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the magazine

DRIVING *force*

Randy Marion makes new presence in Salisbury





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On the cover: Randy Marion has acquired the Honda, Kia and Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep/Ram dealerships formerly owned by Gerry Wood Auto Group. (Andy Mooney photo)

On this page: Zeplin Wingler ascends after a dive into the Eaman Park pool. (Sean Meyers photo)



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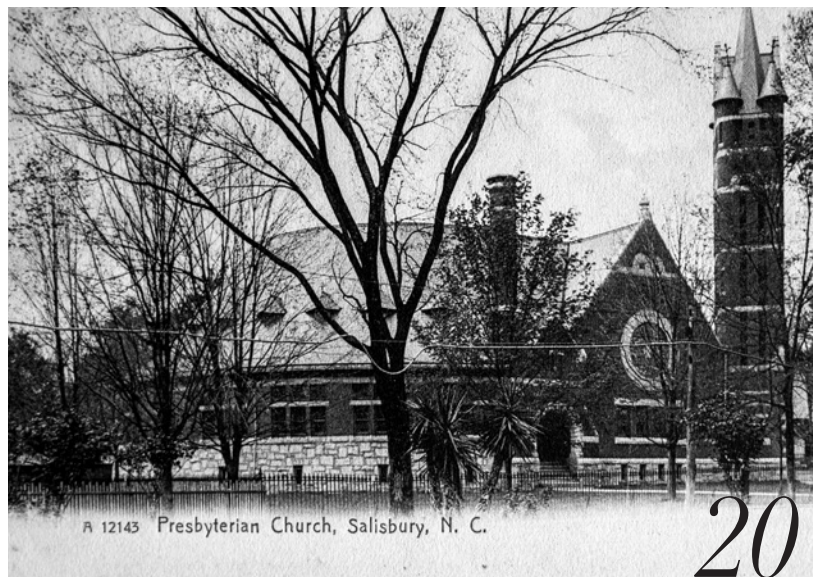
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May brings a wide variety of events and stories

I remember when I moved here 30 years ago, there was seldom more than one event to attend on a weekend. Leaders of performing groups and nonprofits called each other months ahead to see if anyone had “claimed” a particular evening for an event.

Well, the population of our county has grown by 40,000 over 30 years and events have grown proportionally. It's a new day! Our area has multiple events most weekends. Don't feel like a car show? Take in a play! It's warm outside this month and our area offers so much to do in May.

Just a sample of events this month include the Cheerwine Festival, “Arts in the Park” at Granite Lake, the Barnett Sisters Band at Spencer Library, Hippy Fest at Rowan Fairgrounds and Xtreme Outlaw Midget Racing at Millbridge Speedway.

Piedmont Players offers, “Kinky Boots,” Lee Street theater presents, “Imaginary Invalid” by Moliere and Salisbury Symphony Orchestra offers another ensemble opportunity in, “Serenade Percussion” at Hedrick Little Theater.

Regular offerings include Salisbury-Rowan Farmers' Market Saturday mornings, First Friday at Salisbury's downtown and Historic Salisbury's Second Saturday Salvage at the Ice House.

We have a wide variety of articles this month, as well. A story on Randy Marion tells how a small-town boy from West Virginia developed an empire of mega-lots from scratch. Marion recently purchased three auto dealerships from Gerry Wood in Salisbury and another purchase elsewhere is on the horizon.

Donna Prunkl makes her Salisbury the Magazine debut with “The Grand Tour,” a story of international travel with her 10 grandchildren, one at a time. It started when Donna pondered



what to get their eldest grandchild for her high school graduation. It worked out so well they've continued the tradition with all the others. We read about grandson Cade dancing with villagers in Costa Rica, grandson Jack bungee-jumping into the Corinth Canal in Greece and many others. Some of Donna's friends have been so impressed with the practice that they've adopted it for their own grands.

This month's “Rowan Original” is Salisbury City Council member David Post. Post has been achieving the extraordinary all his life. Today he's an attorney, a CPA and an elected official in his hometown. He's been a college professor at not one but three of our leading universities. He's made things happen on Capitol Hill. He's helped numerous businesses out of bankruptcy. And he's made life-saving drugs affordable for those with HIV. He recently sold his closed-door pharmacy for millions. Being a custodial single dad didn't seem to slow him down a bit. Check out his story for information and inspiration.

We've devoted a page to Mayor Barbara Mallett from East Spencer. It's not often that a town clerk becomes mayor, but that's just what Mayor

Mallett did. She was recently honored by Southern City Tabernacle AME Zion Church with a “Legacy of a Leader” service, where friends, family and elected officials gave testimonials to her humble leadership.

Pete Prunkl — yes, that's right, two Prunkls in one issue — was intrigued to see what historic homes have been lost to development over the years. Local notables like Edward Norvell and Ed Clement share their memories of the old beauties lost to the wrecking ball. The story is accompanied by before and after pictures to illustrate that sometimes progress means great loss.

Eaman Park Pool is now the serving a third generation of swimmers. Founded in 1957, the pool serves members only, but anyone can join for a fee. Andie Foley found some original members and some newer ones to share summer fun memories. The pool opens on May 31 every year, and anyone who wants to check it out can buy a day pass.

The story of Mike Ploplis follows the arc from flight paramedic to fulltime local artist. Ploplis' work ranges from representational to abstract, but one painting alludes to the day he almost lost a patient and walked away from his career.

Our book review is written by a man who is quite possibly the most well-read citizen of our area, John Basinger. He brings us a refreshing look at “Remarkably Bright Creatures,” written by Shelby van Pelt.

So, take a break from all that fun around the county and enjoy your magazine. We'll see you in June.

Maggie

— Maggie Blackwell
 Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

‘Remarkably Bright Creatures’ Suspends Disbelief

A book that lets the reader suspend disbelief is a true treasure. The latest quality read for me has been Shelby van Pelt’s “Remarkably Bright Creatures.” Set in the outskirts of Seattle, primarily at the Seattle Aquarium, this debut novel takes readers away from their lives and into a strange and wonderful world.

The central character is Tova Sullivan, a 70-year-old widow who moonlights as a janitor at the Aquarium. Fastidious and precise in her efforts to keep the basement of the aquarium clean, Tova has a habit of talking to all the animals, even the ones she does not think are very nice in return. Tova’s great loss in life is that of her son, Erik, who died at age 18 under suspicious conditions 30 years ago.

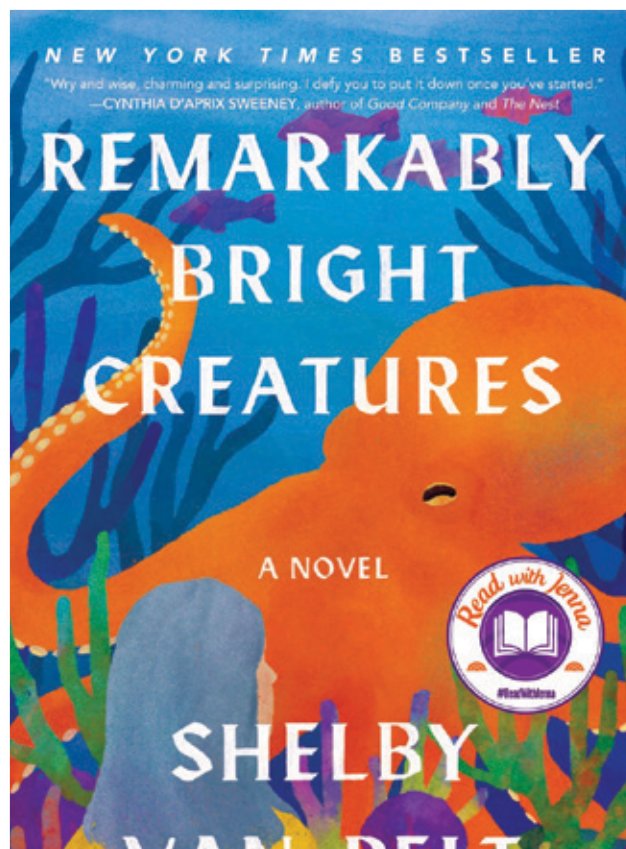


by
**JOHN
BASINGER**

Cameron, a wayward young adult who has a penchant for losing jobs and flailing from relationship to relationship, is the next major character van Pelt introduces. Thinking that his father is a real estate magnate, Cameron drifts north from northern California to Washington, hoping he can score some money.


The unquestioned star of the book, however, is Marcellus the octopus. Dazzling tourists with his ability to emerge from the aquarium’s rock, the beginning of the book shows Marcellus’s quick wit and his ability to let himself out of his container. Marcellus knows he can be out of his container for eighteen minutes before he suffers what he calls the Consequences. Interspersed in his chapters are factoids about how intelligent and underrated his species in fact is. As the book develops, Marcellus develops a quickly evolving friendship with Tova.

Undercurrents of grief and loneliness undergird the book. Tova, who lives alone and has memories of her late husband and son; Cameron, who needs a *raison d’être* and someone to love him; and Marcellus, who has made the best of his captivity but does not relate to many of his fellow prisoners, especially the sharks. Told in alternating chapters, these seemingly disparate lives intertwine with one another to tell a story with a thoroughly happy and uplifting conclusion. Van Pelt includes



“Remarkably Bright Creatures”
by Shelby van Pelt. Ecco Publishing, 2022. 368 pp.

supporting characters who add flavor and spice to the story, including the Knit-Wits, a group of widows who like to socialize and gossip, and Ethan, an eccentric Scot who Tova is too preoccupied to notice as a potential love interest.

All this comes together to make a thoroughly entertaining novel that will take the readers away from their daily lives. As a side note, the Academy-Award winning “My Octopus Teacher” is now on Netflix, in which an octopus reveals his charms to a curious diver who befriends him over the course of a year. This species shows how little we know about the animal kingdom and “Remarkably Bright Creatures” is a testament to the power of friendship and the intelligence of the animal world. 

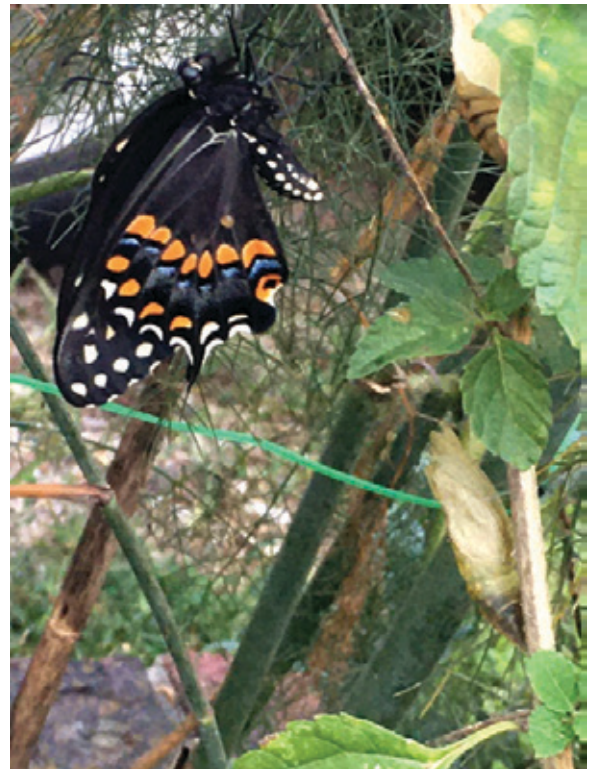
John Basinger is a litigation attorney who lives in Granite Quarry with his cat Birdy and his piles of books.

Through the lens



Tessa Jackson captured the transformation of a caterpillar (above), to a chrysalis (left) and then to a swallowtail butterfly (right).

To submit a photo for Through the Lens, send a high-resolution photo to andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com. Vertical orientation is preferred.



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CPA, attorney
and Salisbury
City Councilman
David Post

| Q & A |

Renaissance man

Attorney, CPA and Salisbury City Councilman David Post

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE BLACKWELL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS

It might be said David Post is an overachiever in a family of overachievers. His mom Rose Post was a beloved journalist and columnist for the Salisbury Post. His dad owned Zimmerman's, a popular and successful department store, with his brother. Sister Suzie is a Duke professor in photojournalism and a former photographer for National Geographic. Brother Sam is a former teacher; he and brother Jon are both successful business owners. Sister Phyllis is a professor of counseling at UNC-Charlotte, nationally renowned for her work in trauma-informed care.

David is both a CPA and an attorney and has served on Salisbury City Council for 4 terms, but his real successes are in business and parenting. He was a single custodial dad for over 10 years.

Q. *How did you come to be both a CPA and an attorney?*

I graduated from Chapel Hill in 1971 in accounting. I specialized in tax law. I worked for one of the big accounting firms, then came back to Salisbury and worked for a firm with about 35 employees. It was a great experience. I was involved in a couple of situations, though, and noticed when cool things happened, lawyers were around. I was intrigued.

This all happened in the late '60s and early '70s, which was a big "change the world" time. Anything was possible! So, I went to law school at Duke; passed the bar in '74. I talked Chapel Hill into letting me be an adjunct professor. This helped me pay for law school.

Did you practice law?

Initially I practiced law here with my now-mentor and lifelong friend Glenn Ketner. But the demands of serving as CPA and attorney for my family's business — and providing legal services to people my mom discovered who needed legal help, plus my job — it was all too demanding. I put a backpack on my back and headed to Europe for a few months. That's where I met my ex-wife.

What happened next?

I decided to move to Cary to practice law and helped start a company that assisted companies in bankruptcy. After a while one of the professors at the Chapel Hill School of Business called me and asked me to step in and run the company; a former director had allegedly taken all the money. Yes, I do see the irony in a bankruptcy company going bankrupt!

I went around the country, talking to people knowledgeable in bankruptcy. We organized a conference and I was able to snag Michael Milken as the keynote speaker. This was in the '80s and he was all over Forbes and Fortune magazines. We charged \$1,000 a head and 1,000 people attended. Voila! The company had \$1 million.

How did you get to D.C.?

Terry Sanford invited me to work on his staff in Washington. We had two kids and one more on the way. This job would mean reduced pay and higher cost of living. I worried about my responsibilities.

My mom said if you don't do it, you'll always regret it — you're not going to starve.

So, we packed up and moved to Washington. I still have a house up there and my kids are there. I go up every month.

Working for Terry Sanford, I wrote a piece of legislation about reducing the deficit — you know, you write these bills, they get thrown in the hopper and nothing happens; but three senators invited me to work for them. I worked for Joe Lieberman for a year to get the budget bill out.

I got permission from the Senate Ethics Committee to be a professor for additional income, and parlayed positions at George Washington and American Universities. I was on faculty for nine years. I created a course in Troubled Company Management.

I got involved with an advocacy group for people with aids. I started working with that group full-time, traveling all around the country. My kids were 12, 10 and 7 when my wife asked for a separation and gave me custody. I couldn't travel anymore.

How'd you come back home to Salisbury?

I was talking with Ralph Ketner and mentioned I'd always wanted to offer discounted baby food. He said, "Why don't you do that with medication?" I decided to open a closed-door pharmacy. Med-Express was born! Everything here costs one third of what it does in D.C.

I drove back and forth between Washington, D.C. and Salisbury for 10 years from 2001 to 2012. I had Fridays off from my classes in D.C. When my youngest child finished his first year of college, I decided living in D.C. no longer made sense. So, I moved here full-time and visited D.C. to see the kids.

It never occurred to me in my wildest dreams I'd move back here. But Salisbury is a community. Northern Virginia is a big city, and it takes so long to drive anywhere! Driving to the college as a professor took an hour and a half.

I came here and got involved in the community. Revenue at the pharmacy had grown from \$300,000 to \$37,000,000. It was on the list of fastest-growing companies in Inc. Magazine. My pharmacy partner wanted to retire in 2014, so we sold it.

How did you decide to run for Salisbury City Council?

I'd been writing articles for the Post every other week on national issues. Someone asked me to write on local issues. I was on Planning Board, the county Library Board, the board of Historic Salisbury Foundation, even serving as Interim Executive Director for a while. I asked Mike Miller, 'if I ran, why would I be running?' and we came up with 10 ideas. I created a campaign using those ideas. People have booed me! You must be able to take criticism.

What are your pastimes?

I enjoy pickleball. I listen to a lot of books, and I'm a news junkie. I look forward to months with five Tuesdays, because that's a week with no meetings: I can visit my kids and grandkids!

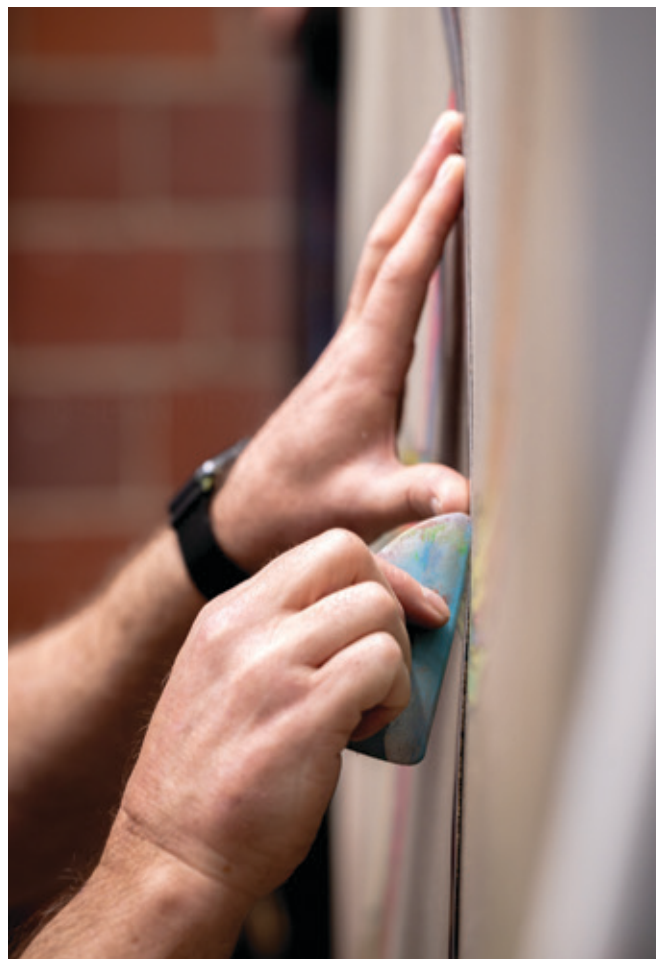
I support several organizations, including Meals on Wheels. I run the program that prepares tax returns for free at Rufty-Holmes Senior Center. The guy from last year asked me to run it or they'd have to shut it down. I had COVID at the time of the class, so I had to teach myself and then pass the test. We've already surpassed last year's number of returns.

I'm living a life I love. If someone would have said at age 65 to 75, you'll have the resources to do anything you want to do, I wouldn't have believed them. My kids are fine with what I'm doing. I've been blessed. Gee Whiz! How lucky can I be to do what I love every day? **S**





Formerly a paramedic and firefighter, artist Michael Ploplis creates his work at Rail Walk Studios and Gallery in Salisbury.



“Art saved my life.”

Helicopter paramedic leaves high-stress world of trauma to focus on painting

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**



Ploplis shows a piece of his art, once used for an album cover.



Ironically the most innocuous painting in Michael Ploplis' studio is the one about the day he left his career as a helicopter paramedic to be a full-time artist.

Although "Resonance" is a sizeable painting at about five feet square, the image is a curious one, with six teal blue stripes at a barely diagonal cant and out-of-focus foliage between them. Turns out it's the window he stared out of for hours after almost losing a patient. The window with teal blue blinds inside and trees outside.

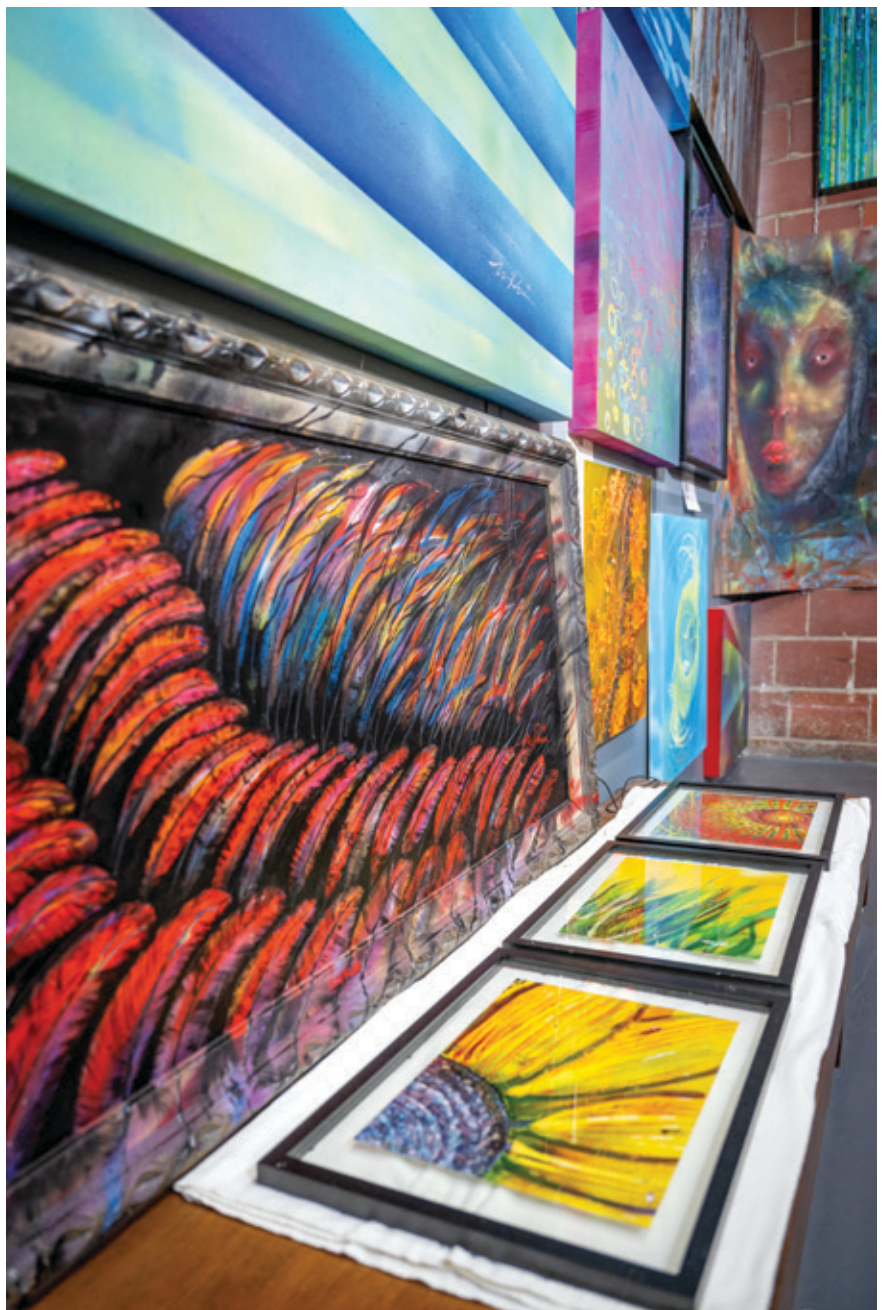
He was living in Salisbury and working in eastern North Carolina, quite a commute. He flew to work every week and slept in a rented camper while there.

It's important to note that helicopter medics see the worst of the worse injuries and illness. A medical helicopter is called only if time is critical to the survival of the patient. At this time, COVID was raging. A helicopter cabin is tiny, and he and his coworkers shared it with critically injured or sick patients time after time after time during a single shift. He says it's a miracle he did not catch it. They, like pretty much all medical workers, he says, were exhausted, running on adrenaline.

On this day, a woman had sustained life-threatening injuries. Ploplis and the rest of the crew attempted two procedures to save



Ploplis keeps his helicopter helmet, signed at his first gallery opening, at Rail Walk Studios and Gallery in Salisbury.



her life. Neither was successful.

They arrived at the hospital, where fortunately a medical device was available for this kind of case. The woman survived.

“This dismantled my confidence going forward,” Ploplis says. “The feeling of helplessness is hard to shake after that. It was very sobering.”

When he got off work that morning, he went to a park he’d never noticed and replayed the entire event in his mind, over and over. Being away from home, he didn’t have his family to share with.

He returned to his little camper. He sat on the edge of his bed and stared out the window with the teal blue blinds.

“Being isolated, it impacted me greatly. I couldn’t vent/ask advice/have some sort of clarity.”

“Everyone in that environment has confidence — they have to. Once you realize you’re not all-powerful, you lose your swagger. I knew I needed to find something else. I was a walking PTSD poster child.”

Ploplis says he began to take his mental health more seriously, and doing so opened the opportunity for him to explore what was inside of him.

“Art always comes back to me,” he says. “I don’t have to worry about procedures, medication or efficacy. I just let go and let creativity happen.”





Ploplis works on his artwork, "Analemma."



Ploplis used acrylic paint on canvas to create the work "Misdirection."

When he painted "Resonance," he says, he knew his time in flight medicine was short. At the peak of the pandemic, he concluded that he "just couldn't do it anymore."

So, he walked away.

This is not a man easily deterred. This is a man who attended a job fair to get an interview for a job he didn't want or need, just to meet the woman who is now his wife.

Ploplis' career is a study in opportunity. It connects from high school journalism to real-world journalism to a stint in the Marine Corps at the premiere level, to firefighting to paramedic to flight paramedic. He says art has been the one constant throughout.

"I don't regret the path I took in life, and it's surprising to me today how gratifying this is to my soul, my person, now. It's a weird experience to pursue your passion after realizing how much it means to you.

"Would I appreciate this opportunity if not for this journey? My answer is no. I've said it more than once, art saved my life."

Ploplis' work ranges from oil to acrylic to spray paint with shaving foam, sawdust, dish detergent and cornstarch to add texture. While he says he's still trying to find his style, there is a strong commonality among his pieces.

They range from representational to purely abstract to somewhere in-between. Even the representational pieces seem to be as seen through Ploplis' eyes. The huge giraffe, "Stretch," is done in pointillism. The dots are large and multi-colored, but there's no mistaking that it's a giraffe. "Chapel Hill" is a view of that city from the sky, a vantage point with which he was well-acquainted. "All Behind Me," a textural abstract, is a collage of scraps from every canvas he's painted to date.

Altogether, in a little over three years, he's completed over 187,000 square feet of work. His in-laws, he says, are flabbergasted by what comes out of his head. "I'm equally surprised by what develops in front of me," he confesses.


Ploplis is 56 years old and has a wife and two kids: Reilly, age 22 and Reagan, age 9. Ploplis says they had a challenge in getting pregnant the second time and he never expected to be a father at this stage in his life, but having a daughter has changed him as a person.

"I couldn't imagine my life now without her. She's very empathic and can sense my emotions. We have a close bond. She has noticed how art can make you feel — and what's fascinating — she has noticed how art makes others feel."

Son Reilly has embraced Ploplis' development as an artist. One thing dad values about son is his ability to lock onto one thing vehemently.

"Validation from your son or daughter is a precious thing," Ploplis says. "I'm not sure a lot of people have that. For the past 30 years, I couldn't be there for every birthday or recital and now, I have the freedom to participate in their lives. Leaving my job as a paramedic gave me the joy of being able to participate in my family's life again."

As to his wife, Ploplis says, "Erin's tolerance for my nonsense has grown exponentially. I think she's proud I'm demonstrating the resolution to follow through with that I want to do. She keeps me grounded; keeps me on purpose."

"There have certainly been times when I'm like, 'What the heck am I doing?' — in the peak of an inflation, pursuing art. She puts it back into perspective for me. She's my most honest and valued critic. I'm thankful I have her, Reilly and Reagan; they are my rudder." 

You can find Mike Ploplis' work online in a variety of locations:

- www.artbyploplis.com
- @artbyploplis on Instagram
- artbyploplis on TikTok
- artbyploplis on Facebook and YouTube
- visit Railwalk Studios & Gallery at 409 N. Lee St. in Salisbury





The Bankett Station building sits where the Baker Tire and Battery Company used to be at the corner of East Innes and Lee streets.

Lost Salisbury

What we lost . . . and what came back

BY **PETE PRUNKL** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**

HISTORICAL IMAGES FROM SUSAN SIDES' POSTCARD COLLECTION

Salisbury and the rest of the country caught demolition fever in the years following World War II. Casualties included middle-class houses, schools, commercial buildings, African American neighborhoods, historic homes, Victorian mansions, humble dwellings, churches and schools. The primary cause of the fever was America's optimism about its future. We suddenly believed that new was good and old was bad and that our towns and cities needed to be renewed, revitalized and rebuilt.

For National Preservation Month, May 2023, we remember what Salisbury lost to the steam rollers and wrecking balls that dominated her existence for over 30 years.

And we celebrate the role that Historic Salisbury played in cooling demolition fever. After 1972, the founding year of Historic Salisbury Foundation, many who experienced Salisbury's tear-down era wanted to save, stabilize, restore and reuse old historic buildings. West Square, where many of the town's grand old houses were situated, was the first place where Salisbury's new preservationists drew the line on demolition. Preservation spirit then spread to the West End, Brooklyn/South Square, Fulton Heights, North Main Street, Park Avenue, the mill village at Kesler Manufacturing and Downtown.

Demolition Fever destroyed countless treasures from our landscape. Here are the stories of just a few.



The Overman House at 100 South Fulton and Hobson-Klutz House at 106 South Fulton (above) share same spot as South State Bank at the corner of Innes and Fulton streets (below).

THE SPITE FENCE.

SouthState Bank at 401 West Innes Street occupies the same space as two Victorian mansions, the 1849 Overman House at 100 South Fulton and the circa 1860 Theodore Klutz House at 106 South Fulton. “I was born in the Overman House,” said attorney Ed Norvell. “I remember every room, the garden, the summer kitchen, the old well.” When his parents moved to the suburbs, they sold the Overman House to the bank. In the summer of 1966, developers demolished both houses. They also destroyed the fence between 106 and 112 South Fulton, the home of Hollywood actors Suzanne and Sidney Blackmer. Suzanne was outraged at the wanton demolition and devised one of Salisbury’s most effective protests. She replaced the lost fence with a makeshift wooden one and adorned it with curtains, bedsheets, old dresses, men’s underwear and an American flag. Suzanne Blackmer’s spite fence made the news for weeks afterwards and stood as a preservation protest for the next two years.







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The Andrew Jackson house (below left) shared same spot as City Hall at 217 South Main Street.



ANDREW JACKSON SLEPT HERE

The house where Andrew Jackson boarded while studying law in Salisbury survived until the 1950s. It was next to what was then Center Theater, now the home of Piedmont Players. Developers hired Wagoner Construction Company to demolish what would today be a notable historic landmark to build Security Bank and Trust Company, which later became City Hall at 217 South Main Street. Preservationist Ed Clement served as vice president of marketing at Security Bank. When the bank enlarged the building, he had access to what was possibly the foundation of the Jackson boarding house. Ed retrieved several bricks from that area. Today he displays them at Lombardy, the circa 1800 John Steele House that he restored.



The 1917 Innes Street Graded School (left) shared the same spot as First National Bank at Innes and Long streets.

INNES STREET GRADED SCHOOL

Originally a house stood on the corner of North Long Street and West Innes Street, beside the 1917 Innes Street Graded School at 322 East Innes Street. When the house was razed, the school was expanded and renamed for North Carolina's progressive State Superintendent of Public Instruction Arch Turner Allen. Commercial property replaced the school in 1975. Today the lot is home to First National Bank, which has the same address as the old school. Locals who attended A. T. Allen remember the massive cedar tree that still stands on the site.

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Eighteen homes were demolished to make room for the U.S. Post Office on East Innes Street.



U.S. POST OFFICE

In the early 1970s, bulldozers leveled four houses on South Clay, six on East Innes and seven on East Fisher Streets (a total of 17 homes!) to make way for the Post Office building and parking lot. While some homes were vacant, most were occupied single-family houses. Structures on the even side of the 600 block of East Innes were not part of urban renewal.



Clockwise from top left: 601, 609, 613, 621, 623 and 625 East Innes Street were all located where the current post office sits.



Boyden House (right) shared the same spot as the library at the corner of Church and Fisher streets.



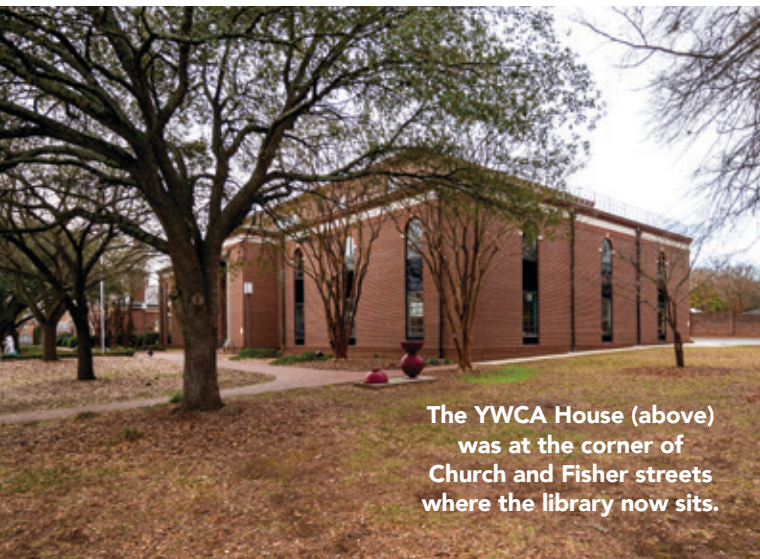
Residence of Mayor A. H. Boyden. SALISBURY, N. C.



4C Salisbury, N. C., Sunday POST, Sun., Mar. 27, 1955

ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Development of Rowan Public Library meant the sacrifice of three impressive houses. The pre-Civil War Boyden House on the corner of Fisher and Church, was the first to fall when the 1950 portion of the library was built. This was the home of avid hunter and former Salisbury mayor Archibald Henderson Boyden (1847-1929). Boyden's widow Mary donated the home to the library in 1949. Historic Salisbury Foundation made an unsuccessful appeal to the library board to save the 1912 Brawley House, an English Tudor Revival at 221 West Fisher Street. Historian and Salisbury Post columnist and A. H. Boyden's grandson, James Shober Brawley (1918-1981) grew up in this house. In 1936, after years of vacancy, the circa 1880 Trantham House at 227 West Fisher Street became headquarters for the Salisbury branch of the Young Women's Christian Association. The upstairs served as living quarters for as many as ten young women. The Brawley and Trantham houses were demolished for the 1988-1989 library addition.



The YWCA House (above) was at the corner of Church and Fisher streets where the library now sits.



The Brawley House shared the same spot as the center of the library on Fisher Street.

PINK GRANITE SERVICE STATION

The circa 1932 Bankett Tire and Battery Company, the pink granite service station at 201 East Innes Street was a contributing structure to the Downtown National Register Historic District. In 2016, only Historic Salisbury Foundation defended this architectural gem from demolition. In January 2017, preservationists and the owners reached a compromise. The owner would demolish the building and then rebuild it on a vacant lot 100 feet east of its original site. Bankett Station now occupies the corner and the pink granite service station remains a pile of granite blocks behind a chain link fence.



Baker Tire and Battery Company (above) at the corner of East Innes and Lee streets is now a pile of blocks (below left). Bankett Station now occupies the space.



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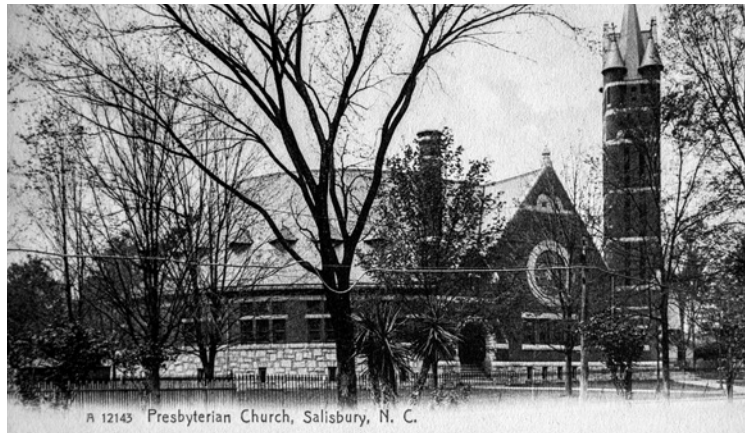


BELL TOWER GREEN

Every rule seems to have an exception. For Salisbury, the singular exception to “Preservation is progress” is Bell Tower Green.

The bell tower of Bell Tower Green was the front entrance to the 1892 First Presbyterian Church. The church was a trend setter in its day. Its design was based on the popular Akron Plan, which envisioned a flexible, semi-circular space with movable walls between the sanctuary and Sunday school rooms. The sanctuary floor sloped down toward the pulpit like an ancient amphitheater with pews arranged in concentric arcs. To many locals, it was “the circle church.” Although popular at the end of the 19th century, by the 1920s, the plan was out of style.

Elders at First Presbyterian decided in 1946 that the circle church had to go. The Akron Plan did not adapt well to a growing congrega-



First Presbyterian Church’s main sanctuary was demolished in 1971 but the bell tower still stands. Bell Tower Green Park was built around it in 2021.

tion and growing population of kids in Sunday School. Long before demolition started in 1971, church leaders and the congregation decided to spare the bell tower. By 1972, the circle church was a vacant lot and the tower a local landmark. In 1974 and again in 1990, the old bell tower needed help. Fundraisers by First National Bank, the Residents

of Old Salisbury and Historic Salisbury Foundation helped repair the tower and saved it for a second and third time.

In July 2019, after three years of dreaming, listening, planning and fundraising, civic leaders broke ground on Bell Tower Green, Salisbury’s downtown park. Their selling point for community financial

support was the lack of green space in Downtown Salisbury. The block where the old church stood had become more black asphalt than green grass. In September 2021, after raising \$13 million in private and public donations, Salisbury now had a green outdoor community center.

Bell Tower Green stands atop the rubble of the 1892 First Presbyterian Church, but the three-acre site also straddles what Salisbury’s founders first envisioned for West Square. Eighteenth century city planners wanted this part of town to be a park or commons, an open tract of public land for cattle, children and citizens. Except for the cows, that is what we have today. In this one instance, demolition aided history, rather than erasing it. **S**

Salisbury writer Pete Prunkl has 25 years of freelance experience with bylines on antiques, preservation and the social sciences.



With his dancer's athleticism, Cade took immediately to surfing lessons in Costa Rica.

the
GRAND
TOUR

The Prunkls make world adventures with grandchildren a tradition after high school graduations

WRITTEN BY DONNA PRUNKL | SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Chris, Pete and Donna took a harrowing ride in a cable car to the top of the Alps for this stunning view.

Lfour grandson Charlie is not sleeping, he's talking. Even the quaint French countryside scrolling outside our train window could not hold his attention long. This tall, handsome Clemson junior had a mischievous twinkle in his eye as he leaned toward me and asked, "Mama D, what is your love language?" I stalled with, "Let me think about it." Understanding it as a leading question, I countered, "What's yours?" and sat back prepared to listen. I smiled and thought, "This is exactly what I love about these trips with our grandchildren; we learn so much."

The grand tours began with Lauren, the first of our 10 grandchildren to graduate from high school. What gift is worthy of a grandchild who plans a college major at Furman University in sustainability and prefers life simple and unadorned? I was mulling over this conundrum when my husband Pete interrupted to discuss hotel options for our upcoming trip to Scotland. I sat bolt upright, "I've got it! Why don't we take Lauren with us to Scotland?"

The trip was a rousing success. We loved exploring Scottish castles and the Isle of Skye with its brisk North Sea breezes. Trekking the woolly mountains of the Quiraing was unforgettable. Lauren recalls, "Traveling together was a unique and wonderful experience that allowed us to know each other better."

Lauren was such a joy and heightened our travel experience. We decided then and there that the Grand Tours would be a high school graduation tradition.

Pete and I have a blended marriage; we celebrate our 25th anniversary this



It wouldn't be Scotland without castles and kilts. Lauren and Donna found both at Eilean Donan Castle.



Charlie, Donna and Pete toured Place du Vieux Marche in Rouen, France.



year. He has three children from a previous marriage and I have two. Together we have 10 incredible grandchildren.

Everyone loved the trip idea. We all agreed that parents pay for airfare and we cover everything else. The kids choose their destination (within reason). Some of them spend years in deliberation. Once the tough decision is reached, Pete gets busy planning and making reservations. He loves every minute of it.

Granddaughter Carolyn loved collecting autographs through all the parks at Disneyworld.

We both agree it's the best decision we've ever made. Only two of our grands live in Salisbury. Opportunities to spend quality time with them are too rare, especially once they reach their busy teens. On these trips, we have time for conversation and sharing stories. They really get to know their grandparents in a personal way. We all learn about each other's plans, opinions, phobias and character traits, which leads us back to Charlie's love language response.

It was AFFIRMATION! Who knew? This extroverted, self-confident college leader needs to hear praise and loves approval. A history buff, Charlie Prunkl is well-read in all things related to the World Wars. He chose the beaches of Normandy, France, for his destination. Pete was well into trip planning when COVID-19 put the brakes on the world and our trip. It wasn't until 2022, with Charlie on the cusp of 21, that Europe reopened to travel. His age and maturity meant relaxed freedoms, leading to one of Charlie's highlights.

"A favorite is Grandad finding me at 2 a.m. at the Delirium punk rock bar where Irish pharmaceutical reps are encouraging me to pound a beer as a Frenchman is confessing his love to me, all while pink and blue mohawked citizens



Cade danced with new friends in a Costa Rican street festival.

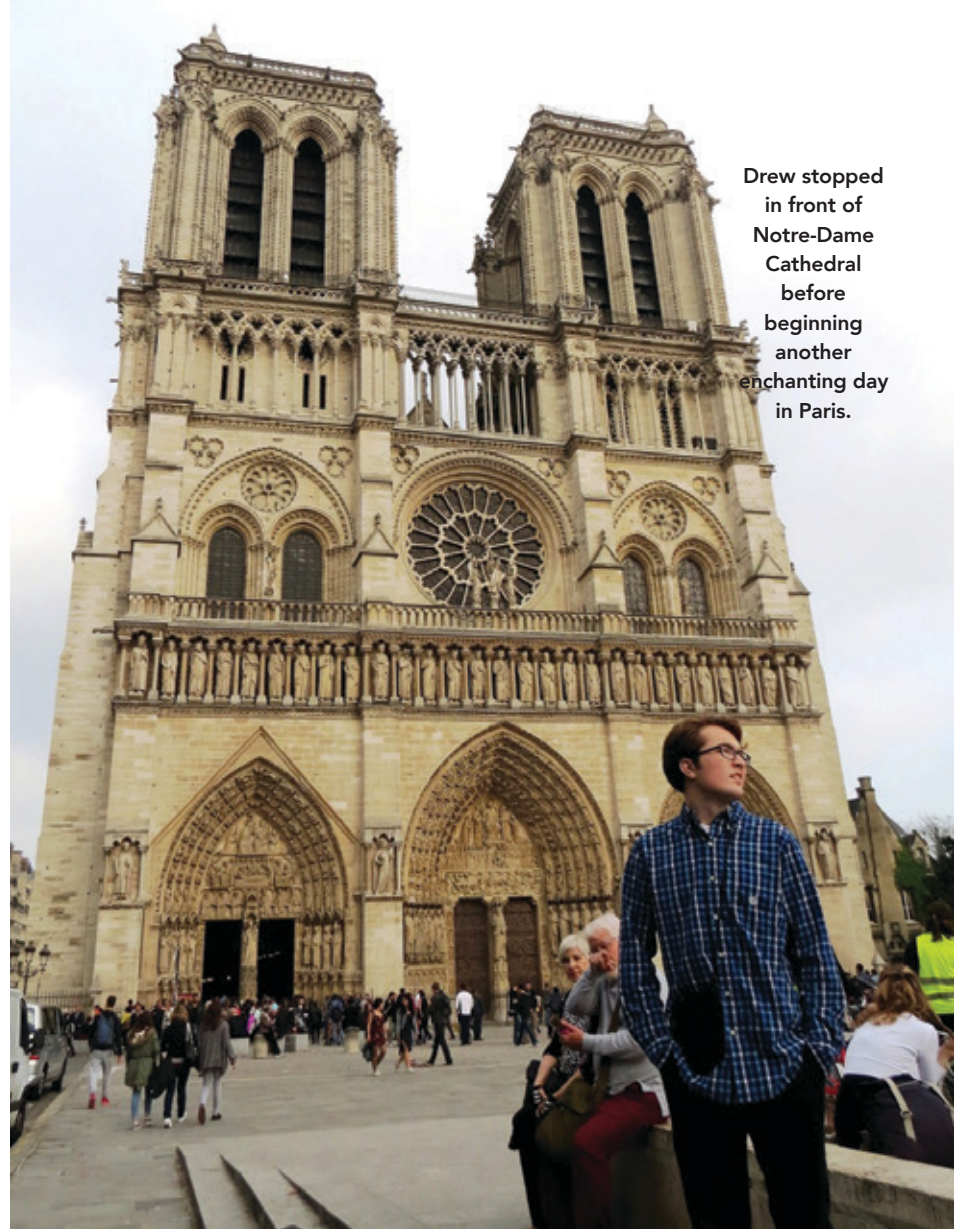
rage to ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit!’ Now, don’t you want to know more?

Pete and I were exhausted after a long day touring Rouen, France, and wanted to go to bed early. We agreed that Charlie could go out for a few hours. As it turned out his texts saying he was going to be late were not getting through to us nor were ours, checking on him. He had told us where he would be, so I sent Pete to make sure he was alive. Now we laugh about it.

Reflecting on misadventures, crazy meals and weird accommodations is another benefit of the tours. Family gatherings are spiced with shared tales and recalled highlights. Since only two of our trips have been with granddaughters, the other five have flowed with testosterone and high adventure.

“I can’t decide which is my favorite memory of Greece, so I’ll go with two,” said Jack Leslie, now a student at Chapel Hill. “My bungee jumping into the Corinth Canal — with Mama D scared out of her mind as she watched from under the bridge — and taking a boat tour around the Isle of Hydra.” We snorkeled for the first time on that tour, including into a cave where I spotted an octopus on the ocean floor. The next day we celebrated Jack’s 18th birthday on the beach with baskets of tiny fried fish.

Jack’s was our only injury on a trip. Every evening during our stay in Nafplio, Jack ran up the 999 steps of the nearby Palamidi Fortress to watch the sunset. An avid animal lover, he couldn’t help but stop to pet a big dog he passed on his route. It bit him on the hand, drawing blood. This led to frantic internet searches about rabies in



Drew stopped in front of Notre-Dame Cathedral before beginning another enchanting day in Paris.



You can’t visit Athens without a hike up to the Parthenon. Grandson Jack managed to find a little shade on a sweltering day.



Greece, calls home to his mother (from me; Jack thought my concern was silly) and antibiotics from the local pharmacy. His hand healed quickly and there was no foaming at the mouth.

Jack's twin brother Cade Leslie chose Costa Rica where on a night tour of the cloud forest with flashlights in hand, we discovered tree frogs, sloths and giant spiders. Later he and Grandad took an almost mile-long zipline adventure through the tops of the rainforest; part of it, Cade viewed as he hung UPSIDE DOWN!

Hiking through the quaint village of Grindelwald high in the Alps was a Swiss favorite.

Cade was headed to NYU in the fall to major in dance. One of his best memories reflected that passion. We had stopped in the town of Alajuela for a cool drink. My feet were done so I chose to remain in the car. Cade soon came running back for me. He led me to the town square where a salsa band had the locals swirling and dancing in their colorful best. A feisty grandmother drew the six-foot blonde into the throng and imagine her surprise when Cade pulled out the dance moves!

They were soon the center of attention. "They were so encouraging and welcomed us in with open arms," said Cade. Honestly, it was a scene from a Disney movie, including applause as we reluctantly left the happy group.

Drew's trip was our second Grand Tour, and he chose Paris. Since it was on our bucket list, we were thrilled. Drew Pendergrass was headed to Harvard and loved books more than breath. Though more cosmopolitan than most of our tours,

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Paris had its dramatic twist. You might enjoy Drew's synopsis:

"On our trip to Paris in 2016, we dodged historic floods to see all the sights. We spent a day at the Louvre and rushed through the medieval Arabic art as the staff started moving the works to avoid the rising waters. It closed the next day. Weather aside, the trip was unforgettable. We have so many shared memories: the Shakespeare Book Store, the restaurants with 4.5 stars and two Euro signs, and our tiny hotel room in the still-functioning medieval hospital." Our "interesting" hotel was next door to Notre-Dame Cathedral, so for 10 days, it felt like an old neighbor. The fire less than two years later was especially horrifying.

A favorite adventure in Scotland was the dramatic hike with granddaughter Lauren along the Quirang on the Isle of Skye.




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Charlie and Pete reflect on the Battle of Dieppe that occurred 75 years ago on this rocky beach.



Jack bungee jumped into the Corinth Canal, Greece.

Drew's brother Chris Pendergrass chose another bucket list location — Switzerland. Like the flood and COVID, stuff happens. We were all especially looking forward to this trip until suddenly it was halted at the airport. The airline said I could not board! My passport would expire two months after our return trip. Switzerland will not let you into the country without a 90-day cushion. Who knew? Pete was frantic. Chris and I — and the helpful airline agent — finally convinced him that he and Chris should go on without me. I would get my passport renewed the next morning and join them on an afternoon flight. Thank goodness, we were in Atlanta where this was possible. The incident evoked this memory from Chris, who graduated with honors last year from Kenyon College in Ohio.

“I think the coolest thing for me was that I got to go for a day with just Grandad, and Mama D came later,” said Chris. “I got to see how much my grandparents care about each other. Grandad didn't want to do anything without Mama D. He didn't want her to miss anything. Seeing how excited everyone was when we reunited was really sweet.”

After that rocky start, we all agreed that our time in the Alps was the best, with fresh strawberries, picturesque



Quentin and Piper look at scrapbooks as their trips are coming in the next year or two.



Paris was a culinary delight. Drew tried escargot for the first time.

hikes and cows with incredibly huge bells that rang across the mountain meadows.

We rode cable cars to the tops of massive peaks. My knees still tremble at the thought. At one location, while I was in the gift shop, Granddad agreed that he and Chris could try the Thrill Walk, a transparent walkway attached almost 9,000 feet up to the side of the mountain. Did I mention, testosterone?

Endurance was certainly a factor in our tour of Disneyworld with our granddaughter Carolyn Prunkl. We survived the Florida heat with a string of frozen lemonades. Carolyn was having some health issues, so her parents didn't feel ready for her to leave the United States. She chose her favorite place on the planet, Disneyworld, as her destination. She had her photo taken with every character we could find as we toured the four parks. "My favorite part was going to Hollywood Studios and seeing the shows with Mama D and Granddad," said Carolyn. "Let the magic happen!" Carolyn knew every lyric of Frozen and

sang along enthusiastically with the kids in the audience.

There are seven trips in the scrapbooks with three to go, one each for the next three years. Quentin Hippert, who lives in Salisbury and graduates from Gray Stone Day School in May, has selected Rome, Italy, for his trip this summer. His sister Piper Hippert will graduate in 2025 and chose London, England. Their cousin Marin Leslie is considering Norway for 2024.

Through the years, as I posted our Grand Tour photos on Facebook, friends liked the idea so much, they made plans for trips with their grandchildren. We can't recommend it enough. Yes, we're spending their inheritance but making incredible memories to last their lifetimes. No one has complained. **S**

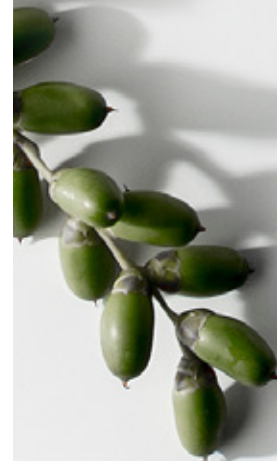
Donna Prunkl retired as communications coordinator with the NC Synod of the ELCA and lives in Downtown Salisbury when not stomping around the world.

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Killian Wingle
takes a dive on a
hot summer day at
Eaman Park pool.

Salem Griffith, back turned, plays with Anastasia Patton as her brother Colton looks on. Generations of kids and adults have enjoyed Eaman Park Pool, now in its seventh decade as a local summer gathering spot.



TRUE BLUE

Eaman Park Pool Club has provided
family fun for generations

WRITTEN BY **ANDIE FOLEY**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**

Margot May Pryor
enjoys an ice
cream cone at the
side of the pool.





In the 1950s when Lloyd Goodman left his career as a PE teacher to join his father's lumber business, there were certain sounds he likely thought he'd be leaving in the past.

The chaotic thrum of excited chatter as groups of children got to interact and cut loose. Trills of laughter punctuating the noise. Scampering feet, and, occasionally, the sound of a whistle being blown — an indicator that behavior should be adjusted.

But an educator doesn't become and stay an educator for just anything. There's a certain fondness and compassion for our world's youngest inhabitants that comes with the job, and Goodman didn't waiver in this, despite his change in job title. In a new location, seeing new needs, he and a team of Rowan County stakeholders came together to bring life to a new backdrop for this beloved racket: the Eaman Park Pool Club located at 121 Eaman Ave.

The pool club, now the longest operated in Rowan County, has been the locale of many a core childhood memory for not only Goodman's children, but his grandchildren and



Above: From left, Kathryn Heim, Dagny Clark, Christopher Heim and Grady Clark enjoy an afternoon swim at the pool. **Right:** The pool is reflected in lifeguard Grace Eppehimer's sunglasses.

great-grandchildren alike.

And the Goodmans' multigenerational involvement with and commitment to the club is far from unique.

SEE A NEED, MEET A NEED

Sitting in her living room, Jane Britt, Goodman's youngest daughter, held yellowed newspaper clippings collected by her father and reflected on the man with a smile.

"My dad was a PE teacher and worked at a Y before he came back here to work for his dad. He just always felt like there needed to be activities for kids outside," she said, adding with a laugh: "I mean, we had one TV. We didn't play inside."

Nancy Corriher, whose father David Graham was also one of the pool's founding officers, said this time spent away from screens was a shared community experience around the time of the pool's genesis.

"Eaman Park kids?" Corriher said, "We played outside until the streetlight came on and then you went home."

With so many living, breathing products of a baby boom visible at every stop around the neighborhood, a need became apparent to both Goodman, Graham and others. The onslaught of children may be out and active, but where were the structured resources best suited to safely occupy their time come summer? True, the Eaman Park neighborhood had an established "playground" space, but there was no set equipment, no identifiable amenities. The space sat, largely, unused, save for the occasional baseball practice and small tract of community garden.

And so, local fathers began rallying the troops, or in this case, neighborhood families. Working as a collective, they raised money and sold stock, gathering enough





Debbie Hoffman relaxes in the pool on a hot summer day.

resources to bring the pool to life. It would be housed on this play space, which E.A. Goodman's, Lloyd's father, donated. In fact, the name, "Eaman," is a coined word made from E.A.'s initials, with the "-man," from his last name.

The effort was not, however, without some controversy. The same day the group broke ground on the property amid shin-high grass, a collection of concerned families appealed to the Superior Court for a restraining order against the formulated group, called the Eaman Park Club, Inc.

The restraining order would have prevented the group from "taking over and appropriating" the dedicated "playground" space according to a Salisbury Evening Post article from the day — May 7, 1957.

The concern, according to the suit, was that certain members of the community would be excluded from the property.

Just days later — May 14, to be exact — the group took a non-suit judgment after the club provided documentation that no resident would be deprived of use of the space, regardless of their involvement with the pool's construction or otherwise.



When the pool opened in July of that same year, some 102 excited kids were there to take the first leap into the water, a visualization of the club's commitment to welcoming all.

Today, the same holds true, and memberships are available for not just neighborhood members, but anyone within driving distance.

A NEW GENERATION

While members like Britt and Corriher started as founding members and are now bringing

their grandchildren along with them to the club, others found the pool in recent years.

Others like Daphne Safrit, the club's current president, who joined in 2015 as a mother of one, Margot May Pryor. The next year, she was pregnant with her second — a September baby.

"I spent the last two full months of my pregnancy sitting in that shallow end. Every. Day. Because it's the only place I could get cool and feel weightless," Safrit said with a laugh. It's a tip she now shares with others in her life carrying

summer babies.

But, she said, the pool offers so much more than this maternal relief.

“(My family is) there six days a week ... to get them away from screens and out getting fresh air and getting active,” Safrit said. “It’s just awesome having a safe, family-friendly location to take them where I know that everyone is looking out for them.”

Summers spent at the poolside have also instilled passions her children might have otherwise been missed. Safrit doesn’t swim so much as float, she said. But her oldest?

“I’ve taken my first swim lessons at the pool,” said Margot May, now 11. “That’s turned into competitive swimming. I swim year-round.”

While swimming is a popular pick for the pool’s youngest members in terms of favorite amenities, the list is spanning: getting the chance to play with and be tossed in the water by older kids, according to 7-year-old Salem Griffith; or the games young members play together — Sharks and Minnows, Gator, line tag and more, said 16-year-old Aiden Palmore.

Twelve-year-old Hayley Palmore’s favorite part about the pool?

“I like the people,” she said.

“We’ve met tons of people through (the club) and a lot of the community that is Salisbury we found through that pool,” said Brian Goodger, who moved to North Carolina when his wife Dr. Diana Riser accepted a professorship at Catawba Collage. The pair moved with their two children Elyse, 8, and Alden, 11.

Like many parents, they were concerned for how the two might adjust in a new environment.

“But it’s been great. It’s one of the things that we did have concerns about moving here, not knowing how quickly our kids would find ‘their’ people,” Goodger said. “But that hasn’t really been an issue; it’s been fast.”

Safrit explained:

“All the kids who come to the pool go to different schools. They see the same people every day during the school year, but when summer times comes and the pool opens up? It’s like going away to summer camp without the crazy expense.”

These forged friendships often last a lifetime — well outside the limits of the pool’s three-month season.



Salem Griffith, 6, leaps off the diving board during a hot summer day.



Tilley Shirleys leaps into the pool on a hot summer day.

“We don’t typically have to be there to watch our kids because of our age,” said founding member Jayne Land of herself and friends Patty Artz and Nancy “Fle” Griffith, “but we go to socialize for us. It’s a great community. I think Eaman Park Pool is a great community.”

For many members, this communal mindset surrounding the pool is closer to a family. Maintenance is often performed by volunteers and funded through membership dues, fundraising efforts, or donations. The language of members is common — it’s “our” pool.

For the 2023 season, maintenance has included a complete resurfacing and retiling, landscaping and painting of the bath houses. The latter, said Griffith, was an undertaking by new members.

“Since the beginning, even from the kids on up, it’s been a community endeavor,” said Corriher.

BECOMING A MEMBER

Of the amenities the Eaman Park Pool Club



Pool toys rest on a lounge chair.

members boast, there are picnic shelters, covered areas, a grill, a diving board, hammocks, a four-square court, bathhouses and more.

Another, listed in all capital letters on the website? No overcrowding.

But, says Safrit, this is not to say that memberships are limited. The club is always seeking

new families, new opportunities to expand this group of people dedicated to a safe, positive and affordable option for local families.

The pool is open 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week, with a three-month season spanning from Memorial Day to Sept. 30. Members can access the pool at any time during these hours with a key fob.

For membership, individuals pay \$325 a season, and families of up to five \$425. The first two years include an additional \$100 new membership fee. Installment plans are available by request.

The value, however, is hard to overlook, says Safrit.

“At \$425, you’re looking at the cost of one night at Great Wolf Lodge,” she said. “Here, you’re getting something for your family to do all summer.”

Those interested in a membership should visit eamanparkpool.com or email eamanparkpool2012@gmail.com. Trial days are also available for \$10 a person. **S**



Graham McKeithan makes his way through the pool with a water squirter.

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Randy Marion is the new owner of three Salisbury car dealerships that were formerly owned by Gerry Wood.



DRIVING *force*

Randy Marion makes presence in Salisbury
after taking over Gerry Wood Auto Group

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WAYNE HINSHAW**



From left: Brenda Wood, Gerry Wood, Randy Marion, Brad Wood, Jennifer Marion Mills and Randy Marion Jr. stand next to a 2023 Honda Odyssey in the showroom.

In early March, Randy Marion Auto Group purchased three Salisbury auto dealerships from Gerry Wood. The businesses are now Randy Marion Honda, Randy Marion Kia and Randy Marion Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram.

FAMILY BUSINESS

It's an understatement to say Randy Marion Auto Group is a family business. Marion's daughter Jennifer Marion Mills will serve as Executive Manager for the Salisbury businesses with the three general managers reporting to her. His

son Randy Jr. serves as vice president and General Manager of the Mooresville Chevrolet, Buick and Cadillac dealership.

Mills' husband Grey, in addition to representing District 95 in the N.C. House, is legal counsel for Randy Marion Auto Group, and for now, it appears that many, if not all, of the grandchildren aspire to work for the company, as well.

Mills' daughter Alexandria is in her second year of law school. After getting her creds, she is interested in joining the family business. Son Grey is a junior at Texas A&M and enjoys working holidays in sales. Mills says he loves the car business! Randy Jr.'s son Randy III, will attend Appalachian State next



Clockwise from top: The Randy Marion badge is seen on a Honda Ridgeline. (Andy Mooney photo); Randy Marion lived in this home in Mooresville in 1990. (Submitted photo); Randy Marion hugs an emotional longtime Gerry Wood employee after the completion of the sale in March.

“ *It’s the popular question, isn’t it? The answer is hard work and people ... our 800 employees are all great workers.* ”

— RANDY MARION
on how he came to own 13 dealerships

year and works at the business on breaks from high school. Other grandchildren are younger and not yet personally involved in the business.

Moreover, the Marion family considers their employees to be extended family. His priority, Mills says, during the recession of 2008, and again during the pandemic, was to save jobs. She is proud to report that not one employee lost a job due to those challenging times. When the former employees of Gerry Wood stayed on to work for Marion, they received checks for \$1,000 as a sign of appreciation.

So, the question is, how did Randy Marion come to own 13 locations, nine car franchises and over 200 acres of car lots? Mills chuckles as she answers.

“It’s the popular question, isn’t it? The answer is hard work and people. Dad always says he’d love to take all the credit, but our 800 employees are all great workers. Dad worked hard and made time for family. Mom supported incredibly.”

Mom is Betty Marion. She stayed home during the early years,

caring for the family. Today she is president and owner of a fleet company.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Randy Marion started working at age 12 and never stopped. At age 21, he started selling cars with his dad in West Virginia, where he grew up.

In 1987, Marion had the opportunity to work with Dick Keffer in Mooresville. If the partnership worked out, he could buy out Keffer when he was ready to retire. He sold much of what he had and moved the family to a small home in Mooresville in order to garner a down payment.

The Keffer dealership was quite modest compared to Marion’s current lots. Housed in a small brick building with wooden painted signs, it was Marion’s beginning to the current empire. Today he owns dealerships in Mooresville, Huntersville, Statesville, West Jefferson, Wilkesboro, Hickory and Salisbury.

PHILANTHROPY

Marion’s grandfather was one of three people who founded their home church in West Virginia. Today Marion continues to contribute to that church as well as their church in Mooresville. The company makes it a point to give to worthwhile organizations in each community where they have a presence. “It’s important we take care of the communities where we are,” Mills says. In fact, the Randy Marion website has a page where nonprofits can request donations. Vice presidents of the company look at all requests and decide where they can give. They receive over 700 requests a year, so it’s a tough decision.





Above: Randy Marion addresses the employees after the signing of sales papers in March. Gerry Wood is on the left.

The Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram dealership with the new Randy Marion banner.





Sign crews remove the Gerry Wood name from the Honda dealership in March.

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HONORS

Marion was recognized by Time magazine in 2003 and awarded honors as National Dealer of the Year in 2010 and 2020. He's been awarded the Order of the Longleaf Pine. Although he has not attended college, he holds an honorary doctorate from Gardner-Webb College.

FUTURE

Marion is 71 years old but says he has absolutely no plans to retire. He enjoys attending Duke basketball games but maintains his favorite hobby is work.

The company has another acquisition in the works but it's still a little early to announce. Although they have no plans for further growth, they say if another great opportunity comes open, Marion will definitely consider it.

"I'm a little overwhelmed at how nice and friendly everyone has been in welcoming us to Salisbury," Marion says, "and look forward to becoming part of the community." **S**

Randy Marion Kia, Honda and Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, RAM are located at 414, 525 and 529 Jake Alexander Blvd. in Salisbury. Website is randymarion.com.



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Above: Sally Taylor with grandson Maddox Lee Taylor. Below: Ashley, Andrew and Olivia Moleta enjoy the fare.



Derby Holshouser, Linda Holshouser, Lora Owen and Sandra Owen have been attending the Pancake Festival for years.



Below left: Allison Doby, Ann Edison, Kyle Yoder, Melissa Yates and Mike Edwards. Below middle: Salisbury Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield came early to support Kiwanis. Below right: Landyn Kessler, Anderson Kessler and Ryleigh Lohnes are just a few of the many Key Club members who gave a helping hand during the festival. Many pancake diners remarked on how hard the young people worked.

Kiwanis Pancake Festival

The Kiwanis Club of Salisbury held its 66th annual Pancake Festival at the J.F. Hurley YMCA. The local club was founded in 1920; Kiwanis International has been around since 1915. The motto of Kiwanis is, "Serving the Children of the World." The local club supports many local initiatives to help children, such as purchasing car seats for low-income families, providing e-readers for preschool children through ApSeed Elementary Education; providing books for preschoolers through Smart Start Rowan and more.

The club meets every Friday from noon to 1 p.m. at the Country Club of Salisbury.

— Maggie Blackwell photos





Above: Joshek Avalos, Lesly Hernandez, Madison Gooch, Elise Ellis, Tiayana Hanson and Elizabeth Alvarado-Martinez: more hard-working Key Club members. Right: Ron Bowers, Richard Miller and Antonio Cervantes. There was lots of fun from this bunch as they flipped pancakes.



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Barbara Mallett, 'Legacy of a Leader'



Southern City Tabernacle AME Zion Church celebrated Mayor Barbara Mallett of East Spencer with a “Legacy of a Leader” service. Elected leaders at all levels attended to recognize the Mayor. N.C. State Representative Harry Warren presented her with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest citizen recognition in the state. State Senator Carl Ford presented her with a flag flown over the state capitol in her honor.

Mallett served as City Clerk for the town for 20 years before first being elected to town council in 2005. She was elected mayor in 2009 and has served ever since.

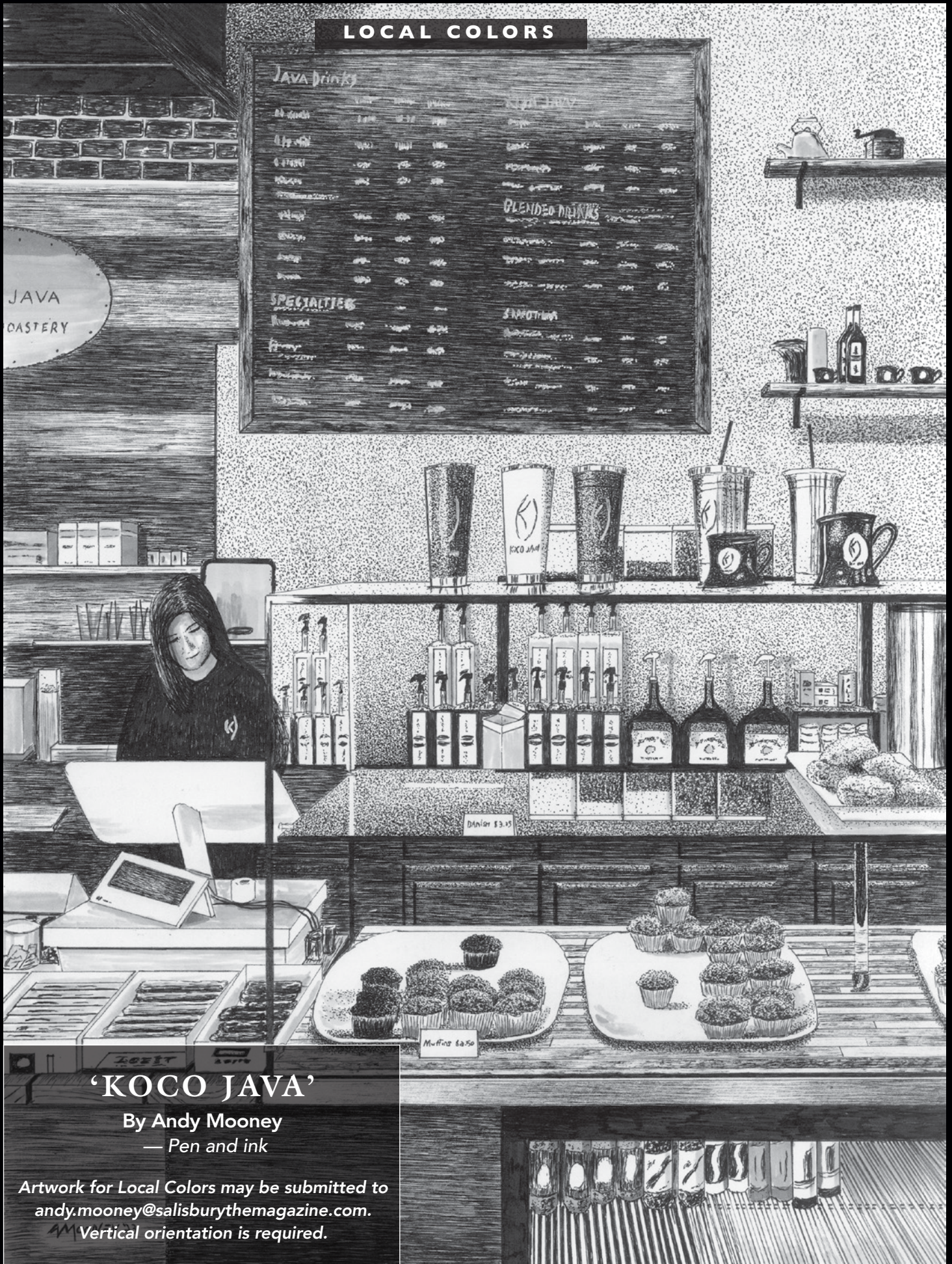
East Spencer has many projects in the works, including demolition and rehabilitation of dilapidated homes, redevelopment of the Long Street Corridor, a gateway corridor to Interstate 85, improving the water delivery system, rebuilding Royal Giants park and more.

The celebration included testimonials from family, friends and colleagues in government.

— Submitted photos



LOCAL COLORS



'KOCO JAVA'

By Andy Mooney
— Pen and ink

Artwork for Local Colors may be submitted to
andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com.
Vertical orientation is required.

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