

Holiday 2016

SALISBURY

t h e m a g a z i n e

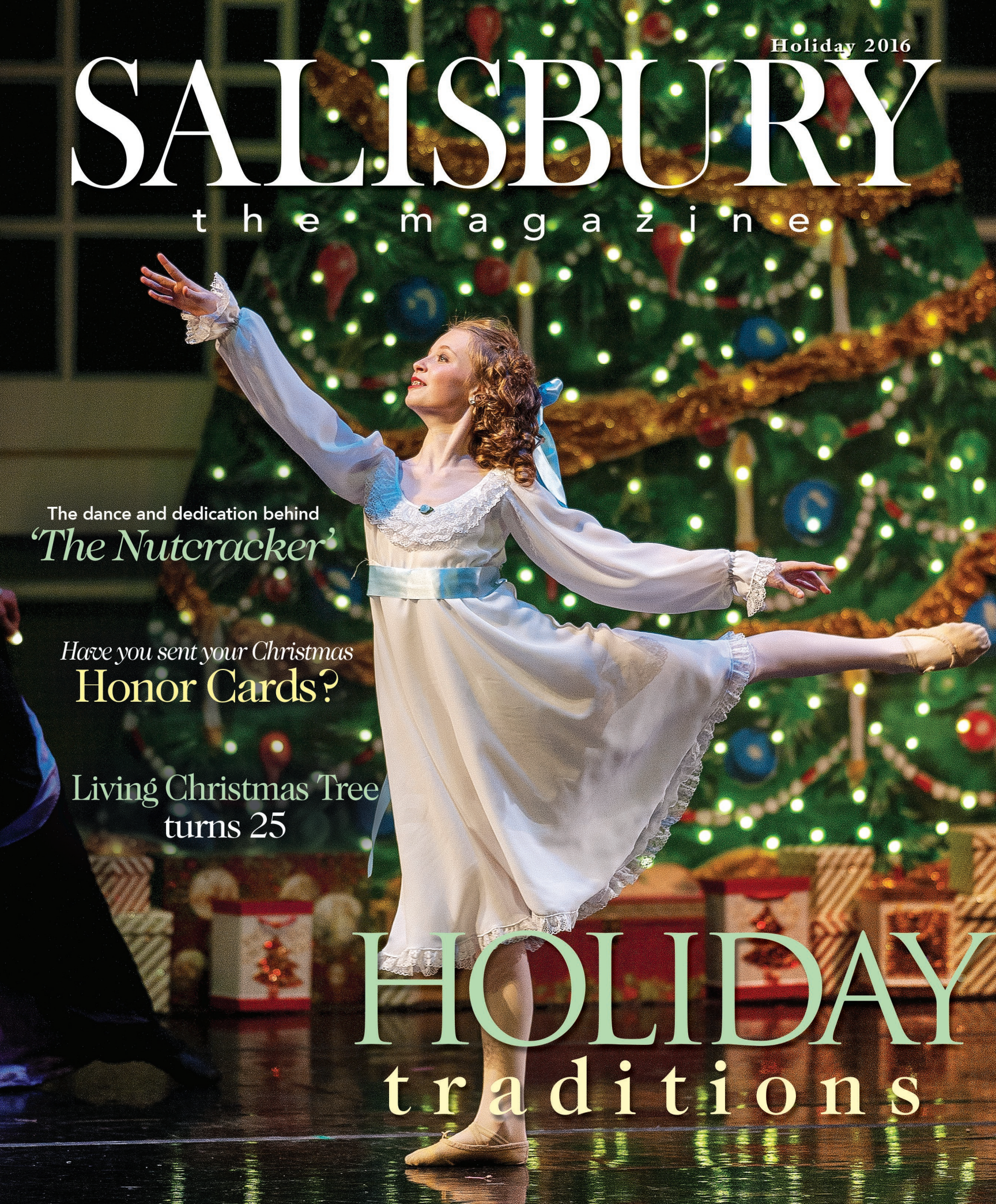
The dance and dedication behind
'The Nutcracker'

Have you sent your Christmas
Honor Cards?

Living Christmas Tree
turns 25

HOLIDAY

t r a d i t i o n s

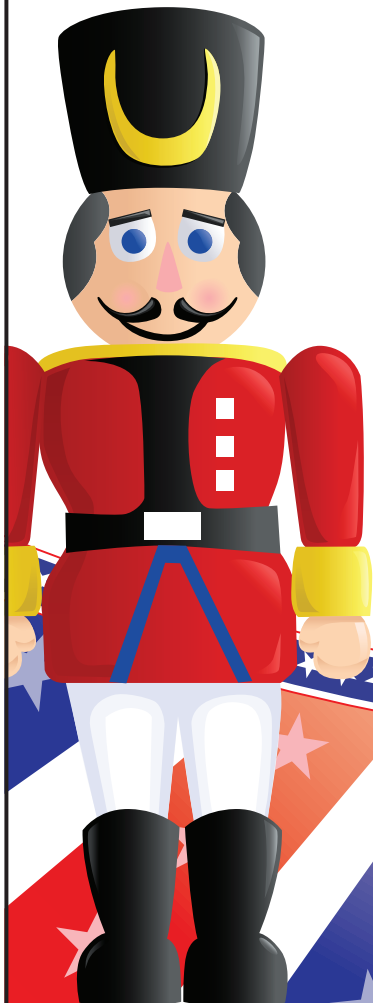


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HEALTH

FEATURES

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Visions of Sugar Plums

For many, it's not
Christmas until they've
seen 'The Nutcracker.'

by **SUSAN SHINN**

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Decorating, Frannie-style

Taylor fills a special home
with the Christmas spirit

by **ELIZABETH
COOK**

On this page: Harps sit in the orchestra pit during a dress rehearsal for 'The Nutcracker' at Keppel Auditorium on the Catawba College campus. **On the cover:** Renee LeClair, in the role of Clara for the Piedmont Dance Theatre, performs during a dress rehearsal for the 'The Nutcracker.' — *Photos by Jon C. Lakey.*

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For the holidays, try out our tradition edition

I must confess my family didn't have many Christmas traditions. At least I didn't think so. My brother and I tended to open our presents on Christmas Eve every year. I figured out later it was probably because my parents, who both worked, wanted to take advantage of the day off and sleep in the next morning.

We took off for the houses of both sets of grandparents on Christmas afternoon. There were good dinners and desserts at each location. As gifts, my grandparents preferred giving us bank envelopes with cash inside. The portraits of Lincoln or Hamilton appeared in the open oval in the middle of the envelopes, and the money made us quite happy.

On the sentimental side, if there is one, I have a strange memory of Christmas. It's not of a sleigh ride in the snow or chestnuts roasting on an open fire. No, it's me as a youngster alone in the living room at night. The lights are out, except for a color wheel underneath our aluminum tree, and I'm lying on the floor trying to decide which color glowing across the walls and ceiling I like best.

Is it green? No, it has to be blue. Wait a minute, red could be the one. For some reason, those colors dancing through the room made it feel like Christmas to me.

But the best holidays were to come, of course, when my own kids arrived. My wife would make her traditional monkey bread on Christmas morning, and the boys would take turns handing out gifts from under the tree, as we sipped our coffee and hot chocolate.

After the boys were long grown, Christmas became a time to travel with them. It was fun to have Christmas lunch in a Munich beer hall and point to a sausage dish I couldn't pronounce. Touring the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona on Christmas also is hard to beat, especially when you do it with familia.

A couple of holidays back, we attended a Christmas Eve service at the National Cathedral in Washington, but I think I like the traditional service at St. John's Lutheran Church in Salisbury just as much. It's nice when the lights go down, all the candles are



lighted and the congregation sings "Silent Night."

You'll find this holiday issue of Salisbury the Magazine full of tradition. Read Susan Shinn's story on "The Nutcracker," presented by the Piedmont Dance Theatre and Salisbury Symphony, and you'll realize it's just not Christmas for many people until they see that production.

Roy and Norma Campbell bring Christmas to every room of their historic home in Milford Hills, and they

love sharing it with their neighbors.

For 24 years now, Rowan Helping Ministries has had a local artist provide a piece of original art for its Christmas Honor Card. That's a great tradition. And it's hard to believe, but this is the 25th year First Baptist Church has presented the Living Christmas Tree as its gift to the community. Some 400 people are involved each year in making "The Tree" happen.

We catch up with children's librarian Robert Jones, whose RoBoJo Theatre is always a hit at Christmas, and Elizabeth Cook talks holiday decorating with the ever-talented Frannie Taylor.

Deirdre Parker Smith keeps the tradition theme going by sharing delicious recipes for three desserts — a cranberry crisp along with chess and pecan pies. They could definitely make your Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays special.

There is something non-traditional in our holiday issue. We visit the new Grievous Gallery on East Council Street, where people let out their frustrations — the holidays can be filled with them — by smashing things.

An old color wheel actually would be a good thing to throw and break against a wall. On second thought, that's something I could never do. S

Mark Wineka,
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine



EASY, FRESH & AFFORDABLE

**HOLIDAYS
LIKE THEY'RE**

**MINT
TO BE**

— HOW  REFRESHING —

You'll find everything you need this holiday season.

FOOD  LION

Give the gift of a good book

A plethora of popular authors will have new books on the shelves in the cozy reading months, including David Baldacci (“No Man’s Land”), Lee Child (“Night School”), Paulo Coehlo (“The Spy”), along with Patricia Cornwell, Janet Evanovich, Robert Harris, JoJo Moyes and John Grisham.

Those will make great gifts for anyone on your Christmas list.

Here’s one you should add: Maria Semple’s “Today Will be Different.” My book club read “Where’d You Go, Bernadette,” an earlier Semple novel, and it was one of the funniest and most poignant books we’d chosen.

In “Today Will be Different,” Eleanor will do better with her husband and son, she won’t swear and she will shower, but ... stuff happens. Semple makes dysfunction and dissatisfaction somehow amusing.

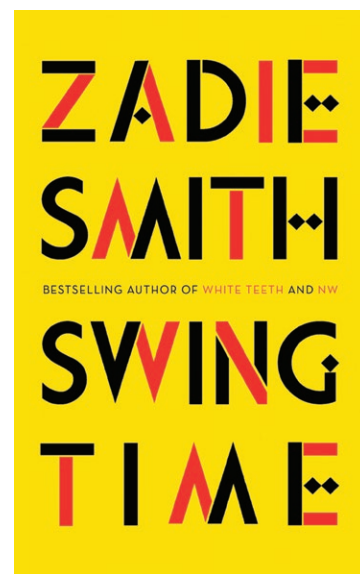
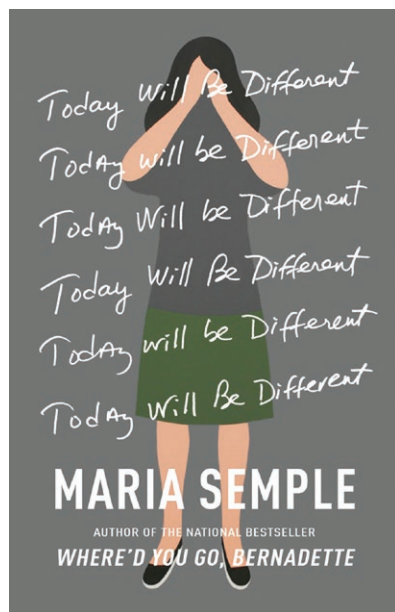
This promises to be another funny, thoughtful novel about how we need to be truthful about ourselves before we can change. It’s just what you need as a break from seasonal stress. It was released this month.

Treat yourself to writer Zadie Smith, who again crafts amazing fiction built on relationships that show how humans form their own tribes. In “Swing Time,” two girls dream of being dancers — but only Tracey has talent. The narrator has ideas about what makes up a tribe and what makes a person truly free. The girls compete, like and loathe each other, and while Tracey wins medals, the narrator ends up working for a pop star. The situations allow Smith to comment on racial and class structures and world views. Library Journal recommends the “sensitive drama” for all readers.

If a cookbook is what will make someone

happy, you’ve got a lot to choose from this year, but at the top of my list will be Vivian Howard’s “Deep Run Roots: Stories and Recipes from My Corner of the South.”

Driven, imaginative, determined and nostalgic, Howard has become a celebrity despite herself. Her PBS show, “A Chef’s Life,” has brought her an enormous amount of attention, which she has said she did not expect. She writes on her website, “I started working in restaurant kitchens because I wanted to turn that experience into a career in food writing. I guess then, ‘Deep Run Roots,’



my first cookbook, is the culmination of that pursuit. Part story, part history, part recipes, I’d like to think ‘Deep Run Roots’ is much more than a cookbook. And I hope it’s the first of many books like it I get to write.”

If you’re a person of a certain age, you must read Bruce Springsteen’s autobiography, “Born to Run.”

To learn more about the amazing Eleanor Roosevelt and her friend Lorena Hickok, read “Eleanor and Hick: The Love Affair that Shaped a First Lady,” by Susan Quinn. Kirkus Reviews calls it “A relentlessly captivating study of two remarkable individuals who helped extend the roles of American women in the public policy realm.”

And finally, “The Underground Railroad” by Colson Whitehead. Friends who have read it were deeply affected. Whitehead has been called a writer of the first rank for his explorations into race mythology and history. Unforgettable. [S](#)

Deirdre Parker Smith is book editor of the Salisbury Post and Salisbury the Magazine.



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The grayish-blue berries on junipers and cedar trees are actually female cone berries. These evergreen trees/conifers are sought out by birds when the winter sets in, partly because the branches offer protection from the cold winter winds and the berries are a food source. The berries are not very tasty to birds in the fall, but when the winter deepens, the birds are ready to gobble down the berries. This explains why you always see cedars springing up around fence rows or under power lines.



Hat tricks

Librarian Robert Jones brings children's stories to life. / By MARK WINEKA

One of a child's earliest memories of going to the Rowan Public Library's headquarters in Salisbury is hearing a story told — and often performed — by assistant librarian Robert Jones.

You can call him “Mr. Robert.” The kids do, and last year Rowan Public Library provided programs for more than 37,000 children.

Every Christmas season, Jones puts his considerable storytelling talents into overdrive when he and many of his artistic friends put on the RoBoJo Holiday Theatre.

This year will be the 19th edition of the RoBoJo Theatre, “where friends and I bring Christmas stories to life,” Jones says. It's an hourlong variety show of skits, songs, stories and audience participation.

If you go, count on corny jokes, funny limericks, adorable puppets and interesting takes on some of your favorite Christmas books.

At the library, Jones works closely with three people in his department and three others in outreach.

He was born and raised in Salisbury and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Appalachian State University in 1978.

Jones was a teacher's assistant at Knox Junior High for a year, then moved to Charlottesville, Va., where he worked as a residential counselor at a school for children with learning disabilities.

Jones then worked six years as a waiter/bartender at a country club before moving back to Salisbury. Over several years, he worked on a farm, then as a bread baker for Lee's Fine Food.

“I was working as a bartender at age 40 when I got the job as a librarian assistant at Rowan Public Library, where I celebrated 19 years this past summer,” Jones says.

Jones also has become a behind-the-scenes force on the Salisbury theater scene — first with St. Thomas Players, then



Robert Jones is a rock star to 3-year-olds. He entertains children weekly at Rowan Public Library, where every Christmas he and friends also present the RoBoJo Holiday Theatre. — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

in helping start Lee Street theatre with Cindi Graham. He served as LST president for four years and was on the board an additional two years until after the theatre moved to its present location.

If anyone is a Rowan Original, it's Jones. Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with Mr. Robert for a quick interview:

Q. What were a couple of your favorite stories (or books) as a kid? Do you have a favorite holiday tale?

“Incredible Journey” and “Call of the Wild,” as a kid. My favorite Christmas book is “The Christmas Crocodile” by Bonny Becker.

How do you try to make books come alive for the children who visit you at the library?

I simply have fun with the children, and most importantly, it’s all about the hats I wear!

What’s the most satisfying aspect of your job and maybe the thing that makes it easy to keep coming back to every day?

That’s easy ... the face of a child. Although I do relish telling lies — I mean, stories — to a group of children.

Do books and reading still hold the same kind of magic for children they always have, or do you fear something has changed with today’s technology?

Regardless of age, books allow us to escape into a world that’s not ours. Technology can’t change that.

How have you seen your own job change over the years?

Definitely technology and the increasing interest toddlers have in computers.

I think you were the youngest of four boys. What was it like around the dinner table growing up?

Four boys. Six years apart. Gobble, gobble, “May I be excused?” Banging of back screen door.

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

I listen to a lot of hip-hop. I’ve told my nephew to blast it at my wake.

Five words you would use to describe Salisbury:

Generous, talented, community, historical and fun! It’s all here in Salisbury, you just have to turn over the right rock!

What’s your pet peeve?

Hypocrisy.

What holiday do you like better — Thanksgiving or



Librarian Robert Jones always finds a captive audience with kids — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

Christmas?

I’d have to go with Christmas, as the magic and merriment last over a longer period of time. Plus, you can never have too many Christmas lights!

What are your favorite holiday movies?

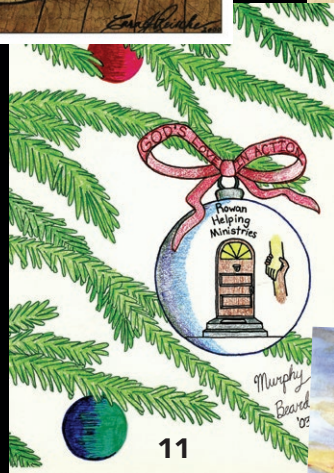
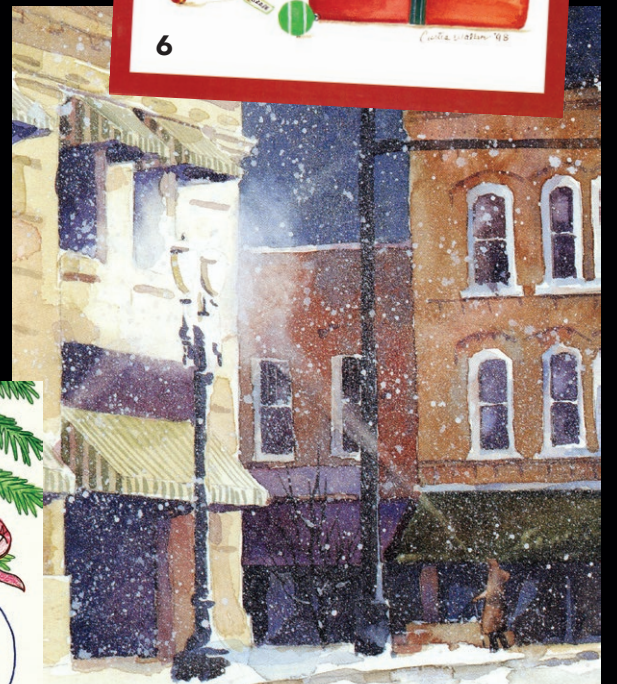
“American Beauty,” but I do love “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas,” because at the end the villagers let the Grinch carve the roast beast.

What two foods are always in your fridge or pantry?

Yogurt and individually wrapped, processed American cheese.

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

“Carpe diem” with your family and friends, as your life can be turned upside down in an instant. S



Card descriptions on page 18

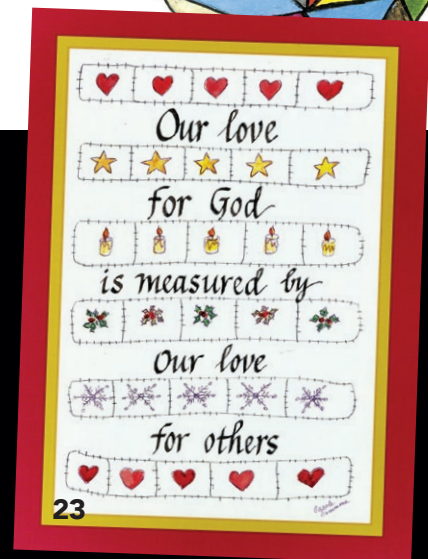
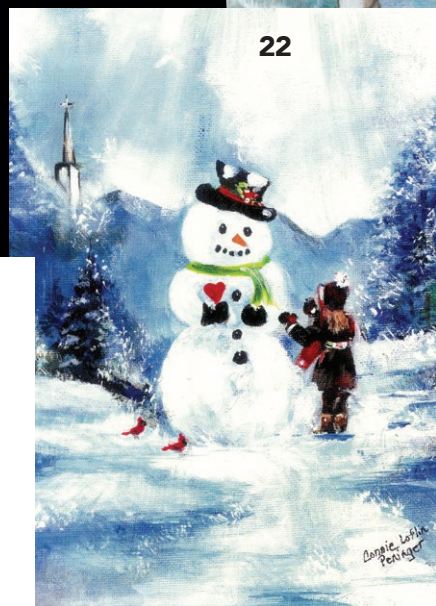


HONOR SYSTEM

Rowan Helping Ministries' Christmas cards connect mission with local artists



Written by
MARK WINEKA



It was an early winter snowstorm. Rebecca Little decided to stick to the main highways on her trip home from work, and driving up South Main Street in Salisbury, she was struck by how simple, quiet and lovely the scene was. The Christmas star was still hanging over the Square.

The longtime artist in Little took over, and she traveled several times around the block until there was no traffic behind her. She stopped her car near the Empire Hotel and rolled down her window against the bitter cold. Hanging out the driver's side, Little took a photograph of snow-covered South Main looking toward the Square.

After she made it home, Little moved quickly to her paints.

"I started on it right away," she said.

Though she had never entered before, Little knew this scene was what she had been looking for as a possible Christmas Honor Card submission to Rowan Helping Ministries in 2016.

This summer, Little entered her oil on canvas painting into the competition, and a Rowan Helping Ministries committee chose "Christmas on the Square" as its Christmas Honor Card.

Little was deeply touched. It meant a lot that her card would be helping Rowan Helping Ministries. In addition to her artistic talents, Little belongs to the Salisbury-Rowan Runners Club, and proceeds from a significant number of the club's races each year go to RHM.

"It's very important for me to give back to the community in that way," Little said.

Over the years, Rowan Helping Ministries

officials estimate Christmas Honor Cards have raised close to \$700,000 for the organization dedicated to helping those in need. From 2002 through 2015 alone, the sale of the Christmas cards and donations related to the annual cards project brought in \$450,000.

Those funds go toward RHM's mission of involving the community in helping the community.

Among the many services the volunteer-driven organization provides are feeding and sheltering the homeless, providing clothes, paying utility bills and rent for those in need, stocking a pantry and distributing food to the poor.

These efforts take the form of the well-known Homeless Shelter and Jeannie's Kitchen in the Robertson-Stanback Center on North Long Street; the Clothing Center, Food Pantry and Crisis Assistance Network at the newly rededicated Ralph W. Ketner Center; the Eagle's Nest transitional housing; Rowan Helping Ministries-West, New Tomorrows and Journey Forward.

The inside message on the Christmas Honor Card says it best. Here's how it was phrased last year:

"During this season of sharing, a gift has been made in your honor that will allow Rowan Helping Ministries to put God's love into action by providing for essential life

needs of those in crisis in our community."

Dianne Scott, retired executive director of Rowan Helping Ministries, always cherishes walking back from her mailbox and opening up a Christmas Honor Card.

"Each year, when I receive one, it makes me smile and it makes my heart flutter," Scott said. "I feel like it's a way of saying thank you."

Scott was serving as executive director in 1993 when the card project started. The idea came from Greensboro Urban Ministries. The director for that organization shared with Scott what a success Christmas cards had been as a fundraiser, and it struck a nerve with Scott and her board.

"We felt like there were so many wonderful artists here, we could (showcase them)," she said.

The late Jamima DeMarcus, a board member at the time, asked Salisbury artist Clyde Overcash to submit a painting which could be used for the first card in 1993. Clyde provided the watercolor titled "Kerr Mill at Sloan Park."

Little's "Christmas on the Square" is now the 24th card, and the artists in between make up a who's who of local artistic talent. The names range from Betty Sedberry and Cara Reische to Bob Timberlake and Bob Doares.

The subject matter of their artwork can



Rowan Helping Ministries Executive Director Kyna Grubb, left, and former RHM Executive Director Dianne Scott stand behind Christmas Honor Cards from the past 23 years.



Kris Mueller holds up a 2016 Christmas Honor Card entry for the selection committee to vote on. From left: Dianne Scott, Kyna Grubb, Scott Jones, Quanitta Kelly, Paul Rogers, Jeff Matthews, Samone Cowan and Jeanne LeMaster.

hardly be categorized into one theme. There are historical places in the snow, a holiday rooster or a peace dove, biblical scenes, snowy landscapes, a sunrise, a snowman, Santa, angels, folks around a holiday dinner table, winter hats and mittens, Salisbury street-scapes, Norman Rockwell-type groupings and direct messages.

In 2015, RHM chose calligrapher Carole Simmons'

art, inspired by a Biblical passage, which said, "Our Love for God Is Measured by Our Love for Others."

"I love seeing the local art and the talent that's here," Scott said, describing how through the years the Honor Cards became a "friend-raiser" as well as a fundraiser.

The cards sell for \$5 each, and 4,000 are printed each season. Sponsors such as Summie and Debbie

Christmas Honor Cards, then to now

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1993, Clyde — "Kerr Mill at Sloan Park" 2. 1994, Betty Sedberry — "Barber Junction Depot" 3. 1995, Carlton Jackson — "Home for Christmas" 4. 1996, Lou Murphy — "All Are Invited" 5. 1997, Bob Timberlake — "The Alexander Long House" 6. 1998, Curtis Waller — "Grandkids' Gifts" 7. 1999, Bob Doares — "The Nativity" 8. 2000, Cara J. Reische — "To All a Good Night" 9. 2001, Mark Brincefield — "Winter Light" 10. 2002, Phyllis Steimel — "Christmas Comes to the Eagle's Nest" 11. 2003, Murphy Beard — "Helping Hands at Christmas" 12. 2004, Kaneko McNeill — "Christmas Sunrise" | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. 2005, Sybil Efirid — "Our Helping Angel" 14. 2006, Nancy L. Rogers — "Sharing the Warmth" 15. 2007, Bob Doares — "Jesus Approaches the Jordan" 16. 2008, Michael Kirksey — "The Gift" 17. 2009, Carol Dunkley — "Snow Bird" 18. 2010, Marietta Foster Smith — "Safe and Warm" 19. 2011, Cara J. Reische — "Hope & Faith" 20. 2012, Barbara Harris Richmond — "Peace Throughout the World" 21. 2013, Caroline Dobson Marshall — "Hands, Heads and Hearts" 22. 2014, Connie Loflin Peninger — "Love Came Down at Christmas" 23. 2015, Carole Simmons — "1 John 3:17" 24. 2016, Rebecca Little — "Christmas on the Square" |
|--|--|

Carter, Edward and Susan Norvell, Fisher-Greene Insurance, David B. Jordan, Lion's Share Federal Credit Union and Snow Benefits Group help to cover the printing costs.

A dozen retail locations and eight Rowan County F&M Bank branches offer the Honor Cards for sale. For an extra \$10 donation, RHM will send out the cards for you.

Each year, many people in Rowan County make sizable donations to RHM and mail out only Christmas Honor Cards. The cards fulfill two purposes: honoring their recipients and supporting Rowan Helping Ministries.

Kyna Grubb, the current RHM executive director, said she loves the connection of the art to the RHM mission.

"We do ask them to draw a connection," Grubb said, and when you hear at the annual reception the artist's story and his or her inspiration behind the card, "it often compels you to buy one."

"I'm sort of a sucker for that," Grubb added.

Part of the decorations in Grubb's office include a stained-glass peace dove Doug Patrick created, based on Barbara Harris Richmond's Honor Card in 2012. Grubb's office also features Nancy Rogers' painting "Sharing the Warmth," which was the Honor Card in 2006.

In fact, throughout the rededicated Ralph W Ketner Center's offices, interview rooms, reception area and halls are the original Honor Card artworks.

"It's great now to be able to hang them here," said Scott, who joined Diane Hundley in deciding where pieces in the renovated spaces should go. RHM staff members treasure the signed cards and pieces of original art they have.

The artwork chosen each year becomes the property of RHM. In years past, some of the art has been displayed in places such as Waterworks Visual Arts Center and local banks.

It was the practice for many of the early years for RHM board members to invite a particular artist to paint something which



Above: Carl Repsher (right) works with a client and her daughter in one of the interview rooms at Rowan Helping Ministries. The painting by Bob Timberlake that is on the 1997 Honor Card hangs on the wall. **Right:** Rebecca Little's 'Christmas on the Square' is Rowan Helping Ministries' Christmas Honor Card for 2016.

could be used for the Honor Card. Later, it was opened up to all artists as a competition.

In 2003, a special competition was held among high school students, and Murphy Beard's art was chosen that year. About a half dozen artists submitted pieces to be considered this year.

For about 15 years, RHM also produced holiday ornaments, designed by Betty Gladstone of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. "Those I still hang on my tree," Scott said.

Kris Mueller, director of resource development for RHM, said the card selection process each year is always fun — and always tough. Her committee starts work on arriving at a new Honor Card in April, and the reception unveiling the new card and its artist is held in late October.

"Really, it's like Christmas all year around here," Mueller said.

The Salisbury-Rowan County locations



Photo courtesy of Rowan Helping Ministries

which have Christmas Honor Cards for sale include Caniche, Carolina Lily, Critters, Diversified Graphics, F&M Bank's eight locations, Fine Frame Gallery, Godley's Garden Center, the Hot Dog Shack in Granite Quarry, Innes Street Drug at the Ketner Center, Lion's Share Federal Credit Union, Price Pharmacy in Granite Quarry, Queen's Gifts and Stitchin' Post & Gifts. [S](#)



Maple Pecan Pie

Sweet, *nuttty* & TART

Pies and a crisp warm the holiday soul.

Written by DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH

Photography by JON C. LAKEY

You've enjoyed your holiday meal, probably had too much to eat, and now it's time for dessert.

Pumpkin pie is the expected finish, but these are worthy alternatives that won't ruffle any traditionalist's feathers.

One speaks to an old Southern tradition, and the others use classic fall and winter flavors.

The chess or chest pie goes back at least to the 1920s, the days of the party line. That's when folks shared a phone line and you sometimes had to wait for another person on your line to hang up before making your call. You could hear the other conversations by just picking up your phone.

My husband's grandmother, Nolie Zimmerman (who lived to be 106), picked up her chess pie recipe by listening in one day when she heard a mother giving the recipes to her daughter, a neighbor.

"I had made chest pies, but not like that, and not good like that 'cause I didn't know how to make chest pies. I went and made me some crusties while it was fresh on my mind, and I baked me a chest pie."

Chess pie is nostalgia in a pie plate.

The pecan pie is adapted from a recipe in the 1984 edition of the wonderful Fannie Farmer Cookbook, which has been my cookbook bible ever since I got it. It answers hundreds of simple cooking ques-



Cranberry Apple
Raisin Crisp

tions, and its recipes are generally foolproof. It's one way I learned to cook. My adaptation is to substitute real maple syrup for the corn syrup. No pancake syrup. REAL maple syrup. I use light brown sugar instead of white and add an extra half cup of pecans to the pie. If it's pecan pie, it should be full of nuts, right?

A nice, rich cup of coffee is the perfect accompaniment to the chess or chest pie and the pecan pie. It balances out the sweetness.

The Cranberry Apple Raisin Crisp is an adaptation, too, from a 1980s era country inns cookbook (missing somewhere in my collection of cookbooks), that made a huge crisp — enough to fill a 9-by-13 pan. This 8-by-8-inch is plenty for smaller gatherings. It

will easily feed 6-8, depending on the serving size. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream, and you can stretch it even further.

The nice thing about the crisp is it's quite tart from the fresh cranberries, and cuts through the richness of turkey and dressing and gravy. I always buy an extra bag or two of cranberries to freeze for recipes later in the year. Their tart brightness is always a welcome note.

CHESS PIE

- 2 unbaked 9-inch pie crusts
- 3 eggs
- 1 stick (½ cup) butter, softened

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 3½ Tablespoons cream or milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine the filling ingredients and blend well. Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared crusts. Bake for 10 minutes. Turn the oven down to 325 degrees and bake for 20 to 25 minutes more, or until done.

Why two pies? Well, that much filling in one pie is just too sweet and too rich. The thinner filling makes the piece of pie portable on a napkin, no fork needed.



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MAPLE PECAN PIE

- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups chopped pecans
- Pastry for single crust pie
- A few pecan halves (for garnish)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Place prepared pastry crust in a standard pie plate, with a little flour sprinkled in bottom of plate.

Mix eggs, syrup and brown sugar with a whisk until no lumps remain. Add salt, vanilla and pecans and stir with a spoon or spatula to combine.

Pour into prepared pie shell and garnish with whole pecan halves, if desired. Place in oven and bake for 10 minutes, then reduce temperature to 350 degrees and bake 35 more minutes. If crust should begin to brown too much, make a foil collar to protect the edges. Pie is done when it has puffed up and browned slightly.

CRANBERRY APPLE RAISIN CRISP

- 2 apples, cut into bite-size pieces (a sweet apple)
- 1 12-ounce bag cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- Zest of one orange
- 1/2 cup orange juice (about 1 orange)
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- Pinch of salt

For the topping

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats (not instant)
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 5 1/2 Tablespoons cold butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.



Chess pie goes well with a hot cup of coffee.

Prepare the apples; rinse cranberries if frozen. Combine fruits with 2 Tbsp. flour, 3/4 cup sugar, orange zest and juice, spices and pinch of salt. Stir well to combine.

Meanwhile, cut cold butter into cubes. Using a pastry cutter, two knives or your fingers, blend flour, oats, sugar and butter until it forms a crumbly mixture.

Place fruit mixture in an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Crumble topping over fruit.

Bake for 45 minutes, or until top is nicely browned and fruit has softened.

A small glass of port would complement this dish. 



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Home *is the holiday*



Roy and Norma Campbell's house
welcomes Christmas in grand style.

Written by HUGH FISHER | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY

When Christmas comes around each year, Roy and Norma Campbell are ready to welcome in the season. A week or so before Christmas, they open their home, the historic Grubb-Sigmon-Weisiger House, to guests. Inside, almost every room is filled with Christmas cheer. Nativity scenes, Christmas trees and brilliant lights mix with the natural charm of the two-story Queen Anne house, built in 1911.

Friends and neighbors gather to enjoy refreshments and, most of all, the decorations.

With this season marking the 21st year the Campbells have held this open house, the gathering has become a tradition all its own.

It all started in 1995, when the Campbells rode by the then-vacant home on McCoy Road.

“I saw it in the paper for sale,” Norma said. “We rode by and looked at it. I just thought it was the prettiest old house I had ever seen.”

At that time, nobody was living there. When they came back to view the home with a real estate agent, they learned that it was in good shape – no major repairs needed. They bought it and made it their home.

For many years before, Norma had decorated the family Christmas tree with sentimental ornaments. “All the Christmas ornaments my son made at school when he was little,” she said. “I had saved everything. Then, when he went off to college, I decided, ‘I’m going to have a gold, silver and pearl Christmas tree, something a little fancier.’”

It all started that first Christmas, when Norma decorated two trees and the couple decided to invite friends from up and down their street to come by for refreshments, as a way of getting to know the neighborhood.

Today, the Christmas decorations fill the house. From antique to new, from fancy to simple, the ornaments fill trees throughout the house while other decorations span the hallways, the stairs and the rooms.

“It’s a house that just begged to be decorated, the first year,” Norma said. “And then, it just kind of grew from there. And it just kept on and on.”

Norma said she shops for Christmas decorations year-round, whenever she happens to see them. Antique stores and estate sales are her most common places to discover a new Yuletide treasure.

A good many of the ornaments came from local shops. “Every year, Godley’s (Garden Center) would put stuff on sale after Christmas, and I’d buy it,” Norma said.

Her taste is simple. “Anything I see that’s pretty, I get,” she said, “and then it finds its place in the house.”

Yet there are some things that remain constant. Every year, the Campbells plan to have a Christmas tree and a Nativity scene in all the occupied rooms – parlor, living room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms.

When she counted them up in 2015, Norma said there were 38 Nativity scenes in the house – some made by hand, others crafted from wood or porcelain.

It’s never a problem to find places to display them all, Norma

said. “Older houses have more nooks and crannies to decorate.”

The process of actually decorating the house starts in mid November with the upstairs bedrooms, where the decorations are older and reminiscent of family members who played there as children.

No decorations go up outside until after Thanksgiving, Norma said, but as December rolls around, the house and grounds put on their Christmas finery.

In the formal parlor downstairs, Norma sets up her favorite and most elegant Christmas tree, hung with gold and silver.

As she shops throughout the year, Norma said, “I’ll buy old lockets, and I’ll put pictures of us, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren in them.”

Those lockets then become Christmas ornaments that represent the family, with white lights illuminating the pictures alongside golden strands and other ornaments.

The kitchen features Nativity scenes and a music box depicting the Christ child with Mary and Joseph.

For the most part, there aren’t overall themes for the different rooms of the house.

Yet some pieces are special. One in particular, a wood carving of the Nativity made by a member of her church, is what Norma called “a treasure.” She keeps it on display year-round.

Their church heritage also shines through not just in the Nativity scenes, but in the Chrismons handmade by her sister-in-law: crosses, hearts and other symbols of faith.

Elsewhere in the home, Christmas bells recall years gone by, while hand-painted, crystal and ceramic Madonnas look on.

When they moved to Salisbury 21 years ago, Norma still worked in Lexington while Roy had already retired.

“I didn’t decorate much that year, but I told Roy, ‘Let’s invite all the neighbors to come by,’” Norma said.

Story continues on page 33.



Roy and Norma Campbell







Clockwise from opposite left: In the N.C. State room, a Santa quarterback prepares to pass; The Campbells wait until after Thanksgiving to decorate the outside; A nicely decorated bannister leads upstairs past family photographs; Details in a front parlor; The country kitchen provides a nice holiday respite.





Top: The Nutcrackers and a snowman fill the top of a chest in an upstairs bedroom. Left: Virtually every room in the Campbells' home has a beautifully decorated tree. Right: A wall cabinet in the living room is populated with Christmas figurines.



“Our former neighbor was a Realtor who had been here forever, and he knew everybody in Salisbury,” Norma said. “We had them come over and help us get to know people.”

“Many of them had never been in the house before, and it was so fun, people enjoyed it so much.”

Today, the Campbells usually plan their open house for one or two Sundays before Christmas, depending on when the holiday falls during the week.

“We open the house, we have punch and cookies and people just walk through,” Norma said.

“There’s something for everyone,” Roy said. “The two big trees in the front parlors probably get more comments than everything else.”

And there are also combinations of

decorations you might not expect, such as the Christmas tree upstairs in the pink room that’s decorated with roses.

Or, in the blue bedroom upstairs, a collection of old toys that belonged to his son.

Or, the downstairs room that has North Carolina State University ornaments – a room that stays decorated with red and white year-round, thanks to a love of all things Wolfpack.

There are many family memories in the house, and it sometimes happens that those decorations bring back memories for the people the Campbells welcome into their home.

Norma said guests often see things they remember from their childhood.

“I have a little box with a paper Nativity scene in it, and our preacher’s wife



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Above: A view from the front hall. Opposite: An upstairs bedroom has plenty of room for the holidays.

saw it and said that when she was little, her family had one just like it," Norma said.

Hundreds of people come through the house each December to see the decorations. The Campbells said they've never put their house on a home tour, but love welcoming friends, family and guests at Christmastime.

"It's just like a winter wonderland," Norma said. "People just love to come and go through everything, to look at all the decorations."


"Most of the people who come now have come before. There's always new people coming, but many people look forward to it."

"Sometimes the house is so full, you can't really move around," Roy said.

They put out the refreshments and the guests come in throughout the afternoon.

"Some will come toward the end of the day," Norma said, "and then we just pull up chairs, eat cookies and visit."

For the Campbells, decorating for the holidays takes a lot of time and effort, but it's worth every moment, they said, to be able to share that experience with friends, family and now, the community at large.

"We feel like this house belongs to Salisbury," Roy Campbell said. "We're just going to be the caretakers for a while." 

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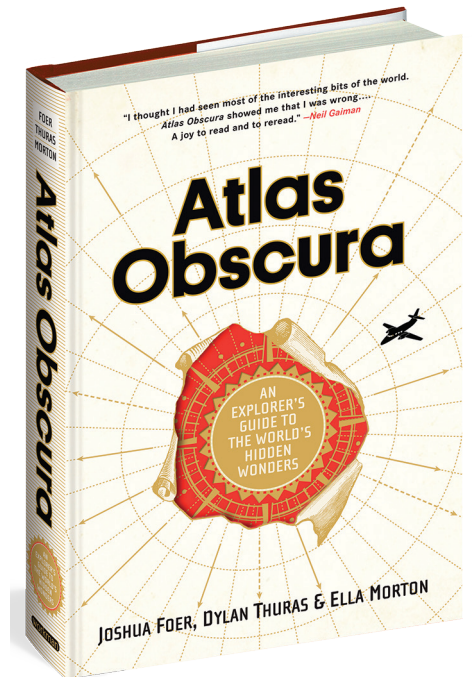
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WRITTEN BY SUSAN SHINN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



Renee LeClair, as Clara, and the mice. Below: Dancers from the Piedmont Dance Theatre in Kannapolis perform during a dress rehearsal.

Sure, you're reading the holiday issue of Salisbury the Magazine, but at this writing, fall is just beginning to take hold here. The smell of pumpkin spice everything is everywhere. The leaves are just beginning to change. The mornings are pleasantly cool, and ... wait a minute, was that a gaggle of ballerinas dancing gracefully across the Square?

OK, maybe not the Square, but at Piedmont Dance Theatre, the focus is squarely on "The Nutcracker."

And for folks around here, it's not Christmas until they've seen "The Nutcracker" presented by Piedmont Dance Theatre and the Salisbury Symphony at Catawba College's Keppel Auditorium. This year's performances are slated for Dec. 17-18.

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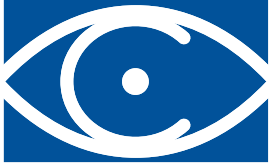
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The Nutcracker leads a contingent of soldiers against the Rat King.

“It’s been wonderful,” says Rebecca Wiley, owner of Piedmont Dance Theatre with husband Daniel.

Wiley approached Maestro David Hagy about coming to Salisbury around 2005. Hagy came to see the performance in Kannapolis, and was captivated.

“It clicked, and it worked,” Wiley says.

The dance company is now a presenting co-sponsor with the symphony, providing all dancers for the beloved ballet.

“On average, we hire between two to three guest artists every year,” Wiley says. “The rest is regional talent from Rowan, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Iredell counties. The symphony gets better and better every year, and every year, we add something to the stage and improve the set.”

She adds, “I love working with David Hagy. It’s like going home.”

Hagy returns the compliment.

“Daniel and Rebecca are my closest friends here in Salisbury,” Hagy says. “Together, they have raised the level of dance in the central Piedmont.”

The Russian choreographer Petipa designed the ballet, for which Tchaikovsky then wrote the score. Many of the melodies are instantly

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recognizable to listeners, Hagy notes. “What other piece has that many melodies that people know and love? The orchestration is one of the most craftily skilled of any composer. So for the musicians and me, it’s a Christmas gift.

“The musicians look forward to it every year. It’s not a piece to be ho-hum about. Part of the beauty of Christmas is tradition.”

And this ballet has it in spades.

Although Tchaikovsky’s elegant score remains the same, Wiley re-choreographs 30 to 40 percent of the ballet each year.

“The score is the same, and the storyline is the same,” Wiley explains, “but how people interpret it is totally different. I modify and change the choreography based on the ability of the dancers. Last year, we had 95 kids, and we had a cast of 112. That’s a lot of bodies and a lot of emails.”

And a lot of support from parents. It takes a whole cadre of parents to make the event a success.

Leah Champion volunteers with the show’s educational performances and spends time backstage as well.

“It’s a really big production to put on,” she says, with some amount of understatement. Her daughter, Kerry, is dancing in “The Nutcracker” for the seventh year.

“I enjoy getting to know the other parents,” Champion says. “It really is a labor of love. We all have to work together. The girls come back because it is a good experience, but it’s a big-time commitment.”



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Kerry Campion, from Salisbury, is one of the dancers in the performance.

She adds, "The Nutcracker' is our extended family from September to December. It's part of our holiday calendar, and our production is as good as productions in larger cities — but it's right here at home. You don't have to drive an hour to see a high-quality production."

Kevin Clark's daughter, Rebecca, a junior at A.L. Brown High School, has been in the production for 11 years.

"The opportunity presented itself for her to be in 'Nutcracker,' even though she was with another studio," Clark says. "She liked it so much, we moved her into Rebecca's dance studio, and she's been there ever since."

As to Clark's involvement, he calls himself a "jack-of-all-trades, master of none."

"Have you seen the fog? It's me," he says. Clark built the production's fog machines and the snow machines — all from scratch.

The first thing he ever made was a giant red box for the toy scene. Over the last eight years or so, he has made and repaired swords. He found a pedestal table on the side of the road, made new legs for it, and put a new top on it. It now holds the punch bowl in the party scene.

"I had maybe five bucks in that table," he says with pride.

Parents help with everything from making costumes to helping with set changes and costume changes and much, much more.

So what has kept him involved all these years?

“Oh, it’s fun!” Clark says, without hesitation. “It keeps you involved in your child’s life. I get more out of working backstage than sitting in the audience. I have not sat in the audience for probably four or five years. People don’t think of ballet as a sport, but if you were to stand backstage and see the girls come off stage, it’s a workout. The girls grow from year to year and mature in their performances. It’s neat to watch them grow up into the people they are. I get such joy out of it.”

So every year, Wiley says, attendees see “fresh faces and new dancers,” as well as those who return to the stage. “It’s fun to see the dancers grow up. I’m dealing with children who really, really want to do this. The kids love it. You’ve got 95 enthusiastic, hard-working, committed children and teenagers. They come in with a good attitude.”

The Wileys’ daughter, Mila, 9, has been in ‘The Nutcracker’ since she was 6 months old, when she was carried onstage in her mother’s arms for

Daniel Wiley as Drosselmeyer animates one of the gifts performed by Katherine LeClair.



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the party scene.

“She loves it,” Wiley says. “She wouldn’t miss it. When she was 2, she was a baby mouse, and she had to run across the stage, not cry, and not pee. My expectations for her have been age-appropriate.”


Standing from left, Catherine Livingston, Daniel Wiley and Armon Sanchez with Rebecca Wiley (on the floor) reacting to a rat.

For the record, Mila auditions just like all the other dancers, her mom says. “I keep her on her toes, no pun intended. I do like to put her in the party scene so I can see her. We’re so busy with rehearsals as a family. We’ve got a good system in place. We’ve got it figured out.”

So while everyone else was enjoying the last bit of summer, Wiley was pulling out costumes and props, and scheduling auditions, which took place Sept. 10.

“It’s a lot of work,” Wiley admits. “Once we get past casting, it’s usually pretty smooth sailing.”

Extra rehearsals on Saturday take place throughout the fall. So if you think you hear the strains of “Waltz of the Snowflakes” while drinking that pumpkin spice latte, well, you probably are.

For information on ‘Nutcracker’ tickets, you may visit www.salisburysymphony.org. 

Freelance writer Susan Shinn lives in Salisbury.

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DECORATING, *Frannie-style*

Taylor fills a special home with the Christmas spirit.

Written by ELIZABETH COOK | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY



The living room and foyer of the Catawba College President's House are aglow with Christmas decorations.

Frannie Taylor makes her job look like fun. Project administrator over renovations at Catawba College, she has a long list of duties, but each holiday season brings around an especially joyous one — decorating the President’s House for Christmas.

President Brien Lewis and wife Laura love the stately Tudor home and often open it up to students, faculty and the community. Frannie gives Laura great credit, especially at this time of year.

“She loves making the house as pretty and warm as can be,” Frannie says, “and very much filled with the Christmas spirit.”

A traditional home like the President’s House calls for similar decor, Frannie says. When a holiday level of decor is added, she says, “it should be a positive asset, not a take-away.”

The Lewises have a hand in the decorating process.



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“Brien always has my favorite music; he’s a music aficionado,” Frannie says. And he goes one step further. “He always sets up the tree.”

The Lewises get a fresh tree from a local nursery each year.

Frannie decorates the house by pulling together fresh greenery from the house grounds, as well as decorations the Lewises brought with them to Catawba, and others handed down from Laura’s mother. They include jesters and winsome Christmas fairies.

With an unending stream of Christmas tunes playing in the background, Frannie sets

Left: Santa figurines stand beside a seashell Christmas tree in the dining room.

Right: The sunroom is rich in color.

to work. She sticks to a simple color scheme of silver, gold, cream and crystal — neutral colors that she says are complimentary to greenery.

Santa figures bring touches of red into the mix.

The foyer is a pivotal spot. “It’s the first place people are greeted,” Frannie says. On one chest, a white porcelain Nativity scene

rests on a bed of gold mesh, flanked by sparkling trees, with gold tassels hanging from a lamb nearby.

Perhaps even more important is the full garland hanging from the banister that rises from the foyer to the second floor. Frannie builds the garland anew each year, starting with a lighted garland of artificial fir and using floral wire to attach a variety of fresh greens — magnolia, white pine, cedar and holly berries.

“That’s a Clyde trick,” Frannie says, referring to the well-known local artist.



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Decorations in other areas also combine artificial and fresh greenery — on the living room mantel, in the hearth. Large pine cones picked up on campus also figure in.

“I’ll always utilize artificial as basically a great way to hold it all,” Frannie says. She compares it to using an Oasis form in the base of a flower arrangement.

With decorations going up soon after Thanksgiving, natural greenery may need to be replaced with fresher pieces after a couple of weeks. Frannie says magnolia leaves are prone to curl up and turn bronze, especially if gas logs are used in a fireplace nearby.

Shells also are incorporated into the decor, in the form of slender white trees on a side-

board or a gilded box of shells and alabaster on the mantel.

From a Nativity scene, left, to outdoor decorations, center, and a beribboned corner cupboard, right, Christmas fills the President’s House. Opposite: The Tudor-style President’s House is the scene of several holiday parties each year.

board or a gilded box of shells and alabaster on the mantel.

Ribbon wraps up the Christmas decor package. The garland decorating the dining room corner cupboard has gold, open-weave ribbon, as well as strips of white taffeta embroidered with gold.

Frannie says she decorates her own home more simply, focusing on two areas.





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“I will always have an incredible tree and fabulous Christmas table,” she says.

She goes for a layered look on her table, with a table cloth, a damask runner, chargers, Christmas Rose china by Spode, lots of mercury glass vases and decorations of silver and gold.

Then there’s the Tannenbaum. She uses a prelit, artificial tree, filling the core with inexpensive metallic balls to give extra brightness.

Ribbons come next. Frannie decorates the outside of the tree with two or three types of ribbon, leaning toward taffeta with wire edging. She buys her ribbon in August, she says, because the stores sell out of the ones she wants well before the holiday season.

Last, she puts on the family’s special ornaments.

That’s Christmas decor in Frannie Taylor-style — shining, bright and elegant. **S**



Above: Pine cones picked up on campus and artificial pine branches pour out of the living room fireplace. Right: Silver and gold ornaments decorate the mantel, along with a box made of alabaster and shell.

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picking up the pieces

Feeling down, frustrated?
It might be time to smash things
at Grievous Gallery.

Written by MARK WINEKA

Photography by WAYNE HINSHAW

Kristen Trahan remembers the first time she broke things — on purpose — at Grievous Gallery. On the table in front of her were empty soft drink and liquor bottles, old plates and glass figurines.

She took a black Sharpie and wrote what seemed to be a novel on each piece of glass. Trahan acknowledges now she had a lot of emotional baggage. Over a year's time, she lost both a brother and a fiancé, and she couldn't shake the feeling of abandonment.

Traham took a step toward letting some of those feelings go by picking up the bottles and dishes and, one by one, throwing them as hard as she could against a far wall. The shattering sounds echoed through the old engine repair shop at 313 E. Council St., Salisbury.

"I was crying, I was screaming," Trahan says. "I was a wreck. But it was beautiful. I had to let it out. I think it's like a life-changing, life-saving idea. This is the kind of thing that could save someone's life."

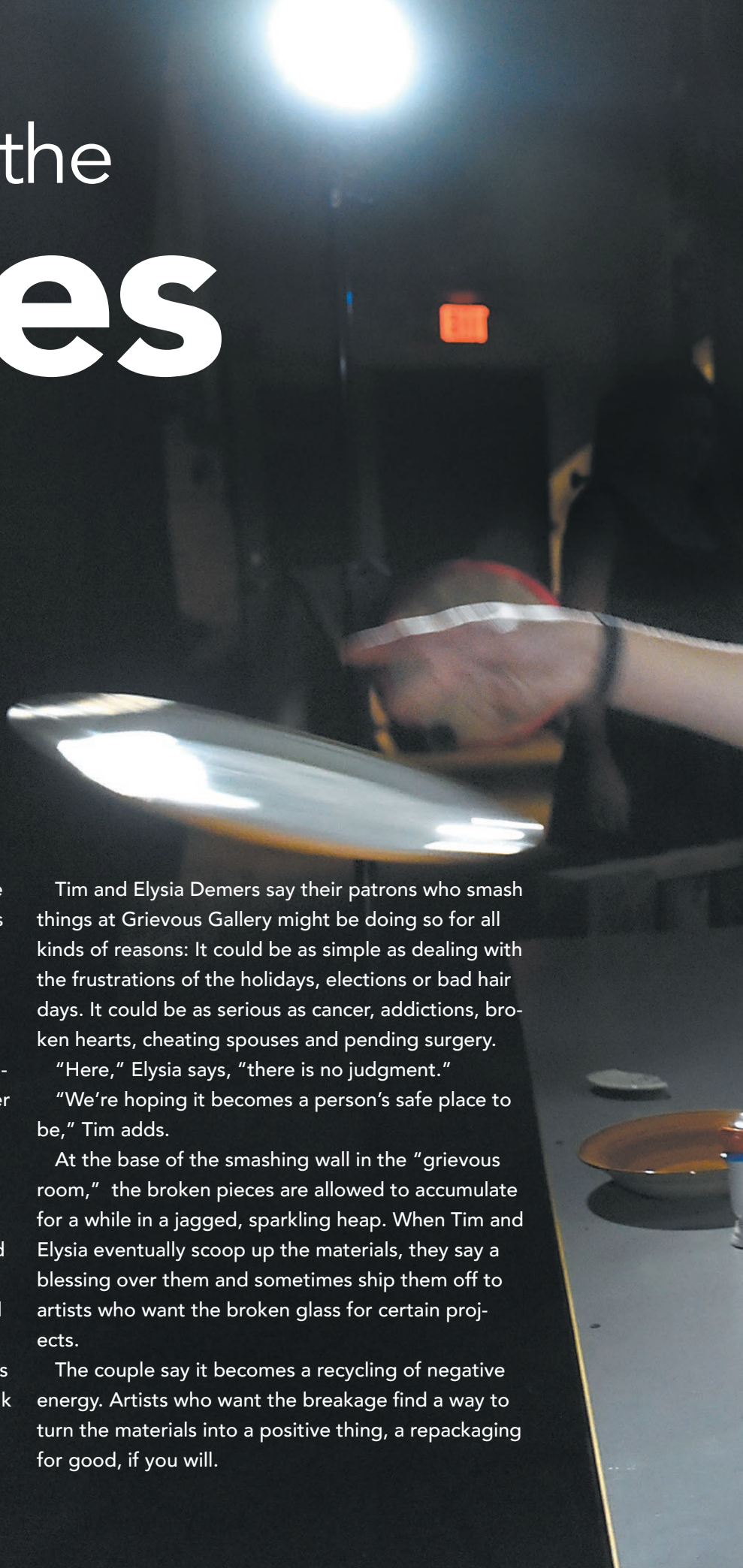
Tim and Elysia Demers say their patrons who smash things at Grievous Gallery might be doing so for all kinds of reasons: It could be as simple as dealing with the frustrations of the holidays, elections or bad hair days. It could be as serious as cancer, addictions, broken hearts, cheating spouses and pending surgery.

"Here," Elysia says, "there is no judgment."

"We're hoping it becomes a person's safe place to be," Tim adds.

At the base of the smashing wall in the "grievous room," the broken pieces are allowed to accumulate for a while in a jagged, sparkling heap. When Tim and Elysia eventually scoop up the materials, they say a blessing over them and sometimes ship them off to artists who want the broken glass for certain projects.

The couple say it becomes a recycling of negative energy. Artists who want the breakage find a way to turn the materials into a positive thing, a repackaging for good, if you will.





Kristen Trahan sails a dinner plate at the wall at Grievous Gallery to relieve her stress after losing her brother and fiancé during the past year.



The couple offer breakables in packages of small (\$25), medium (\$50) and large (\$75). There's also a BYOB (Bring Your Own Breakage) option for \$10. In addition, the gallery sells shadow boxes, jars and frames for people who want to hold onto their shattered pieces and maybe even display them.

The actual gallery in the front section of the spacious building reflects the venue's overall theme as "the place to frame your pain."

In its infancy, the gallery has been open from 6-10 p.m. Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Grievous Gallery also offers group rates and packages for people who schedule in advance. The venue is available for private parties.

"It's crazy enough, it just might work," Elysia says of the whole concept.



Above: Kristen Trahan wrote 'I'll see you soon' on a broken dish, after telling her story of the death of her brother and fiancé. Left: Grievous Gallery owners Elysia and Tim Demers pose in front of their business on East Council Street.

A sign out front says, "Yes, this is the place you've heard about."

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vice of sorts for several bars and restaurants in Salisbury. They go from place to place, collecting all the breakable things those establishments would otherwise be discarding. In addition, Tim and Elysia have a lot of “picker” friends who make the rounds of estate sales and bring them remnant glass and dishes they don’t want.

The grievous room, where all the throwing and smashing occurs, is located in the back and divided off from the rest of the place by a black curtain. People can be in the grievous room by themselves or as part of a group. There’s a sound system available, allowing participants to jam out to their favorite tunes, if they want.

The gallery asks people to wear goggles. The smashing wall itself is a combination of metal and brick. Some shelves hold dishes at which to aim and create more breakage. On this night, an upside-down garbage can with an empty liquor bottle on top provides another good target. Sparkling lights dance on the wall.

“It was really liberating,” Meaghan Bethea says after tossing several items. “When you’ve had a bad day or a bad week, throw something to get that rage out. It kind of sets you free.”

The past week had been tough for Bethea. In China Grove, her brother-in-

Caleb Hill entertains with guitar and song at Grievous Gallery.



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Left: Artist Shane Manier paints pictures of the musicians as they perform. Right: Sophia Daniz throws a bottle at the wall.



law's parents' house had been destroyed by a fire. When Bethea was in middle school, it had been like a second home to her. She walked to that house and stayed there every day after school was over. The fire was devastating.

Bethea says breaking things at Grievous Gallery "helps to get those issues out," and she thinks it's better for people than trying to numb their pain with things such as alcohol or drugs.

Elysia Demers says many people coming into the gallery treat it lightly at first, not knowing the emotional baggage they're carrying. But throwing and breaking things against a wall turns into a cathartic experience.

"They say, 'Hey, I'm going to break stuff!'" Elysia says, "but they go out crying. ... It's really emotionally heavy when you go into that room."

For Elysia and Tim, the roots of Grievous Gallery extend back to a traumatic brain injury Tim suffered in 2012.

Frustration was built into the cognitive rehabilitation that followed for him. He was much like a patient recovering from a stroke. Elysia remembers the time he wanted to say

the word "orange," but "scissors" kept coming out instead. The more frustrated he became, the more Tim wanted to yell and scream.

"It's a long road," Elysia says.

The couple came to believe the frustrations Tim was feeling as part of his therapy and recovery were not unlike those felt by most people. We live in a world, Elysia says, in which we're told to bottle things up, keep things shoved inside.

"But people are snapping at an alarming rate," she says.

For Elysia personally, throwing and breaking things against the wall is a good way to get rid of tiredness and the burden of being stretched too thin. Too often she beats herself



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up, she says, for not being able to say “no” to people who want her help.

Tim and Elysia have done a few other things to the old engine shop. They’ve created a stage and offer a “Not So Open Mike Night” on Tuesdays to attract people into the place. They enjoy having artists such as Shane Manier painting as the musicians perform.

Every now and then, you hear the smashing of feelings in the back, behind the black curtain.

“That’s closure,” Elysia says of the sound. **S**

Grievous Gallery owner Elysia Demers looks through the broken glass piled against the wall for interesting messages that people wrote to relieve their stress.



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Green peace

In its 25th year, Living Christmas Tree
is First Baptist Church's gift to the community. / *By* MARK WINEKA



The birth of Jesus plays out in front of the Living Christmas Tree. — *Photo courtesy of First Baptist Church*

If you're one of the choir members who populate the Living Christmas Tree at First Baptist Church, it's good not to be claustrophobic or have a fear of heights.

Singers stand shoulder-to-shoulder, row upon row, with just enough room to breathe, and the upper branches of the Living Christmas Tree are pretty high — as though you're perched on a fire escape near the top of a tall building.

Stamina plays a role, too. Can you sing this close and this high off the ground for 80 solid minutes?

Neal Wilkinson has participated in every Living Christmas Tree service — these are regarded as services, not performances — since the first one back in 1992.

"It's the most meaningful experience I have had in a choir," says Wilkinson, an accomplished tenor.

This year will mark the 25th edition of the Living Christmas Tree. "The Tree" — that's what everyone at First Baptist Church has come to call it — reaches more than 6,000 people each year, and a huge behind-the-scenes effort goes into it, when you consider the construction and taking down of the tree structure itself, a canned food collection, costumes, decorations, dramatic direction, security, sound, stagehands, ushering and ticket distribution.

More than 400 volunteers are involved in making it happen. Over the first 24 years, each service has played pretty much to a capacity audience. "It really is amazing," Wilkinson says.

By now, the process behind the Living Christmas Tree runs like clockwork. "You push the button, and it rolls down the mountain — that tree has mileage on it," says Debbie Teague, the pianist for The Tree since the beginning.

Without fail, by 8 a.m. on the November day tickets go on sale for the Living Christmas Tree, a line starts forming in the back parking lot of First Baptist Church. While the reserved tickets are free, a love offering is taken at each service, helping to offset costs of the next year's "Tree." Up to 10 tickets are allowed per household.

People attending also are asked to bring at least one canned food item as a contribution to Rowan Helping Ministries. The services lead to a

whole trailer of food for the RHM pantry.

The 2016 edition of the Living Christmas Tree will have a 103-voice choir. Generally, about two-thirds of the choral group are members of the church and the other third are from the community at large. The singers are adults — high school-aged and up. There's also a 15-member orchestra and 30 to 40 people for the dramatic portion of the service that includes narration, skits and Biblical scenes.

First Baptist Church has always scheduled the Living Christmas Tree for the weekend after the Thanksgiving weekend. It is offered in seven different services — 7 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Monday and 5 and 8 p.m. services on Saturday and Sunday.

Russ Robbins, minister of music for First Baptist, is going into his 14th year as conductor for the Living Christmas Tree. He says The Tree accomplishes two things: It provides a worship service for believers, and it's an outreach effort to those who aren't.

The service covers Jesus from birth to resurrection, not just his birth. "The gospel is always presented at each service," Robbins says. "We don't just show how he came, we show why he came. It is an evangelistic tool. It truly is a ministry of the church."

The church also views The Tree as its Christmas gift to the Salisbury and Rowan County community.

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WBTV reporter David Whisenant, a member of First Baptist Church, serves as narrator. He actually started out as the angel Gabriel when he first participated in The Tree years ago. Some of the orchestra members are paid for their talents, but otherwise everything is all volunteer.

Singers memorize the songs — the space limitations on the tree structure make that a necessity — and the service is different each year. Robbins says there are usually 15 songs, five of which are new, five that have been done maybe once or twice before and five that choir members can sing in their sleep.

Robbins and Teague usually start in July, planning and praying for the tree and thinking about an overall theme for that particular year. By the beginning of August, they are outlining the whole service.

This year, rehearsals began Aug. 17, and as always a daylong “Tree Retreat” for partici-

pants was held in September.

“We’ve grown the tree and added to the structure of the tree three times,” says Teague, who has missed only two services in 24 years.

She describes the expansion in terms of adding rows and side “branches.” It takes about a week to construct the tree, not to mention adding all the cloth, netting, greenery, lights and other decorations.

From the beginning, Steve Jones of the First Baptist Church congregation has served as chief engineer.

There have been four different conductors since 1992: Steve Harrell from 1992-99; Doug Jordan in 2000; Wilkinson, from 2001-02; and Robbins, from 2003-present.

Wilkinson was choir president that first year when music director Harrell floated the idea of having a Living Christmas Tree. “We had nothing,” Wilkinson says. “I said, ‘You’re completely out of your tree.’”

Harrell says the idea came from Chris Jenkins, who had been involved with a similar project at Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh.

The structure on which the choral members stand is essentially built from house roof trusses turned up on end. Originally there were 13 wooden trusses. Jones determined quickly the trusses wouldn’t pass through the church doors, so he cut the plans (and trusses) in half. Inside the church, the halves had to be bolted together

The trusses arrived by Mack truck, and it took \$1,100 worth of hardware alone to bolt everything together. “We had some really good carpenters,” Harrell says.

Lester Brown provided the live greenery, and every piece was treated with fire retardant. Harrell also wanted a structural engineer called in to make sure the altar area could hold such a monstrosity of wood and people.

“I didn’t want that big Christmas tree end-



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ing up in the fellowship hall,” he says.

Members of the church loved decorating a Christmas tree that big, according to Harrell. They used bows, ribbons, tinsel and lights. Stringing all the lights into the live greenery — “that was a sticky mess,” Harrell says. “Some people couldn’t sing because of allergies.”

The fear of a fire consumed Harrell. And the cost. “That first year was really scary, because we just didn’t know,” Harrell says, “(and) it was very, very, very expensive.” He remembers the first tree having about 70 singers. In recent years, the number has swollen to more than 100.

“We’ve had lots of fun experiences with it every year,” Harrell says. “It makes me feel proud and honored that they’re still doing it.”

In the earliest years of The Tree, the singers were actually twinkling stars and their faces were not meant to be seen. That changed in

2000 when the singers became visible and stars themselves.

Because of the closeness, the length of the service and maybe the height, there have been several times, Robbins says, when conductors have seen singers disappear from the tree. If singers are feeling faint, they are instructed to drop down, turn around and hang their legs off the back of the structure.

The Thursday service has as part of the audience nursing home residents and the men of Bethel Colony of Mercy, a drug rehabilitation program in Lenoir. Bethel Colony of Mercy clients are involved each year in taking down the Living Christmas Tree structure. To Teague and Robbins, that Thursday service is always the most memorable, the “most unfiltered.”

Wilkinson says the original plan was to do the Living Christmas Tree for five years, then reevaluate things. Those five-year assessments

have continued, and so has The Tree.

In 2002, the Living Christmas Tree didn’t quite go off as planned, thanks to a major ice storm. The church lost its power from Wednesday, the day of The Tree’s dress rehearsal, until Sunday afternoon. Wilkinson was conductor that year, and the church made the decision to delay the Living Christmas Tree services by a full week.

Meanwhile, all the live greenery used to decorate the tree died, and Wilkinson scrambled to find replacements for at least half the orchestra. Wilkinson will tell you, that year’s Living Christmas Tree was memorable.

As they all are. By the way, the ice storm year was the last time The Tree used live greenery.

The 2016 Living Christmas Tree at First Baptist Church, 223 N. Fulton St., will be held from Dec. 1-5. Tickets can be reserved for the various services starting Nov. 10. **S**



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Horses are a common sight in the Cleveland Christmas Parade. This year's event is Dec. 3. — Photo by Andy Mooney.

Holiday 2016

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area

NOVEMBER 4

First Friday

• *Downtown Salisbury*

5-9 p.m. Shop, dine and stroll the downtown. For more information, contact katelin@downtownsalisburync.com.

NOVEMBER 5

Holiday Faire

• *First Ministry Center*

Promoted by First Baptist Church as Salisbury's Christmas Craft Show. Center is located at 220 N. Fulton St. For more infor-

mation: 704-636-0061, or 704-633-0431 for vendor information.

NOVEMBER 7

Erin Brockovich

• *Catawba College*

Consumer advocate Erin Brockovich, best known for her involvement in one of the largest direct action lawsuits in U.S. history and a movie based on those efforts, will speak at 7 p.m. at the college's Keppel Auditorium. Free and open to the public. Brockovich's topic will be "Community Power: How We Can

All Make a Difference in Creating a Healthier Planet."

NOVEMBER 11-12

Salisbury Antiques Show

• *Civic Center*

The show will be held from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Nov. 11 and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 12. The Civic Center is located at 315 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. The event is considered the longest running annual antiques show in North Carolina (since 1953) and one of the finest. Shop for estate furniture, porcelains,

jewelry, art, oriental rugs, linens and prints among 19 dealers. Rowan Museum's Preview Party is on Thursday, Nov. 10. Food is available, and the show benefits the Rowan Museum and its historic properties.

NOV. 10-12, 17-19 'Reefer Madness'

- *Lee Street theatre*

7:30 each night. An outrageous tongue-in-cheek musical comedy adaptation of the classic anti-marijuana propaganda film. Made into a movie in 2005 starring Kristen Bell and Alan Cummings. Lee Street theatre is located at 329 N. Lee St. For more information: Contact 704-310-5507, or go to leestreet.org.

Nov. 11-12, 18-19 'The Boxcar Children'

- *Norvell Theater*

A Piedmont Players Youth Theatre production. Generations of young readers have cherished the spirited Depression-era adventures of The Boxcar Children, and now the Alden children's story comes to life on stage. Shows at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 11 and 18. Shows at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Nov. 12 and 19. Norvell Theater is located at 135 E. Fisher St. For tickets, call 704-633-5471, or go to www.PiedmontPlayers.com.

NOVEMBER 12 Kannapolis Cruise-In

- *Downtown Kannapolis*

1-7 p.m.

NOVEMBER 12-13 Salisbury Gun and Knife Show

- *Rowan County Fairgrounds*

9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. General admission, \$7; children 11 and under, free. Two-day adult pass, \$10. Free parking.

For more information: www.rowancountyfair.net, or 704-640-2326.

NOVEMBER 12 Share the Care 5K

- *Novant Health Rowan Medical Center*

Go to salisburyrowanrunners.org for information on this race.

NOVEMBER 12 CBA Fall Swap Meet & Bike Show

- *Rowan County Fairgrounds*

This annual CBA swap meet and bike show attracts over 5,000 bikers. This is the chance to see a unique array of motorcycles and cars. Lots of accessories and car parts also will be available for sale. Go to www.charlottecba.org, or call 704-577-1546 for more information.

NOVEMBER 17 Richard Smith Concert

- *Rowan Public Library*

7 p.m., part of the Friends of Rowan Public Library and Cheerwine Concert Series. The library is located at 201 W. Fisher St., Salisbury. Call 704-216-8228 for information.

NOV. 18-DEC. 22 'All Aboard the Polar Express'

- *N.C. Transportation Museum*

Inspired by the runaway hit movie. Passengers will enjoy singing and dancing upon their arrival at the North Pole, where Santa will present the first gift of Christmas. Tickets, dates and times available at www.nctrans.org, or call 704-636-2889.

NOVEMBER 19 Lighting of the Fall Fires

- *Historic Gold Hill*

5:30 p.m., the annual Lighting of the Fall Fires, an evening of entertainment, refreshments and warm holiday cheer while strolling through Historic Gold Hill and its quaint shops. For ticket information, go to www.goldhillnc.com, or call 704-267-9439.

NOVEMBER 22 Southern Rowan Christmas Parade

- *China Grove-Landis*

The Southern Rowan Christmas Parade is a

fun, holiday event everyone can enjoy. Bring a chair and watch the parade from Landis to China Grove.

NOVEMBER 23 Holiday Caravan Parade

- *Spencer to Salisbury*

A tradition you do not want to miss. Bring friends and family out to enjoy the 57th edition of the Holiday Caravan Parade, starting in Spencer and ending in Salisbury. Call 704-636-5335 for more information.

NOVEMBER 24 Butterball 5K

- *The Forum of Salisbury*

8-10 a.m. A Thanksgiving Day run benefiting Prevent Child Abuse Rowan.

The Forum is located at 2318 S. Main St. Go to preventchildabuserowan.org for information.

NOVEMBER 25 Holiday Night Out

- *Downtown Salisbury*

5-9 p.m. For more information, contact katelin@downtownsalisburync.com.

NOVEMBER 25-26 Kannapolis Holiday Market

- *Kannapolis City Hall*

10 a.m.-5 p.m. at City Hall, 401 Laureate Way. Live entertainment.

NOVEMBER 26 Santa and the Grinch

- *Bell Tower*

10 a.m.-noon. Come out and visit that old Grinch and Santa Claus himself. Get a start on your Christmas shopping, and enjoy an afternoon in downtown Salisbury. Photo-op for kids. Call 704-637-7814, or contact katelin@downtownsalisburync.com for more information.

NOVEMBER 28 Kannapolis Tree Lighting

- *Kannapolis Village Park*

The City of Kannapolis Parks and Recre-

ation Department once again will light the Community Christmas Tree at Village Park to kick off the Celebration of Lights for the season. The Winterland Express will be running after the fireworks launch. Call 704-920-4343 for information.

DECEMBER 1-5 The Living Christmas Tree

• *First Baptist Church*

Involves more than 100 church and community choral members. Free admission, but tickets are required. Donations of canned goods for Rowan Helping Ministries and a love offering are taken. Performances are 7 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Monday; and 5 and 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

DECEMBER 1-18 'A Broadway Christmas Carol'

• *Old Courthouse Theatre*

The Concord theater is located at 49 Spring St. NW. Go to 704-788-2405 or www.oldcourhousetheatre.org for information.

December 2 Jingle Mingle

• *Downtown Salisbury*

5-9 p.m. First Friday Out. Shops and restaurants in downtown Salisbury stay open later to give you a chance to get started on Christmas shopping. Contact katelin@downtownsalisburync.com for information.

DECEMBER 2 Tree Lighting Ceremony

• *City Park Lake*

6 p.m. Free event also includes a Candy Cane Hunt. For more information, call 704-216-2708, or go to www.salisburync.gov.

DECEMBER 2-4 The Arc of Rowan Festival of Trees

• *F&M Trolley Barn*

The Festival of Trees is the signature fund-raising event of The Arc of Rowan

County. It showcases a collection of beautifully decorated Christmas trees and is a wonderful kick-off to the Christmas season. The trees in the festival are sponsored by anyone interested in helping The Arc of Rowan. Times for viewing the trees are Dec. 2, 7-9 p.m.; Dec. 3, 11 a.m.- 8 p.m.; and Dec 4: 1-5 p.m.

DECEMBER 3 Brunch with Santa

• *Salisbury Civic Center*

10 a.m.-noon. Families are invited to make a holiday memory, sharing brunch with Santa. Enjoy great food, crafts, games, photos and more. All ages are welcome. Pre-registration is required. \$6 per person or \$20 per family of 4. For tickets, call 704-216-2708 or contact vkoon@salisburync.gov.

DECEMBER 3 RoBoJo Holiday Show

• *Rowan Public Library*

2 p.m. The library is located at 201 W. Fisher St., Salisbury. Contact 704-216-8234 for more information.

DECEMBER 3 Cleveland Christmas Parade

• *Downtown Cleveland*

2 p.m. Sponsored by Cleveland Lions Club, For more information, contact 704-278-0661, or hewclem@bellsouth.net.

DECEMBER 3 Fulton Heights Christmas Home Tour

• *Fulton Heights*

5-8 p.m. A holiday tour of homes in one of Salisbury's streetcar neighborhoods. For information, contact Theresa Pitner at theresapit@hotmail.com.

DECEMBER 3 Santa Run for Charity 5K

• *Millbridge Ruritan Building*

Go to salisburyrowanrunners.org for more information.

DECEMBER 4 Gingerbread House Workshop

• *Rowan Museum*

1-4 p.m. Build and decorate your own gingerbread house. The museum is located at 202 N. Main St., Salisbury. Contact 704-633-5946, or go to www.rowanmuseum.org for more information.

DECEMBER 6 Holiday Pajama Express

• *South Rowan Library*

6-7:30 p.m. Fun, refreshments and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Wear your favorite holiday PJs. Call 704-216-7729 for more information.

DECEMBER 7-10 '10 Minutes till Christmas'

• *Lee Street theatre*

7:30 nightly. This ninth annual new play festival will get everyone in the Christmas spirit. Call 704-310-5507, or go to leestreet.org.

DECEMBER 9-11 Christmas in the Village

• *Historic Gold Hill*

Refreshments, Santa, Friday night shopping, s'mores at the Arbor. Go to www.goldhillnc.com for information.

DEC. 8-11, 15-17 'Elf: The Musical'

• *Norvell Theater*

Piedmont Players Youth Theatre. Based on the beloved holiday film, this hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity. For more information: Go to www.piedmontplayers.com or call 704-633-5471.

DECEMBER 10 Girls on the Run 5K

• *Catawba College*

9 a.m. at Shuford Stadium.

DECEMBER 10

Santa & the Grinch

- *Downtown Salisbury*

10 a.m.-1 p.m. Santa and the Grinch hang out with antique firetrucks. For more information, go to katelin@downtownsalisburync.com.

DECEMBER 10

Kannapolis Christmas Parade

- *Downtown Kannapolis*

6-9 p.m. 78th annual parade.

DECEMBER 11

St. John's Men's Chorus Christmas Concert

- *St. John's Lutheran*

4 p.m. The church is located at 200 W. Innes St., Salisbury.

DECEMBER 12-13

Christmas Traditions

- *Meroney Theater*

7 p.m. each performance. "Christmas Traditions: The Stories and Music of Christmas" represents a collaboration between pianist Susan Trivette, storyteller Dr. Karl Hales and singers Neal Wilkinson, Debra Hubbard-Pastore and Laura Millsbaugh. Admission is at least one canned item for Rowan Helping Ministries.

DECEMBER 17

Christmas in the Grove

- *China Grove*

Join in on the Christmas cheer, drink some hot cocoa and ride a horse-drawn carriage to see the beautiful lights of China Grove. Call 704-857-2466 for more information.

DECEMBER 17-18

'The Nutcracker'

- *Catawba College*

Salisbury Symphony and Piedmont Dance Theatre combine for this Christmas classic. Shows in Keppel Auditorium. Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 18, 2:30 p.m. For more information: 704-637-4314, or salburysymphony.com



Mary Jane Hartley puts the ribbon topper on a tree decorated by Rowan Cabarrus Community College's SOAR program during The Arc of Rowan's Festival of Trees at the F&M Trolley Barn in 2014. This year's event is Dec. 2-4.

.org

DECEMBER 18

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

- *First United Methodist Church*

5 p.m. FUMC is located at 217 S. Church St. Free admission. Contact matthew@fumcsalisbury.org for information.

DECEMBER 24

Hall House tours

- *226 S. Jackson St.*

Christmas Eve tours of the historic Dr. Josephus Hall House, 6-8 p.m. For more information: 704-636-0103, or www.historicsalisbury.org.

DEC. 31, JAN. 1

Old Stone House Christmas

- *Old Stone House*

Dec. 31, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jan. 1, noon-4 p.m. Tours of the historic house and the reenactment of a Colonial family's Christmas celebration in Rowan County will highlight the weekend. Guides in period costumes will be on site, and guests will enjoy learning

about customs and participating in crafts, musket firing, woodworking (benches, bowls and spoons), weaving, candle-making, open-fire cooking with lots of samples, music, children's games, goats and chickens. Located at 770 Old Stone House Road. Contact 704-633-5946 or go to www.rowanmuseum.org for more information.

DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve at the Bell Tower


- *Bell Tower Park*

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

DECEMBER 31

Woodleaf Tomato Drop

- *Unity Presbyterian Church*

9 p.m.-midnight. The New Year's Eve Tomato Drop is becoming a Woodleaf tradition. Contact 704-278-4248, or go to woodleaf-tomatofestival@yahoo.com for information. 



Tilley Harley-Davidson in Salisbury was host for the Sixth Annual Biker Blues & BBQ Rally in which more than 70 barbecue teams from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Florida competed.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Clockwise from top left: Joline and Scott Adams are behind the Sauced competition team from Charlotte; Adam Strange, Billy Birch and Alex Gunter of the All About That Baste team of Charlotte; Motorcycles filled the parking areas during the event at Tilley's Harley-Davidson in Salisbury; Butch Kelly and Steve Hampson headed the Butts 'R' Us team from Waxhaw.



Biker Blues & BBQ





Above: Kayla Peak and Mat Griner headed the Big Show BBQ team, connected with the 'John Boy and Billy Show' on Charlotte radio. Right: Todd Smith, Bubba Chavis, Luke Darnell and Jerry Stephenson were part of the Redneck Scientific team from Clayton.



Top: Bob Bennett, Robbie Bennett, Stephanie Bennett and Dean Foster of Smoking Studs BBQ in Mooresville. Below: Melissa and Andrew Rasmusen of The Smokehouse Mafia.



Above: The Kings of Q, based in Raleigh, included Craig Scates, Byron Lawson, Brock Dalton and Rich Campana. Left: Richard Drum, George Good-year and Dennis Dowling. Dowling's Smoke This team of Hickory was the 2015 grand champion at Biker Blues and Barbecue.





David Pulliam, Kathy Pulliam and Tim Campbell



Top: Gene Faller and Chris Blumenthal. Above: Sean Meyers and Jim Taylor. Below: Bill Graham and John Henderlite.



Above: Bethany Sinnott, Fle Griffith and Craig Kolkebeck. Above left: Chris Speer and Tripp Edwards. Left: Martha and Randy Lassiter.





Above: Shari Graham and Hen Henderlite.
Right: Brian Romans, Jess Buckwalter, Lisa Perone and Jamison Middlemiss.



Lee St. theatre

kickoff

At a kickoff celebration for its ninth season, Lee Street theatre announced it will have 10 new shows from September through July 2017. Craig Kolkebeck will be serving as interim artistic director for the new season.

— Photos by Len Clark



Top: Mike Cline and Beth Homan. Above: Wendy Weant, Diane Labowitz and Seth Labowitz. Left: Brad Stephenson, Kindra Stephenson, Jenny Hubbard and Robert Jones.



Above: Third-year Campbell University School of Medicine students and their friends. Below: Novant Health Rowan Medical Center President Dari Caldwell and husband David.

NOVANT HEALTH ROWAN PATRONS' BALL

The 26th Annual Patrons' Ball for Novant Health Rowan Medical Center was held at Catawba College's Crystal Lounge. The old Hollywood theme was brought to life with vintage-styled Hollywood complimentary photographs and Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall impersonators who danced with guests throughout the evening. The ball was led by event chairperson Tracy Smith and raised \$135,000 to assist in the purchase of a 3D mammography unit for the new mobile coach. This will be the first mobile coach outfitted with 3D technology in the Novant Health system.

— Photos by Karen Goforth of Irresistible Portraits





Above: Salisbury Mayor Karen Alexander and husband Henry. Right: Noelle Loebe and Jeff Motes.



Left: Tracy and Kenan Smith. Above: Tippie Miller with Joel and Joyce Goodwin. Right: N.C. Rep. Harry Warren dances with wife Catherine.



Above: Guests relaxed between songs at dinner tables decorated with the classic movies theme. Right: Madison and Ashley Currin and Lauren and Charles Whaley.





The Price of Freedom Museum near China Grove held its annual 9/11 Remembrance Day. Several fire departments, law enforcement personnel, EMS representatives and military veterans participated in the all-day event, which featured emergency equipment; old cars and farm equipment; food by the Millbridge Ruritans; and music from the Strings of Victory and Hubert Furr Family. Battalion Chief David Morris of the Salisbury Fire Department was keynote speaker.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: The American flag is displayed proudly outside the Price of Freedom Museum during its 9/11 Remembrance Day. Above left: Capt. Drew Barkley of Kannapolis Fire Department plays 'Amazing Grace' on the bagpipes.

9/11 Remembrance



Above: Noah Wooten, Donna Schmelzter, Katie Greene and Hannah Schmelzter. Left: Ronnie Flowers, Chris Corriher and Nick Fulham.



Left: Karen McCorkle, Carol Furr and Leah Cavanaugh are sitting in front of a Salisbury Fire Department trailer, which holds a steel girder piece from the World Trade Center towers that came down Sept. 11, 2001.



Left: Chuck Overcash, Meagan Poole and Landon Poole. Right: Bobby Harrison, museum founder Bobby Mault and Joel Honeycutt.





Above: Teresa Patterson and Jeff Shaw.

Left: Samone Cowan, Katie Murdock, Karen Taylor, Latasha Gibbs, Jeanne LeMaster and Cynthia Okwara.



The Rev. Fleming Otey and Yoko Otey

KETNER DEDICATION

at Rowan Helping Ministries

Marking its 30th anniversary of service to the community, Rowan Helping Ministries rededicated its original building as the Ralph W. Ketner Center in honor of the late philanthropist and Food Lion cofounder. The building, which opened in 1989 on North Long Street, underwent extensive renovations and now houses the ministry's administration and crisis services.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: Paul Miller, Nate Valentine and Bob Bankhead.
Right: Cynthia Okwara, Sherry Smith, Dianne Bruce and Darotheia Lyerly.





Above: Siblings Naomi and Connor Koontz enjoy the celebration. Below: Kynlee Carey, from China Grove Elementary School, gets on her feet with teachers.



Granite Quarry Elementary School was on hand for the party.

Rowan-Salisbury Schools celebrate

Recent test scores released by the state for Rowan-Salisbury Schools showed upward growth for the district. For the school system and its board, that was cause to celebrate. After a called meeting at 4 p.m., more than 200 staff, parents, students, administrators and teachers gathered in the Board of Education room at the Wallace Educational Forum to cheer the improvements.

— Photos by Jon Lakey



Right: Angelia Fleming, from North Rowan Middle School, and Rita Foil, public information officer for Rowan-Salisbury Schools.

Left: Rowan-Salisbury Schools Superintendent Dr. Lynn Moody, Salisbury Police Resource Officer Shanita Millsaps and Sharon Gardner celebrate.



The second annual Toss for Tots cornhole tournament to benefit Prevent Child Abuse Rowan was held at the F&M Trolley Barn. Once again, local cornhole teams turned out to show their best moves, have a lot of fun, and raise money for a good cause. The Livehouse band, with popular dance tunes, entertained the crowd, and supporters noshed on food truck offerings from Big Tasty and Chibogz. The event raised \$21,500, the proceeds of which will go toward therapeutic services for clients of the Terrie Hess House.

— Photos by Susan Shinn



Wendy Talbert and her son, Jace Overcash, play a fun game of cornhole in front of the F&M Trolley Barn, where the tournament was held.



Larry and Amy Becker enjoyed a meal of bratwurst.

Toss for Tots



Livehouse, with Amp Culbertson on lead guitar, lead singer Walter 'Snooky' James, LaDell Yates on bass guitar and Thomas Robinson on keyboards entertained the crowd. Not pictured is drummer Brian Roberts.



Above: Longtime Terrie Hess House supporters Charlene and Tomme Gamewell. Above right: Sisters Jennifer Jennings and Amanda Pennington enjoyed an evening out together. Right: Adriane Morris, Alesia Hill, Andrew Hill and Amber Watson.



Toys for takeout

Our simple tradition of cooking for friends has become so much more.

Editor's note: This column is written jointly by Jack and Jeanie Moore.

In retirement my husband, Jack, became an entrepreneur, marketing and selling his own BBQ sauce. He loves to cook pulled pork, baby back ribs and barbecued chicken in our backyard on his customized oil-tank cooker to promote his sauces.

I tell people all the time that “he can cook for 100, but not for two.”

During the 2005 holiday season, we decided to honor our friends, family and colleagues with a takeout BBQ chicken dinner as a token of our friendship and gratitude. The event was fun and folks appreciated our gesture and consequently brought us bottles of wine, holiday goodies, candy and other small gifts.

Our takeout dinners became an annual event, and our menu now includes baby back ribs, BBQ slaw, pinto beans, and bread.

In 2008, we decided to use the event to promote a bigger cause. Our community was suffering from the loss of manufacturing jobs and the resulting recession created additional stress on struggling families during the holidays. We invited our guests to bring an unwrapped toy for any age child to help our local Salvation Army with its outreach to needy families.

Each year, our guest list has grown and

our donations have increased. In the last couple of years, Jeanie became involved with the Christmas Bureau, which includes Rowan County United Way, Salvation Army,

Christmas Happiness, Toys for Tots and Operation Santa Claus. This collaboration works to ensure that assistance is leveraged to serve as many needy families as possible.

During the application process, Jeanie was able to gain insight into the needs of local families and the “wish lists” of children in the community.

We now make suggestions on our annual e-mail invitation for items that are both practical and desirable.

Several dedicated and faithful friends help us every year to

serve meals, prepare takeout boxes, organize toys and clean up. Our guest list includes family, friends, former co-workers, public safety employees, coaches, ministers, politicians, educators, judges, lawyers, doctors,

postal carriers, businessmen, businesswomen, neighbors (old and new), and new guests are added each holiday season.

In 2015, we served over 170 plates. Many people shop throughout the year to support our “Toys for Takeout” event. The generosity of our friends and colleagues has been amazing – we can tell that folks have put a lot of thought and love into their contributions.

In 2016, we plan to focus on building literacy skills in our community. Our desire is to not only make a difference during the holidays, but also for life. We want to make a bigger and more lasting impact. One of our local elementary schools has provided us with a list of items that will help facilitate reading growth and classroom performance, and we have added them to our “Santa” list.

We hope to fill our living room with books, board games, puzzles, art supplies, jewelry-making kits and electronic readers, along with the dolls, footballs, basketballs, bicycles, skateboards, remote control cars and other toys donated by our incredibly generous friends.

Every year we look forward to shopping and cooking for “Toys for Takeout.” This night truly is our time to reflect on our blessings and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with friends who have become our extended family. We could not do it without them. **S**

Jeanie Moore is a retired vice president of advancement and continuing education for Rowan-Cabarrus Community College. Jack Moore is a retired telephone lineman and maker of Blowin’ Smoke barbecue sauces, sold in many locations.



by
**JACK &
JEANIE
MOORE**



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