congregation. A pastor who comes in and rips up all the carpet, she says, is going to cause problems. “The first thing you have to do is show people love,” Lara says. “It really is a wonderful privilege to love a congregation. We have the distinct privilege of loving them together. And they are very lovable.”

Lara says their being hired helped her realize the character of the church — a church open to change, to breaking ground. She hopes they bring a breath of fresh air to the church.

Josh is a little incredulous that the two of them never met until college at Northwest Pacific. “We grew up two hours apart, attended camp 20 minutes apart, and met a thousand miles away.” He's from Michigan; she's from Illinois. Together they attended Duke Divinity School.

Randy Kirby has served the church for 18 years as associate pastor. “We recently had a block party at the church where we invited folks from the neighborhood and from Overton School,” he says. “We had a surprisingly wonderful turnout — at least twice as many people as we had anticipated. That reflects new thinking







*Above: The Musser Gritters find time for a relaxing walk with their Labradoodle, Red. Right: Josh also oversees First Presbyterian's youth group.*

about ways we can reach out to the community and improve our connectedness with those around us. It's an example of something we've done since Josh and Lara came, and it was met with success."

The couple alternates Sundays for preaching. They take turns moderating session meetings and they share pastoral care with Kirby. They are co-heads of staff, and Josh manages the youth group.

"One of the things Josh has done with the youth," Kirby says, "is to shift all of the middle and senior high youth under the umbrella of Teens With a Mission (TWAM), so that they all understand, we are having fun, but we do have a mission here in the church. Both Josh and Lara went on the TWAM Mexico trip this year and that is exciting. It's a mark of their commitment to try new things and show a deep appreciation for our long-time successes."

Josh smiles. "She's much better with a hammer than I am," he says.

While they're not making big changes, they have made small ones.

"We go out in the pews and shake hands before the service," Lara says. "Our hope is that a visitor will meet the pastor in the first 10 minutes in the church. It's all about knowing each other and de-







*The co-pastors move toward the back of Lewis Hall to greet congregants exiting a contemporary service.*

lighting in each other's presence."

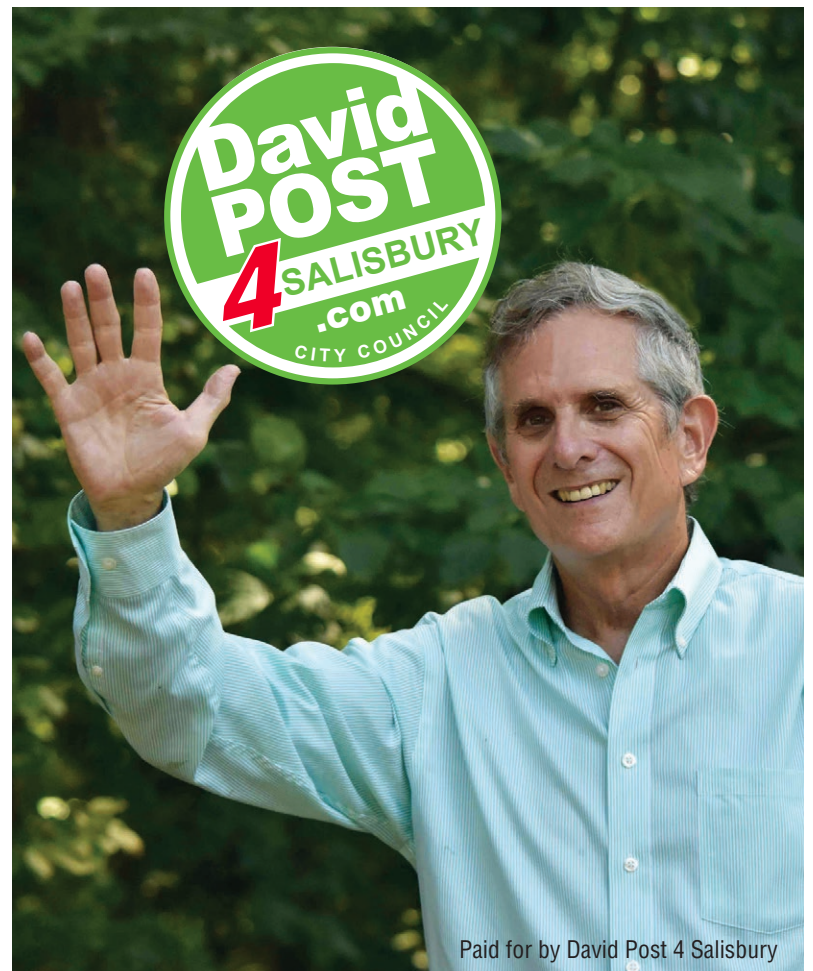
How does a couple survive working together in a demanding job? Lara says it helps them both grow as people. "We are so close," she says. "Working together we know each other's foibles and can support, celebrate and encourage each other in meaningful ways. We both really have a heart for what God has called us to do. We delight in the joy of what is before us. If we disagree about something, what we both know is we care deeply about this call. Ultimately, we come together and figure it out."

"One thing all pastors know," Josh adds, "is being a pastor is a very lonely job. Being in a pastor couple you are less lonely. In ministry, the great days are great, and the hard days are really hard. Coming home to somebody who knows that and understands is hugely significant."

Lara's eyes twinkle. "It's really fun working with Josh. Pastoral leadership has its ups and downs, but it's fun to walk through that door and make a joke with my spouse."

After the TWAM Mexico trip, the Musser Gritters took a week's vacation. As they left, Lara posted the poem "The Peace of Wild Things," by Wendell Barrie, on her office door. "I think there is a peace," she says. "You have to slow down enough to hear the voice of God. We are trying our very best to have time to let God's voice fall on ears that are listening."

Josh tells about a friend dying in Greensboro. He had been a pastor



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*Above: Josh leads a Bible study class during Sunday school.*

*Left: Josh taunts Lara from his dunking booth perch at the church's recent block party.*



*Above: Lara is the first female senior pastor in First Presbyterian's 198-year history.*

*Left: Palm leaves dry in Lara's office. She hopes to burn them and use the ashes for a future Ash Wednesday service.*





*The couple like to walk among the pews and shake hands before each service.*

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for 50 years. “There’s a lot of things an old buck like me can tell a young buck like you,” he told me. ‘Don’t take yourself too seriously. If people are showing up on Sunday and singing to God, something is going well. Always remember the God whom you serve and the God to whom you belong.’”

*Lara, Josh and Red on the front porch of their home in Fulton Heights.*

Josh’s eyes become a little damp as he shares his friend’s advice.

Their biggest challenge the first year, Lara says, has been their age. “It’s a gift; it’s a challenge. We have had so much to learn; it’s the first time the buck stops with us. It’s a lot of pressure. We so deeply want to fulfill that responsibility for this congregation. We’ve had to grow strong shoulders. They know we will keep learning and growing. Learning how to shoulder the responsibility has been a challenge.”

Meanwhile, Bullock is smiling.

“Rarely in life does reality exceed expectations,” he says. “Lara and Josh have brought renewed energy to our church. Their sermons bring Scripture to life and are filled with relevant illustrations for our times. A year later, I still hear, ‘Thank you for Lara and Josh,’ on a weekly basis. They were an answer to prayer, and we are so blessed to have them.” **S**

*Maggie Blackwell writes frequently for the Salisbury Post.*

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*The Ellis Street home of Kevin and Rachel Davis was built in 1928 from locally quarried granite. At left, a portrait of Rita Hayworth hangs over the living room mantel.*



# MAKING IT THEIR OWN

Davises give timeless feel to Ellis Street home.

Story by Elizabeth Cook | Photography by Jon C. Lakey







**I**n the OctoberTour brochure, 201 S. Ellis St. is listed as the Rufus G. Hunt House, named for the man who had the granite house built in 1928.

In local circles, it may be known as the house where Don and Carol Sayers used to live.

Forget all that. Since Kevin and Rachel Davis moved into 201 S. Ellis St. nearly two years ago, they have taken to heart the advice that Carol Sayers gave them.

“You’ve got to make it your own.”

The Davises have done exactly that, using their artwork, antiques and personal flair to create a one-of-a-kind eclectic mix that is inviting and inspiring, as OctoberTour participants will discover on Oct. 12 and 13.

They came here by way of Charleston, S.C., for Kevin’s job as manager of the Belk store in Salisbury. When they were making the transition, Rachel was eight months pregnant with their daughter, Monroe, and was staying in Charleston until they found their next house.

They liked cities and wanted to be near Charlotte. After checking out Concord, Rachel took an agent’s advice to look at



*Kevin and Rachel pose with daughter Monroe in front of a portrait of Roger Moore as 007.*

Salisbury. She saw online that there was a lot going on downtown. When she came across the stone house on Ellis Street listed on Zillow, she told Kevin to check it out.

“We feel very fortunate to live here,” Rachel says. “We walked into this house and

we both fell in love with it.”

“It’s an incredible home in an incredible neighborhood,” Kevin says.

He figured that out quickly.

*Story continues on page 58.*





*Clockwise from top:* The living room contains a velvet couch and an heirloom glass-front cabinet; art plays a big role in the decor; dining room drapes came from a home in Nashville.





*Clockwise from top left: The dining room shows an eclectic mix of styles; Monroe and Kevin tussle in the hallway; the front porch has become a meeting place; the kitchen, remodeled by earlier owners, has an open layout.*







*Clockwise from top: Lights in the Davises' home glow at night; a bar sink and cart fill a convenient niche; Rachel saved her toy stove from long ago.*







Moving day found Rachel stuck out of town because of a snow-storm, but Kevin was alone for only a short time. Gail Williams greeted him from next door.

Soon neighbors were filling the Davises' refrigerator and throwing them a party.

"We were blown away," says Rachel.

*An antique chair sits in the dining room.*

"Because of the kindness," Kevin says. "I've lived in five different cities and nobody has ever been this kind and welcoming to myself or us as a family."

Babe Nobles brought them food. Rick Anderson stocked the fridge with salads. The Abramson girls next door have babysat Monroe. Ed and Susan Norvell have become close friends.

"It's almost like we've been adopted into all these families because we don't have our own family here," Rachel says. "We're very thankful."

Now they've settled in but are hardly at a standstill. Rachel commutes daily to Greensboro for her job merchandising men's denim for Lee Jeans. Monroe, 21 months old, goes to the Yadkin Path Montessori



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“He’s being Super Dad right now, picking Monroe up, taking her to school,” Rachel says. Their new normal is a tag-team effort.

That’s another reason why the Hunt House was a good fit for them. It didn’t need renovation. Previous owners had already done that — including a major kitchen remodeling carried out by the Say-erses.

“Not only was it done; they had done it very well,” Rachel says. “We’ve just really done a lot of decorating.”

They painted the doors a high-gloss black to create contrast and brought in their furniture and art.

“I am a big believer in recycling,” Rachel says. “That’s our contribution to the world,

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as we recycle furniture. I think it's very important to have a timeless look by mixing antiques with some newer pieces."

In the living room, her great-grandmother's glass-front cabinet holds a collection of family heirlooms. Nearby, a blue velvet couch has clean, modern lines.

Over their vintage Baker dining room table hangs a new chandelier with frosted glass orbs. Modern art hangs on the walls. Green velvet chairs at the table have a mid-century feel, while others are French antiques.

"I do like to mix. It's not so modern; it's really an old Hollywood feeling," Rachel says. "It kind of lends itself to a timeless feel. It's all about layering."

The French buffet — 18th century or early 19th century — came out of an estate in Palm Beach, Fla., Rachel says. She spotted it in a Charleston store and watched



*The front door beckons at night. A new light fixture hangs in the dining room.*

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*Living room tables hold family photos, fine lamps and other artwork and collectibles.*



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it for a year until the price hit a point they could afford.

Triple-lined floral linen drapes came from a home in Nashville.

"You can find amazing pieces if you hunt for them," Rachel says. "I will have these drapes forever. It's more fun to go out and hunt for things. ... It makes things special."

Art plays a big role in the Davises' decor.

Friend Harte Armstrong created the dramatic wood-stain picture of Rita Hayworth, red blossom tucked over one ear, that looks out from over the living room fireplace.

A Hallmark sign graces the top of a cabinet in the hallway. One ornate frame holds a paint-by-numbers street scene they found while honeymooning in California. Another old frame holds a black and white photo of Roger Moore in a James Bond dinner jacket.

"We love to collect art. All of our walls will probably be decked out in art at some point," Rachel says. They lean toward the modern and impressionistic but also love a traditional floral now and then.

"We really just wanted to make it feel like our home and be a reflection of us. We're at home a lot. We host a lot of people."

"We have a revolving door," Kevin says.

"A revolving porch," Rachel adds. Neighbors often drop by to visit when they're sitting outside.

A tan leather couch just fits in their little den, another favorite place in the house. Rachel plans to put up olive grasscloth wallpaper. Like many parts of the house, it's a work in progress.

"I was the little girl who rearranged her room once a week," she says. "... It's some-

thing I've enjoyed doing my whole life, and it's always in practice. I'm constantly changing things around."

They layer in pieces from their history — wedding photos, family mementos, vacation finds — to give every room personal meaning.

"I love being at home, and I think your home should be your sanctuary," Rachel says.

Kevin agrees and has enjoyed helping Rachel scout out items to suit their style. The house may be known for who lived there in the past, but the Davises want it to be known for the family building their future there. As Kevin says:

"Hopefully, after the next six months or so ... it'll be Kevin and Rachel's house." **S**

*Elizabeth G. Cook is former editor of the Salisbury Post.*



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## THE BIG FIVE



# 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CHINA GROVE

Written by Susan Shinn Turner | Photography by Jon C. Lakey





# 1. Cherry Treesort

*Trent Cherry has completed five treehouses so far, and they attract many overnight customers.*



My son and I stayed at Cherry Treesort in May, just before Andrew graduated from Catawba College. “This is so cool!” Andrew said about a million times during our overnight visit.

Having begun construction in October 2015, Trent Cherry has now completed five treehouses — all named for family members — at the “treesort,” in a wooded area just off Flat Rock Road in China Grove. Doug Tolson and Johnny Stevens come from California to build the treehouses, which are then finished by local craftsmen. The adorable dwellings have quickly become a go-to place for birthday parties, girls’ night out, anniversaries, and family reunions.

It’s a beautiful place to visit in summer and fall. But December is also extremely popular. Why? That’s when the Polar Express runs at the N.C. Transportation Museum. You’ll find the place overrun with families, eating s’mores, playing with giant Jenga sets, and generally having the time of their lives.

“Because of the success of the Polar Express,” Cherry says, “it’s cool to see kids running around with their candy-cane pajamas and holding their golden tickets.”

He adds, “I love building treehouses and I love seeing the families come. It’s a place you can camp without roughing it.”





## THE BIG FIVE

# 2. Gary's Barbecue



Since April 21, 1971, Gary's Barbecue has been the go-to place for folks in China Grove — and beyond.

When owner Gary Ritchie opened, not long after graduating from South Rowan High School, the restaurant had 10 booths and a counter with six stools. Ritchie has expanded three times and can now seat 216.

His business model is simple: good food, good service and a clean restaurant.

"You see old friends here and make new acquaintances," he says.

His busiest days of the year are Christmas Eve and Farmers Day. If you ever leave China Grove, you always wanna go back on Farmers Day. And remember, Gary's is always closed the week after Farmers Day. Many a family has experienced the agony of seeing an empty parking lot in late July when their mouths are watering for Q.

There's not just barbecue on the menu. Ritchie says a lot of folks enjoy the hamburgers and foot-long hot dogs. Brunswick stew is a nice change of pace anytime of year.

Gary's has been a go-to place for Angela Diggs Lippard and her family for years.

Lippard and her husband, Lynn, started going with her mom and dad on Wednesdays after choir, when their three children would go home with their grandparents. They come whenever their adult children are home. Catherine Wirz and her husband, Phillip, live in Durham, and Aaron and Rebecca Lippard both live in Raleigh.

After a recent family trip, Lippard says, they didn't go home — they went straight to Gary's.



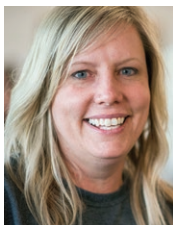


# 3. Main Street Mission

When Pillowtex — the former Cannon Mills — closed in 2003, it created a crisis in southern Rowan County. Folks needed food and clothing. Main Street Mission opened in response to that crisis.

The non-profit organization has evolved over the years. A year ago, the agency completed a \$400,000 expansion, which included a facelift of the laundromat next door in downtown China Grove, a new clothing space — Main Street Threads — and new storage space for the food pantry, now known as the Market.

Instead of a food pantry, neighbors visit the Market, using a tab system to select foods. Instead of being handed a box of food, they grab a cart and select their own groceries. Healthier foods cost fewer tabs.



Oliphant

The Getting Ahead class enables neighbors the opportunity to work their way out of poverty.

Hope Oliphant, who took over in January as the new executive director at Main Street Marketplace and Meeting Place, emphasizes a model of partnership with neighbors. Instead of giving neighbors what agencies think they need, the Marketplace invites neighbors to the table to find out what they need.

Oliphant and her team are living out the mission's motto: "Where everyone has a place at the table."



Scott Trexler examines some tomatoes in the produce section at Main Street Marketplace in China Grove.



**THE BIG FIVE**

# 4. China Grove Roller Mill



Three years ago, the China Grove Roller Mill got a new lease on life. The South Rowan Historical Society entered into a partnership with Rowan Museum, which took over the roller mill. Built in 1903, it had ceased operations in 1995.

“They needed a group to assist with fundraising and administrative details,” says Aaron Kepley, executive director of Rowan Museum.

The roller mill is the fourth property that Rowan Museum oversees, including the museum itself, the Old Stone House, and the Utzman-Chambers House.

“It’s been a challenge but not a bad challenge,” Kepley says. “The members of the historical society take an interest in what goes on with the roller mill. Those China Grove people really help us out.”

Kepley, who is 32, says that most people his age or younger have no idea what a roller mill is. They were, he says, a gathering spot for communities, a place to have crops milled, and a place to buy seed.

“They connected generations, and farmers miss having that local connection,” Kepley says.

The China Grove Town Council, he says, wholeheartedly supports the roller mill. “If there are events in China Grove, they make sure the roller mill is included.”

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The China Grove Roller Mill  
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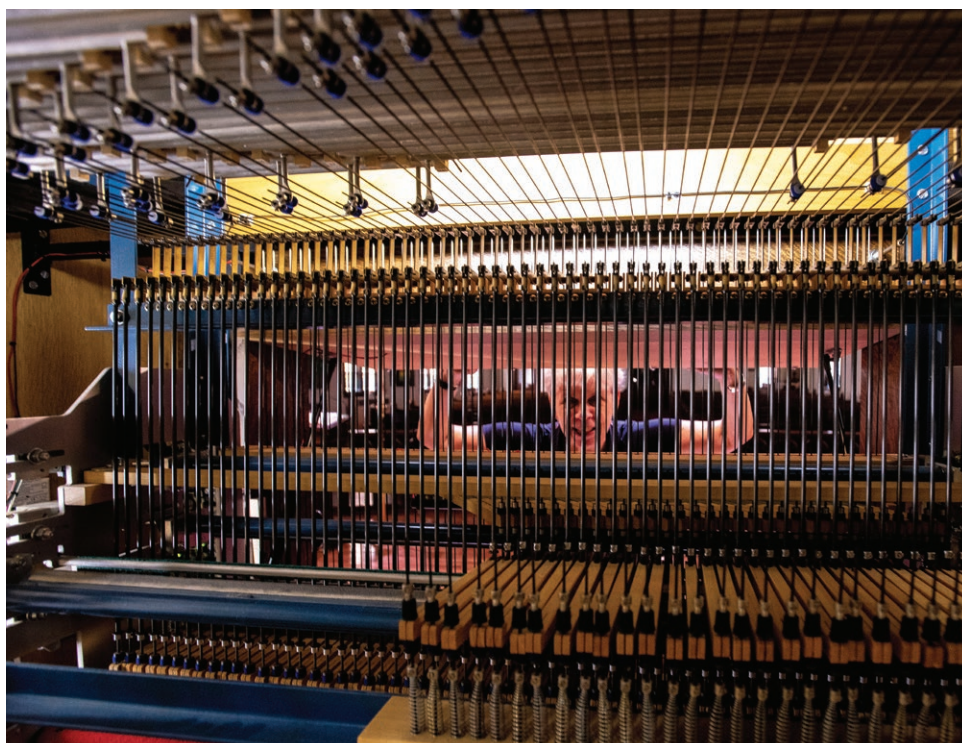
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*Church organist Libby Staton can frequently be found sitting at the console of the C.B. Fisk organ at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in China Grove.*





**THE BIG FIVE**

# 5. St. Mark's organ

Harold Menius was a quiet, unassuming man. He was a faithful member of the Senior Choir at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in China Grove, where he'd been a lifelong member. He spent his career at Cannon Mills, and he and his wife, Martha, had no children.

He was also an early investor in Food Town.

He died in 2006 and a year later, St. Mark's received a bequest "to be used primarily for St. Mark's organ fund and at the church's council's discretion." The council tithed the first 10 percent. They then formed an organ team to carry out Menius' wishes.

After 3½ years of research, the team chose C.B. Fisk to build Opus 143 at St. Mark's.

Cantor Elizabeth Staton said at the time: "With the crafting of and installation of Opus 143, St. Mark's has now joined the Fisk family, and they are now part of our St. Mark's family — and the greater community of China Grove."

St. Mark's has opened its doors for concerts by aspiring organists, field

trips for school children, and guests on Farmers Day.

"I think Harold would be pleased," Staton says. **S**



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## the Scene



Kennedi Fisher, center, with her biggest supporters, Rori Godsey and Kory Fisher. Kennedi, a centerfielder and Knox Middle School sixth-grader, was the team's youngest player.

Robbie Freeze, left, the father of player Carmen Freeze, with Julie Hester and Carmen's granddad, Terry Freeze.



The players each had a convertible to ride in from the downtown parade to their arrival at Salisbury Community Park. Here, Riley Haggas gives a fist bump to Gary Blabon.



Kassidy Sechler grabbed a parade ride in this vintage car.



Members of the 2019 Little League World Series Softball Champions include (in alphabetical order, not as pictured) Emma Rae Cline, Kynlee Dextraze, Andie Evans, Kennedi Fisher, Carmen Freeze, Riley Haggas, Avrelle Harrell, Cadence Lane, Lexie Ritchie, Campbell Schaen, Kassidy Sechler, Arabelle Shulenburger, Lauren Vanderpool and Ashley Yang.

# Little League Softball World Champions

Rowan County, representing the Southeast region, captured its second Little League World Series championship in girls softball by winning the crown in Portland, Oregon, where the team had a record of 7-0 and defeated Louisiana in the nationally televised final. As part of celebrating after the girls returned home, a ceremony was held for the team at Salisbury Community Park, home of Rowan Little League.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Lynn Bernhardt, left, whose HTC Sports and Designs made many of the gifts for the players, stands with West Rowan Middle School Principal Stacey White and her daughter, Amber.



Kathy and Todd Sechler, parents of player Kassidy Sechler.



Carolyn Melchor and her granddaughter, Makynzie, are big Rowan County Little League supporters.



Josh Schaen, one of the team coaches, squeezes his daughter, Campbell, who was the team's pitching ace.





Doreen Baker, Mooresville Middle School Principal Ayana Robinson and Mooresville Board of Education member Debbie Marsh. Mooresville Middle had four players on the championship team.



Holding up balloons for No. 10 Avrelle Harrell, center, are her family — Tony, Imara, D’Nahjah and Kimberly.



Player Lauren Vanderpool (No. 14) with her family, including brother Ryan and parents Nancy and Jon.

Misty Shulenburger with her daughter, Arabelle, a Southeast Middle School student and one of the players on the world championship team.



Andie Evans’ convertible makes its way toward the ceremony at Salisbury Community Park as parents cheer the way.



Nettie and Walt Cline, grandparents of catcher Emma Rae Cline.

Corriher-Lipe Middle School Principal Justin James, left, with his athletic director, Tyler Rea. Corriher-Lipe Middle had two players on the team, Lexie Ritchie and Kynlee Dextraze.



Anna and Rori Wilson were on hand to support Rori’s teammate and friend, Campbell Schaen.



A ride in a vintage Thunderbird proved to be to Carmen Freeze’s liking.



Joyce Gilland, left, great aunt of star pitcher Campbell Schaen, stands with Jean Coates, grandmother of Campbell.





Part of the Food Lion team: Scott King, Vanessa Simerson, Melissa Hughes, Shane Valley, Heather Broadway, Stacy Butler and Mandy Culp.



Justan Mounts, as a unicorn, along with Randy Cress (front end) and Caleb Sinclair (back end) who manned the stallion costume, lead the antics connected to the lunch-time drummer parade.



Diane Geddes, left, winner of the Heads & Tails game for \$172, poses with Teresa Dakins, chairperson of the Dragon Boat Festival.

## Dragon Boat Festival

The Rowan County Chamber of Commerce's Sixth Annual Dragon Boat Festival enjoyed an almost perfect day on High Rock Lake as the event attracted 28 teams, close to 20 vendors and a crowd estimated at 5,000 people. Each 21-person team raced three times, and the day held 29 dragon boat races in all. Gator Bites, sponsored by Cardinal Tire and Matangira Recycling, won the overall title, with eight other teams as division winners.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Members of the Powers Curbers team included (in no particular order) Tricia Cole, Haley Cole, Josh Cole, Hannah Cole, Sheldon Davis, Courtney Wagner, Robin Huden, McKenzie Collins and Dylan Anderson.



Chamber volunteer Allison Tally and Granite Quarry Mayor Bill Feather ready the Dragon Boat Festival medals that will be awarded later in the day.



Above: Misty Campbell, Alisha Beam, Sarah Smith and Heather Riffe were members of Novant Health's Sink or Swim team.



Left: Tiffany Bradley and Ashley Duncan



Terry Hunt of Lexington (foreground) and Sharon Jones wait to board the VA Warriors dragon boat. Hunt lost his sight in 1997 but at 72 still participates in many outdoor sports.





Ceremony attendees included Chauncey Morris, Lisa Morris, Davann Millsap and Domaneka Morris.



Ruth Small, Joyce Cable and Doug Cable attended the induction ceremony.



Betty Oglesby stands with her husband, Ted, a 2019 inductee into the Hall of Fame.



In back, Brenda and Aaron Neely. Seated: Raemi Evans. Neely is a Hall of Fame Committee member. The Hall of Fame's annual Fred Evans Award is named for Raemi's late husband.



The 2019 Salisbury-Rowan Sports Hall of Fame inductees included the late Scott Young, represented by widow Diane Young and their children at far left; the late Lonnie G. Kluttz Sr., represented by his widow, Stephanie; David Freeze; Shayla Fields; Mike Gurley; Ted Oglesby Sr.; Donald Jenkins; Don Heglar and Bobby Parnell.



Hall of Famer Donald Jenkins, center, stands with nephew Ethan Rice, son Justin Smith, son Jadon Jenkins, wife Dionne Jenkins, brother Chip Rice and friend David Hyman.

## Salisbury-Rowan Sports Hall of Fame

The Salisbury-Rowan Sports Hall of Fame inducted its Class of 2019 during a ceremony at the Salisbury Civic Center. The class includes former Salisbury High-N.C. State basketball star Shayla Fields; author-runner-cyclist David Freeze; longtime West Rowan High basketball coach Mike Gurley; the late Scott Young, a football coaching great at West Rowan High; baseball star Henry Donald Heglar; former Salisbury High basketball all-star Donald Jenkins; former major league baseball pitcher Bobby Parnell; longtime Special Olympics coach Ted Oglesby Jr.; and the late Dunbar High, college and pro basketball player Lonnie G. Kluttz Sr. Founded in 2001, the HOF now has 125 members.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



The family of the late Scott Young, a 2019 inductee, includes his widow, Diane; children Brody, Ally and Bryant; and mom, Betty Young.



Those attending included Dawn Gibson; Sarah Oglesby, mother of 2019 inductee Ted Oglesby Jr.; and Toni Cook-Smith.



# the Scene



Doug and Amy Pruitt with Larry Brown



Dr. Gary Freeze of Catawba College presents historical background on important inhabitants of the Rowan Museum's Utzman-Chambers House.



Anderson and Azalee Everhart, left, have fun playing an early-American ring toss game with Theresa Pierce.



Left: The impressively dressed Claudia Galup, Jenny Hubbard and Carolyn Glasnow pause for a picture. Galup was playing the part of Mrs. Beard, who attended President George Washington's visit to Salisbury in 1791. Hubbard portrayed Mary Beard Locke, wife of Moses Locke.  
Right: Judge John Holshouser with Randy Lassiter

## Utzman-Chambers House's 200th anniversary

Rowan Museum Inc. celebrated the 200th anniversary of its Utzman-Chambers House at 116 S. Jackson St. Re-enactors and board members were on hand to greet visitors, play period games with children and share information about the house, the period and the house's collection of artifacts. Dr. Gary Freeze, history professor at Catawba College, spoke on some of the house's most important inhabitants from two centuries ago.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Left: Alyssa Hill with her brother, Lyndon.  
Right: Bud Mickle and Sandra Roakes were manning the refreshments table.



Randy and Diana Cummings with Jean Owen.



The historic Utzman-Chambers House on South Jackson Street is owned by Rowan Museum Inc.





Julie Evers and Courtney Maaney



Lauren and Charles Whaley



Mark Doby, Allison Doby, Craige Myers and Terri Myers



Nikki Weatherford, Drew Roseman, Carmen Jessup and Jacque Jensen



Nancy Trexler, Phyllis Fisher, Brenda Marcus and Carolyn Peeler

## History on Tap

Historic Salisbury Foundation's summer series, History on Tap, brought close to 125 people to the Wallace Annex on East Fisher Street. It gave visitors a chance to sample New Sarum beers while also getting an inside peek at the second and third floors of the 1906 building. The huge structure originally served as an annex to V. Wallace & Sons' wholesale and dry goods business on South Main Street. The Wallace family is considering converting the upper floors of the Annex to apartments.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Whitney Wallace Williams, center, answers some questions about her family's history and its connection to the building called the Wallace Annex.



Bonnie Allyn and Chuck Hoffman provided musical interludes on the second floor as people toured the Wallace Annex.





Kay Kluttz with her daughter Kim Lucas



Thelma Corriher and Betty Ritchie have played vital roles on the church's history committee.



Doris Cress and Carole Brooke

## Mount Zion UCC reception

The congregation of Mount Zion United Church of Christ gathered to observe the 100th anniversary of its "new" sanctuary — a building dedicated in June 1919 after a fire destroyed the fifth sanctuary on that site the year before.

— Photos by Susan Shinn Turner



Davis Harwood, 4, has fun at the covered-dish luncheon.



Left: Leroy Castor, 97, was the oldest church member in attendance. Middle: Jane Corriher sits for a moment with daughter Emily Corriher Bancroft, who directs the church's preschool program.

Right: Margaret Corriher and Harold Ray.





Margaret Almeida, Mary Ellen Turner and Margaret Klutz



Susan Alexander, Deborah Messinger, Fred Dula and Beth Woodson



Dyke Messinger, Bill Wagoner and Randy Lassiter



Tricia Johnson and Jenny Steinman



Hannah Jacobson and Alyssa Nelson



Tisha Proper, Bethany Fortner, Meredith Abramson, Tamara Sheffield and Karen Alexander

## Bell Tower Green reception for donors

Bell Tower Green Inc. closed off the 100 block of South Jackson Street, set up a big tent and celebrated with donors who overall had contributed \$10 million of a \$12 million goal for a new downtown park. Just days later, many of the same folks attended a groundbreaking for the 3.66-acre park, slated to be finished by the end of 2020. It will be bounded by South Jackson, West Innes, South Church and West Fisher streets, and construction is in full gear.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Trudy Thompson, Tommy Thompson, Donna Childress and Jeff Childress





*Docent Marnie Stoker stands in the living room of the Hedrick Block apartment over Pottery 101 during last year's OctoberTour. This year's event is Oct. 12-13. — Wayne Hinshaw photo*

**2 'Women in Congress'**  
**Oct. 2-5: Hedrick Little Theatre, Catawba College campus** — 7:30 p.m. In Ancient Athens, the government gets nothing done, crime and poverty are out of control, idiots are in leadership. The solution? Have women secretly take over the government and turn the city into a communist utopia in Aristophanes' hilariously profane, 2,400-year-old farce. Get tickets online at [catawba.universitytickets.com](http://catawba.universitytickets.com).

**3 'Shakespeare in Love'**  
**Oct. 3-9: Meroney Theater** — 7:30 p.m. The deadline for Will's new play is fast approaching, but he's in desperate need of inspiration. That is, until he finds his muse — Viola. This beautiful young woman is Will's greatest admirer and will stop at nothing

(including breaking the law) to appear in his next play. Against a bustling background of mistaken identity, ruthless scheming and backstage theatrics, Will's love for Viola quickly blossoms and inspires him to write his greatest masterpiece. Call 704-633-5471 or go to [www.PiedmontPlayers.com](http://www.PiedmontPlayers.com).

**3 'Kimberly Akimbo'**  
**Oct. 3-5: Lee Street theatre** — In the wilds of suburban New Jersey, "Kimberly Akimbo" is a hilarious and heartrending play about a teenager with a rare condition causing her body to age faster than it should. When she and her family flee Secaucus under dubious circumstances, Kimberly is forced to reevaluate her life while contending with a hypochondri-

# October 2019

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area



ac mother, a rarely sober father, a scam-artist aunt, her own morality and, most terrifying of all, the possibility of first love. For information on tickets: 704-310-5507 or leestreet.org.

**4 Day Out with Thomas**  
**Oct. 4-6 (also Sept. 27-29): N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer** — All aboard for a train ride with Thomas, meet Percy, and so much more. Advance purchase of tickets recommended. Ticket prices may vary. For more information, visit [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org).

**4 Busker's Bash**  
**Oct. 4: downtown Salisbury** — The best local talent comes together to perform in front of participating downtown businesses with shops and restaurants offering specials from 5-9 p.m. and free music from 6-8 p.m.

**5 Autumn Jubilee**  
**Oct. 5-6: Dan Nicholas Park** — 10 a.m.-6 p.m. This 40th annual festival attracts more than 45,000 visitors from across Rowan County and the state. The Autumn Jubilee celebrates the season with live music, food and craft vendors. This is a free event.

**10 OctoberTour Patrons' Party**  
**Oct. 10: Hall House lawn** — 6:30 p.m. Come kick off OctoberTour 2019 in style as Historic Salisbury Foundation honors its sponsors and homeowners with music, food, and drink. The party launches the tour's week-end of festivities. For more information visit [www.OctoberTour.com](http://www.OctoberTour.com).

**11 OctoberTour Luncheon**  
**Oct. 11: Country Club of Salisbury** — Oct. 11: Join Historic Salisbury Foundation for a delicious meal and wine while you travel back in time with historical accounts of some of Salisbury's famous people and places. Special guest speaker Brett Sturm, restoration specialist. His topic will include information on alternative materials on historical buildings and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historical Buildings. Visit [www.OctoberTour.com](http://www.OctoberTour.com) for additional information or call 704-636-0103. Luncheon admission: \$50 per person.

**12 OctoberTour**  
**Oct. 12-13, Salisbury/Rowan County** — 10 a.m. Sponsored by Historic Salisbury Foundation, this year's tour of historic places spices things up with several private homes in

Salisbury and the Kress Plaza Condominium as stops, along with examples of Greek and Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical, and Tudor Eclectic living in historical Salisbury. Call Historic Salisbury Foundation at 704-636-0103 for more information and advance tickets. Also visit [www.OctoberTour.com](http://www.OctoberTour.com).

**12 OctoberTour Bistro and Brews**  
**Oct. 12-13: 300 W. Bank St.** — Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday: noon-5:30 p.m. This free event is located near the Hall House Museum and is open to the public. Area restaurants and food trucks offer delicious food and drink for purchase. This area is a hub of activity and a wide array of sweet and savory items, as well as artisans with their wares. From unique one-of-a-kind pottery to ornaments with local landmarks, each vendor has something special to share.

**12 'Opera Fireworks!'**  
**Oct. 12: Catawba College's Keppel Auditorium** — 7:30 p.m. Acclaimed Metropolitan Opera soprano Jennifer Rowley, the performer featured in the "Evening at the Met" fundraiser earlier this year, returns to sing with the Salisbury Symphony. The night includes opera excerpts from Der Rosenkavalier, Vanessa, La Traviata, and Aida, including some of the solos she will perform soon with the Paris Opera and in the Sydney Opera House. The Salisbury Symphony Chorale will accompany Miss Rowley. For additional information visit [www.salisburysymphony.org](http://www.salisburysymphony.org).

**12 Granite Quarry Civitan Fiddlers Convention**  
**Oct. 12: East Rowan High School, 175 St. Luke's Church Road** — Chopped barbecue plates, hamburgers, hot dogs and desserts start being sold at 11 a.m. and meal tickets will be available for advance purchase. Band and Individual Youth and Adult Competition with registration beginning at 3 p.m. The Youth competition begins at 4 p.m. followed by the Adult competition at 7 p.m.

**17 Power in Partnership Breakfast**  
**Oct. 17: Trinity Oaks, 728 Klumac Road** — 7:30-8:30 a.m.; A Rowan County Chamber of Commerce event: \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members, Contact [info@rowanchamber.com](mailto:info@rowanchamber.com).

**26 Halloween Fun Fest**  
**Oct. 26: downtown Salisbury** — The annual Halloween Fun Fest in downtown Salisbury will bring ghoulish fun to residents and visitors of Salisbury and beyond. Be sure to bring your family and friends as the City Hall parking lot (behind 217 S. Main St.) will transform into a Halloween carnival featuring music, costume contests, Halloween crafts, a bounce house, face painting, candy and more. \$5 unlimited game play and activities. Games and activities will be held from 3-6 p.m.; trick-or-treating with downtown merchants from 4-5 p.m. with a costume contest at 5:15 p.m.

**26 BlockWork**  
**Oct. 26** — Neighbors helping neighbors on "Make a Difference Day." The annual city-sponsored BlockWork brings residents and community volunteers together to build cleaner and safe neighborhoods, one block at a time. Working together with property owners, residents, city staff and other support groups, participants help neighborhoods establish a proactive approach with stewardship of housing resources. To volunteer, sign up by Oct. 1 at [www.salisburync.gov/BlockWork](http://www.salisburync.gov/BlockWork), or call 704-638-5235 for a mailed application, or stop by the City Office Building at 132 N. Main St.

**26 Gold Hill Trick-or-Treating and Ghost Tour**  
**Oct. 26: Historic Gold Hill Village and Gold Hill Mines Historic Park, 735 St. Stephens Church Road** — Trick or treat at the village shops between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. From 5-8 p.m. a ghost tour is offered. Check-in times are 5, 6, 7 and 8 p.m. Ghost stories and guided ghost walks and hayrides included amid Gold Hill's historic 19th century gold mines and historic sites in its 70-acre park. Admission: \$6; ages 6-10, \$3. No advance ticket sales. Tickets sold until the 8 p.m. cut-off time. Multiple tours throughout the night until all patrons are out on tour.

**31 Downtown China Grove Trick-or-Treating**  
**Oct. 31: downtown China Grove** — 4-5 p.m. Bring a bag for candy and wear your best costume to trick or treat with the downtown merchants in China Grove. **S**





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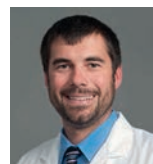
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