

OCTOBER 2020

SALISBURY

the magazine

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- Inside Thread Shed's home, the 1898 Bell Block
- A visit to Spencer bungalow of Chace and Jacque Jensen
- Outstanding outdoor spaces in the West Square

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the magazine

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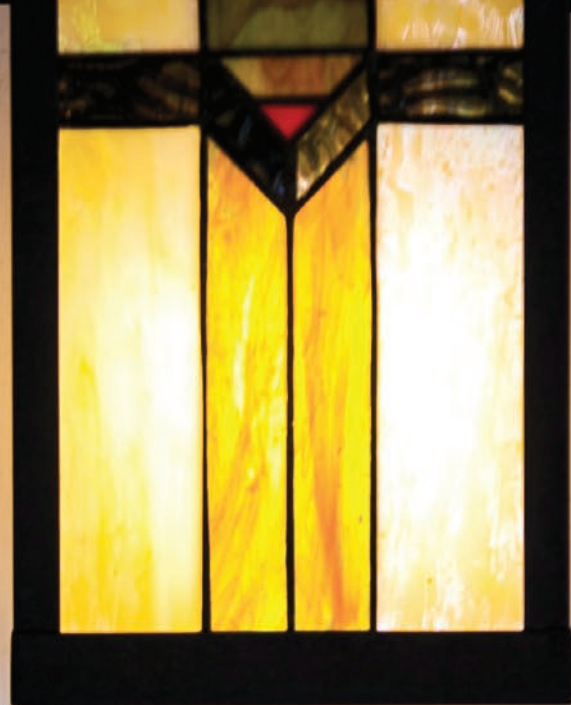
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FEATURES

30 IMPACT STATEMENT

*Jensens incorporate history;
themselves into Spencer bungalow*

by ELIZABETH G. COOK

40 THREADS OF TIME

*Loflins' clothing store flourishes
in 1898 Bell Block building*

by MARK WINEKA

50 CENTURY STRONG

*Kiwanis Club marks 100 years of fellowship,
making Salisbury better*

by JOSH BERGERON



On the cover: Ashley Honbarrier is executive director of Happy Roots.

(Jon C. Lakey photo)

On this page: An art deco wall sconce adorns the front porch at the home Chace and Jacque Jensen of Spencer.

(Sean Meyers photo)

58



| departments |

| THE ARTS |

12 **Note worthy**
The baritone voice of Jim Burgess keeps weaving stories

| AT HOME |

18 **Superior exteriors**
West Square homeowners go all in on outdoor spaces

| EDUCATION |

58 **Gardens to go**
Happy Roots, RSS provide kits for students to grow on

18



INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Anne Roland Furniture54

AutoXpress39

Bare Furniture4

Barnhardt Jewelers55

Blue Bay Restaurant49

Carolina Cremation2

Cathy Griffin - Century 2153

Cozart Lumber23

Edward Jones - Jolene M. Philipott . . .65

F&M Bank17

Godley's Garden Center23

Hap Roberts36

Landis Plumbing65

McLaughlin's Country Store57

Medicine Shoppe, The38

Mow Better48

Rowan Animal Hospital55

Rowan-Kannapolis ABC Board57

Salisbury Dental Care3

Salisbury Motor Company67

Stout Heating and Air56

TMR Realty56

Tom's Carpet Care23

Trinity Oaks47

Wake Forest Baptist Health68

Windsor Gallery54

IN EVERY ISSUE

Editor's Letter p.7 | **Through the Lens** p.8
Bookish p.9 | **Rowan Originals** p.10
Salisbury's the Place p.66

Every magazine needs a moonbeam

As you finish this issue of the magazine, you'll find on the Salisbury's the Place page a superb pen-and-ink drawing done by our own creative director, Andy Mooney.

Andy spends hours on these drawings, one of his many passions. He also has a love for photography, the coast, anything to do with the military, classic sports cars and LifeWay Church. I think I should add his devotion to the Salisbury Post newspaper and Salisbury the Magazine.

For half of his life — he's only 40 — Andy has worked at the Salisbury Post, mainly as a page designer who is crucial to getting out the online, print and special editions of the newspaper, along with his senior copy-editor buddy, Paris Goodnight.

In fact, that's Paris (back to you) walking down East Innes Street in Andy's drawing this month. I kid Andy about how he and Paris take a lot of moonlit strolls together, knowing it's their attempt to get up and exercise each evening after long hours of being tied to desks.



Andy Mooney

Along with sportswriter Mike London, Andy and Paris are usually the last ones in the building, putting things to bed, so to speak. It's only after the newspaper deadline or on his "days off" at home that Andy works on our magazine.

A disclaimer: Andy doesn't like me writing about him. "I am strictly a behind-the-scenes type, not desiring the limelight," he protests. "... You have your work cut out making me sound interesting."

But the truth is we couldn't do the magazine without Andy, who has been the designer of our pages since we started almost 50

issues ago in 2015. I literally throw all the stories, headlines and photographs at Andy for each issue and say go to it.

I never doubt that the pages I receive back from him will be of the highest quality. His eye for using photographs, employing design elements and making things fit while still being visually attractive is amazing.

Andy graduated from North Rowan High, and he has degrees in information systems (computers) from Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and graphic design from Guilford Tech.

Andy has been the page designer for other magazines. At one time, he was doing a total of five, including

this one, and still holding down his full-time job at the newspaper. He hesitates to mention his freelance work because he really wants to focus more on art.

And who can blame him? It's always fun to receive one of Andy's drawings for Salisbury's the Place, because they're good, plus they usually depict a scene in Salisbury or Rowan County, which he always reminds me is the point of that page.

He wants me to emphasize that to other contributors.

I communicate a lot with Andy, and I've noticed some of his notes come from "The MoonePad," which I guess is a name for his iPad, or whatever wild computer setup he has at home.

It's an appropriate name. Andy is our best astronaut, moon(lit) walks included. And he has the best beard, too.



Mark Wineka,
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

| *through the lens* |

by Adrian Binney



It was a happy accident, but Adrian Binney, an amateur photographer who is retired and lives near Winchester, England, first sent this photo to Salisbury the Magazine thinking it was going to a similarly named magazine in Salisbury, England. When informed of the snafu, Binney gladly wanted us to publish his photo showing the interior of the 800-year-old Salisbury Cathedral in his home country. Binney says it reveals 'the unique feeling of the cathedral with materially all the chairs put away.' Salisbury, North Carolina, is named for its sister city in England.

When deeper understandings emerge from loss

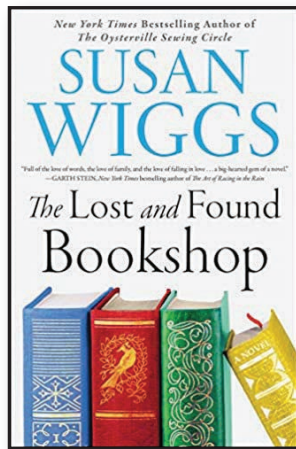
Fall is nearly upon us, and with it arrive three vastly different books, each dealing in its unique way with the quest for meaning in loss.



by ALISSA REDMOND

Soon after moving to Salisbury and purchasing the South Main Book Company, I felt compelled to start plotting out a Hallmark movie script of my daily life in my idyllic store.

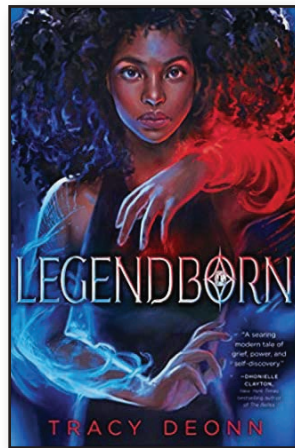
I am so grateful veteran author Susan Wiggs did an infinitely better job of describing the charms of bookselling than I ever could have within her new novel, **The Lost and Found Bookshop** (368 pages, William Morrow).



In a story set in San Francisco, Wigg's protagonist, Natalie Harper, returns home from a lucrative, but deeply unsatisfying career in California's wine country to care for her grandfather who suffers from bouts of dementia, which he keeps somewhat at bay by living in the store his family has owned for over a century.

Faced with difficult financial decisions, Natalie and her grandfather uncover family heirlooms and historic artifacts buried within the walls of their bookstore — with the help of

handsome handyman, Peach Gallagher. This book simply could not be more delightful and will undoubtedly warm your heart as our weather cools.



If you are looking to suspend reality a bit more these days — and who can blame you — **Legendborn** (512 pages, Margaret K. McElderry Books) is a powerful new release from debut novelist Tracy Deonn, a North Carolina-based writer and recent graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill.

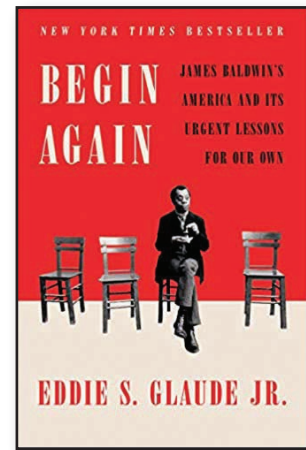
Set on the campus of UNC, Deonn infuses the legend of King Arthur with southern Gothic traditions and teenage angst into a riveting young adult/science fiction novel. In the first of what could easily become a six-book series, Deonn brings to life Bree Matthews, a 16-year-old student who enrolls in a fictional early college program at Carolina in the wake of her mother's tragic and sudden death on a hunt for answers about her family's heritage.

Perfect for fans of Cassandra Clare, perhaps with an added affinity for Colson Whitehead, Deonn's newly created world has set the literary world abuzz, and she is highly likely to continue breaking down walls and pushing new frontiers in these genres for many years to come.

Finally, on the nonfiction front, Eddie S. Glaude Jr.'s **Begin Again** (272 pages, Crown) inspired me in profoundly unexpected ways.

Glaude begins this literary analysis of James

Baldwin's nonfiction works by highlighting Baldwin's struggle to reconcile the deafening silence of American society during and in the aftermath of the 1960s civil rights movement by crisscrossing the globe in search of clarity of purpose.



Noting Baldwin's frequent, extended stays across Europe, Glaude speaks to the societal anxieties Baldwin felt he must escape from to author commentaries that lifted our national dialogue on race to another level.

Glaude then examines commonalities between Baldwin's lifetime and the strange times we find ourselves currently experiencing and, in doing so, Glaude offers us glimpses of how modern society can proceed based on Baldwin's aspiration to remain unbroken "on the wheel of life."

I grabbed this book expecting a powerful analysis and concluded my read determined to re-read every work by James Baldwin in pursuit of my own elsewhere — to create alliances and move onward towards brighter days for all of us. **S**

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



Entrepreneurial spirit

Liliana Spears says to 'get in the game' you first have to show up

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAVONNE POTTS

Liliana Spears, the multi-hyphenated businesswoman in Salisbury, took on many of her enterprises as a way to make a difference in the community.

"I had an entrepreneurial spirit," Spears says, "and I always thought the best way to help a community is to have a vested interest. So being in business gave me that root to really want to make a neighborhood better."

Let's run down some of her interests. She is maybe best known as owner of the Latin Mix store on South Fulton Street for more than 15 years.

But longer than that, she has run a company specializing in asbestos removal. From her store in the past, she also has operated a staffing company, and she currently has a jewelry business and offers life coaching.

In addition, she owns rental properties in the neighborhood close to Latin Mix.

She also had a beauty shop for 15 years before deciding to close it

five years ago.

"Many of the Spanish beauty shops that you see around are workers that worked here and opened up their own shop," Spears says. "It's a nice continuation, which is what we want to happen, to pass that baton."

Spears says she would encourage others to go into business for themselves.

"Find something that you can't find," she says, "and if you can't find it, others are probably looking for the same thing and meet that need."

Spears first came to Rowan County and briefly attended Knox Junior High in 1976, before moving away in 1977. After marrying, she traveled with her U.S. Army husband for 20 years. Their family, which later included four adult children, lived in 13 different states, including Hawaii. They also spent periods in Germany and Guatemala.

Writer Shavonne Potts recently caught up with Spears for a quick Q&A:

Q. Who inspires you and why does that person inspire you?

My mother, Yolanda Garcia, inspires me. She's strong, decisive, a warrior when it comes to meeting people's needs. She sees no obstacles, she sees opportunities. That's where I've gotten my inspiration. It can be bad, but there's nothing so bad that we can't work through. My mother is 80 years old. She owns a number of beauty shops in Charlotte.

What is the best advice you've been given?

Be a problem-solver. It came from a coaching class.

What would your perfect day look like?

Coming to my business — and I do have them often — and being able to connect with my customers. I know a lot of my customers by name. I know a lot of their families. So being there for my community — that is my perfect day. Being able to interact with the people who come in my store and my other businesses and to be able to really listen and hear their needs. Not only what they're saying but what's going on behind what they're saying. And getting something good to eat.

What's your favorite meal to make or eat?

I love to cook, so my favorite meal to make is Thanksgiving dinner and everything that comes with Thanksgiving dinner — ham, turkey, potatoes, all of that. I do it every year for my employees. They come to my house and they sit down and I serve them. I serve the people who help me serve all year. (Spears adds her favorite meals to eat have been seafood at the downtown oyster bar, Shuckin' Shack.)

Name a book title or an author who you just can't put down?

There are several. One of them is John Maxwell. I really like his leadership style. The other

one is the Bible. I read that one often. It is my favorite book to read.

You're not originally from Rowan County, but how do you try to embody the spirit of Rowan County in all that you do?

I really think that Rowan County is one of these jewels among North Carolina that helps families and is becoming inclusive. It's a county where if you have big dreams, you can make them come true in a small way. I still believe that there's a community sense here. I have seen



a sense of family in our customers whether they are Asian, African-American, Spanish or whether they think they are 100% white. I have felt that sense of community here in downtown Salisbury (and) Rowan County. I believe they are welcoming to immigrants and that gives me comfort. I see a lot of other races. I see a lot of people from Taiwan, Liberia here. So there's that inclusiveness that I really like about Rowan County. I believe the governing body of Rowan County has ears and they listen. They can't fix everything, but they listen.

You have served on a number of committees, such as the Human Relations Council. What other boards or committees do you belong to?

One of the things that I really enjoyed was when I was on the Smart Start board before any

other Spanish-speaking people were there. We were able to bring the Spanish component to that board 16 years ago. I'm a guardian ad litem. I'm on the Housing Advocacy Board. I'm really active at Cornerstone Church.

How would you encourage others to become more involved in their community?

I would just encourage people to have a vested stake in the game, and the only way you can get in the game is to show up. Many times you can show up and feel you're not validated or needed. Rowan County and Salisbury needs people who want to show up and show up and show up, and then their talents and resources can be put to good use.

How have you managed to cope during the pandemic? What or who has gotten you through it?

I did get COVID-19 in the beginning. It wasn't that bad, but I believe the one thing that's kept me going is not an overload of information but limited information. I take what applies

to me and the community that I try to inform, but I don't go and nitpick every little bit. I also have this assurance that God's got this. We just have to follow that path. Now that doesn't mean that I'm not going to wear my mask or show up to everything. I limit where I go. I'm cautious, but I'm not afraid. I am aware but again, I'm not afraid and I try to live everyday life with caution. Life still has to go on.

I believe because I'm helping others it makes me forget the need that I have. I'm so aware of trying to help other people that it makes me help forget that I have that need, too. I'm glad that the looking for toilet paper part is over. That was the biggest headache I had. It was crazy. It got intense.

Describe yourself in 5 words.

Optimistic. Helpful. Truthful. Go-getter. Persistent. **S**



Beast of a baritone

Singer-songwriter Burgess has entertained nursing home residents for quarter century

WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA / PHOTOGRAPHY BY WAYNE HINSHAW



The catalog of tunes in Jim Burgess' head is like a four-story Rolodex. Pull out a song card, any song card, and Burgess can probably play it.

"You could stay here a week and not hear the same one twice," says his wife, Norma.

Burgess chuckles, knowing that hasn't always been the case. He remembers one of his daughters protesting on many occasions, "Daddy, I've heard that one before."

But it's Burgess' voice, more than his memory, that catches you off guard. No 85-year-old man with a pacemaker — no matter how big he is — should have a rich baritone voice like his.

For more than 25 years, Burgess has taken that voice to senior clubs, retirement centers and nursing homes. A few have been in Rowan County, but he mostly has played at Guilford and Davidson County venues — in familiar areas where he grew up, sang and worked as a longtime junior high math and science teacher.

It's all volunteer. At the peak, Burgess was playing for seniors at 20 different places a month, and just the reward of sitting down with those audiences was payment enough.

"I'm not hurtin' for money," Burgess says. "When I leave I say to myself, 'Well, I've done something good today.'"

At these stops, it's usually just Burgess and his Yamaha guitar. The audience might be only a few residents, or it could be a whole activity room filled also with family and staff. But he has met many interesting people, and he likes to fill gaps between the songs with conversation and stories.

"I explain songs," he says.

The songs themselves — many of them sound like they could be the soundtrack to old Western movies — also have a narrative quality to them.

Above: Musician Jim Burgess looks over one of his CDs.

Opposite: Burgess sings one of his favorite songs, 'Sixteen Tons.'



On some occasions, not often, Norma will sing a song or two with him. She shakes her head, remembering it took her a year to learn “If I Were A Carpenter.” She also has harmonized with her husband on “You’re the Reason God Made Oklahoma.”

This year’s pandemic halted, of course, Burgess’ performances for seniors. Up until the quarantine, he was still hopping into his Toyota Sienna and going to about three places a week.

Burgess chuckles as he reminisces about his singing/song-writing career, which includes eight CDs. His signature hat also sits on the coffee table.

The retirement home/nursing home gigs started soon after he retired from teaching in 1992.

In retirement, he was painting part-time at high schools with other teachers looking for extra income. He also was taking care of his second wife, Jodie, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor early in 1992. She died at age 52 in July 1994.

That same fall, one of his painting buddies, the late Lee Evans, proposed that he and Burgess go perform in some nursing homes. Everyone who knew Burgess was aware of his experience as both a singer and songwriter. Evans played guitar and also a golfing pal of Burgess.

“I thought it would last a week,” Burgess says.

But it started a quarter century of his playing for seniors. At various times, his musical partners were Evans, Clayton Smith and Bill Joyce before Burgess found himself going it alone.

Today, Burgess might offer up songs ranging from Jim Croce’s “Leroy Brown” to his own “Ode to the Red Hat Ladies.” Appreciative audiences who became familiar with his playlist over the years many times asked him to play “I Don’t Look Good Naked Anymore.”

That can be a hoot, but a good helping of his songs are religious in nature, and again, tell a story.

Performers such as Marty Robbins, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Phil Harris, Jimmy Dean and Johnny Cash were always inspirations for Burgess, as he listened to them through the decades on radio or played the grooves off their albums.

As for singing, Norma says her husband started at age 5 or 6 and never stopped. "He's eat up with music," she says.

Born in Jamestown and raised in High Point, Jim Burgess has now lived in Salisbury with Norma for 22 years. His father worked mostly in furniture plants in the High Point area. His mother was a widow with two children when Jim's dad married her, and together they had four more children.

Burgess was the youngest. Thanks to his height — 6 feet, 6½ inches — he was tall enough to play basketball in high school and college, but actually too tall for the Army. That extra half-inch put him over the height threshold for being drafted back in the 1950s.

In junior high, when Jim already was 6 feet tall as a seventh-grader, a coach gave him a nickname.

"He called me 'Stretch' and it stuck," says Jim, who went on to be an All-State honorable mention player for High Point High (Now High Point Central).

A basketball scholarship paid for half of his \$800-a-year cost for room, board and tuition at Guilford College, which back then was in the same basketball league as Catawba, Lenoir-Rhyne and Pfeiffer colleges.

Burgess finished his second basketball season in 1956 at Guilford and decided to leave school. He returned home to take care of his ailing mother, suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. She soon passed away, and Burgess figured he was through with college.

He went to work in the warehouse of a hosiery mill and also found himself up for the draft, before his fateful rejection in Charlotte for being too tall. A new basketball coach at Guilford College then persuaded Burgess to return to the team and school, and Burgess would go on to be a fifth-year senior player, graduating from Guilford College in 1959.

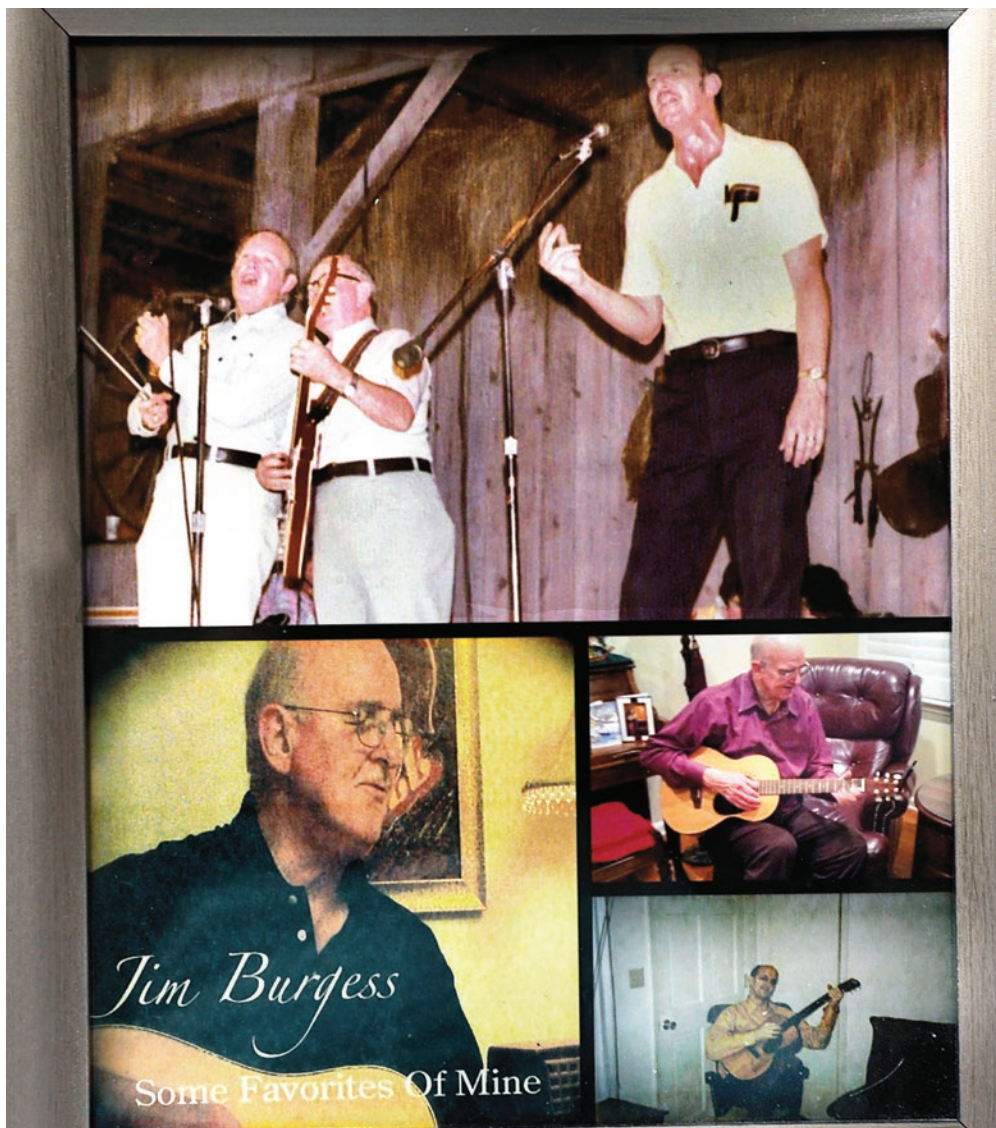
Burgess likes to say he grew up on hillbilly music and always had a knack for hearing songs, learning them quickly and retaining them in his steel-trap mind.

"In 25 years, I've never seen him use a piece of paper," Norma says.



Above: Burgess sings to his wife, Norma, at their wedding in Fiji.

Below: Photos from Burgess' many years of singing.



Burgess performed a Phil Harris song in a freshman talent show at Guilford College and word about his rich baritone voice spread.

Bob Morris of Morris Furniture saw him sing and invited him to be an “end man” in the Jaycee Jollies minstrel show, which was held every spring. Those were much different times when white performers donned blackface for variety shows featuring what they billed as “Negro” songs and dances.

Burgess says he was never comfortable with blackface, and for his first show, he was worried to death about telling a joke and singing “Accentuate the Positive.” He messed up the joke, “but they asked me back.”

He shed the role of an end man, however. The minstrel shows in those days would fill up the junior high auditoriums with hundreds of people. Burgess also was part of another minstrel show in Fair Grove. “Those were the biggest audiences I ever sang to,” Jim says of the minstrel shows, which came to an end in the late 1960s.

After college, Burgess fell into a 30-year career between Lexington and Thomasville as a math and science teacher. It was interrupted only once by his working three years in the private sector with an early computer punch-card company.

On the side, Burgess kept singing, recording and also writing some songs, including a love song titled “I’ll Close My Eyes,” for which he still receives international royalties, humble as they are.

He figures he paid \$370 to record that song at the Arthur Smith Studio and has gotten back about \$1,000 in royalties over 50 years.

YouTube viewers also can find his Christian song “The Stranger,” which has an accompanying video put together by Norma. He wrote that in response to one of his teacher painter friends, who wasn’t buying into the Immaculate Conception.

It’s part story, part song and could easily be a Sunday School lesson. “It took me a long time to write that,” Burgess says.

Burgess has sung for Christmas parties, business gatherings, weddings and funerals, and he has performed as far away as Renfro Valley, Kentucky. He also has recorded eight CDs with the



help of the late Bobby Lee Duncan and, more often, Mitch Snow Productions in High Point.

“Nice guy, unbelievably talented,” Jim says of Snow. “Mitch became the man. I spent a lot of money with him, but never regretted one cent.”

Burgess has two daughters and Norma two sons from their previous marriages. Norma, also an educator and information technology specialist, served in Rowan-Salisbury Schools for 30

years before retiring. They have seven grandchildren between them and today live next to the Corbin Hills Golf Course in Salisbury.

An interesting side note: They got married in Fiji.

Will Burgess return to the nursing home circuit once the pandemic coast is clear? He’s not sure, but his voice, no matter what, will be ready.

“I love to hear him sing,” Norma says. 



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Part of Kristin and Greg Shields' backyard includes an English knot garden room.



Mandevilla climbs up a trellis at the home of Sean and Leah Campion.

Outstanding outsides

*Homeowners use pandemic days
to pump up their landscapes*

WRITTEN BY SHERRY BECK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS



Above: The exterior bistro bar area at the home of David Garling and Frank Labagnara.
Below: Their storybook Mrs. Powers' garden gate.

Editor's note: *Sherry Beck of Salisbury is a freelance landscape, interior and floral designer and owner of The Designing Eye.*

Our gardens — large and small — have never been more important to savor and enjoy. They remain places where we can unwind, relax and spend time either alone or with family and small gatherings.

With the coronavirus lockdown, the pandemic has become a productive experience for organizing, restoring and gardening.

When I meet with a client, I always surprise them with a request that I look outside from inside their home. We spend more time looking out at our landscapes than we actually do being outside. Focal points, design and colors add to the ever-changing view.

Three garden enthusiast couples in Salisbury's West Square Historic District recently met the challenge of the pandemic and made significant changes to their outdoor landscapes. They include Frank Labagnara and David Garling, Leah and Sean Campion and Kristin and Greg Shields.





Frank Labagnara and David Garling transformed their backyard into a garden retreat at their home on West Bank Street during this year's pandemic.

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY GOES A STEP FURTHER



The guys' French-inspired front porch.

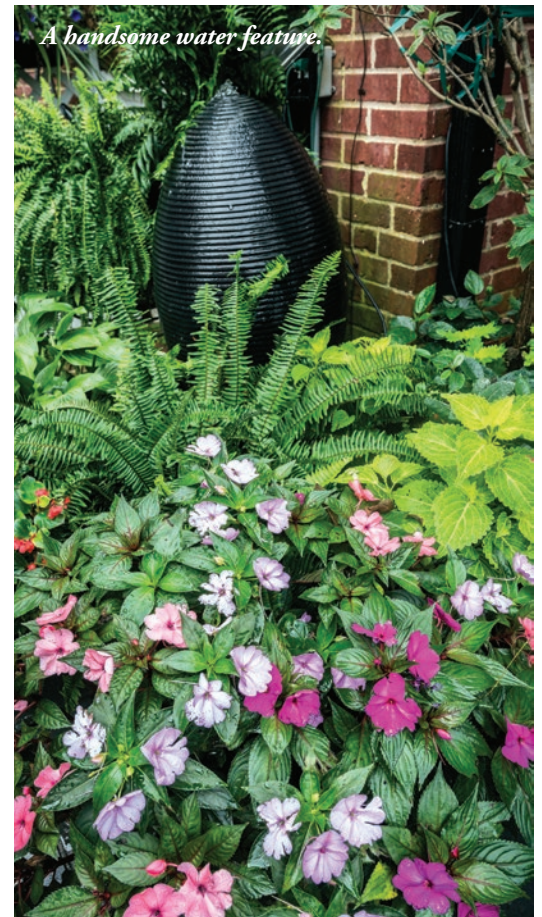
When you step into the inviting entrance of Frank and David's back garden, visitors are instantly struck by the tucked away space that boasts of sculptures, English-inspired plantings, color and controlled elegance.

The house already breathes Southern hospitality, but during this pandemic David decided to take it further. We took the inside appointments outdoors.

David, along with everyone else, has been pretty much homebound, and now the garden is his and Frank's mini vacation — reminiscent of their travels to gardens in Charleston, Savannah and the French Quarter.

"Behind the closed door is a refuge wrapped in magic and beauty," David says.

When in Paris, their favorite patio garden was at the Ritz — "small but so lovely and private," he adds. "Every inch is remarkable



A handsome water feature.



Before Beck and the owners implemented this new backyard design, all they had to start with was two wooden benches and four urns.

and unforgettable. I love to water every morning, and small finches land on the water as I hand water, waiting for a treat. It's magical."

When you create separate rooms within the garden, it expands and makes a small yard feel much bigger.

David and Frank used massive urns that boast large hollies, a large sun sculpture and gazing balls. Small sculptures tucked away create a visual delight.

The "bar nook" was created with an unused baker's rack, lining the shelves with marble tiles, introducing a riot of lush, layered color from plants and appointments that even boast a glass bunch of grapes from Imelda Marcus!

A pair of lime-light hydrangea topiary trees and planters add to the "seating nook" and serve as a backdrop for the small black fountain that provides the cheerful sound of water and a place for bees and butterflies to take a drink.

Using "found wrought iron" elements gave definition to the espaliered David Austen Old English roses and espaliered camellias that were introduced. A gate from Habitat for Humanity's Restore was transformed with new posts. David loves the thrill of the hunt for bargains.

We transformed the front porch with the addition of window boxes filled with hot pink geraniums. Reminiscent of their travels in France, David loved the idea of black and white drapes that compliment the wide Southern porch.

Story continues on page 24.



Above: The gate came from Habitat for Humanity's Restore.

Below: The garden entrance from the street.





The distinctive front porch greets passersby on West Bank Street.



Above: Window boxes bring the color and texture to the porch railing.

Right: An antique pram provides a home for plants.

Below: Garling has an affection for gazing balls.



| at home |



Above: Cherubs face off at a fountain.



Right: Another object found by Garling: a Buddah statue.

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Greg and Kristin Shields relax in the backyard of their South Fulton Street home.

BUILDING ON A SENSE OF STYLE, DESIGN



Kristin's garden tools are ready for use.

Everyone knows Kristin and Greg Shields' beautiful green home on South Fulton Street, especially with its white lights at Christmas, but a back patio might be the hidden jewel on their property.

It is good to have a well-developed sense of style and design in your garden. Last year, we had a new start by creating curved beds and laying out a potting bench patio that Kristen's father fashioned for her. A pergola and new seating options expanded the outdoor room for entertaining and dining al fresco.

Old bricks that were stored away now line the beds to create a definite edge. If you keep a crisp line along your beds, your eye does not see the weeds.

Kristin has kept the garage facade covered in ivy that is carefully edited with different design elements for a touch of whimsy.

The "knot garden" took some hits last year from a fungus, and we lost the majority of the hollies and topiary hydrangeas. Never daunted, Kristen kept the design in place adding French limestone baskets as focal points this time with strawberry topiary hydrangeas, allowing the drift roses, iris and peonies to thrive.

The central water fountain provides a cool spot for bees and butterflies for this French-inspired formal garden.

Plants are living things and just like us they need a good place to live — a.k.a., great soil. They like to eat — a.k.a., fertilizer. And they need water to drink — a.k.a., irrigation. Sometimes you never know what makes one survive when other's don't.





Kristin and Greg incorporated an expanded patio with a pergola and dining area.

Fearlessness is a good quality for a gardener and it describes Kristen perfectly. She expanded her dry stream bed in the shady area of her landscape. Tons of rock and sand created the base for the backdrop of shade plants.

Working in a small footprint, Kristen added hosta, ferns and annuals for a pop of color. The dense shade is difficult to work with, but the rocks and pops of white brighten up the spot.

Encore azaleas were introduced for their three seasons of bloom. Working with existing camellias and English boxwood, the goal was to save as much as we could and enhance the original design.

Kristin loves to piddle in her garden. She says being outside just makes her happy. Listening to an audio book, she could spend all day outside doing gardening chores. Her husband, Greg, has had to drag her inside when obligations were beckoning.



Edited ivy provides a dramatic facade on the garage, which also features a fireplace.





A backyard view of the Shields house with a bedframe trellis at left.



Mandevilla climbs up some twine.



The dry stream bed.



Kristin's father made the potting bench, which sits on a new floor of saved bricks.

Leah and Sean Campion, sitting on the bench, enjoy their great outdoor space with daughters Kerry and Abby and the family's dogs, Bella and Maddox.



REVVING UP A NEW PLAN

What do you do when your house is disappearing from the large, overgrown shrubbery that is historic to your property?

Leah Campion brainstormed, planned and took her time. Holding our collective breath, we ripped out the boxwoods. Ever thoughtful to their historic value, Leah then incorporated several of them into the new layout.

Also mindful to select shrubs and plant materials that could have been used when the house was built, a cohesive blend was executed. The remaining boxwoods are thriving, just a little bare.

Leah enjoys gardening and during this time at home in the early spring the whole family kicked in to rev up the new plan. Sean Campion likes to tell you that their spring garden chores are his workout routine to lose weight. Kerry just wants her mother to have flowers — they make her happy.

When they purchased their home, Leah's first thoughts were, "I have to have a flower garden in the front." She grew



Zinnias add some brightness.



The Campions now have a cottage garden feel in front where some of the home's traditional boxwoods were taken out.

up gardening with her mother and grandmother and has continued with her daughters.

"I love having a front yard garden because we spend a lot of time on our front porch." Leah says. "I also believe a garden is meant to be shared, so I hope people walking up and down the (West Bank Street) sidewalk get a little bit of enjoyment out of all of our hard work. I rarely do the same thing twice, so my garden is ever-changing. That is what makes it enjoyable for me, coming up with new color combinations and plants to try each year."

The front boasts of a vitex that blooms in July with its beautiful purple spikes and vase shape. Gardenias for scent and encore azaleas are the "bones" of the garden and serve as the backdrop for the drift roses and interesting annuals and perennials.

A large magnolia that is on the neighbor's property provides shade for the garden. It was a challenge we met with heirloom George Tabor azaleas, camellias and gardenias.

By adding a bench for seating and pots for color, we created a spot to linger and perhaps enjoy a book or a cup of tea.

Some quick advice: Your goal should be to have four seasons of gardening, something for every day of the year.

And remember: 98% of the people that pass your home never see the interior! **S**



The bench sits in a new side garden under a neighbor's magnolia.



Some of Leah's favorites.



A view of the Campions' house from West Bank Street.



Grasses provide movement.



Leah introduced a slate path walkway in front.



The Campions spend a lot of time on their front porch.

The homes of Kristin and Greg Shields and Leah and Sean Campion will be on this year's virtual OctoberTour. Oct. 9-11. Go to OctoberTour.com.



Chace and Jacque Jensen's house at 505 Seventh St. was built for the family of a fireman who worked for Southern Railway.

Persistence **PAYS OFF**

JENSENS INCORPORATE SPENCER'S HISTORY,
PERSONAL TOUCHES INTO THEIR 1925 BUNGALOW

written by ELIZABETH COOK | photography by SEAN MEYERS



Clockwise, from above: Maps, photos and other railroad memorabilia line the stairwell. Jacqué's wedding gown adds a note of elegance to the guest bedroom. The letter "J" figures into the Jensens' decor.



Chace and Jacque Jensen pose in front of their 1925 bungalow, which will be on Historic Salisbury Foundation's virtual October Tour.



For proof that Chace and Jacque Jensen are do-it-yourselfers, look no further than the gifts they give each other.

A few years ago, Chace surprised Jacque with a heat gun for her birthday. She put it to work removing layers of paint from a stairway.

When his birthday rolled around in 2018, she gave him the materials for a waterfall and koi pond. All he had to do was build it.

Their efforts go beyond mere home improvement projects, though, as people will see on Historic Salisbury Foundation's first virtual October-Tour on Oct. 9-11 at OctoberTour.com.

At 505 Seventh St., in Spencer, the Jensens are reinforcing connections between their home and the town of Spencer's railroad past. In the process, they hope to help preserve local history and, ultimately, draw more young couples to a town that they believe is rich in potential.

"Any house in Spencer can really transform like this," Jacque says. "It's a great town with lots of opportunity."

As the house shows — and their story proves — these are people who put a lot of thought and determination into the things they undertake.

Neither Chace nor Jacque grew up in Spencer. They graduated from local high schools, though, he from North Rowan in 2001, she from Salisbury High three years later.

Chace first spotted Jacque at what was then Club Zidis in downtown Salisbury. Later he saw



Clockwise from above: The Jensens' den decor includes photos on the far wall of the home's former owners and their descendants. You can tell Chace is a San Francisco 49ers fan by this man cave. A vintage railroad sign gives passengers an important warning.

a friend of hers at Charlotte Motor Speedway and asked if she'd share Jacque's phone number. When the friend said no, Chace said he'd come back and ask her again every 15 minutes.

"And about the third time she gave it to me," he says.

Jacque, a student at East Carolina at the time, was about to transfer to Catawba. After she moved back home, they had their first date.

"That was all she wrote from that point on," Chace says.

"He was persistent," Jacque says.

"I was very persistent," he says.

Fast forward a couple of years to the fall day Jacque came home from work ready to carve the pumpkins they'd bought at a local church. Chace said he'd decided to do the job himself.

She found the pumpkins in the dining room, carved with the words, "Will you marry me?" Around them sat rose petals and a box holding a diamond ring.

THEIR OWN IMPRINT

They married in 2013 and were ready for their own home.



No one was living in the house at 505 Seventh St. when real estate agent Karla Foster showed it to the Jensens. They had already spotted it online.

"Even though we walked in when the house was empty, it felt full," Chace says. Full of charm, that is, including original woodwork, hardwood floors, tall ceilings and a flowing floor plan.



The owners were selling the house as a flip, having made improvements. The Jensens saw the potential to upgrade several areas and make their own imprint.

In historic parlance, the bungalow is known as the Snider-Floyd House, built around 1925 for Roby Snider, a steam engine fireman for Southern Railway, and wife Ola. Later, the Ray



Above: Brian Long designed the backyard pergola to resemble the house, including tapered columns and stained ceiling. The Jensens entertain here often.
Below: The downstairs bathroom recently underwent an update, with a glassed-in shower and new tile flooring.



Floyd family owned the house from 1970 to 2002. Jacque’s digging through public records came up with deeds to the property, which she framed and put on display. She reached out on Facebook to a descendant, Amy Brown, who was mentioned in the obituary for the Sniders’ daughter, Forrestine. In addition to memories of the house, Amy shared family photos that now hang in the front parlor. “The more research I did on who owned the house previously, I felt a little more at home having things that explain what Spencer is all about,” Jacque says. The town grew up around the steam locomotive repair facility that Southern Railway’s Samuel Spencer decided to locate between Atlanta and Washington, D.C. in the late 1890s. It grew into one of the largest railroad shops in the country and kept Spencer humming with activity for half a century. Mementos of that era line the stairwell to the Jensens’ second floor: a map of the Southern Railway lines from



Clockwise from top: UNC decor dominates Chace's bigger man cave, complete with a Tarheel-shaped coffeetable. A red lantern hangs in the garden. Tiny baubles hang from a lampshade. The Spencer Crescent was the town newspaper. The kitchen table and chairs sit beneath a fixture with a Tiffany-style shade.





Florida to New York, a ticket office sign, actual luggage claim tickets, a small coal shovel, photos of trains and even a rusty rail spike.

You can almost hear a steam engine huffing down the tracks.

“You learn about history and the people that built this town and think, ‘Gosh, you know, we should have some things in our house that speak to Spencer’s history,’” Jacque says.

Over the parlor entry hangs a sign bearing the name of a newspaper that once served the town, The Spencer Crescent. In the dining room, railroad china is displayed on the wall.

VINTAGE STYLE

Beneath the memorabilia and artwork is a sturdy, 2,000-square-foot structure, with a broad front porch, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a roomy dining room and kitchen. The Jensens had extensive work done to the bathrooms recently to open up the spaces, and new flooring went down in the first-floor hallway.

Also in that hall hang two arching windows removed from the Catawba College administration building during a recent update. Jacque and Chace both graduated from Catawba, and around the windows hang photos from their wedding. Jacque’s wedding dress is on display in the guest bedroom upstairs.

The house has its original white oak flooring in the living and dining rooms and wide-plank pine in the bedrooms. In the kitchen, they replaced old laminate with luxury vinyl that looks

Vintage movie posters hang in the dining room, along with white railroad china and colorful hand-painted pieces. Below, a rusty rail spike hangs on the stairway wall.

like tile. The two of them installed the floor over a weekend.

The house’s second owner, Ray Floyd, built the raised panel kitchen cabinets, and Jacque says she didn’t have the heart to remove them.

The small pantry, tucked in a corner, did not have a door to close it off from the kitchen. Jac-



que says her mother, Pam Thompson, predicted they’d have to have a door custom milled for the short, narrow space. Then the two women went to the Ice House, where Historic Salisbury Foundation stores doors, windows and other architectural pieces salvaged from old homes. The warehouse had a whole section of doors that size.

“Mom’s jaw dropped,” Jacque says.

The Jensens have furnished the house in vintage style — an antique wardrobe in one room,

a Jacobean-style sideboard in another. There are too many gems to mention. Local artists’ work is displayed in several places, as are vintage posters and other pieces.

Growing up, Jacque spent many a Saturday going to yard sales and thrift stores with her mother and grandmother. She grew up in a house built in 1939 and has pleasant memories from family gatherings at her Aunt Alma’s 19th century home in Hertford. Along the way she developed an eye for hidden treasure, be it displayed in an antique store or discarded on the side of the road.

“A lot of our things are kind of thrifty finds. We shine ‘em up,” she says.

Every now and then Jacque calls and asks Chace what he’s doing. “That’s usually when I know I’m going to pick something up,” he says.

Their home is no museum, though. Two bedrooms are decorated man-cave style — one dedicated to the UNC Tarheels and the other to the San Francisco 49ers, though a home office has begun to take over that room.

Chace says he picked up enough construction skills when he worked for his father, Danny Jensen, to handle smaller projects — rebuilding a fence, laying flooring, staining wood. They use Brian Long Construction for major work.

DREAM SINCE THE AGE OF 10

The Jensens have two Jack Russell terriers, Tyson and Buddy. They also have two busy jobs, hers with a wine distributor, Empire, on Carow-

Everybody Was Happy

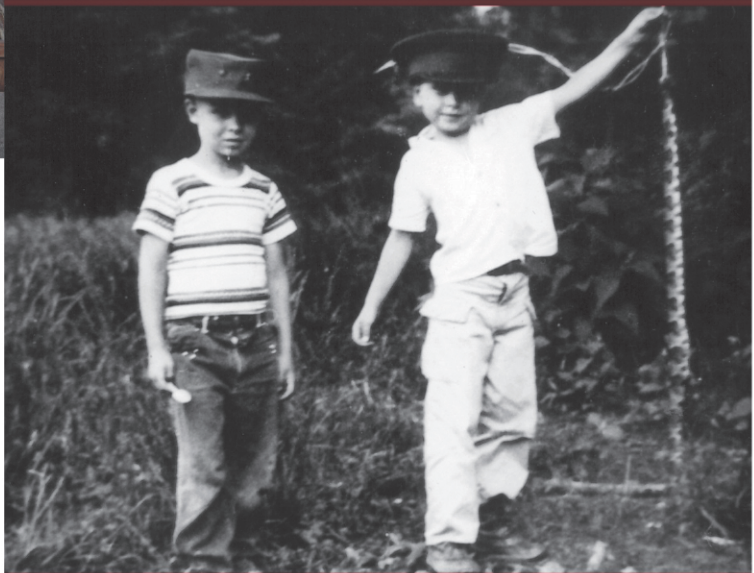
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*The boy from Merritt Avenue,
the rise of Food Town,
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inds Boulevard in Charlotte and his with Newell Brands in Huntersville.

Chace's mother, Frankie, bought the house next door and helps them a lot, they say. She takes care of the dogs when they're away or busy. Now and then she treats them to a home-cooked meal at the end of a long workday.

The Jensens' favorite feature at 505 Seventh St. may be the pergola in the back yard. At their request, Long built it to match the style of the house, starting with tapered porch columns. Both the pergola and the porch have stained, bead-board ceilings.

Jacque and Chace like to have friends over, and the pergola has proved to be ideal for entertaining, with its comfortable seating and the soothing sound of water gurgling in the background.

That water feature was no mere whim. Chace

dreamed of having a koi pond since about the age of 10. That's when he saw one in someone's yard while out with his parents and became determined to build his own. His dad came home from work more than once to find Chace digging in the family's front yard to create a lawn pond.

That was part of Chace's vision for the Spencer house but not at the top of his to-do list. Then for one of his birthdays, Jacque bought the materials. She found a design she liked on Pinterest. It looked so easy, she remembers.

They'd removed a large tree near the fence line, and that hole became the starting point. The tree service ground away the massive stump. Chace took a heavy duty ax to the large roots that remained.

"I had back issues for about two weeks," he says.

Roots cleared, he put in a liner and built up the slope. Then came time to make the waterfall and pond look like something nature might have created.

Chace remembers moving rocks around late into the night. Jacque helped but went inside at bedtime. Neighbor Sid Rabon kept him company a little longer and eventually turned in, too.

"I was out here until about 4 in the morning placing rocks over about two weekends," Chace says. "There was nothing easy about it, but it was well worth it."

Jacque agrees. "It turned out better than we expected."

That was in the months before their house was on OctoberTour in 2018, another lifelong dream, this time of Jacque's. She'd always wanted a historic home worthy of the tour.

Preparing for OctoberTour was hard work but



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very rewarding, she and Chace say. Compliments from tour-goers reassured them all their toil was worth it.

Jacque is a member of the Historic Salisbury Foundation Board and chair of Spencer's Historic Preservation Commission. When talk of a virtual OctoberTour arose in reaction to Covid-19 restrictions, she volunteered to have their house on tour again.

"We're very proud of the house. It seemed another way to give back to HSF," she says.

This time they can relax. The footage was shot in August. When OctoberTour arrives, they won't have to put away the dogs' toys, forgo backyard entertaining or tackle any last-minute do-it-yourself projects.

They've done a lot to the house. For now, Chace says, they'll give it a rest.

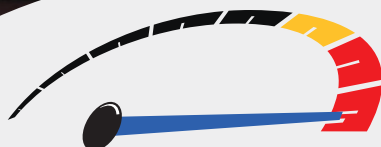
"I'm about projected out for a while." **S**

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



The front porch reflects Jacque's penchant for red and black, while the hand-stained ceiling shows the Jensens' appreciation for quality materials.




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The 1898 Bell Block building, home of The Thread Shed, stands on the northeast corner of South Main and East Fisher streets.



An old office door upstairs.



The clothing store's original sign.



BELL *of the* BALL

FOR OCTOBER TOUR, THREAD SHED OFFERS PEEK INSIDE ITS HISTORIC BUILDING

written by MARK WINEKA

photography by JON C. LAKEY





Cindy and Dave Loflin, who are front left, stand with employees in their longtime downtown business.



Horsehair plaster upstairs.

Two Daves live at the heart of the Bell Block building's story: David Gaskill and Dave Loflin.

Gaskill oversaw and financed the construction of this 1898 Salisbury landmark, located at 133 S. Main St. — the northeast corner of South Main and East Fisher streets.



An interesting fireplace cover.



Salisburians recognize the impressive Richardsonian Romanesque structure for its Rowan County granite facade; fluted cast-iron pilasters; scrollwork and a cornice of 76 redwood blocks; its green awnings and trim; the full-story windows on the second and third levels; the small balcony of ornamental ironwork on the second-floor corner; and the date and name of the building painted into the uppermost angle.

Histories describe Gaskill himself as a merchant, salesman, builder, speculator, tobacco man, bachelor and wannabe city official. He lost bids to be mayor of Salisbury twice, once by seven votes.

It's thought the Bell Block building's name traces back to either an aunt or sister of Gaskill's — a woman named Julia Bell.

But more modern-day Salisburians associate the venerable Bell Block with a longstanding business — the Thread Shed. And that's where Dave Loflin enters the picture.

Since 1986, the Thread Shed has operated out of the spacious ground floor of this building. The Loflin family first leased the location from Historic Salisbury Foundation. Then, in 1994, Dave and his wife, Cindy — along with Dave's parents, Arnold and Evelyn —



Clockwise from top left: Intricate details on the building's exterior; a narrow room upstairs; crumbling wallpaper shows a room's decor from days gone by; a display case near Thread Shed's entrance documents the store's history in pictures.



Above: Marcia Smith climbs the impressive staircase leading from the second to third floors. *Below left:* An old doorknob hangs in against time. *Below right:* The view down a second-floor hallway.





bought the structure from HSF for \$130,000.

Dave Loffin considers the family business “extremely fortunate” to have purchased the building when it did and he would not want to be anywhere else. While a generation or two of Salisburians are familiar with Thread Shed’s retail operation on the first floor of the Bell Block, few have ever seen the second and third floors.

Until now. Historic Salisbury Foundation’s annual OctoberTour, which this year will be a virtual and interactive journey because of the COVID-19 pandemic, will take online tour-goers on a trip through the whole building.

Although long left to age on their own, the upper-floor interiors are a time capsule which will give OctoberTour patrons a glimpse into the craftsmanship and detail that went into buildings as the country moved into the 20th century.

The suspended wooden staircase between the second and third floors is impressive by itself.

Loffin says actor George Clooney, when he was in Salisbury scouting for his movie “Leatherheads,” brought an artist to the second floor to sketch one of the wooden arch-



Above: The Thread Shed’s Jim White, right, packs up gear purchased by Rick Heinrich of Lake Norman Fire and Rescue. Below: The Bell Block’s basement appears to include an old jail cell.





Shelby Snyder works on some custom printing in a rear work room.



On one of the upper floors, Loflin passes a bathtub that was left behind by a previous tenant.

ways that lead to the staircase. Clooney thought it could be inspiration for one of his sets in the period movie about the early days of football.

“I just love the way it still looks,” Loflin says. “we’re up here, and it looks the way it did in 1898.”

These seldom-seen reaches of the Bell Block building have their original wooden floors and ceilings.

You can’t help but marvel at the wainscoting; the giant, arched windows with sills as wide as park benches; wavy window panes, which suggest original glass; and the levered transoms over the office doors, several of which still have their numbers displayed.

Loflin loves pointing out the frosted, translucent glass of one of the old office doors, and he only guesses at the ceiling height. Is it 14 feet, 15 feet?

The important bones of the interior are amazingly intact. Where the plaster is broken in places, you can still see tufts of horsehair in the horsehair plaster of the day. Long hairs from the manes and tails of horses added more structural strength to the plaster. In some hallway spots, Loflin has placed clear plexiglass over broken plaster so you can see the horsehair.

“I’ve always been curious as to what was up here,” says

Thread Shed manager Marcia Smith, who has been with the Loflins' business for 42 years.

Gaskill, who died in 1924 and is buried in Chestnut Hill Cemetery, reportedly lived in a second-floor apartment at the Bell Block, but the layout of the rooms, halls and common areas suggest that offices populated these floors, too.

Surprisingly, there isn't a whole lot of evidence of bathrooms, and few fireplaces remain intact on the second floor. One room puzzles Loflin. It has a window, but no door. The only way in is to climb through the window.

Another puzzle are the paintings of a cartoon cat on the walls of another room or former office. The figures are signed by artist Virgil Potts.

C.C. Hook of Charlotte, an architect, designed the Bell Block. Estimates of the total square footage vary widely. Loflin puts it at about 6,000 square feet per floor.

The Bell Block's construction occurred when things were percolating in Salisbury. Between 1897 and 1902, the city's population doubled to 6,277, and houses were being built at a rate of one per week between 1900 and 1902. Salisbury had 17 manufacturing firms, and city



Jim White gazes out one of the huge upper floor windows onto East Fisher Street.

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merchants included some 30 general stores, 15 grocers, four druggists and seven hotels.

Salisbury also had two banks, a building and loan association, gas company, waterworks and a new sanitarium at the start of the 20th century. In addition, the late 1890s marked the beginnings of Southern Railway's Spencer Shops.

"I really do enjoy the history," Loflin says of his building and its place in Salisbury/Rowan's development.

Gaskill also is attached to two Victorian residences in the West Square Historic District. He built the childhood home of actor Sidney Blackmer at 425 W. Horah St. and the handsome home at 402 S. Ellis St., both of which were on the OctoberTour with the Bell Block in 1983.

In his 1924 obituary, the Salisbury Post credited Gaskill as a trailblazer "for the rebuilding and remodeling of practically all the businesses in the city by the installation of new and modern plate glass fronts."

The Bell Block has seen many uses through the years. The street-level space fittingly started out as a clothing store, the use it fills today. But the building also housed a bowling alley at one time, a Pender's Grocery and a Colonial grocery store. There's even a jail cell in the basement.

The upper floors have been apartments and a boarding house. Old-timers also mentioned the upstairs serving as offices for Salisbury's first telephone company. A stenographers school — the Salisbury Commercial School — operated

upstairs, too.

The Belk Harry Co. bought the building from C.H. Summers and Phoebe B. Summers in 1934, and the first floor was used as a men's and boys' store for a time. In later years, it became Belk's FabricFair store.

Belk Harry Co. donated the building to Historic Salisbury Foundation in August 1981, and the FabricFair continued as a first-floor tenant.

"Not many years out of high school, I knew I wanted to go into business," Dave Loflin says. At only 20 years old in 1975, he found a willing business partner in his father, Arnold, and a friend, Steve Land, also was on board in the beginning.

Dave Loflin recalls going to the bank where his brother-in-law worked and being rejected for their \$20,000 loan request. The second bank they sat down with was more willing to take a risk on their new business.

The first Thread Shed was located at 133 E. Fisher St. from 1975-78, in part of the building where City Tavern is today. It then moved to the former location of Goodnight's clothing store in the 200 block of South Main Street.

In 1986, the Thread Shed moved to its present-day corner. Loflin notes the family signed its initial lease with HSF the same year the Salisbury Mall opened, robbing downtown Salisbury of some of its main anchors, such as Belk and J.C. Penney's.

"But we knew we were downtown people," Loflin says. "I have no regrets on that. ... From

day one I was excited and I'm still excited."

The mall has, of course, lost most of its retailers, and Rowan County bought the property several years ago. Meanwhile, the Thread Shed is in its 45th year as a downtown mainstay. Stitchin' Post Gifts and the Thread Shed, both founded in 1975, have become the central business district's longest-running businesses.

When the Thread Shed started, Loflin says, "we were selling fashion." He describes it then as a large specialty store of name-brand fashion items. Today, it's more name-brand specialized items, with its display floor filled with work clothes, uniforms and all manner of tactical gear for law enforcement, fire departments, rescue squads and emergency medical occupations.

You see brand names such as Wolverine, Timberland, Riggs, Carhartt and 5.11 spread among the work boots, shirts, pants, jackets, hats, vests, belts, gloves, socks and utility bags. The Thread Shed remains a place for school uniforms, one of its staples for many years.

Loflin says the store has always tried to offer things "that not just everyone had." The business has tried to listen to its customers and create a store fitting their needs — "We're more of a custom house," Loflin says.

Smith, the store manager, always has met the challenge of adapting the retail space to the newest specialty.

"The look of the store has changed so much," Smith says. Most of the decorative arches from the Belk days were covered up to provide more

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wall space, as were street-side windows on the inside.

All operations of the Thread Shed fit on the first floor, with the second and third floors used for storage. Overall, the ground level holds the retail section, a large staging area for tactical gear orders, offices, stock rooms and places for sewing, applying patches and custom embroidery.

Loflin considers it a highly functional building, even with its age and size. "This building could be about anything you'd want it to be," he says. "It's a great building."

Through the years, the Loflins' major maintenance has been a new roof, the painting and caulking of windows and the addition of awnings. Historic Salisbury Foundation sold the building with protective covenants, which was

fine with Loflin.

"We have tried to be good stewards," he says. "We're real proud of it. We've tried to take care of it."

The Loflins have several personal touches in their store. You can try on work boots from the comfort of a barber's chair. Over the front door are longhorn steer horns, which are 6 feet wide tip-to-tip. "Just something kind of quirky," Loflin says. There's also a photograph of Dave with his late father, Arnold, framed by a toilet seat — an inside joke and conversation piece, Dave says.

Today, the Thread Shed's full-time and part-time employees include Dave and Cindy Loflin, Smith, Loretta Hill, Jim White, office manager Chris Smith, seamstress Annie Brown, Shelby Snyder, Barbara Moose and Rachel West.

As with Smith, several of the employees have

worked for the Loflins a long time.

Evelyn Loflin died in 2008; Arnold Loflin, in 2013.

Customers often will find Dave and Cindy Loflin's dog, Archie, in the store.

Loflin says customer service has always been at the crux of what the Thread Shed does. "To me, relationships in business matter the most," he adds. "We always wanted a business where everyone feels welcome.

"Thread Shed is a building," Loflin says. "It's the people who are in it that make it work." **S**

This year, OctoberTour will be held online at OctoberTour.com from 6-9 p.m. Oct. 9, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Oct. 10 and noon-5:30 p.m. Oct. 11.

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This image from 1925 shows members of the Salisbury Kiwanis Club gathered near the historic Salisbury Station.

‘K’ is for
KIWANIS
— and kids

FROM 1920 TO 2020, SALISBURY CLUB KEEPS MISSION
OF HELPING CHILDREN FRONT AND CENTER

written by JOSH BERGERON

For Cassandra Rankin, there's something special about helping children.

"Kids are my heart," Rankin smiled. "I want to be a voice for a child."

As part of her job as the family services coordinator with Prevent Child Abuse Rowan, Rankin deals with serious issues often, but she finds joy in building connections with families going through tough times. So she's understandably been less than excited about the small, yet significant changes to comply with social-distancing rules.

"The families coming in here, they need somebody on their team," Rankin says. "So, to me, talking to them virtually just wasn't personal enough for me. I can't give out hugs anymore, but I still just love working with families."

Rankin can often be spotted having long phone conversations with family members who have needed her help. When co-workers encourage her to say she has something else to attend to and end the conversation, Rankin says she prefers to stay on the phone and help families work through any items they might be dealing with.

For her passion for her work and helping children, Rankin this year received a Salisbury Kiwanis Club Centennial Award, given to people who embodied the club's mission of being "a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community



Cassandra Rankin poses with her Kiwanis Centennial Award certificate. Rankin is one of a select few who have received the award. The club had planned to present 100, but the coronavirus pandemic changed those plans. (Josh Bergeron photo)

at a time.” In a nomination letter, a co-worker called Rankin “a beacon of hope” who supports families through every part of the process, starting with a forensic interview.

“Countless children and their families have been lifted up through Ms. Rankin’s work, and we would be honored to have her recognized for her service in our community,” stated her nomination letter.

Rankin’s love for children likely comes, in part, from the fact that she has two daughters, both of whom are now adults. And she’s grandmother for a 4-year-old, too. She’s called “Grandma” by her granddaughter, but she’s been working hard lately to get her grandparent name changed to “Gigi” or “Mimi.”

Before she came to Prevent Child Abuse Rowan in 2015 in a full-time position, Rankin was a police officer. Until 2007, she worked at Piedmont Correctional Institution.

Now she’s one of nearly 20 people who has received a Kiwanis Centennial Award. The club had planned to name 100 people to commemorate the 100 years the organization has been around, but coronavirus interfered with those plans. Club President Glenn Taylor and long-time member Rick Eldridge, who serves as the club’s secretary and treasurer, say the club could decide to continue presenting the awards once gathering restrictions allow for large in-person meetings.

Today the club counts more than 60 people among its members, but it started out with just three local men who met with a group of Kiwanians in Charlotte to find out about the requirements for starting a club and set out to make it happen. Walter Summersett Sr., W.C. Maupin and C.I. Jones made a list of members to invite to join.

The Salisbury Kiwanis Club was officially organized with 60 members on Nov. 29, 1920, at Hennessee’s Cafe, which was located at the historic Salisbury Station. A “charter night” was held April 1, 1921, at the Empire Hotel. And there were 65 members of the club by that time.

The roster of charter members included local attorney’s John Hudson’s grandfather — J.



Two girls enjoy a day on the swings at the Kiwanis Health Camp when it was located on Old Concord Road.

Giles Hudson Jr. — who was also an attorney. Hudson recalls his grandfather’s carpooling with another member on the way to weekly meetings and going to the club’s classic pancake festival with his dad.

Hudson’s father wasn’t a Kiwanian, but John joined the club more than 10 years ago.

The list of charter members also included Dr. Charles W. Armstrong, who would make a major impact on the community through his professional and civic work. Armstrong, who became public health director in 1919, would “shape the future of the club and Kiwanis prob-

ably more than any other member,” writes Eldridge in a 100th anniversary history recap.

Armstrong’s leadership role in Kiwanis would start when he was asked to help identify children in need of surgeries for orthopedic conditions. While the club handled expenses for the surgeries, it wasn’t an easy sell to parents. The pitch was that the children could lead normal, productive lives with the surgeries. Religious objections were common.

Eventually, 104 children received surgeries as a result of the project. Other Kiwanis clubs took on similar projects after the Salisbury club’s efforts were widely praised.

Armstrong’s leadership with the surgery project would eventually translate to his becoming the club’s president in 1928. The same year, he pushed the club to take on another project — a

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tuberculosis camp on the site of what's now the W.G. "Bill" Hefner VA Medical Center. The club would host 30 children (25 of whom fully recovered) in the first year at a cost of \$1,800, with some help received from city and county governments as well.

Dr. Charles Armstrong had a transformational effect on the local Kiwanis Club and rose to the rank of international president.

By 1930, a state tuberculosis camp was set up in Salisbury, with the Raleigh News & Observer calling the facility "one of the most outstanding bits of work in tuberculosis control and practical treatment."

By 1947, the 'health camp' would move to the site of what's now the Rowan County Agricultural Building before later moving to a site on Bringle Ferry Road, which was later sold to Yadkin Path Montessori School. The club's focus would shift as needs changed over the years — helping crippled children, those with nutritional needs and with speech impediments as well as children through the YMCA, Extension Service and other groups. In particular, the Salisbury YMCA served hundreds of children at the site through its summer day camp.

When it was a tuberculosis camp, fresh air, sunshine and wholesome food supplemented by rest formed the basis for the treatment. They would bathe in the sun for roughly an hour with only shorts on.

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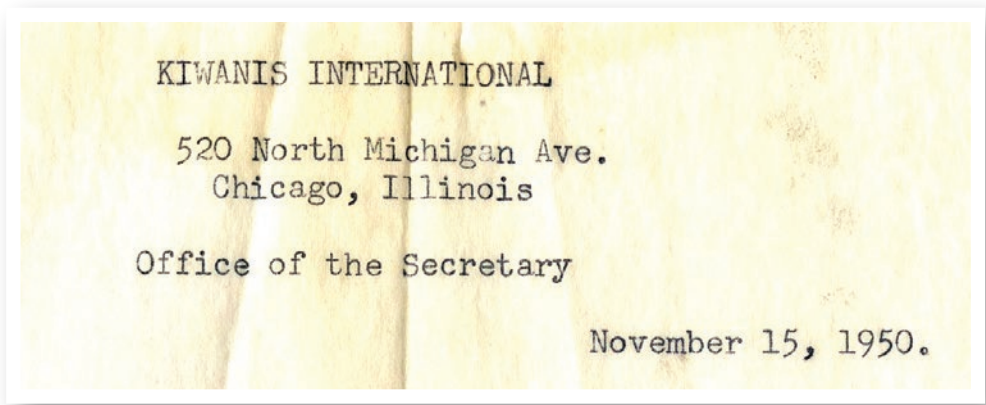
“Their tanned and bronzed bodies give ample proof of the effectiveness of the treatment,” the News & Observer wrote in 1930.

During its years as a speech camp, children were tested for letters each had difficulty with. The camp concentrated on getting them talking and improving through dramatic skits and puppet shows. There also were craft projects to make items used in shows.

“It is believed that the project was the direct motivating force which started the underprivileged children’s work of the Kiwanis International,” a 1952 Salisbury Post article stated.

With the land’s sale to Yadkin Path Montessori School in 2015, the camp’s history would come to a close, but its legacy lived on through a \$100,000 donation to the Bell Tower Green Park to help pay for playground equipment at the park.

The donation fit well with the club’s mission



of improving the world one child and one community at a time — something current president Taylor noted in November 2019.

“Knowing that the kids are going to have a spot in this park in downtown Salisbury is just going to be phenomenal,” he said. “For our club to be able to donate \$100,000 is fantastic. It’s a great thing to be a part of.”

Armstrong’s leadership positions, meanwhile, grew within the Kiwanis organization as the club also received recognition. In 1950, he was elected president of Kiwanis International. And in a letter from O.E. “Pete” Peterson, secretary of Kiwanis, the Salisbury club was called one “truly dedicated to service.”

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Dear George:

Please accept our heartiest congratulations on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Salisbury Club. When on November 29, 1920, the Kiwanis Club of Salisbury was complete, I am sure that none of the members visualized that in thirty years our organization would grow from a small group to 200,532 members in 3,185 clubs.

One member of the Salisbury Club, Dr. Charles W. Armstrong holds the honor of having been selected by the delegates at an International Convention to serve as President of Kiwanis. His outstanding leadership will long be remembered. We are also indebted to another member of the Salisbury Club, Charles C. Erwin, who served as Governor of the Carolinas District during 1943.

This is the letter (starting on page 55) received by the Salisbury Kiwanis Club of fering congratulations on its 30th anniversary and saying that Charles Armstrong had been elected as the international president.

nently worthwhile," Peterson wrote. "In public affairs, assistance to needy children, and in the many other activities in which the club has participated, you have established an inspiring record. Your club has always been alert to the requirements of leadership and inspiration, in maintaining and infusing the spirit of service, fellowship and progress among the citizens and interests of the community."

Armstrong is the only member of the Salisbury club to become an international president. But there have been three Carolinas District governors from the Salisbury club, including Armstrong, Dr. Charles C. Erwin and Todd Hildebran, who remains a club member.

While the health camp was a critical cog in the club's history, so is its annual pancake festival, which started in 1957 after earlier attempts to raise money with a horse show and Brunswick stew. The club estimates that its festival brings out 2,000 attendees annually. Today, it remains the club's major fundraiser and generates money to help organizations that mesh with the Kiwanis mission.



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Other Kiwanis clubs in Rowan County have been started, but none have quite found the strength and longevity of the Salisbury Kiwanis Club. Taylor was for years the president of the Rowan County Club, which folded in 1996. He also helped start a Kiwanis organization known as the Charles Armstrong Breakfast Club, which lasted six or seven years. Like many civic organizations, the Salisbury club's membership has waxed and waned with the years, but it boasted as many as 133 members in 1970. Its lowest recorded membership was just 39 people in 1936 — due in part to the Great Depression.

Civic clubs in Rowan County and across the country often draw members for friendly conversation and a nice meal with friends. The Salisbury Kiwanis Club also keeps its focus on projects that benefit children. It's one critical item that Taylor says has kept him involved in Kiwanis.

"I do love what we do," Taylor says. "Just what we do for the benefit of the children of Rowan, that's our main thing and it's a good mission." **S**

I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the outstanding services rendered by J. Lewis Sowers, who has served as secretary of your club for five years. The secretary of a club holds an office which requires much extra time and effort in the performing of his duties and Lewis' fine record in this capacity reflects his loyalty and devotion to Kiwanis ideals and principles.

It can truly be said that the Kiwanis Club of Salisbury is a Service Club. The activities of your club have been eminently worth while. In public affairs, assistance to needy children, and in the many other activities in which the club has participated, you have established an inspiring record. Your club has always been alert to the requirements of leadership and inspiration, in maintaining and infusing the spirit of service, fellowship and progress among the citizens and interests of the community.

With every good wish as you continue to meet the challenge of "Agressive Citizenship - Safeguard of Freedom", I am

Cordially yours,

O. E. "Pete" Peterson, Secretary

Mr. George C. Maynard
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Happy Roots Executive Director Ashley Honbarrier checks on the pepper plants in the Henderson Independent School greenhouse. Below: Gracie Lowe holds a tray of plants ready for a home garden. (Submitted photo)



'Together Gardens'

With help from Happy Roots and RSS, students 'grow' at home

WRITTEN BY KRIS MUELLER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



Ashley Honbarrier and Amy Pruitt are get-your-hands-dirty kind of gals. Like the vegetables, plants and flowers they nurture professionally, these ladies thrive when working in the sunshine and soil outdoors.

And so do the children they introduce to nature and gardening through their respective organizations — Happy Roots, which Ashley manages, and Rowan Salisbury Schools’ Horizons Unlimited and the Summit K-8 Virtual Academy, both directed by Amy.

They also share a concern that each new generation of children is becoming increasingly disconnected from our agrarian roots. Many young children today have no idea where fresh produce comes from before appearing in the grocery store’s produce aisles.

So last year, they set out to help K-8 schools create onsite gardens or maintain existing ones to use in teaching students to grow fresh produce and grasp the basics of our food supply system. Staff from the RSS Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department also joined the effort to create curriculum and utilize gardens as outdoor classrooms.

“We were on our way,” Ashley recalled. “We had been working hard, meeting with principals and teachers and had planting days lined up. We had already spent time weeding and getting beds ready for students to plant and building beds for new school gardens. We had a full day





From left, Rowan-Salisbury School System's Katie Lynne, Holly Pore, Amy Pruitt and Haylie Dixon stand with Happy Roots coordinator Aron Burleson and Happy Roots Executive Director Ashley Honbarrier.



planned with Hurley and Isenberg (elementaries) to plant and the schools were so excited.”

And then COVID hit, causing schools to close and children to retreat home to continue learning virtually.

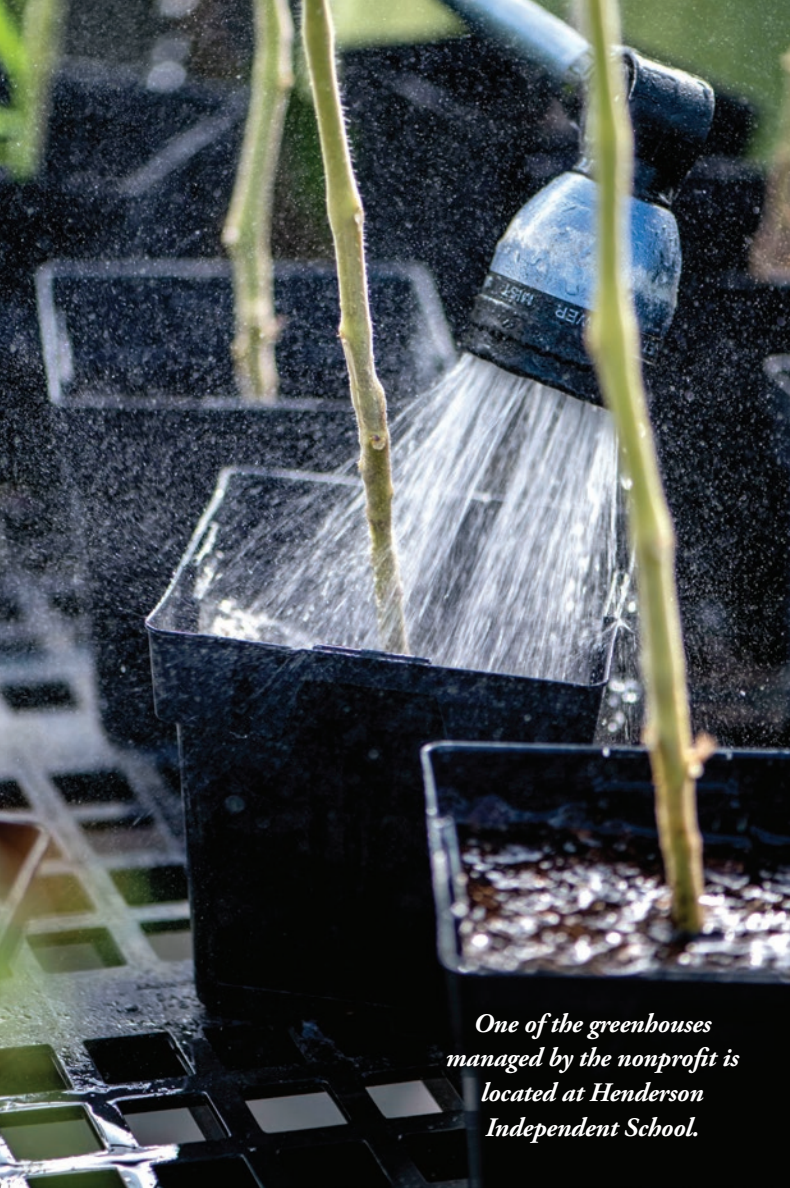
Iman Cuthbertson's first cucumber. (Submitted photo)

Rather than abandon the gardening project, Amy said, the group “pivoted,” adapting the project to fit the new environment. They named it “Together Gardens” and created garden kits to distribute to K-8 students who wanted to grow home gardens with their families.

A hundred students signed up to receive kits — either a pre-made wooden garden box or smaller gardening containers, bags of soil, gardening tools, vegetable plantings — including green beans, cucumbers, carrots, and potatoes — and companion plants to attract pollinators or lure harmful insects away from vegetable plants.

Students accessed the Together Gardens educational materials and online classes through the school system’s Canvas learning management system, said Holly Pore, director of the RSS CTE Department.

Program organizers held Family Friday check-in sessions via Zoom each week. The “Garden Gals” — Ashley, Amy, Holly, and Katie Lynne Dionne, Erwin Middle School’s agriculture teacher — answered the young gardeners’ questions, celebrated their victories when their tomatoes turned red, and calmed their concerns when bugs



One of the greenhouses managed by the nonprofit is located at Henderson Independent School.



Above: The Black family gets set to plant its garden. (Submitted photo)

Below: The Salisbury nonprofit Happy Roots works closely with area agencies to provide a gardening experience that is educational as well as therapeutic for participants.

ate their plants. High school students in the CTE Farm to Table and agriculture programs provided cooking demonstrations using vegetables growing in their gardens and helped in other ways.

The gardens blossomed, as did the kids and their families. Many of them had never worked in gardens and harvested produce.

“One of the families I talked to have an autistic son who had COVID and was on life support,” Ashley said. “He got better and got out of the hospital, but once home, it was hard for him to understand why he was in quarantine and could not go anywhere. The garden was such a savior for him because he was out there tending to it every day, and it took his mind off being at home and not in his normal school environment.”

Studies show that getting outdoors and tilling the soil improves people’s moods, Amy said.

“There are microbes in the soil that actually lift our moods and make us feel purposeful and connected to something,” she said. “When you get out and weed, aerate the soil, dig, till, and hoe, that is helping your plants AND helping you. A lot of our families felt like it was giving them a purpose because they were feeling unsettled (by the pandemic).”





Honbarrier in the greenhouse.

The Together Gardens project drew comparisons with the Victory Gardens that Americans planted during World War I and II to offset the food shortages caused by the wars, Holly said.

“Our project definitely had this sense of service learning,” she said. “We were looking for opportunities to provide students with outdoor learning spaces and connectivity to the world that almost became closed for a moment. Although we were not able to learn together in regular classrooms, we were able to create learning opportunities (for students) at home.

“We were trying to instill this spirit of service and community — how we can sustain one another and help one another through changes. I really saw students take pride and enjoy being able to grow food and understand ... what that means for them and their families, as well as for their community and neighborhood.”

Ashley credits the students, staff, and Principal Alexis Cowan of Henderson Independent School for supporting the Together Gardens project, as well as other gardening initiatives of Happy Roots. The nonprofit organization uses the greenhouse at Henderson as its base of operations and



The seeds of learning.



Nola Norman sits on the edge of her family's garden.



A student keeps her garden well-watered.



Lucy Black waters her garden's tomatoes.



Jackson and Marley Kimmer prepare to deliver three garden kits to Nazareth Children's Home.



West Rowan High students Gavin and Grayson Burlison put together wooden frames for the garden beds.



Julian Kauffman shows off one of his garden's first tomatoes.



Andrew Smith with his garden.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



has raised beds at the school. Students volunteer in the greenhouse, working with Ashley and Aron Burleson, her fiancé, and a Happy Roots volunteer.

“Some of the Henderson students who come from troubled homes work in the greenhouse with us regularly,” Ashley said. “For the Together Gardens, they started the seeds and helped take care of them. They knew the plants initially would be going to school gardens, so they had a strong sense of pride and accomplishment that they were helping the community to get this project started.

“We are so fortunate to have this greenhouse to work out of. If I had to buy all the plants we grow here, it would cost a fortune.”


The Together Gardens project is being offered in the new school year as student clubs and passion projects so that students can explore and develop new interests. Katie Lynne Dionne will coordinate the Together Gardens Club in her new role as middle school agriculture teacher for the Virtual Academy.



High school students will continue their involvement in Together Gardens by designing promotional and educational materials, creating online classes and demonstrations, and working with Ashley and Haylie Dixon, the naturalist for Horizons Unlimited, in additional greenhouse space at Salisbury High School.

Amy believes that children in the first Together Gardens program now understand how food is produced and “appreciate that when they walk through the grocery store and see this beautiful produce and fruit that it is not just ... magic. It is a process and people are diligently working to produce food. To me, it is golden that a child understands that.”

New generations of Americans have now experienced their first major food shortage because of a world event, this time caused by a virus, Amy said.

“It is important to pass that on to the next generation to help them never take their food for granted,” Amy said. “Growing your own food and knowing how to access your own food is a skill that all people should know.” 

Summer Kennedy and Bayleigh Miller participate in online cooking demonstration.



Kris Mueller is a freelance writer living in Salisbury.

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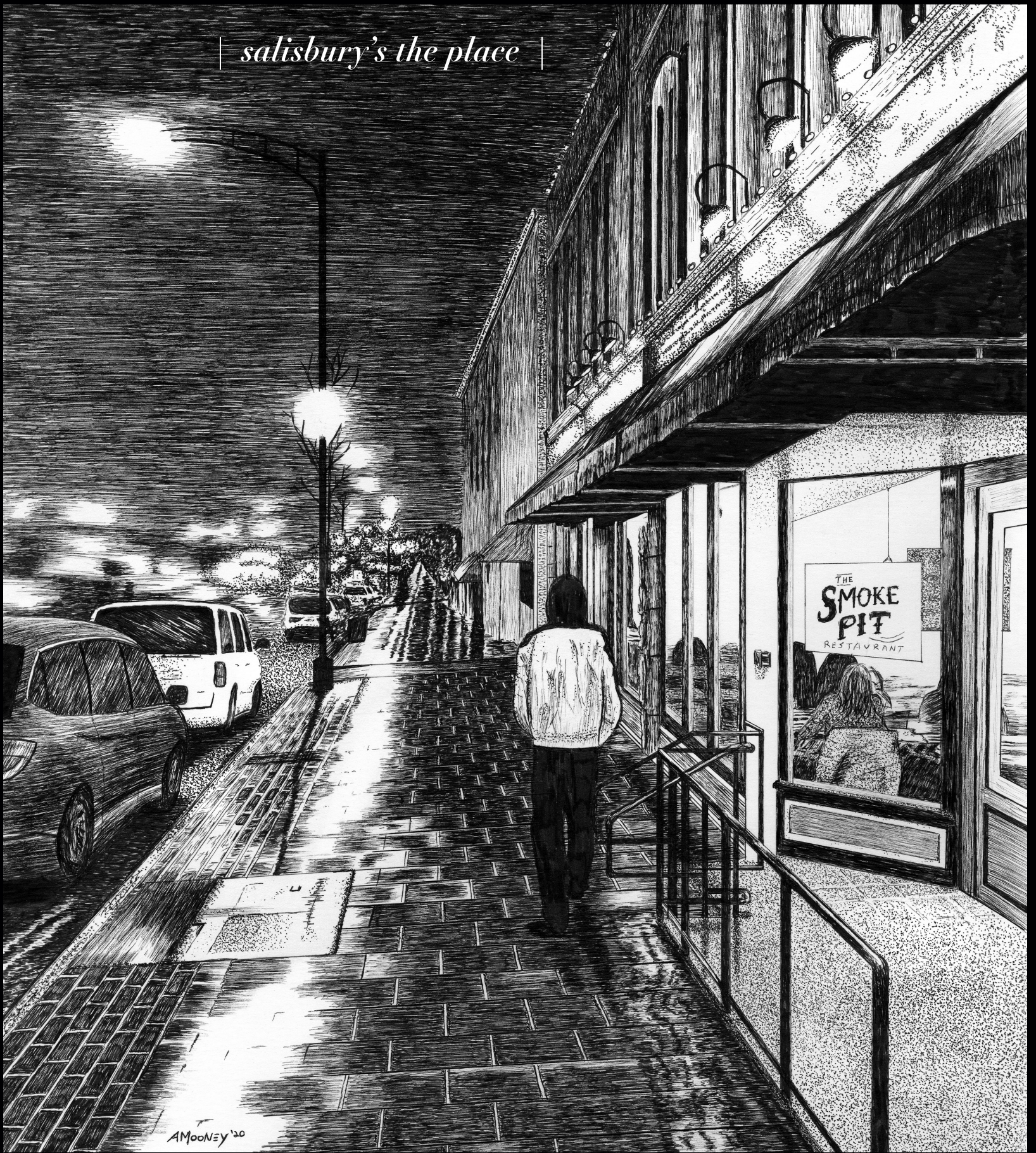
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'RAINY NIGHT ON INNES' By Andy Mooney — Pen and ink

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