

August 2016

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by **SUSAN  
SHINN**

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**On the cover:** Molly Cherry swings near the treehouse owned by her parents. — *Photo by Jon C. Lakey*





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# Come home to Salisbury — we'll leave the lights on

**I**t happened again the other day. I answered the telephone at my newsroom desk, and a friend on the end of the line was telling me I had left my truck's lights on.

Only a couple weeks earlier I had committed the same sin — locking up my truck and leaving the lights on after a summer thunderstorm. On that occasion, in rapid succession, three different people driving or walking by called to let me know.

These experiences tell me several things: One, I'm scatterbrained. Two, people have figured out I drive an old truck. And three, it's sort of nice to live in a small town where neighbors are looking out for you and your truck.

After they finished college, both of my sons settled in large metropolitan areas. They both ride the subways in their cities to work. They can attend major league baseball, football, soccer and basketball games. Great concerts and theater productions are always available to them, as are impressive daily newspapers and stylish magazines reflecting where they live.

I sometimes envy their city-slicker status and all the fine restaurants, museums and parks available to them. I love the hustle and bustle — people of all shapes, sizes, ages and nationalities walking on the streets with a purpose.

But after visits, after timing arrivals and departures by the heaviest traffic times, I'm also happy to get back home — as slow-paced and boring as it might be.

I like rolling out of bed, hopping in the truck and being at work in 15 minutes, going through only three traffic lights on the way. I like seeing people I know at the grocery store. I like finding an easy parking space most everywhere I go.

For the exercise I do these days, Salisbury has more than enough parks and greenways for me. For the kind of wild nightlife I'm after, going to an American Legion or a Kannapolis Intimidators baseball game represents my fast lane.

I could go on with corny, sappy, All-American, Southern images of



this place we call home. Iced tea on the porch. Spitting watermelon seeds in the backyard. Fireworks on the Fourth. Stopping for funeral processions. Covered-dish suppers. Dove hunting in the early morning. Fiery letters to the editor. Friday night high school football. Masonic picnics. Bass fishing at the lake. Tomato sandwiches. Antebellum homes. Country churches. Christmas parades. Barbecue and hush puppies. Ice cream on your truck's tailgate.

But the fact is, these things really are givens in a small town. We don't make them up for a book or movie. Likewise, I have lived

here more than 36 years, and I know I will never come close to meeting all the interesting people or places Rowan County and the Piedmont in general have to offer. It's enough for hundreds of lifetimes, and I'll never catch up.

This month's issue will introduce you to more special people: Trent and Ashley Cherry and their treehouse escape near China Grove, Rita Rodelli and her lavender garden, Elmer Edwards and his banjos and Wendy Beeker and the personal journey that influenced her home-decorating style.

Allana Ansbros pays a visit to artist Leslie Hudson-Tolles in Cleveland, and Laurie D. Willis gives us an inside look at Livingstone College's culinary and hospitality management program. You'll also find stories on 19th century St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and learn more about runner/cyclist David Freeze, this month's Rowan Original.

At the end of this issue, Evelyn Medina, a native of Guatemala, tells us how she found a home in Salisbury. She doesn't say it in exactly this way, but I think she discovered the one magic thing:

Salisbury has neighbors who will look after her and her truck. S

**Mark Wineka,**  
*Editor, Salisbury the Magazine*



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# Looking inward at ourselves

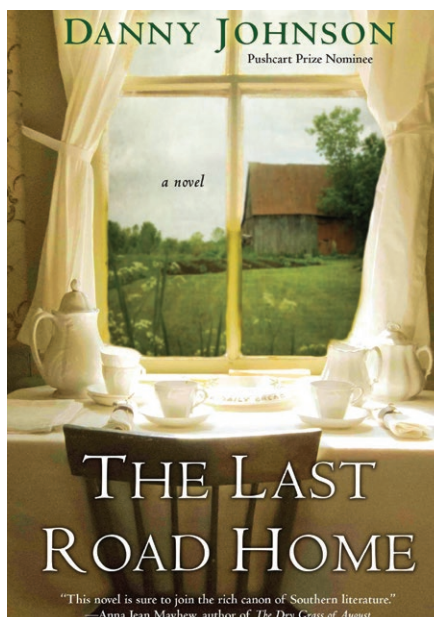
For that last read of summer, “The Book That Matters Most,” by Ann Hood follows a mother and daughter as they discover mysteries from the past which can ultimately bring healing to both.

Ava’s 25-year marriage has fallen apart. Daughter Maggie is living in Paris, in a destructive relationship with an older man. Ava joins a book club where members must present the book that matters most to them. Ava remembers a book from her childhood that helped her get through the deaths of her mother and sister. Her quest to find it and its author changes her life and her daughter’s.

Not just for book lovers, the novel travels a cycle of discovery for both women.

Racial tension and unrest are on the rise, despite gains over the last 150 years. “The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race,” edited by Jesmyn Ward, honestly considers the issue. Ward is a National Book Award winner. “The Fire This Time” takes James Baldwin’s “The Fire Next Time,” a 1963 examination of race in America, and brings the concept forward. Baldwin’s book was written on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. He wrote then, “You know and I know that the country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon.”

Ward gathers short essays, memoir and poems to again address the question of race in America and reflects that we are not a “post



racial” society. Among the contributors are Jericho Brown, Edwidge Danticat, Mitchell S. Jackson, Natasha Trethewey and Kevin Young.

For something with a North Carolina flavor, look for “The Last Road Home” by Danny Johnson, set for release in August.

Johnson is a Vietnam veteran who has been a member of the North Carolina Writ-

er’s Network and has been a fiction judge for the Weymouth Center for Arts and Humanities. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

“The Last Ride Home” is the story of Raeford “Junebug” Hurley who loses his parents and goes to live with his grandparents on their tobacco farm. There he meets Fancy Stroud and her twin brother, Lightning, who are black sharecroppers. Junebug and Fancy have a friendship that runs deep. Then Junebug gets sucked into a moneymaking scheme that goes bad and must embark on a journey that takes him through loss and war toward understanding. Fancy must try to find her place in a world not welcoming to African Americans.

Looking forward to September, UNC Press is publishing “The South in Color,” by William Ferris, with a foreword by Tom Rankin.

Ferris has been photographing the South for years, documenting the tumultuous 20th century. He starts the book with photos of a farm in Vicksburg, Miss., with family and hired hands gathered together. The color photographs tell a deeper story than black and white, Ferris believes, and he uses the color for everything from that farm to roadside signs, folk art, roads, landscapes and people.

Rankin is professor of visual studies at Duke University. Ferris is a professor of history at UNC-Chapel Hill and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. His two previous books are “Give My Poor Heart Ease” and “The Storied South,” creating an informal trilogy of our era. [S](#)



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THROUGH THE LENS / *by jon c. lakey*

The rolling flames from a blacksmith's forge are frozen in time with a fast shutter speed. This single frame captured the flames in the shape of a face in profile.





# Road warrior

Mile after mile, David Freeze is not one for giving up. / *By* MARK WINEKA

In June, David Freeze was at it again, this time making a solo bicycle trip from Santa Monica, Calif., to Chicago and following as much as he could of the original Route 66.

The trip, as always, posed serious challenges for the 63-year-old runner/cyclist, not the least of which was getting across the Mojave Desert. Freeze again sent daily dispatches to the Salisbury Post while he was on the road.

Freeze has written three books based on previous cycling trips. “Lord, Ride with Me Today” chronicled his Oregon to Myrtle Beach, S.C., journey. “Pedaling, Prayers and Perseverance” covered his Maine to Key West, Fla., excursion, during which he was only slightly delayed after a vehicle hit him and his bicycle as he was going through Florida.

Last year, Freeze wrote “Riding the Rails of Freedom” after going from Mobile, Ala., to Toronto, Canada, by following the route of the Underground Railroad. If everything went right this summer — he was on his trip when this issue was sent off to the printer — he collectively will have cycled through 41 different states on his four trips.

**David Freeze is known locally for his cross-country bicycle trips and being an advocate for running and healthy living. Freeze also operates a small farm in western Rowan County.**

*Photo by* Jon C. Lahey.





Freeze was born in Salisbury and grew up on a dairy farm off Millbridge Road. He graduated from South Rowan High and attended Western Carolina University for a couple of years before finishing his bachelor's degree in business at Catawba College. He later earned a master's degree in organizational leadership from Pfeiffer.

Over the years, Freeze has worked in various levels of management, most of it with horticultural distribution businesses. He is the driving force behind Salisbury-Rowan Runners and is a frequent contributor to the Post with his stories on fitness, running and race results.

Freeze's family includes daughters Amber Freeze and Ashley Baker (and Ashley's husband, Dale), sister Patricia Freeze, brother Larry Freeze and nephew Sammy Freeze, who is "my farm helper," David says. Salisbury the Magazine recently caught up with David Freeze, a Rowan Original:

**Q. What drives you to take on these arduous, cross-country trips on your bicycle? Why do you do it?**

I first wanted to see the country but do it in a way where I could experience America, not just see it. Riding on these trips combines a physical challenge, a real sense of adventure and a chance to meet people. Originally, I thought the focus of the trip would be incredible scenery, but experiences interacting with the people have nosed out the scenery.

**Q. How close have you come on any of the trips to deciding you couldn't go on because of an accident, fatigue or illness?**

I've been very fortunate. I was warned by a veteran long-distance cyclist to not give up in



David Freeze has cycled nearly 10,000 miles over three long-distance journeys. Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

the first week or when crossing the Rockies. Nothing has made me want to give up so far, not even the Florida accident.

My daughter Ashley did call right after the accident and say, "OK, Dad, it is time for you to give up this craziness and come on home." I was on another bike and riding toward Key West again within three hours. So far, I have been so excited about each new day's ride that there have been no rest days in almost 10,000 miles of riding.

**Q. Who's the favorite person you've met or the favorite place you have visited on one of these trips?**

I met a guy called "Mountain Man," just as I had crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky on my cross-country ride. His goal was to be lowered by crane into the Ohio River while handcuffed and chained into a casket. He wanted to prove he could get out.

Another was a chance meeting with a guy

who claimed to be Elvis' brother on a hot Sunday afternoon in southern Illinois near the Mississippi River.

My favorite place so far is the Wind River Canyon in Wyoming, site of ever-changing colors on sandstone and rock walls. The colors change because of the direction of the sun, how clouds pass over and the angle that you view the walls from. I was mesmerized. All this was on a quiet Indian reservation with little traffic just after passing through Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons with their overwhelming tourist traffic.

**Q. How did you become interested in running and why is it so important to you?**

I had been playing team sports in my early 20s and was gaining weight. I watched the New York City Marathon on TV and made the comment that I might want to try that. My wife at that time laughed herself silly at the mention of it. I was in the very next New





David Freeze bales hay for his Arabian horses. Photo by Jon C. Lakey.



David Freeze is also a freelance writer, who regularly submits stories to the Salisbury Post. Here, he interviews Gary Lowder from the band Smokin' Hot.

Photo by Jon C. Lakey.

York City Marathon!

Running has made me who I am, and allowed me to encourage others to get the same benefits that I have experienced. Nothing inspires better than a 5-mile run at 5:30 in the quiet stillness of the early morning. The great feeling lasts all day. Better health, mental clarity and confidence are just a few of the benefits I attribute to running.

**Q. What kind of work are you doing with the Price of Freedom Museum near China Grove?**

I get to interview the military veterans who are willing to tell about their experiences from World War II and the Korean War. We will include more Vietnam vets soon. Their answers are videotaped and played back later when the



museum has special events. It is a distinct honor to get to interact with these great men and women who have guaranteed our freedom through their sacrifices.

**Q. Tell us about the health scare you had not too long ago:**

At the end of my 2013 cross-country ride, I began to have trouble breathing and my pulse was rapid, both resting and during exercise. I had a DVT — a big blood clot in my leg. Once it was discovered, scans revealed both lungs full of more clots. With that discovery, the doctors also checked for any clots in my brain. No clots were found, but a small brain tumor was.

After several MRIs and a visit to a brain surgeon in Charlotte, we made plans to deal with the tumor once my clots were dissolved. An additional MRI about 10 weeks later found that the brain tumor was no longer there. The doctors had no explanation, but I will always credit the power of prayer from the churches and individuals who took time to ask God to heal me once the situation became public.

**Q. What's something people probably don't know about you?**

I took piano lessons for 10 years. I don't play nearly as much anymore, but I do love to sit down every couple of weeks and play old hymns. The fast pace of life slows down and any stress goes to the back burner. I only sing then and when I ride the bike. That way, nobody is exposed to the terrible sound for very long.

**Q. Who do you consider one of your mentors?**

Frank Patterson. I grew up working for



David Freeze speaks during his reception at the China Grove Roller Mill after his third trip, which was from Alabama to Toronto, Ontario. Photo by Andy Mooney.

Patterson's Tomato Farm, and Frank made a special impression on me. A little later in life, I realized that certain qualities were what made him such a good man. A man of faith, hard-working, community-oriented, a great family man and always level-headed. At a time in my life when I needed stability, Frank and the Patterson family provided it. Once when I was working late in one of the fields alone, Frank drove up and said, "Come on, let's go see the women's church softball team play." A small thing, but a very pleasant memory.

**Q. Five words you would use to describe Rowan County:**

Friendly, supportive, peaceful, historic, the best place for home (I've seen a lot of states).

**Q. What's your pet peeve?**

Same as it has always been. If you make a commitment to do something, then follow through and do it. Don't leave someone else counting on you. Commitment says a lot about character.

**Q. What's your favorite local restaurant?**

Subway. I had a girlfriend once who got perturbed with me for going there so much. It seems like I get a free sandwich every couple of weeks with their rewards card. The Palms, DJ's and Hendrix are other favorites.

**Q. What two foods are always in your fridge or pantry?**

Morningstar veggie burgers and plenty of yogurt. During the summer, add watermelon.

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

Be aware of what is going on around you. Strive to always be informed of local and world happenings. Develop a good work ethic. Be engaged, giving of yourself to your community. **S**





Left: Leslie Hudson-Tolles talks to one of her two horses, X-Tra, in the barn at her home in Cleveland. Opposite: Hudson-Tolles gives student David Willingham some pointers for his dog piece during class at her in-home studio.

# ‘A passion’

Artist Leslie Hudson-Tolles’ love for horses has fueled an inspiration since childhood.

*Written by* ALLANA ANSBRO | *Photography by* ALLISON LEE ISLEY

**E**ver since artist Leslie Hudson-Tolles can remember, she dreamed of life on a farm with horses she could call her own.

After decades of hard work, Hudson-Tolles now lives in Cleveland, with her husband, Richard, on a 25-acre farm that has three dogs, a puppy, a cat and two horses.

“So this is what I tell my kids,” Leslie says, “it may have taken me into my 60s to get my farm, but it doesn’t make it any less

precious, and maybe more precious.”

Although Hudson-Tolles is recognized as an International Equine Artist, she also does a variety of artwork on other animals and children. Within her home, around every corner, there are numerous pieces on display, some of which feature her husband, daughters and pets.

To Leslie, her art is more than just a hobby. “It’s a passion, it’s a way of life and it’s all encompassing.”

Raised in Amherst, N.Y., she couldn’t have been further from her dream. As a child, she drew horses to make up for the fact that she couldn’t own one.

As she grew older, her passion for art and horses grew with her.









She attended West Virginia Wesleyan College and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. After graduation, she had saved up to buy her first horse.

In graduate school at Southern Connecticut State University, she studied as a print maker and earned her master's degree.

For 32 years, Hudson-Tolles lived in Newtown, Conn., where she raised her two

daughters there as a single mother.

She taught art during the summer at Sandy Hook Elementary School before the shooting tragedy. While living in Connecticut, she founded the Newtown Bridle Lanes Association and was active in the Connecticut Horse Council and the Connecticut Morgan Horse Association.

In 2006, she moved to North Carolina with four Morgan horses. She is a signature

member of the Institute of Equine Artists and belongs to the Piedmont Pastel Society and Mooresville Artists Guild.

Hudson-Tolles recently traveled to Newtown to participate with the NBLA in a dedication of the Trail of Angels, a walking and riding trail honoring the victims of the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

She now works with a large collection of pastels and some colored pencils, sculpts





and draws.

She teaches art part-time at Sacred Heart Catholic School and instructs at an after-school art camp at St. John's Lutheran Church for its Barnabas program.

"Things will get in the way of your dreams," Leslie says. "Don't give them up. Just don't give them up. Because when they come through, it's so good."

She works on her art from her home in

her personal studio and holds bimonthly art classes there for adults on Saturday mornings. She even runs a small business, Tolholm Studio, with its own Facebook page she uses to sell her artwork.

"When you buy a piece of art, you're buying the training, the education and experimentation, the trial and error, the failures and frustrations, the long winding road of an artist's visual journey," Leslie

**Above left:** Leslie Hudson-Tolles works on a pastel piece of her new puppy, Rosebud, during studio time at her home in Cleveland. **Top:** Hudson-Tolles enjoys studio time at her home in Cleveland. **Above:** Ali Khatib, left, 12, and his brother, Fares Khatib, 10, shine a flashlight on one of Hudson-Tolles' horse paintings during her downtown demo on First Friday in Salisbury on June 3.



says.

Waterworks Art Museum and Fine Frame Gallery in Salisbury, the Hickory Art Museum, Koenig Frameworks in Newtown and The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center in Wyoming all display works by Leslie. She is also one of six artists displaying art at the Hiddenite Arts Center in Hiddenite.

“I’m so blessed,” she says. “Because the thing about being an artist is you’re a hand maiden to your art. You can’t help it. It calls you. It can call you when you’re stressed, it can call you when you just want to relax, and it gives back, too.”

In July, Leslie traveled to The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Range in Wyoming with a group of students to draw, paint and photograph the wild horses. She encourages anyone interested in her classes to contact her for more information.

Although she will have to retire from teaching at some point, she knows her art is a lifetime commitment.

“Artists never retire,” Leslie says. “... It’s part of who you are. It’s

**Leslie Hudson-Tolles’ pastel of her dog, Phoenix, which she created during her downtown demo on First Friday in Salisbury.**



more than a career, and sometimes it just won’t let you alone and you just wish that you were a normal person.” S

*Allana Ansbro is a senior at the University of North Carolina-Asheville and has been a summer intern at the Salisbury Post.*

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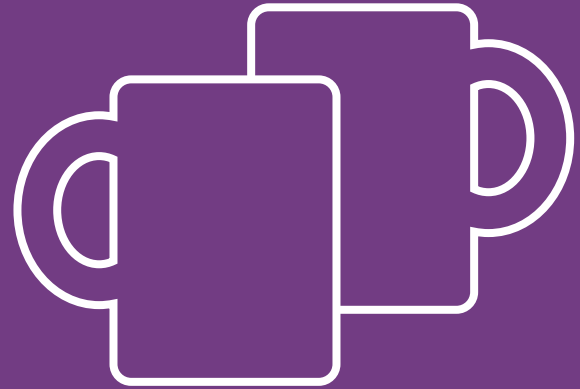
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# The Blue Bear CAFÉ

Livingstone students learn the ropes  
at the hospitality progwwram's restaurant.

*Written by* LAURIE D. WILLIS

*Photography by* ALLISON LEE ISLEY

**C**hefs put final touches on entrees as patrons, dining at beautifully decorated tables, converse over appetizers while listening to piped-in '70s hits. Servers refill glasses with water and iced tea as the hostess greets customers with an effervescent smile.

It's a scene that could play out at most any restaurant in the country. However, on this night, the locale is the former Holiday Inn on Jake Alexander Boulevard in Salisbury, and students in Livingstone College's School of Hospitality Management & Culinary Arts are in charge.

Never mind it is 7 p.m. on a Friday, when most college kids are gearing up for the weekend. The students are interested only in taking excellent care of their patrons who have paid more than \$30 each for dinner.







Janice Hunt, a student in Livingstone College's culinary arts program, places a dish of vegetable soup on a tray to be served to a guest at the Meadowsweel restaurant in Salisbury on a Friday evening. The culinary arts students take part in a 'First Dinner Series' and create their own restaurants, run the restaurants, and serve real customers a five-course meal. Hunt was the main chef for the night and the vegetable soup was the second course of the meal.





**Above:** William and Sharon Coleman share a laugh while enjoying the second course of their meal at the 'grand opening' of Meadowsweel, a restaurant serving American food, at Livingstone's restaurant.

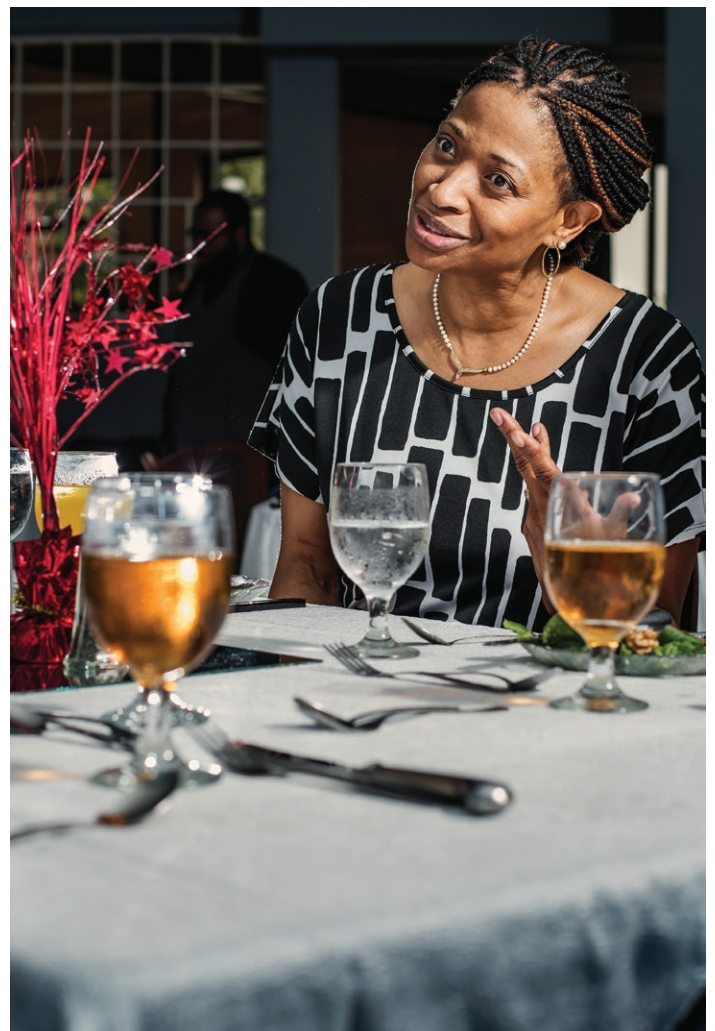
**Right:** Dr. Vivian Ray, director of the School of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts, joins patrons for a chat during their meal.

It was all part of HMG 340: Restaurant & Food Management, an upper-level class that teaches students how to execute restaurant grand openings. On four consecutive Fridays, students served customers at the restaurant unofficially named the Blue Bear Café. They did everything from menu planning to advertising, and though Director Dr. Vivian Ray was present, she offered little to no assistance.

"I would have stepped in had there been a major faux pas," Ray says, "but once these students graduate and obtain jobs I won't be around to bail them out. As director, my job is to ensure they learn everything they need to know to be successful in the hospitality industry."

Ray put away her administrative hat during the "Dinner Series." In fact, on one night instead of directing traffic, she dined with Nigel and Sarah Alston, Livingstone alumni who drove 45 minutes from Winston-Salem for dinner.

"We enjoyed the meal, the coziness of the setting and the attention to detail," Nigel said. "We eat out daily, and the meal was definitely worth \$30. We were impressed with everything."





**Right: A dish at the grand opening of Meadowsweel, a student restaurant serving American food. Below: Davon Shaw, general manager, shares a laugh with a patron.**

Livingstone's hospitality program has received rave reviews since its inception in 2012. Kudos have come from dental workers who experienced the students' culinary skills during one of several community events at which they've participated. Salisbury-area residents who were treated to a 2015 Christmas feast sang their praises. And so have alumni and trustees for whom they've cooked.

That the program is doing well is no surprise. Ray, a 30-year veteran in the hospitality industry, has studied at La Varenne Cooking School in France and completed a three-year apprenticeship in New Orleans, where she developed an affinity for Creole and Cajun cooking. She has worked at restaurants, country clubs and hotels and taught at Purdue University and the University of Central Florida. What helps make her so good is the ability to dish just the right amounts of tenderness and toughness to students who affectionately call her Chef Ray.

Yet despite her stellar background, Ray is quick to credit the program's success in large measure to Livingstone President Dr. Jimmy R. Jenkins Sr. A consummate visionary, he first considered a hospitality program in Florida in the early 2000s after being appointed by then Gov. Jeb Bush to a study commission examining problems between African-American college students and hotel and restaurant owners.

In demonstrations garnering national headlines from Daytona Beach, Fla., students alleged racial discrimination by hotel and restaurant owners there. At the time, Jenkins was president of Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Fla.

After assuming the Livingstone presidency, Jenkins didn't abandon the lessons he learned from the study commission. Instead, the



institution's hospitality program is a direct byproduct of that experience.

When Livingstone's program debuted in 2012, the institution pulled out all the stops. A bear ice sculpture adorned the Events & Hospitality Center, apropos given Livingstone's mascot is the Blue Bear. There was live music. And students in white jackets and



chefs' hats served eats for a variety of palates, including pasta, lamb chops, crab claws, ham, oysters, turkey and an assortment of fruits, cheeses and delectable desserts.

Local dignitaries attended. So did some of Ray's former students from Indiana and Florida and a Duke University chef with whom she worked while serving as catering director at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro.

Back then the program was on campus; however, it quickly burgeoned, creating the need for Livingstone to purchase the hotel on Jake Alexander Boulevard.

"Under the direction of Dr. Vivian Ray, the hospitality program continues exceeding my expectations," Jenkins says. "Despite the economy, people still eat out, stay in hotels and require space for conferences. I'm grateful Livingstone's program is doing so well and adequately preparing students for careers in hospitality."

Count Timothy Gray and Kevin Pettice among those students.

Gray won a scholarship to obtain a culinary arts certificate at Livingstone but is now working toward a degree. This summer as sous chef to Carowinds' Executive Chef Kris



**FOOD / blue bear café**

Siuta, he's responsible for ensuring food quality control is met at every food and beverage stand in the amusement park. He's also the lead cook at Genesis Health Care in Salisbury.

Pettice, a May graduate, spent two summers in Disney World's highly competitive internship program and is now in Disney's management-in-training program with plans to attend the University of Central Florida's renowned Rosen School of Hospitality Management in the fall.


Both men consider Ray the perfect person to elevate Livingstone's hospitality program — an accolade she appreciates but doesn't relish. As hotel renovations continue, she's focusing on increasing enrollment, arranging opportunities for students and positioning hospitality management among Livingstone's most popular majors. She's also trying to organize a trip to France for selected students.

"We've accomplished a lot in the program in just four years, but Dr. Jenkins and I envision significantly more growth," Ray says. "I'm thoroughly pleased with it thus far and the caliber of students we've attracted."

Added Gray: "If you want to work in the hospitality industry, then you absolutely want to be at Livingstone College. Enrolling in their

**Chef Karrell Darden, culinary arts professor, right, helps student Robert Coleman prepare cranberry spinach salads.**



program is the best thing I could have done. It's given me a new lease on life, opened doors I never even imagined and positioned me for an exciting future." 

*Laurie D. Willis is assistant director of public relations for Livingstone College and also is a freelance writer and owner of Laurie's Write Touch.*



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# The personal touch

Go ahead, decorate with things that mean something to you.

*Written by* WENDY BEEKER | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY



Wendy Beeker's antique typewriter immediately makes the tabletop much more interesting.





Dining room with piano that came with the house.

“Decorating” is such a featherweight word for the process of making your home reflect what you hold dear. And yet, there exists no other word that comes closer to the process.

I’d love to say here and now that I have invented one – but sadly, I have not. So “decorating” it is, and here is how it has come to mean so much to me.

My parents started building a beautiful A-frame house that overlooked Conesus Lake in Upstate New York when I was about 8. It was on the hill above my grandmother’s cottage where I spent all my summers.

Not many people back then were “year-rounders.” Most people came for the summer and packed it all up Labor Day weekend. But there we were: my parents; my younger brother, Dan; and myself. Well, for a while. Building a house puts a special strain on any relationship, but I’d be lying if I said my parents had a special relationship. By the time I was 10, they were divorced,

the house was sold and the profits split. So began my apartment-living life.

Dan and I lived with both parents at different times. We moved a lot. The places we lived were not penthouse apartments. They weren’t even in buildings that had penthouse apartments. We lived for a year in a basement apartment with my mother. The kids in the complex crouched down to look into our living room window.

All of the apartments shared that basic contractor white paint (that isn’t as white as it is more of a dingy prison drab) and various gold-green shades of worn, dirty shag carpet.

It wasn’t all terrible. In the summer, we still had our grandmother and her cottage.

Our cottage neighbors then in the 1960s are still our neighbors. Grown old, married,



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more children. That cottage is what defined comfort for me and the first place that I ever felt at home. And isn't "home" such a big word? The water lapping against the break wall, fish jumping as the sun goes down, the quiet voices of fishermen in the early mornings as the sun rises across the lake. The texture of the trees, the grass, the water and the cottage itself — a wooden, dark brown-stained affair with creamy golden yellow trim.

The castoffs and necessities were as familiar to me as the people in my family.

When Jock and I married, we bought our first house in December 1988. It was a sweet little bungalow that I immediately began to paint anything but white. I hand-sanded the oak floors. I planted flowers that I knew nothing about. We had our two sons and a plastic blow-up pool in the summers. Then we moved to coastal Georgia — two more houses, a baby girl, and I opened my first shop. I began collecting and paying more attention to the intention of decorating and what it meant to me and my family of five.

We had been back in Salisbury for five years when we found our current house in Spencer, a year ago. That it was cheap was the best thing that could be said. And it had good bones. Ever hear anyone say that about a house? It's about looking past the dirt and grime, the dead bugs and the unfortunate color choices, to the essence of a house. The Realtor told me on the phone that it was a "fixer-upper." She didn't lie.

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Above: Black-and-white photographs hang behind some old cameras.



Left: A peek into the laundry room from the kitchen.





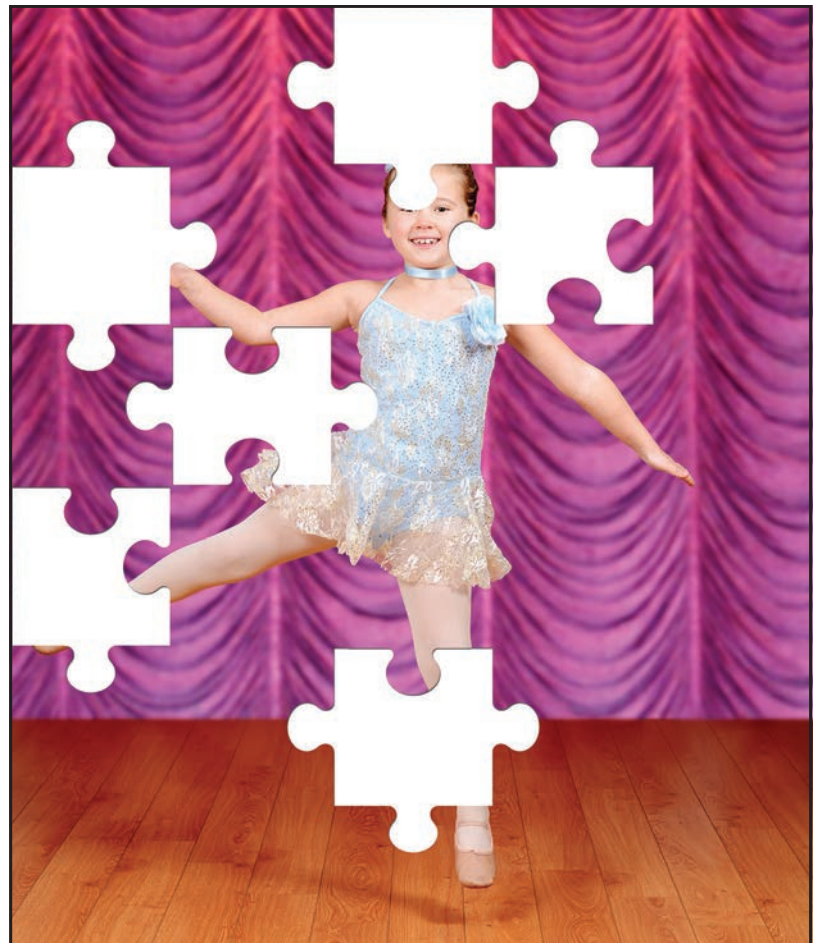
An end table made with a slab of marble. The wooden part of the table came out of a family workshop and was headed for the trash pile.

But all I could see were the possibilities: the old kitchen farm sink, the laundry room with beaded board walls, even the old brown piano sitting squarely in the otherwise empty dining room (I had always coveted Carrie's white painted, upright piano since first seeing it stacked with various old books).

I have learned a lot about color and decorating in the days since my first store in 2001. I've learned a lot about myself, too. I love color — adore it — but my palette is more muted now; gray-blues and creamy whites are the colors that speak to me.

I love painting a piece of furniture a bold color for two reasons: It doesn't overpower a room and it's easily changed. I love orange but c'mon, how long will I love it if I paint an entire room that color?

Early on, when Jock and I were first married, I was so eager to decorate and furnish our first home that I bought a lot of new stuff. Now, in this 1929 bungalow (another bungalow!), I have



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Top: Willow Beeker straightens an item in a glass hutch. Above: Brown medicine glass jugs with burlap couch cushions. Right: A collection of oil cans, several of which were handed down from family members.





Clockwise from above: Plates and glassware in a cabinet; Distressed repurposed shelf in the dining room; An old bench serves as a bookcase in the hallway; A shelf in the hall holds small items; Black-and-white family photos hang on a weathered door.





one new piece of furniture — a sofa. The rest are pieces that I traded for, inherited (like my grandfather's marble countertops from his insurance office that are now a coffee table and a side table in the living room), or paid very little for. I realized somewhere along the line that it wasn't about a designer label or a steep price tag.

I have a collection of shells from the beach in Georgia and a tin deed box full of worn gray stones from the lake in New York that I pile on the dining room table for decoration. FiestaWare became an obsession because it's all my Grandmother Harriet ever used at the lake.

The collection of tiny oil cans began when I found a couple in the shed where my great grandfather stored them in the 1930s. What manner of items he used them on, I'll never

know, but I love their thick oily patina and that they smell like an old lawn mower.

I have learned how to build the rooms of my house with the things that are meaningful to us and to do it over time. It's just a process that can't be hurried.

The beautiful piece of pottery from my friend Cheryl or a framed print that came from a book I bought in Paris are sweeter because of their memories and ties to people and place.

So this house, with its leaky roof and imperfect plaster walls, is my texture and comfort. It holds me dear. S

*Wendy Beeker is owner of South Main Book Company (formerly the Literary Bookpost) in Salisbury. She is currently working on a book of her own, 43 years in the making.*

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# WITH A BANJO ON HIS KNEE

Elmer Edwards makes custom instruments that are highly sought after.

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

**I**n the early 1970s, Elmer Edwards, a machinist by trade, also was playing his banjo on the side with various bluegrass groups.

Edwards and the Balsam Mountain Boys were performing one Saturday morning on a WBUY radio show in Lexington, and after he packed up and headed to the parking lot, Chubby Wise was waiting for him.

Wise was a well-known country and bluegrass fiddler, and Edwards remembered him from the days when he had played in Bristol, Va., back in the mountains where Edwards had been raised. Traveling north from Florida and heading now toward Tennes-

see, Wise had heard the local radio show in his car and realized it was Edwards playing the banjo.

Wise drove to the radio station to make his pitch: Would Edwards head off to Nashville with him and play the Grand Ole Opry?

“Chubby, I can’t,” Edwards said.

Wise wanted a good reason why not.

“I have four of them — a wife and three children,” Edwards said.

Edwards watched Wise and his chance to play with another country music legend drive away, but he had no regrets.

“Family is important to me,” Edwards says. “I’m from a big family, and I have seen so many families get broken up from such as that. Often I wonder what would have become of me. You daydream — that’s the way I put it.”

Wise, who died in 1996, played with the likes of Bill Monroe, Hank Snow and Flat & Scruggs. He was co-author of one of the most famous fiddle



songs of all time, “The Orange Blossom Special.”

So Edwards’ saying “no” was harder than you might expect. “But I had a wonderful family,” Edwards explains again.

Edwards, now 80, can play the banjo, guitar, fiddle and mandolin, but his favorite instrument will always be the banjo. In much younger days, his music and various gigs took him as far as Detroit and pretty much the whole southeastern United States.

In his early 20s, he married his childhood sweetheart, Veronica, who taught at the same three-room school house in the Virginia mountains where they had both attended.

Edwards ended up briefly working in coal mines as his father had. He and Veronica had a little girl, but coal mining held no future. So on March 3, 1959, Edwards moved to North

Carolina and took a job at Erlanger Mills in Lexington.

“I’ve never been without a job since,” he says. Always able to build most anything with his hands, Edwards became a machinist. He and his wife added two sons to their family, and he would eventually retire from a machine shop in High Point.

To earn extra money, Edwards built banjos (and other instruments), setting up his shop at his home near Tyro. Over the decades, he has built eight mandolins, eight violins, the tops and backs for guitars and 63 banjos.

“They’re all over the country,” Edwards says of his banjos, which carry his personal insignia.

“The sound is perfect,” says Connie Corriher, who owns one of the Edwards models and takes banjo lessons from him once a

week. “The craftsmanship is outstanding. There’s none like it.”

Some time back, Elmer Edwards printed up business cards. They basically give his address and telephone number and explain that he makes custom banjos and handles repairs on banjos, guitars, mandolins and violins.

On his banjos, everything is hand-fitted, not machined-out.

He custom builds to a buyer’s preference. The neck of Corriher’s guitar fits her hand, he explains. Inlaid deep into the maple wood are mother of pearl and abalone shells.

“I cut it right here and inlay it,” Edwards says, running his hand over the smooth surface.

The tone ring — and how it fits — is crucial to the banjo. He shows off his banjos and their eight coats of lacquer, along with bird

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and butterfly designs he comes up with.

"I just sit down and let these things come into my head," Edwards says. With the hundreds of hours Edwards invests in some of his banjos, they can be pricey, in the thousands of dollars.

He built a beautiful banjo for Gretchen Tracy, who joins Edwards and Corriher as part of the regular Friday night jam sessions of bluegrass musicians at the E.H. Montgomery Store in Gold Hill.

"She would buy every one I would make, if she could afford it," Edwards says.

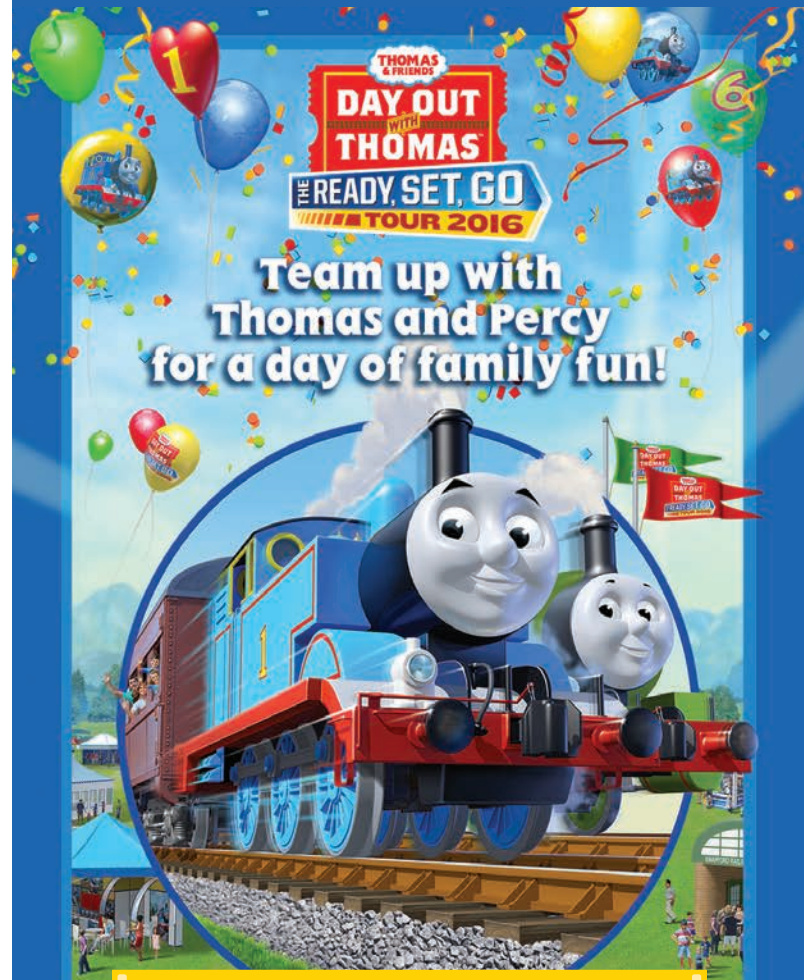
Edwards signs and numbers all of his banjos. "All of them are for myself, unless someone especially wants one," he says. He buys his wood at a saw mill in Virginia. He drives there and picks out the wood he wants.

His pride and joy is a banjo he calls the "Dogwood Blossom." It's gold-plated and has a back with embedded abalone shells. The heavily engraved metal is done by a craftsman friend in Tennessee. On the tiger stripe maple he sometimes uses, Edwards relies on a Conn strobe tuner to tell him the tones of the wood.

The thicker a piece of wood, the higher the pitch. The thinner the wood, the "bassier" it is, Edwards says.

The Dogwood Blossom is not for sale. "My grandson claims it," Edwards says.

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Connie Corriher and Elmer tune up for a lesson.

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Edwards has carried a pocketknife since he was 4. He grew up in Dickenson County, Va., which borders Kentucky and looks onto the Cumberland Mountains. The little towns around him had names such as Clinchco and Haysi. The county seat was Clintwood.

Edwards was the oldest of 12 children. By the time he was 4, he already was taking care of some of his siblings, and by the time he was 8, Edwards was plowing with a horse. The family lived on a small farm of about 25 acres, and there were horses, cows, pigs and chickens to look after.

His maternal grandmother, Virginia Taylor, proved to be a big musical influence. She and the other family musicians gathered at her house to play their banjos and fiddles. She lived within walking distance, and Elmer

visited with her a lot.

Edwards built his first banjo when he was 9, out of any materials he could scavenge. “I just picked out the easiest things to work with,” Edwards says. He made several bridges before he was satisfied, and the skin for the banjo came from a deformed calf the family put down.

His choices for strings were either Mapes or Black Diamond brands. Edwards usually opted for Mapes because they were a lot cheaper — 25 cents a pack. To earn the money so he could buy strings, Edwards would help neighboring farmers get in their hay, for something like 50 cents a day.

On that first banjo, Edwards used maple for the back, calfskin for the head, poplar for the neck and Mapes strings. He kept looking

at a banjo in the Sears & Roebuck catalog as his guide. He relied on his pocketknife and a hand drill for digging out the holes he needed.

Edwards wasn't exactly new to making things. He also used to build his own wagons and scooters. “I had to learn how to do all these things,” he says.

So how did his first banjo turn out? “Real, rough, real rough, but it worked,” he says. “We made noise.”

Someone taught Edwards early on that you can't learn to play without knowing how to tune a banjo first. Within a week's time, he was playing “Cripple Creek” the way his grandmother taught him.

“Every time I get hold of an old banjo, I got to play ‘Cripple Creek,’” Elmer says.

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Edwards creates the designs on the back of his banjos.

The first time he played in front of an audience was at a local pie supper, an event where people brought their best cakes and pies and auctioned them off to buy coal for the school.

The county schools superintendent liked what he heard of Edwards and his guitar-playing cousin, so he had the boys provide the entertainment at pie suppers across the county.

“The same tunes, over and over,” Elmer recalls. “We played ‘Cripple Creek’ a lot.”

So Edwards grew up playing old mountain music over both hard and unpaved roads. He never had any formal training, and he never learned to read music. “If I heard something, I had to try to remember it until I got to my banjo,” Edwards says.

The famous Stanley brothers, Carter and Ralph, played on another ridge, and Edwards came to know and play with Ralph Stanley, an accomplished banjo



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player and singer who would become a Grammy Award winner in 2002.

Edwards first came to North Carolina one summer when he was 15. He lived with an aunt here and worked in a Burlington hosiery mill. Back home, he was playing with a group called the Country Playboys. They had a local radio spot. Also in high school, Edwards' band won a talent show, and the prize was playing two tunes on a Huntington, W.Va., television station.

As a 17-year-old one summer, Edwards found himself playing with fellow musicians behind chicken wire in a bar in Detroit, Mich. He also played with likes of Alan Shelton and Jim and Jesse McReynolds who were from Wise, Va.

"We used to double-head a lot of shows together," Edwards says.

It's difficult to say at what Edwards is better — playing the banjo or making them. Over the years, his reputation as a banjo maker and banjo fixer grew. He made banjos and sold them. He put new heads on banjos, built bridges and replaced strings.

Edwards has never advertised his banjo-making prowess, but his customers have come from the Carolinas, Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky. When more groups were playing in the area, it wasn't unusual for musicians to call him for emergency repairs, which he would handle overnight. They would pick up their instruments the next day and head out for another show.

"I'm not trying to be boastful," Edwards says. "I just let my work speak for itself."

But Edwards enjoys playing the banjo most of all. "I guess that was my first love — and still is," he says. He always has a banjo pick at the ready in his pocket, so he and Corriher, who is still learning, sit down and try "Foggy Mountain Breakdown."

"Calm down, I'm right here," he tells her as they pick through the song.

Edwards put his banjo making and playing on hold for eight years while serving as the personal caregiver for his beloved Veronica, who had Alzheimer's disease. When she died, they had been married 55 years and four days.

Now Edwards is easing back into the banjo life, as both a builder and player. He looks around the crowded shop he built in 1988 and sighs.

"I wish it would be twice as big now," he says.

When he was 10, Edwards made his second banjo and gave it to Granny Taylor. He lost track of where it was for 50 years, not knowing one of his sisters had ended up with it. On a visit to him in Lexington one year, she had a surprise for Elmer.

"That was the first thing out of her car," he says.

Edwards now has that banjo hanging in his shop. It's something you don't put a price on. 



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TURNING OVER A NEW  
**LEAF**

Cherrys' treehouse getaway provides  
a place to play, a place to dream

*Written by* SUSAN SHINN | *Photography by* JON C. LAKEY





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SIP A DRINK

Nick Cherry enjoys relaxing on the porch of the family's treehouse. The 220-square-foot Treesort is a vacation destination for families, complete with power and running water.



Opposite: Molly Cherry likes to sit in the window with a view and read.





**R**emember when you were a kid, and somebody's dad — the cool one, you know which one I mean — built a treehouse for all your neighborhood buddies? It was a place to hang out, a place to be cool — literally, because you were way up in the canopy of trees. A place to play and a place to dream. You discovered that 20 feet above the ground, life was grand.

When Trent Cherry, 37, and his wife, Ashley, 33, bought a 26-acre working farm in China Grove, they wanted a special spot to hang out with their two children, Big Nick, 7, and Molly, 5.

Why not build a treehouse, Trent thought.

All these years later, he's discovered that 20 feet above the ground, life is indeed grand.

The treehouse has been a huge hit.

Trent works for Penske Race Team in Mooresville and travels 36 weeks a year. He knew he'd have to build the treehouse in the off-season, and he knew he wanted it done before Thanksgiving, so the family could spend time there.

The fields on the property are planted with corn, barley, and other crops.

He's no builder, however, so he called in the professionals. Doug Tolson and Johnny Stevens are known for their treehouse construction skills. The two came in from California and spent 21 days building the treehouse. Trent served as the general contractor and labored on the treehouse when he got home from work.

"It was done right," Trent says. "You could live in this." Well, almost.

The treehouse takes its cues from the tiny house movement, coming in at just 220 square feet.









Trent and Ashley Cherry and their two children, Nick and Molly, have made their treehouse a destination location.

If it sounds like it's a fabulous place to stay with friends, it is. Cherry Treesort, as Trent has taken to calling the place, has hosted several birthday parties, including a sleepover for five 16-year-old girls.

Down on the ground, Trent has added a fire pit, benches, Adirondack chairs and a swing. It's actually a daybed and it's big enough to nap in. Trent knows this for a fact

because he accidentally fell asleep there one afternoon. There's a spot to play corn hole, a giant Jenga set, and plenty of room to roam.

My son and I stayed there for a night in mid May. We built a fire (his favorite part), made s'mores, played Jenga, and also did a whole lot of nothing (my favorite part).

"It's like you're out in nature," Andrew told me, "but you don't have to rough it."

Trent's wife admits she was a little apprehensive about his big, um, small plans.

"I thought he was crazy!" she says. "But the kids were so excited, and he's a big kid himself. It's been a good family activity for us. If he needs to do something at the treehouse, he'll take the kids to play while they're out

*Story continues on page 54.*



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The stairs and hand rails are filled with sections of limbs to make a natural safety barrier. Below: The beautiful woodwork of the treehouse's interior. Below right: Nick blows out his marshmallow as Trent watches.







Clockwise from above: Molly shows the way to her favorite place, the loft; Limbs form supports for the staircase; A map of the United States made from license plates of the individual states hangs in the sleeping loft; A sliding door reveals the bathroom which has a stand-up shower and an incinerator toilet; The sign leading up to The Treesort.





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there. We go over a couple of times a week.”

She adds of their son, “Nick is his pal when it comes to new ideas over there. Who knows what the two will come up with next?”

Friends who have stayed at the “treesort” have shared rave reviews.

Paula Sloop of China Grove wrote in the guest book, “We had a wonderful time celebrating Payton for her 14th birthday. The treehouse is amazing as well as all the extras. We had a very enjoyable time ‘getting away.’”

The Eclair family posted this comment: “This treehouse fostered so much love and friendship for us. We loved the accommodations and nothing was more satisfying than sitting around the campfire, singing songs and roasting marshmallows. Everything was so thoughtfully placed and set out for us. The place is so beautifully built, and provided us with shelter when it was rainy and the outside space was so cozy when it was sunny.”

Searra and Todd wrote, “We fell in love with the treesort as soon as we stepped inside its cozy walls. It got better every single day. The fire pit is a must on a nice night, and definitely try napping on the day bed. Nothing beats a treehouse adventure, that’s for sure. Whether you are relaxing at the treesort or taking a day hike at the nearby national forests, it’s sure



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The family enjoys one of the two swings near the fire circle.

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to be a trip you never forget.”

Johnny and Shay Brown of China Grove spent Valentine’s there. She wrote, “Thank you for a unique and romantic experience! The ice storm made everything outside look even more beautiful. The bed was warm and cozy, and we slept very well.”

Even though the experiences were varied, there was one comment everyone wrote, “We’d love to come back!”

For more information about the Cherrys’ treehouse, visit [www.cherrytreesort.com](http://www.cherrytreesort.com). 

*Freelance writer Susan Shinn lives in Salisbury.*



Above: The sleeping area in the loft. Left: Treesort is complete with a tin roof and a cozy porch for relaxing in the woods.

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Rita Rodelli stands and smiles for a portrait in her lavender garden during The Lavender Garden's Field Day in Salisbury.

# The lure of lavender

A beautiful plant also proves to be nature's relaxation remedy.

*Written by* AMANDA RAYMOND | *Photography by* ALLISON LEE ISLEY

**I**n the 17th century, France was hit hard with the plague. Thousands were dying, but four grave robbers never seemed to catch the illness.

Authorities eventually caught the thieves. Their judge told them if they revealed the secret of their immunity from the plague, he would grant them immunity from the law. Turns out, the thieves were from a family of perfumers who doused their bodies with oil that contained lavender.

Rita Rodelli, owner of The Lavender Garden at 399 B Leazer Road, has the recipe that the thieves used to escape the plague, called Four Thieves Vinegar.

The story is probably more legend than fact, but that doesn't stop Rodelli from sharing the story at her booth at the Davidson Farmers Market.

She said men are more skeptical when they hear it, while women are more likely to play along.



“Why can’t you just enjoy the story?” she said about the skeptical men. “Why wouldn’t it be true? It might likely possibly be true.”

People may raise an eyebrow at lavender’s ability to ward off the plague, but many are conscious of other positive health effects lavender brings to the table.

Rodelli didn’t start her lavender garden because of its medicinal properties; she just thought the lavender gardens she read about in magazines were beautiful.

Her four-acre spot on B Leazer Road was part of her family’s farm. Around 2003, Rodelli’s father divided up the 70 acres purchased by the parents on Rodelli’s mother’s side to his grandchildren. He gave the remaining land to his three daughters, including Rodelli.

Rodelli read about the Jardin du Soleil Lavender Garden in Washington in *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine* and began researching lavender and how to grow it.

“I thought, ‘Well I can do that. Why not?’” she recalled.

Rodelli started sharing her findings with her family, with her father quietly sitting nearby. Little did Rita know her father was taking mental notes.

One day, her father walked up to her and announced her field was ready. The nutrients the soil needed were in place and the rows were drawn. All she had to do was plant her lavender.

“I’m not sure I wouldn’t still be in the books doing research,” she said.

Part of that research led her to the health benefits of lavender.

Three of the compounds found in lavender essential oil that provide health benefits are linalool, which helps kill bacteria and heal burns and wounds; ketones, which relieve pain, rebuild skin tissue and help with

**Lavender Linen Spray is one of the many products that Rita Rodelli sells. The Lavender Linen Spray can be used as a room freshener and it also helps with restful sleep.**



sleep; and esters, which reduce swelling and muscle spasms and regulate mood.

Rodelli sells a Balm of Gilead that includes lavender essential oil, which can help with sunburns.

“I had a sunburn, a really bad one, you know, burning, hurting, red,” she said. “I put that Balm of Gilead on it, and I never remembered to put it on again because it never burned again.”



According to WebMD, lavender can be used for restlessness, insomnia, nervousness and depression. Lavender also is used to soothe aches and pains, including migraine headaches, toothaches and joint pain.

As far as research goes, again according to WebMD, there is evidence that lavender oil, along with other oils, may improve hair growth for those suffering from alopecia areata, a hair loss condition. There also is research behind lavender oil’s being taken orally to improve and prevent anxiety and improve sleep. There is even evidence for lavender pads placed on the neckline of clothing reducing falls in nursing homes.

WebMD says lavender is probably safe for most people in food amounts, but there are some possible side effects that can occur, like constipation, headache or increased appetite when it is taken by mouth. It could possibly disrupt normal hormones in prepubescent boys.

Along with selling products at the farmers market, Rodelli also hosted the second annual Field Day event at her lavender garden in June. Visitors were able to buy fresh lavender bundles, learn to make lavender wands and sip lavender lemonade.

Most of all, they were able to see the lavender bushes, pale green at their base








Rodelli has felt the mood-lifting powers of lavender herself. She said one day when she was filling bottles with lavender essential oil, she was overcome with the feeling that something good was going to happen to her.

When she was driving later that same day, that feeling faded.

“I said, ‘Oh shoot, it was just that lavender.’ It really, really works,” she said.

Whether it’s used for soothing aches and pains, lifting the mood or relaxation, Rodelli said lavender will put a smile on your face.

“It just makes you happy and relaxes you,” Rodelli said, “and you feel like, ‘Well, I can handle this.’” 

**Sharon Forthofer paints during The Lavender Garden’s Field Day.**



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# A 'plain country church'

Rustic beauty, pioneer craftsmanship combine in the simple elegance of St. Andrew's.

*Written by* MARK WINEKA | *Photography by* WAYNE HINSHAW

**W**OODLEAF — On the last Sunday in August, people gather at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church for its one service of the year.

"How could you not come back for this?" Betsy Brown asks.

It's a rhetorical question. That one service a year is always a kind of homecoming, bringing old friends and families together, but also

taking them back 175 years to a time when life wasn't so complicated. The simplicity of this unpainted, weatherboard church of heart pine construction can take your breath away.

To get there, take an easy right turn off Woodleaf-Barber Road and travel to the end of St. Andrew's Church Road, where the tiny meetinghouse has stood since 1840.

Just by walking onto the grounds, you're back in the antebellum



South. Sitting in the original pews inside, you can't help but notice the plainly adorned altar, the flickering candles, the scarred floorboards, the former slave gallery overhead, the wavy glass of the window panes and the daylight seeping in under the doors.

Neither the inside nor outside of the church has ever been painted. The structure was never "modernized," beyond the installation of a wood stove for a brief period when it served as a school.

An architectural historian would say St. Andrew's is a Piedmont frame meetinghouse typical of pre-Civil War Episcopal churches of its day. It is believed to be the oldest of its kind in western North Carolina and a treasure for how well preserved it is.

Jacob Correll built the church for \$325 on land donated by Charles and Michael Pearson. Bishop Levi Silliman Ives consecrated St. Andrew's in 1840, and regular Sunday services were held here until 1906, when St. Andrew's became a victim of its own isolation.

Brown invites you to an open door on the northeast side of the sanctuary.

"Take a deep breath and look out there," she says. "... If there ever was a Robert Frost wall, this was it."

She is referring to the church burial ground, enclosed by a dry-laid, basalt stone wall, remarkable for its endurance. The entrance to the cemetery is designated by granite piers supporting an iron gate.

In this church cemetery are 54 inscribed monuments and maybe more than a dozen with graves marked only by upright field-stones. The number of slaves buried here is not known. Their graves were marked before the Civil War by single basalt stones, but that lower part of the cemetery became hidden



**Above:** The dry-laid basalt stone wall encloses the cemetery. It has remained intact since construction.

**Right:** The only lighting in the church are the candles in wooden candleholders. The chancel is in the background.

over time by mature trees and bushes.

When the slave section of the cemetery was cleared and uncovered, a special rededication ceremony was held in 2013 by Assistant Bishop William Gregg of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

Seven of the 17 organizing communicants of St. Andrew's are buried in the cemetery. The oldest marked grave belongs to Joseph Turner (1826-1842), and the most recent burial was in 1987 of Charles Boyd Swicegood, a great friend to St. Andrew's and its upkeep.

At least four of the gravestones are signed by their carvers. One of the more important stones is that of Hezekiah Heathman (1772-1852), who was the patriarch of the founding



**Betsy Brown**



REMINISCE / *st. andrew's episcopal*

communicants.

To the north end of the church property outside of the burial ground lies a large flat rock — a mounting stone or “upping rock,” which was used to help women make the step up into their wagons or carriages.

The Rev. Thomas F. Davis served as the first rector from 1840-46, but the longest serving rector would be the congregation's fifth, the Rev. George Badger Wetmore, from 1855-88. His descendants are among the small but dedicated group who make up a committee still looking after the church's maintenance today, though the church is officially owned and insured by the Episcopal Diocese. Brown, kin to Wetmore, is among the church's protection committee, for lack of a better description.

**There is a narrow stairway leading to the upstairs.**

Most of the committee members do not live in Rowan County any longer — Brown resides in Manteo, for example — so it takes some communication and planning for clean-up days and getting ready for the annual service.

The first Holy Communion service at St. Andrew's was held Aug. 30, 1840, and that's the reason for gathering annually on the last Sunday in August. There's an austere, primitive beauty to the altar, which includes an original wooden cross made of pine. By custom, the Order for the



Administration of Holy Communion comes from the Book of Common Prayer, in use when St. Andrew's was first consecrated.

Old hymns are sung, accompanied by the notes from an antique pump organ, a gift in 1989 from Sarah and Jim Turner of Richfield. It dates to 1894. Davis Cook of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Salisbury

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often serves as organist.

One custom called for a handmade bird feeder of wood to be fastened outside a window near the altar. "After the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Host is placed in the bird feeder in order that others of God's creatures may be fed," the late Lib Etheridge wrote in her history booklet of St. Andrew's that she compiled in 1990 for the 150th anniversary.

After each Sunday service in late August, the congregants also hold a picnic lunch in the church yard. Etheridge, who was Brown's mother, said in 1990, "Even after worshipers are gone, the quiet, empty church seems to have a warmth that makes one want to stay and visit for a while."

After attending a service in 1982, then Salisbury Post editor Steve Bouser wrote, "Jacob Correll, whose adze marks are still clearly visible on the church's hand-hewn beams and whose bones lie in the nearby graveyard, built St. Andrew's during the Episcopal renaissance of the early 19th century. It was described as 'a plain country church' then, and that's what it is now: not much to look at for those accustomed to more ornate surroundings for worship. But the modern world could use more such examples of what the old Shaker song calls 'Simple Gifts.'"

That same Sunday in 1982, those attending the service learned St.

Andrew's had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The St. Andrew's congregation, as with all others in its day, felt the physical and emotional burdens of the Civil War. The rector recorded many notations during this period about funerals for soldiers, donations to army missions, men being home on furloughs and baptisms of men and boys going off to war or coming back from battles.

For March 3, 1863, the rector wrote in notation form, "Baptised at the house of Mr. Thomas Thompson (near Unity Church) Joseph Theodore Thompson, a wounded soldier, very low and the day before the amputation of his arm."

In the 1870s, the church's altar area was rebuilt, and the slave gallery was closed up. Brown says it had been unusual, during the days before emancipation, that slaves used the same front door as their owners before splitting off and going into the gallery.

Transportation played a significant part in St. Andrew's losing its congregation between 1893 and 1905, as the communicants of the church mostly transferred to St. George's Episcopal in Woodleaf. The Erwin Co. built a mill in Cooleemee at the turn of the century, and when that happened, a bridge was built over the South Yadkin River on today's N.C. 801.

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## REMINISCE / st. andrew's episcopal

This meant the main road between Woodleaf and Cooleemee no longer passed by St. Andrew's Church. Before, travelers had to cross Fourth Creek by ford and the South Yadkin River by ferry.

Regular services ceased at St. Andrew's Church by 1906. To their credit, succeeding generations of families who ended up going to St. George's, Unity Presbyterian and Woodleaf Methodist, made it a point to look after the little church.

Brown's late parents, Guy and Lib Etheridge, were among the great stewards of St. Andrew's. Brown says she and others on the team looking

after the church now "couldn't live with ourselves" to neglect the church, knowing what they parents did to preserve it.

"We're pretty proud of this," Brown adds, "and it's a constant battle."


About \$14,000 of restoration work took place at St. Andrew's in 1977-78. Sills, studs and weatherboarding were replaced in spots, and the floor of the gallery was replaced as the gallery was reopened and fitted with a railing. The gallery flooring came from the old Woodleaf School.

Elsewhere, a rusty tin roof was removed and replaced by hand-split cedar shakes. Shutters were built for all the windows. Rafters also were realigned and siding was replaced on the wall closest to the cemetery.

Building materials came from old barns, smokehouses, well houses and tool sheds. Most of the donated boards were more than 100 years old.

The appreciation for St. Andrew's comes and goes. It used to be, for example, a field trip destination spot for all Rowan County fourth-graders. Most recently, it was opened as part of a one-day Sacred Places Tour sponsored by Historic Salisbury Foundation.

On rare occasions, christenings, weddings and funerals are still held here. But it's as Brown says, a bride would have to be pretty brave to have her wedding at a place without electricity or bathrooms.

Yes, St. Andrew's has always been about simplicity, and he wears it well. 

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## Earnhardt 50th Anniversary

Oron and Bobbie Earnhardt, of Salisbury, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 18, 2016. They were honored with a buffet dinner at the Speedway Club at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Entertainment was provided by local disc jockey Chris Sifford, of Salisbury, and The Randy Clay Band.

The Earnhardts were married on June 18, 1966 in York, South Carolina by Judge Lula Nunn. Now retired, Oron taught for 44 years in the Statesville, Cabarrus, Rowan-Salisbury and Mooresville school systems. Also, during this time, he coached football and track for 28 years. Bobbie worked as a teacher assistant and bus driver at Knollwood Elementary School for six years. She served as Assistant Register of Deeds for almost seven years, and retired as Rowan County Register of Deeds after 17 years of service.

Their children are Dale Earnhardt and wife Teka, of Rabun Gap, Ga.; Laura Earnhardt of Charlotte and Hope Brooks and husband Devin, of Landis. Their grandchildren are Dallas, Josie and Luke Earnhardt; and Ella and Linzie Brooks.







# Withorn & Wineka

RIO GRANDE • PUERTO RICO • CAROLINE PETTERS PHOTOGRAPHY

Melissa Darby Withorn and Bennett William Wineka were united in marriage on June 3, 2016, overlooking the El Yunque Rainforest, Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. Officiant Cynthia Moss presided over the 5:30 p.m. ceremony.

The bride's parents hosted a fantastic reception that included authentic cigar rolling and a special Pleneros band with dancers.

The bride is the daughter of Gloria and Thomas J. Withorn Jr. of Marietta, Ga. She is the granddaughter of Jean "Dinky" Withorn and the late Thomas J. Withorn and Hazel and Ernest Hale.

Melissa is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Portfolio Center of Atlanta, Ga. She is an associate creative director at Public School, Atlanta, Ga.

The bride was given in marriage by her father and attended by four of her dearest friends, Laura Ritchie of Durham; Claire Conarro of Atlanta, Ga.; Lauren Hughes of Atlanta, Ga.; and Sarah Whitworth of Washington, D.C.

The groom is the son of Lindsay and Mark Wineka of Salisbury. He is the grandson of David Robert Alford III of Oak Ridge, Tenn., and the late Dorothy G. Alford and the late Nancy and Charles W. Wineka of Dover, Pa. Benn is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a local broadcast manager at INFORM. He was attended by four best friends, including Samuel Have Wineka of Falls Church, Va.; Kyle Conarro of Atlanta, Ga.; Benjamin Cox of Raleigh; and Seth Leonard of Raleigh.

They will celebrate again in the fall of 2016 with a trip to California.

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'The Dancing Tomatoes' ride in the parade during last year's Woodleaf Tomato Festival. Seated is Mahaley Mays and Meredith Hutchinson who were candidates for the 'Mayor of Woodleaf.' This year's event is Aug. 20. — Photo by Wayne Hinshaw.

# August 2016

Upcoming events in Salisbury-Rowan

## JULY 28-AUGUST 6 "Hands on a Hardbody"

• *Meroney Theater*

Piedmont Players. Performances begin at 7:30 each night. Musical comedy based on the documentary film about 10 hard-luck Texans who fight to keep at least one hand on a new truck to win it. Performances in August are the 4th, 5th and 6th.

## AUGUST 5 Summer Sip

• *Downtown Salisbury*

5-9 p.m. Enjoy a craft beer crawl in and out of downtown shops. Go to [downtownsalisburync.com](http://downtownsalisburync.com) for more information.

## AUGUST 5-6 Singed Out Ministries Annual Sale

• *First Ministry Center of First Baptist*

The ministry center is located at 220 N. Fulton St. Call 704-633-0431 for information and times.

## AUGUST 6 Craft Beer Festival

• *Downtown Salisbury*

Second annual event. 3-7 p.m. Sample beers from various regions of North Carolina, as well as Salisbury's new craft brews.

## AUGUST 6 All Ford Car Show

• *N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer*

9 a.m.-noon. One of the museum's biggest car shows. Features Mustangs, Thunderbirds, Fairlanes, Lincolns, Mercurys, Model A's and Model T's. Contact Dick Goho at 315-771-7322 for information.

## AUGUST 7 Crossroads Classic Race Finale

• *Downtown Salisbury*

The 2016 Giordana Crossroads Classic will be a four-day race that will visit four different N.C. cities. All races will be held in down-



town venues, and “The Race Finale” will take place in Salisbury. Go to [www.crossroadscyclingclassic.com](http://www.crossroadscyclingclassic.com).

## AUGUST 8-12

### History Camp

- *Rowan Museum*

9 a.m.-2 p.m. each day. This is Camp 2 in the summer for elementary school students, rising third through fifth grades. The museum is located at 202 N. Main St., Salisbury. Fees, which include T-shirt, snacks, and supplies, are \$150 per week per camper and \$130 per camper for museum members.

## AUGUST 11

### History on Tap

- *Ice House, 224 E. Horah St.*

6-8 p.m. The third in Historic Salisbury Foundation’s History on Tap series, which combines beer with a tour of a historic site. RSVP for two tickets for free beer you may enjoy while meeting new people or catching up with old friends.

## AUGUST 13

### All GM Car Show

- *N.C. Transportation Museum, Spencer*

9 a.m.-noon. Features classic to modern Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Buicks and more. Contact Dick Goho at 315-771-7322 for information.

## AUGUST 13

### Night at the Museums

- *Rowan Museum and Spencer Doll & Toy Museum*

The night will come alive in Salisbury and Spencer with “live” characters from the “Night at the Museum” movie, as well as historical characters. The evening will include a trolley ride, scavenger hunt in two museums, buffet dinner and fun for adults and children.

## AUGUST 13

### Summer Concert Series: Delbert McClinton

- *Kannapolis Village Park*

All the concerts/movies in the park are free of charge. Blankets, lawn chairs and picnics/coolers are permitted and concessions will be available. No pets, tobacco, grilling, glass bottles or outside alcohol should be brought in. Coolers will be checked at several entry points. The beer and wine tent will be open during concerts for alcohol sales, ID is required.

## AUGUST 15

### Chamber Kick-Off Campaign

- *Location to be announced*

A 5-7 p.m. Business After Hours event and kickoff for the Total Resource Campaign. For more information, contact [cdeese@rowan-chamber.com](mailto:cdeese@rowan-chamber.com), or 704-633-4221.

## AUGUST 18

### Union Street Live

- *Downtown Concord*

Summer concert series. Main stage: Band of Oz. North stage: Mike Strauss Band. Go to [www.concorddowntown.com](http://www.concorddowntown.com) for more information.

## AUGUST 20

### Hot Summer Nights

- *Historic Gold Hill Village*

From 2-6 p.m. Old cars and swinging to the oldies. Music by Cruise-In DJ, Gary Walter. Go to [historicgoldhill.com/events](http://historicgoldhill.com/events) for more information.

## AUGUST 20

### Woodleaf Tomato Festival

- *Unity Presbyterian Church*

9 a.m.-4 p.m. This is 10th Year Celebra-

tion. For more information, contact 704-278-4248, or [woodleaftomatofestival@yahoo.com](mailto:woodleaftomatofestival@yahoo.com).

## AUGUST 20

### Big Muddy Challenge

- *Patterson Farm*

An unconventional family adventure race, the Big Muddy Challenge builds active outdoor memories for parents, their children and friends. Participants from ages six to 82 team up for an unbelievable day. Go to [www.visit-pattersonfarm.com/biog-muddy-challenge/](http://www.visit-pattersonfarm.com/biog-muddy-challenge/) for more information.

## AUGUST 20

### Stories Under the Stars

- *Kannapolis Library*

7-8 p.m., featuring Martha Reed Johnson. A unique literary performing arts event. Programs are geared toward families with children of all ages. More information at [www.kannapolisnc.gov](http://www.kannapolisnc.gov).

## AUGUST 26-27

### Antiques Appraisal Fair, Roadshow Style


- *108 Fourth St., Spencer*

Located at the Spencer Toy & Doll Museum. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$5 per appraised item. Limit two items. For more information, contact 704-762-9359, or [spencerdollandtoy-museum.com](http://spencerdollandtoy-museum.com).

## AUGUST 26-28

### Fin, Feather and Fur Expo

- *Rowan County Fairgrounds*

An expo for outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, boating, archery, shooting, trucks and racing. 75 to 100 vendors (indoor & outdoor). For more information: [finfeatherfurexpo.com](http://finfeatherfurexpo.com). 





Above: Laura Millspaugh and Jim O'Donnell. Below: Clyde and Anne Spencer.



A surprise Maestro showed up before the performance to get the crowd into the spirit during the 12th annual Pops at the Post concert at the Salisbury Post.

# Pops at the Post

Pops at the Post celebrated its 12th year, and the theme, "Let's Have Fun," embodied the spirit of the event. This year's Salisbury Symphony outdoor concert from the loading dock of the Salisbury Post included a variety of pieces, including tributes to musical icon Frank Sinatra.

— Photos by Jon C. Lakey



Left: Glenn Shaver dips Connie Dinkler as they dance to the Salisbury Swing Band. Right: Justin Davis, head track coach from Livingstone College, joined several other singers in a rendition of 'My Way.'





Above: Bob and Lee Wagener with the Salisbury Civitans. Left: Steve Monday with Rowan County Weather keeps an eye on the radar with his smartphone after rain moved through during the concert.



Youngsters enjoy the downpour near the tailgate area.



Left: Laura Paholski and Nell Thompson. Right: Sally Lawing and David Singer.



Kevin Agner looks over the music before his cello performance with the Salisbury Symphony.





Left: Dr. Lester and Tiffany Brown. Right: Lynn Frick, Barb Sorel, Kristen Colwell and Tracy McMillin.



Dr. John Wear, Sharon Baker, Alice and Fred Stanback

# BLOOM ENCHANTED

It was an evening of enchantment and a festive showing of community support for education and other local needs at Salisbury Academy's seventh annual Bloom gala. Held at the Bob Julian Roundhouse of the N.C. Transportation Museum, Bloom Enchanted brought over 300 community members together for an evening which included "Garden of Eatin'" food and drink, a live auction and dancing to music from The Shakedown Band.

— Photos by Jenny Tenney Photography



Left: Cara Reische, Jon Palmer, Dana Walser and Brad Walser. Above left: Cindy Barr, Laura Lewis and Catawba College President Brien Lewis. Above right: Marian Walters, Fran Misner and Courtney Wallace



# Cruise 'n Barbecue

St. Paul's Lutheran Church held the Sixth Annual Cruise 'n Barbecue to benefit its Helping Hands Ministry. The day featured chicken dinners, a poker cruise and classic cars.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Franda and Frankie Raymer stand next to their 1967 Camaro.



Above: Jenna and Scott Shay. Left: Donna and Alan Lyerly stand with their 1966 Chevelle.



Left: Rick Murphy, Crystal Canup and Paul Canup. Middle: Perry and Jill Earnhardt. Jill is parish nurse for St. Paul's Lutheran and works closely with the Helping Hands Ministry. Right: John and Carolyn Canup.





Above: Lauren Stephenson arrives with her husband, Brad, and their sons Jeffrey, 6, and Emmett, 2, all of whom were High Cotton models. Right: Kenan Smith, Chip Short, Andre Resner and Wayne Koontz.



Kyna Grubb ties Chad Vriesema's tie as her husband, John, looks on.

# High cotton

The High Cotton Fashion Show, featuring male models, was held at the Hambley-Wallace House on South Fulton Street in Salisbury. The show benefited the Family Crisis Council.

— Photos by Susan Shinn



Left: Corey Basinger, Jason and Diana Keith. Middle: Rick Parker, Dianne Scott and Renee Bradshaw, executive director of Family Crisis Council. Right: Maryja Mee, Tamara Sheffield and Tracy Walsler stand in the driveway of the Hambley-Wallace House, location for the fashion show.







The Norvell Theater's Ali Khatib, 12, and Miles Abramson, 10, served as volunteers for the event.

Broadway performer David Larsen, who has starred in "The Book of Mormon," "Hands on a Hardbody" and "Billy Elliot," charmed the patrons at Piedmont Players' annual fundraiser, Night on the Stage. He was accompanied by Salisbury's own Virgie Taylor and joined for a couple of numbers by fellow Broadway performer Emilee Dupre. It was a night of dinner and music, along with raffles and a silent auction.

— Photos by Susan Shinn



Piedmont Players Board of Governors President Andy Abramson, actor Emilee Dupre, Ed and Susan Norvell and actor and singer David Larsen.

# Night on the STAGE



Actors David Larsen and Emilee Dupre stand with Salisbury Mayor Karen Alexander (middle).



Left: Emilee Dupre and David Larsen perform.

Right: Terri Freeborn, Jennifer Crawford, Trudy Gale, Tom and Martha Smith and Sherry Scott.







Above: Chris Blumenthal and Elizabeth Myles. Right: Guests enjoyed dinner within a circus-themed decor at the Lee Street theatre event.



# A Night at the **Cirque**

Lee Street theatre held “A Night at the Cirque” fundraiser, a one-of-a-kind, black-tie fundraising gala to benefit the theater and its educational programs.

— Photos by Susan Shinn



Above: From left, Paula Bohland and her sister, Mary, greet Leslie Stopper, Dr. Luanne Anderson and Craig Stopper. Above right: Winnie Mikkelson, Cris Brincefield and Liza Phillips. Right: Nancy Owen and Veda Dry.



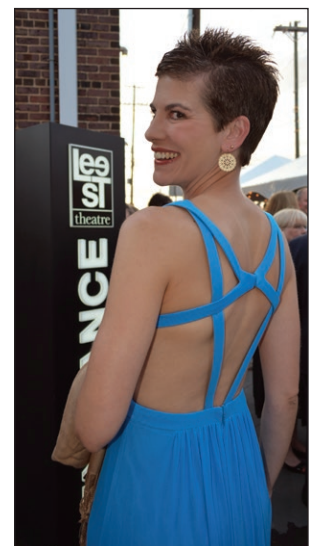




Above: A 'moving table' was among the featured acts during cocktails. Hors d'oeuvres were later placed on this table. Right: An acrobatic couple perform in the air above an appreciative crowd. Below: Joyce and Joel Goodwin react to a stilt walker going by as they visit with Larry and Libby Gish.



Left: Patsy and Ozzie Reynolds. Above: Law enforcement officers and guests were captivated by the street walkers. Right: Meredith Fox and Derek Hollis. Far right: Leah Campion shows off the intricate back to her blue gown.







The 'Friends for Life' team at Relay for Life



Lee Ann Freeze and Felicia Charles

# Relay for Life

This year's Relay for Life event was a one-day, noon-to-10 p.m. affair that featured some 80 Rowan County teams raising money for cancer research. There was the always emotional survivors ceremony, roll call and walk around the fairgrounds track, plus a day filled with food, music, contests, pep rallies, hair-cutting, giveaways and a nighttime luminary service.

— Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: North Rowan High team members Terry Lark, Ashlyn Gwyn, Kathy Pardue, Shayla Lackey and Brooke Link. Left: Carolina Oncology's team: MacKenzie Koontz, Tina Koontz, Kara Lefko, Kathy Mason, Jennifer Dellinger, Laura Ingram and Carson Ingram.





Clockwise from above: Kaitlyn Morgan and Casey Jones with Hunter; Members of the West Rowan High Relay for Life team: Nahla Mills, Brooke Keadle, Bailey Herndon, Emily Muire, Ashley Wood, Maddy Boroughs and Khara Fesperman; Representing Women of Nazareth Community Church were Joyce Stirewalt, Michele Sloop and Lisa Shuping; East Rowan representatives Paola Rivera, Katie Barnes, Kaylee Henley, Madelyn Cooper and Anna Hester; East Rowan High Mustangs Lauren Wilsey, Haley Cole and Jennifer Johnson.







Above: David and Peggy Norris on the balcony of the Rowan Museum. Right: Karen Alexander, mayor of Salisbury, Lynn Bull as George Washington and Greg Edds, chairman of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners.



# George Washington Ball



Above: Terry and Penny Sides. Right: Glenn and Beth Dixon.

As part of a daylong celebration of the 225th anniversary of George Washington's visit to Salisbury in 1791, a period ball fundraiser, with George Washington in attendance, was held in the Messinger Room of the Rowan Museum.

— Photos by Jon C. Lakey







Above: Marian Hough and her father, Boyd Hough. Left: Sara McCubbins drives the carriage with the honored guest.



Top: Grady and Trudy Hall cross North Main Street. Above: Renee Shuping Cassidy, Dr. Kevin Showfety and Bunny Showfety.

Above: Todd Southard, Nancy Stewart and David and Ronda Phillips.

Right: Dakeita and Russ Roakes, Lynn Bull as George Washington, Will and Charlotte Staton.





# Where we belong

In Salisbury, I feel I can touch the lives of people around me

If anyone had told me 20 years ago that I would be living in Salisbury, N.C., with no plans of ever leaving, I probably would have laughed in his or her face. Growing up in Los Angeles, Calif., was the only life I knew, but when the opportunity to move came, I knew it was time for a change.

I remember my first spring in Salisbury. I had never seen so many trees and greenery in a city before. The winding roads and crisp mornings made me feel alive and fresh. The smog, traffic and concrete were left far behind. Even then I didn't think I would claim this as my home. That would change.

After meeting the man who would become my husband, we decided to buy a house in Rowan County, mostly because of the price of land. We started our family, and as my children grew, I became more and more involved in the community. I had never shied away from community involvement. I always tried to do my share while living in Los Angeles, but, I must admit, this felt a bit different.

I'm not sure if it is because Salisbury is, of course, a much, much smaller city. Or maybe because of the fact that one can see that his or her voice is actually heard. Maybe, it is because in Salisbury, I can be a small fish in a small pond, not a small fish in an immense ocean. I feel I can touch the lives of people

around me, as my life has been touched by so many in this community.

My children are growing up fast. Even as I hope they will get out and venture into life and experience success, at this point in life, I truly feel we are right where we need to be. This town has been an incredible experience for my family. We have had the unique opportunity to run two thriving small businesses. We know everyone, it seems. I can walk into my local bank and be greeted by name. We are part of a church that truly is an extension of our family. We are involved, proudly working with groups who are focused on raising awareness to such things as poverty and racism. I have met incredible people who I now call friends and whom I also know will be in my life forever. And we can find entertainment in whatever form we want, whether it's theater, symphony, movies,

shopping, a growing downtown — it is amazing all that is offered in a smaller-sized city!

We are invested in Salisbury and repeatedly see its commitment to recognizing people's hard work and passion.

I'm not sure people know just how unique we are compared to other places. Yes, there are things that need improvement — but then, that's true everywhere. I'm proud to be a part of a community that is already head and shoulders above any community I've ever lived in, anywhere. This is my city, Salisbury, where I am convinced my family belongs. For the Medinas, Salisbury is the place! **S**



by  
EVELYN  
MEDINA

*Evelyn Medina and her husband, Rigo, operate Mean Mug Coffee and Medina Construction.*





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