

April 2017

SALISBURY

t h e m a g a z i n e



the right
fluff

Dwarf rabbits bring home big wins

*The **Vette** Set*

*A car club for guys who
love their Chevys*

PLEASING
PATTERNS

*Barn quilt trail becoming
a reality in western Rowan*

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FEATURES

..... April 2017

34

Money bunnies

Couple's dwarf rabbits know how to win.

by **AMANDA
RAYMOND**

46

Rural radiance

More and more, barn quilts adorn Rowan County's landscape.

by **MARK WINEKA**



On this page: The 'Dresden Plate' barn quilt at Foggy Bottom Farm on Caldwell Road.

On the cover: A 4-week-old broken black Netherland Dwarf rabbit owned by Alan and Tamie File.

— Photos by Jon C. Lakey

IN EVERY ISSUE

Editor's Letter p.7

Bookish p.9

Through the Lens p.11

Rowan Originals p.12

Events Calendar p.68

The Scene p.70

Salisbury's the Place p.82



FOOD

14 A 'Hail'-storm from Texas

Gizmo's sauces are gaining a foothold.

THE ARTS

18 An eye for landscapes

Catawba student's photos reflect a love for N.C.

AT HOME

24 Toys in the attic

M&M House holds surprises through every door.

WELLNESS

58 Dog star

Dollie represents the care, affection, nurturing of Partners in Learning.

REMINISCE

62 The Vette Set

Salisbury club is 'just a bunch of guys who love cars.'



INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Baker's Shoes 43
 Bangkok Gardens 57
 Bare Furniture 4
 Barnhardt Jewelers 61
 CHS-Primary Care 83
 D.C. Chem Dry 42
 Distinctive Naturescapes 45
 Downtown Salisbury 10
 Embellish 61
 F&M Bank 10
 J.A. Fisher Co., Inc. 17
 Godley's Garden Center 32
 Hearing Solutions of NC, PLLC 33
 Landis Plumbing & Heating 57
 Laurels of Salisbury 57
 Lazy 5 Veterinarian 31
 Lexington Medical Center 84
 Medicine Shoppe 30
 Merle Norman of Salisbury 43
 North Hills Christian School 45
 Oak Park Retirement Center 8
 Old Courthouse Theatre, Inc. 17
 Par 3 Life, Health 45
 Powles Staton 2
 Rowan Animal Clinic 42
 Rowan County 27
 Rowan/Kannapolis ABC Board 29
 Salisbury Emporium 45
 Salisbury Motor Company 40
 Salisbury Motor Company 3
 Salisbury Square, LLC 44
 Southern Images Lawn Service 32
 The Floor Pavilion 17
 The Forum 44
 Tom's Carpet Care 61
 Transit Damaged Freight 41
 Trinity at Home 33
 Trinity Oaks Retirement Center 23
 Viva Wellness Boutique & Spa 17
 Wife for Hire 43
 Windsor Gallery 43
 Yatawara Gynecology 57

A '65 roses' champion shows we can make a difference

Helen Brown has told the story many times — about 4-year-old Ricky Weiss who had cystic fibrosis.

Without his mother's knowing, Ricky listened to her on the telephone, calling people on behalf of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. She was trying to raise funds for research — all three of her sons had CF.

One day Ricky told his mother he knew about the calls. Confused, because she thought she had kept her telephoning secret, the mother asked Ricky what he thought the calls were about. "You are working for 65 roses," he said.

Today, "65 roses" is a term to help young children put a name on their cystic fibrosis, and it has become a registered trademark of the CF Foundation.

Salisbury's Helen Brown is not unlike Ricky's mother. Her two grandchildren, now grown, have lived their whole lives with cystic fibrosis, and Helen has done her part in raising money for research. Instead of calling people on the telephone, however, Helen has held huge community yard sales and other events to raise funds for the CF Foundation since 2001.

Along the way, she and her husband, Ralph, have assembled quite a team of dedicated CF volunteers.

"It may not be tattooed anywhere," volunteer and friend Brenda Zimmerman said, "but rare is the day that volunteers do not think about the importance of Helen's mission and the impact her life has on each and every person who has stepped in to help."

The yard sales are sanctioned by CF, and the research foundation sends shirts each year for the volunteers to wear. Local eateries donate some of the food for the local CF team, from the setup on Thursday until the end of the sale on Saturday. The Browns take care of the rest.

"I have always been a goal-oriented person in both my personal and professional life," says Helen, now 83. "I feel that measurement of my success is through attainment of goals. ... Thanks to many wonderful people who have touched my life, I have met most of my goals."

Helen Brown is our "Rowan Original" this month. I invite you to read the Q&A with Helen to learn just how much her biannual yard sales have raised for cystic fibrosis research. You will be blown away.



Elsewhere in this issue of Salisbury the Magazine, you'll learn about the growing number of beautifully painted barn quilts that are dotting the Rowan County countryside, especially in the western and southwestern ends.

A dedicated group of people — the painters, Mount Ulla Preservation Society, the Salisbury-Rowan Quilters Guild and the Rowan County Grange — are combining forces to put together a trail that could someday become an important asset to Rowan tourism.


In a nod to the Easter holiday coming later in April, Amanda Raymond and photographer Jon Lakey bring us wascally-wabbit cuteness in the form of Netherland Dwarf rabbits, raised in Rowan County by Tamie File. Do not bunny hop over that story.

When he's not playing tennis for the Catawba College men's team, Salisbury High grad Christopher Derrick spends time with his camera, shooting some impressive landscapes throughout North Carolina. This issue shares some of his photographs.

You might have seen members of the Vette Set Corvette & Old Chevy Club with their cars in parades, at shows and as the drawing card for fundraisers. The core group of these car enthusiasts has been together now for 20 years, and the club has some beautiful cars, as you will see.

Deirdre Parker Smith introduces us to the saucy side of Joel Hail. Rowan-Salisbury Teacher of the Year Anthony Johnson offers a great message in our "Salisbury's the Place" column, and back on the subject of cuteness, you'll want to read Rebecca Rider's story about Dollie, the therapy dog at Partners in Learning.

Helen Brown's CF volunteers used to kid her about never being able to settle on \$10 or \$15 for certain items at her yard sales. So her favorite price always turned out to be \$12.50.

We think this issue of Salisbury the Magazine has \$12.50 worth of cuteness alone. 

Mark Wineka,
Editor, *Salisbury the Magazine*

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Family the theme that binds these novels

Salisbury's own daughter, Kristy Woodson Harvey, has a new book, "Slightly South of Simple," that will publish on April 23.

It is the first of three books featuring a family of women who have to face the daily challenges of finding and keeping love, raising children and facing life without a spouse.

The new book is set in Georgia, at a seaside town Harvey hints is inspired by her home in Beaufort, N.C. And it covers generations of the family, from matriarch Ansley to her daughters to their children. Three sisters show how life's path takes different turns.

In this book, daughter Caroline is ready to end her marriage. Daughter Emerson is getting a bit of a break in her acting career, but at whose expense? And daughter Sloane is waiting patiently with her two boys for her husband, Adam, to return from his most recent deployment with the Army.

Ansley runs an interior decorating business — Harvey writes a decorating blog with her mother, Beth Woodson. Harvey writes what she knows and she captures the dilemmas of

young motherhood well, adding unexpected troubles to keep the book interesting.

She leaves the sisters and their mother wide open for the next book, where we can find out what happens next.

Two Elizabeths have new books, which is good news to their fans, as well.

Following "My Name is Lucy Barton," Elizabeth Strout's new book takes place in the same small town Lucy was from.

"Anything is Possible" again shows how skillfully Strout handles fraught relationships, which she has done in all of her books to date. This, like "Olive Kitteridge," is another collection of connected short stories.

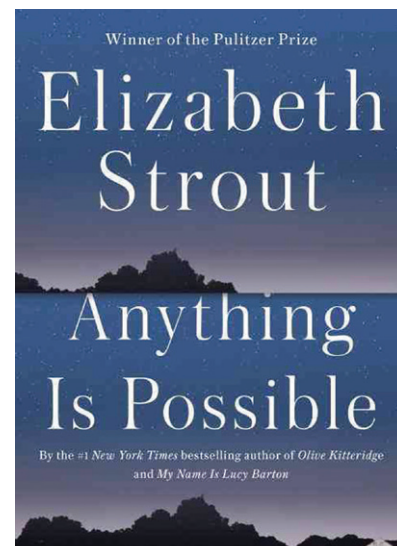
The Pulitzer Prize winner has created a set of small town characters dealing with love and loss. One of two sisters trades self-respect for a rich husband, the other finds a kindred spirit in the pages of the book. A school janitor sees his faith tested when he helps an isolated man. And Lucy Barton comes back to visit her siblings after 17 years away.

"My Name is Lucy Barton" was as much about what was unsaid as what Lucy and her mother shared. Strout is a master of nuance and deep, complex emotion, as she demonstrated with the unforgettable Olive Kitteridge, a woman learning what love really means.

Strout has said, "As I was writing 'My Name is Lucy Barton,' it came to me that all the characters Lucy and her mother talked about had their own stories — of course! — and so the unfolding of their lives became tremendously important to me."

The publication date is April 25.

The other Elizabeth with a new book is



Elizabeth Kostova, author of "The Historian" and "The Swan Thieves." This time, she brings us "The Shadow Land," and we are learning secrets in Bulgaria, where a young American, Alexandra Boyd, has escaped to heal the wounds left by the loss of her beloved brother.

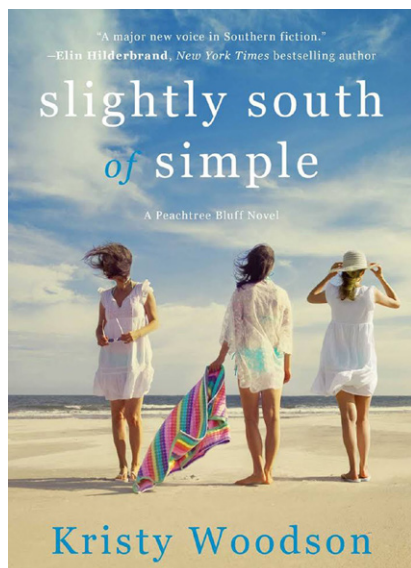
As soon as she arrives in Sofia, things start to go wrong, and she finds herself with a bag that is not hers — it belongs to a group of people she helped get into a taxi in front of a hotel. Worse yet, the bag contains an ornately carved wooden box that contains human ashes. A name is engraved on the box, Stoyan Lazarov, and Alexandra has little to go on.

As she delves deeper in her quest to locate the family, she discovers dark secrets.

Kostova uses the novel to reveal the horrors of a century, to explore the culture and landscape of Bulgaria and to prove the power of a story.

Early reviewers warn that "The Shadow Land" is not like Kostova's bestseller, "The Historian," but they say her writing has matured and her descriptions of the country are breathtaking. S

Deirdre Parker Smith is book editor of the Salisbury Post.



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THROUGH THE LENS / *by sarah jane lakey*

The foot bridge and trees are reflected in the lake at Dan Nicholas Park.



Queen 'B'

Helen Brown and her team work relentlessly for CF research. / By MARK WINEKA

In 1991, at the age of 58, Helen Brown graduated from Catawba College with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

That should tell you a little bit about Helen's resolve, which people saw daily during her 56 years as office manager for the Busby family of doctors — George, Trent and Rudy Busby.

"I enjoyed every day I worked," says Brown, now retired. "I felt as though I helped make what could be a difficult time in a person's life easier."

During her last semester at Catawba College, Helen's second grandchild was born, and Anna was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at 6 months old. Anna's younger brother, Michael, also would have CF.

As a girl, Anna raised \$10,000 to go toward CF research, and her efforts inspired Helen to set her own goal of raising \$100,000. That's how Helen's "Yard Sales for Cystic Fibrosis Research" started in 2001.

Those twice-a-year yard sales — Helen's husband, Ralph, puts in loads of work, too — have become signature events in Salisbury. You'll see in the conversation with Helen later that her Emerald Street yard sales (and occasional estate sales and other events) have exceeded her original monetary goal — by a lot.

Brown has assembled a loyal team of volunteers, who recognize her as an amazing organizer, planner and leader.



Helen Brown poses in front of a quilt that one of the yard sale volunteers made with the Team Cystic Fibrosis T-shirts.

Helen Brown, now 83, considers herself a city girl from Asheboro. Her parents were textile workers, and she was the first in her family to attend college. She earned a two-year degree in medical records at Lees McRae College, married Ralph in 1956, and they moved to Salisbury when Ralph took a teaching job at Boyden High School.

Helen went to work for Drs. George and Trent Busby in 1959, then later Dr. Rudy Busby in 1977. All told, she managed the office more than five decades before Rudy Busby closed his practice in 2014, and Helen finally retired.

Helen and Ralph have two daughters (Kelly and Stephanie), six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Helen's next Yard Sales for Cystic Fibrosis will be May 26-27 and Oct. 6-7. Salisbury the

Magazine recently caught up with this Rowan Original:

Q. How many years back do your yard sales go now, roughly how much money have you raised for cystic fibrosis research and how many yard sales total have there been?

Sales started in 2001 (25 sales), and to date, yard sales and other projects have raised \$201,000.

How many volunteers are usually involved in helping you with the yard sales? What are some of their jobs?

Twenty-five to 30 active volunteers. There is intake of donated goods, checking for breakage, stains, needed repairs, batteries, researching pricing for specialty items, checking electronics for use, pricing, sorting, storing, safety issues, etc.

All items are cleaned, washed, paint is touched up, wood finishes cleaned and waxed, etc. Items are packaged in sets clearly marked with sizes or numbers and priced, Volunteers also do pick-ups of donated goods, run errands and make deliveries.

What kind of items can I expect to find at your typical yard sale? Are you particularly heavy in a couple of things, or all over the board with what you offer?

Items range: plants, kitchen items, household appliances, linens, jewelry, furniture,

framed artwork (often signed), tools, sports gear, luggage, books, DVD-CD's, lamps, craft supplies, knick-knacks, rugs, baby items, toys, glassware, china, Christmas, Halloween, Easter, yard art.

All over the board. And keep in mind, it is clean, in working order, not chipped, packaged and tagged. Sixty tables are borrowed from First Baptist Church, Salisbury, and are full! Furniture and large items line both sides of our 100-foot-long driveway.

In terms of size, how much has the yard sale grown from that first one to what people can expect to see this spring?

The sale went from a Saturday morning once a year to twice a year, and it starts at noon on Friday and runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Only one has ever been rained out.

People all over the area mark their calendar so they will not miss it. Some even schedule family visits in Rowan County to include the weekend of a sale. The city allows our block of Emerald Street to be one way on the days of the sales.

Do you feel you have made a difference? Is the research into cystic fibrosis making a difference in the lives of your grandchildren and others with CF?

Research has indeed made a difference in the life of affected individuals and their families. Median survivor age is now about 40, as compared to the near certain death of affected toddlers in the 1950s.

Although CF is still considered a childhood condition, today almost 60 percent of CF patients are adults. Research in any disease field is expensive. The CF team knows that \$200,000 is significant.

Give us an update on Anna and Michael, your grandchildren with CF, and how they are doing.

Anna is the eldest with CF. She has a master's degree from Appalachian and is a full-time certified musical therapist. She is married and has a 1-year-old son, who does not have the CF gene.

Michael has a bachelor's degree from Appalachian and is working on his master's degree. He is employed in IT at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. Both are doing well.

You've been retired about three years now, How would you rate retirement, and would you rather be working?

After the office closed about three years ago, I grieved nearly a year over the loss of my patient family and my employer family. However, I do enjoy having more time to spend with Ralph, family and friends. I also enjoy having more time to work on raising money for CF.



The yard sales that Brown started 14 years ago have netted over \$200,000 for research for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

What's a typical morning for you and Ralph?

We enjoy staying in bed a little longer, lingering over breakfast, reading our two papers (Salisbury Post/Charlotte Observer). Sometimes watching a Turner Classic Movie, and I have a lot of correspondence to take care of related to the sales. Every donor, contributor and volunteer gets a handwritten note.

Five words you would use to describe Salisbury.

Tough question! Cultural, historic, friendly, opportunity-filled, beautiful. Although I enjoyed growing up in small Asheboro, I cherish the years I have lived in Salisbury with its educational, economic, cultural, entertainment and religious opportunities. It is a wonderful place to live, raise children and grow old. I can't imagine living anywhere else.


Beyond the yard sales, what are your favorite things to do in retirement?

Having more time with family and friends, reveling in God's daily beauty, watching Turner Classic Movies and trips to interesting places.

What two foods are always in your fridge or pantry?

Milk, fruit.

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

Form friendships with positive people. Avoid harmful habits such as smoking, drugs, alcohol. Graduate from high school, continue your education by learning a trade or earning a degree. Find a job you love and do the best job you can. Have faith in God and in yourself. 



A 'Hail'-storm from Texas

Gizzmo's sauces are a tasty way to start over.

Written by DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY



Joel Hail, from Spencer, has created a line of barbecue sauces that found a space on the shelves in Food Lion stores under the label name of Gizmo's Gold Label Barbecue Sauce.

What does a Texas boy do when he moves to Rowan County? He makes barbecue sauce, of course.

Joel Hail, a former executive chef, was looking for something he could produce. He came up with Gizmo's Gold Label Premium BBQ Sauce. It's good stuff; buyers at Food Lion recognized that, inviting him to produce two of his five sauces for select Food Lion stores.

Food Lion is putting an emphasis on local products, and Gizmo's is right here in Rowan County. The four Food Lions in town will carry the sauce.

Joel grew up with barbecue in Texas. His father "did a lot with sauces," making them for shows and special events put on by oil companies and chambers of commerce. "Dad

really made sauces for hundreds of thousands of people," Joel says.

He caught the bug, attending culinary school at the Colorado Institute of Art. He graduated with honors and met his wife, Michelle, also a chef. He worked for large corporations as an executive chef and pastry chef. At one enormous restaurant where he worked, he made 3,000 pieces of dessert. The restaurant ran out before the end of the day. He made 5,000 pieces the next day, and they ran out again. He's used to big productions.

But Joel seriously injured his knee and lost his job as an executive chef at a boutique

hospital with private suites. He was partially disabled.

When he and his wife and son Taylor moved to North Carolina to be near his wife's family in Monroe, they had to start over.

"People don't want to hire you if you have a disability. I had to reinvent myself or give up, and I would not give up."

The secret was in the sauce.

Knowing about the different styles around the country, he created his Gizmo's Original recipe, which is a bit sweeter than some sauces and has a Pacific rim vibe, with a little soy sauce.

He uses no high fructose corn syrup and no artificial flavors.

His Lexington Red sauce is tomato-based and has a little mustard, so it's a fusion of North and South Carolina styles. It uses apple cider vinegar instead of white vinegar.

"It's all about fusion," Joel says.

Food Lion liked those two. They also liked

Lone Star, based on his father's barbecue sauce. "It is big, smoky, Texas style. You need it to stand up to beef — brisket, especially."

Lone Star is "not hot, but intense. ... It has very little sugar. It has a tangy, smoky taste. It's — Wow!"

His Chipotle Honey Orange sauce is spicy, but full of flavor. People wanted something hotter, so Joel created Chaos in Texas-Hot!, with a little habanero.

"But I don't want to blow your brains out. It has to have flavor, it can't just be hot."

Some sauces are gluten-free, some have reduced sugar and sodium. He's working on a version with no sugar. The Chipotle Honey Orange, for example, is sweetened and gets its acid from orange juice.

"I tried to balance sweet, salty and acid." Molasses is an important component in his recipes.

He says "barbecue sauce is the new condiment, especially the handmade, specialty sauces." Barbecue sauce can also be used for stir frying or as a dipping sauce.

He's thankful for what has happened.

"I'd been doing sauces for friends and family. ... In one year, I went from nothing to getting the request from Food Lion."

He'd been doing festivals, joking that his business "was a shoestring held together with a Band-Aid." He also sold at farmers markets and Webb Road Flea Market. It was there he met a representative from Food Lion who quickly called him back and started the process of placing his sauces in stores.

Friends stepped forward to help, and Joel was able to do all the testing and certifications. Still, getting the first order of 260 cases, or 3,100 bottles, was a challenge. He's been making the sauce in a commercial kitchen in Asheville, but found a space in Concord.

"My friends got to work and thought of things I had never thought of. ... We did 110 cases in a day and did the rest another day."

The labels had to be redesigned. Joel didn't have a labeling machine, so he pasted on 3,100 labels by hand. They also had to shrink wrap the cases by hand, after loading them on



Joel with his wife, Michelle, son, Taylor, and the family's 4 dachshunds — Bentley, Bella, Molly and Jasmine.

pallets.

They got all that done, but he still didn't have a purchase order, so he waited. The actual buyer is in Maine, so he waited for a fax. "One little miracle after another had to happen for it to finally work out."

The next miracle was a friend who has a business with a truck that Joel could use to transport his sauces to a warehouse in Butner. And at that warehouse, they only accept deliveries at night, and only between certain hours, and they were making the delivery right after the snow storm.

When he and his friend arrived, they were told they had to unload it and that it was

stacked wrong, so they would have to take it apart, restack it and re-shrink wrap it. Somehow, they got all that done.

By now, the sauces should be in stores.

And, by now, Joel is back at work selling sauces, shipping to customers in 10 states, going to festivals, markets and the like. "I need to keep going. I'm amazed at where it's gone."

Golding Farms in Winston-Salem is analyzing his product to produce in larger quantities to meet future demand. Golding Farms makes a lot of house products for various food businesses.

Harris Teeter has also expressed interest in his sauces, but that's as far as it's gone at this point.

"Things have fallen into place fast," Joel said. "And I know it's not my devastating charm." **S**

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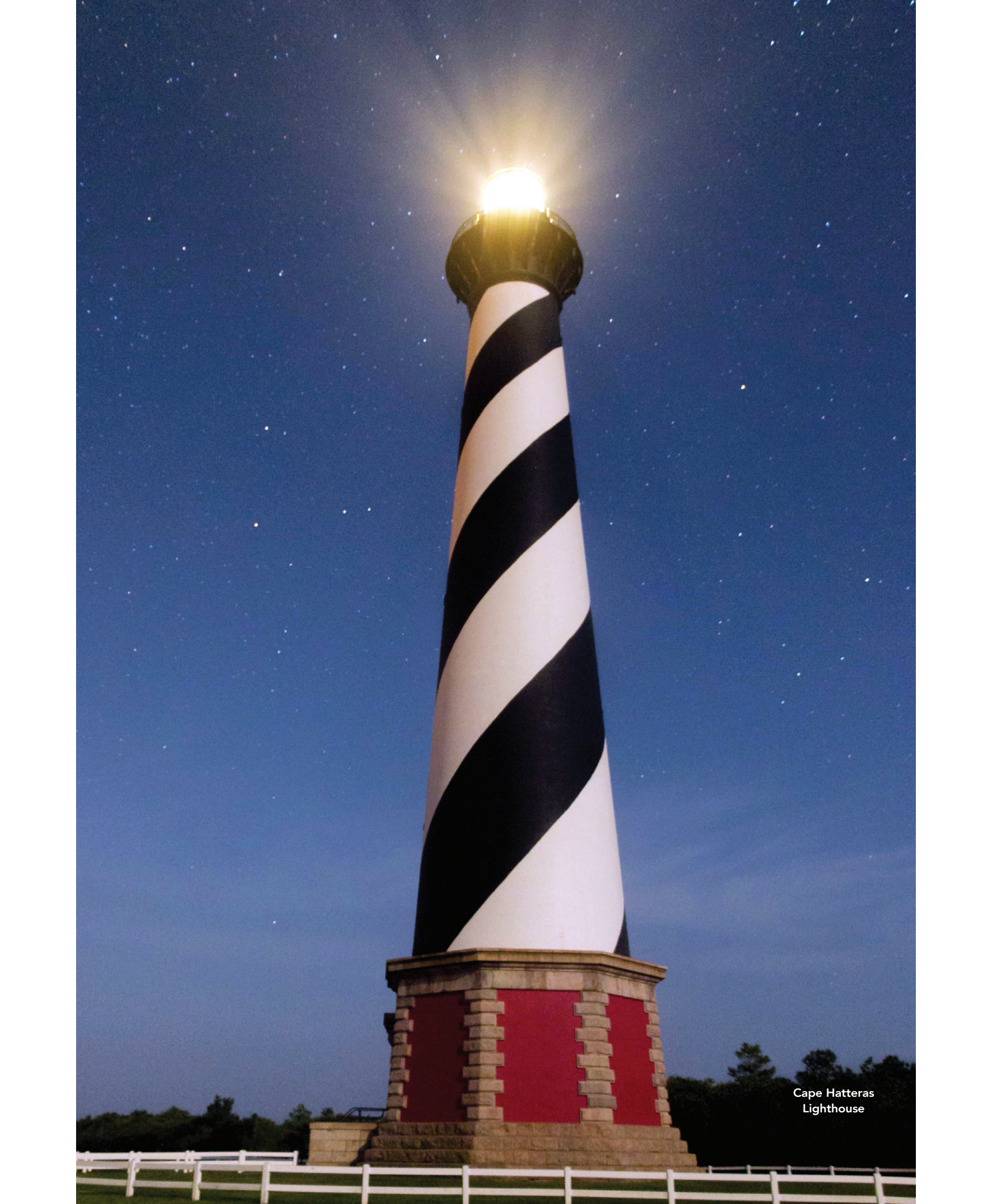
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A tall, cylindrical lighthouse with a black and white spiral pattern, illuminated from the top, stands against a starry night sky. The base is a red-painted stone structure. A white fence is visible in the foreground.

Cape Hatteras
Lighthouse

Have camera, will travel

Catawba College student's photographs
reflect a love for North Carolina.

Written by MARK WINEKA

When he can't take off for the mountains or coast, Christopher Derrick likes to grab his camera and beat a trail into the Catawba College Ecological Preserve.

Derrick, a member of the men's tennis team at Catawba, isn't exactly a typical college junior. He gets up too early at times, not for a tennis practice, but looking to catch a sunrise in the preserve.

His photographer's eye tells him the winter sunrises are more vibrant.

"I've been back here all the time," Derrick says as he walks toward an open view of the water. "The geese were crazy the other morning I was out here."

As long as he can remember, the 21-year-old Derrick has been taking photographs, but things seemed to become more serious last year. Photography became a passion. Something clicked, excuse the expression, and Derrick found himself fully appreciating his native state and the landscapes it had to offer.

"There's so much to photograph in North Carolina," Derrick says.

He began making special trips to the mountains and coast, often taking his younger brother, David, a freshman at the



Tree after a
fresh snow.



Craggy Garden pastel sunrise in the N.C. mountains.



Catawba College junior Christopher Derrick enjoys capturing moments of nature with his Canon camera. He is shown here with his gear at Catawba's nature preserve. — Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

University of North Carolina at Wilmington, with him. He traveled up and down the Blue Ridge Parkway, and he photographed all the N.C. lighthouses except three.

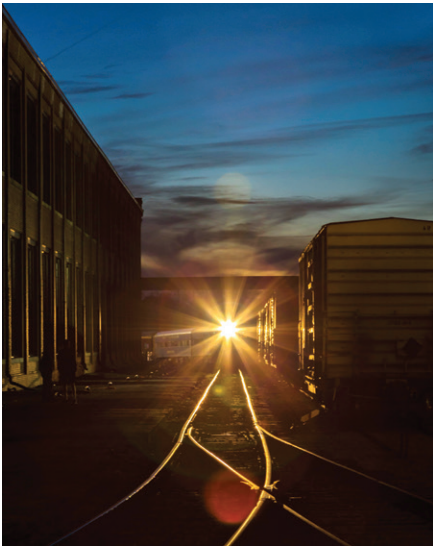
“I really like getting them at night,” Christopher says.

Soon, he was checking the Dark Sky Finder website to determine the best places to capture the Milky Way with his camera.

“I didn't know it was possible until several months ago,” he says, explaining how he watched YouTube instructional videos on the ways to do it.

Derrick is self-taught. He asks questions of a couple of photographer friends and otherwise relies on demonstration videos on the internet. He hasn't read a book on photography, nor ever taken a photography class, even at Catawba.

He owns no flash equipment, not even a pop-up flash on the Canon 5D Mark III



Clockwise from right: The Milky Way is visible in the night sky at Thunder Hill Overlook in the mountains; Linn Cove Viaduct on the Blue Ridge Parkway; a train engine's light illuminates the tracks at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer; an Oconaluftee Elk is pictured in the mountains.

he uses the most. He shuns, for now, doing human portraits, or anything such as wedding photographs.

Derrick says that would add an element of pressure he doesn't want.

"A landscape can't tell me it doesn't like the photograph," he says.

Derrick majors in business administration, studying accounting and economics at Catawba. He is son of Elizabeth and Mark Derrick of Salisbury, and both he and David are graduates of Salisbury High, where they starred in tennis.

Word has quietly spread around the Catawba College campus of Christopher's picture-taking abilities. When friends have seen his sports photographs, they ask him to take some of their own teams. Derrick also

has developed a keener interest in wildlife, especially since taking an ornithology class at Catawba that spent a lot of its time in the preserve.

"You really start noticing all the wildlife around you," Christopher says.

His love for the coast and the outdoors in general probably comes from his grandfather Perry Hood, who has bought hunting and fishing licenses for his grandsons since they were little. They have spent a lot of time surf fishing for red drum on the coast, and Hood also has been teaching the guys some of the finer skills behind fly fishing in mountain streams.


Christopher has dreams of adding all kinds of lenses, camera bodies and equipment, but for now his Canon and a tripod are enough.

"I seem to find myself in an expensive hobby," he says.

The more often he uses his camera, the more he sounds like a photographer, talking about light, the rule of thirds and composition in general. The world affords plenty of good views, he has learned, but they don't always make a good photograph.

Christopher Derrick posts a lot of his photos on social media, and it has led to the sale of some prints, but he doesn't consider his pastime a business. He has thought of establishing a website for his work, but he emphasizes that photography remains a "glorified hobby."

And that's fine with him.

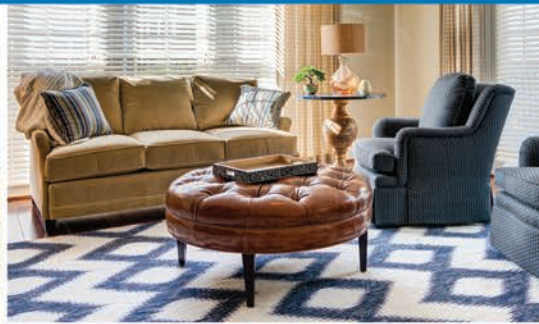
"It gives me something to do rather than sit at home and watch TV," he says. 



Sunrise at Catawba's nature preserve.



July lightning storm over the ocean at the North Carolina coast.



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welcome to CJ'S ATTIC

M&M House holds surprises through every door,
hidden or otherwise.

Written by ELIZABETH COOK | Photography by JON C. LAKEY

Barefoot and with an iced beverage in hand, C.J. Peters stands on the front porch of the M&M House on Park Avenue.

Officially, this is the 1891 McCubbins-McCanless house, named for its earliest owners and made famous locally by a top-to-bottom renovation featured on the History Channel in 2006.

Most people would not greet visitors outside in February without shoes, but C.J. Peters is not like most people.

The long, salt-and-pepper hair is the most obvious clue. His outright affection for this colorful, quirky house might be another. The biggest clue of all awaits in the attic of his house.

First, some background.

C.J. and wife Robbie were living in Belmont and thinking about a move when they came to see a listing on Fulton Street in

Salisbury. The house had already sold, though, so agent Martha Hawkins took the couple to the M&M House.

What a jewel the newly restored house was, all cornices, rooflines and bric-a-brac. Built on land that cost just a dollar, as the story goes, the Queen Anne Victorian was based on designs created by George Barber, a noted Southern architect who marketed his elaborate designs in mail-order catalogs.

After being neglected for who-knows-how-long, the house was brought back to life through a joint project involving Historic Salisbury Foundation, Lowe's Home Improvement and the History Channel. Workers and craftsmen restored the house from the foundation to the four chimneys and everywhere in between. They even recreated a second-story front porch, complete with shingled gables, turned posts and brackets with sunburst designs.

The house was freshly painted, of course. The six exterior colors have names all about the outdoors — forest, sage, sunshine, rose, sky and storm. Inside, Anne Scott Clement of A.S. Originals-Interiors chose wallpapers, borders and paints to fit with the Victorian period.



Behind a bookcase on the second floor is a hidden spiral staircase that leads up to C.J. Peters' attic studio.

Opposite, clockwise from top: C.J. Peters jams on his historic home's top floor, an attic he converted into a studio; An old pump organ is among the many vintage pieces in the house; The 1891 McCubbins-McCanless has ornate woodwork, colorfully painted.



Buffed up as good as new, all the M&M House needed was someone to make it a home.

Enter C.J. and Robbie. When Hawkins first showed them the house, they were leery of the neighborhood, mostly a collection of rental houses and vacant structures then. But

they loved the exterior of the house enough to go inside.

“As soon as we crossed the threshold, it was a done deal,” C.J. says.

An ornate staircase dominated the small foyer. Handsome woodwork ran throughout the house, complementing the wood floors



Above: Behind the bookcase is a hidden spiral staircase that leads up the attic.

Left: The M&M House underwent a complete restoration in 2006. Exterior paint colors include forest, sage, sunshine, rose, sky and storm. The sidewalk is made of bricks from an old textile mill.

Below: The dining room retains the formal feel of a 19th century home.





Can a person have too many guitars? C.J. Peters doesn't think so, as his artwork and collection attest.



and original fireplaces. Off the foyer sat the parlor, followed down the hall by a formal dining room, an updated-but-quaint kitchen, another parlor and a bathroom. Three bedrooms were upstairs, along with two bathrooms and other assorted nooks and crannies.

Sold.



The house was turn-key ready when C.J. and Robbie moved in, but C.J. saw even more potential in its generous attic. The drop-down ladder limited access, but to a master carpenter like him, that was not an obstacle.

Left: The front parlor with staircase.

Opposite: Peters calls this dormer area a 'doll house.' The Grateful Dead is not among his favorite bands, but a piece of artwork with Grateful bears seemed to fit.

Ten years and many hours of labor later, C.J. stands in front of a bookcase in the second-floor hallway and asks visitors if they'd like to see the attic. Then he pulls one side of the bookcase forward like a hidden door, and behind it rises the spiral stairway to C.J.'s heaven.

He calls it The Attic Studio.

Can a person have too many guitars? Use too many paint colors? Jam too much with his friends?

No, no and no.

"This is where I have my fun," C.J. says, referring to the chaos of color and instruments and memorabilia that covers the room. The sharp angles of the ceiling add to

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C.J. and Robbie Peters have furnished the house with furniture from its era.

the avant-garde air.

Maybe M&M should stand for music and mayhem. The staircase is black and white with dabs of blue, green and purple. One part of the ceiling bears something like a huge sunburst, with a guitar at the center and red and yellow rays radiating out from it.

Performing music is the room's key use. It is also part office, part art studio and part retreat.

C.J. plays the guitar, mostly. The attic setup also includes a keyboard that Robbie plays, a fiddle, a set of drums and bongos. A sound baffle hangs from the ceiling. Recording equipment is nearby.

A rack holds an assortment of guitars, but they're everywhere — on the wall, on tables. One is stored in a custom-made case. C.J. flips the latches and pulls out "Beowulf," a guitar he designed when he was 16 and has been refining ever since. He uses terms like "my life's work" and "masterpiece" as he handles it. The frets are scalloped. The V-shaped body is hand-carved.

"It's a very beautiful and wicked-cool guitar," C.J. says. "...



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Sitting on his front porch with a cat nearby, C.J. Peters makes an adjustment while playing his guitar.

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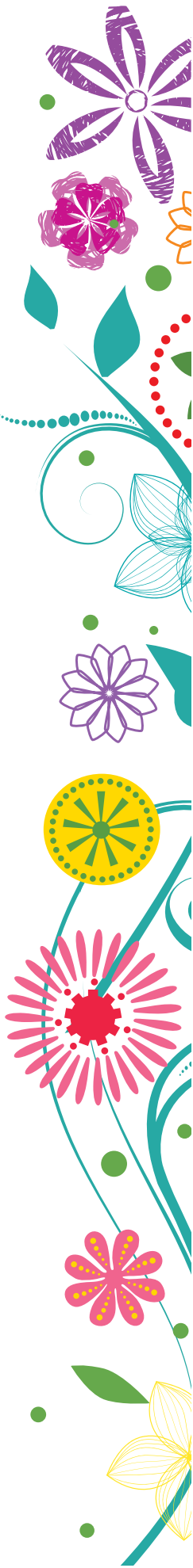

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C.J. cherishes this guitar that was painted by his sister.

It's one of those things that will never be done."

When friends come over to play music, the attic's 28-inch walls may be its most important feature.

"We can play as loud as we want," C.J. says.

The small alcove created by a dormer is his "doll house," he says, outfitted with two chairs, a guitar and Grateful Dead designs in the window. He's not really a Deadhead, he says, but the artwork fit.

Album covers and posters on the walls are eclectic. Some are just what was available — Helen Murray and Marie Osmond, for example. Others reflect C.J.'s tastes — Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin.

His desk and a light table are up against one wall. He's honing his drawing talents, he says, along with his music and carpentry skills. His theory is that getting better at one thing makes you better at all things — at least where creativity and craftsmanship are concerned — and ultimately make you a better person.

"I'm a master carpenter; I'm not an artist," C.J. says. But he'll keep trying.



The neighborhood is part of the North Long-Park Avenue Historic District, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. The area developed between about 1890 and 1925.

Jack Thomson was managing director for Historic Salisbury Foundation when the M&M project was done. In fact, the foundation owned the house and sold it through its revolving fund. C.J. says Jack gave him the idea for the bookcase entrance to the attic but also talked about not intruding upon the house in the process.

C.J. heeded that advice over the years it took to transform the attic. He and Robbie have made other improvements, too. They bought four pallets of bricks from the old Kesler/Cannon Mill that was being demolished in the neighborhood a few years ago and laid a rustic walkway in

front.

“It’s so wonderful to come home to something beautiful and inspiring,” C.J. says.

The neighborhood as a whole has improved, he says. And Salisbury has proved to be a good place to live.

“Everyone has been so sweet. They don’t mind me being an original. They don’t make me feel weird. They embrace it.”

Later he sits in the parlor with Robbie, who suffered a stroke two years ago. The community has been supportive, further reinforcing their decision to live in Salisbury.

Nearby sits a collection of M&M candy figurines. They don’t seem to fit with the vintage surroundings until C.J. explains the obvious — M&Ms, as in the M&M house.

The house and the candy have something else in common, according to him. They’re multi-colored, tasty and sweet.

“It’s a sweet house.” 

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One of Alan and Tamie File's Netherland Dwarf rabbits — a chestnut named Tam. Right: Tamie holds a 4-week-old black Charlie.

the right fluff



Tamie File's little rabbits
bring home big wins.

Written by **AMANDA RAYMOND**

Photography by **JON C. LAKEY**



SALISBURY — Tamie File used to ride with her neighbor to rabbit competitions. She spent a lot of time with the judges while she was there.

One of those judges would always tell her she was destined to breed tortoise-shell rabbits because she was a redhead. That inspired her love of the tortoise-shell color of rabbits.

File went all in — she started getting serious about breeding perfect tortoise-shell Netherland Dwarf rabbits. When she was 15, she won her first best of breed award with a tortoise-shell rabbit. The judge choosing the best in show award said her tortoise-shell rabbit was

so good, he was amazed to find out it belonged to a child who bred the animal herself.

File didn't win best in show that year, but the experience changed her forever.

"Since that day, I have never been without a tortoise-shell Netherland Dwarf," she said, and not for lack of trying. File said every time she tries to focus on another color, she finds herself going back to tortoiseshell.

Specializing in tortoiseshell has paid off for



Top: Tamie and Alan File enjoy raising a barn full of Netherland Dwarf rabbits. The couple show and place frequently in the American Netherland Dwarf Rabbit Club in the tortoiseshell variety. Above: A 4-week-old broken black Netherland Dwarf rabbit.



Above: A 4-week-old sable point Netherland Dwarf. Right: Tamie feeds Kendall, a black tortoise-shell stud rabbit, a Shredded Mini Wheat.
Below right: Some of the ribbons the Files have won.

File. At the 2016 American Netherland Dwarf Rabbit Club National Competition, File dominated the tortoise shell variety. Her senior bucks took all six top spots, her senior does won the top three spots and her junior bucks won the top two and fifth spots. Her junior doe earned third place, but she did not bring her best junior doe because she was afraid she might get sick.

File and her husband, Alan, ended up winning best of variety, best opposite sex of variety and best junior of variety.

“Nobody dominated anything the way we dominated the tortoise shell,” she said.

Tamie File has been breeding Netherland Dwarf rabbits for 37 years. She has converted her husband’s horse barn into a rabbitry to house more than 150 rabbits.

The only qualifications to label a rabbit a dwarf rabbit is that it is under two-and-a-half pounds and has ears under two-and-a-half inches long.

It takes more than that to do well in competitions. Like competitions for dogs and cats, the rabbits are compared to a standard. The judges look for things like fur texture, color and “12 o’clock ears,” which are ears that stick straight up.



Story continues on page 40.



Above: Tamie works with five black tortoiseshell rabbits.

Left: Tamie holds 3-day-old rabbit.



Clockwise from top right: Everett is a blue stud. The bowl he is sitting in is a prize from a previous show; The Files work together to build custom cages that they offer for purchase; A Siamese sable Netherland Dwarf; Alan holds a 4-week old broken black Netherland Dwarf; Tamie holds a 4-week-old black tort Netherland Dwarf.

Even though judges are looking for those small ears, the ears have to balance with the head and body.

File said other breeds of rabbits are bred and judged for their meat, but dwarf rabbits are too small.

“They don’t really have a purpose other than to look cute,” she said.

The rabbitry the bunnies call home has cement floors, a sewer system, and it is completely insulated. There are cages along the walls and a set of cages near the center of the barn. The cages are stacked vertically, with trays and boards in between that File can easily clean off.

File also brings in air-conditioning and heating units to keep the rabbits comfortable throughout the year.

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Tamie kisses Kendall, a black tortoise-shell Netherland Dwarf rabbit.

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On the rim of a basket, a broken tort Netherland Dwarf rabbit eyes the camera.



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the names of the bunnies inside. There's also a board in the middle of the barn for File to keep track of the bunnies.

And, yes, every bunny has a name.

"The hardest part about having rabbits is naming them," she said.

File knows the name of just about every rabbit she has. Even when lining up tortoise-shell rabbits to demonstrate how judges would evaluate them, she knew exactly which cage to put them all back in.

Not all bunnies are good to take to competitions, so File sells them as pets. She breeds all sorts of colors other than tortoiseshell, including black, white, gray, chestnut, Siamese and multicolor rabbit, so buyers have a lot of options.

She and her husband also make and sell wire rabbit cages.

File uses the money she gets from selling the pet bunnies to pay for her competition expenses.



A blue Netherland Dwarf rabbit.



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Competitions are everything, and everyone in File's family knows it. If a competition landed on one of her children's birthdays, they knew to pick a day either before or after the competition.

In her 37 years, two of her rabbits have won best in show.

File's love for rabbits started as a child. Even when living in the city, File has always loved animals.

"I never should have been a city girl," File said. "I was always a country girl."

One of her neighbors had a lot of different animals on her property, and she taught File all about caring for animals and genetics.

File ended up becoming a member of the American Rabbit Breeders Association at 12 and has since become a lifetime member.

File wasn't a good student, but her love of animals helped her learn to read and write. Her mother bought her a subscription to National Geographic index cards with different animal facts on each one.

"I cherished every card and memorized every one by the time the next package came in," she said.

When she met her husband and moved to Salisbury, her only condition was she had to be able to bring her rabbits. Alan File was all for it and helped convert his former horse barn into the rabbits' home. Now Alan helps take care of the rabbits and attends competitions right along side his wife.

File has a couple of goals for the coming year. One is to keep working on the barn to make it the rabbitry of every breeder's dream. Another is to make her fox-colored bunnies a show color at competitions.

One of her biggest goals is to get more young people in the area interested in rabbit breeding and showing. She said it would be a good way to steer children away from electronics and offer them a good hobby.


"This gives them a reason to get out of the house," she said.

As a child, while others were going to parties, File said she was at rabbit shows.

"It kept me out of so much trouble as a teenager," she said.

Rabbits have always been a big part of File's life. They've been her motivation through

hard times, and no matter what else in her life was changing, her rabbits were her constant.

"The rabbits have always been the same," she said. 



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The Files, a pair of their rabbits and some past awards.

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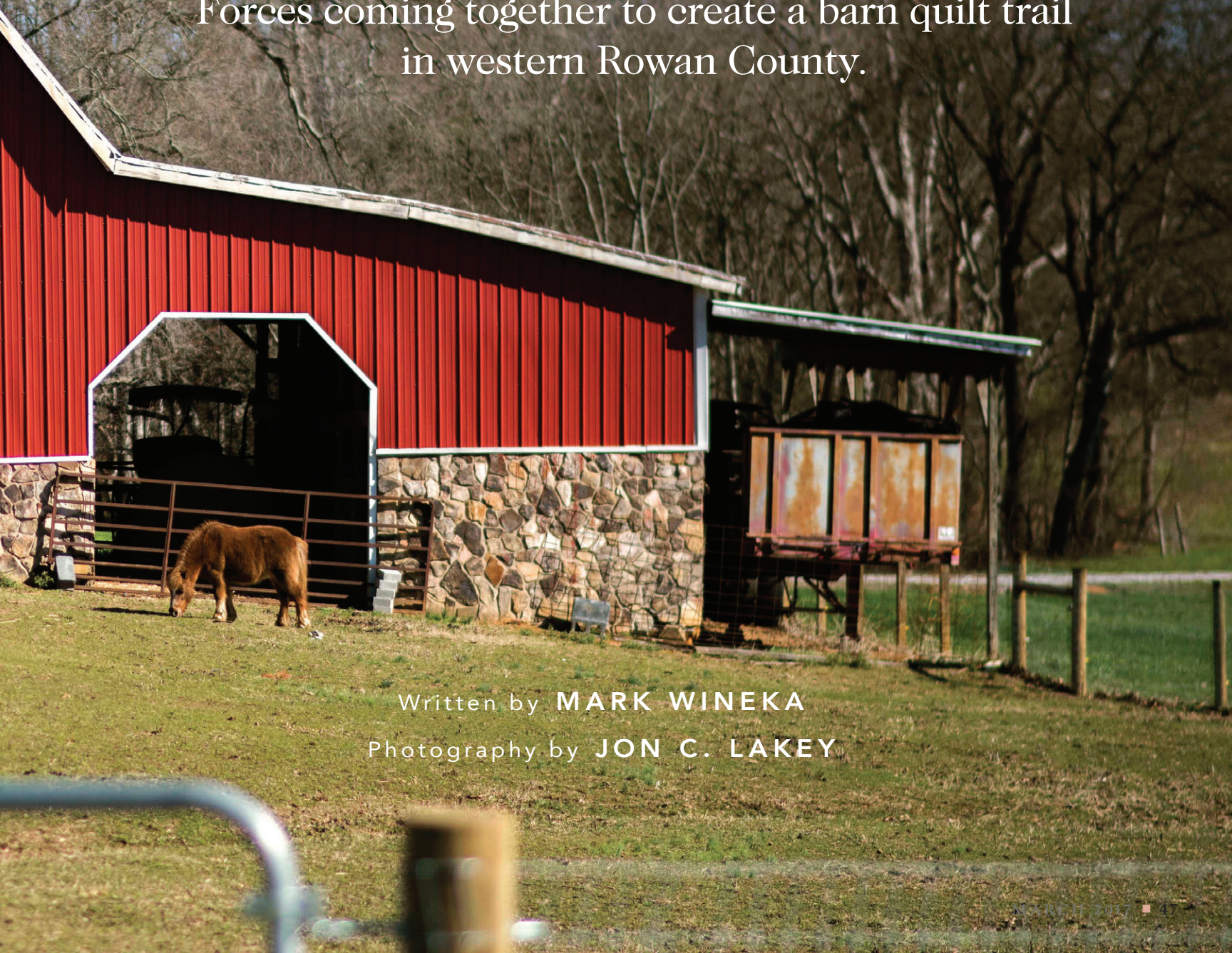
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Written by **MARK WINEKA**

Photography by **JON C. LAKEY**

A group of women gathered around the side of Adele Goodman's old smokehouse off Corriher Springs Road and took in the diamond-shaped, Stars-and-Chains pattern of a barn quilt.

Adele has named it "Mildred's Star," in honor of her late grandmother, Mildred Goodman. Mildred loved looking into the sky and finding the evening star.

"This is one of the first ones I've seen, and it's beautiful," said Teri Davies, co-president of the Sunny Days Chapter of the Salisbury-Rowan Quilters Guild.

Adele had agreed to meet a carload of women, including several quilters, on this particular Saturday morning. She planned to show them as many as 15 barn quilts scattered throughout the western and southwestern Rowan County countryside. The quilters — Davies, Chloe Goho, Judy Young and Rita Hiatt among them — have an eye for patterns and a growing fascination with the barn quilt phenomenon.

"Another thing, too, is how beautiful the barns are," Young said.

Beyond the smokehouse, the women walked to Goodman's backyard, where Adele had another quilt square hanging on the side of a barn. The colors and pattern of this one were inspired by Adele's late peacock, George.

"That's George's memorial quilt," she said.

Before the women took off on their morning expedition to see other barn quilts, Davies retrieved from her car a quilt she had received as a gift. It was the ultimate — a quilt depicting actual barn quilts from a rural





A peacock-inspired barn quilt at the Henry C. Corriher homeplace on Corriher Springs Road.



Above: Chloe Goho points out a detail in a quilted wall hanger that has images of barns with barn quilts. Behind her from left are Judy Young, Adele Goodman and Teri Davies holding the quilt. Below: 'Mildred's Star' on the smokehouse at Goodman's Henry C. Corriher homeplace on Corriher Springs Road.

county in Wisconsin.

"Driving through the county is a great way to spend the day," Davies said. "I would love to see this barn quilt trail happen in Rowan County."

Adele Goodman is the ringleader behind that effort. She said it's really a collaboration among the Corriher Grange Hall, Mount Ulla Preservation Society and now the Salisbury-Rowan Quilters Guild.

Goodman often is the common denominator, bringing these entities together, not to mention persuading and cajoling all the people she knows in western Rowan County to have barn quilts hung on one of their buildings.

The idea of a Rowan County trail started in 2014. "It's like a magnet pulling us all together, which is pretty cool," Goodman said.





Barn quilts can be described as single quilt squares — patterns usually painted on 8-by-8-foot boards, then framed and mounted on the side or front of a barn (or other building).

Communities often develop a barn quilt trail, providing motorists with an interesting, colorful, at-your-own-pace drive through the countryside.

Donna Sue Groves of Adams County, Ohio, came up with the idea of barn quilts, and she launched the Ohio Barn Quilt Project in 2001. With her original quilt pattern on a barn, Groves wanted to honor her mother and her Appalachian heritage, and the idea of barn quilt trails spread rapidly when more people followed her lead.

The movement has led to groups such as arts councils, quilt guilds, preservation societies, 4-H clubs and granges in virtually every state running with the idea.

In the N.C. mountains, a significant quilt trail already runs through Yancey, Ashe, Avery, Haywood, Macon, Madison, McDowell and Watauga counties. Iredell County — Rowan's close neighbor — has organized a significant quilt trail.

Bostian Barn Quilts, represented by cousin-in-law artists Pam and Susan Bostian, has painted most of the barn quilts in western Rowan County. The artists also have seen their quilt squares go to Davie, Cabarrus,

Left: 'Gottes Segen' (Family Blessings) hangs on the old granary at Corriher Brothers Dairy on Corriher Springs Road. Middle: Hilda and Lee Goodnight's 'Garden's Bounty' on Saw Road. Right: 'Carpenter's Wheel' and eight-point star. Frank and Wanda Corriher's barn.

Iredell, Lincoln and Alamance counties, in addition to one in Virginia.

The Bostians partnered on their first one for Adele Goodman's smokehouse. "They're probably the best barn quilt painters I've seen," Goodman said.

Officials with the N.C. Grange, which has taken on expanding barn quilt trails as a statewide project, say each block pattern often reflects something about the farm or land, its owners, or the building the quilt is on.

Taken together, a barn quilt trail can tell "a wonderful story of the whole community," the N.C. Grange says.

Vinnie Karriker Duncan, a Rowan County native and member of the N.C. Grange board of directors, had Pam Bostian paint a quilt square for her father Hoke Karriker's Karrimont Farm.

The square duplicates a quilt she still has that was made by her mother, Dorothy Bost Karriker. Vinnie calls it "Dot's Sugar Sacks." The mostly orange and green block depicts

a "Save All" pattern, describing how all the material at hand for a quilt was used.

During the Great Depression, when she was 12, Dorothy pieced the quilt top by using dyed sugar sacks, cut into the Save All pattern. She never finished it, however. Five decades later, members of the Corriher Extension Homemakers Club traveled to Dorothy and Hoke Karriker's N.C. mountain home to complete this quilt in August 1987.

In December of that same year, Vinnie's parents gave her the finished quilt. It came with the story and a card, including the signatures of the women who had done the quilting. Adele Goodman notes her grandmother Mildred Goodman was one of those ladies, along with Lucille Deal, Doris Gardner, Mabel Owens, Nancy Kerr, Virginia Sloop and Geraldine Wood.

Pam Bostian used the quilt to match the colors and design for the barn quilt block, which was installed on Hoke Karriker's granary for his 95th birthday last October.

Adele Goodman likes the story behind a barn quilt painted for Johnny and Karen Moore. For several weeks, Johnny had been receiving treatment at Duke University for a medical illness, and as a surprise, his friends and neighbors raised money and erected a quilt pattern on one of his barns facing Hall Road.



Above: Wanda Reid's 'Compass.' Right: Susan and Pam Bostian are the painters behind most of the barn quilts that are seen in the area. The pair work on the large wooden panels in Pam's husband Bobby's workshop near Mooresville.



After arriving home late one night from an exhausting day of treatment, Johnny and Karen walked outside the next morning to see their quilt — a “Farmer’s Fields” pattern for him with a flower in the middle for Karen.

“He said they were shocked at first, but then started crying,” Adele said. “I told him it wasn’t just a barn quilt. It was a way for them to know that they were loved and appreciated.”

Throughout that recent Saturday morning, Goodman told the stories behind many of the barn quilts. The Corriher Brothers Dairy just up the road from Adele has the “Wild Iris” barn quilt installed in honor of Nell Corriher, who was terminally ill.

Ruth and Kenneth Corriher on Corriher Grange Road chose a “Star in Space” pattern. Henry Goodnight on Saw Road wanted a sunflower pattern, to go with his sunflowers growing nearby.

Hilda Goodnight’s tulip pattern has been named “Garden’s Bounty,” reflecting Hilda’s love for her vegetable garden. “When the sun hits it, it glows,” Adele said.

Wanda and Franklin Corriher, who live on Bluegrass Lane off Lipe Road, commissioned two barn quilts. Wanda asked for a combina-

tion of two patterns to make “Walter’s Wheel” in honor of her father. “It just brings you joy every day you see it,” she said.

Farther down their private lane, not visible from the road, the Corrihers repainted a side of an old barn and mounted “Carrie and Cora’s Peony” quilt square on it. The double-as-



ter pattern honors Wanda's grandmother Carrie and Cora, her young granddaughter, who can see the barn quilt from her bedroom window.

Nancy Graham's barn on Caldwell Road reflects a Dresden plate pattern made to look like fabric.

On N.C. 801, Carolyn and Larry Poteat also have two barn quilts — a Whig pattern on a smokehouse and a Glittering Star pattern on the barn.

There are many more, and Adele knows and loves them all.

"It has been a blessing to me to reconnect with neighbors when they decide to get one," she said. "I'll sit down and help them pick a pattern and do the colors to speed things along."

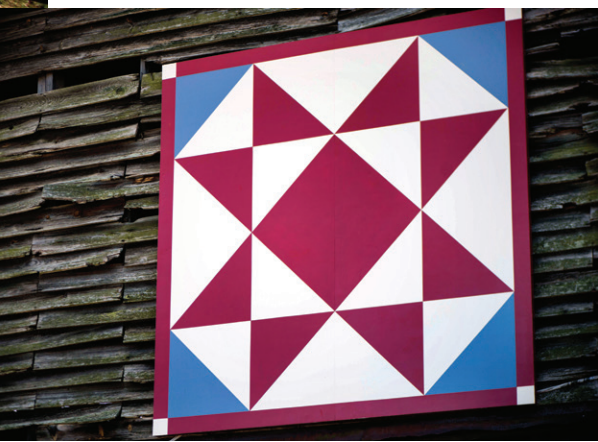
Pattern selection can be overwhelming if they don't have a quilt they want to replicate. Clients of artists Pam and Susan Bostian often start by looking at the book known by all quilters:

Story continues on page 54.



Top: Teri Davies, left, and Vinnie Karkiker Duncan, hidden, hold Vinnie's heirloom quilt against a stiff breeze. The quilt served as the pattern for the barn quilt behind Vinnie. **Above:** Henry Goodnight's Saw Road Sunflower.





Opposite, clockwise from top: 'Dresden Plate' at Foggy Bottom Farm on Caldwell Road; Pam and Susan Bostian sketch out patterns on a paper grid before painting the wooden panel; A Whig pattern at Larry and Carolyn Poteat's property on N.C. 801.

Clockwise from top right: 'Cora and Carrie's Peony' near Wanda and Franklin Corriher's home; Teri Davies and Adele Goodman stop to look at a barn quilt on a garage; 'Letters From the Farm' at Darryl and Barbara Corriher's home; 'Lone Star' at Larry and Carolyn Poteat's barn on N.C. 801.





“5,500 Block Quilt Designs.”

The artists, who work out of Pam’s husband’s large shop off Brumley Road in Iredell County, then discuss color, size and the barn itself. “We always go and take a look,” Pam said.

They draw and color a few examples to scale on smaller squares. The planning requires a lot of mathematics. “We wish we would have paid more attention to geometry in school,” Susan said.

Once they move the design to graph paper, they can easily translate it to the big board. They use sturdy, expensive MDO board, and by the time they are finished they have glued, screwed, sanded, primed, painted, sealed and framed it all.

The Bostians rely on exterior latex paint. An 8- by 8-foot square takes a good three weeks and five or six coats of paint, especially with the reds. All the paint colors are specially mixed for each square.

Ruth and Kenneth Corriher’s ‘Star in Space’ on their barn on Corriher Grange Road. Opposite, top: ‘Farmer’s Field with Lily’ at Johnny and Karen Moore’s farm on Hall Road. Opposite, bottom: Hoke Karkiker’s barn has a barn quilt patterned after a family heirloom quilt.

How long the barn quilts will hold up remains a question. “We don’t have a longevity to go by yet,” Pam said.

The artists sign each work on the back, date it and include the pattern name. The quilt squares weigh at least 150 pounds.

Materials cost about \$280. They charge \$450 for a finished 8-by-8 quilt, and whatever slim profit there is has to be divided between the two artists.

“We definitely should charge more,” Pam said, but both she and Susan quickly added they prefer making the barn quilts affordable so more people will want them.

“If we were doing it for the money, we probably would stop doing it,” Susan said.

Their \$450 price does not include delivery or installation, and they make it clear they do not install/hang the barn quilts, though they can offer instructions and contacts for that.

The Bostians charge \$200 for 4-by-4-foot squares and \$60 for 2-by-2-foot squares.

The women have photographs of 42 different barn quilts they have done, but they think their total is closer to 50.

Pam, a retired hairdresser, said she became intrigued with barn quilts she had seen during a trip to Ohio with her husband. She came home and began painting a quilt of her own and had no idea Susan in Davie County also had started one.

Susan is an accomplished artist who otherwise specializes in stained glass.

A short version of the story is that Adele Goodman heard the women were interested in painting barn quilts, and things just snowballed from there. “When we started this, we didn’t know we would keep doing this,” Susan said.

So far, all of the quilt squares the Bostians have done have been painted and assembled at their shop. They have never painted a quilt pattern directly onto the side of a barn.


“I would love for us to do that,” Susan said, and they think they have the scaffolding they would need.

For now, the women meet at the shop about twice a week and try to have two barn quilts going at the same time. The artists, both of whom identify the most with Rowan County, can’t believe the county hasn’t embraced barn quilts earlier than now. “We’re way behind in this,” Pam said, adding that grant money exists to establish barn quilt trails.

Pam, Susan, Adele and others envision guided and self-guided tours, barn quilt calendars and a website.

The Bostians take great pride in all of their quilts.

“It’s pretty neat to go down the road and say, ‘We did that.’” Pam said.

To contact Bostian Barn Quilts, call Pam Bostian at 704-664-4562 or Susan Bostian at 336-753-6905. 



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As Center Director Deborah Howell looks on, Elsie bends toward Dollie, a therapy dog for Partners in Learning at Catawba College. Dollie can have a calming effect on an upset child as well as be an encouragement to others.

Puppy love

Dollie reflects the care, affection and nurturing of Partners in Learning.

Written by REBECCA RIDER | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY



The heart of Partners in Learning could be many things. It could be the nonprofit's focus on inclusion and working with special needs, it could be its caring staff or a passion for educating and supporting parents. But for some, it's a dog named Dollie — Dollie Partners, that is.

Center Director Deborah Howell said the 7-year-old cocker spaniel and poodle mix needed a sassy name to fit her personality. Dollie works as the center's therapy dog, and over the past six years she's wriggled her way into the heart of the place with a wide, doggy grin.

"She helps with the care, the love, the nurturing that we want to always be a part of our culture," Executive Director Norma Honeycutt said.

Howell and Honeycutt talked for years about getting a therapy dog for Partners in Learning, but dismissed the idea over and over again.

"We said we were never gonna get one," Honeycutt said.

But that was before they met Dollie. One spring a parent carted in a litter of puppies in a clothes basket and set it in the lobby. Howell said she zeroed in on Dollie immediately — the dog was sticking her blond head over the side



and looking around. Though she wasn't familiar with dogs, Howell went over to the clothes basket, stooped down and picked up the wiggling bundle of fur.

"And then I just couldn't let go of her, and I just fell in love with her," she said.

That day, Dollie became an official part of the Partners in Learning family. She spends her days with the children at the center, helping them walk, speak or giving them something to cling to in times of stress. On weeknights, she goes home with Howell, but she spends weekends with Assistant Director Ashlee Hawkins. Howell jokes that the two "share custody."

Assistant Director Ashlee Hawkins and Tyriq spend some time with Dollie the therapy dog at Partners in Learning.

Meanwhile, Dollie has been studying hard for her role as the center's therapy dog. She passed obedience training with flying colors, and was working on her therapy certification when things came to a grinding halt: Dollie was going blind.

She was just short of getting her vest, Howell said, when they noticed Dollie's usually bright, brown eyes growing cloudy. She started developing cataracts and slowly losing her vision. She was only 2 years old.

Howell said the dog started running into things, or would startle easily if approached from behind. The program didn't have the funding for cataract surgery, so Dollie was withdrawn from her therapy training.

But she still knows her stuff, and Howell said Dollie's disability means she fits right in at Partners in Learning.

"We embrace all people and animals with special needs," Howell joked.

In the mornings, Dollie will wait at the door of Howell's office for children to pass by, and Howell said the dog has picked out her favorites. Students beg to give her water, food, take her for a walk or to sit with her on

the comfy office couches.

“Dollie’s a wonderful motivator for children with special needs,” Howell said.

When she’s working, Dollie might encourage children using wheelchairs or walkers to move across the room to her. Children with speech delays at Partners in Learning file away the words “dog” and “Dollie” as some of their earliest vocabulary words. She even helps the younger children learn about being gentle.

“That’s been a biggie,” Honeycutt said.

Older children who come to the center after a full school day can take Dollie for a walk to decompress, and students who are overwhelmed or having a meltdown cool down in an office with Dollie pressed close to their side.

“She’s just a really good comforter,” Howell said.

She’s speaking from experience. A few years ago, Dollie was her confidant and solace as Howell battled cancer and went through chemotherapy.

And Dollie seems to have a sixth sense for what people need. Honeycutt said she can sniff out a dog person almost immediately, and when someone wants an eager, playful pup, that’s what she is. But if not, she’s calm, quiet and unassuming — friendly, but not demanding.

“It’s like she knows what you need,” Howell said.

It’s a trait that makes her invaluable to staff, as well as students. She’s helped more than one staff member get over a fear of dogs

— and Honeycutt said Dollie can sit “still as a stone” when told to.

“So it’s not like they’ve got a dog jumping on ’em,” she said.

Again, Howell and Honeycutt speak from experience. Both were nervous around dogs until they met sweet, smiling Dollie.

“Now I’m not the least bit scared of ’em,” Honeycutt said.

Over time, Dollie has woven herself into the family of Partners in Learning, and left her paw prints all over the children and staff who spend their days at the center. The children took up donations to have her spayed, she has joined students in city parades and the entire Partners in Learning family gathers to celebrate Dollie’s birthday.

“She is perfect,” Howell said. S



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THE VETTE SET

Salisbury club is 'just a bunch of guys who love cars.'

Written by MARK WINEKA | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY



Marvin Shaw ticks off the reasons why he is a Corvette man.

He considers it the only true American sports car. You drive a Corvette once, Shaw says, and you fall in love forever. To him, this iconic Chevrolet, first produced in 1953, has built-in prestige.

“It’s really a great feeling to have one,” says Shaw, a founding member of the Vette Set Corvette and Old Chevy Club in Salisbury.

The club meets the first Saturday of a month, usually in the garage at Roger Rankin’s house. The guys talk about current events, cars and what kinds of things they can do to help the community.

“We’re just a bunch of guys who love cars,” Shaw says.

The Vette Set Club is one of several Corvette clubs in North Carolina. It grew out of a core group of men in the Fairview Heights

neighborhood who have been friends since they were kids. They also came to own Corvettes, admiring the look, motion and roar of these high-performance cars.

“And we knew other people who had them, too,” Rankin says.

The Vette Set Club held its first meeting Nov. 12, 1997, at the Dunbar Center in East Spencer. The “Old Chevy” part of the name was added later. When they get together, the guys like to arrive in their cars, while wearing their smart Corvette jackets, Vette Set golf shirts and Corvette ballcaps.

Above: Danny Thompson, left, Roger Rankin and Marvin Shaw, right, have a friendship and love for cars that goes back to childhood.

Opposite: Tim Leazer’s new C7 Stingray.

Albert Johnson, the club president, still has his original Vette Set jacket from 1997.

“I try my best to keep these guys in line,” Johnson says. “... It’s a good club. We do a lot of good things.”

Club members pay a \$20 fee to join and \$10 a month in dues. They do some of the usual car enthusiast stuff, attending shows and participating in parades such as the Holiday Caravan, Cleveland Christmas Parade and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade.

But Shaw says they also try to find ways to help people. Many times they are asked to bring their cars as a way of drawing bigger crowds to community fundraisers.

The Vette Set Corvette and Old Chevy Club holds an annual show at Royal Giants



Park to help with East Spencer's recreation program. Members have attended Juneteenth, and the club tries to support youth organizations and teams.

Shaw, an employee at Gamewell for more than 40 years, says he thinks the club's classic vehicles help to inspire people, "and show kids in the neighborhood there are things they can shoot for in their lives."

The Vette Set Club produces a monthly newsletter for its membership, which is about 20 strong. It also has a Facebook page. When club members got together on a recent Saturday, they drove up in 13 different Corvettes, ranging from 1968 to 2006 models (not counting Tim Leazer's new C7 Stingray),

Also represented were a 1967 Chevy Nova, two 1950 Chevrolet Deluxes and a 1962 Chevy Impala.

Above: The Vette Set and Old Chevy Club got together on a recent Saturday to show off their rides.

Right: Kenny Clement owns this 1967 Chevy Nova.





Clockwise from top left: Tim Leazer looks closely at some of the Corvettes; Jean Pulliam and the late Robert Pulliam belong to the blue C3; Jimmy Clodfelter's sunglasses reflect classic cars; Robert McGinnis owns the red C6; A passenger seat sports its Corvette emblem.





“Most of them are just toys,” Albert Johnson says. “It’s just something to play with.”

Johnson has a few toys himself.

Above: The Bell Tower serves as a backdrop for club members’ cars.

Left: Roger Rankin owns this 1962 Chevrolet Impala.

Besides his 1982 model Corvette, he owns two 1957 Chevrolet Bel Airs. He bought one of the Bel Airs while driving to Myrtle Beach. He saw it parked at an old service station, bought the car on the spot and called his friend Shaw to pick up the Chevy on a trailer and haul it back to Salisbury.

Ask Vette Set guys about their cars, and the talk turns to horsepower, cubic-inch engines, carburetors, torque, fuel-injection, suspension, headlamp

styles, interior finishes, emblems and even the size of steering wheels.

Shaw thinks the 1962 Corvette's steering wheel must have been 40 inches in diameter. "You had to be a man to drive that car," Shaw says.

Club members know all seven generations of the Corvette and the prized model years in each.

Shaw, Rankin and Danny Thompson are proof if you talk about cars long enough, you do crazy things, such as forming a drag racing team. They call it "RST Racing," reflecting the first letters of their last names, and Rankin is the driver of a car they have named "Azzkikkr."

Thompson has owned a Corvette since 1970. Jimmy Clodfelter wears a Corvette ring to go with his 1973 Corvette Stingray. He bought the Stingray four years ago, not long after his wife died. Clodfelter says he redid the exhaust, radio and everything else inside, and he belongs to the fraternity of owners who like to work on their cars as much as show them off.

Tim Leazer's C7 Corvette qualifies as a show car. The all-black Stingray looks like



a Batmobile, and Leazer acknowledges he hardly drives the beauty, which has only 1,000 miles on the odometer.

Leazer, 45, has owned five Corvettes over the years, including three of the newest Stingray models.

"It's kind of wild," he says. "I'm a Ford man, but I like Corvettes."

Marvin Shaw acknowledges that his twin brother, Melvin, also is a Ford man, who

drives a classic Fairlane. But that's another story. Marvin Shaw is perfectly happy with his 2005 Corvette convertible.

For him, not many things are better in the car world than tooling down the streets of Salisbury with the top down, knowing he has a club full of friends who find the same joy in their classic Vettes.

"That's what it amounts to — everybody's love for cars," Shaw says. **S**

Above: President Albert Johnson sports the club's original jacket from 1997. Danny Thompson is in the background.

Right: Robert Bratcher drives this white C3.



April 2017

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area

MARCH 30, APR. 2, APR. 6-8
'Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing'

• *The Norvell Theater*

Based on the popular title by perennial favorite Judy Blume, "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing" is a humorous look at family life and the troubles that can only be caused by a younger sibling. For more information: www.piedmontplayers.com, or 704-633-5471.

APRIL 1, 8, 22
At The Throttle 2017

• *N.C. Transportation Museum*

At the Throttle is back at the N.C. Transportation Museum. You can power down the tracks behind the Lehigh Valley Coal No. 126. No previous locomotive experience is required. Sessions are scheduled between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Participants enjoy a full half-hour operating the engine with a qualified engineer in the cab with them. Tickets cost \$160 a session. For tickets and more information, go to www.nctrans.org.

APRIL 1
Colonial Spring Frolic

• *Old Stone House*

Eighth annual event at the Rowan Museum's Old Stone House, located at 770 Old Stone House Road just outside of Granite Quarry. Celebrate spring and the reopening of the house for the season. History tours of Michael Braun's Colonial home, Easter egg-dyeing, musket-firing demonstrations, woodworking, open-fire cooking demonstrations and tastings, candle-making, children's games, Colonial dancers and music. Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission: \$5 for adults; \$3, students.

APRIL 2
Hurley Park Spring Celebration



Claire Paskiewicz, 5, dances with her grandmother, Kathy Haynes, to the Salisbury Swing Band during last year's annual Hurley Park Spring Celebration. This year's event is April 2. — Photo by Allison Lee Isley.

• *Hurley Park*

Bring the whole family for a day of fun at the 30th Annual Hurley Park Spring Celebration from 2-4 p.m. For more information: www.salisburync.gov/PLAY, or 704-638-4459.

APRIL 7
Easter First Friday

• *Downtown Salisbury*

Come celebrate the Easter season with friends and family in Downtown Salisbury while the shops stay open later. The event begins at 5 p.m. For more information: www.downtown-salisburync.com, or 704-637-7814.

APRIL 7
Earth Day on the Greenway

• *Salisbury Greenway*

Celebrate and learn more about Mother Earth on the greenway starting at 9 a.m. on the Prescott Drive section. For more information: www.salisburync.gov/PLAY, or 704-216-7529.

APRIL 8-9
Upscale Yard Sale

• *Rowan Museum*

The yard sale will be located at the museum, 202 N. Main St., Salisbury. April 8, 8 a.m.-noon; April 9, 1-4 p.m. Clothing, jewelry,

housewares, furniture, appliances, accessories, art lamps, draperies, toys, games, decorations, books, music, electronics. Free and open to the public.

APRIL 8-9, 14 Easter Bunny Express

• *North Carolina Transportation Museum*

Take a 25-minute train ride around the N.C. Transportation Museum with the Easter Bunny. The furry friend will be handing out candy to the kids, posing for pictures and meeting everyone. Kids can also get temporary tattoos in the museum Gift Station and a craft to take home. For more information: www.nctrans.org/Home, or 704-636-2889.

APRIL 9 'Monumental — Requiem'

• *Keppel Auditorium*

On the Catawba College campus, Salisbury Symphony will present Verdi's "Requiem" with multiple choirs. Soloists include Angela Rene Simpson, soprano; Christy Brown, mezzo-soprano; James Allbritten, tenor; and Jake Gardner, bass-baritone. This concert is sponsored by Dr. W. Gerald Cochran. For more information: www.salisburysymphony.org, or 704-637-4314.

APRIL 9 Rhythm & Run 5K

• *Downtown Kannapolis*

6:30 p.m. Part of the "Run Kannapolis" series of eight 5k walk/runs in the city during 2017. People of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate. Online registration is available at www.runkannapolis.com. Proceeds benefit the N.C. Music Hall of Fame.

APRIL 11 Art in History

• *Rowan Museum*

History Club event, 7 p.m. Local artist Robert Crum's speaking topic is "Land of My Ancestors — Art in History." He will present art he has created to represent his ancestors Daniel and Rebecca Boone. Previously displayed at the Rowan Public Library and The Gallery at Clearwater. Crum will give a short talk and open things up for discussion. Free and open to the public. The museum is located at 202

N. Main St., Salisbury.

APRIL 15 Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Fest

• *Historic Gold Hill*

Grab your baskets for an exciting Easter Egg Hunt at Historic Gold Hill beginning at 11 a.m. For more information: www.goldhillnc.com.

APRIL 15 Easter Egg Hunt, Train Rides

• *N.C. Transportation Museum*

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will complement the Easter Bunny Express mentioned earlier. The Lehigh Valley Coal No. 126 steam locomotive will be pulling six colorful cabooses on the Caboose Train. Ride either train, or both with a combo ticket. For more information: www.nctrans.org/Home, or 704-636-2889.

APRIL 21-22 One Acts Festival

• *Florence Busby Corriher Theatre*

7:30 nightly. Presented by Catawba College Theatre. Free admission. For more information: www.catawba.edu/theatre.

APRIL 22 Touch a Truck

• *City Hall*

10 a.m.-1 p.m., behind City Hall, 217 S. Main St. This 11th annual free event allows kids to see big trucks and equipment up close.

APRIL 22 Pass the Plate

• *Catawba College*

This annual fundraiser for Rowan Helping Ministries will be held in the Crystal Lounge at Keppel Auditorium on the college campus. For more information: 704-637-6838, ext. 100, or www.rowanhelpingministries.org.

APRIL 22 Strides for Stroke 5k

• *Downtown Kannapolis*

9 a.m. Part of the "Run Kannapolis" series of eight 5k walk/runs in the city during 2017. People of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate. Online registration is available at www.runkannapolis.com. Proceeds benefit

Carolinas Healthcare System NorthEast's stroke program.

APRIL 27-29 'Alice in Wonderland'

• *Lee Street theatre*

Return with Alice to the magical world from her childhood adventure. This dance showcase will tell the story of Alice's adventures in Wonderland and her battle with the Red Queen's reign of terror. The show begins at 7:30 p.m. For more information: www.leestreet.org, or 704-310-5507.

APRIL 28-30 Confederate Prison Symposium

• *Salisbury*

This is the 20th annual Salisbury Confederate Symposium, which looks at the history of the Civil War prison and the Union and Confederate soldiers linked to it. Sponsored by the Robert F. Hoke Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. For tickets and schedule information, contact Sue Curtis at 704-637-6411, or southpaws@fibrant.com.

APRIL 29 Astronomical Star Party

• *Carolina International School*

In recognition of National Astronomy Day, the Astronomical Society of Rowan will have a star party from 6-9 p.m. at the school, located at 9545 Poplar Tent Road, Concord. For more information: www.astrowan.org.


APRIL 29 Ted Luther Memorial Golf

• *Corbin Hills Golf Club*

Tournament benefits Rowan Helping Ministries. For more information: 704-637-6838, ext. 117, or www.rowanhelpingministries.org.

APRIL 29 Millbridge Elementary 5k

• *155 Ed Deal Road, China Grove*

9 a.m. This fourth annual walk/run includes a half-mile fun run for kids. The 5k is designed to appeal to walkers, joggers, casual runners, competitive runners, elite runners and families. Proceeds will go to various projects at Millbridge Elementary School. 



The Oyster Roast offers plenty to eat beyond oysters.



Above: Trent Busby, Kathy Carlton and Jim Carlton. Below: Mary Heather Steinman and Melissa Hammer-Grubb.



Above: Greg Scarborough, Jay Whittington and Tomme Gamewell. Below: Rochelle and Tom Bost.



The 12th Annual Oyster Roast to benefit Waterworks Visual Arts Center was held at the F&M Trolley Barn, and once again a large crowd enjoyed oysters and shrimp, pulled pork sliders and dessert. The night also included a silent auction and dancing. Proceeds from the Oyster Roast support Waterworks' educational and outreach programs. For more information about Waterworks, located at 123 E. Liberty St., go to www.waterworks.org.

— Photos by Heather Renee Alsip

Waterworks' OYSTER ROAST



Tina Acree, Tory Curran and Mary Wymbbs



Dan Williams and Bob Honeycutt



Above: Dari Caldwell, Greg Alcorn, Missie Alcorn, David Caldwell and Chris Caldwell.



Left: Former Salisbury Mayor Paul Woodson and current Salisbury Mayor Karen Alexander.



Left: Sarah Cowan and Matthew Craner.



Ashley Linker-Morris, Lindsay Starrett, Josh Triplett and Josh Linker-Morris



Below: Tricia Proper, Shakira Humble and Corey Bassinger.



Far left: Brad Durham, Cathy Sexton, Denise Durham and Jeremy Ferden.



Left: Jennifer and Steve Miller.



Right: Marlene Owen and Hayden Simmerson.



Maestro David Hagy conducts the Big Band orchestra.

To salute Salisbury Symphony's 50th anniversary season, the theme for this year's Big Band Bash was "Music of the Ages." The event, held in both the Hedrick Auditorium and Crystal Lounge of Catawba College, also was a special tribute to the late Bert W. Oestreicher, the woman who inspired the symphony's first Big Band Bash.

— Photos by Eric Slipp



Jean Owen and John Stafford

BIG BAND BASH



Ashley and Bays Shoaf



During breaks in the music, there were conversations galore.



Betty and Jim Carli enjoy a dance.



Lyn and Al Wilson



Lisa Kearns and Abel Cavazos



Conductor David Hagy hams it up with singers Alexis Greer, Leah Campion, Lonnie Carpenter and Bill Bucher.



Above: Will and Mary James.

Left: Singer Alexis Greer performs.



Dan and Winnie Mikkelson



Bob and Stephanie Potter



Left: Some of the musicians at Salisbury Symphony's Big Band Bash.



Right: Buddy Farnan, Linda Jones, Stephanie Potter and Bob Potter.



The 2017 Winter Flight field takes off at Catawba College.

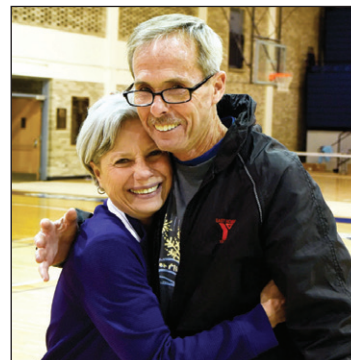
WINTER FLIGHT 8K

The 34th annual Winter Flight 8K served as the Road Runners Club of America's North Carolina 8K Championship, and it also kicked off a new racing season for runners. The day included a 5K Health Run/Walk, and children also had the option of participating in a free fun run. Some 250 runners and walkers participated. Ryan Jank of Mooresville posted a time of 25:37 as the top men's finisher in the 8K, and Molly Nunn of Winston-Salem had the top women's time of 29:31.

— Photos by Aaron Cress



Mendy Brady, Brian Brady, Gates Brady and Shelby Brady



Left: Craig Farmer, Laurie Ward, Sonny Ali, Joshua Readling, Acquawon Stallworth and Giuseppe Lopriore. Above: Race director David Freeze receives a hug from Val Velte, corporate wellness nurse for Novant Health. Right: Aaron Johnson, 4, in the fun run.





Charlotte Matheny, Milton Matheny, Steve Austin and Wayne Eckert are all sporting 'Winter Flight' shirts.

Left: Elizabeth Kimberly of Woodleaf, Sheri Nemeth of Elizabeth, Tenn., and Molly Nunn of Winston-Salem



Above: Malaysia Dilliard and Aleiah Martin. Below: Jim Owens of Kings Mountain and Steve Austin of Charlotte



Top: Buddy Barnett, Ryan Barnett and Brittany Rabon. Above: Ginnie Chambers, Madara Shillinghaw and Kim Seabold.



Crossing the finish line are Chance Brown, foreground, and Kelly Lowman.



The fourth annual Wine About Winter tasting crawl in downtown Salisbury was a sold-out event featuring 38 locations and new selections of red and white wines, many of them locally produced. Ticket-holders received a souvenir wine glass, walking map, tasting pass and Sommelier corkscrew. Some 1,000 people bought tickets.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: MaryJane Kotsalis, Amy Overcash, Mary Faith Murray, Verna Bumgarner and Jackie Wetter. Above left: Nicki Rembielak and Emily Pierce.



Kelly Kershaw and Mallory Stavola

WINE

about

Winter



Pamela and Bill Dunn



Above: Holly Doreen and Beth Craft. Left: Diane Young, Heidi Galanti, Steve Galanti and Michael Young.



Clockwise from top left: Russell Bennett and Misty Owens; Liz Alley, Luana Hassan, Stacie Fowler and Marybeth Trombly; Joy Jost, Bill Jost and Tami Harless; Angela Eatmon, Lauren Poole and Benita Hawkins; Natalie Scott, Michaeline Nichols, Katie Torpey and Megan Morsillo; Crystal Trexler, Tessa Botts and Hillary Kepley; Angie Daniels, Robin Davidson, Missy Bradshaw, Rebecca Coble and Carla Kluttz; Beth Atkinson, Mark McCollum and Christine Phillips.





Above: M.T. Sidoli, Sharon Rowh and Don Brisson. Above left: Organizers Mark Doby, Will Scott and Lane Wallace. Left: Jean Wurster and Bethany Sinnott.

'Democracy for Sale'

More than 175 people attended a screening of the documentary "Democracy for Sale" at the Norvell Theatre on Jan. 31. A group of concerned residents reached out to Working Films to request a screening in Salisbury as part of the statewide tour of the documentary starring Zach

Galifianakis, an N.C. native. The film focuses on the influence of big money in North Carolina politics and aims to help viewers develop a better understanding of the negative consequences when citizen input in government, at any level, is limited or curtailed. The free screening was

hosted by the Yadkin Riverkeeper.

"Democracy for Sale" is part of the EPIX original documentary series America Divided, executive produced by Common, Norman Lear and Shonda Rhimes.

— Photos by Emily Ford



Above: Toni Smith, Emily Perry, Anthony Smith and Linda Sutton. Left: Organizers Lane Wallace and Gemale Black.



Clockwise from top right: Eric Hake and Teresa Rowell, two of the organizers, chat with Lisa Boguslaw; Yvonne Moore and Teresa Moore-Mitchell; Maryja Mee, Jody Blackwell and Maggie Blackwell; Mary Zimmerman applauds during the program. Rick Travis is next to her; Bethany Sinnott and Billie Cunningham; Organizers Lane Wallace and Will Scott; Maryja Mee, Mike-o Martelli, Jeff Sharp and Susan Lee.





Left: Ann Parnell and Claudette Roberts.
Above: Amy McCachren and Missy Shives.
Right: Frances Vance and Dr. Martha West.

Christmas in January

Dr. Martha West held her annual “Christmas in January” gathering at her house Jan. 29 as a way of raising funds for local nonprofits. Scores of her friends showed up to contribute roughly \$5,800 to 12 different charities. The first Christmas in January party took place in 1985, sort of as a way to take West’s mind off her husband’s death the previous year. The tradition of giving money to charities started in 2004 after West read that 4,000 people in Cabarrus and Rowan counties had lost their jobs, mainly from the closing of Pillowtex. “How can I have a party?” West says she asked herself, knowing a lot of people were suffering. So she began combining the party with a request for charitable contributions to the local agencies.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Jesse McCartney, Kay McCartney, Andrea Anders and Michael Bitzer



Above: Richard Dietrich, Mike Baranski and Fle Griffith, Left: Davey Overcash and Karen Wood. Right: Celia and Steve Jarrett.



Kyna Grubb, Dianne Scott and Ketti Overcash



Clockwise from top right: Dylan Mills, 8, Keegan Merrel, 8, Alec McGrail, 8, Leah Wippenbetk, 7, and Kailyn Meacham, 6; Barbara Corriher, Grayson Smith, Tim Smith, Owen Shell, and Susan Mesimer; Mark and Beth Davis, Jennifer Hall (standing), Nathaniel Hall, Parker Hall and Sophia Davis; Kristen and John Sapia with daughter Ella; Dorothy Graham, Gracie Hauser, Regina Graham Hause and Raphael Hauser; Mailee-Grace Matangira and her mother, Nicole Matangira.

EMPTY BOWLS

A simple soup bowl can remind us of all the people who are hungry in our community. Participants at the Empty Bowls fundraiser for Rowan Helping Ministries received pottery bowls made by students and guests of the homeless shelter. The event was held at North Hills Christian School.

— Photos by Wayne Hinshaw



In finding Salisbury, I also found myself

On June 27, 1998, we buried my mom in New Orleans. She had died from breast cancer a week earlier. The very next day we moved from Columbus, Ga., to Salisbury, where my wife, Dr. Desiree Johnson, was going to establish her practice.

It was supposed to be an exciting time. It wasn't. I was depressed. Within a month of moving here, Dr. Catreia Hunter invited us to Trinity Presbyterian Church. Her husband was the pastor at the time. The first person we met in the church was Annie Bates. When we walked in, I tried to sit at the back of the church and Mrs. Bates wasn't having it. She guided us to the middle of the sanctuary and struck up a conversation.

It was what I needed — the warm feeling of friendship, even though I didn't know her. The church helped me deal with the issues I was having at the time. I became friends with her sons, Pastor Timothy Bates and George Bates III. The Bates family and members of Trinity made Salisbury feel like home. I was starting to enjoy it.

But then, during our first Christmas in Salisbury, my dad died in New Orleans.

Losing both parents within six months of each other was the toughest stretch in my life. I did a lot of self-reflecting and soul-searching during that period. I was a stay-at-home dad and needed to get myself together. In the fall of 1999, I enrolled in Livingstone College to major in music with the mindset that I was going to make a difference.

Livingstone College played a major

part in helping me find myself and purpose. I had professors to push and motivate me in ways I needed. While some kids dream of becoming a teacher as they grow up, I didn't figure out my calling until I had to complete community service required by the college. I began volunteering at a local elementary school.

Not much had changed since I was in school — students were given worksheets, the teachers sat at their desks, and students with behavior issues were allowed to sleep in class or were removed from the environment completely. I was disturbed by what I observed and began volunteering and mentoring in that classroom. The next semester, I changed my major and graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 2003.

As a teacher, my main goal is to give my students a learning experience completely different from my own and to honor my parents. As a student, I was every teacher's worst nightmare. I was constantly in trouble and failed fourth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades before being forced out of school at the age of 16.

My life experiences impact how I approach teaching. I remember sitting for hours in grade school listening to my teachers lecture and doing meaningless work. To make the environment worse, all my teachers were women. I had no teachers who looked like me or were the same gender. It was not an inviting environment. I wasn't motivated to get any work done, so I disrupted class. The disruption led to an office visit and a suspension from school.

One of the many reasons I love teaching in Rowan-Salisbury Schools is the 1:1 Apple device program. This levels the playing field in our community. Students now have access to technology their families could not afford. I believe in the power of technology to transform learning and the lives of my students. Having an iPad for every student allows more self-paced and individualized learning.

If someone would have told me 25 years ago I would be a teacher living in North Carolina, I wouldn't have believed them. And to become the Teacher of the Year is even

more amazing.

I thank God every day for guiding me to this place in my life. I didn't see His vision, but I walked by faith to get here. Salisbury is where I found myself. **S**



by

**ANTHONY
JOHNSON**

At this writing, Anthony Johnson was the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Teacher of the Year, the Southwest Regional Teacher of the Year and in the running for N.C. Teacher of the Year. He teaches fourth- and fifth-grade science and social studies at Isenberg Elementary.



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