

March 2019

SALISBURY

the magazine

TREADS *and* THREADS

NASCAR tire specialist gains traction with her own clothing line

Le Car

Merci Train inspires 49 Days of Gratitude

Pinterest

Woodleaf Lanes has fun to spare

Urban renewal

Youngs breathe new life into former general store

Senior BINGO



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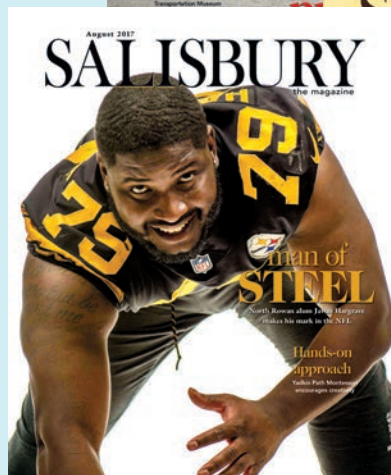
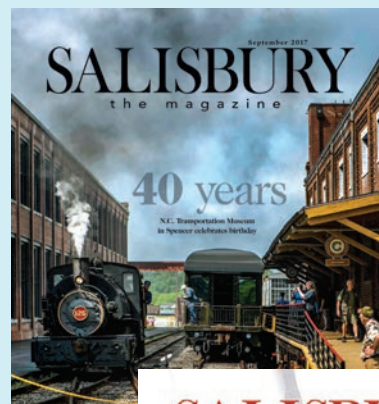
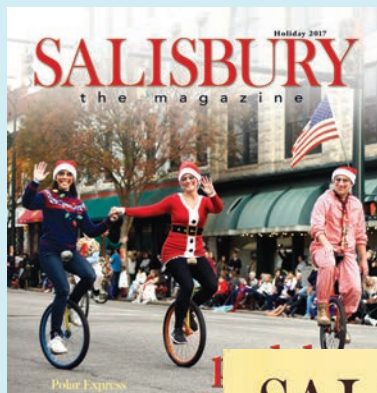
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Salisbury the Magazine
P.O. Box 4639
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The French connection

Story of Merci Train inspires
49 Days of Gratitude

by **MARK WINEKA**

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Gaining traction

NASCAR tire specialist
tries her hand in fashion

by **BEN WHITE**



On the cover: Liz Prestella, a tire specialist for a NASCAR team, is marketing a line of work clothing for women.

— Photo by Wayne Hinshaw

On this page: Artifacts from France are placed in the 40-and-8 boxcar at the North Carolina Transportation Museum for the 49 Days of Gratitude project.

— Photo by Jon C. Lakey

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Merci Train provides always relevant message of gratitude

In this issue of Salisbury the Magazine, you will be reading a lot — maybe for the first time — about the Merci Train of 1949. It's a story you should commit to memory because it will inspire you, warm you, maybe even give you hope for mankind.

Its history, now 70 years old, has spawned the 49 Days of Gratitude. Led by Sherry Mason Brown, Kimberly Lentz and the N.C. Transportation Museum, participants have found a way to take a heart-warming gesture from the French people in 1949 and make it benefit — and educate — the people of Rowan County today.

The Merci Train was in gratitude for the Friendship Train of 1947 which the American people, not the government, sent to Europe. Its hundreds of boxcars were filled with \$40 million of relief goods, much of which went to France.

Those Friendship Train packages included a gift tag that read as follows:

"All races and creeds make up the vast melting pot of America, and in a democratic and Christian spirit of goodwill toward men, we, the American people, have worked together to bring this food to your doorsteps, hoping it will tide you over until your own fields are again rich and abundant with crops."

As for the Merci Train, each state received a 40-and-8 boxcar with highly personal gifts from French citizens. If you didn't know, North Carolina's Merci Train boxcar has long resided at the Transportation Museum and is sort of a reborn star of the 49 Days.

A couple of footnotes: First, those 40-and-8 boxcars, built between 1885 and 1901, did not hold fond memories for U.S. veterans, especially the men of World War I.

Clare R. Arthur Bass wrote in 2006 that the 40-and-8s, meant to hold 40 troops or eight horses, were used to transport Americans to the battlefronts in France. They had no windows, toilets or

seats. No sleeping or dining areas. The men had to position their bodies in rows as a way to lie down and sleep, and some of the trips could take several days.

But veterans across the country saw the boxcars' arrival in 1949 as important symbols — memorials to lost friends and a reminder of the sacrifices made to fight tyranny. I think it's why so many of the 49 original boxcars survive today.

One more note for what it's worth: Rowan County might be the only place in the country having this big of a celebration connected to the 70th anniversary of the Merci Train.

Word of what Rowan is doing has reached France, and Elisabeth Jenssen, chairperson of a French-American-Italian project called MDFDEFriendship-MerciTrain70. That project also celebrates the 70th anniversary, plus it includes a series of international events going all the way

to 2022, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Friendship Train.

The French-American-Italian project has an executive director in Vermont, Brigitte Helzer, who was 7 years old and the youngest participant in the 1949 New York State reception and parade for the Merci Train in New York City.

Sherry Mason Brown plans to invite Helzer to be part of the 49 Days of Gratitude. She will be welcomed, just as the Merci Train was so many years ago. **S**



Mark Wineka,
Editor, *Salisbury the Magazine*



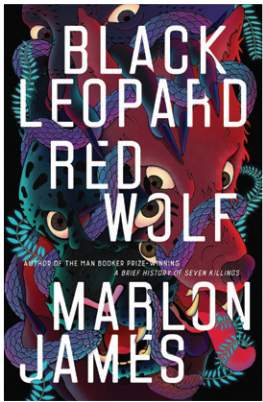
This composite of photos shows the progression of the Super Blood Wolf Moon total lunar eclipse on Jan. 20-21. Fifteen photos were put together in Photoshop to create the image. Photos were taken over a four-hour period using a Canon 30D with 70-200mm lens @ 200mm.

March blooms with delights

Spring brings a fresh crop of books.

"Black Leopard, Red Wolf"

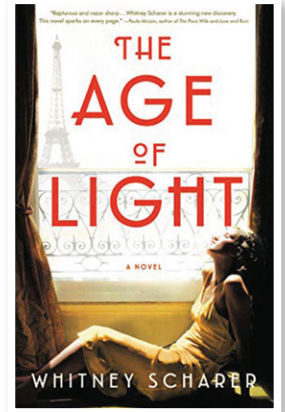
By Marlon James



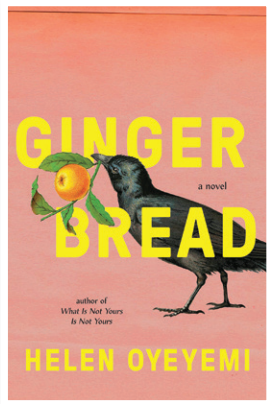
Following up his Man Booker Prize for "A Brief History of Seven Killings," James has written the first book in what is to be an epic trilogy that is part Lord of the Rings, part "Game of Thrones" and part "Black Panther." In this first volume, a band of mercenaries — a witch, a giant, a buffalo, a shape-shifter and a bounty hunter who can track anyone by smell — are hired to find a boy, missing for three years, who holds special interest for the king. Drawing from African history and mythology and his own rich imagination, James has written a novel unlike anything that's come before it: a saga of breathtaking adventure that's also an ambitious, involving read.

"The Age of Light"

By Whitney Scharer



This debut, which was the object of a bidding war, is based on the life of Lee Miller, a Vogue model turned photographer who decided she would rather "take a picture than be one." The novel focuses on Miller's tumultuous romance with photographer Man Ray in early 1930s Paris, as Miller changed from muse to artist. Early reviews suggest that the novel more than lives up to its promise, with readers extolling its complicated heroine and page-turning pacing. Told in interweaving timelines, this sensuous, richly detailed novel brings Miller — a brilliant and pioneering artist — out of the shadows of a man's legacy and into the light.



"Gingerbread"

By Helen Oyeyemi

Oyeyemi became a critical darling in 2014 with "Boy, Snow, Bird," a retelling of "Snow White." She takes us back into fairy tale world with "Gingerbread," the story of mother and daughter, Harriet and Perdita Lee, and their family's famous, perhaps...magical, gingerbread recipe. The world's truest lover of the Lee family gingerbread, however, is Harriet's charismatic childhood friend Gretel Kercheval — a figure who seems to have had a hand in everything (good or bad) that has happened to Harriet since they met. Endlessly surprising and satisfying, written with Oyeyemi's inimitable style and imagination, it is a true feast for the reader.



"Look How Happy I'm Making You"

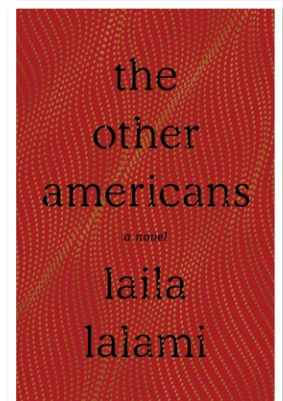
By Polly Rosenwaiké

Anthony Doerr, author of "All the Light We Cannot See," calls this collection of short stories, "A beautifully written and beautifully conceived series of stories about, well, conception...Among the thousands of books for prospective and new parents, I doubt any will make you feel more understood and less alone than this one." In its starred review, Kirkus calls it "an exquisite collection that is candid, compassionate, and emotionally complex." Meaghan O'Connell says, "Each story in 'Look How Happy I'm Making You' is a lovely universe unto itself — funny, intimate, casually profound — but there is something transcendent about reading them together like this." On sale March 19.

"The Other Americans"

By Laila Lalami

Lalami, whose previous novel, "The Moor's Account," was a finalist for the Pulitzer, returns with a "structurally elegant mystery" (Kirkus). At the opening of this highly anticipated new novel, Moroccan immigrant Driss Guerraoui is killed by a speeding car on a California highway. The book then follows a number of characters connected to and affected by his death, including his jazz composer daughter, his wife and an undocumented immigrant who saw the accident. J.M. Coetzee says, "This deftly constructed account of a crime and its consequences shows up, in its quiet way, the pressures under which ordinary Americans of Muslim background have labored since the events of 9/11." Lalami was the 2017 Brady Author's Symposium speaker at Catawba College. The book will be released in late March.





Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Nicole Matangira chats with others attending the chamber's annual gala at the West End Plaza.

— Jon C. Lakey photo

Faithful servant

Chamber chair Nicole Holmes Matangira breaks a barrier, sees an amazing opportunity ahead.

Story by **Liz Moomey**

At the annual membership gala Jan. 10, Nicole Holmes Matangira accepted the gavel, making her the first African-American chairperson of the Rowan Chamber of Commerce.

Since she was young, Matangira has worked and been a vital cog in two family businesses, Holmes Iron & Metal and Matangira Recycling, and she hopes to bring her commercial savviness to the job of leading the Chamber forward.

As she considers the year ahead, Matangira says noth-

ing is impossible for 2019 as the Chamber chair. Her priorities are workforce education, researching the possibility of a youth Leadership Rowan, making a more vibrant downtown Salisbury, boosting the Rowan IDEA Center and updating the trade show.

Chamber President Elaine Spalding says Matangira's leadership will set a precedent in making the county even more focused on diversity and inclusion.

Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with Matangira, a Rowan Original, for an interview:

Q. What is one thing you're most looking forward to as the Rowan Chamber chair?

As Rowan Chamber chair, having the opportunity to connect, getting to know so many amazing people and establishing long-term relationships.

As the first African-American chair, what do you hope you can bring to the business community?

I will bring my ears to hear joy, the love of God, revelation and knowledge.

What does it mean to you as the first person of color to hold the position of Chamber chair?

Honestly, I truly didn't understand the true magnitude of this position, but bit by bit I keep getting more and more revelation. The words that come to light for me it is all by grace of God that I have been given this amazing opportunity to experience walking in such an amazing role.

Do you think seeing more minorities involved in the Chamber leadership will allow for better representation in the business community?

First of all, the Chamber has done an amazing job in establishing good faith efforts, to bring about diversification in recent years through the implementation of the Minority Business Council and Women in Business. I believe that, yes, we will see more representation in the coming months and years. I believe that strongholds were broken, the door is wide open. We will see even more diverse community business leaders entering this community and becoming a part of the Chamber business community.

What got you interested in becoming a business owner?

I grew up as a child working in our family business. I stepped away from the family business after I graduated from college. I wanted to experience working for someone else besides my family. I discovered that through those work experiences that it was great way for me to discover that I did not want to continue working for someone else. I realized that I spent all of childhood working in our family business and that the vision of Holmes Iron & Metal Inc. was in me.

Who do you go to most for business advice? Why?

My father and Jesus. My dad has always been very instrumental in my life, especially in business at an early age and still is today. As I have matured through the years and I have developed a more intimate relationship with Jesus, I have learned to rely on him for more and more business advice. Trust me, the Lord truly speaks!

What is the best piece of business advice you've been given?

(That) I can "do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens me."

What is the key to success with Holmes Iron & Metal and Matangira Recycling?

First of all is Jesus. Second is family being on accord in the workplace. Third is providing exceptional customer service. Fourth (is) us having a great long-term customer base.



Nicole and Daniel Matangira. — Nancy Shirley file photo

Where would you like to see Holmes Iron & Metal and Matangira Recycling in 10 years?

Birthing more business out from Holmes Iron & Metal and Matangira Curbside Recycling LLC. Empowering lives around us and providing efforts to help develop the underutilized town and community (in East Spencer) in which our business is located.

What is the wackiest business idea you have ever had?

I would like to try my hand at carpentry work. I told my cousin the other day you may be surprised when I build my own house.

What is your go-to snack?

Original Lay's Potato Chips.

What would you do if you weren't a business owner?

I would be teaching the gospel full-time and traveling the globe. **[S]**



*Teresa Moore-Mitchell practices
with pianist Matthew Brown at
First United Methodist Church
in Salisbury.*

Soaring with a song

Soprano Teresa Moore-Mitchell takes a shot at the big time.

Story by **Shavonne Walker** | Photography by **Jon C. Lakey**

THE ARTS

As a child, Teresa Moore-Mitchell often read about airplanes and she dreamed she'd someday learn to fly them. She never became an aeronautical engineer. Instead, her flight path took her on a love of singing, particularly after winning a middle school talent show.

A teacher would eventually help her discover she could sing opera, leading most recently to perhaps the pinnacle of her career — an audition for the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

She submitted her resumé and a clip of her singing and was selected for the audition.

If chosen, Moore-Mitchell would either perform in an upcoming opera as the lead or as part of the chorus. Moore-Mitchell won't find out if she was chosen until May. "My audition was absolutely amazing," she said. "My vocal and performing technique was at the level I planned to perform. So it's a waiting game, but I feel like I've won the lottery already, just to get on that stage and share my gift."

When she's belting out a song from an opera or another genre, Moore-Mitchell said she often puts herself emotionally into the feelings of the characters.

If the song is about the death of a character, then she reflects on how she felt when someone close to her died.

"I love something that's going to pull at the heart of a person," Moore-Mitchell said.

She never knows what existing life experiences people in the audience already come to a show with and, "maybe I'm giving someone hope," she said.

Moore-Mitchell flew to New York in late January to audition for the Metropolitan Opera. She submitted a list of arias she had sung before and the judges chose two.





Above: Teresa Moore-Mitchell practices with pianist Matthew Brown at First United Methodist Church in Salisbury. **Below:** Teresa Moore-Mitchell took this photo from inside the Metropolitan Opera in New York on the day she auditioned in January of this year. — Photo courtesy of Teresa Moore-Mitchell

She had spent hours of practice making sure she held each note and gave the songs the emotion and feelings the opera requires.

Moore-Mitchell said she was “determined to praise God with my voice, represent the Salisbury community and encourage her students at Livingstone College and Pfeiffer University.”

Moore-Mitchell relies on local musicians and experts in their field to get her performances ready.

She is usually accompanied on piano by Matthew Michael Brown, music director of First United Methodist Church, or Dr. Phillip Burgess, director of vocal/choral studies at Catawba College.

Brown typically offers Moore-Mitchell one-on-one coaching before her performances.

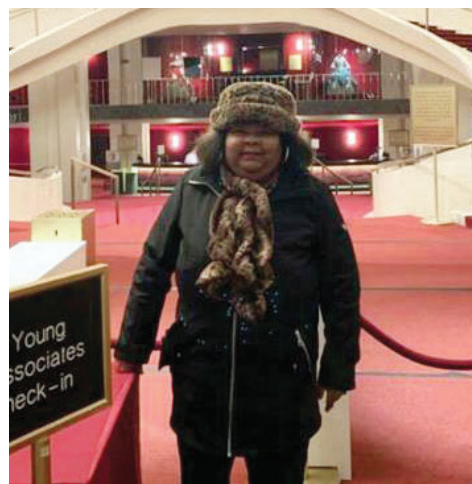
“I’m like a radiologist looking at scans,” Brown said half-joking.

He listens to her sing song after song and offers critiques along the way.

“I know he’ll be honest,” she said.

Salisbury Symphony Music Director David Hagy also works with Moore-Mitchell on her pitch.

Moore-Mitchell is a full-time professor at



Livingstone College where she teaches private voice/foreign language, diction and music literature similar to music appreciation; African-American music; and voice class for non-music majors. She’s also an adjunct professor at Pfeiffer University where she gives private voice lessons.

She loves the opportunity to continue auditioning, and it allows her students to see you don’t have to stop performing.

Moore-Mitchell said many of the musical

opportunities she’s had were because of the encouragement or inspiration of a teacher.

Her then sixth-grade teacher, Isaac Heggins, spearheaded the talent show for which she tied for first-place singing a rendition of Michael Jackson’s “Rock With You.”

A high school chorus teacher helped Moore-Mitchell discover she could sing soprano. Growing up, she’d never tried singing in any other style other than the classical songs of her Presbyterian church.

She began playing piano in second grade on a piano that belonged to her grandmother and it remains at her parents’ home. Moore-Mitchell is the daughter of Terry and Yvonne Moore and the wife of Fred Mitchell Jr., all of Salisbury.

In addition to her chance at joining the Metropolitan Opera, later this year Moore-Mitchell will teach a master class in Germany. She’ll teach students about American folklore, spirituals, gospel, and will even instruct a choir there on how to sing within those genres.

“She knows how to draw an audience in,” Brown said. “She’s someone who can communicate through the eyes.” **S**

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Greenlight it!

Set an Irish table for St. Patrick's Day.

Story by Deirdre Parker Smith | Photography by Jon C. Lakey



Irish stew and soda bread make a perfect lunch.

For the luck of the Irish, please don't drink green beer on St. Patrick's Day. That's so American.

And leave the corned beef and cabbage for another meal, because that's another American tradition.

The Irish may have adopted these American traditions to make the tourists happy, but St. Patrick was celebrated in Ireland with religious services and feasts.

Irish people who immigrated to America put on the first St. Patrick's Day parade in Boston in 1737, decades before we were an independent country. Blue was the color associated with St. Patrick's Day, once upon a time. Chicago started dyeing its river green in 1962 in observance of the day.

Instead of corned beef and green beer, steep yourselves in the richness of a beef stew made with Irish Guinness stout, served with a side of Irish soda bread, which is like a very large biscuit.



Irish soda bread is so easy to make, like a giant biscuit. Serve it with any stew or soup.

When the day is done, set yourself down in front of a cozy peat fire (gas logs will do) and warm yourself from the inside out with a proper Irish coffee — no clouds of sweetened artificial topping, but real, plain, rich whipped cream.

Americans have added raisins and caraway seeds to basic soda bread, making it a sweeter concoction, but it was created to be a fast

bread, requiring no yeast or rising time, that could be made quickly while other things cook.

Real Irish stew uses lamb as the meat, but finding a lamb shoulder around here is not easy. And it's expensive. By the time you cook with that dry stout, you'll lose some of the delicate lamb flavor anyway. Many Irish farmers raise sheep, so it was available and not expensive, but Ireland also has plenty of cows — and

lovely, rich butter — that make a perfect meal.

March in Ireland has temperatures in the upper 40s and low 50s, with a good chance of rain on any given day. It's good stew weather.

IRISH SODA BREAD

- 3 cups all-purpose flour (or a combination of whole wheat and all-purpose flour)



Real Irish coffee includes a jigger of Irish whiskey and real whipped cream.

- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, cold and cut into small pieces
- 1⅓ cup to 1⅔ cup buttermilk, cold

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Brush a baking sheet with melted butter or spray with non-stick spray.

Combine dry ingredients in a deep bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender, two knives or your fingers, until the mixture is thoroughly blended, with small bits of butter coated in flour. Gradually stir in 1⅓ cup buttermilk, stirring constantly, until dough is firm enough to be gathered into a ball. If dough crumbles, add up to ⅓ cup more buttermilk, 1 Tbsp. at a time, until it holds together.

Place on a lightly floured board and pat into an 8-inch flattened round loaf.

Place loaf on baking sheet and slash a ½-inch deep X into the top of the dough with a small, sharp knife.

Bake at 425 degrees for about 45 minutes, or until the top is golden.

Serve with lots of softened butter.

FOOD

IRISH GUINNESS STEW

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 pounds beef chuck, cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- 1 onion, large, chopped
- 3 leeks
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 22 ounces (2 bottles) Guinness stout
- 2 cups beef broth
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 2 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 sprigs thyme or 1 tsp. dried thyme leaves

Peel and cut up carrots and potatoes, mince garlic. Trim root end off leeks, strip off tough greens. Cut leeks lengthwise and rinse any grit off under water. Slice into ½-inch pieces.

Cut the beef into 2-inch chunks. Pat dry and sprinkle with kosher salt and pepper.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a Dutch oven or

heavy bottomed pot over high heat. Add beef in batches and brown well all over. Remove to plate and repeat with remaining beef. Set aside.

Lower heat to medium and add remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Add onion and leek, cook for 3 minutes until softened, then add garlic, cook 1 minute. Stir flour into the vegetable mixture and cook for 2-3 more minutes.

Add Guinness, stirring and scraping up browned bits on bottom of pan, then add beef broth.

Return browned meat to the pot, including any juices, along with carrots, potatoes and thyme tied with kitchen twine.

If beef and vegetables are not fully covered, add enough water to do so. Cover, bring to a boil, stir, then lower heat so it is bubbling gently. Cook 2 hours then remove lid and simmer for 30 minutes more until meat falls apart and the sauce has reduced and thickened.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove thyme bundle and serve with Irish soda bread.

IRISH COFFEE

- Freshly brewed strong coffee
- Brown sugar
- White sugar
- Irish whiskey (Bushmill's or Jameson's)
- Heavy whipping cream

Whip ½ cup heavy cream just until fluffy and thickened. Do not add sugar and do not whip to firm peaks.

For each mug of Irish coffee, add 1 tsp. brown sugar and, if you like a sweeter coffee, 1 tsp. white sugar.

Add 1 jigger (1½ oz.) Irish whiskey and stir. Pour in piping hot coffee. Using the back of a spoon, gently pour whipped cream on top of coffee so it makes a solid layer. Sip coffee through the whipped cream.

Ahhh. ☑

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HEALTH



Urban planning

Downtown pioneers Diane and Michael Young are living above the store again.

Story by Elizabeth Cook | Photography by Jon C. Lakey

In Michael and Diane Young's apartment above the former O.O. Ruffy General Store, the spacious kitchen and living room feature original maple flooring that survived a 2015 fire. Windows above the cabinets let light into the master bedroom on the other side.



AT HOME



Diane and Michael Young, pictured here with dogs Cinnamon and Mollie, had backgrounds in downtown development, construction and preservation that helped make the O.O. Rufty project possible.

When Diane and Michael Young first moved to downtown Salisbury, they were trailblazers.

It was the late 1980s. Merchants were scrambling to fill the void left when Belk and JCPenney moved to the new Salisbury Mall.

Instead of abandoning downtown, some Salisburyans invested in it — people such as George and Margaret Kluttz and Bill and Susan Kluttz. The two couples bought the former Kluttz Drug building at 101 N. Main and renovated it to become Spanky's Homemade Ice Cream. Offices would go on the second floor.

They kicked around ideas for the third floor, a victim of disuse and invading pigeons. An art gallery?

A city club?

Michael, then the city's first downtown marketing manager, suggested the space become an apartment, something Salisbury had not seen in the central business district for decades.

Margaret Kluttz asked if he knew anyone who would want to live there.

"Yeah, me!" he said.

And so he did. Michael and Diane moved into an



Above: Lights glow in the Youngs' East Innes Street apartment above the Hive gift and craft store. *Right:* A window or laylight in the ceiling brings in light from a skylight above. *Below left:* The master suite includes a bathroom with a double vanity.





Diane cleans the floor in an apartment on the back of the building. Some of the original flooring looks charred on the edges, a result of the 2015 fire and perhaps the oil once used to keep down dust in the 1922 building.

apartment right on the Square.

“We used to joke that we were the first downtown residents other than the street people,” Michael says. The Youngs stayed there four years, until they decided to buy a house and start a family.

Three decades, two children and one Maupin Avenue house later, the Youngs again faced the question recently of who might live in a downtown apartment. This time, though, they were investing in the building themselves, and downtown had dozens of apartments — a growing trend instead of a curiosity.

There was no question about who would live in one of the apartments in the Youngs’ building, the former O.O. Rufty General Store at 126 E. Innes St. In September 2018, Diane and Michael moved into a two-bedroom space they designed for themselves.

Fire had heavily damaged the structure in

2015, when it housed Okey Dokey & Co. But the Youngs saw the building’s potential and brought it back to life — coming full circle on their love of Salisbury’s downtown and of living in it.

Sentiment had little to do with the project, however.

“We are not philanthropists,” Michael says. “We didn’t do this to boost downtown. This has been a good investment for us, a smart investment.

“... If it were easy, though, everyone would be doing it.”



The first-floor retail space the Youngs renovated is now the home of Hive, a gift shop that specializes in handcrafted goods and art workshops. The rest of the building contains six apartments, including their own, and storage

rental units in the basement.

One hurdle they faced before work could begin was financing. Big banks brush off queries about mixed-use developments, according to Michael. But Salisbury’s local bank, F&M, stepped up. “They’ve been terrific,” he says.

Another challenge was meeting the guidelines for historic tax credits. The Youngs had an advantage there. In decades of work as a contractor, Diane has helped some 50 projects through the tax-credit process. She knows what is likely to win approval from the National Park Service, the ultimate decision-maker on the credits.

The other challenge — or temptation — was keeping costs down. Michael says they sometimes had to reel themselves in. “We went over budget, but a lot of that was self-inflicted.”

Story continues on page 31.

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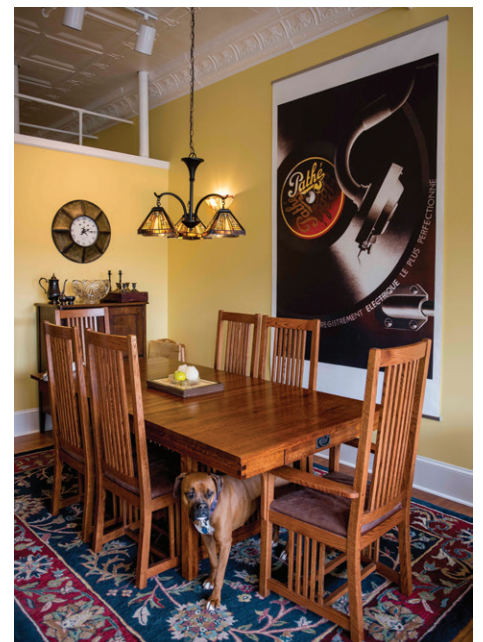
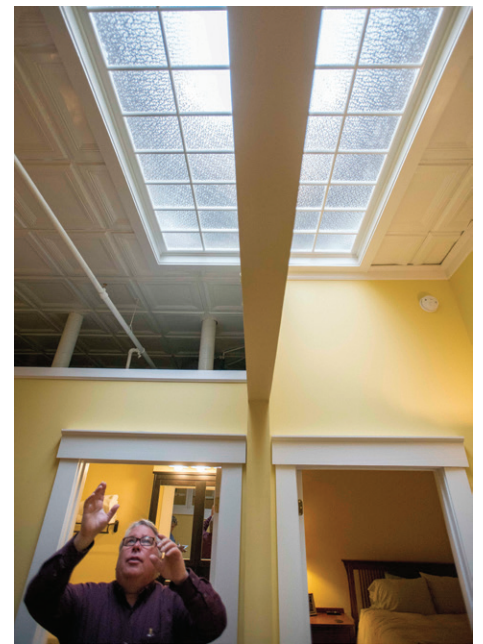
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Above: The Youngs' dual-fuel stove is equipped with a handy pot-filler faucet and surrounded by cabinets that came ready-to-assemble from IKEA. Top to bottom at right: Mollie sits at attention in the living room; Michael points to the laylight in the ceiling; a poster printed at Downtown Graphics Network decorates the dining area.



Above: The Youngs' bedroom sits just off the dining area. *Below:* The ancient fire door between their building and neighbor Simply Good Natural Foods was made in Memphis, Tenn. *Below left:* Shelves holding a pottery collection separate mirrors in the master bathroom.





***Above:** A bold print decorates a wall leading to the entrance hallway, where the Youngs plan to add a bar area.
Below right: A sconce in the Craftsman style accents a wall.
Below left: Subway tile surrounds the bathtub area.*

AT HOME

Instead of replacing burned-out tin ceilings with sheetrock, they had a Florida company stamp new tin to match the original. They also put in electronic locks and, in the common areas, security cameras.

The other apartments have many of the same amenities the Youngs wanted for themselves — farmhouse sinks, subway tile backsplashes and top-of-the-line faucets in the kitchens, for example.

“Those are things we didn’t have to do,” Diane says, “but (a) we’re getting historic tax credit on it, so it made it more affordable, and (b) we wanted apartments that would lease up very quickly and that we could command a top market rate for, and we were successful with that.”

Their total investment, including acquisition and construction, has come to about \$1.6 million, she says. Rents range from \$995 on the basement apartment to \$1,450 for a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment, plus electricity and gas. Only one was vacant as of mid-January.

Cabinets for all six apartments came ready-to-assemble from IKEA. Five pallets of cabinetry, countertops and sinks arrived all at once — and before the building’s elevator was in working order. So up the stairs it all went, to be stored next door above Simply Good Natural Foods, a building owned by Geof Wilson.

Installation was an endeavor.

“If you open the box and you look inside at all the parts and pieces and the instructions, it’ll take your breath away,” Michael says. Friends with cordless drills got the job done. Pizza and beer helped.



As a couple, the Youngs may be uniquely qualified for downtown development. Hailing from Michigan, they met at a conference when they were both downtown managers in small South Carolina towns — he in Seneca, she in Georgetown.

It was a Main Street romance, Diane says. They married soon after Michael took the Salisbury job.

Michael left the downtown position a few years later and launched Downtown Graphics Network, which makes custom-designed street banners, flags and other artwork. But he has continued to cultivate downtown devel-



Like most of the furniture in the apartment, the bookcases and TV cabinet came from the Youngs’ former home on Maupin Avenue.

opment, talking with others about downtown property and its potential.

He’d had his eye on the O.O. Rufty building ever since the fire. Stan Williamson owned the property.

“Stan approached Michael, who’d been planting seeds for a couple years with him,” Diane says. Stan was ready to sell.

“It’s such an iconic building,” Michael says.

For more than 80 years, it housed one of Salisbury’s oldest retailers — the kind of general store where you could buy everything from candy to cowbells. The store’s slogan was “If you can’t find it at Rufty’s ...”



“This is what kept the fire from spreading to the next building,” Michael says as he slides a heavy door between the main hallway of the Youngs’ building and the second floor over Simply Good. On the other side of the firewall is an enormous, open room.

“This is typical of spaces in downtown Salisbury,” Michael says. “It’s a blank canvas, ready to go.”

Michael says he has acted as a matchmaker, helping downtown property to wind up in the hands of people who put it to the best use — such as selling 101 S. Main St. to Ted and

Cheryl Goins, who built Pottery 101 and their own apartment on the Square.

The Youngs also bought and redeveloped the East Innes building that houses The Smoke Pit restaurant and four apartments above it.

“What we’ve always done is, I build them, and Michael leases and maintains them. So it’s a really good mix of skill sets,” Diane says.



What is now the Youngs’ dining area sits above the epicenter of the 2015 blaze, started by a light fixture on the first floor, Diane says. The fire burned a hole through the second floor, where boxes of paperback books had been stored.

Clearing the rubble was their first task. They filled four or five 40-yard containers with charred debris and other trash.

“One workman that had been with us many years came in to work on the structural repairs,” Diane says. “He just looked around and said, ‘What have you guys gotten yourselves into?’”

They approached designing the apartment as they would building themselves a custom home.

“We wanted a really nice, spacious kitchen,” Diane says. The open floor plan accommodates a large island that looks out into the living area.

AT HOME

In the counter behind the island, the dual-fuel Verona stove has two electric ovens and a convenient pot-filler faucet above the gas burners.

“We really like to cook, so that was a real exciting splurge,” Diane says.

In addition to the farmhouse sink in one counter, there’s a second, “clean” sink in the island, a feature Michael liked in a house on OctoberTour.

They included two bedrooms, even though they could have used three when their children — Lewis, 26, and Emalee, 23 — both come home. But that happens only two weekends a year, Diane says. “That’s what blowup mattresses are for.”

They moved from a 2,600-square-foot house with a chock-full attic and garage into a 1,700-square-foot apartment.

“We gave away so much stuff to Habitat,” Michael says.

That included armoires to supplement the house’s small closets. The apartment has plentiful storage space, including a walk-in master

bedroom closet.

They installed high windows in their bedroom to let in light from the living room windows, which face the street. As they found out on their first night, the windows also let in streetlamp light, so shades are on order. But the interior windows do effectively block street noise.

People often ask them about crime. So far they’ve not had any uncomfortable moments while walking dogs Cinnamon and Mollie at night. “It’s no more safe or unsafe than anywhere else in the city,” Michael says.



In their living room hang two huge posters produced at Downtown Graphics Network that show 1932 works by A.M. Cassandre, a lithographer and poster artist Michael studied in college. That seemed appropriate for a 1922 building, he says.

Also appropriate, the Youngs believe, is the growing interest in downtown apart-

ments. Those who choose urban living in Salisbury — usually young professionals and empty nesters — will find a much different vibe than they did 30 years ago.

“It’s more of a 24-hour downtown,” Michael says. The district has more specialty retail stores and restaurants, he says — plus two breweries.

The buzz of activity appears likely to accelerate, the Youngs say. They base part of that opinion on location — Salisbury’s proximity to Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston-Salem and other thriving areas. They have also seen a change at meetings of downtown directors — fewer people with graying hair like theirs and more who are young.

“I think it’s because downtowns are cool,” Michael says.

He and Diane should know.

“We’re kind of the poster children for downtown revitalization,” she says. **S**

Elizabeth Cook lives in Salisbury and is former editor of the Salisbury Post.

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A photograph of a worker in a red beanie and grey hoodie working on a train car in a dark industrial setting. The worker is standing in a narrow aisle between train cars, looking down at something in their hands. A yellow ladder is leaning against a concrete pillar in the background. The scene is lit by overhead industrial lights, creating a dramatic, low-key atmosphere.

PAYING IT FORWARD

49 Days of Gratitude find inspiration in the Merci Train.

Story by Mark Wineka | Photography by Jon C. Lakey



Volunteers Jacob Riley, Paul Hess and Steve Mersch knock off surface rust on the 40-and-8 boxcar at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer.



Deep in the bowels of the Roundhouse one day in January, Walt Lyman stood back to admire some of his handiwork.

Since the beginning of the week, Lyman had been sanding, priming, repairing and applying a fresh coat of Westchester gray paint to the narrow-gauge 40-and-8 boxcar, named for its capability during wartime of carrying 40 troops or eight horses.

Above: Walt Lyman works on restoring the 40-and-8 car. Left: A glass egg holder was given to North Carolina from a French citizen in 1949.



Above: Volunteer Paul Hess, from Salisbury, uses a rotary brush to knock off surface rust on the train car.

Right: Dianne and Louis Brady pose with the newly constructed and painted shields that will go back on the boxcar.



It was a tight squeeze, and American doughboys fighting in France in World War I were never thrilled to be crammed into the windowless 40-and-8 car. On this day, surrounded by powerful locomotives and expensive rail-cars on display at the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer, this little French boxcar seemed overwhelmed and maybe even an afterthought.

That will hardly be the case this February and March, when the 40-and-8 car — a gift to North Carolina from the French people and one of 49 cars of the 1949 Merci Train, or Gratitude Train, will stand as the starring symbol for Rowan County’s “49 Days of Gratitude.”

As he worked on the outside of the car, Lyman was anxious to find a key for the padlock so he could roll open the door.

“I’m sure we’ll get into something interesting when we get inside,” Lyman said. “I’m not going to call anyone if I find French money in there.”

In short, the 49 Days of Gratitude are a “Celebration of Thanks,” using the story of the Merci Train as inspira-



Above: James Hart places a display case on a French helmet that was one of the original items gifted to North Carolina.

Below: Dianne Brady, from Franklinville, N.C., holds one of the original shields that was on the Merci railcar.



tion. In 1949, the people of France donated a 49-car train of 40-and-8s to the United States in appreciation for the American Friendship Train of relief goods that had been sent to a ravaged Europe after World War II.

Each of the then 48 states received one of the cars, filled with crates of gifts from the French people — and so many of those presents were personal, sometimes handmade, family artifacts. The 49th car was designated to be shared between the District of Columbia and the territory of Hawaii.

The Merci car in Spencer is the one that arrived with much fanfare in Raleigh on Feb. 8, 1949.

So you see how the “49” theme emerged. The train came in 1949, and there were 49 cars in all. Rowan County’s 49 Days of Gratitude, the brainchild of Sherry Mason Brown and Kimberly Lentz and fully supported by the transportation museum, is offer-



*Doug Nixon closes the door
on the 40-and-8 boxcar so the
exterior can be repainted.*

Among the original gifts from the French people that came to North Carolina were this glass egg holder and a silver spoon. They were eventually given to the Rowan Public Library, which has loaned them to the N.C. Transportation Museum. Here, they sit on the floor of the Merci Train boxcar.



ing numerous programs, exhibits and activities with the themes of World War II, French culture and — above all else, gratitude.

But the real heart of this 49-day time span is the placement of 49 donation boxes throughout Rowan County for local charities.

The big donation boxes measure 24 inches wide and 19 inches deep and are decorated with the Merci boxcar. They are not meant for monetary donations. Instead, they are ac-

cepting specific material needs of the nonprofit groups.

The cost for sponsoring a box was \$100, and sponsors have chosen which charities to support. They were distributed Feb. 9 during opening ceremonies, which included a parade in Spencer, a program emceed by WBTV's David Whisenant, a keynote address by Beth Troutman and the opening of the transportation museum's Merci Train exhibit.

The freshened boxcar is on display, and the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh has loaned to the Transportation Museum close to 100 items that were originally among the gifts from the French people.

These include teapots, coffee services, dolls, medals, a bed warmer, paintings, figurines, an egg cup, ashtrays, dishes, a toy car, toy soldiers, a grooming set, vases, a 1915 military helmet, a powder box, a hand mirror, snuff container, a



Volunteer Steve Mersch, from Concord, works on the restoration of the French boxcar.

mask, candleholder, pitchers and cornucopias.

“It really was an awesome collection of personal things,” says information and communications specialist Mark Brown of the N.C. Transportation Museum.

It’s estimated the French people donated some 52,000 items in the 49-car Merci Train.

To go with the gratitude theme, the museum’s exhibits designer, James Hart, also has replicated a Southern Railroad boxcar from a peri-

od correct for the American Friendship Train. He made it part of an exhibit area where the museum is accepting canned goods from visitors that can later be distributed to the needy.

By the time the 49 Days of Gratitude ends, the N.C. Transportation Museum, Fresh Artists, Center for Faith & the Arts, Waterworks, Rowan Museum, the N.C. Museum of Dolls, Toys & Miniatures, Rowan’s public libraries, the Phoenix Readers, Rowan-Salisbury Schools,

the local 40 and 8 Voiture and others will have been involved.

A big closing ceremony will be held March 30 at North Rowan High, including a band, readings, a video highlighting the sponsors with their collections and one other major thing related to the 49 Days of Gratitude — The Butterfly Project.

It involves all of Rowan County’s middle-schoolers (roughly 5,600 kids) and aims at ty-



Top: The wooden shields, recently remade, reflect various French provinces. They have been reinstalled on the outside of the boxcar. Above: The 49 Days of Gratitude project was the brainchild of Sherry Mason Brown and Kimberly Lentz. Left: A delicate vase was one of the many personal gifts from the French people.

ing the history of the Holocaust in with World War II.

Each student will paint a \$2 ceramic butterfly, which will eventually be included in several permanent art installations throughout the county. First, the butterflies will be on display at the March 30 closing.

The butterflies honor the lives of the 1.5 million Jewish and non-Jewish children who died in the Holocaust, and the memorial plaques on the installations will share messages of remembrance and hope.

The Butterfly Project, which is a global education and arts program, also includes a middle school lesson plan. In addition, there will be public and middle school screenings of “The Butterfly Documentary Film.” Tammy Grinshpon, daughter of Terenzin Concentration Camp survivor Ela Weissberger, will share her mother’s story when the film is shown.



This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Merci train. Brown and Lentz gained their own inspiration for the 49 Days of Gratitude from the eighth-grade artwork of Anna Everhart.

Everhart, now a sophomore at North Rowan High, was participating in a Fresh Artists pilot program at North Rowan Middle — something Brown, Lentz and art teacher Leigh Ann Alexander became heavily involved with.

One of the exercises in Fresh Artists called on students to create a “Silly City” based on their artwork from a particular place.

“It’s called ‘Silly City’ because nothing’s to scale,” Lentz says. “You can’t use a ruler, is one of the requirements.”

The North Rowan Middle students chose the transportation museum, and Anna found herself painting the Merci boxcar — a decision she soon regretted.



Anna Everhart poses with her artwork, which sparked the idea for the 49 Days of Gratitude.



On the side Everhart was painting were numerous shields, each representing the insignia or coat of arms, so to speak, of a French province. (Though there are 40 French provinces, the N.C. car does not have 40 shields.).

It was pretty complicated and time consuming to paint each shield distinctly enough that it could be recognized.

“I hated that thing,” Everhart says today. “My art teacher made me finish it, but I tried to avoid it.”

Under Fresh Artists, the Silly Cities students come up with are incorporated into sizable panels and sold to corporations or other groups as unique artwork. The money paid is used to buy art supplies for underfunded schools, leading to more student art and more giving back.

The N.C. Transportation Museum thought the students’ Silly City for the museum was a perfect thing to use for exterior artwork, and it

bought six panels, each 32 inches high, that can be seen along the walkway next to the Master Mechanic’s Office.

“It provides a pop of color where you totally don’t expect it,” Mark Brown says.

Everhart’s Merci boxcar is in one of the panels. Everhart and volunteers Brown and Lentz had never heard the story behind the Merci train until that Silly City exercise. One brainstorm led to another, and Brown and Lentz realized the county could do something big and noble in connection to the 70th anniversary of the Merci Train.

They immediately found support from all individuals, governments and other entities they approached with the 49 Days of Gratitude idea, especially the Transportation Museum.

“The museum has been such a great champion of us,” Sherry Mason Brown says.



Over the years, the story of the Merci Train has faded a bit into the background, though there is a website and numerous individuals devoted to its history.

From 1994 to 2012, the late Earl Bennett Sr., one of its historians, visited all 43 boxcars still remaining from the original Gratitude Train. Only the ones in Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska and New Jersey are missing, have been destroyed by fire or were scrapped.

The surviving boxcars found their ways to American Legion posts, veterans parks and museums, state fairgrounds, 40-and-8 societies, rail museums, heritage centers and even a National Guard camp.

The N.C. Transportation Museum became the home for North Carolina’s Merci car in 1981, so it’s one of the museum’s oldest exhib-

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its. It came from the N.C. Forty and Eight Society in Wilson. Until the 1960s, the car had been on display in various places in Raleigh.

The Merci car's arrival at the state capital in 1949 was a big deal. The welcoming party and parade included Gov. Kerr Scott, French dignitaries and bands from Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune.

"The present occasion is not a debt being paid, because no debt was owed," said News & Observer editor Jonathan Daniels. "But the gratitude of the French people warms our hearts, and we are grateful for their friendship."

Large crowds reportedly filled the Hall of History to witness the crates being unpacked. Many of the gifts were housed at the N.C. Museum of History, where they remain, and others were distributed across the state to libraries, schools and other museums.

Rowan Public Library has, for example, a few items from the

Work crews unload North Carolina's Merci Train boxcar after its arrival in Raleigh on Feb. 8, 1949. This same 40-and-8 car is now part of the exhibits at the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer.

— Photo courtesy of Raleigh News & Observer



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Merci Train in its possession, including an egg holder and silver spoon.

Built between 1885 and 1901, each 40-and-8 car in the Merci Train measured 29 feet long and weighed 12 tons. An ocean freighter named Magellan arrived in the New York harbor on Feb. 3, 1949, carrying the whole train.

New York Mayor William O'Dwyer called it "the most heart-warming event in recent international history." Some 200,000 people turned out to welcome the New York car.

In 1947, the American Friendship Train of hundreds of boxcars represented roughly \$40 million in relief supplies for Europe.

"This effort inspired a French rail worker and war veteran named Andre Picard to suggest that France reciprocate," a history says. "... A local veterans' organization adopted the proposal, and a committee was established to solicit gifts. The response was astounding, and the effort

gained nation momentum.

"The national headquarters of the French War Veterans Association took control and decided to fill 49 cars with gifts. Each car was decorated with the shields of 40 provinces and other designs."



As part of refurbishing North Carolina's 40-and-8 car, the Transportation Museum asked veteran sign painter Louis Brady Jr. of Franklinton to paint 24 new shields, reflecting the French provinces still represented on the car.

The jack-of-all-trades Lyman, who lives in Landis, cut the boards for the new shields, then Brady primed each one. To make the new shields as accurate as possible, Brady's wife, Diane, used tracing paper to transfer the designs from the old shields to the new boards.

Brady then went to work with his paintbrush.

"I enjoyed doing them," Brady says, relishing the history involved. "You don't get to do jobs like this often."

The N.C. Forty and Eight Society donated \$1,000 toward the shields and the overall restoration.

Back in the Roundhouse, Lyman kept working. He pointed out how one side of the Merci boxcar looked as though someone took shots at it. He'll putty up those holes and smooth things out, he promised. He was otherwise happy with bringing the old car back to life and being part of it.

"That legacy you leave behind means more than any money you can make," Lyman said. "It will always be history. When you're finished, you've restored a part of the past."

And for that we are grateful.

For more information on the 49 Days of Gratitude, go to 49DaysOfGratitude.com.

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49 Days of Gratitude events

The opening parade and ceremony connected to Rowan County's 49 Days of Gratitude was held Feb. 9, and the N.C. Transportation Museum' Gratitude Train Exhibit is already open, but here are some other things to look for through March:

- **Feb. 9-March 30** — The North Rowan Fresh Artists Silly City Exhibition will be on display at the Waterworks Visual Arts Center, 123 E. Liberty St., Salisbury.
- **Feb. 13-March 30** — Rowan-Salisbury Schools student exhibitions tied to the 49 Days of Gratitude, Waterworks.
- **Feb. 15** — Art Crawl. the Salisbury trolley will have stops at Waterworks, Center for Faith & the Arts and more.
- **Feb. 20** — African-American involvement in World War II, Hood Theological Seminary.
- **Feb. 23** — Introductory swing dancing at Rowan Public Library; showing of World War II movie "Anchors Aweigh" at the East Branch of Rowan Public Library; showing of World War II movie "Casablanca" at South Rowan Regional Library in China Grove/Landis.
- **Feb. 25** — Gratitude Journaling at Rowan Public Library.
- **Feb. 27-March 3** — Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit



"Rise Above" at the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer.

- **March 9** — Salute to Women in Service at the Hefner VA Medical Center. Also, the "Meet Me in Paris" gala — the annual fundraiser for the Center for Faith & the Arts at Lee Street theatre.
- **March 15** — "The Great War" — Phoenix Readers & St. John's Lutheran Church.
- **March 16** — American Girl "Molly on the Home Front" at N.C. Museum of Dolls, Toys & Miniatures.
- **March 22** — Merci Weekend, "All Things

French." (Among other touches, downtown Salisbury stores will be encouraged to have French themes.)

- **March 24** — Cinema CFA (Center for Faith & the Arts) presents "Sarah's Key," an American film about the rounding up of Jews during World War II.
- **March 30** — Closing ceremony, including Piedmont Prime Time Community Band at North Rowan High School. Drama students will be recounting stories of war veterans, and the butterflies of the local Butterfly Project will be on display.



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GAINING TRACTION

NASCAR tire specialist also builds durable clothing line for women on the go.

Story by Ben White | Photography by Wayne Hinshaw



H

HARRISBURG — At first glance, Liz Prestella looks to be in the wrong profession.

Her 5-foot-5-inch frame and easy smile combine for fashion-model-type looks, but come any given race weekend this native of South Lake Tahoe, California, isn't thinking of stage runways or bright lights. Her stage of choice is the NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series where she helps prepare race cars for competition on short tracks, road courses and superspeedways across the country.

However, there is a certain degree of fashion in her life.

On race weekends, Prestella resembles a soldier in battle, working hard to accomplish a winning mission. The green eyes under black-rimmed sunglasses have turned definite and focused, shifting from time to time over numbers written on rubber in a variety of coded colors.

She wears a black-and-white crew uniform. Her gloves hold the trusty air gauge she uses to check tire pressures many times per day.

Each time she lifts tires and wheels over her head that weigh more than half as much as she does, there's a glimpse of tattoos peeking out from under her short-sleeved shirt.





Now in her seventh season as a crew member in NASCAR, Prestella works as a tire specialist for JTG Daugherty Racing and the team's driver, Chris Buescher. Her journey into NASCAR's premier series began in 2002 during a Sunday outing at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California, with her parents and sisters. One glimpse was all it took to get hooked on a sport she loves so much.

"I've always been close to my Dad (Alton) watching races with him and working on cars," Prestella said. "He wanted me to take auto shop when I got my license at 16 mainly so I would know what to do if I was ever stuck on the side of the highway. I just fell in love with the mechanical end of it. It just grew from there."

In 2008, Prestella moved to North Carolina and landed an internship with Jennifer Jo Cobb's (Xfinity Series) team and later joined team owner Jay Robinson and 1990 Daytona 500 winner Derricke Cope. From there, she handled tires for Tommy Baldwin Racing before accepting her present





Prestella models women's work pants, above, and T-shirt, below. — Images from www.torqdclothing.com

position at JTG Racing.

During the full 36-race Cup schedule, she's the person that keeps the wheels rolling on the No. 37 Chevrolets.

"My job is basically everything that involves tires," Prestella said. "When we get to the track, I get all the tires we have for the weekend. I measure them, check them and mark them to make sure everything is known to us before we put them on the car. I put them in sets and set all the pressures once I get the information from the crew chief. Then I make sure the car has the right tires on it at all times. Throughout the race weekend, everything involving the tires is on me."

"I enjoy all of it because it's very meticulous and is controlled because it's done a certain way."

Buescher, now in his fifth season of NASCAR Cup series racing, appreciates the dedication Prestella puts into making sure his tires are the best possible for the track he is driving.

"Liz works harder than I do I believe," Buescher





Above: Prestella is interviewed by writer Ben White. Below: Prestella models one of her tank tops. — Image from www.torqdclothing.com

said. “She hustles and has been really good to us and our team. She works her tail off and stays busy the whole time. She doesn’t put up with anything from anybody. She is all business at the track and has purpose and gets her job done and does it very well.”

That hustle is what got Prestella’s mental wheels turning on a problem that needed to be fixed. She found herself frustrated during those times when the sleek black pants she wears at the track failed to keep up with her pace. With some eight or 10 women in various pit crew roles within ARCA, Xfinity and Gander Outdoors Truck Series teams, there was a need to help other females with the same issues she was experiencing.

“I’ve been into sewing and crafting since I was little and my grandmother (Mrs. Rae Edwards) taught me how to sew when I was 10,” Prestella said. “I’ve always been into working on cars but early on noticed it’s hard to find clothing that fits and is comfortable while working on cars. I guess it really came from auto shop in high school. I wore men’s coveralls there, and they were huge on me. As I started getting further along with my automotive career, I was having to deal with clothing supplied to me (that) just wasn’t comfortable and really didn’t fit me all that well. Once I got to the race track in them, I was having the same problem.

“That’s when I began thinking of clothing for women that work on cars. There’s a large number of them, but there is no clothing line specifically for us.





Prestella checks a tire on race day.

Women can buy tactical pants made for women but they are extremely expensive. They don't hold up quite like what the guys have. The guys have eight or nine different options with double knee pads, cargo pants, pocket pants. We really don't have that option. So as I began looking for something for myself, I realized there just isn't anything out there.

"I have such a passion for sewing and clothes and working in the automotive field, so I decided to combine the two together."

Her initial research for the project began in May 2017. While sitting in airports across the country waiting for flights or at tracks waiting for garage areas to open, Prestella searched the internet for companies that could transform

her ideas from paper to reality. She read reviews from customers and eventually chose to go with a manufacturer in Cleveland, Ohio, and another in the Bronx, N.Y.

From there, she ordered 10 different types of fabric samples to look at them, feel them, stretch them, pull them and even run a knife along them to see how easily they would snag. Constantly crawling in and around race cars, her line had to be strong and able to withstand the toughest of tests. Three pattern makers were chosen before cloth was cut and sewn. She is now the proud owner of Torq'd Clothing, a small enterprise company that is gaining steam.

"The durability of the fabric was a big deal for me knowing what I know about working in the

garage area and what I go through with problems I encounter," Prestella said. "The biggest problem I have while I'm working with tires is the knees blowing out, pockets ripping and having adequate pocket sizes on the pants. In talking with other women in the sport, they've had the same problems."

Like the race teams she works for, much of her success comes from trial and error. Her team owners at JTG Daugherty Racing encourage her to build her clothing line while working to keep the tires rolling out of their Harrisburg shop.

As a builder of businesses himself, JTG founder Tad Geschickter is 100 percent behind Prestella's efforts.



An NBC Sports telecast shows that Prestella was a Pit Crew All-Stars nominee.

“She is a racer and a hard worker,” Geschickter said. “Make no mistake, we are more than happy to have female crew members at JTG, especially if they work as hard as Liz. She is one of the best tire specialists in the garage, and we are fortunate to have her.

“I’m an entrepreneur and I’m all for her being successful with her clothing line.”

Co-owner Brad Daugherty, a former basketball star at the University of North Carolina and with several NBA teams, feels Prestella’s venture is an amazing opportunity for personal growth.

“Liz is very focused, is an extremely talented young lady and very good athlete because that’s what these crew members are,” Daugherty said. “When you come into this business as a female, the concept of working on a pit crew is still new, but she has worked her way through the ranks. Her attitude is to be the best she can be at her job and compete at the highest level of NASCAR. She prepares for her job above and beyond, and the drive and focus she has is outstanding.

“We love that she has the clothing line. We say maximize

the opportunities you have. Some might say that’s a distraction but I don’t believe that. In today’s world, if you have a chance to reinvest yourself back into what you’re doing and make it your own personal venue, I think it’s great.”

Prestella smiles when reminded of her accomplishment after careful planning and determination to see it through.

“I’m excited to have established a clothing line and am getting it out there,” Prestella said. “I’m really adamant about the quality and how I really want it. I can look at samples all day long, but until I wear them and work in them, I don’t know how durable they will actually be. I’ve climbed all over cars in the pants that I’ve designed and they are pretty durable. The only thing I changed was pocket fabrics and was not the main body fabric. I’m very rough and tumble, so I’m a good test market for them.”

The future is bright, but for now Prestella is excited to be chasing race cars while chasing her dreams. **S**

Salisbury’s Ben White, an award-winning writer and author, has covered NASCAR for many publications for 37 years.



When the real Chris Buescher isn't available for a photograph, a cardboard cutout has to do.



*B.J. Wall, from Lexington, rolled
the first perfect game at Woodleaf
Lanes 40 years ago.*



Nellie Hargrove pulls her pink and blue ball from the carrying case.

The little bowling center that can

For exercise, camaraderie and fun, 60-year-old Woodleaf Lanes has plenty to spare.

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

On this mixed-league bowling night at Woodleaf Lanes, Penny Hoover starts her second game with three strikes and a spare.

It was more than four years ago that Hoover became the first woman to bowl a perfect 300 game at Woodleaf Lanes — a feat in itself because this 24-lane bowling center has been around since 1960.

Hoover remains a stellar bowler. She rolled a 235 in her night's first game for the Just Do It Four team. She has been bowling here since the 1970s, when her dad introduced her to the game and she heed-

ed the advice of wonderful coaches in the Saturday morning youth leagues.

Now Hoover is a coach herself on Saturday mornings. She still competes in tournaments at times and loves the camaraderie and socializing in league play.

"I really wouldn't want to bowl anywhere else," Hoover says, "because this is like home to me."

Woodleaf Lanes has rolled on for almost 60 years despite many challenges in the industry and the ever-growing competition for people's recreational time. The peak popularity for bowling came in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, when there were



Above: Tuesday night mixed league action at Woodleaf Lanes. Below: Bob Paolino, principal owner/manager of Woodleaf Lanes.



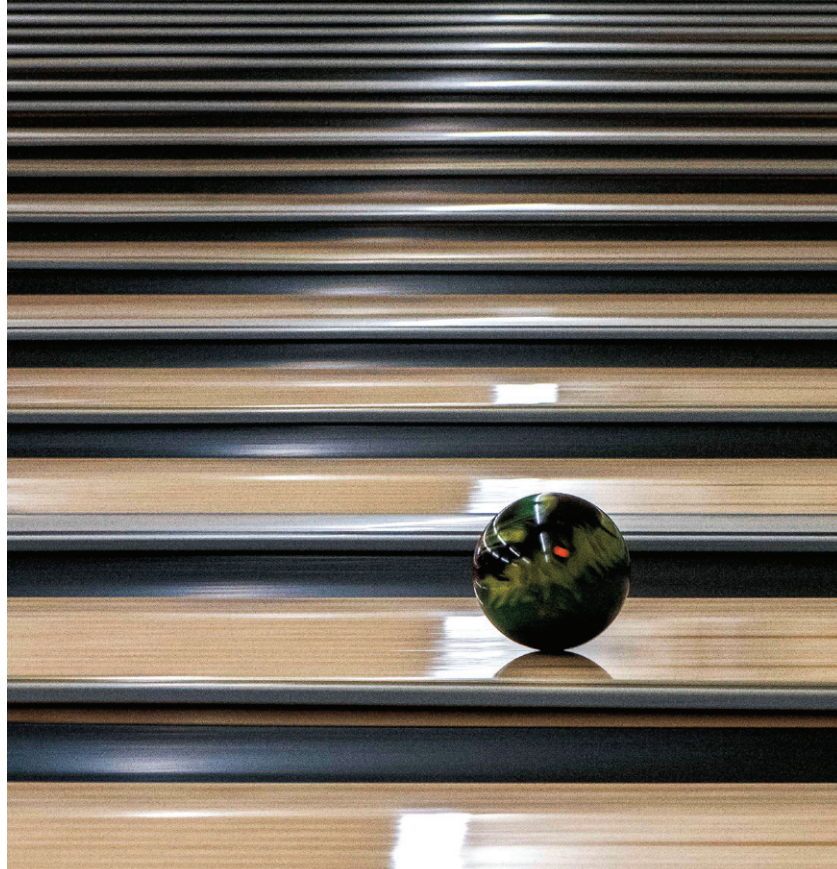
12,000 bowling centers in the United States.

Today, that number is approximately 3,800, including less than 100 — 94 by Bowling2U.com’s last count — in North Carolina. A Washington Post report said the number of bowling centers nationwide had dropped by 33 percent between 1986 and 2014.

“We’ve survived a lot,” says Bob Paolino, who has managed and had a principal ownership interest in Woodleaf Lanes for 43 years.

But as grim as some of the industrywide numbers can be, bowling remains a \$6 billion-a-year business and, with millions playing, it is still the most popular participatory sport in the United States.

It can be a lifetime activity, extending from youngsters in bumper leagues to seniors in their 80s and 90s. It leads sometimes to college scholarships and professional careers. It provides recre-



Above: A ball makes it way down one of the lanes, which have to be cleaned, oiled and buffed daily. Below: Wood Poteat walks away after throwing another strike during the Tuesday night mixed league. Mixed leagues have to have at least one male or female on a team.



ation for children and adults with disabilities.

Bowling’s physical benefits should not be underestimated. Just playing three games, Hoover says, translates to a 1.5-mile walk. That doesn’t count the strength exercises that come with lifting, lowering and rolling her 15-pound ball over 30 frames.

Though it has always been at this same Salisbury location, the bowling center owes the “Woodleaf” name to its original Woodleaf Road address. The street name changed later to Salisbury Boulevard, then finally to the 1811 Jake Alexander Blvd. spot known today.

Built at a cost of \$250,000 in 1960 by Brunswick, a huge name in bowling, Woodleaf Lanes opened with just 12 alleys. It added a concession area in 1963, and 12 more lanes later.

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Paolino had one of his first bowling experiences at Madison Square Garden when he was 9. He eventually worked at a West Haverstraw, N.Y., bowling center, in which Paolino’s dad was a partner.

WELLNESS

Paolino went on to major in speech and drama at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He and his wife moved to Houston, Texas, for her job while Paolino sold Kirby vacuum cleaners, worked in community theater, was an actor in some local television commercials and did a bit of modeling.

Paolino was 25 when his father and brother (still a partner in Woodleaf Lanes) made their pitch for Paolino to leave Houston to manage the bowling center in Salisbury, which was up for sale. Bob's father was in capital sales for Brunswick, which had a management contract with Woodleaf Lanes at the time.

Paolino and his wife packed up and moved east from Texas in 1977. "We were just like the Beverly Hillbillies, only we didn't strike oil," he says, smiling.

Today, Woodleaf Lanes is a 20,000-square-foot facility of bright, vibrant colors, big video screens that double for scoring, plenty of promotional signs and advertisements.

The Rock 'n' Bowl Cafe looks like a throw-back to the 1950s or 1960s. Favorite menu items are nachos, pizza, popcorn, funnel sticks, corn dog nuggets, hot dogs, cheeseburgers, grilled cheese and tater tots.

There's a pro shop, and the walls beyond the bowling lanes are dotted with gum ball machines and arcade games, including several of those machines that have a big claw to grasp stuffed animals.

The walls also hold framed newspaper stories, such as the one about the first perfect game ever bowled at the center in 1978. Lexington resident B.J. Wall holds that honor.

Now 74, Wall still bowls regularly at Woodleaf Lanes. He has bowled at many centers in the region through the years, "but I figured if I'm going to retire to a bowling center, I'd retire here," Wall says during the mixed-league bowling night. "Bowling now is just a pastime."

A Vietnam veteran, Wall has enjoyed bowling all these years for the exercise, the social as-

pects and how you have to count on yourself when you compete.

Wall, who first bowled in 1963, travels here from Lexington at least three days a week. "It's like having a bowling alley in your backyard," he says.

Paolino, who also owns and operates Pla Mor Lanes in Statesville, says Woodleaf Lanes has made it as a small business because of all the updates over four decades, the attention to customers, making efforts at outreach in the community and a constant presence through advertising, events, promotions and online tools.

"We've always had very good relationships with our customers," Paolino says. "They have always felt like it's their second home. ... We try desperately to make it family friendly at all times."

The outreach has extended to Special Olympics, high schools, colleges, veterans and seniors. The Wednesday afternoon seniors league has, for example, 18 teams.



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You also don't realize how much goes into keeping a bowling center going — from its pins and pinsetters, to synthetic lanes, to scoring systems. A pinsetter, for example, has 5,000 moving parts, and Paolino depends on mechanic Bryson Lamb for daily maintenance.

Just replacing the pins about every two years costs around \$7,000. The lanes have to be cleaned, oiled and buffed daily.

“You're constantly trying to upgrade,” Paolino says, “and these things are not cheap.”

Paolino depends a lot on Woodleaf Lanes Assistant Manager Henry Lamb (Bryson's dad) and Bryson's wife, Melissa. Together, the Salisbury and Statesville bowling centers employ 28 full- and part-time people.

Gone are the days when a bowling center's business was built primarily around league play, though the leagues remain a healthy source of revenue. Woodleaf Lanes and the industry as a whole have had to do more to attract the recreational or casual bowler.



Mary Kesler, Ernest Hargrove, Matthew Kesler, Joe Hunter and Beatrice Hunter celebrate.

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WELLNESS



On that count, Woodleaf Lanes has gone heavy into promotions such as midnight or “Mystic Bowling” on Friday and Saturday nights from 11 p.m.-1:30 a.m. It features black lights, shimmering disco balls, loud music, and the pro shop even sells socks that glow in the dark.

V.L. Funderburk, 83, bowls with a group of fellow bowlers on Tuesday afternoons.

Woodleaf Lanes also has scores of birthday parties every year, offers packages for group and corporate outings and holds special holiday parties.

Paolino bowls in the senior league and keeps his sanity otherwise by cycling, playing blues and jazz guitar and acting in local theater.

“It enriches my life to have those things, to have my music and theater,” Paolino says.

The bowling center is open every day of the year except Christmas Eve.

A group of seniors from Salisbury and Mocksville meets after lunchtime on Tuesdays at Woodleaf Lanes. They usually number about seven or eight, and the only thing at stake are the bragging rights.

One of the bigger braggers is 83-year-old V.L. Funderburk.

“People hate to see me come,” Funderburk says. “Everybody wants to whoop me.”

“Five or six years ago,” Joe Hunter says, “he could back up what he was saying.”

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These bowlers take their pastime seriously. They arrive with their own balls, carried in bags that could be mistaken for the kind of luggage you roll through airports. They have their own shoes, and several of the players wear arm braces to help with their mechanics.

"I got these shoes when I was 3 years old," Funderburk says to the hoots and hollers of the others.

Mary Kesler shakes her head and adds, "This is what we have to put up with."

The bowlers exchange many hand slaps and words of encouragement, especially after strikes and spares. In the day's first game, Hunter leads the way with a 171 score. Kesler, who always sports a cowboy hat, finishes with a 146.

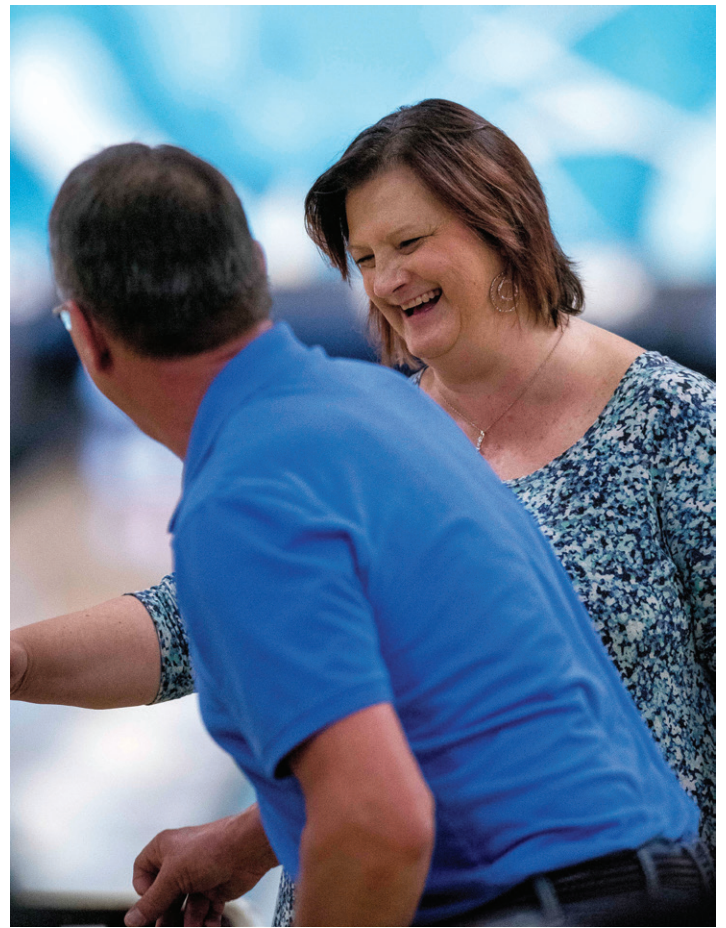
"That's all right," Kesler says, looking at Funderburk's score of 128. "I beat the old man. Wait a minute, I have a 146. I beat him real good."

Hunter says that first game will be the last one he wins on this day. Ernest and Nellie Hargrove's grandson Jay has just arrived to play with the group.

A student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Jay was introduced to bowling as a kid by his grandfather, a good bowler himself, and Jay has six perfect games to his credit and four different three-game sets over 800.

"I really like the competition," Jay says. "It's a physical game as well as a mental game." **S**

Penny Hoover was the first woman to roll a perfect game at the center in 2014.




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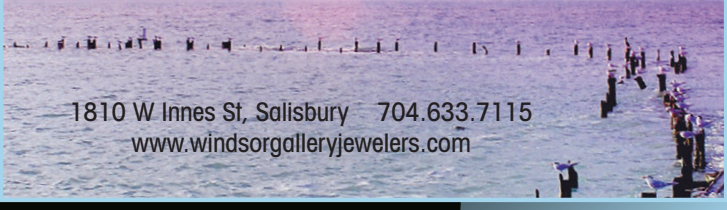
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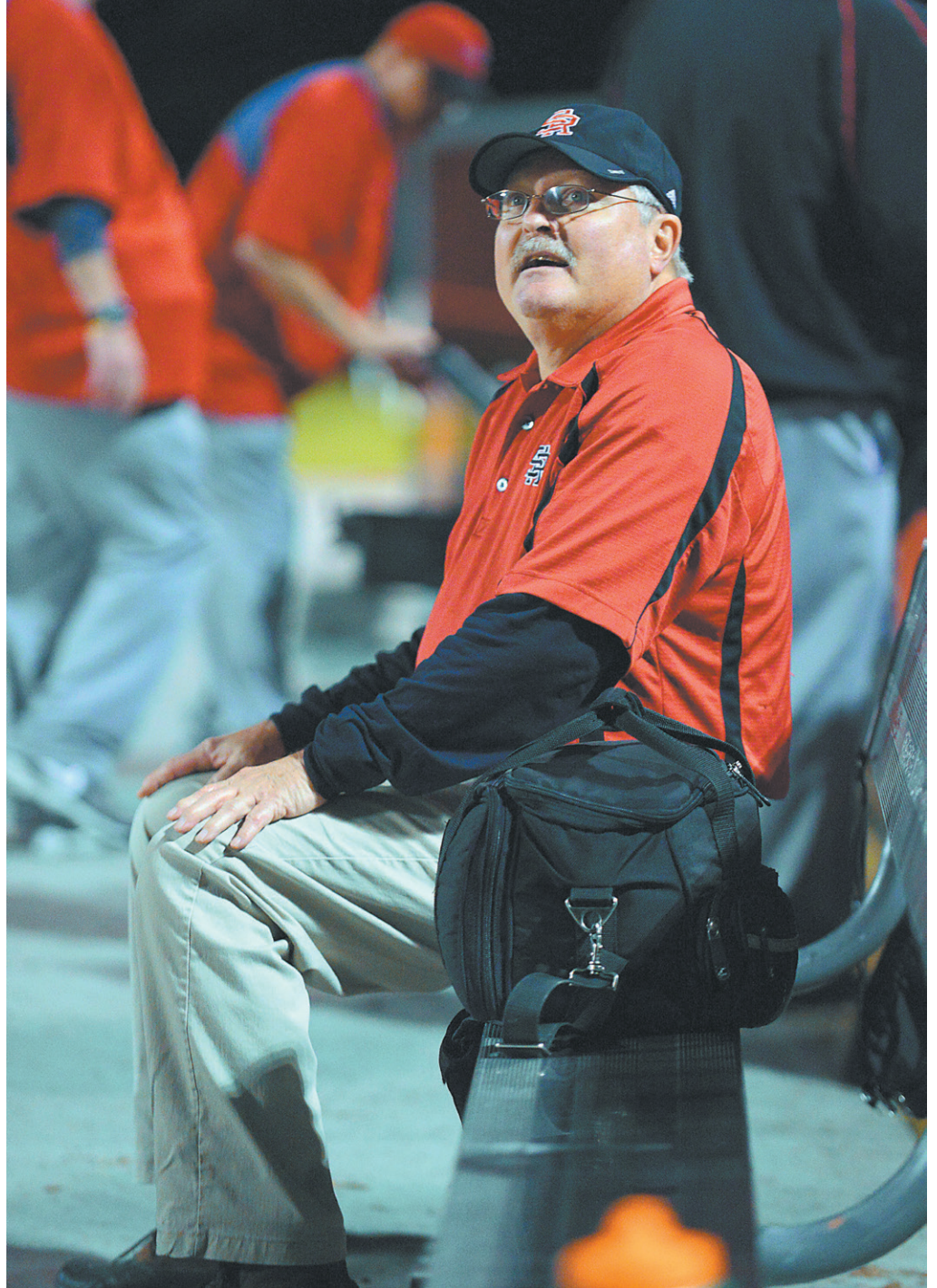
Steady and ready

High school trainer Larry Sides taped, patched up players for 40 years.

Story by David Shaw | Photography by Wayne Hinshaw



***Above:** Longtime South Rowan athletic trainer Larry Sides treats football player Jarrid Nelson with ultrasound to a knee injury in the trainer room. Thorne Eagle is on the left being treated for muscle tightness. **Above right:** Sides at his last football game as a trainer on Nov. 2.*



The spotlight never did find Larry Sides, but don't suffer any heartache.

As a soon-to-be-retired athletic trainer at two Rowan County high schools, he feels like he has seen it all, yet maybe hasn't seen enough.

"Well, if they need me for anything, they can call me," Sides coos in that comforting, biscuits-and-gravy vibe of his. "I'm not hard to find. I just live a mile over that way, through the woods."

It is there — one very long, very loud missed field goal from South Rowan's James Donnell

Stadium — that Sides will take refuge from a profession he's enjoyed for all of four decades. Come March, as winter melts into spring, he'll take a knee and disappear into that endless cornfield of esteemed, local personalities.

"My body won't let me do the things I need to do anymore," declares Sides, a 1970 West Rowan graduate. "My knees are so bad I can't even run onto the football field. I need shoulder surgery, rotator cuff. They need somebody who can do more, and do it better. This job, if you're doing it right, is a lot of work."

It's a job Sides was serendipitously introduced



*Above: Trainer Larry Sides tapes the ankle of Emilio Bernal on the equipment cart.
Left: On the practice field, Sides checks on a football player who is on crutches.*



to in the late 1960s by Bruce Morton, a long-ago West Rowan math teacher who just happened to be the varsity football coach.

“If it hadn’t been for him, I wouldn’t be talking to you right now,” Sides says. “He made me a student trainer for four years and took me to some clinics in Greensboro. Helped me get certified. By my junior year he said I was too good an athlete to just be a trainer, so he put me on the team. I would tape everybody up, then tape myself and go out and practice.”

Sides became West’s kicker and punter, embarking on an adventurous, Forest Gump-like journey that took him initially to Western Carolina University and ultimately to every corner of America. After college, armed with a degree in health and physical education and 10 more semesters as a sports trainer, he spent a year working construction, taking a sledgehammer and chisel to the walls and ceilings of the VA Medical Center.

“I was the guy who knocked holes in the walls so they could install air conditioning,” he recalls. “It was a constant job and hard work. But the best thing that ever happened to me was I got pink-slipped.”

His next chapter brought Sides to North Carolina A&T, where he earned a master’s and became a certified driver’s education instructor. Fate intervened again in the fall of 1977.

REMINISCE



Above: Larry Sides pauses in the hallway outside the trainer room while talking with Nathan Chrismon, who is applying heat to a sore knee.

Right: Sides removes a treatment device from Spencer Balentine's knee.

“A job came open at West Rowan, my old school,” says Sides, a smile creasing his annular face. “The driver’s ed teacher had gotten married and moved away with her husband. So I got that job and stayed there 30 years. I was a driver’s ed teacher, an athletic trainer and a receivers coach. Doors open when they need to, I guess.”

Memories of bygone days, ex-players, forgotten coaches and Friday nights on the sideline quickly accrued. Sides can spew odd-ball tales of Morton, Dale Hedrick, Doug Chalk and Randall Ward, former coaches all. His reputation as an always-there



REMINISCE



corpman blossomed into three decades as the school's Cal Ripken — a guy who came to work, rolled up his sleeves and got the job done.

Of course, life as a trainer comes with no playbook and the job included a fusion of varied unpleasanties. Sides vividly remembers a particular night in fall of 1985, when head coach Raymond Daugherty's Falcons made their first playoff appearance at Statesville's Greyhound Hollow. West Rowan implausibly suffered enough injuries to fill a medical journal and predictably lost, 48-0.

"It was probably the worst night ever," Sides says. "This was back when Statesville was in their heyday. They had some very good years. We had a lot of injuries that

game. While the team doctor was sewing somebody's nose up, I had a running back break both bones in his arm. So I had to get him straightened out and bring him off the field. The guy that went in for him, on the very next play, he dislocated his shoulder."

But wait — as they say in infomercials — there's more!

"We ended up having people playing different positions," he continues. "Our quarterback went to defensive safety and ended up breaking his leg before the game was over. It was just a horrible night."

Years later, when Sides had accrued enough keepsake memories and time-in-grade as a driver's ed teacher, he retired and walked away from West Rowan. More specifically, he got on the bus.

"I went to work for Nelson Myers," he says, referencing the owner of Crossroads Charters & Tours. "He'd been trying to get



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me to drive for years. I've been driving buses since I was in high school. When I first took the test, the instructor took me out and as soon as I got back he told me, 'You're ready to drive.' I actually showed him how to do a right two-point turn."

Sides fondly refers to his initial retirement as "a vacation every day." He got reacquainted with his three children and attended South Rowan football games, watching his youngest daughter scurry about as a team manager. In 2008, he accidentally crossed paths with former athletic director Danny Crosby.

"You see, Danny played ball with my son," Sides explains. "So we kind of knew each other. He knew I was retired and he was looking for a trainer. I thought, maybe it would be a good way to spend time with my daughter. That was her senior year."

An offer was proposed and, after some tinkering, accepted.

"I remember Jason Rollins was the football coach and he really appreciated me when I got here," Sides says. "At the time I wasn't really looking for a teaching job, because I was already drawing a retirement. Jason liked me and I was satisfied to be a trainer."

It didn't stop him from asking. Sides countered with requests to teach driver's education or sports medicine classes at South. Both were rejected.

"So I considered it, anyway," he says, his eyes narrowing to a thoughtful squint. "I finally told them I'd do it temporarily, until they found someone else. That was 10 years ago."

And now, a half-century since a high school math teacher opened the

door for a wide-eyed, sports-crazy freshman, Larry Sides will close it behind him. He'll remain active, busying himself as a warm-hearted bus driver, an assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 301 and as a standing member of the Milford Hills United Methodist choir.

"I've always loved sports," he says with a boyish twinkle. "I also knew I wasn't good enough to keep playing. Becoming a trainer, I've made a lot of friends and found something I was good at. You could say it worked out for me."

It has. Call him if you need something. **S**



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Margaret Kluttz and Elizabeth Cook's husband, Ed.

Elizabeth Cook reception

The Salisbury Post held a retirement reception in December for Elizabeth Cook, who served as the newspaper's editor for 25 years and whose career at the Post spanned 40 years. Post colleagues — past and present — along with many people from the community attended the reception in the Post lobby. Cook has been a regular contributor to Salisbury the Magazine since its beginning and hopes to keep writing in the years ahead.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Elizabeth Cook and Salisbury Mayor Al Heggins



Above: Shanna Pruett and Karen Hurst, both in the Post's sales department, made sure attendees sampled the cake. Right: Cook with Catawba College President Brien Lewis.



Left: Gerry Hurley, wife of late Salisbury Post Publisher Jim Hurley, speaks with Cook at the reception. Middle: Deirdre Parker Smith with Piedmont Players Director Reid Leonard. Right: F&M Bank Chairman Emeritus Paul Fisher with Elizabeth Cook.



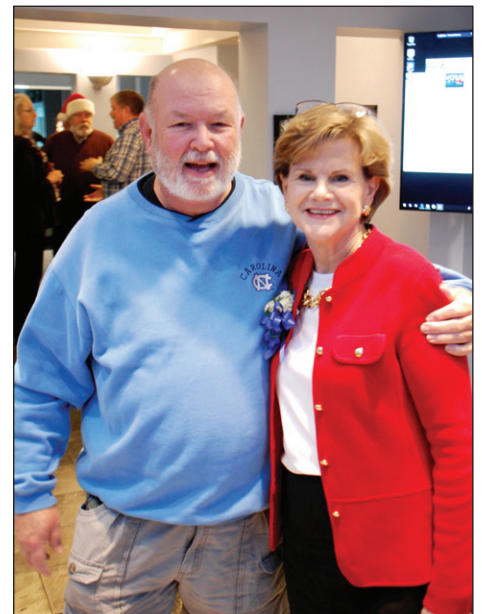
Above: Kristin Byars and Audrey Eudy. Right: Jason Walser, Fred Stanback and Post Publisher Greg Anderson.



Left: Gerrie Blackwelder, Darrell Blackwelder and Kaye Brown Hirst. Right: Ed Norvell, David Post and Clyde.



Left: Ed Norvell, Tony Blackwell and Alice Stanback. Above: Post reporter Shavonne Walker with her daughter, Arianna, and fellow reporter Andie Foley. Right: Jerry Dudley and Elizabeth Cook.





Leslie Rich



Part of the crowd prepares for the balloon release.



Shelby James with Kelsey Lynn Doane

Voices of Hope

The 17th annual Voices of Hope brought its celebration of life and healing through music to the Library Park in Spencer. The Sunday afternoon of singers/musicians, food, games, socializing, door prizes and a traditional balloon release at the end goes to support the Michael Yang Foundation, named for organizers Lori and Steve Yang's son, who died in 2001 when he was just 23 months old. The foundation supports several things such as Kindermusik, college and camp scholarships, along with the Circle of Hope support network for bereaved parents.

— Photos by Nancy Shirley



Above: Catawba College students Logan Williams, Luis Campa, Emily Avalos, Abraham Savon and Angel Paez. Right: Luke Yang. Far right: Ava Morris.





Above: Lori Yang. Right: Paislee Ann Miller and Kynlee May Miller.



Left: Marilyn Alexander with Kathy and Bobby Rusher. Middle: Steve Yang with daughter Ashley. Right: Amery Barton and Chris Gatton.



Left: Tinsley Merrell. Above: Mona Hips and Ke'Andre Rankin. Right: Amelia Steinman and Kathryn Rusher.





Pete Bogle, left, was one of the evening's fire jugglers. Here, he's with Rowan County Commissioner Greg Edds.



Deborah Johnson, outgoing Chamber Chairwoman Janet Spriggs, Doug Spriggs, Sarah Walker, Troy Dibley and Paula Dibley



Douglas Holmes, Shirley Holmes, Edie Morrison, new Chairwoman of the Board Nicole Holmes Matangira, LaShonda Holmes and Sabrina Harris

Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Gala

The 93rd annual Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Gala was held at the West End Plaza. Presented in cooperation with the Rowan EDC and the Rowan County Tourism Development Authority, the gala carried a theme of "Celebrating Rowan County — The Greatest Show!" During the evening, chairmanship of the Chamber board was passed from Janet Spriggs to Nicole Holmes Matangira, and several award presentations were made.

— Photos by Jon C. Lakey, Zach Stevenson and Mark Wineka



Katelin Rice, left, throws a juggling pin back to Pete Bogle.



Madison Osborne, left, Gary Blabon (back to camera) and Terry Osborne



Rachel Smith, Andrew Smith, Rita Foil, Danny Hines and Rosalind Hines



Kendall Brown and Daisy Lemke



Collette Ellis, a stilt walker from Satarah in Charlotte.



Salisbury Mayor Al Heggins, left, greets Martha Bostian.



Rhonda Martin, Carrie Hanneman, Deirdre Blabon and Gary Blabon



Emcee Cale Evans, center, of Now Are the Foxes served as ringmaster. Right: Composer/pianist Marc Hoffman of Salisbury provided music before and during the gala.



Donna Groce, Mary Scott Norris and Cheryl Goins



Gary Blabon of Novant Health Rowan.



Cindy Morgan, left, and Pam Bloom perform in one of the colorful stories.



Mary Ann McCubbin, center, leads children in some crowd participation.

RoBoJo Theater's Holiday Show

Prior to Christmas, the 21st annual presentation of the RoBoJo Holiday Show was held at the Salisbury headquarters of Rowan Public Library. A group of talented local actors and staff, including children's associate Robert Jones — known to many as "Mr. Robert" — performed in the hourlong variety show. It included skits, songs, readers and audience participation. Favorite children's stories, corny jokes, catchy limericks and adorable puppets added to the fun.

— Photos provided by Len Clark & Sue Whitley



Above: Len Clark, project manager for Salisbury the Magazine, was one of the performers. Left: Performers Cindi Graham and Robert Jones.



Tim Campbell and Tamara Sheffield read the Christmas Duck story.



From left, Melissa Oleen, Robert Jones and Chelsea Childers (reading) captivate their young audience.



Candice CasaSanta, left, a herbalist, describes some of her teas from Little Moon Botanicals for a Wellness Expo visitor.



Gail Poulton, left, an instructor at SoFul Yoga & Wellness, and Michelle Pentoney, owner of Hive in downtown Salisbury.



Ashley Honeycutt, Anna Bullins and Cacy Honeycutt of Juice Life

Wellness Expo

A Wellness Expo bringing together professionals in alternative health care took place on a Saturday morning in the Stanback Room of Rowan Public Library. The day featured experts in massage, reflexology, yoga, natural foods and supplements, life coaching, ayurveda and more. Close to 25 different businesses or organizations were represented.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Raven Patrick and Mary Sewell of the Holistic Moms Network



Left: Wivianny DeHaas, director of the Mind & Body Integration Center, in Salisbury. Right: Michelle E. Sloop, left, a licensed massage and bodywork therapist with Live Well in Rockwell, stands with Paula Bohland, executive director of GRACES, a Salisbury-based organization raising money to support the Escuela Integrada School in Guatemala.



Amanda Fallin and Allison Parker of the Simply Good store.



Castlebay — Fred Gosbee and Julia Lane — performs 'Robert Burns — The Man, The Myth, and The Music' at Rowan Public Library in 2017. This year's Castlebay appearance is March 26. — Wayne Hinshaw photo

1 Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit 'Rise Above'
 Feb. 27-March 3, N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer —Traveling Exhibit of the CAF Red Tail Squadron. Part of the "49 Days of Gratitude" slate of events in Rowan County. Contact the museum at 636-2889, or go to www.nctrans.org for more information.

1 'Hamlet'
 March 1-2, 8-9: The Norvell Theater, 135 E. Fisher St., Salisbury — 7:30-9 p.m. A Piedmont Players Theatre presentation. Prince Hamlet finds himself involved in a conspiracy of power in the royal palace in one of Shakespeare's most influential and powerful plays. Tickets: \$10-12. Call 704-633-5471 or go to piedmontplayers.com.

1 'The Cake'
 Feb. 21-23 and Feb. 28-March 2: Lee Street theatre, 329 N. Lee St. — 7:30 p.m. In this comedy with heart, Della makes cakes, not judgment calls – those she leaves to her

March 2019

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area

husband, Tim. But when the girl she helped raise comes back home to North Carolina to get married, and the fiancé is actually a fiancée, Della's life gets turned upside down. She can't really make a cake for such a wedding, can she? For the first time in her life, Della has to think for herself. Call the box office at (704) 310-5507 or go to www.leestreet.org.

2 Casting Crowns
 March 2: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, 4751 Highway 49 North, Concord — 7 p.m. Grammy Award-winning Casting Crowns presents its "Only Jesus Tour," featuring Zach Williams and Austin French. Tickets: \$30. Go to www.cabarrusarena.com/events.

8 Salisbury Kiwanis Pancake Festival
 March 8-9: J.F. Hurley Family YMCA, 828 Jake Alexander Blvd. — 5-8 p.m. March 8; 7:30-10:30 a.m. March 9. A Salisbury tradition since 1957, the pancake festival raises money for Kiwanis Charities. Tickets can be purchased at the door or from Salisbury Kiwanis Club members in advance.

9 'Meet Me in Paris'
 March 9: Lee Street theatre — 7 p.m. The annual gala and fundraiser for Center for Faith & the Arts. Imagine twinkling lights and white tablecloths, the sound of good jazz in the background and the smell of fresh flowers from

the stand on the corner. Artists are out painting and poets are reading their new works. There is good French wine on the table and the buffet contains a delightful assortment of French hors d'oeuvres and fine desserts. As you sip and nibble, special entertainment takes the stage to make the evening more wonderful. Leave the mundane world behind and join CFA for a magical evening. For information and reservations: call 704-738-3445 or go to info@faithart.org.

9 Cleveland Lions' Spring Breakfast

March 9: Cleveland Lions Den, 106 Cemetery St., Cleveland — 7-10 a.m. Proceeds go toward scholarships.

9 Barbie's 60th Birthday

March 9: North Carolina Museum of Dolls, Toys, and Miniatures, 108 4th St., Spencer — 10 a.m. Celebrate the Barbie 60th birthday with a special presentation by doll expert Bradley Justice. Call 704-762-9359 for information.

10 Champion Cheer & Dance — Wolfpack Championship

March 10: Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, 4751 Highway 49 North, Concord — 8 a.m.-11:30 p.m. For information, go to www.eventbrite.com.

14 Brady's Author Symposium

March 14: Robertson College Community Center, Catawba College Campus — 11 a.m. The 33rd annual symposium will feature Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Olen Butler. Tickets: 704-637-4393 or catawba.edu.

21 Power in Partnership Breakfast

March 21: Trinity Oaks, 728 Klumac Road — 7:30-8:30 a.m. Rowan County Chamber event. The Power in Partnership (PIP) breakfast series brings top-notch speakers to the community to discuss relevant business topics. PIP also provides high level networking opportunities. This Chamber's breakfast averages over 150 attendees each month, beginning in September and concluding in May. They are held on the third Thursday of each month. A breakfast buffet is provided.

22 Maybe April

March 22: Lee Street theatre, 329 N. Lee St., Salisbury — 7:30 p.m. Maybe April is an American musical trio based in Nashville who play Americana indie folk. Call the box office at (704) 310-5507 or go to www.leestreet.org.



At the griddle: Erik Lipscomb, Linda Hildebrand and Ayden Reinholz (in front) at the 2018 Kiwanis Club Pancake Breakfast. This year's event is March 8-9. — Mark Wineka photo

22 'Wind and Wings'

March 22-23: N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer — "Wind and Wings: The Science of Flight." Two-day exhibit. Go to www.nctrans.org for information.

23 'Pure and Noble Spirit'

March 23: Keppel Auditorium, Catawba College Campus, 2300 W. Innes St., Salisbury — 7:30 p.m. The Salisbury Symphony Orchestra presents "Pure and Noble Spirit," including pieces by Mozart, Mendelssohn and Prokofiev with pianist Solomon Eichner. Tickets \$10 to \$24. Call (704) 216-1513 or go to www.salisburysymphony.org.

26 Castlebay

March 26: Rowan Public Library, 201 W. Fisher St. — 7 p.m. Friends of the Rowan Public Library's concert series presents Castlebay. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. This event is free, open to the public, and all ages are welcome. For more information, call 704-216-8243.

30 Catawba College Vernaculars

March 30: Lee Street theatre, 329 N. Lee St., Salisbury — 7:30 p.m. Catawba College Music Department hosts a Vernaculars Concert to celebrate legendary artists. Performances are by the school's talented students with the Jeff Little Trio. Call (704) 310-5507 for information.

30 49 Days of Gratitude's Closing Ceremony

March 30: North Rowan High School, Spencer — 11 a.m. Prime Time Community Band performs, and drama students read stories of local veterans as part of the 49 Days of Gratitude's closing activities.

30 Bloom in Wonder

March 30: N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer — 6:30-11 p.m. Salisbury Academy will host its 10th annual Bloom gala. Attendees will enjoy cocktails, dinner, a live auction and dancing. Contact Salisbury Academy's Development Office to purchase tickets at tbaird@salisburyacademy.org.

30 Upscale Yardsale

March 30-31: Rowan Museum, 202 N. Main St., Salisbury — 8 a.m.-noon, March 30; 1-4 p.m. March 31. Donated yard sale items are sold to benefit Rowan Museum programs. Free and open to the public.

30 Spring It On 5K

March 30: downtown Kannapolis — 8 a.m. Run Kannapolis is part of the city of Kannapolis' Discover a Healthy Life brand. Hosted this year by Atrium Health, the series will have eight 5K walks/runs in the city. Register at runkannapolis.com.

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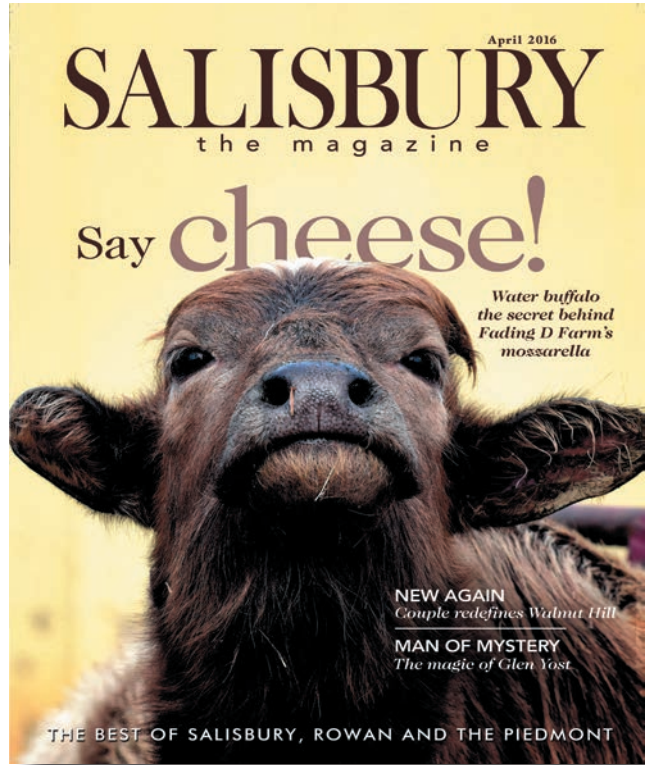
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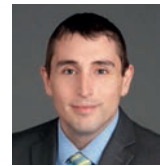
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