

SEPTEMBER 2021

SALISBURY

the magazine

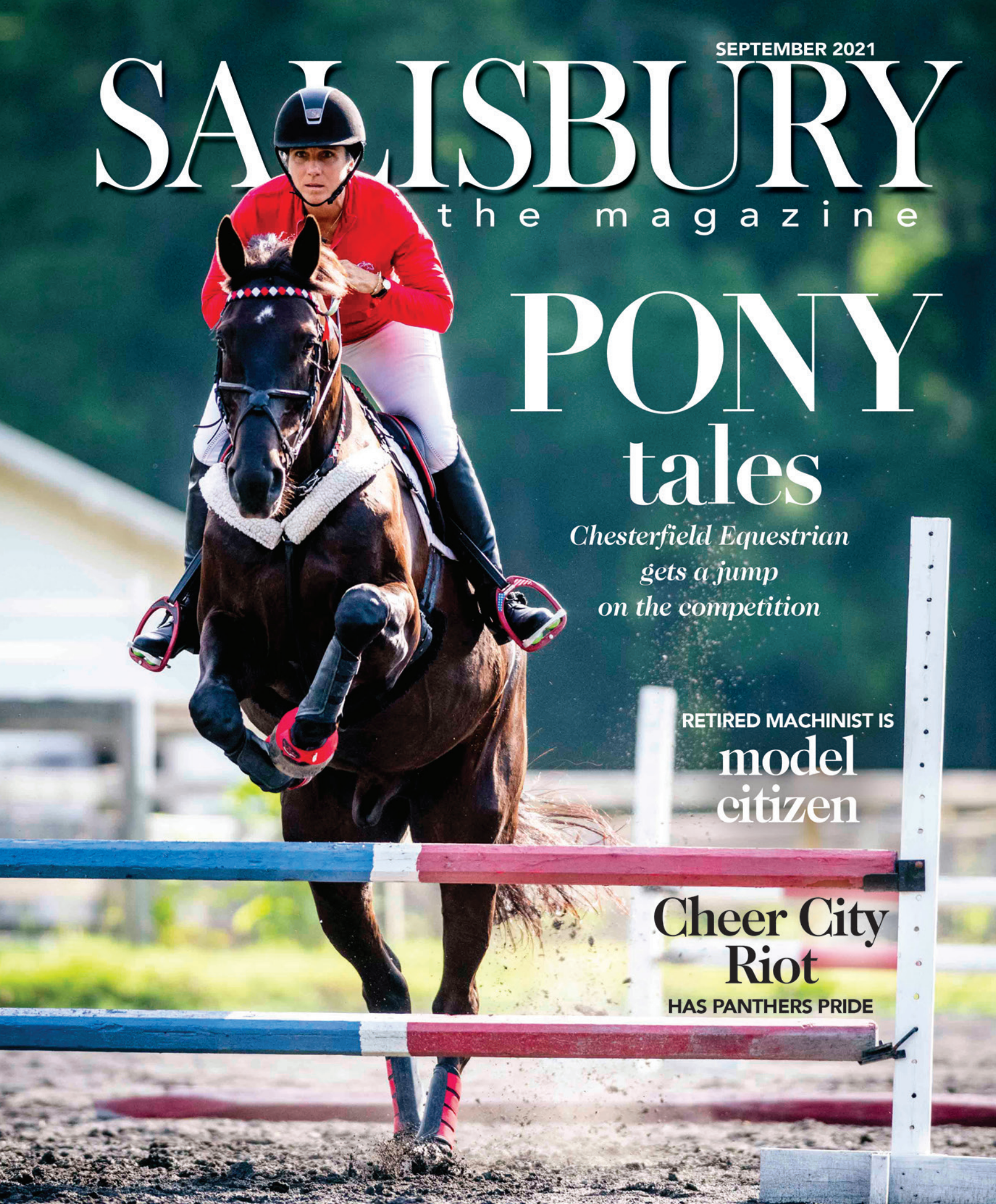
PONY tales

*Chesterfield Equestrian
gets a jump
on the competition*

RETIRED MACHINIST IS
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Riot**

HAS PANTHERS PRIDE



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THE 12TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS, GENE OVERSTREET

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FEATURES

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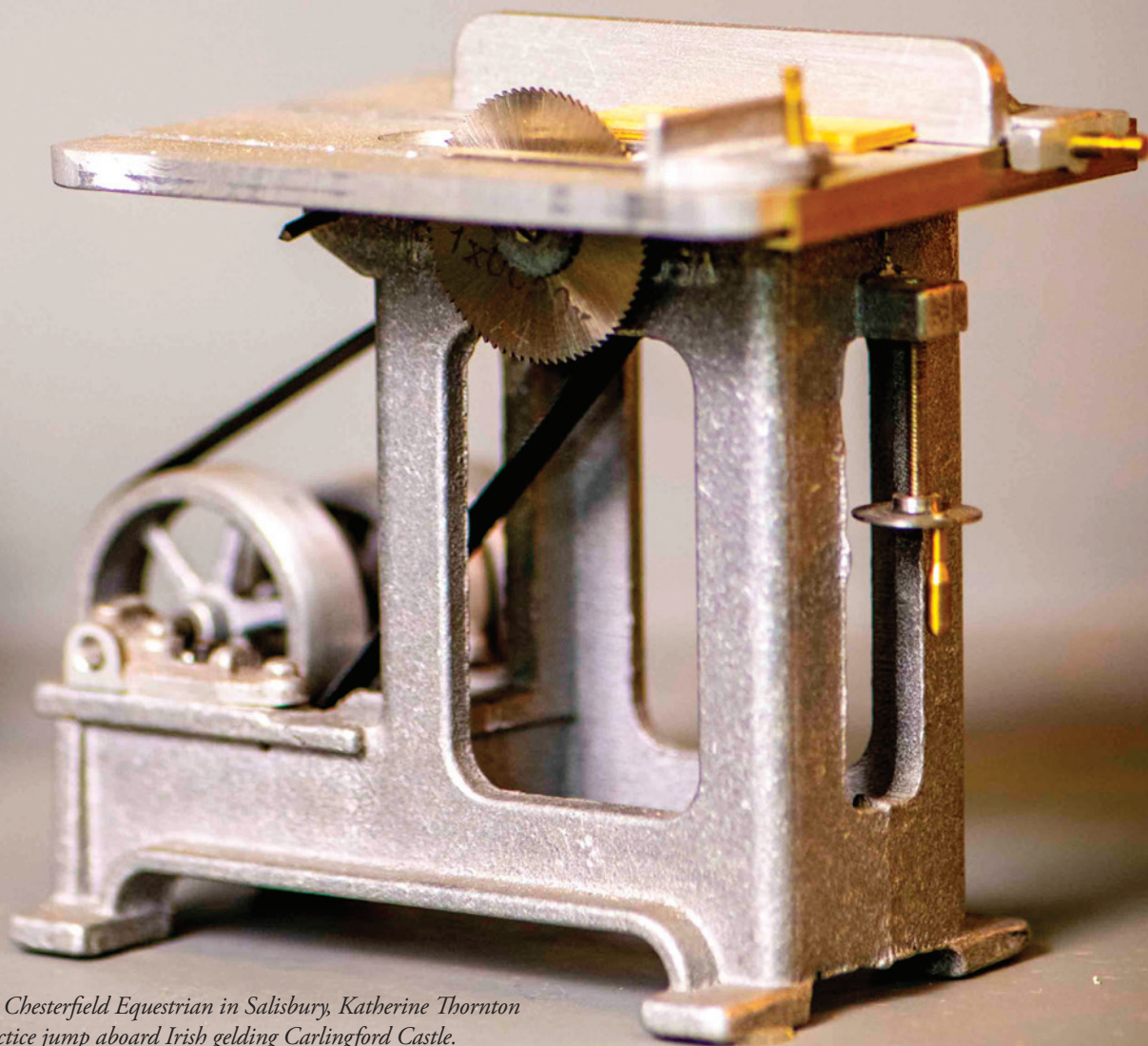
*Sam Bannister creates a wonderful
world of miniature machines*

by **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

38 HORSE SENSE

*Katherine and Bob Thornton have made
Chesterfield Equestrian their passion*

by **MARK WINEKA**



*On the cover: At Chesterfield Equestrian in Salisbury, Katherine Thornton
takes a practice jump aboard Irish gelding Carlingford Castle.*

*On this page: A model of a table saw, built by Sam Bannister.
(Jon C. Lakey photos)*

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Cheer City Riot goes bonkers for the Carolina Panthers

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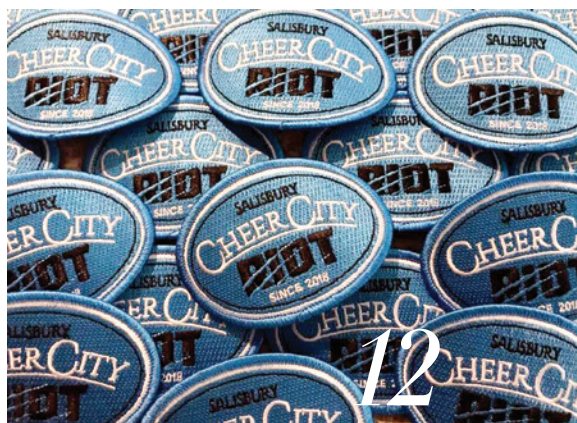
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From 1905-1938, streetcars represented Salisbury's effort at mass transit



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The sky isn't falling — it's just busy

During the pandemic, when I was staying around the house a lot more, I often headed to our back deck to grab some sun and read a few chapters of whatever book I was gnawing on. I'm not confessing that I fell asleep on occasion, but you can reach your own conclusions.

On those afternoons, I noticed — after 22 years of living at this particular house — that we must live under a southbound flight pattern for jets heading to the Charlotte airport and beyond. Flying high overhead, they sometimes disrupted my sleep, but it was their frequency that really caught me off guard.

They are relentless, heading along almost identical corridors about every five or 10 minutes. At least it seemed that regular to me. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. I'm just pretty disgusted that it took me 22 years to notice. My being oblivious to these jets simply heartens my wife. She has never understood how tone deaf I can be to the things around me.

It turns out the skies above our house are filled with other activities. While I'm out there sunning, reading and sleeping, the days are abuzz with wasps slapping the siding under an eave. Hawks keep circling, looking for rabbits attracted to the clover in our yard. Small-engine planes constantly make runs, spitting out parachutists, and menacing helicopters roar by at times on military exercises based out of the Mid-Carolina Airport.

They are all welcome. Well, maybe not the wasps, but I put up with their company, too. I like to think of this whole symphony as peaceful noise.

Maybe you will be reading this issue of *Salisbury the Magazine* in the din of a coffee shop or restaurant. You could have the television on in the background as you turn the pages. Or maybe the fields and houses are roaring by as your family car heads for the beach.

Whatever your environment, look for this issue's story on Katherine and Bob Thornton, who operate Chesterfield Equestrian. They have found their own peaceful noise amid the horses they train, ride and take care of in Salisbury.

Sam Bannister's workshop is no doubt a quiet, well-organized place. It needs to be, and contributing writer Maggie Blackwell describes how Bannister creates a world of miniature machines, the kind a machinist such as he would have worked on 100 years ago.

Are you a Panthers fan? Then you might want to roar on game day with Cheer City Riot, the group of Salisbury/Rowan Panthers fans who have made New Sarum Brewing their official place for watch



parties. The Panthers' season is just around the corner.

In the At Home section, West Square resident Sherry Beck writes a personal account of the painstaking restoration she and husband Steve did with their beautiful home on West Fisher Street.

Pete Prunkl, writing for Historic Salisbury Foundation, provides the interesting story behind Salisbury's streetcars, which ran in the city from 1905 to 1938.

Alissa Redmond's *Bookish* focuses on the new work by Wiley Cash, who will be in Salisbury for a book-signing in coming weeks. A new school year also is underway, and Dr. Tony Watlington, superintendent of Rowan-Salisbury Schools, answers some questions as this issue's Rowan Original.

Joel Honeycutt provides the *Through the Lens* image, and artist Celia Jarrett's contribution to Salisbury's the Place reminds us the Cheerwine Festival will be held in September.

So there's a lot going on in here, out there — and up in the sky. Don't sleep on it.

Mark Wineka,
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

THROUGH THE LENS by Joel Honeycutt

Joel Honeycutt, a longtime volunteer at the Price of Freedom Museum off Weaver Road in China Grove, captured this intriguing image in early June. The sharp 'V' resulted when Bobby Harrison crossed a Vietnam-era spotlight from his Jeep with a World War II spotlight owned by Mark Corriher.



Tensions, turmoil run high in Cash's thriller

Wiley Cash's latest novel, *When Ghosts Come Home* (pp. 304, expected publication Sept. 21, by William Morrow), is quite possibly the most perfect crime thriller I have ever had the pleasure to read.

Propulsive and character-driven, this book is one I could not put down, and I stayed up all night to finish it — my heart was pounding by the end. I did not want my experience with this book to be over; *When Ghosts Come Home* is such an amazing read, and I imagine I will be hard pressed to find someone to disagree with that statement after picking it up later this year in my bookstore. South Main Book Company will be lucky to host Cash in Salisbury on Oct. 13 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Winston Barnes, the aging sheriff of Oak Island, North Carolina, appears to be failing in his bid for reelection, and he is wakened one morning by the sound of a plane crash at the nearby municipal airport. He arrives first on the scene to an obvious crime. There is enough to fill a novel with tales of Barnes' detective work that follows, but the real story — the heart of this novel — lies in Cash's tender depiction of two families mired in complete turmoil.

Barnes is as nearly preoccupied with losing the sheriff's race as solving this crime, as his wife's cancer is progressing rap-



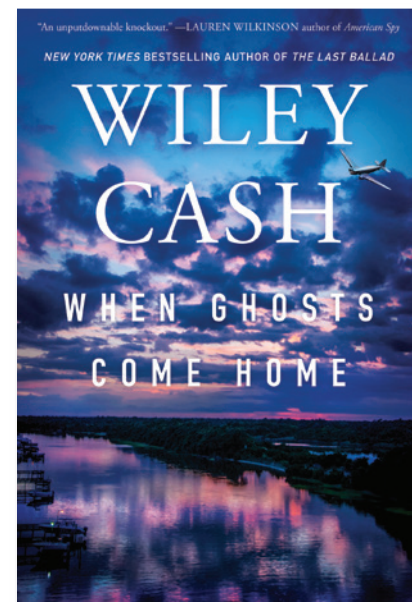
Author Wiley Cash

idly, and they will lose their healthcare coverage without his continued employment. Their daughter, Colleen, blows into town from Dallas without her new husband — or any notice to her parents — to grieve the loss of her stillborn child and re-determine the course of her life.

Across town, the family of Rodney Bellamy is also picking up the pieces of their shattered lives in the wake of tragedy. Patriarch Ed Bellamy, a war veteran and respected high school teacher, wants answers in the wake of his son's mysterious death, and he does not believe he will obtain accurate ones from the Brunswick County Sheriff's office. Rodney's wife, Janelle, is overwhelmed caring for the couple's infant son and her teenage brother, Jay, who recently arrived in town after a skirmish with law enforcement near their parents' home in Atlanta.

Everyone is a suspect, and tensions are bubbling over between families and political factions as this well-paced novel edges towards its jaw-dropping conclusion. Sheriff Barnes is an incredible character who is able to see through other characters' racism, family strife and personal secrets to try to uncover the truth; he is the kind of sheriff we all need right now.

When Ghosts Come Home is set in 1984, and I hold out hope for a present-day sequel, but until then, I will recommend Cash's latest book to anyone looking for a compelling read, and I hope this one raises his national profile substantially, as it should. **S**



▶ The title mentioned above, along with others from Wiley Cash and fine North Carolina authors, will be available at Salisbury's independent bookstore, South Main Book Company, located at 110 S. Main St. You can pre-order this novel on the store's website (<https://southmainbookcompany.com/shop/when-ghosts-come-home-by-wiley-cash/>). Call 704-630-9788 or email southmainbookcompany@gmail.com to confirm store hours and events. Alissa Redmond is the bookstore's owner.

A lot of things filled Dr. Tony Watlington's plate Jan. 11 when he became the new superintendent of Rowan-Salisbury Schools. Renewal. Strategic plans. Aging facilities. Underperforming schools. And, yes, something called a pandemic.

Heading into his first full school year, Watlington comes prepared. Over his 27 years as an educator, Watlington has been on the frontlines as a teacher, principal and district administrator in Guilford County.

When he replaced the retired Dr. Lynn Moody as RSS superintendent, Watlington had been chief of schools, the deputy to Guilford County Schools Superintendent Sharon Contreras. Before then, he also served as chief strategic planning officer, central region superintendent, executive director of the central region and executive director for school support.

As a history teacher in his early years, he was the district's Teacher of the Year. As a principal, two of his schools received awards for improving most within the district.

Moody oversaw the initial implementation of Renewal, which gives the entire district charter school-like freedoms. But now it's up to Watlington to see it through, especially after the challenges of the pandemic.

A native of New Jersey, Watlington moved to North Carolina as a kid and grew up in Harnett County. He earned a bachelor's degree from N.C. Agricultural and Technical University, a master's degree in American political history from The Ohio State University and a master's of school administration as well as a doctorate of education leadership from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Watlington also earned training certificates from Harvard and Yale.

He has three sons, Tony Jr., Aaron and Caleb.

Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with Watlington for a quick Q&A:



*Rowan-Salisbury Schools
Superintendent Dr. Tony
Watlington.
(Submitted photo)*

| Q & A |

'Super' structure

Dr. Tony Watlington wants schools to develop students beyond their test scores

WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA

You took the helm of Rowan-Salisbury Schools at one of its most challenging times in history. What positives, if any, emerged from this long period in which administrators, teachers, students and parents dealt with the pandemic?

We took advantage of the opportunity to work together as a team and to ask ourselves how to best meet the needs of all our students and families. Also, we took the time to reflect on what we should discontinue doing or what we should do differently after the pandemic is over. Some examples include thinking differently about how we use time and technology and having more clarity about what equity means and what it looks like.

Why were Rowan-Salisbury Schools' efforts at Renewal an important selling point in your taking the job as superintendent?

I was attracted to the Renewal vision because of the opportunity to re-imagine how to teach children in a way that develops the whole child beyond focusing on just one test score. We also can and will be accountable for improving academic performance and life opportunities and outcomes for all children.

How much did the pandemic derail progress on Renewal?

In addition to causing significant student learning loss, the pandemic slowed our development of a strategic plan and local accountability model, both of which we hope to complete early this fall. We are moving along with this work since our five-year Renewal evaluation from the state is scheduled to occur in 2023.

You immediately visited all the schools after being hired.

What were your major takeaways about the physical condition of our schools after those visits?

Many of our school facilities are aging and need repair or replacement, but our school staffs and maintenance and custodial staffs do an awesome job of keeping our schools clean, inviting and well kept. There is a true sense of ownership and pride in Rowan-Salisbury Schools.

As a relative newcomer to this community, what are your first impressions of Rowan County? How would you describe it, warts and all, to friends from elsewhere who might ask?

Rowan County is a beautiful place to live among friendly and welcoming people and we have access to rural, suburban and urban living, as well as great restaurants and activities. Equally

important, we are committed to working together to develop a long-range strategic plan that will increase achievement for all students while decreasing opportunity gaps among our highest and lowest achieving students.

Who has had the biggest influence in your life, and is there anyone you consider a mentor?

My parents, my maternal grandparents, and my three children have had the biggest influence on my life. Mr. Barry Williams, who was one of my first bosses when I became a principal over 20 years ago, and Dr. Edward Fort, who was the chancellor at North Carolina A&T State University when I was an undergraduate student, still serve as great mentors to me.

It sounds as though you are serious about fitness.

How often do you run, for example, and what's your personal best in the 5k?

I enjoy CrossFit exercise and running. My personal best 5k time is 25:00 and I'm looking forward to trying to beat this time in the next 5k race in Rowan County!

What are two or three of the favorite books you've read and would recommend to others?

Three of my favorite books include *The Culture Code* by Daniel Coyle, *Where Do We Go from Here?* by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and *Leadership in Turbulent Times* by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

What's the most used app on your phone?

My Twitter app!


If you had only one song you could listen to the rest of your life, what would it be?

I Will Always Love You by Whitney Houston

What's your favorite sandwich?

It's a tie between a Chick-fil-A's Grilled Chicken Deluxe with extra pickles and a good, chopped barbecue sandwich with slaw.

If you could go back in time and give some important advice to a 20-year-old Tony Watlington, what would it be?

Always be intentional about making time for what matters most because time passes quickly, and you can't get it back. 

Salisbury Post education reporter Carl Blankenship assisted with this Q&A.



Fanning out

Cheer City Riot believes Panthers football is meant to be shared

BY MARK WINEKA





Zack Luttrell surveyed the large contingent of Carolina Panthers fans playing cornhole, catching up with one another, listening to music and grabbing New Sarum beers. He couldn't help thinking how far this Roaring Riot idea of his and a friend's had come since 2008.

And this was a hot July day — the 2021 National Football League season hadn't even started yet.

"I'm proud of where we've gotten," said Luttrell, now head of a growing worldwide organization for Panthers devotees, "but we still think there are so many other Panther fans" to reach — people, who no matter where they are living, yearn to watch Panthers football with other fans in black and blue.

In Salisbury, a partnership between New Sarum Brewing and Cheer City Riot, the local chapter of Roaring Riot, provides watch

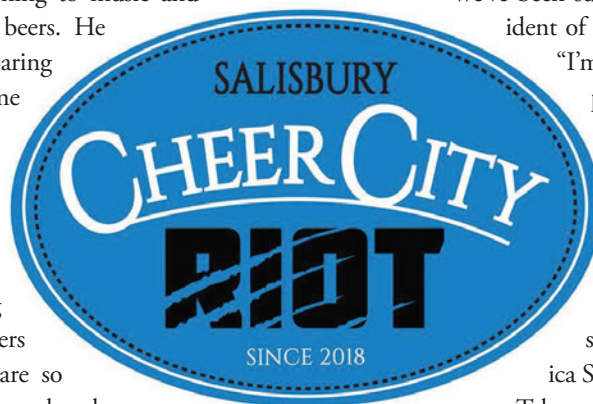
parties for Panthers fans for every game and has extra events during the year, such as cornhole tournaments.

"We've been successful," says Dillon Brewer, co-president of Cheer City Riot with his wife, Kelsey.

"I'm really proud of what we've accomplished in a short time, and I can't say enough about Andy's support."

Andy Maben, brewmaster and co-owner of New Sarum, not only provides the official Salisbury bar for Panther games, he created a special beer, Thirst and Goal, which is sold during the season at Bank of America Stadium.

Take a close look at the Thirst and Goal can, and you'll see the Cheer City Riot logo. Brewer proudly notes Cheer City is the only Riot chapter to have its own beer — a hazy milkshake IPA made with blueberries and blackberries (the Panther colors, of course).



Above: Kelsey Hedspeth Brewer and Dillon Brewer, co-presidents of Cheer City Riot, flank Zack Luttrell, co-founder of Roaring Riot at this summer's Cheer City Riot cornhole tournament, held at New Sarum. (Mark Wineka photo). **Opposite, clockwise from top:** Events such as the cornhole tournament also offered an opportunity for graduates of UNC-Charlotte to gather. Here UNC-Charlotte alumni and Roaring Riot members from the Salisbury, Lake Norman and Atlanta chapters pose for a group photo. (Mark Wineka photo); Alain Brown, whose alternate persona is Mad Cattah, keeps the Panther enthusiasm high at the cornhole tournament this summer. (Mark Wineka photo); New Sarum Salisbury Brewing Co. makes a special beer, Thirst and Goal, for the Carolina Panthers, and the can includes the Cheer City Riot logo. The beer, a hazy IPA, is made with blueberries and blackberries to reflect the Panthers' colors. (Submitted photo); Luttrell, left, posed for this photo with New Sarum brewmaster and co-owner Andy Maben. (Submitted photo)



Top: Teams, many of them wearing their Panthers gear, warm up for Cheer City Riot's cornhole tournament this summer at New Sarum Brewing. (Mark Wineka photo).
Above: A Roaring Riot banner flies in the brewhouse at New Sarum. (Submitted photo)

Roaring Riot — the 2008 brainchild of Luttrell and Joe Ryan — now takes in 42 chapters and an additional number listed on its website as affiliates. A location must have at least 25 paid members of Roaring Riot to be a full-fledged chapter.

Roaring Riot has spread its claws all over the world, including chapters in Sydney, Australia; Canada; Berlin, Germany; London, England; Monterrey, Mexico; and Moscow, Russia.

There also are Riot chapters in many U.S. cities, including Washington, D.C., Tampa Bay; Phoenix, Philadelphia, New York, New Orleans, Nashville, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles and Seattle.

In essence, this means on game days, even if you live in these other NFL cities, you can find a designated bar or restaurant for a Panthers watch party.

Cheer City Riot, which has 47 paid Roaring Riot members, is one of 11 official chapters in North Carolina. Others are Asheville (Beer City Riot), Charlotte (Queen City Riot), Durham (Bull City Riot), Forest City (Small Town Riot), Greensboro (Gate City Riot), Greenville (Catawba Valley Riot), Hickory (Catawba Valley Riot), Lake Norman (LKN Riot), Raleigh (Oak City Riot) and Winston-Salem (Camel City Riot). Boone is listed as an affiliate.



Clockwise from above: Tyler Mullis (22) walks under the oversized Roaring Riot scarves hanging outside at New Sarum Brewing. (Mark Wineka photo); A watch party for the Carolina Panthers at New Sarum. (Submitted photo); Andy Maben, left, brewmaster and co-owner of New Sarum in Salisbury, says it's fun to attend Roaring Riot watch parties in other cities. Here he poses with a friend and fellow Panthers fan from the Roaring Riot chapter in Denver (Mile High Riot). (Submitted photo); A can of Thirst and Goal at a Panthers game. (Submitted photo).



■ ■ ■
 Kelsey and Dillon Brewer, who are Rockwell residents, have known each other since kindergarten and started dating soon after graduating from East Rowan High. Dillon had been a fan of the Baltimore Ravens growing up, but love won out and he joined Kelsey in becoming a follower of her favorite team, the Panthers.

When Kelsey was living and working in Charlotte, the couple became involved with Queen City Riot, the largest Riot chapter, and they often tailgated with Riot members before home games. During those tailgates, which have become known as Tailgate with a Purpose, Dillon and Kelsey would bump into people they knew from Salisbury and Rowan County, including high school friends.

Many conversations and networking with folks such as Austin Owen and Jamie and Courtney Spangler ensued over a seven- to eight-month period, and going into the 2018 season, Dillon, Kelsey and their Carolina Panthers friends had an official Cheer City Riot chapter ready to go.

“There was not a chapter from Charlotte to Greensboro,” Dillon says, recalling one of the points he made with Luttrell.

The “Cheer City” in the local chapter’s name comes



Top: Cheer City Riot members and others gathered for this photo during a Carolina Panthers watch party at New Sarum. *Above:* Cheer City Riot members Avery Wright and David Andrews attend a watch party. (Submitted photos)



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A Tradition for Life

SPORT

from something you might expect — Salisbury’s status as the birthplace and headquarters for Cheerwine, the soft drink.

“You cheer for your team, and this is the home of Cheerwine — it just made sense,” Dillon says, adding the Cheer City Riot’s logo was “the closest I could come without ripping off Cheerwine.”

For a couple of games, the newly minted chapter met at Go Burrito! on West Fisher Street, but the cheering fans who settled in next to the TVs for three or four hours at a time were not necessarily a good fit with the restaurant’s after-church Sunday patrons.

Word quickly reached the Brewers that New Sarum’s Maben was a big Panthers fan.

The wedding of Cheer City Riot with New Sarum was kismet.

“If anyone was going to have it,” Maben says, “it was going to be me. I fought for it. I said, ‘What do we need to do to make it happen?’”

Brandy Hamilton, vice president for Cheer City Riot, remembers it this way: “Andy was the most emotionally invested.”

Maben saw it as an investment into his favorite team, providing a go-to venue for fans to root for his Panthers.

“And we sell beer, and beer is really good when you’re watching football,” Maben says.

With televisions in the bar and the brewhouse, New Sarum had plenty of space. For night

games, New Sarum also sets up a projector-type television and screen so people can watch from the tables outside. “We do whatever we can to make it work,” Maben says.

In addition, New Sarum provides a food truck for every game.



To be a Roaring Riot member, you pay \$25, of which \$5 comes back to the local chapter you designate. In return for the \$25, the Roaring Riot member receives a T-shirt and automatically can attend the Roaring Riot tailgate, whose Charlotte location this year has moved closer to the stadium to a spot at 628 W. Morehead St.

At Tailgate with a Purpose, the beer costs \$2 and the food is free, so it’s a good deal. Hamilton also notes that a marching band often leads the Roaring Riot tailgaters into the stadium.

But there are other perks if you are a Roaring Riot fan. For away games in other NFL cities, Roaring Riot often plans “takeovers” or “experiences,” such as the July 31 Training Camp Experience or this season, for example, the Miami, Big Apple, Buffalo, Dallas and New Orleans takeovers.

Aimed at making Panther fans a visible contingent in the away cities, the takeover packages include plane tickets, hotel accommodations, Panther tailgates and game seats so Roaring Riot members can sit together.

A couple of years ago, Dillon and Kelsey Brewer took a Roaring Riot trip to London, where the Panthers played a regular season game. “I’m going to Buffalo this year,” Dillon says, “and Dallas.”

Dillon says Cheer City Riot’s approach is not about growing the Roaring Riot membership. Rather, its first goal is to change the culture, as Luttrell and Ryan first envisioned, and keep strengthening the Panther fan base.

“But it’s silly not to belong,” Maben says of a Roaring Riot membership.

“Just the T-shirt alone (is worth it),” Hamilton adds.

Dillon Brewer emphasizes that everyone is welcome to attend the Salisbury watch parties — you don’t have to be a Panthers or Roaring Riot member. He noted a Cleveland Browns fan joins the Cheer City Riot crowd in watching the Panthers games at New Sarum just to be around the enthusiasm.

Panther away games usually translate to bigger watch parties at New Sarum because many of the local Panther fans like to attend the home games in person.

But the Cheer City Riot leadership team makes sure someone with the chapter is on hand at New Sarum in case anyone wants to learn more about the chapter and Roaring Riot.

The Brewers serve as co-presidents; Hamilton, vice president; Nate Upright, secretary; and



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Courtney and Jamie Spangler are members of the executive board.

“One of the most awesome experiences is to visit Riots in other cities,” Maben reports. Hamilton says because of her job, she will be splitting time this coming season between Cheer City Riot watch parties and the Oak City Riot gatherings in Raleigh.



Roaring Riot, whose numbers have grown to some 5,000 members, operates separately from the Carolina Panthers, but the organization seems to have the Panthers’ blessing, given what it does for building the fan base.

Team owner David Tepper has been known to drop in on the Riot tailgate before a game.

Beyond the watch parties, other Cheer City Riot activities have included two cornhole tournaments a year, an ugly sweater Christmas Party, a bowling night, a Draft Night Party, and the

group also has adopted a highway for litter clean-ups and fostered a Erwin Middle School Riot.

At the cornhole team tournaments, participants receive Cheer City stickers, patches and business cards with the chapter’s mission. Teams vie for tickets to a Panthers game, gift cards for more than \$250 worth of merchandise and trophies. The tournament also has a raffle for a set of Panthers cornhole boards.

Roaring Riot has stayed innovative and kept its membership engaged, Dillon Brewer says. The “takeovers” in other cities for away games have different buy-in levels. You could, for example, purchase a package that skips the plane tickets or buys the hotel accommodations only and foregoes the other offerings.

On its website, Roaring Riot provides regular news updates and insights on the team through editor-in-chief Josh Klein’s “Riot Report.” Roaring Riot donates monies, too, to the Keep Pounding Fund for cancer research and

Roaring Riot Foundation for community outreach experiences.

Luttrell is impressed with the initiatives Cheer City Riot has taken to raise money for the Roaring Riot Foundation and go beyond the watch-party experience.

Dillon and Kelsey Brewer have made many friends in other Riot chapters. During the pandemic, Riot chapter presidents held a regular “Happy Hour” on Zoom at 6 p.m. Fridays, and often they stayed on, talking with other Panthers loyalists for hours.

“We still do it every Friday,” Dillon says.

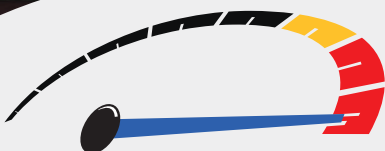
By the way, Dillon Brewer also is president and New Sarum will be the official bar for a Salisbury chapter of Mint City Collective, a Roaring Riot-type of effort being done for Charlotte FC, a new Major League Soccer team.

“Once soccer takes off,” Brewer says over a beer at New Sarum, “this place will be hoppin’ for it, too.”



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AT HOME



The Becks' house at 301 W. Fisher St. was built in 1912 for Leo Wallace Sr.



West Square wonder

Sherry and Steve Beck prove up to the task in restoring a beautiful West Fisher Street home

WRITTEN BY SHERRY BECK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS

I had been obsessed with the For Sale sign's presence at 301 W. Fisher St. for years. After finally getting him to walk around the crumbling exterior, my husband, Steve, said, "No way!" We were six years into building a house from the ground up on Lake Norman that was taking most of our energy. Still, two years passed, and I couldn't get her — the Salisbury house on West Fisher — off my mind. Finally, Steve relented: "Go look and get it out of your system."

When my very sly Realtor opened the door with the view of the parquet floor leading to the grand staircase, I walked inside and immediately texted Steve. Standing in the middle of the foyer, I exclaimed, "OMG, I love it!" He turned to a colleague and said, "We just bought a house!"

I truly believe houses have a soul — and this one spoke to me.

Although it was sometimes daunting, we rose to the challenge of saving this beauty and preserving a piece of Rowan County's history. It was built in 1912 by Lazenby Brothers for Leo Wallace Sr., and several other well-known families have lived here, including the Proctors, Brett and Peggy Summers, and Dr. Frank W. Kirk, who practiced dentistry in what is now the dining room.

There's a special uniqueness in the house that shows both the craftsmanship of the time period and the care that went into the luxury in the details. The clay tile roof, two types of exterior columns and a wide porch beckon you in. Beautifully framed decorative windows also give visitors a peek into what is in store.

Stepping inside the foyer, you experience the decorative dentil molding, built on site, 1-inch blocks at a time. The same curved staircase and quarter-sawn oak parquet floors that sold me on that first day have been restored and polished to their original gleam. Each of the four downstairs rooms, excluding the kitchen, have a Celtic knot design configuration in the perimeter of the floor. The upstairs flooring is heart pine. Call buttons with their system of multiple knobs and pulleys and a fully functioning bathroom in the basement offer clues to the many people it would have taken to run a home such as this in the early 1900s.



Steve and Sherry Beck on their front steps.

An upstairs bedroom shares an updated bathroom with another room.





The front foyer features a curved staircase and a quarter-sawn oak parquet floor.



Still in business, a Tennessee company provided the original cast iron fence and its more recent replacement parts.

The ladies' parlor is Edwardian style with ornate, decorative plaster moldings and the only original light fixture left in the home.

While sharing the home now with family and friends, it may be easy to romanticize historical restoration. Despite its beauty and historical significance, we could see from the outset the house had fallen into a dilapidated state with rotting rafters, a leaking roof and an overgrown garden. To accept the structural challenges while restoring the original historic elements for the next 100 years was our goal. What follows is the part of the story that made 301 W. Fisher an adventure—both the welcomed and the discouraging surprises that continue to this day.

TEN SURPRISES, AND COUNTING

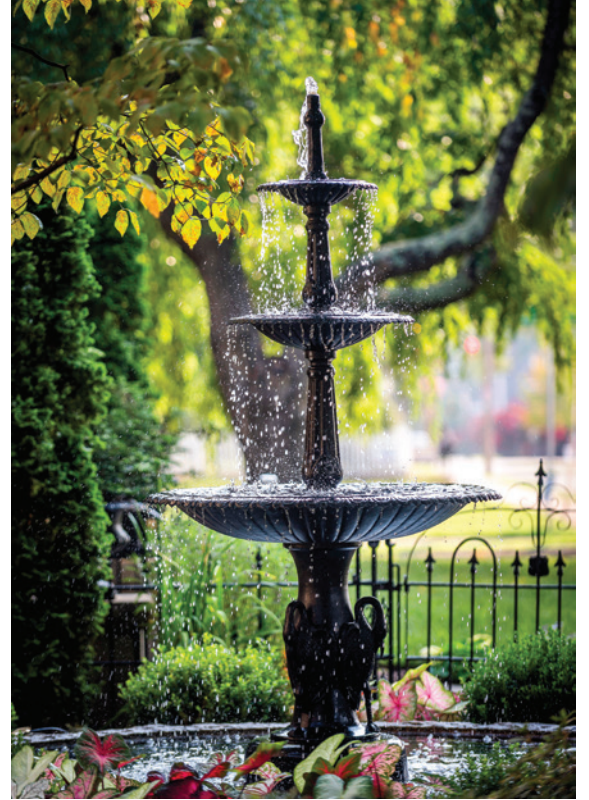
- 1.** Historic roof tiles 50% destroyed.
- 2.** Rafter tails 30% rotten.
- 3.** Four of eight Corinthian columns rotten.
- 4.** All four balconies damaged and had to be completely rebuilt down to the floor joists, and stucco.
- 5.** Water leaking from the gutter into the dining room walls, damaging plaster and stucco.
- 6.** Floor joists in the master bath had been whittled down to accommodate for their 1950s fixtures and would not support new fixtures. (The first time we took a bath it ran out into the basement.)
- 7.** Lightning damage to the plumbing stack in the guest bath.
- 8.** Crumbling chimneys and fireplaces.
- 9.** Septic system backed up into the house.
- 10.** Extensive termite damage on garage and crumbling masonry.
- 11.** Layers of paint and old wallpaper to be removed.



Clockwise from top right: The side garden features a beautiful cast iron fountain and benches for enjoying the sounds; Artwork from across the world and local to Salisbury adorn most of the walls in the home; The front door features an address window above the main entrance; The side courtyard provides another niche for outdoor entertaining; Lights from a salvaged ocean liner hang in the back sunroom.

301

WEST FISHER STREET



Clockwise from top right: A closer look at the side garden's fountain; A flower box brings color to a courtyard wall; The master bedroom walks onto a patio with views of the new Bell Tower Green; A full view of the back sunroom; The kitchen restoration moved walls and doorways and replicated original arch designs in three entrances to it.





Top: The den is located off the foyer and features a music motif. Above: The original garage was salvaged using local granite and a new roof design, which duplicated the balcony's facade. Left: The patio off the master bedroom looks toward the new park.

AT HOME



Taken in the early 20th century, this photo shows the Beck's home on the right. The house on the left no longer exists and is today's site for the Rowan Public Library.

It stands to reason that the roof is an important part of any home. No one wants to find plastic children's swimming pools sitting in the attic to catch water from the leaking roof, as we did on a walk-through before buying. Removing the roof proved to be an eye-opening experience. Only 50 percent of the original clay tiles could be salvaged. Locating the same historic tile in the quantities that we needed was impossible. The solution was another salvaged historic tile in the same color but a different pattern on the lower half. This took months to locate.

Every rafter tail on the far east-facing balcony and four of the eight porch columns were rotten. They were duplicated by a local craftsman and replaced. Other rotted wood and plaster were repaired.

The back-porch roof was completely rotten and exposed to the elements for months. A new tin ceiling, black-and-white zigzag tiles and modern accessories create a cozy spot for relaxing with all the window details.

My office is an example of capitalizing on a problem. When the roof leaked bringing down the ceiling, the newly exposed arch roof details were amazing. Placing new bead board on the ceiling made a big statement as you look up to the pointed roof.

Because the tile and ceiling work took so long to replace and repair, the temporary roof failed! One Saturday morning we showed up for work and found large chunks of plaster and rain water standing on our second floor, water running down the first-floor walls and pooling in the basement. This event turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The house was so wet inside that the wallpaper in the foyer areas came down in minutes.



*Above: The side courtyard provides a private escape to the outdoors.
Below: The attic has become a great place to hang out.*





A hall off the kitchen includes several of the home's art pieces.




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AT HOME

The electrical was now exposed and could be changed. All new electrical and HVAC were added.

After the damage was removed, a plaster restorer worked three months duplicating the same technique as the original plaster work. Stucco restorers worked just as long repairing the outside facade.

The kitchen renovation was one of our biggest challenges and changes. The back stairs had been removed years ago and two small rooms made up what is now our kitchen. Removing the wall and adding a support beam was the first step. We eliminated a coat closet in the back hall and provided access to the patio through a new arched opening. Duplicating the original arch, we copied the design on all three kitchen entry points.

The large chimney was a challenge, but we hid it behind a floor-to-ceiling, custom-made china cabinet. Our cabinet maker

said it was the largest cabinet he has ever built. Using the beveled glass from the original china cabinet doors, we created new doors for the bar designed with antique mirrors to house our decanters.

The dining room had melamine paneling left over from the days Dr. Kirk practiced dentistry here even down to the plumbing holes in the floor for the pipes. A swinging door was left in place, reminiscent of how he went from patient to workshop. A mantel salvaged from the Habitat for Humanity shop created a larger focal point with a new marble inset.

The upstairs attic is a hidden jewel. It was

previously used for storage, but painting the original bead board, refinishing the woodwork and restoring the heart pine floors created our hang-out room. This is perfect escape to watch TV and do puzzles. Looking at the new Bell Tower Green park from this angle is amazing!

My personal favorite additions are all from my husband and I consider them labors of love.

The contents and contours of a property tell you what to do with the landscaping. This is especially true in small spaces. In a front courtyard, a buried ring of granite was discovered that we used to build a fountain base. After two years of searching for a cast-iron fountain, we found one on Craig's List in Florida. Thanks to a road trip, it returned home with us to repair and incorporate.

In restoring the cast-iron fence, we found the original makers still in business in Tennessee and were able to replace the missing gate posts. This fence was original to a neighboring

“I truly believe houses have a soul — and this one spoke to me.”

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one that stood on the library property and was placed here years ago.

Our side courtyard provides another niche for outdoor entertaining. The house next door sits just 3 feet from the property line. Steve built a privacy wall and stuccoed it to match the house. When we found out the caps for the columns would be over \$4,000, he made a mold and poured them himself.

A copper water wall, stone columns and a gas fire insert create a focal point in the center. It's now a little private oasis.

Another addition is our outside basement entry. The original steps to the basement were steep and very unattractive with a metal covering jutting out into the narrow driveway. An existing window was the perfect spot to dig down, add steps, top with salvaged granite and wrought iron railing while giving us valuable driveway space.

The existing garage was built on the property

line. Per code, tearing it down would prevent us from rebuilding. One wall at a time was torn down and carefully rebuilt. Using salvaged granite from the city streets, a new roof design duplicated our balcony's facade, complete with an eyebrow roof topped with leftover tile. Two new wooden doors replace the single commercial door that was rusting away.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Decorating had to take a back seat to all the construction issues. This afforded me time to scour our area consignment shops, estate sales and unique shops. Filling the home with period pieces has been a cherished task. One recent find — an early 1900 design-inspired chair used on an ocean liner with glass, metal and velvet details — will look as if it was here since the first family.

Lights crafted from a salvaged ocean liner

hang as pendants on our porch. An alabaster stone fixture from a house in New York graces the music room. A pier mirror from a local estate was newly gold leafed and stands at the top of our stairs.

Original art is next on our agenda to source. We've begun with our travels in Africa, Italy and France, as well as flea market sales from North Carolina to Texas. We also hope to showcase local artists and are especially proud of some early work we have from Cara Reische's portfolio.

We're so thankful to be a part of a community that appreciates this house, knowing she will be here for another 100 years for both residents and visitors to enjoy. **S**

Sherry Beck is a freelance landscape, interior and floral designer and owner of The Designing Eye. The Becks' house will be on this year's OctoberTour.

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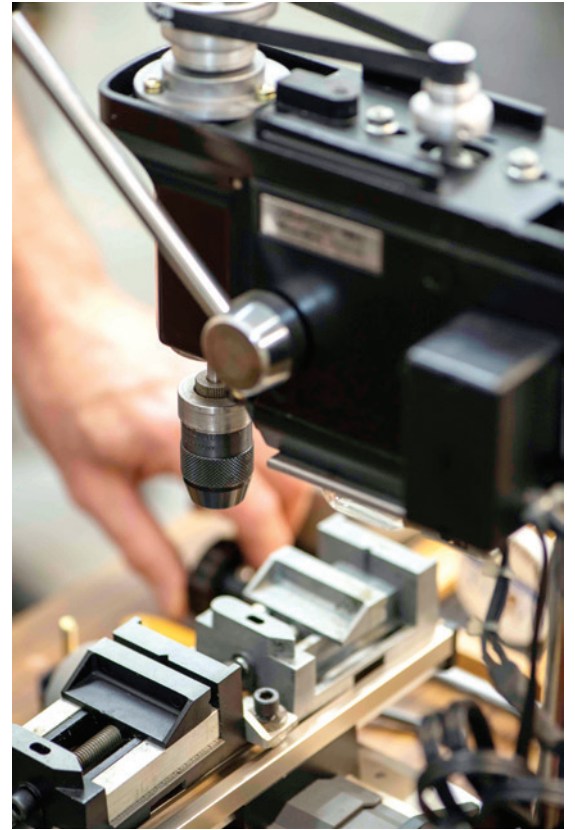
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Sam Bannister, retired from Duke Energy, says completion of a miniature model is satisfying, but he always wants to keep going.

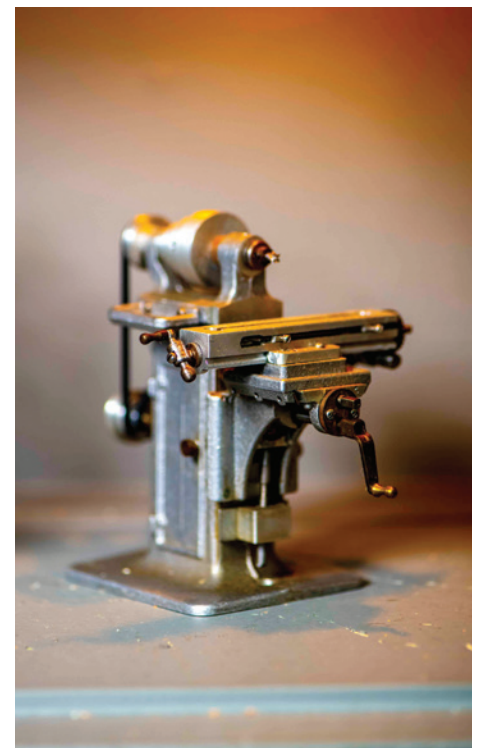


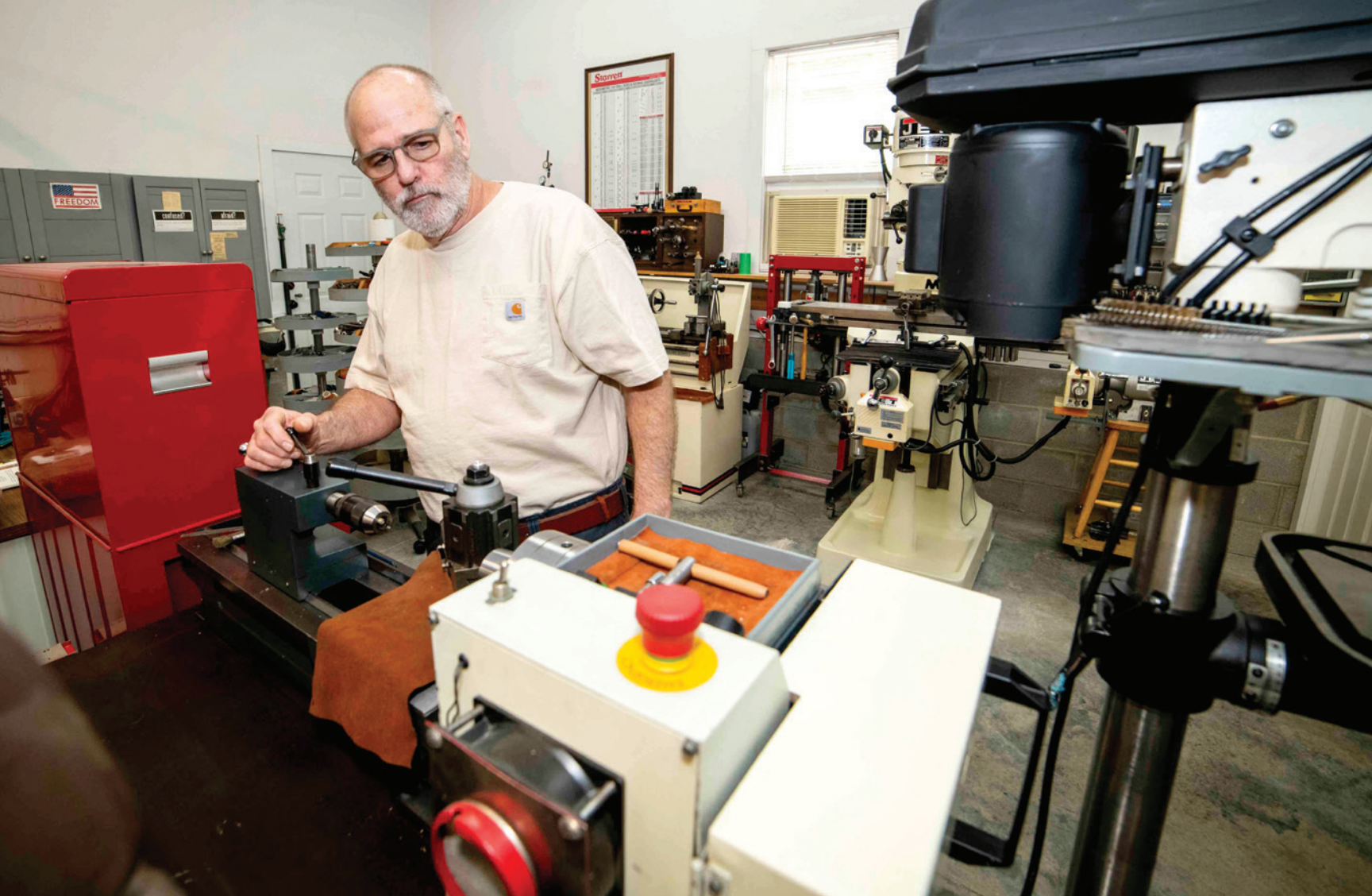
Left: To make the miniature machinery, small tools are essential. The models reflect earlier steam-powered equipment. *Center:* A working lathe is one of several models Bannister has built from kits. *Right:* Bannister modified a drill press to hold very small bits for his work.

MICRO *manager*

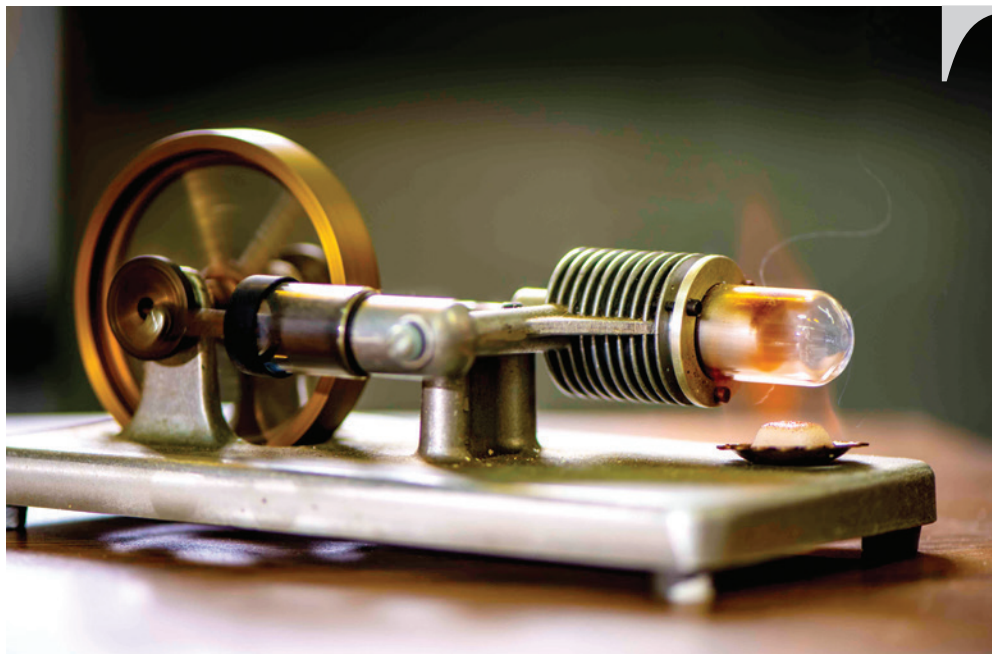
Machinist Sam Bannister immerses himself in a world of miniatures

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE BLACKWELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY





A workshop of big machines helps in making small machines.



A flame causes the simple engine to turn the flywheel.

The flame heats the tiny clear bulb and the piston responds, chugging at a smooth 150 rpm. Sam Bannister's 2-inch Stirling engine runs just as smoothly as its larger counterpart. This model, however, required Sam to make each component, even machining tiny smooth rods into screws.

"I'm a big YouTuber," he says, "and had noticed PM Research had an ad on one of their channels. I had just retired and thought I might like to try that. I'd start the day going over the plans and then get to work. When I'd get tired, I'd stop and go inside."

He had to familiarize himself with working on the miniature level, having been used to working at real scale all his life.

Bannister, 65, worked as a machinist at Duke Energy for 27 years, retiring on disability after a heart attack. His surgery-worthy workshop is equipped with a giant German lathe, shaper, grinder and drill press,



Bannister built movable, multi-level shelving to hold all manner of hardware.

as well as microscopic dental tools. Hand tools hang on a massive pegboard within their marked outlines. It's here that he builds his miniatures.

He chuckles as he talks about how steady his hands are. "I do drink coffee," he says, "and if my hands start to shake a little, I sit back, take a break, maybe drink a little more coffee."

Bannister grew up in Anderson County, South Carolina, tinkering with his dad's old Southbend lathe and helping him in his Volkswagen repair shop. Customers came and went as Sam and his dad worked on the engines. One day they got a call from a dealership in Anderson. They had noticed an attachment on the 6-volt engines and wondered about it. It was a solenoid Bannister's dad had developed to help the starters fire immediately. The dealership made a deal to buy the solenoids from him and began installing them on VWs themselves.

When Bannister took machine shop in high school, his dad told him he had "the knack" and should pursue it. He died of a heart attack when Bannister was only 15.

He thinks for a moment and quietly says, "He was my inspiration for all this."

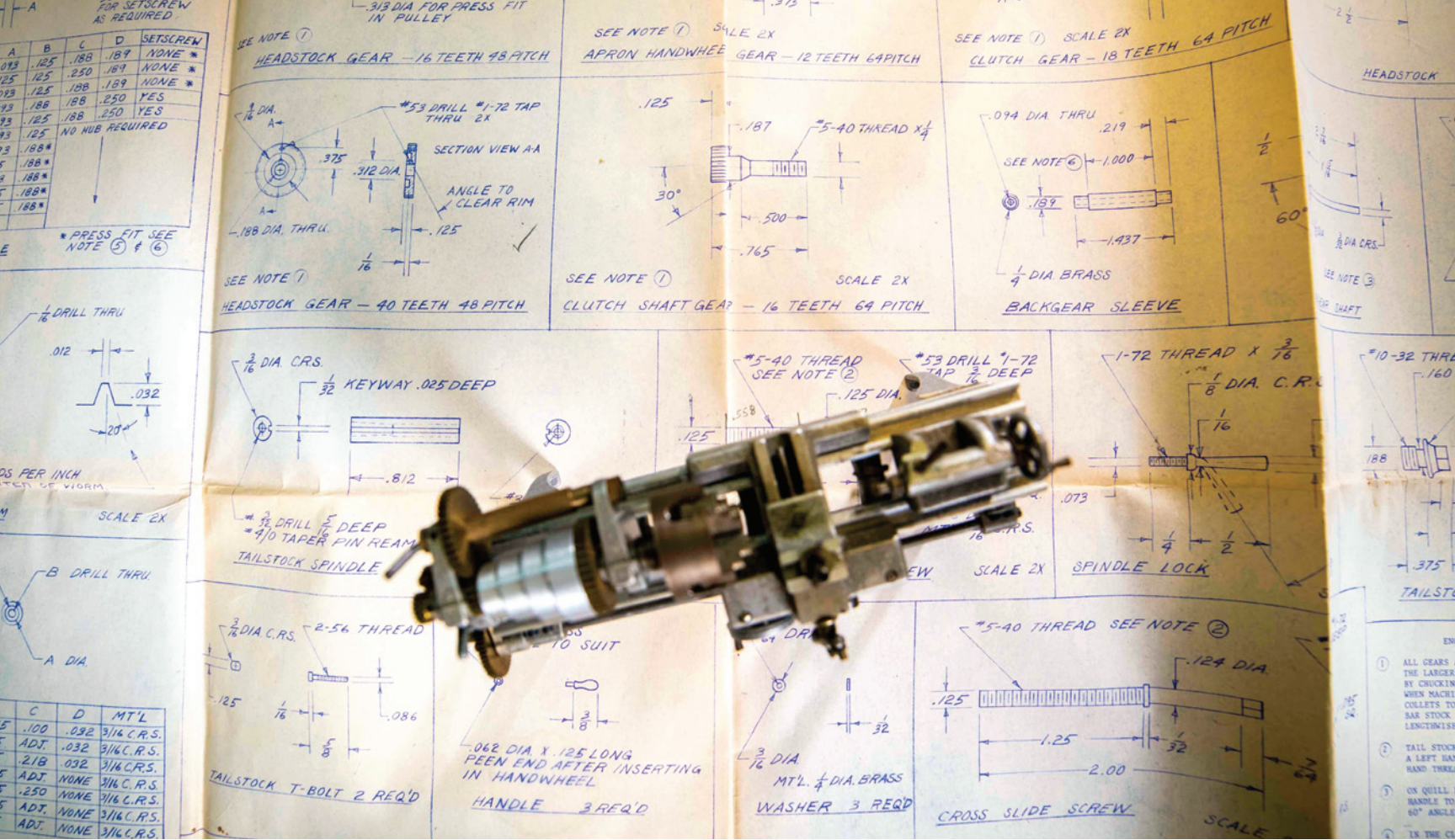
The instructions for the models are virtually wordless, instead resembling some sort of gigantic blueprint with random fractions inserted. It's all Greek to the layman but to Sam, it makes perfect sense. Yet he's convinced that someone without professional machining credentials can handle



A drill press model made from a PM Research kit.



Bannister uses a micrometer for his precise measurements.



A miniature lathe lies on top of detailed plans.

it.

“They would need to be able to work with fractions and decimals, and know how to read a micrometer,” he says. “They would need a Machinery Handbook for tables and conversions, need a general knowledge of math and algebra, and know how to figure angles and calculate tapers. Finally, they’d need to know how to read a blueprint and how to do layout work.”

The Machinery Handbook is a four-inch thick, 3,000-page tome with tables, charts, equations and chapters on mathematics, mechanics, materials, measuring, toolmaking, manufacturing, threading, gears, and machine elements. It’s been in print annually since 1914. Sam’s copy is well-thumbed. He says much of the information is available online, but he’s been using the book so long he can find what he needs quicker there.

Bannister finished his first model in three

No matter if the project is big or small, the Machinery Handbook is essential for men like Bannister.



months and enjoyed it so much he bought every kit PM Research offered. He’s completed them all: the metal lathe, wood lathe, shaper, drill press, milling machine, bench grinder, arbor press and table saw. Completion, he says, comes with two emotions: Satisfaction at having done

it and disappointment at being done with it.

Over time, he realized he needed tools that did not exist for the exacting work. He developed an addition for the collet chuck on his Prazzi lathe that will perfectly center the piece and can machine pieces as small as 1/16 inches.



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He modified his drill press to enable him to drill smaller pieces. Finally, he made a depth indicator for tail stock that enables him to get a precise digital measurement when drilling holes.

“When the meter reached the number, I’d stop,” he says. “I made it because I need everything to be precise.” Tolerances for the models are 1 to 5/1000 of an inch. The smallest pieces are about 95/1000 of an inch.

Bannister has no doubt the projects were therapeutic, saying there’s not a day he doesn’t head out to the workshop to be involved in something. He takes his time and often makes a tool to make things easier, then proceeds with projects.

He chuckles. “I’m not satisfied unless I’ve got three or four things going on at the same time. I’ll resolve one thing and it’ll click something else I’m working on. If I don’t have projects going on, I’m not a happy person.”

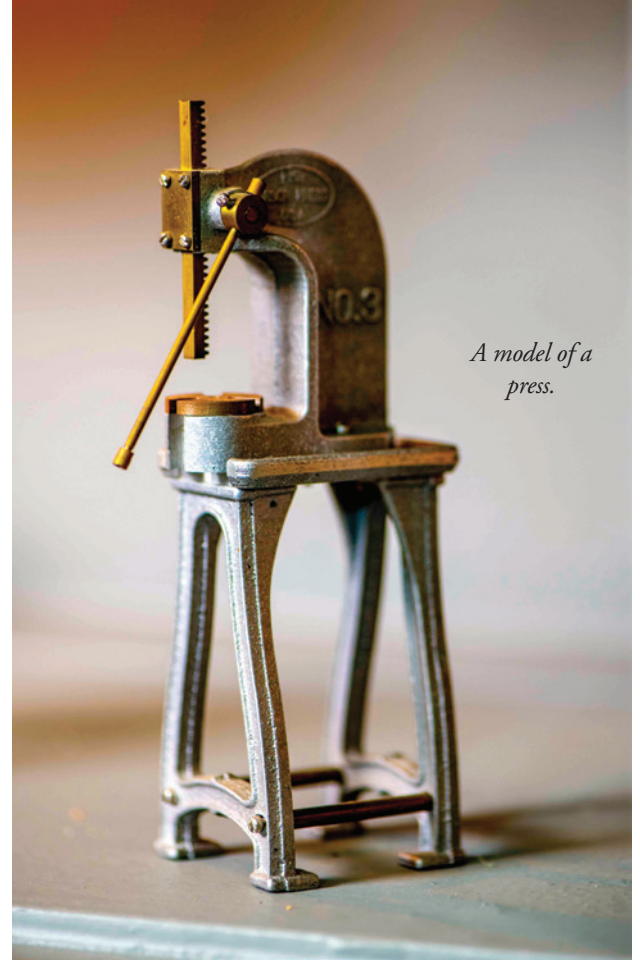
Bannister highly recommends the model kits to others. “They will make mistakes. If you make a mistake, find the material and go at it again. Nothing wrong with making a mistake. You learn from it.”

He’s passionate as he begins to talk about young people, saying a lot of kids are miserable studying stuff they don’t enjoy.

“To the young people coming up today,” Bannister says, “find something that will pique your interest, then pursue your dream — whether it be mechanical or whatever it is, involve your mind and do something you enjoy. See what you can make, see how you can enjoy yourself.”

He’s encouraging the next generation, just as his dad did before him. **S**

Maggie Blackwell is a freelance writer living in Salisbury.



A model of a press.

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HORSE *POWER*


Katherine and Bob Thornton ride to
a rhythm at Chesterfield Equestrian

WRITTEN BY MARK WINEKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



*Bob Thornton rides Irish-bred
Carlingford Beach Boy in the
practice ring at Chesterfield
Equestrian.*





Parked in front of the main barn, the horse trailer waits for its next trip to a Three-Day Event.

Bob Thornton watches intently as his wife, Katherine, guides Paddy through a short practice in the ring.

Katherine and the Irish-bred gelding are trying to measure the right approach and distance between two jumps.

“There you go,” Bob says as they make their passes. “Both of those were perfect and the same, huh?”

Horse and rider try again.

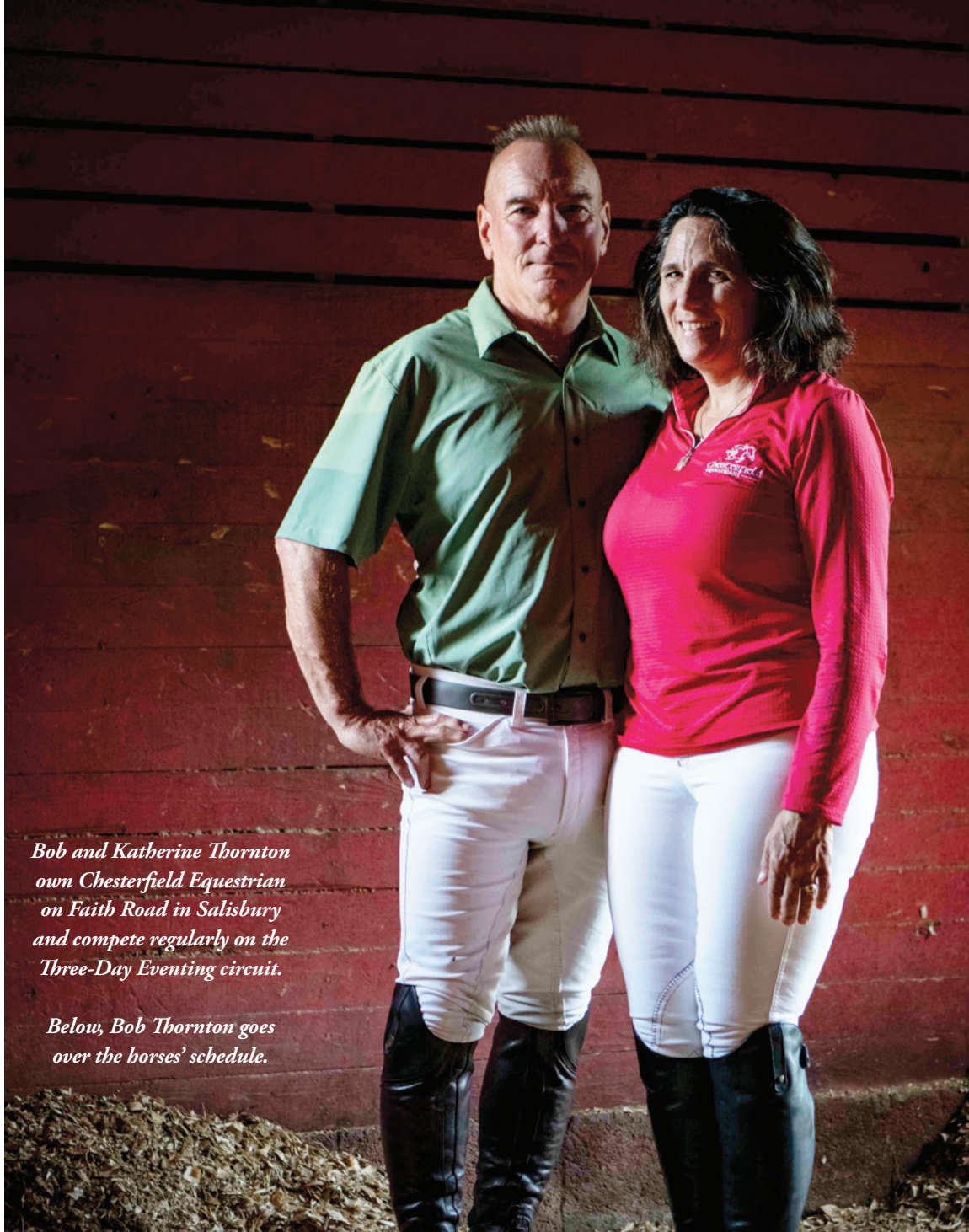
“Now push,” Bob says. “That’s the ride!”

“It was close,” Katherine answers.

“Yes, it was close, but he was well-balanced,” Bob says.

The Thorntons’ Chesterfield Equestrian, 20 acres off Faith Road and just within the Salisbury city limits, also is well-balanced, functioning with the same calm rhythms shown by Katherine and Paddy in the ring. Chesterfield Equestrian takes in the Thorntons’ house, the barns, fields and, most important, their horses — finely conditioned athletes with whom they compete in Three-Day Eventing.


The Thorntons and 19-year-old trainer Taylor Berlin, who is working out Olivia at the same time, are national-caliber equestrians themselves. Bob and Taylor ride professionally while Katherine competes as an amateur. Their competitions take them to horse trials mostly in the Southeast, from Virginia to Florida.



Bob and Katherine Thornton own Chesterfield Equestrian on Faith Road in Salisbury and compete regularly on the Three-Day Eventing circuit.

Below, Bob Thornton goes over the horses' schedule.





Katherine Thornton heads for a practice jump aboard Carlingford Castle, an Irish gelding also known as 'Paddy.'

Through their results this year, Taylor and Katherine qualified for the American Eventing Championship Aug. 31-Sept. 5 at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington.

Bob and Katherine have seven sport horses who are still competing, including three the couple imported from Paddy Hughes' Carlingford stable in Ireland. That trio have barn names of Paddy, Olivia and Thomas, though officially they are Carlingford Castle, Carlingford Champagne and Carlingford Beach Boy, respectively.

The couple also own two Irish thoroughbreds, CJ (a mare) and Sebastian (a gelding), who were former racehorses in the States. Their more formal names are Chesterfield Catalina and Chesterfield Dauntless.

In addition, the Thorntons have bred two of their sport horses in Salisbury — geldings whose barn names are "Chester" and "Huck," respectively.

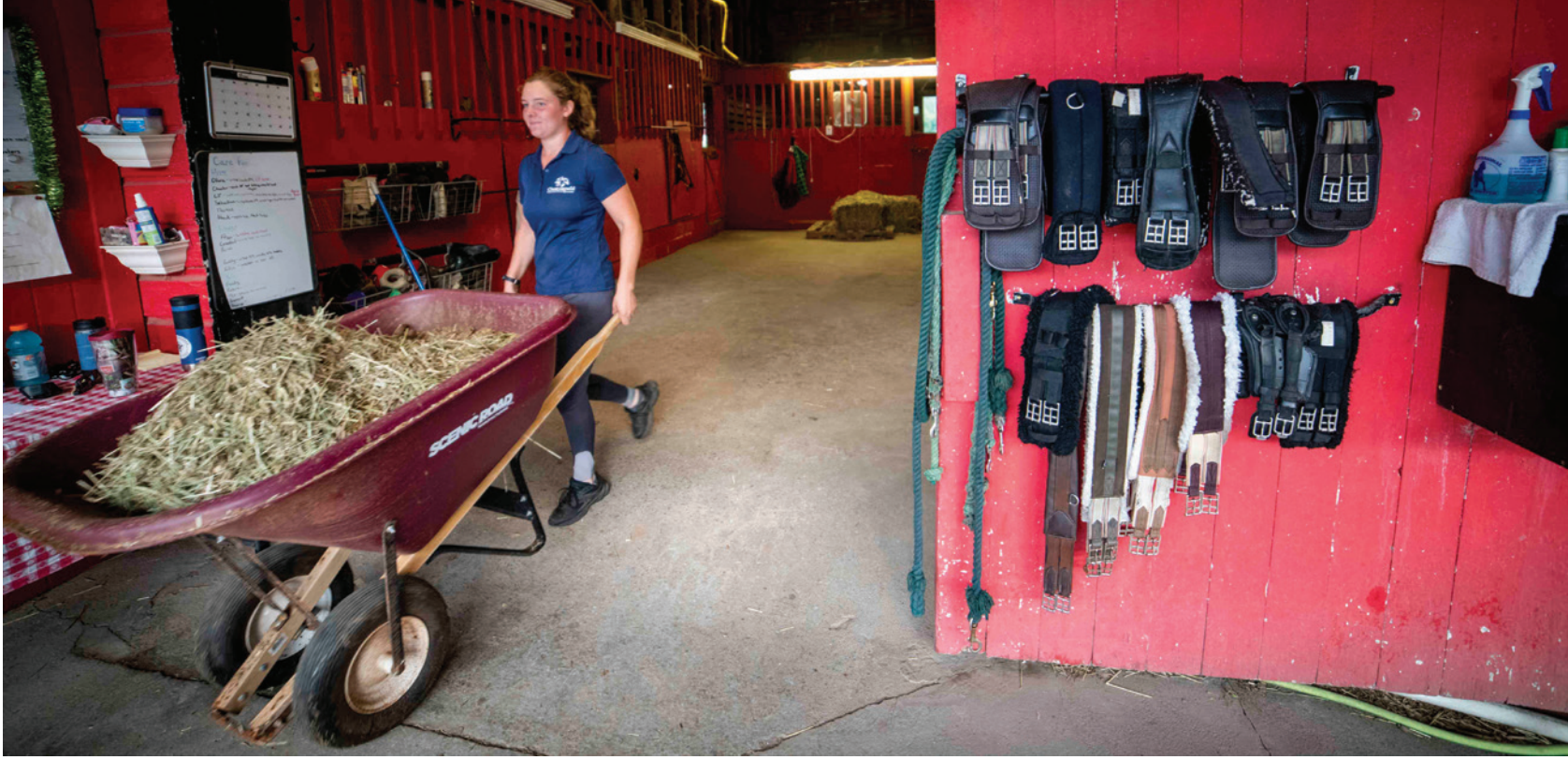
"That's probably going to be the best horse we've had," Bob says of Huck, a bay gelding who has not quite reached his prime competitive age. "That's the indications."

You might be wondering where the Thorntons' "Chesterfield Equestrian" name comes from.

"When Bob and I met, we had a retired horse whose barn name was 'Chester,' and he competed internationally at the top of the sport," Katherine says. "He lived out his days here and we named the farm in his honor.

"When we had the opportunity to breed, we went back and found bloodlines from Chester's relations."

Chester's competition name was Refuted Alimony. So it follows that his nephews, bred here by the Thorntons, are named Chesterfield Irrefutable and Chesterfield Unimpeachable (again, their barn names are Chester and Huck).



***Clockwise from top:** Taylor Berlin, a trainer and rider at Chesterfield Equestrian, also handles her share of barn duties; Bob Thornton prior to a morning ride; Katherine Thornton receives a morning smooch from Paddy; A quiet moment on the farm.*



Katy Todd has a word with Huck during her morning chores at the barns.



Well-worn brushes for grooming.



Bob Thornton, right, sizes up Thomas, a gelding that Chesterfield Equestrian imported from Ireland.



Each horse has its own bucket.



Above: Competing this past March, Katherine Thornton guides Carlingford Castle over a jump at the FENCE Horse Trials in Landrum. (Photo by Liz Crawley Photography)

Left: Brittany Leonard snuggles with Thomas.



Left: Katherine Thornton works in the ring with Carlingford Castle. Right: Taylor Berlin outside the main barn.



Also called horse trials, Three-Day Eventing has been described as an equestrian triathlon. It demands skills from the horses and riders on the flat and over fences. The three phases, usually conducted on three separate days, are dressage, cross-country and show jumping.

“Dressage,” the French word for “training,” puts the horse through a series of movements at the trot, walk and canter. Judges also score riders and horses on “general impression.”

The second day of cross country is maybe the toughest, testing the horse on speed, endurance and jumping ability over lengths of courses that can vary widely. Some championship courses are 22 miles, for example.

In the final day of show jumping, which takes place in an arena, horses hurdle 10 to 12 obstacles over a distance of 820 to 984 yards, while going an average speed of 15 mph.

Three-Day Eventing has been an individual and team Olympic sport since 1912, and Berlin, the Thorntons’ young trainer

from western Pennsylvania, has aspirations of someday being a five-star rider representing the United States at the world championships and in the Olympics.

“What it takes is what she’s doing,” Bob says.

“It’s hard and rewarding,” Berlin says of the equestrian life. “Sometimes you put in 18 days of work for 5 minutes of reward.”

For now, Berlin rides mostly in the Training and Novice divisions, while learning the ropes working, training and taking care of horses at Chesterfield Equestrian. She also gives lessons during the week and, aided by the Thorntons, is trying to pick up entrepreneurial skills for establishing a training business with fellow equestrian Brittany Leonard, 25.

Berlin and Leonard live in a basement apartment at the Thornton house and are only a short walk from the main barn and all the horse duties spelled out on chalkboards and dry-erase boards. Helping them is working student Katy Todd, another vital cog in the operation.



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***Above:** From left, the Chesterfield Equestrian crew includes Katherine Thornton, Katy Todd, Taylor Berlin, Brittany Leonard and Bob Thornton. The horse is Carlingford Beach Boy, also known as Thomas. **Below:** Digging in on the training ring.*

“We’re really a training center for horses and people,” Katherine Thornton says. “... It takes a lot of people to take care of horses, and what we do is so much more than ride horses.”

During the day, Katherine tethers herself to the house, working her full-time job with TIAA. Bob pitches in at the barns, works horses and takes care of many of the day-to-day concerns. Katherine handles the logistics and paperwork for competing in the various horse trials.

“It doesn’t sound like a lot, but it’s a lot,” she says.



Bob Thornton, 59, hardly took the normal route into this equestrian life. At a birthday party when he was 8, he fell off a horse and never mounted another one until after he met Katherine about 15 years ago.

Growing up in West Virginia, Bob gravitated instead to professional careers in motocross (a pro at 16), cycling (competing in the United States and Europe) and race car driving, until he eventually ended up building car engines out of Salisbury, where he met Katherine.



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Taylor Berlin takes on a jump with Irish-bred Carlingford Champagne, known around the Chesterfield Equestrian barn as 'Olivia,' during a horse trial in Landrum earlier this year. (Photo by Liz Crawley Photography)



*Above: Taylor Berlin wraps the legs of Paddy, an Irish-bred gelding.
Left: Ribbons from past horse trials adorn a wall of the tack room.*



Chesterfield Catalina, an Irish thoroughbred mare whose nickname is 'CJ,' takes a peek from the main barn.

He says being around Katherine — and horses — transformed him, for the better.

“Horses have changed my life entirely,” Bob says. “They’re unbelievable animals in what they choose to do for us.”

Katherine says horses have the same effect on her. While at work, she’s going at corporate speed and when she reaches the barn at the end of the day, the horses can sense her energy level remains pretty high.

“The horses allow me to unpack,” she says.

Likewise, the Thorntons know they have to be tuned into the health and idiosyncrasies of their horses. “You have to learn to read them,” Bob says. “You have to learn that in their training, too.”

Their seven competing horses (an eighth sport

horse is retired) “are incredibly elite” athletes and custom bred for the sport, Katherine says, adding “this type of horse is a very high-IQ horse.”

“And very expensive,” Bob says.

When this story was in the works, the Thorntons and Berlin were planning on taking six of the horses to the next event in Aiken, South Carolina. (Berlin would be riding four of them.) Overall, Chesterfield Equestrian has 15 horses on the property because it also boards and trains for other owners.

Berlin boards her horse, Mio, here and uses him for lessons. “They have a special partnership and wonderful bond,” Bob says.



Katherine Thornton, 54, describes herself as a

city kid who happened to be crazy about horses. She started riding at 5 and competed in her first horse show at 6, winning a third-place ribbon. She took lessons on Saturday mornings out of a stable at Rock Creek Park in Maryland, and after school, she rode and exercised as many of those horses as she could.

As a teenager, Katherine competed often. After college, she “went right back to horses for 10 more years,” she says, and worked a time for an Olympic show jumper. Life brought her to Rowan County in the mid 1990s, when the Faith Road property was available.

She earned a master’s degree in business from Wake Forest University in 2000 and has worked previously for Wake Forest and Wachovia Bank. She also has taught at Catawba College and

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Katherine says Three-day Eventing is “a complex sport that suits older folks,” and she thinks Bob was mentally prepared to be a horseman because of his other athletic pursuits in years past.

“Bob started from scratch,” Katherine says. She taught him to ride, but also called on Olympic-level horsemen she knew who gave him lessons. “He’s had incredible instruction and is an incredibly good teacher,” Katherine says.

Bob says their sport requires talent, a work ethic, the availability of good horses, “and it certainly helps to have a large amount of money.” Horses and an operation such as Chesterfield Equestrian truly take a village, the couple say, when you consider the veterinarians, farriers,

“*Sometimes you put in 18 days of work for 5 minutes of reward.*”

trainers, riders and the all-hands-on-deck requirement in feeding and taking care of the horses.

“Riding’s maybe half of it,” Bob says.

When he competes, Bob likes to dress in green, brown and white; Katherine, in black, red and white. Bob laughs when recognizing every sport he has pursued through the years has required a helmet.

Days are in full swing at Chesterfield Equestrian by 6:30 a.m. The chores are what you would

expect — feeding, cleaning out stalls, grooming, wrapping legs and tending to any bumps, bruises or cuts on the horses.

There might be saddles to clean and condition or a horse trailer to ready for the next event.

The tack room’s wall holds photos and ribbons from past competitions. A handy table has all the stuff for making coffee. A chalkboard spells out the day’s and week’s schedule for each horse.

Again, there’s a quiet, well-balanced rhythm to the morning activity, and it’s not lost on Bob Thornton as he takes in the whole scene and thinks about what these horses have given back to him over recent years.

There’s a sign in the main barn that seems to cover both the horses and riders:

“Keep calm and carry on.” **S**

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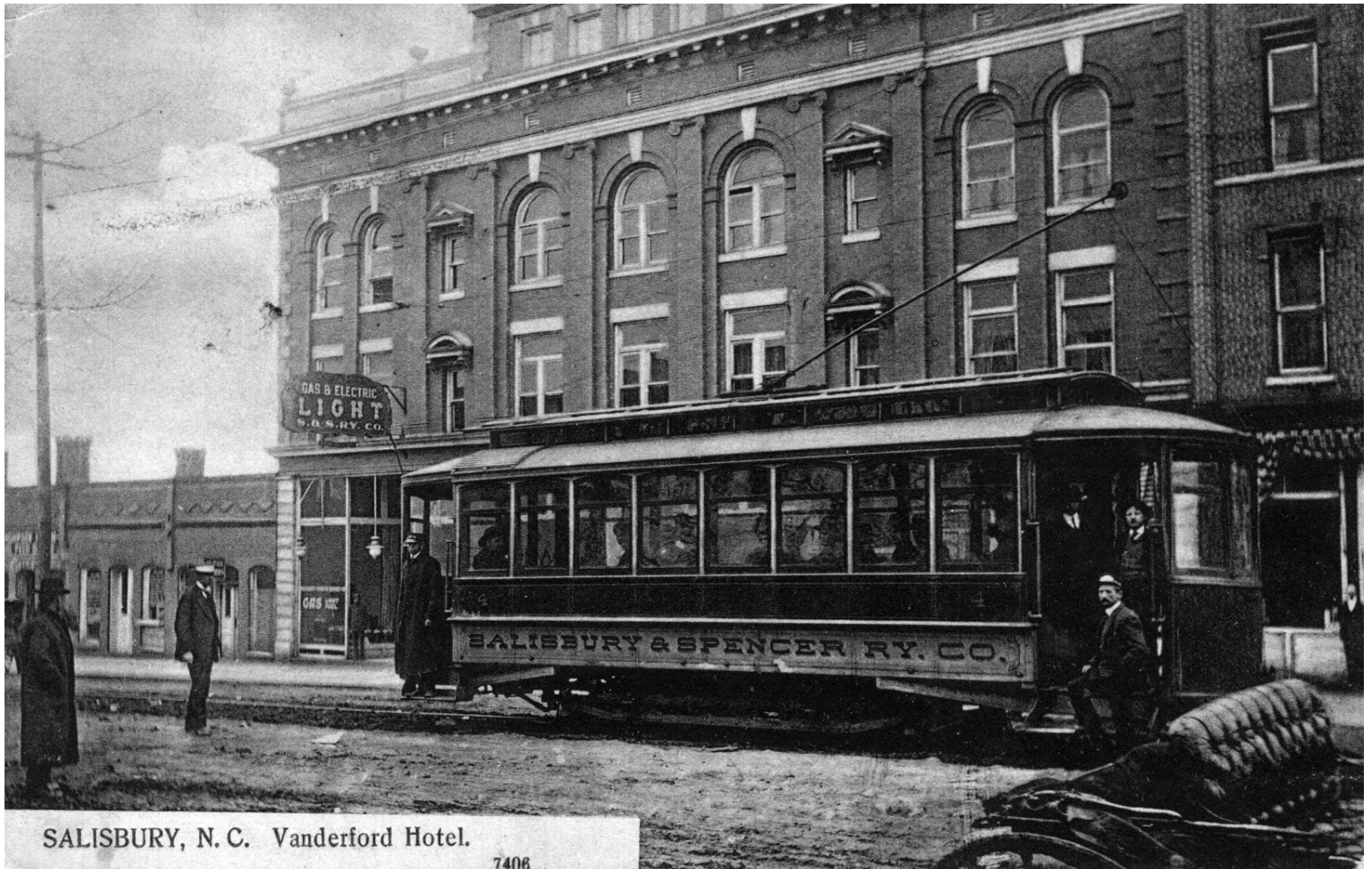
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The Vanderford Hotel at 201 N. Main St. also served as headquarters for the Gas and Electric Light Co., which operated Salisbury's trolley system. In addition, the Vanderford served as the starting point for the trolley line to the fairgrounds, where the Hefner VA Medical Center is located today.

A streetcar named Salisbury-Rowan

*For 33 years, trolleys represented the city's
key ingredient in mass transit*

WRITTEN BY PETE PRUNKL



This is a view from the Chestnut Hill area looking north on South Main Street as a streetcar makes its way down the track.

Editor's note: *This story continues a series of contributions from Historic Salisbury Foundation.*

For the past 83 years, buses have been Salisbury's sole form of mass transit. These practical vehicles get commuters and shoppers from here to there quickly and efficiently. Despite their popularity, buses are mere conveyances. They lack the sentimentality of the streetcar, the mode of transportation they replaced. Salisbury's streetcars, like the steam engines at Spencer Shops, are the stuff of romance and history. Like Mr. Rogers, we love these quaint and charming electric vehicles that still wobble down the avenues of some of our largest cities.

Remnants of the Salisbury-Spencer streetcars, also known as trolleys, street railways or trams, are scarce. They exist mainly in memories, photos, postcards, newspaper articles



and in a few isolated spots where the old tracks are visible. Some local families may have placards, light bulbs, headlight glass and parts of the control box that were taken as souvenirs the day the last trolley rode the rails. The streetcars themselves are gone. They were sold off or given away when the system closed on Sept. 6, 1938.

There is, however, one exceptionally large and often overlooked reminder: the Salis-

bury-Spencer Railway Car Barn at 1325 N. Main St. Over the decades, the old barn's appearance has changed so dramatically that only its address gives it away. Salisbury native Darian Wagoner knows the old barn's history inside and out. He owns MOTTS Powersports, which occupies the massive structure. He can point out the now filled-in arched brick windows and the original posts separating the trolley bays. "Few people know this

YESTERDAY



Workers at Spencer Shops could pick up the Salisbury-Spencer trolley in front of Spencer's Stoudemire Furniture store, which was in business from 1883 to 2015. (Photo by Pete Prunkl)

was the old car barn," he said.

The brick barn sheltered the system's eight trolleys, each 28 feet long, as well as the 300-horsepower electricity generator that energized the entire system. The car barn was completed in early 1905 a few months before the system's Aug. 4, 1905, inauguration.

Every now and then, Salisbury motorists might see parts of the old trolley tracks poking through the pavement, as is the case here on North Caldwell Street near West Innes Street. (Photo by Pete Prunkl)

When the basic track system was completed by 1906, the trolley route covered 4.3 miles from the corner of what is now Mitchell Avenue and Jordan Street in Fulton Heights to Stoudemire's Furniture Store in Spencer. To make the trip from Mitchell Avenue to Spencer, the trolley turned north on Fulton Street, east on Henderson Street and north on Main Street. From there it was a straight shot to Spencer Shops, where many of its passengers worked. With multiple stops for passengers and pedestrian crossings and a maximum speed of 40 miles per hour, a one-way trip was a 15–20-minute commute. If a northbound car met one going south, they could bypass each other on switch tracks in front of the Empire Hotel on South Main Street

and the Vanderford Hotel on North Main.

The idea for a streetcar linking Salisbury and Spencer was hatched in 1901 when the Salisbury-Spencer Railway Company was given a charter to operate an electric streetcar by the cities of Salisbury and





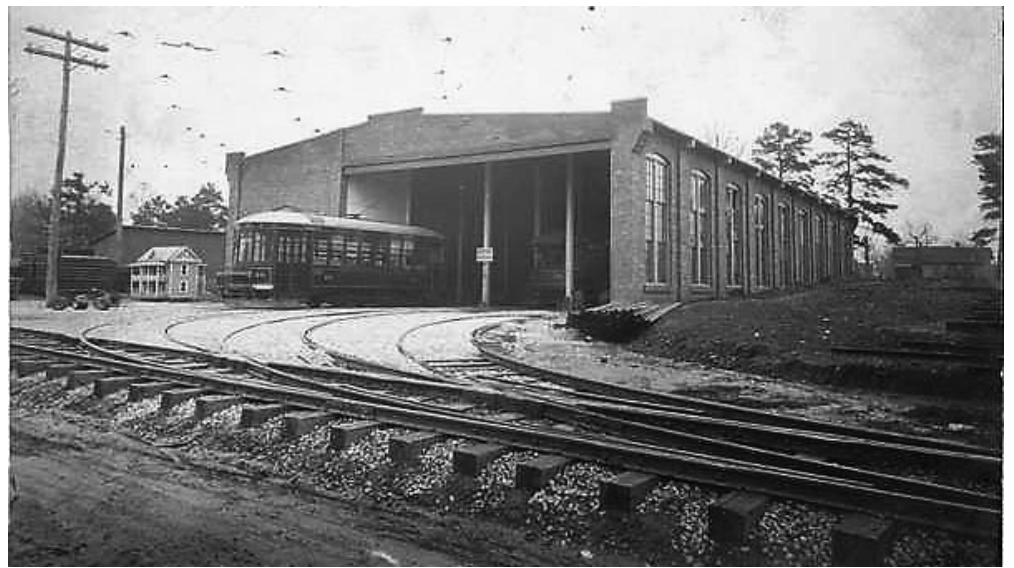
For many years after it closed, the 1905 trolley barn on North Main Street was a Duke Power retail store. Today, MOTT'S Powersports occupies the building and various exterior renovations hide its original use.

Spencer. Financing, construction and other delays pushed the start date into 1905.

Salisbury and Spencer were not the first in North Carolina to build an electric trolley system, nor the last to dismantle it. Asheville was the streetcar pioneer in February 1889. Wilmington paved over its streetcar tracks in April 1939, ending the era of North Carolina's street railways.

Today, we are accustomed to public transit owned and operated by city government. In 1905, even though the trolley tracks were to be embedded in public streets, the trolley was not city-owned. Every streetcar system in North Carolina was owned and operated by a privately owned power company. As a public utility, power companies and their streetcars were regulated by the State Utilities Commission in Raleigh. Its oversight included setting trolley fares, ensuring safe equipment and investigating accidents.

The key initial investors in the Salisbury and Spencer Railway Company were Napoleon Bonaparte McCanless (1851-1920), the



This is the trolley barn on North Main Street as it looked between 1905 and 1908. Note the tall windows with the rounded tops. The outline of these windows, now bricked in and concealed, can be seen from inside MOTT'S Powersports.

great builder whose granite house was recently declared a local landmark, and Thomas H. Vanderford (1850-1931), a visionary business leader. Company headquarters was in the Vanderford Hotel at 201 N. Main St. Unlike the car

barn, the Vanderford Hotel was not modified and saved. The badly deteriorated building was demolished in 1980 and replaced with a parking lot.

Sometime before 1911, McCanless, Vanderford and their partners expanded the system with a new 1.6-mile route to the Yadkin Valley Fair Association Fair Grounds. Ed Clement, Vanderford's grandson, said his grandfather owned the fairgrounds property and envisioned it as another Fulton Heights. Residents of the new subdivision would need a way to get down-



town for shopping and work.

The new route began at the Vanderford Hotel and traveled west on Council Street until it reached North Caldwell Street, where it turned south toward West Innes Street. The circuitous route was necessary to avoid the Confederate memorial on West Innes Street. From West Innes Street, the car turned south on Link Street to the entrance to the fairgrounds. Even with a streetcar at its front door, the planned fairgrounds community never made it off the drawing board. Today, that front door is the main gate of the W. G. Hefner Veterans Administration Medical Center.

A few remnants of the trolley route to the fairgrounds are still visible. The turn from West Council to North Caldwell can be seen in the pavement that covered the tracks after 1938. Several 2-foot portions of track are vis-

Today's planted median on Mitchell Avenue covers the trolley line that used to serve the Fulton Heights neighborhood. This view looks east from Jordan Street.

ible on North Caldwell Street, within sight of West Innes. Closer to the VA Medical Center, the tracks are buried under the now-landscaped median on South Link Street. The median on Mitchell Avenue also contains long-buried streetcar tracks.

Curious Salisburians can find the trolley tracks, but no turntable like the one at Spencer Shops. Our streetcars, like modern subways, did not need a place to turn around for a return trip. They were double-ended with a control box at each end of the car. To reverse directions, the motorman removed the control lever and transferred from one box and installed them in the

other. While he was setting up the controls, the conductor was busy flipping the seats to face the other direction.

Our venerable trolley system changed hands several times in its lifetime. The first owner was the Salisbury-Spencer Railway Company. Then in 1911, the North Carolina Public Service Company took over, followed in 1920 by the Southern Public Utilities Company. The last two owners were The General Gas and Electric Company (1924-1935) and Duke Power (1935-1938).

By 1938, the number of automobiles on America's roads increased 325 percent from 1905. Cars were everywhere, and it was the law that when a streetcar stopped, motorists treated it like a school bus. They stopped, too, even if the light was green. Motorists in a hurry hated the streetcars.

There was an increasingly popular alternative to the clunky trolley. Buses could hold as many people as a streetcar and could travel to Rowan Memorial Hospital, Catawba College and East Spencer, places bereft of trolley tracks.

The day after our streetcar system closed, City of Salisbury-owned buses took over the old routes using the existing car barn as their home base. Soon, the city needed a bigger barn for the larger number of buses and routes, and one was built next door. It has since been demolished.

Several vintage trolleys are still around. There are at least a dozen trolley museums in the United States that offer rides on tracks embedded in public avenues or on museum property. Streetcar fans travel to New Orleans, where trolleys have been running on city streets since 1835, first with horsepower, then with electricity. For a time, Charlotte installed reproduction old-timey electric streetcars on the Lynx Gold Line in Uptown. Shut down during the pandemic and delayed multiple times by construction problems, the Gold Line is expected to reopen by late summer, but with modern sleek 21st century streetcars.

Salisburians can get a simulated streetcar experience on the F&M Trolley. Groups can rent the wheeled, gaso-



Above: In this postcard photo from the old Buerbaum's Bookstore, Salisbury's modern, electric streetcars of the early 20th century mingle at the Square with horse-drawn wagons and buggies. **Below:** The trolley tracks hidden beneath Mitchell Avenue were revealed recently when a resident was planting bulbs in the median. (Photo by Pete Prunkl)



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YESTERDAY

line-powered trolley lookalikes. The reproduction cars are housed at 118 East Council St. in the 1902 McCannless Motor Company garage, renamed the F&M Trolley Barn.

Will electric streetcars ever return to Salisbury? Yes, said Ed Clement, who with his father, rode the last trolley on Sept. 6, 1938.

A tracked trolley with vintage or replica cars along Main Street “makes more sense today than it did in the past,” said Clement. “Salisbury is widely recognized as an historic city. A trolley would set us apart and make us unique. It won’t happen anytime soon, but someday well into the future, it will happen.” 

Pete Prunkl is a freelance writer who reports on antique auctions for Maine Antique Digest and is the author of Beyond the Hedges, a recent book on the growth and development of Historic Salisbury Foundation.



Car 58 waits for a moment at the end of the line on Mitchell Avenue.





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September 2021

Upcoming events in the Salisbury-Rowan area

3-4 **Noises Off**
Aug. 20-Sept. 4, Fridays and Saturdays only: Lee Street Theatre, 329 N. Lee

St. — 7:30 p.m. Called the funniest farce ever written, "Noises Off" presents a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop called "Nothing's On." Doors slamming, on- and off-stage intrigue, and an errant herring all figure into the plot of this hilarious play. Go to leestreet.org or call 704-310-5507 for tickets and information.

4 **Joe Hall Memorial Community Breakfast**
Sept. 4; Lions' clubhouse, 106 Cemetery St., Cleveland — 6 a.m.

Sponsored by the Cleveland Lions Club, this annual community breakfast raises money for scholarships and is always held on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend.

11 **Second Saturday Bookshop**
Sept 11: West End Plaza Event Center, 1935 Jake Alexander Blvd. W., Salisbury — 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Books, DVDs, coffee-table books, Friends Literary gift baskets and book bags for sale. Cash, credit cards and checks accepted. All proceeds benefit Rowan Public Library.

11 **Pops at the Post**
Sept. 11: Bell Tower Green Park, South Church and West Innes streets — 5-10 p.m. A free community concert featuring the Salisbury Symphony. Hear music honoring the victims of both 9/11 and the pandemic, while also celebrating the new park and a return to more normal times after the pandemic. Celebrated since the Salisbury Post's 100th anniversary in 2005.

15 **Carolina Artists Expo**
Sept. 15-17: Salisbury Civic Center, 315 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. — Free to the public. More information is available at <http://thecarolinaartists.org/events/>.

16 **Story Time in a Shelter**
Sept. 16, Kannapolis Village Park, Shelter C (700 West C St.) — 10-11 a.m. Free. The story time includes a story, plus a small craft or activity. All ages welcome. No registration required.

18 **Antique Car Show**
Sept. 18: N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer — 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This awesome show features vehicles owned by members of the Antique Automobile Club of America. All makes and models. Sponsored by the Furnitureland Chapter of the AACA.

18 **Cheerwine Festival**
Sept. 18: Downtown Salisbury — noon-10 p.m. Once again, thousands are expected to pour into the streets of the downtown to celebrate the Cheerwine soft drink, born in Salisbury in 1917. The event has plenty of food, music and Cheerwine. Be on the lookout for festival updates. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the original May 15 date of the festival was moved to Sept. 18. Not counting 2020, this will be the fourth Cheerwine Festival downtown.

24 **Day Out with Thomas**
Sept. 24-26 and Oct. 1-3, N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer — Thomas the Tank rolls into town with the Party train Tour Hop on board for a 25-minute real train ride with Thomas. Say hello to Sir Topham Hatt, stop in the party corner for lawn games, have a blast in the bubble zone and check out the gift shop for exclusive Thomas swag. Contact the call center at 1-866-468-7630. Hours are 9 a.m.-9 p.m. seven days a week, or email the museum at info@nctransportationmuseum.org.

24 **Rowan County Fair**
Sept. 24-Oct. 2: Rowan County Fairgrounds, 1560 Julian Road, Salisbury — 5-10 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24 and Friday, Oct. 1; 1-11:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 25 and Saturday, Oct. 2; 1-10 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26; and 5-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday. It's the annual agricultural fair for Rowan with carnival rides, games, food, juried exhibits. For over 65 years, people have flocked to the fair. Admission: \$6.

25 **GermanFest**
Sept. 25: Old Stone House, 770 Old Stone House Road, Salisbury (Granite Quarry) — 10 a.m.-4 p.m. GermanFest is a daylong celebration of Rowan County's German heritage. Demonstrators on the site will show Colonial trades, crafts and foods. New Sarum will have special beers. A Rowan Museum event. Contact 704-633-5946 for more information.

25 **Gold Hill Founders' Day**
Sept. 25: Gold Hill Mines Historic Park, 753 St. Stephens Church Road, Gold Hill — Starts at 9 a.m.; Founders' Day parade, 10 a.m., then a daylong celebration of arts, crafts, food, music and history, including hayrides, self-guided tours and hiking trails. N.C. Bluegrass Association is host for the music at the amphitheater.

25 **Cleveland Concert Series**
Sept. 25: South Depot Street in the middle of Cleveland — 6:30 p.m. Music by the Dirty Grass Souls. The Town of Cleveland Summer Concert Series (May through September) is held on the fourth Saturday of each month and features regional bands. This is a bring-your-lawn-chair family event.

THE SCENE



*Grayson Lovett, Claudia Lovett
and Naomi Wedderburn*



Ryan Brady, Emma Cornelison, Travis Berry, Beth Berry, Elizabeth Brady and Jim Brady



*Jodi Nesbitt,
McKenzie
Upright,
Caroline
Clark and
Savannah
Leonard*

Faith Fourth of July Parade

Thousands of Rowan Countians flooded into the small town of Faith for its 75th anniversary Fourth of July Parade. In one of the county's first big events since pandemic restrictions eased, parade-goers watched from lawn chairs, front yards, porches, blankets and truck beds along Main Street. The parade capped off the traditional week of July Fourth activities that featured a carnival, music, eats, contests and fireworks.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



*Madison Miller and Kaytlyn Duncan at top with
Addison Duncan, right.*



Carson and Anna Lynne Marino



*Mariah Howell has her bubble machine
going to town along the parade route.*



Mary and Sam Hopkins



Corie Brewer, left, cools off with a portable fan, while her sister, Maggie Snow, holds Corie's daughter, Stella, and Maggie's own daughter, Leona. Corie and Maggie's mom, Suzanne Brewer, sits to the right.



Judy and Mark Beymer



April Runkel



Ethan, Randal and Sarah Rhodes



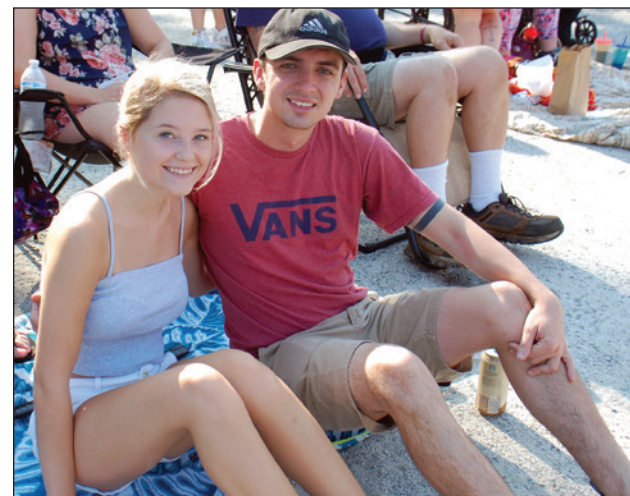
Ronnie Drye and Mary Alice Lyerly



Mary Owen



Nicole Addison, Brady Addison, Addison Thompson, Lucas Thompson and Lauren Thompson



Tammi Schuh and Hunter Kimball

THE SCENE



Nishia Byrd and Kabla McCauley



The Rowan County Originals get ready to push off from the shore for another race with the Fiber Dragons behind them.



Manning a tent for the Chamber are Elia Gegorek, Karen Hurst and Tink Jamison.



These members of the Anchors Up team from Anchors Down include, in front, Megan Close, Leigh Ann Loeblein, Jennifer Flynn, Mary Willis Page and Lisa Sechrest. In back are Bubba Hauss, Tommy Page and Chris Sechrest.

Dragon Boat Festival

The Rowan County Chamber of Commerce's seventh Dragon Boat Festival attracted thousands of spectators and participants to High Rock Lake. Twenty-one teams, sponsored by local employers, competed at the festival. Daniel Matangira chaired the event, and the day at the Shrine Club property off Long Ferry Road also included food trucks, vendors, music and a specially crafted beer from New Sarum Brewing.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Utip Lenoir, left, and Hannah Jones of the VAEA Warriors, right, enjoy the festivities.





Teresa Dakins, Cheryl Goins and Ann Hatchett



The SSRius WaveRunners included Marion Blake, Connie Hoffner, Tisha Corriher, Chance Brown, Jason Weber, David Freeze, Suzanne Murphy, Amber Bishop, Jamie Bishop, Greg Overcash, Karen Leonard, Amanda Lewis, Clayton Lewis, Chad Lewis, Luann Fesperman, Steve Clark, Patrick Smith, Donnie Smith, Ricardo Sanchez and Steve Shive.



Two of the F&M Bank rowers, John Bransia and Jeffrey Fann.



Food Lion Store No. 10 Manager Shane Valley, second from left, received the traveling trophy signifying his store's successful wellness program over the past year. With him are Chamber Chairman Bobby Honeycutt, Novant Health's Cora Greene and Chamber President Elaine Spalding.



Amanda Pennington, Chadd Pennington, Cindy Hart and Tim Hart were part of the Anchors Up team from Anchors Down.



Nicole and Adam Cooper of the Blazing Paddles (Bull Ship Engineering)



These Team Breakfast Club paddlers include Paul Bardinas, Carrie Bardinas, Dawn Ingram, Sara Clymber and Mark Amalfitano.

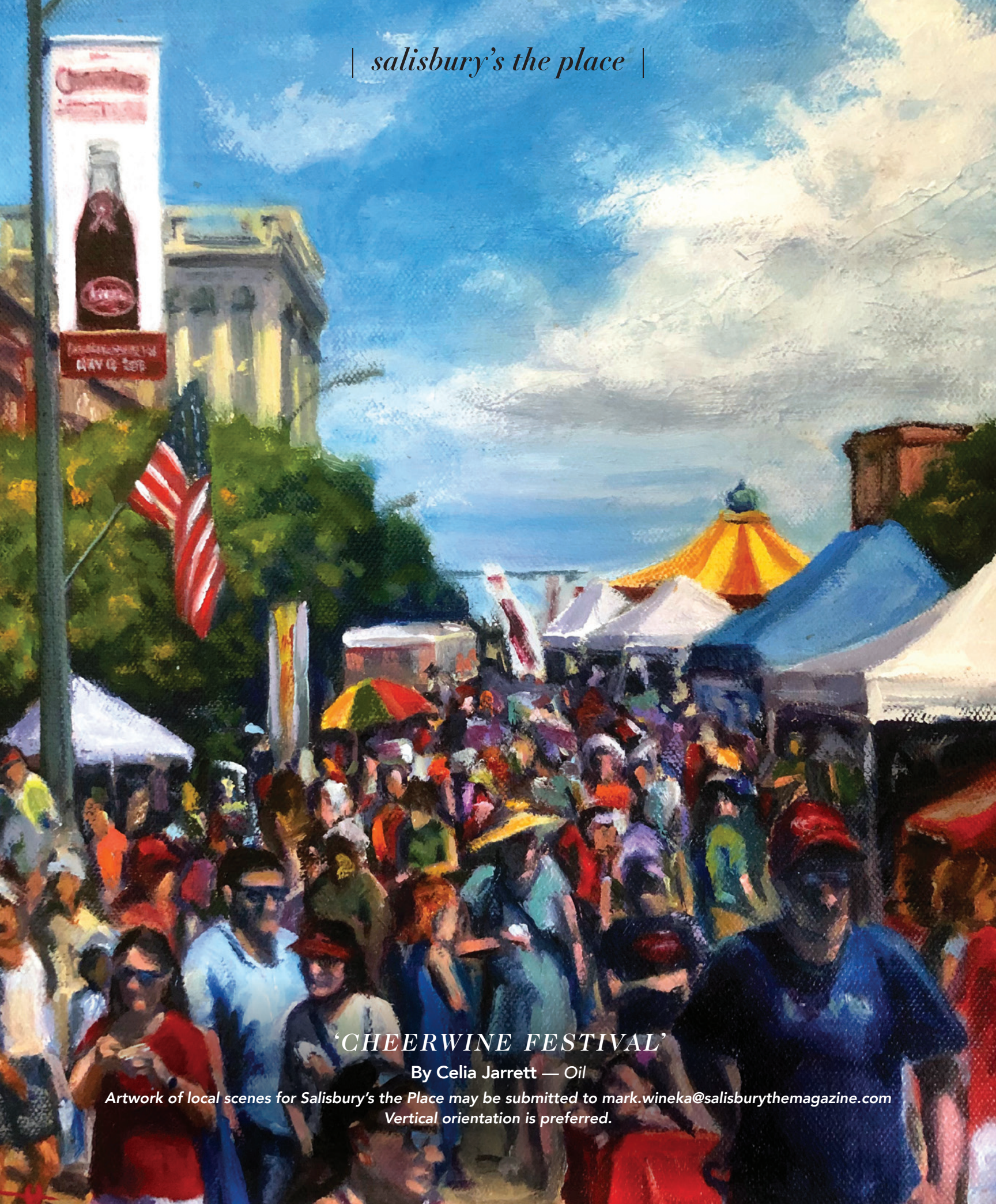


The WLJZ 107.1 FM crew, which provided the tunes during the festival, included Mz Good Newz, J. Keith 'Symphony' Anderson, Salina Holmes and NaQuan Jones (DJ Smaxkz)



Harley Hoosier, Pressley Hoosier and Ansley Lyerly

| *salisbury's the place* |



'CHEERWINE FESTIVAL'

By Celia Jarrett — Oil

Artwork of local scenes for Salisbury's the Place may be submitted to mark.wineka@salisburythemagazine.com
Vertical orientation is preferred.

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Because the health and safety of our community are our top priorities, we will be working diligently in the coming months to offer an event that complies with all COVID-19 guidelines and uses preventive measures to ensure the safety of our guests.



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