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*On the cover:* Tom Hanks speaks at the launch of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's event 'Caring for Our Hidden Heroes' in 2016 in Washington, D.C. (Submitted photo)

*On this page:* There are many University of North Carolina ornaments and trees throughout the home of Lee and Paula Stone. (Sean Meyers photo)





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Brad Walser, President/Owner, started Walser Technology Group in 2003 and is joined by Tracy Alewine, the company's Director of Finance and Administration. Brad, a Salisbury High School graduate, is a passionate hometown entrepreneur and is also the Chair of the Board of Rowan County Chamber of Commerce.

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# See you in the funny papers

I'm writing this on a cold, damp day as Hurricane Ian makes his way through the Carolinas.

Yet there's warmth in my heart, because I want to wish you the happiest of holidays!

Welcome to the Holiday Edition of Salisbury the Magazine. It's always a special edition, because my goodness gracious, it's a special time of year.

I love giving and receiving books. In her Bookish column, Deirdre Parker Smith brings us a whole sleigh full of wonderful ideas for the bibliophile in your life.

Last year, two holiday exciting events occurred for the first time, and both return this year: Winterfest in Spencer on Dec. 2-3 and 9-10, and Christmas on Church Street in Salisbury Dec. 16. We sat down with Spencer Mayor Jonathan Williams to talk about Winterfest in his town, and Shari Graham, who with Hen Henderlite is spearheading Christmas on Church Street.

A lot of folks give generously at the end of the year, but the Everyman's Bible Class does this year-round. Maggie Blackwell visited with this extraordinary group of guys at First Presbyterian Church.

This is the time of year that children look forward to visiting Santa and sharing their wish lists. A group in Huntersville, Santas Just Like Me, provides Black Santas to groups all over the country, but especially in North Carolina. Meet Warren Keyes, one of those Santa helpers, who just happens to have a Salisbury connection.

It's about time to start decorating your homes for the holidays and sure, some folks start earlier than others. (A friend of mine used to start at midnight Nov. 1. I am not making this up.)

But you'd be hard pressed to find more trees in a home than at the residence of Lee and Paula Stone. The Stones, who are newlyweds after marrying in 2021, have a gorgeous home filled with room after room of themed trees. Maggie Blackwell loved visiting with them and you will,



too.

Incidentally, the Stones also start their decorating on Nov. 1, but likely not at midnight. Not that I know of.

Of course, it's not just the holiday season. Sports are transitioning from football season to basketball season. Depending what's happening in the playoffs determines whether your team



*Susan Shinn Turner with Senator Elizabeth Dole*

is still playing. If you've been to South Rowan football games for the past 40 seasons, you'll recognize the voice of Randy Bare. He started as P.A. announcer as a favor to Charles "Crowbar" Corriher — father of standout defensive lineman Chris, class of 1983 — and he's been in the booth ever since.

November is also the month we honor veterans, with Veterans Day observances on Nov. 11. We had the enormous honor to visit with Sen. Elizabeth Dole this summer at her Watergate apartment. Since 2012, Sen. Dole has chaired the foundation that bears her name, which assists military caregivers. With only 1 percent of the population who are members of the military, Sen. Dole says that a lot of folks aren't often aware of the challenges this group faces every day.

Sen. Dole hosted the 5th annual Heroes and History Makers Celebration on Oct. 19 in Washington. My husband and I were so very pleased to be in attendance as the senator's guests. Look for photos in an upcoming issue of Salisbury the Magazine.

Finally, it's been such a gift to be your editor of Salisbury the Magazine since March 2022. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that for everything there is a season, and this is the season I need to spend more time with my family. After Daddy died in August 2021, I have found that I want and need to spend more time with Mom. She is doing great — Friday is always our Chick-fil-A day!

No worries, though. You'll still see my byline here in the magazine from time to time, as well as in the Salisbury Post. And a familiar name will be taking over the editor's seat in January — our very own Maggie Blackwell. Please extend a warm welcome to her just as you did for me.

It's been a pleasure.

As Daddy used to say, "I'll see you in the funny papers!"

— Susan Shinn Turner  
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine





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# *Holidays*



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# THROUGH THE LENS by Cheryl Goins



*Cheryl Goins captured a striking scene of The Plaza on a wet evening with a colorful sky. To submit a photo for Through the Lens, send a high-resolution photo to [andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com](mailto:andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com). Photos must be vertical orientation.*

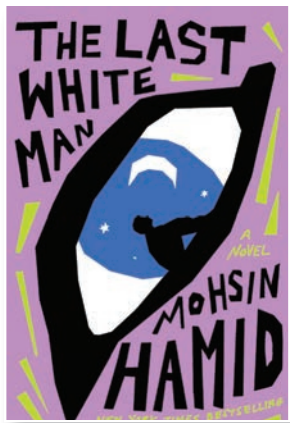


# New thoughts on what matters to us

**H**ow do you choose from the riches of published books this year? So many favorite authors have new books, so many new writers are making impressive debuts. Just reading about what's new and what's to come is like a banquet.

Below are a few suggestions for books to give your favorite reader, or to add to your list for Santa.

The concept of **"The Last White Man,"** by Mohsin Hamid, reminds me of Ursula K. LeGuin's "Lathe of Heaven," in which a man's dreams change reality, including eliminating racial prejudice. Hamid's work is a speculative imagining of widespread racial "turnover," with inspiration from Kafka's "The Metamorphosis." This



**'The Last White Man'**  
by Mohsin Hamid

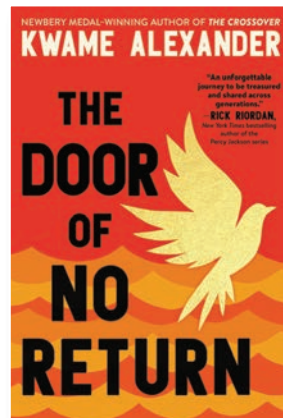
novel shapes that transformation for our times: "One morning Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned a deep and undeniable brown." And he's not the only one. Every kind of reaction ensues — personal, societal, emotional, psychological. A book to further our discussion of a critical issue, Barbara Kingsolver takes inspiration from Dickens' "David Copperfield" and brings the story to modern day Appalachia in **"Demon Copperhead."** The new David is born to a teenage, single mother in a shabby trailer. His only legacy is his late father's good looks and scrappy talent for staying alive. Kingsolver moves him through foster care as he takes jobs that break child labor laws, tries to learn in crumbling schools, and runs into painful addictions familiar to anyone familiar with the opioid crisis. Throughout, the protagonist reflects on his own invisibility in a culture with a waning interest in rural life.

Another coming-of-age story, **"Now is Not the Time to Panic,"** by Kevin Wilson, features 16-year-old Frankie Budge, an aspiring writer, indifferent student, offbeat loner, trying to make it through another sad summer in Coalfield, Tenn. She meets Zeke, a talented artist who has just moved into his grandmother's unhappy house and is equally lonely and awkward. As romantic and creative sparks fly, the two make an unsigned poster, shot through with an enigmatic phrase that becomes unforgettable to anyone who sees it.

The posters begin appearing everywhere, and soon the mystery has dangerous repercussions that spread far beyond the town. Wilson's wit and blazing prose create a nuanced exploration of young love, identity and the power of art — and, ultimately, what the truth will set free. Available Nov. 8.

**"The Door of No Return,"** by Kwame Alexander. Alexander takes another exciting, ambitious step forward, this time into historical fiction. The novel opens in West Africa in 1860 and follows a boy named Kofi who is swept up into the unstoppable current of history. As his world turns upside down, Kofi soon ends up in a fight for his life. What happens next will send him on a harrowing journey across land and sea, and away from everything he loves.

Using what she has learned in her own life, Michelle Obama offers **"The Light We Carry."** Instead of offering clichés and pointless affirmations, the former First Lady teaches strategies to help you find hope and balance. She digs deep into the conversation about difficult topics and finds practical wisdom to help readers cope. With insightful stories and usable tools, Obama



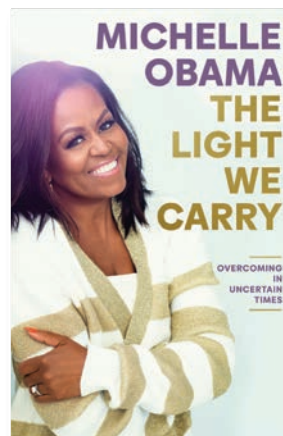
**'The Door of No Return'**  
by Kwame Alexander

hopes to empower readers to find connections in an ever-changing world. Available Nov. 15.

Not your typical rock star, Bono has dedicated decades and considerable funds to activism, including the fight against AIDS and extreme poverty. In **"Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story,"** Bono says, "Surrender is the story of one pilgrim's lack of progress ... With a fair amount of fun along the way." Bono takes us from his early days growing up in Dublin, including the sudden loss of his mother when he was 14, to U2's unlikely journey to become

one of the world's most influential rock bands. Each chapter is named after a song and includes original drawings by Bono. Available Nov. 1.

**"Wonderland,"** by Annie Leibovitz. This book's plain cover reveals the genius of the long-time photographer inside. Released in 2021, the fashion photos in this book contain a wealth of history and subjects both famous and infamous.



**'The Light We Carry'**  
by Michelle Obama

"Looking back at my work, I see that fashion has always been there," she writes in the preface. "Fashion plays a part in the scheme of everything, but photography always comes first for me. The photograph is the most important part. And photography is so big that it can encompass journalism, portraiture, reportage, family photographs, fashion ... My work for Vogue fueled the fire for a kind of photography that I might not otherwise have explored."

Includes 350 extraordinary images (many previously unpublished) featuring a diverse range of subjects: Nicole Kidman, Serena Williams, Pina Bausch, RuPaul, Cate Blanchett, Lady Gaga, Matthew Barney, Kate Moss, Natalia Vodianova, Rihanna, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Karl Lagerfeld, Nancy Pelosi. With a foreword by Anna Wintour. **[S]**





# In good voice

*Randy Bare has handled South Rowan public address duties in football for 40 years*

WRITTEN BY MIKE LONDON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY





*After the game, Randy Bare re-announces all of the announcements as the stadium is emptied. Randy Bare has been the announcer for the home South Rowan High School football games for 40 years.*





**F**rom Ronald Reagan to Joe Biden, Randy Bare has held the same job every fall.

Or if you prefer a South Rowan football coaching timeline, he's been a constant presence from the time of Reid Bradshaw to the time of Chris Walsh.

Bare headed to the press box at South Rowan High when he was 22 years old as a favor to a friend.

Forty years later, he's never left his post.

"People may not know my face, but they do know my voice after all these years," Bare says.

Bare grew up near the Highway Patrol Station on Highway 29, between Salisbury and China Grove. He graduated from South Rowan High in 1978.

"Those were the Reid Bradshaw days, wish-bone days, some of the best days for South Rowan football," Bare says.

Many of Bare's youthful accomplishments came in the world of scouting. He earned the Eagle Scout and Order of the Arrow.

He loved sports and grew up on Little League ball fields and in basketball gyms, but didn't

play varsity sports at South.

He had a good voice and an interest in radio. After graduation, he enrolled in the nine-month course offered by Carolina School of Broadcasting in Charlotte.

"It's the early 1980s, I'm working first shift for Cannon Mills, and doing the Sunset Shift on the weekend at WRNA radio in China Grove," Bare says. "Chris Corriher was one of South Rowan's players and his father, Charles (Crowbar) Corriher, was president of the booster club. He liked what I was doing at WRNA and told me South had a need for a public address announcer. He asked me to give it a try and to let him know if didn't work out and they'd get someone else. I loved it. I never did ask them to try someone else."

He figures his last game as a "regular fan" at South occurred before the 1982 season. That's the year he assumed PA duties. It was the best of times for South football. The Raiders were still in the 3A classification (the move to 4A would come in 1985) and were competing for conference championships every year. They could go toe-to-toe with rival and neighbor A.L. Brown

in those days. In the first half of the 1980s, the schools played overtime three straight years. Attendance was through the roof. Community support for the red and black in China Grove and Landis was at a fever pitch.

Bare calmly fit in to his role. He wasn't the story. His task was to help tell the story of what was happening on the field.

His job was simultaneously the loneliest and the most social one at the stadium. He's high above the action, apart from it all, but he interacts with everyone in attendance.

"I made up my mind from the start that I wasn't going to be one of those PA guys who is a cheerleader," Bare says. "We've got a dozen good cheerleaders down there on the field. My job is to tell who ran the ball, where they ran it to, and who made the tackle. I'll get excited, but I don't go crazy. I'm an old-school announcer and I try to respect the kids on both teams. A fan on the far end of the field may not be able to tell if the ball has been spotted on the 2-yard-line or on the 5. So I just look at it like I'm having a conversation with that individual fan on every play, helping him enjoy the ballgame."





*Above: Randy Bare watches as South Rowan offense runs a play in a recent game against West Rowan High. Below left: Even after years of reading the hand signals of the officials on the field, Bare refers to a signal card to confirm the call before announcing. Below right: A South Rowan Raiders hat hangs in the booth.*





Forty years' worth of home games for Bare has included Thursday's jayvee tussles as well as Friday's varsity battles. That's roughly 500 games.

"The crowd isn't as big on Thursday, but that's the only difference," Bare says. "I try to give the same amount of effort to the jayvees. They deserve it."

Bare does his best to prepare. He studies rosters before the games, and if there's an unusual name or a name he has no clue how to pronounce, he'll ask a coach before the contest.

First names have gotten more complicated over the years. There aren't as many Jimmies and Joes. Names come now with apostrophes and hyphens.

"I'll write out the pronunciation of the name phonetically next to the player's roster number — write it out in my language," Bare says. "That helps. I see some names and it's like, 'That has to be a typo. That can't be right.' But usually it's not a typo."

Mistakes do happen occasionally, even to the best PA men.

"I butchered a name the other night in the South Rowan-Northwest Cabarrus game," Bare says. "It happens. Sometimes my mind is one lane and my brain is in another."

In the early 1990s, Bare recalls pronouncing a South name that looked simple enough on his roster sheet.

"Jeff Kerr on the tackle for the Raiders," Bare informed the fans.

He pronounced Kerr as "Cur," which seemed logical. That's how most Kerrs do it.

"I think both of Jeff's parents were knocking on my door a minute later," Bare recalls with a laugh.

Bare learned to pronounce Jeff Kerr as "Jeff Car" before the night was over. It was necessary. He would become one of the best players in South history.

While Bare declines being a cheerleading PA man, he isn't dry. He's not without a playful sense of humor.

"I like to sneak one in now and then," he says, "just to make sure people are paying attention."

During the COVID peak, Bare casually re-



*Bare, left, at work in the press box during a recent game.*

marked on a third-and-very long situation that the Raiders' opponent was facing third-and-a social distance.

In a November game after basketball practice had started, two R.J. Reynolds receivers took off well ahead of the snap, and flags flew.

"The Demons have been called for traveling,"

deadpanned Bare. "That one got a good crowd reaction."

Bare has handed out a few nicknames to Raiders over the years, some of which stuck permanently.

Safety Brad "Hit Man" Lanning was a terror around the turn of the century.

"People ask me about the memorable games, but I remember specific plays more than games," Bare says. "In a game against West Forsyth, Lanning hit a guy on the sideline so hard



the ball flew 10 feet in the air. West Forsyth's coach (Russell Stone) was the East-West All-Star Game head coach. That's the night Lanning made his team."

Chris "Bull" Kotish trampled tacklers for the Raiders in the mid-1990s and carried his aggressive nickname with him to Lenoir-Rhyne.

In more recent times, Bare got a kick out of it whenever "Detective Remington Steele" made a stop for the Raiders. Remington Steele was a 1980s crime drama on the NBC network.

Besides downs and distances, ballcarriers and tacklers, Bare is in charge of the music that is played pregame and in-game.

"I started out with a cassette player in the booth, then it was CDs, and now everything is on a sophisticated computer program," Bare says. "It makes it easy. I just have to push the right button."

Bare handled PA duties in the early days of

South Rowan American Legion baseball, but it's with South football that he is usually identified.

His voice at football games is his "broadcast voice." It's different from the voice he uses in his regular office job at Food Lion. He's worked for Food Lion for 37 years.

His distinctive voice can be heard in the movie "Fall Nights in China Grove." He traveled to Spartanburg, S.C., for taping sessions and got to meet Don Munson, voice of the Clemson Tigers.

"He spoke to me before I could speak to him, and that's a guy who's broadcast national championship games," Bare says. "Great guy. In this business, you meet a lot of people. I've met so many good people over the years."

Bare has watched four sons grow up. They range in age from 17 to 31.

Bare points out that growing up where he did he attended school at China Grove Elementary,

China Grove Middle and South Rowan.

If he were coming along now in the same house, he would attend Knollwood Elementary, Southeast Middle and Carson.

Times change.

But some things are constant. Like Bare on the South PA.

"For me, it's still a concrete floor and a concrete ceiling and a good place to be every Thursday or Friday," Bare says. "Someone patted me on the back during the game the other night and I looked around and it was Dr. Alan King, who was South Rowan's principal for many years. He grinned at me and said, 'What, you're still here?'"

He's still here, and armed with a new music program and a new microphone to amplify his voice, he plans to stick around for a while.

"I hope to do this until the day I can't get up the ladder anymore," Bare says. "Man, I've loved doing it." **S**

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*Members of First Presbyterian Church, from left, Susan Mesimer, Rhonda Shaw, Drew Adams, Frank Adams and David Carmichael re-enact a scene during the inaugural Christmas on Church Street last year.*



*First Presbyterian Music Director John Stafford leads the choir.*

# *Christmas on Church Street returns*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS

It's time to take another stroll in Downtown Salisbury as Christmas on Church Street returns for a second year.

The event will take place on Dec. 16 from 6 to 8 p.m., and includes stops at most of the downtown churches.

Participants can listen to a podcast which will share a scripture at each stop, along with a description of the scene you're observing, says Shari Graham, who's coordinating this year's event with Hen Henderlite. The route begins at First Methodist and ends at St. Luke's Episcopal.

Britt Nicole will headline a concert at Bell Tower Green around 7:30 p.m. There will also be special music by area choirs.

"Last year was such a joyous time," Graham says. "Last year was the first big outing after Covid. People were so excited to be out. We definitely wanted do it again."

— Susan Shinn Turner





*Above:* Visitors make their way along Church Street at St. John's Lutheran Church.  
*Right:* Andrew Hodges, right, and his daughter Sammie perform Christmas songs at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. *Below:* St. John's Lutheran Church member Jake Parrott portrays one of the three wise men.





## HOLIDAY



***Above left:** Visitors make their way around Bell Tower Green during Christmas on Church Street. **Above right:** St. John's Lutheran Church members from left, Jake Parrott, Andy Payok and Harrison Parrott portray the three wise men. **Below:** Visitors were able to visit the sanctuary at St Luke's Episcopal Church.*







*First Presbyterian Music  
Director John Stafford  
leads the choir.*







*Above:* Visitors enter the main gate during the inaugural Winterfest event, a German Christmas Marketplace set up in Spencer's Park Plaza. *Right:* Spencer's Old 97 Kettle Corn Company set up in the marketplace. *Below:* An honoree plate hangs in a Christmas tree.







*Visiting children pose for a photo in front of the Christmas tree during the inaugural Winterfest event last year.*

# *Winterfest brings a variety of events to Spencer*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS

Last year's holiday celebration in Spencer could have been called Summerfest one weekend and Rainfest the next, but Mayor Jonathan Williams is hopeful that the weather will be more seasonably appropriate for the 2022 edition of Winterfest.

"We've put in an order for cold weather," Williams says with a chuckle.

Winterfest is slated for 4-8 p.m. Friday and 12-8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2-3 and Dec. 9-10.

Tom and Martha Smith are the festival's lead sponsors.

Sherry Mason Brown, Kim Lentz, and Corinne Mauldin lead the planning committee.

"They always think bigger and better, so that's what we're gonna have this year," Williams notes.

The idea for Winterfest came from the Christmas markets in Germany, with a sprinkling of a Hallmark Christmas movie thrown in.

After the pandemic, Williams says, "I thought it was something our community really needed."

Despite last year's crazy weather, Williams says, "It really was a success."

Williams saw guests from not just Spencer, but from all over the county. Additionally, Winterfest runs concurrently with the Polar Express at the N.C. Transportation Museum, drawing even more guests to town.

The grand opening and tree lighting take place at 6 p.m. Dec. 2. The Mountain Top Polka Band starts playing at 4:30 p.m., followed by Ricky Howsare at 7 p.m. The following night,

Alexis Cowan, Adrian Smith, Alexis Greer — The A Team — perform at 7 p.m. The following Friday, Middleshire plays at 4 p.m. followed by the Carson High School Chorus at 6 p.m. The next evening, Divided by Four closes out Winterfest at 6:30 p.m.

The Freeze Your Buns 5K returns at noon Dec. 3.

New this year is an ice skating rink — a silicon-based surface that skates just like ice, but that doesn't melt. You can sign up to skate when you arrive, and you can bring your own skates, or skates are provided. Skating is free.

Warm weather, take that! Ha!

For a complete Winterfest schedule or to sign up for the 5K, visit [spencerexperience.org](http://spencerexperience.org).

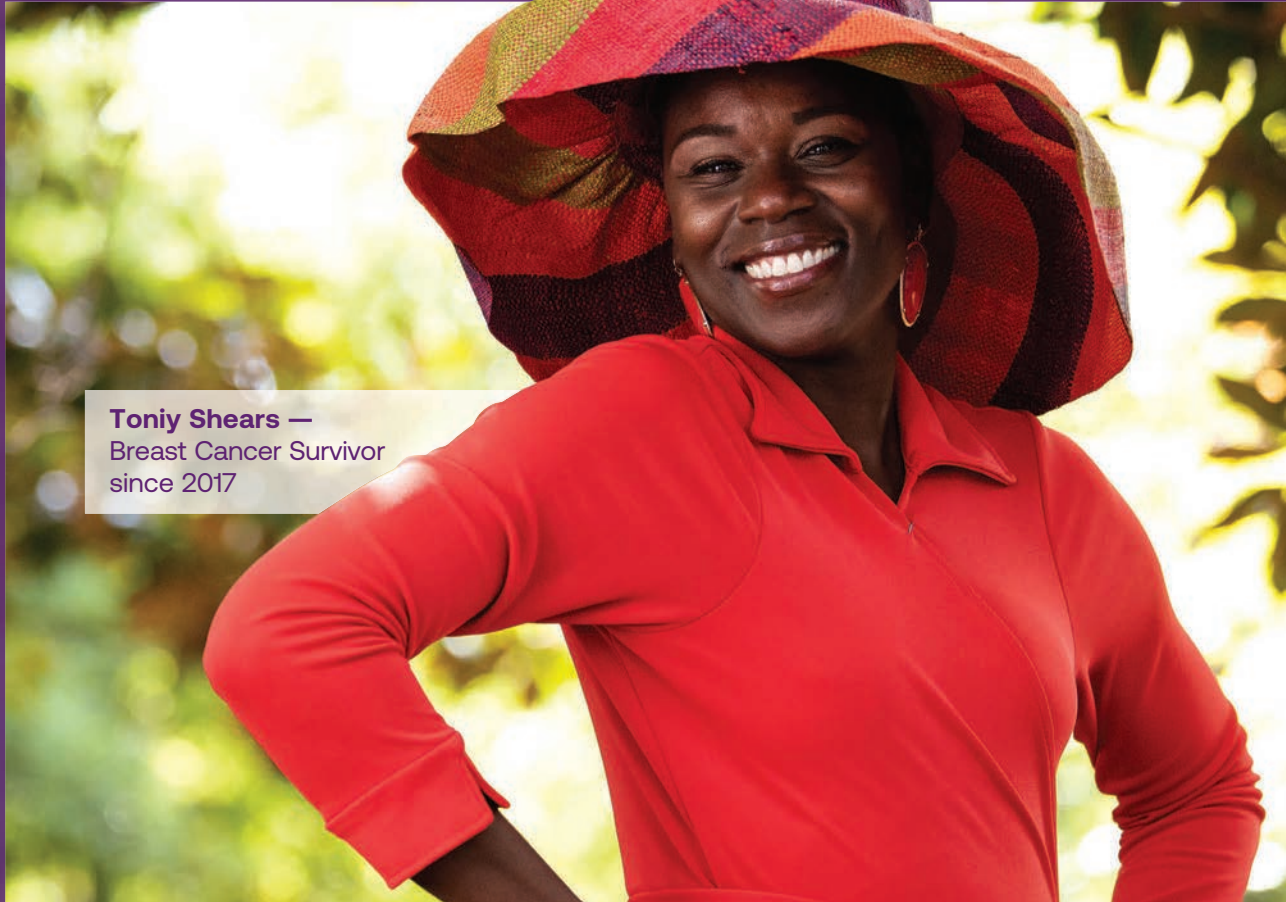
— Susan Shinn Turner





**Top:** Visitors make their way around the marketplace. **Above:** From left, Amanda Barker, Paisleigh Barker, Bentley Patrick and Matt Patrick decorate Christmas cookies. **Left:** Event organizer Corinne Mauldin watches over the festivities.





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*Top: Chuck Payne of Salisbury shows off his metallurgy skills.  
Below left: Winterfest ornaments adorn a Christmas tree.  
Below: Visitors snap a photograph in front of the large Christmas tree.*







**Clockwise from above:**  
 Kannapolis artist and vendor Ray Richardson, stands in his booth; an honoree plate hangs in a Christmas tree; Isabella Sparnicht decorates a Christmas cookie; handcrafted jewelry from Heather and Chon Carlile of 'Shaped by Nature' in Lexington, waits to be purchased; a picturesque sky creates the background for the Christmas tree star.







*From left, Chris Bradshaw, Greg Scarborough, Jay Whittington and David Simmons sing a hymn during service. First Presbyterian's Everyman's Bible Class is a group dedicated individuals that are regular supporters of local non-profits and community programs.*

# *band of* **BROTHERS**

Everyman's Bible Class share a love  
for Christ, helping others and fellowship

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE BLACKWELL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS





*Keith Garner gives the lesson for the day as Rev. Dr. Bob Lewis Zooms in on the class.*

“W

hen the roll, (*when the roll*) is called up yon-der...”

The voices of Everyman’s Bible Class rise upwards with joy and gusto. Some voices melodic, some

not so much, they harmonize to three different songs every Sunday morning.

Everyman’s Bible Class has been a stalwart at First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury for more than a hundred years. Initially, they met in “The Hut,” a small building demolished long ago. Its location would be halfway between the Bell Tower at its eponymous park, and the former restaurant.

When the church built the education building in 1953, the family of Sam Purcell Sr. donated the funds for the Everyman’s Class. His daughter Alice played piano for the class for more than 50 years. The men loved Alice so much they’ve honored her with the stage at Bell Tower Green, inscriptions on hymnals and most recently, a new chime system for the church.

When the men of that 1953 class convened in the new classroom, they each bought a chair for the room. Those armed wooden chairs serve the men today, 50 years later.



*Event goes dig into the oysters during the groups’ annual oyster roast fundraiser.*

Today there are more than 50 men on the rolls. We talked with the class Finance Committee about their history, their goals and their passion for the class.

Hap Roberts is the longest-term member now. As a preschooler, he visited the classroom, climbed up in one of those wooden chairs and proclaimed he’d be a member one day. He joined the class in the 1970s.

Each man can cite who invited him to join the class. Hap Roberts invit-





ed Greg Scarborough. Greg invited Jay Whittington. Raymond Coltrain, then a Presbyterian, invited Chris Bradshaw. And on it goes.

One member recalls his first visit to the class. “My wife said we’re going to Sunday school. I was all tensed up to meet all these older guys, many very successful. The door opened and a member came in. He unzipped his pants, bent over and showed a skin graft he’d just had at the hospital. Al Hoffman was teaching that day. Without looking up he said, ‘We’re just glad it wasn’t hemorrhoids.’ After that my nerves were just fine.”

The men’s generosity has reached people from one end of the county to the other. They’ve granted scholarships, supported non-profits, helped Santa with funding for children who may not receive gifts, and built a Habitat House.

When Immanuel Presbyterian Church near China Grove needed handicapped restrooms, Everyman’s came to the rescue. They donated the funding and class member and contractor Chris Bradshaw drew up the plans.

Several men were doubtful when the opportunity came to build a Habitat House. A few hardly knew the business end of a hammer, and they were not only funding the house, but building it, too.

“When Al (Hoffman) came in with the idea,” says Vick Bost, “I thought, ‘Oh, my, the Marx Brothers are going to build a house.’”

“Yet,” he continues, “When the walls were laying on the ground and we stood in a line and lifted it upright, it was a wonderful experience for

***Above:** Seated: Al Hoffman, the late Alice Purcell, and the Rev. Malcolm Bullock. First row, from left: Bill Carter, Vick Bost, the late Frank Gudger, Dr. Randy Lassiter, Chris Bradshaw, and David Simmons. Second row, from left: Johnny Safrit, Jim Wilson, Keith Garner, Wesley Lanning, Jim Smith, Bob Harris, Brad Farrah, and Jimmy Linn. (First Presbyterian photo)*







*Left: Dottie Clement plays the piano as Vick Bost sings with the group. Above: From left, Dyke Messinger, Steve Fisher and Max Fisher listen to the Sunday school lesson.*





*Above: The group celebrates Julian Krider's 100th birthday. (First Presbyterian photo)*

*Below: Hap Roberts enjoys a moment with the group.*



us all.”

Over the years when homeless veterans in the community have been able to acquire houses, Everyman's has donated items of need. Roberts says, “We've given everything from toaster ovens to scholarships.”

Once when the Salisbury Post printed a Sunday story about a very large young man who needed transportation to a health clinic in Pennsylvania, the class sprang into action, raising money to rent a special van for the trip.

The class has supported Project Santa, which helps children in the eastern part of the county, for 66 years.

Yet the class is well-known for its \$1 contributions to the plate. One former member famously threw in a dollar-off coupon for Tylenol. So how do they support so many in the community?

The class's treasury committee reviews all requests, then presents them to the class. A collection is taken for each project after approval.

Tony Almeida says the pandemic never slowed the class down. They missed one class in March of 2020, then started on Zoom. Today, even though they meet live, they continue to offer the class via Zoom. Dr. Bob Lewis, who pastored the



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church for 24 years, participates each Sunday from Durham. Others Zoom in as well.

The church secretary uploads their class each week to YouTube. Dan Cagle observes, “If you’ve ever heard us sing live, we are tolerable, but on YouTube, we are a nightmare.”

Roberts fires back: “We’re never tolerable!”

The class enjoys the comfortable ribbing that only long-time friends can develop. They chuckle as they remember the late Ed Church, who, on bow tie Sunday, came with a regular tie fashioned into a bow. They kid about the back row, who all attended N.C. State, knowing what the song means in the line, “The cattle are lowing...” They remember with love the late Julian Krider, unofficial timekeeper of the class. When someone spoke too long, Julian would noisily tap the crystal of his watch. Once when class went over time, Julian stood, tossed his dollar into the plate, and left. They recall the Sunday when the lesson was on being close to the Lord. Al Hoffman asked Ed Church, “Are you close to the Lord?” Ed replied, “I’m as close as the devil will let me.”

Many of the greats, they say, have departed their class and this world: Paul Fisher, Dr. David Hall, Dr. Trevor Williams, Mort Rochelle, Jim Wilson, Julian Krider, Dr. Bobby Lomax, Ed Church, Judge Larry



**Top:** From front row left, Dan Cable, Chris Bradshaw, Hap Roberts, Kent Roberts. Back row from left, Greg Scarborough, Keith Garner, Tony Almeida, Vick Bost, and Jay Whittington. **Above:** From left, Dyke Messinger, Doug Lassiter and Bruce Ruffy pose for a photo during the groups’ oyster roast.





*Above: Pastors Josh and Lara Musser-Gritter with their daughter Joanna, shake hands with Jim Mitchell during the group's oyster roast. Left: David Upton and the late Judge Larry Ford share a moment. (First Presbyterian photo)*



*Tom Overcash sings from the hymnal during a Sunday class.*

Ford, Al Hoffman, and of course, Alice Purcell.

David Hall's widow Charlotte remembers the class fondly. "David loved that class," she says. "It was first in his heart. They sent so many cards and texts — and sponsored his reception. They make a joyful noise! They do so much for others and for the community. They are very special to me, as well."

Bob Lewis in Durham says, "I've always loved the Will Rogers' quote, 'Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there!'"

"I think members of the class are serious about living their lives to the glory of God. They don't want to just sit there. They want to do what God is calling them to do. There is something positive, faithful, and transformational about that!"

The class has a specific no-politics policy. "We live in such a polarized society, especially now," Bost says. "It's just not done. We talk of Christ's love."

Roberts says the class nearly disbanded somewhere in the late '70s or early '80s. Al Hoffman said he could move to another class and Roberts said he could, as well. But they agreed they'd rather take a trip to the underworld than leave Everyman's. Thus, the Ham Breakfast was born. Hap recruited some employees from his firm and they prepared a hot ham breakfast. They invited a few guys who had dropped out, a couple of fellows who had expressed interest but never shown up, and the class began to grow.

Similarly, the annual Everyman's Oyster Roast is not a fundraiser but a fellowship opportunity. Members began to think their class might feel intimidating to some prospective members, due to its size and some high-profile members. Jay Whittington conceived the Oyster Roast so they could invite people to come meet them in a casual environment, eating and enjoying life.

It's a formula that's worked for a long time. Dan Cagle says, "It's so ingrained to meet, even if nothing else is going on in the church, we are there. On numerous occasions we are the only

class."

Vick Bost agrees. "We strengthen our faith in Christ and learn lessons of Christ to learn to apply. When I'm out of town, I wonder what the class is doing."

The class is particularly meaningful for Jay Whittington. "This summer my wife was very ill," he says. "They sent it out on email and this class lit up my phone. They were of great support."

Alice Purcell died in 2021, and retired music teacher Dotty Clement serves as their pianist today. The men love her, saying she makes them sound like canaries. Dotty loves them, too, saying, "Golly, it's fun. What a wonderful way to start a Sunday morning. These guys can sing! It's such a blessing to me that we discovered each other."

Today, members are proud to report there's a third generation of Fisher men attending Everyman's, giving them hope the class will continue another 100 years.

"We don't compete, but we support the church 100 percent," Roberts says. "It's simple, easy, relaxed. We sing three hymns and if you don't sound worth a hoot, who cares? We have a great lesson and we pass the plate, everybody putting in a dollar or two. Who can want more than that? We hear every Sunday that Jesus loves us. It's been here for over 100 years, and it'll be here for another 100."

The rest of the room agrees. Amen. **S**









*Paula Stone starts up the life-size Grinch next to the 'Grinch' tree.*

*Right: Lee Stone points out a peculiar ornament he purchased in Pennsylvania.*



# Top of the tree

*Stones have numerous examples of Christmas staple*

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE BLACKWELL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS





*Lee and Paula Stone decorate their home with numerous themed Christmas trees and share the experience with family and guests.*

**T**he first time Lee and Paula Stone dated in 1994, things didn't click. Paula's brother is Lee's best friend. Lee was a little skittish about dating his friend's sister; he did not want to endanger his long-time friendship.

Paula married someone else and moved out of state. When her husband died in a tragic auto accident, she moved back to the Salisbury area. Her family land in the eastern part of the county had a small house. Paula had the opportunity to demolish the little house and build one of her own.

To fill her time, she volunteered extensively at the Habitat for Humanity Restore. Lee happened to come by one day, and this time, magic was in the air. They dated in 2019 and 2020 and married on a Florida trip in 2021.

The Stones will start decorating for Christmas on Nov. 1, and they'll keep working on it for two weeks. They'll have a total of 14 Christmas trees.

Lee, 60, a retired magistrate, was a confirmed bachelor when he and Paula, 51, began dating. He had not decorated for Christmas in years. Paula had a gorgeous new home she was eager to decorate. They had one tree the first year, six trees in



*The 'Carolina' tree incorporates ornaments from both North and South Carolina.*





*Above:* Ornaments hang from the 'Santa' tree. *Below left:* Holiday figurines part of a mini village. *Below right:* There are many University of North Carolina ornaments and trees throughout the home.







*Paula Stone adjusts the mannequin tree 'Crystal,' which she purchased at Salisbury's Habitat for Humanity.*

2020 and a dozen last year.

There's a shed in the backyard just for trees. Ornaments are stored in giant plastic bins, labeled by tree, running floor to ceiling, covering two walls of the garage.

Lee brings in the select Christmas tree of the day, sets it up and brings in the coordinating plastic bins. Paula arranges all the ornaments. He cleans up. "It's a perfect setup," she beams. "He does all the work and I have all the fun!"

Lee, however, is not without creative energy. When Paula explored the idea of a travel tree, he joked, "What are you gonna put on top? A spinning globe?" And the quest for a spinning globe was on. Paula found the perfect spindle to adapt the globe as a tree topper. It lights up as well.

The idea of a travel tree has evolved. Each year one tree will bear the ornaments from this year's travels; next year those ornaments will integrate into the travel tree and a new batch will complete the "This Year" tree.

There seems to be a theme throughout the house, with three trees solely dedicated to Chapel Hill ornaments and ephemera. Lee had collected Carolina items since his graduation, but never realized how much he had until Paula came along. When she discovered them, she promptly turned his upstairs man cave into a Carolina room.

They've crisscrossed the U.S. and visited nearby islands as well, but limited themselves mostly to road trips during COVID. They plan to return to Europe soon, and have trips planned out as far as 2024.

*The "Travel" tree features many ornaments purchased while vacationing abroad.*





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*Clockwise from left: There are many University of North Carolina ornaments and trees throughout the home, a nod to Lee's alma mater; ornaments hang from the 'Santa' tree; the 'Snowman' tree sits in a guest bedroom; the Grinch keeps a watchful eye on the surroundings next to the 'Grinch' tree.*

While their extensive travel has afforded many opportunities to add to the ornament collection, it has also afforded them some very unusual ones. One ornament shows the floor plan of the penitentiary where Al Capone stayed in Philadelphia. Everywhere they go, they look for Christmas stores.

A trip to Florida offered so many coastal Christmas items, they decided to have a coastal tree. A mannequin with a skirt of cedar branches inspired them to develop a mannequin tree. Her name is Crystal. They improbably stumbled into another mannequin tree, this time in red. "Ruby" prompted yet another mannequin tree. There's a Santa tree, a cartoon tree with Bugs Bunny on top, a love tree, a large snowman tree, a small snowman tree and a Charlie Brown tree. This year they're adding a theater tree and a music tree.

Although it seems to be a lot of work, the Stones don't seem to mind. "It's great to see others enjoy them," Paula says. "The kids enjoy them, too." **S**







*The living area is adorned with Christmas items throughout.*



*Above: A whimsical ornamented tree rests in a guest bathroom.*

*Right: The ocean and sea are represented in the 'Coastal Christmas' tree in a guest bedroom.*

*Left: A wreath made by Paula's aunt hangs from the living room wall.*







**Left:** The 'travel' tree features many ornaments purchased while vacationing abroad.



**Right:** A Bugs Bunny tree topper sits on the top of a Christmas tree.

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*Left: A bobblehead figurine of Lee and Paula Stone sits in front of decorated tree.*

*Right: A whimsical ornamented tree rests in a guest bathroom.*




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Senator Elizabeth Dole. (Portrait by Mark Brincefield)





*Elizabeth Dole at a Red Cross Rwandan refugee camp during her tenure as that organization's president.*

*making a*  
**DIFFERENCE**

Sen. Elizabeth Dole continues  
her life's goal

WRITTEN BY SUSAN SHINN TURNER

SUBMITTED PHOTOS





*Animal Heroes Bob and Elizabeth Dole hang out with their dogs Blazer and Leader at the Humane Rescue Alliance's Bark Ball in Washington, D.C. (Photo by April Greer, for The Washington Post)*

**E**lizabeth Hanford Dole has held many roles in her 86 years: student government leader at Duke, Harvard law student, Cabinet Secretary, Senator from North Carolina, wife to a U.S. Senator, and chairman of the foundation that bears her name.

The one role she doesn't want? Retiree.

Dole shows no signs of slowing down, whether it's chairing her foundation board meetings, going up to "The Hill" to film a video greeting for one organization or another, or exercising every other day on her treadmill. (To be honest, it's hard to imagine her not dressed in her trademark dark suits and low, chunky heels.)

This summer, I had the honor of spending an afternoon with Sen. Dole in her beautifully appointed Watergate apartment,

where she's lived since she married Bob Dole on Dec. 6, 1975. They spent one day short of 46 years together before his death Dec. 5, 2021, at age 98.

Enjoy this extended Rowan Original with one of Salisbury's most beloved daughters.

***What was it about growing up here in Salisbury that gave you such a strong foundation in life?***

Salisbury will always be home for me. It's all about neighbors helping neighbors.

***What are some of your fondest memories of Salisbury? Who have been the most influential people in your life?***

Agnes Weant would critique my school essays. Virginia Jenkins gave me a ride to Sunday school, and if I were late, she went right



on by without me! For 10 years, I took piano lessons from Lillian Watkins who lived a half-block away. I was pleased I could play for the Men's Bible Class at First United Methodist Church.

My mom (Mary Cathey Hanford) and I were extremely close. She was an encourager who always talked about life's little extras. You can do your best. You can go the extra mile. If I finished my homework, she'd suggest entering that essay contest that was available.

When I lived in Boston — and wherever I lived — I'd touch base at home every day. Young people flocked to her, and she lived to be 102. She was so optimistic, upbeat, cheery, and thoughtful. She was always thinking of other people.

***Just the other day, I was doing some research about Rowan Museum and learned that your mother, Mary Cathey Hanford, was one of the founders. Why is maintaining support of Rowan Museum important to you?***

Rowan Museum is a tremendous asset to Salisbury, and to the entire state. I was proud of Mother for being one of the founders of this great museum. She was on the Antiques Show Committee for 45 years, and particularly interested in the Old Stone House. This was just a part of her life. I knew how she felt about historic preservation, and it's a part of me, too.

***Tell me about your more recent support of the Norvell Theatre and Bell Tower Green.***

When they were building the Norvell, there was an opportunity to name the seats in the theater, and I thought, wouldn't that be a great way to thank people in Salisbury?

I named 32 seats — for my mother and father, my grandparents, a number of friends, the mothers of friends, and some of my teachers. There's a seat for Bob, and a seat for Rose Post.

(Sen. Dole did not name a seat for herself.)

I was also honored to be able to help with the funding for Bell Tower Green. My mother would be thrilled about the revitalization of that entire area, including the restaurant.



*Senator Dole with Margaret Kluttz, who served as the senator's state director from 2002 to 2008.*

***You have been quite the trailblazer in your life. In an era when women were mostly becoming teachers or nurses or stay-at-home mothers, what made you choose to go to law school and enter a life of public service?***

Making a difference in the lives of others.

I was president of the Women's Student Government Association at Duke. At Harvard Law School, I was one of 24 women in a class of 550.

The first day, a male classmate came up to me and said, "Elizabeth, what are you doing here? There are men who would kill to be here, and these are men who would use their legal education."

In one class on contract law, there were five women in a class of 150. We all had to write and read a poem, then we knew we would never be called on the rest of the semester.

I was once at a luncheon with female senators, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (a down-the-hall neighbor at the Watergate) was there. I ended up

telling this story. She piped in and said she'd had the exact same experience.

• • •

After law school, Sen. Dole worked pro bono cases at night. She was eventually hired by Virginia Knauer, an assistant to President Nixon for consumer affairs. Sen. Dole got in on the ground floor of consumer affairs, which was wonderful training in her interactions with the business community, she notes. After President Nixon appointed her Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission, Knauer told her, "You have learned and grown in this job as much as you can. It's time for you to spread your wings."

During her time there, she married Sen. Bob Dole at the National Cathedral.

She was part of the transition team for President Ronald Reagan, later serving as his Secretary of Transportation (1983-1987), then on to Secretary of Labor (1989-1990) under President George H.W. Bush.

• • •





*Elizabeth Dole, front row, at Harvard Law School. She was one of only 24 women in a class of 550.*

***Tell me about working with President Reagan and President Bush, and what kind of men they were.***

President Bush was a warm man, always considerate of others. President Reagan was thoughtful and gracious.

One day I asked him, "How do you do it?"

He said, "Well, Elizabeth, when I was governor of California, there seemed to be a disaster every day. One day, I realized I was looking in the wrong direction. I started looking up, not back, and I've been looking up ever since."

***I loved the title of the book you wrote together, "Unlimited Partners." Tell me about years in Washington when you and Sen. Bob were one of the original "power couples." It sounds quite glamorous, but probably a lot of hard work, too!***

When I was nominated to be Secretary of

Transportation, Bob wanted to introduce me at my confirmation hearing. I had no idea what he was going to say.

This is what he said: "I regret I have but one wife to give for my country's infrastructure, and maybe the Federal Highway Administration could use Elizabeth's biscuit recipe for filling potholes."

(This was a tongue-in-cheek reference to American patriot Nathan Hale, who said, "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.")

When it was my turn to speak, I said, "If you confirm me to be Secretary of Transportation, my biggest priority will be putting airbags in cars. And I know all about airbags, because I've been driving around with one for years!"

Bob told me, "You're never going to achieve historic legislation without working across the aisle."

Sen. Bob had worked with Sen. Ted Kennedy to get the Americans with Disabilities Act passed. In 1983, Bob and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan saved the Social Security system. And in the late '90s, Sen. Bob worked with Sen. George McGovern to create the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. In 2002, President George W. Bush signed the program into law.

Bipartisan work is not easy, but in the Transportation Department, we worked to increase seatbelt usage, get airbags into cars, and to raise the minimum drinking age to 21 nationwide. Some adjoining states had lower drinking ages than others, and at one time and we called them "blood borders" when young people crossed state lines to drink.

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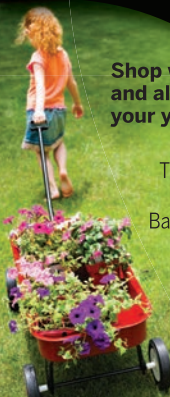
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Later, Sen. Dole resigned from her work while her husband was campaigning for national offices (Dole ran with President Gerald Ford in 1976 as his vice presidential candidate; he ran briefly for president in 1980; he ran again for president in 1988 but lost to Vice President George H.W. Bush in the primaries; and ran for president a second time with Congressman Jack Kemp as his running mate in 1996.) Sen. Bob Dole served in the U.S. Senate from 1969 to 1996.

•••

When Bob was running for national office, I traveled to magnify his message. I visited all 99 counties in Iowa twice, and all 50 states. When I campaigned for the Senate, Bob traveled to 73 counties in North Carolina. We were running

right along together and supporting each other. But yes, it is demanding.

Still, it was true love when Bob and I met. We had so many mutual interests. It was a wonderful fit.

### *Tell me about your time as president of the American Red Cross (1991-1999).*

My first year with the Red Cross, I did not draw a salary. The volunteers do such incredible work, and I wanted to pay tribute to them — whether they are across town or across the globe. It was a joy to work with that organization.

As the American Red Cross collects, tests, and distributes half of the nation's blood supply, we took on a major undertaking to ensure its safety. The system itself was antiquated and decentralized, and we spent \$400 million to make sure that blood was safe to give and safe to get.

### *Tell me about your experience of meeting*

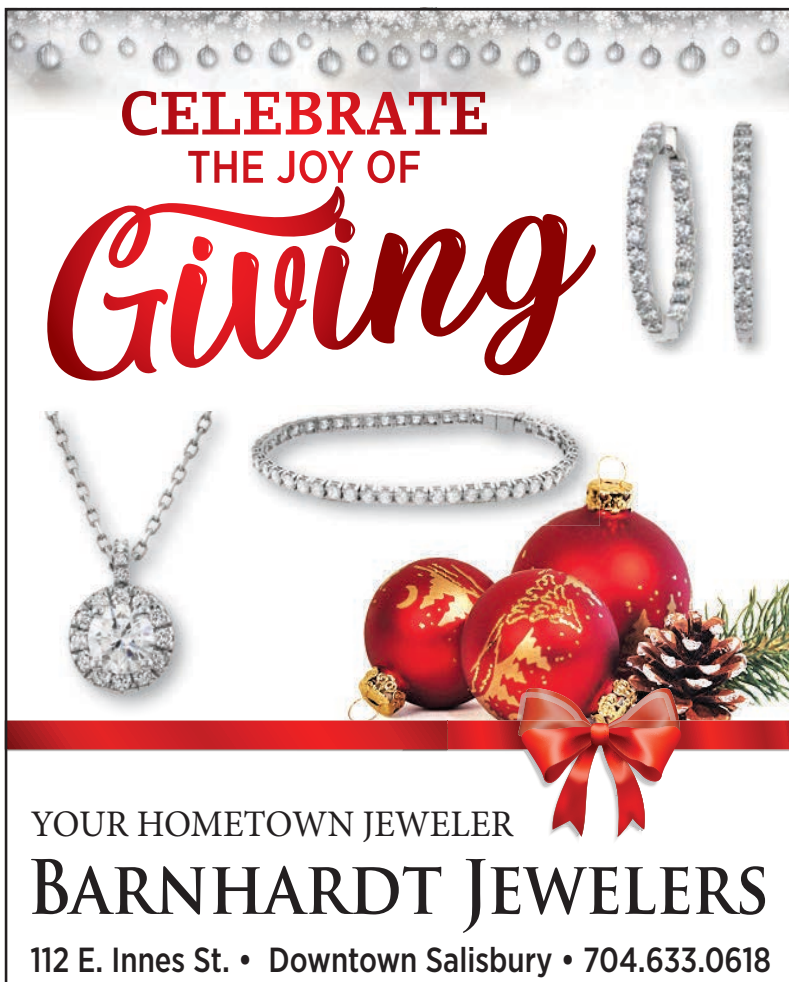
### *Princess Diana when you served as Red Cross President.*

Princess Diana was a lovely person. She was wonderful, with a warm, caring heart. At the time, she was working to help land mine victims. I invited her to come to Washington. We had great meetings. While she was here, we raised \$650,000 for land mine victims at a dinner. Two months later, she was killed in that tragic accident.

### *Tell me about how the Elizabeth Dole Foundation came to be.*

In 2010, Bob spent 11 months in Walter Reed. We met young parents who were caring for their wounded warriors. I began to invite them to dinner in Washington just to get them out of the hospital for an evening. The caregivers became like extended family, and that experience opened my eyes to the challenges they face.

I established the Elizabeth Dole Foundation



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*Bob and Elizabeth  
Dole were married on  
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*Bob and Elizabeth Dole  
at the WWII Memorial in  
Washington, D.C.*

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(Left-to-Right): Mechelle Kuld Lauren Robison Teresa Rufty Landen Cavin  
Jill Dickson Jason Shrader Tara Setzer Janet Edwards Shellie Stubbs

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in 2012, and our goal is awareness and support. With less than 1 percent of the population serving in the military, most people are not aware of what's happening in military families. The number-one need is respite care. Dozens of corporations and organizations have become our partners.

We commissioned the RAND Corporation to develop the first evidence-based nationwide study of military and veteran caregivers. We learned that while there is new, phenomenal battlefield medicine, the injuries last for decades.

There are 5½ million adults caring for catastrophically wounded veterans. There are also 2 to 3 million children who are caregivers, too. It's anything but a normal childhood.

The foundation is growing, and it has bipartisan support. (See [elizabethdolefoundation.org](http://elizabethdolefoundation.org) for more details.)

***Tell me what it's been like to work with actor Tom Hanks, the chair of the foundation's Hidden Heroes Campaign.***

Tom is such a kind and compassionate person. After the RAND Report came out, I met with him in California and began to deliver my pitch.

He stopped me and said, "Senator Dole, I get it. I'm in it 100 percent. Tell me what to do and I'll do it."

He has hosted our gala for the last five years. He has given of his own resources to this foundation. If someone asks him what charity to help, he sends them to us. He's incredible.

***What other things keep you busy? What are your favorite things to do when you are not working with your foundation?***

Bob and I have supported causes we believe in. Bob and I involved with the Honor Flight Network, who brought veterans to Washington to see the World War II memorial. Every Saturday he was able, he'd go to the memorial and greet veterans. Most Saturdays, I was able to join him. This spring, I was honored to speak at the 250,000th flight.

I continue to speak to a lot of groups. I try to get on the treadmill every other day, and I'm so proud of myself when I do. I enjoy watching old movies such as "Chariots of Fire," and spending time with Blazer and Leader, our miniature schnauzers. I gave Bob Leader III for his 90th birthday. He asked me, "Is that our puppy?"

***I understand you — and Sen. Bob when he was alive — have been a prolific phone-caller the last several years, especially during the pandemic. Why is keeping in touch so important to you?***

Phone calls are a way of checking in. When you've worked together with people on tough issues, you are bonded. Our goal was to help at least once person each day.

***What are the two things you always have in your fridge or pantry?***

Ice cream for sure (her favorite is Graeter's butter pecan) and lemon cookies.



*The Doles' miniature schnauzers Blazer and Leader. (Portrait by Mark Brincefield)*



*Bob and Elizabeth Dole at election night in 2002, when she became North Carolina's first female senator.*

***What would you tell a young Elizabeth Hanford?***

Discover your passions — those compelling causes — and bring others in to work with you. Listen to a different drummer, take risks, seek new adventures, explore different cities. **S**





*Warren Keyes  
as Santa.*



# BLACK *and* RED

Warren Keyes has been with Santas  
Just Like Me for 10 years

WRITTEN BY SUSAN SHINN TURNER  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANTAS JUST LIKE ME

**W**arren Keyes laughs. A lot. If you were making a list of Santa traits, he'd check all the boxes. Eyes that twinkle. Check. Beard on his chin as white as the snow. Check. A right jolly old elf. Check. A round little belly that shakes when he laughs like a bowl full of jelly. Uh, no. Not since his doctor fussed at him. More on that later.

But if you're looking for a Santa Claus this holiday season, he's your guy.

What makes Keyes even more special is that he's a Black

Santa, and a member of an organization called Santas Just Like Me.

According to its website, "Our mission is to provide authentic looking Santas of color and representation of the minority community during the Christmas season combined with professional images."

Its tagline: Add a little color to your Christmas.

That's exactly what Keyes has been doing for the past decade.

Based in Raleigh, Keyes knows Salisbury well. He served two terms on Synod Council, the N.C. Lutheran Synod's board of trustees. The synod's offices are located on Jake Alexander Boulevard.

Part of his career was spent in radio broadcasting — thus his rich, velvety voice — and, he says, "I was a big fan of





Santa growing up.”

Santa’s headquarters was located in downtown New Bern, his hometown.

“It was a hallowed space, a sacred space,” Keyes recalls. “It was magical to me.”

Because of his full white beard, little kids pretty much stopped and stared at him year-round. His wife Judy surmised they must be thinking he was Santa.

*Warren  
and Judy  
Keyes*

When he was doing some last-minute shopping one Christmas Eve, a photographer at the Santa booth said he’d make a really good Santa.

Fast-forward five months later. The Keyes were attending a friend’s wedding when the groom told him that a photographer friend of his was looking for a Black Santa. That photographer, who is also Black, said families were starting to ask him, “When will you have a Black Santa?”

When Keyes met with the photographer, whose name is Stafford Braxton, they realized they’d already met that Christmas Eve.

“This coming season is my 10th year with Santas Just Like Me,” Keyes says proudly.

At present, there are six Black Santas available for visits, all of whom have full, white beards, and all of whom have that twinkle in their eyes.

The hope, Keyes says, is to eventually have Asian and Latino Santas.

“We’ve been met with quite a bit of success,” he notes.

While most appointments typically begin after Thanksgiving, Keyes already has a booking for Nov. 3. Santas Like Me gets calls from all over the country.

**Edward Jones**

**Happy Holidays**



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Last year, Keyes contracted for one day at Neiman Marcus at Tysons Corner Center in Virginia. He stayed 1½ hours after closing, and the store added an appearance the following day. He'll be back at Neiman Marcus Dec. 10-11.

Also in 2021, he was Santa in the Durham Christmas parade. Thirty-four percent of that city's residents are Black.

He's also made appearances at the Pope Museum in Raleigh. Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope was Raleigh's first Black dentist and the only Black candidate for mayor in a Southern capital during the Jim Crow era.

"He risked his life to do it," Keyes points out.

He'll be at the Hayti Center in Durham — an African American heritage center for cultural arts and arts education — where he's appeared before, on Dec. 3-4, and will be making home visits during December.

"I've had several kids who have come every year since they were infants," Keyes says. "So the 10th year is a special year."

So how do children react when they see a Santa that looks just like them?

"Glee. Pure excitement. Disbelief," Keyes says. "And I have grandmothers who are crying tears of joy. Representation matters. Even with dark skin, I'm a real part of this society. When it boils down to it, I would hope I could just be Santa."

The Keyes have an adult son and daughter, three grandchildren, one great-grandchild and another on the way. He doesn't confuse his family by dressing as Santa.

Still, he admits, "Santa really comes naturally to me."

So what does it take to become Santa?

"You have to take each request individually," Keyes says. "I want the children to know that I'm on their side."

After his doctor warned him about his weight — Keyes was "rotund," he admits — he started doing intermittent fasting and dropped 50 pounds. Now he wears a prosthetic belly during Santa appearances.

During his appearances, Keyes gets a lot of requests for PlayStations and X-Boxes, as well as the traditional bicycles and books.

Keyes asks questions, too.



*Since Warren and his wife are a bi-racial couple, it's important to him to be available for bi-racial families.*

"I try to make a point to ask their favorite subjects in school, and I get a lot of children who like science and math," he says. "There is a myth that Black kids aren't motivated, so it does my heart good to hear them express an interest in science, math, and reading."

When he talks with children, he's careful to

slow down his speech, and give 100 percent of his attention to each visitor.

"It is really our time together," he says.

He speaks softly, almost in a whisper.

"I'm being quiet and slow in our noisy world. That's what makes Santa magical, in my book."

He continues, "I want to be a part of cheering for people to do well. This old man gets crotchety watching the news. I hope I can do something to encourage these kids to reach for the stars." **S**



## THE SCENE



*Artist Karen Morgan stands with her striking painting, 'Memory of Fame.'*



*Bonnie and Donnie Walsers, with Ryan, Ashley and Landyn Ruble came to the 2022 Carolina Artists Expo to see the artwork.*

# Carolina Artists Expo

The Carolina Artists guild held a reception for its annual Expo art show and sale on Sept. 15 at the Salisbury Civic Center. Artwork included oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings, drawings and photographs.

— Photos by Deirdre Parker Smith



*Above: Danny and Tonda Coutru with friends Sarah and George Hill stand with Tonda Coutru's Magnolia painting. Below: Gary and Gloria Schneider with Marshall Stokes, who won Best in Show with 'Three Boats.'*



*Above: Artist Barrie Kirby with her oil pastel of irises.*

*Below: Janet Payne won third place in watercolor for her painting of white iris.*







*Friends and artists Catherine Sodenberg, Connie Eads and Janet Payne enjoyed seeing each other and talking to patrons at the Carolina Artist Expo.*



*Janice Ruffy and Sandra Cody stand with one of their favorite watercolors by Connie Eads.*



*Friends Bess Johnson and Sarah Kizziah enjoy the Carolina Artists Expo every year.*



*Susan and Bob Mooney came to the Carolina Artists Expo to see the work of their son, Andy Mooney, who won for his pen-and-ink drawings.*



*Above: Anita and Kevin Ryan with Janet Isenhour. The Ridenhours came to enjoy the art at the annual Carolina Artists Expo. Isenhour is president of the guild. Left: Brian Holiday, left, swept the photography category at the 2022 Carolina Artists Expo. He gives credit to his mentor, Cherrathée Hager, right.*







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Vertical orientation is required.

*C. Eads*





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*Luke 2-10*

*Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid,  
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which will be to all people."*



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