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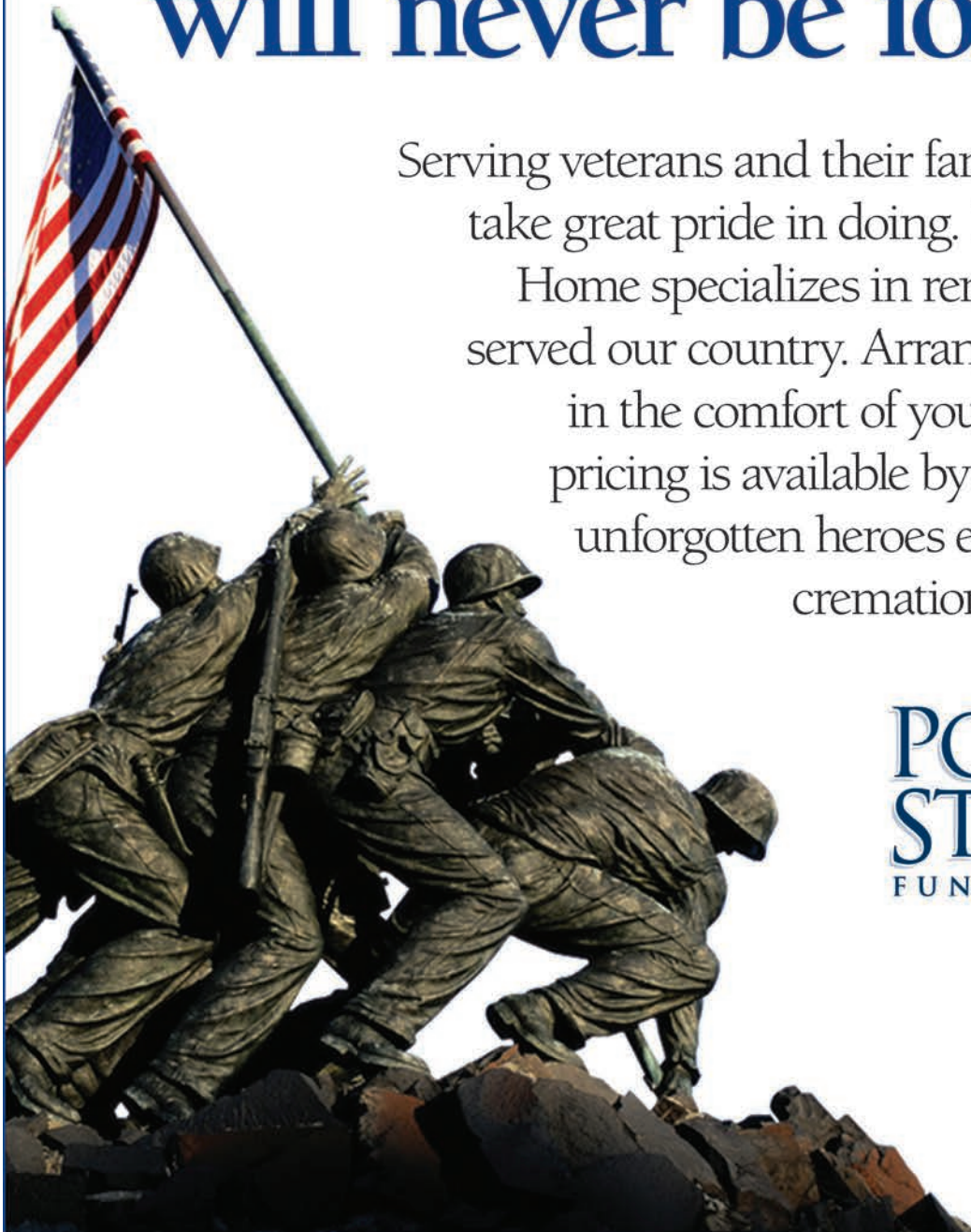
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ON THE COVER: Beth and Glenn Dixon's restoration of the Blackmer House. The Dixons and their talented team of craftsmen have completed the 13-month project.
Photo by Jon C. Lakey

ON THIS PAGE: The J.F. Hurley YMCA offers 45- and 60-minute spin classes to members. Ruthie Pardue is one of the coaches for the class.
Photo by Jon C. Lakey

A new way to celebrate this place of ours

For the first issue of Salisbury the Magazine, let's go to the end. The last story you'll see is a column whose theme is "Salisbury's the place because ..." Katie Scarvey, a fine local writer, contributed her thoughts on this "prompt," for lack of a better word, and it led to a beautiful essay on the things with which she finds comfort in her adopted town, down to the chickens in her backyard.

Katie probably doesn't know it, but the phrase "Salisbury's the Place" goes back more than a century to a community campaign fostered by the Salisbury Industrial Club, no doubt a forerunner to today's Chamber of Commerce. In 1913, the club ordered some 5,000 lapel pins carrying the slogan "Salisbury's the Place," but bigger still, the organization erected an electric sign on the side of the Yadkin Hotel that also carried the phrase.

This wasn't just any sign. It was mammoth — 19 feet tall, 34 feet wide and 1,315 pounds. It had 400 red and white lights. "Salisbury's the Place" was spelled out in white letters two feet tall inside a red diamond. The sign faced the railroad tracks next to the depot, and hundreds of thousands of people saw that sign coming in and out of the station over the years.

Today, Salisbury — and by extension, Rowan County — is still the place. The place for the arts, grand homes, great neighborhoods, fine food, strong businesses, innovation, history, education, recreation, social events and community spirit.



And now it's the place for a magazine celebrating all those people, places and things we take pride in. With the inaugural edition of Salisbury the Magazine, you'll spend time in the newly restored Blackmer House, sit on front porches, meet friends for breakfast, golf some of the toughest holes in Rowan County, eat some of the best burgers, ride through a spin class, meet a local actor and hobnob with neighbors.

When we live somewhere a long time, we tend to take things for granted. Back in 1913, the business community refused to let this happen and decided to make its point in an extraordinary way, with that enormous electric sign.

Salisbury the Magazine will be a bit more subtle than that, but the message and mission are the same. This is the place, and we hope to show reasons why with each issue.

Mark Wineka,
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

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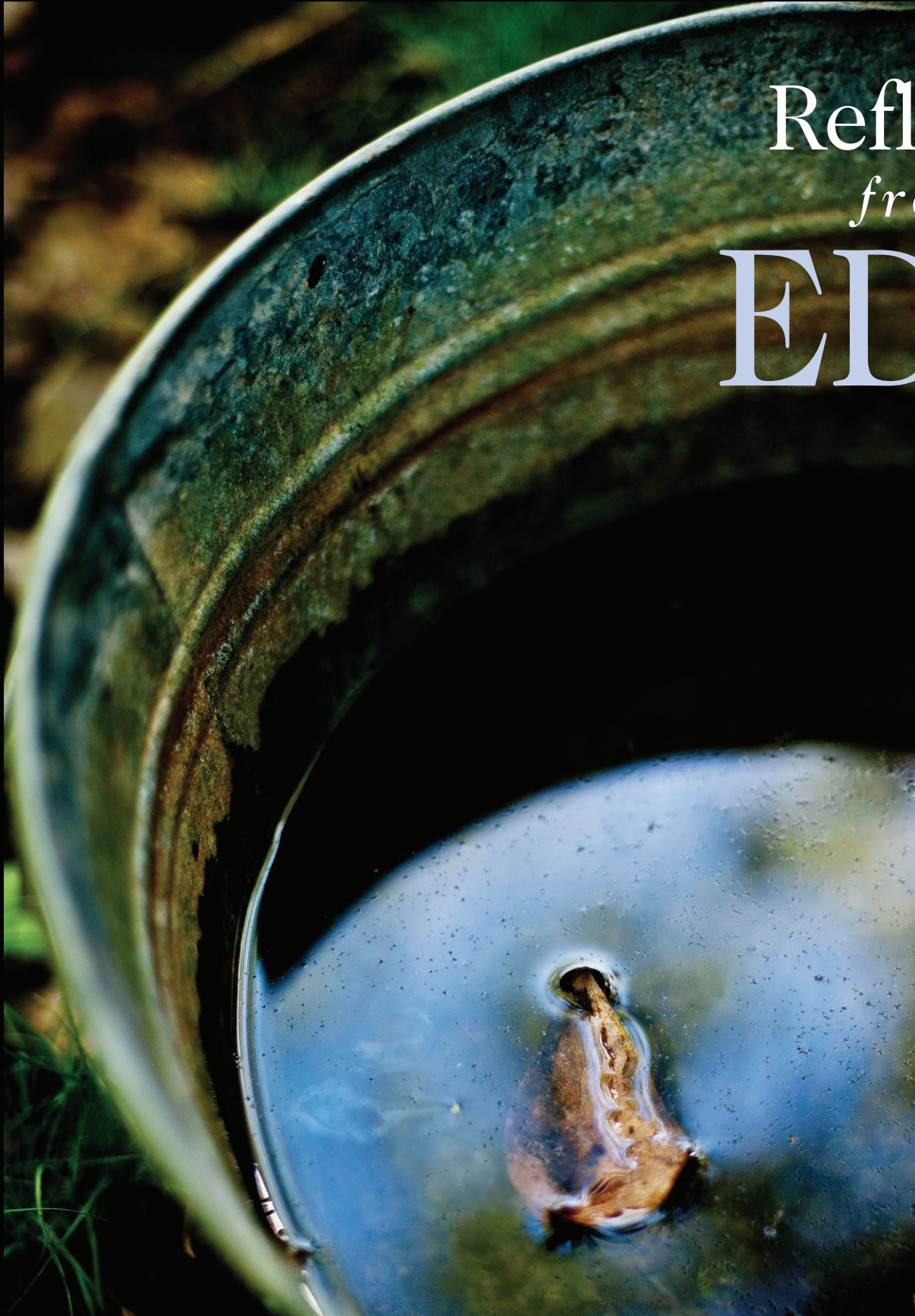
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THROUGH THE LENS

BY JON C. LAKEY



Reflections *from the* EDGE

Some beautiful colors, textures and layers of light can be found in the simplest of things. Take this pail of stagnant water with a small, solitary leaf floating on the surface. "Meniscus" is the principle in chemistry describing a curve in the upper surface of a liquid that is caused by tension. The camera picks up this surface tension, which is reflected at the edge of the pail and around the borders of the leaf. Let's just say it's pretty.



Photograph by Sean Meyers

Scene 1: The stage is empty, except for a single chair. A light illuminates the chair and nothing else. An actor appears.

Brian Romans first appeared onstage when he was in high school. He quickly became addicted to the thrill of the theater. A Catawba College graduate, he still lives in Salisbury, working a day job and performing wherever and whenever he can.

Comedy excites him, but his serious roles have been well received and respected. Just don't ask him to sing.

"I can't sing at all — at all," he says during a downtown lunch.

At the time, he was starring in the "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)" at Lee Street theatre, along with Jacob Asher and

life in the spotlight

For actor Brian Romans, it's "all about the work"

by DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH

Jason Roland.

The three have now performed all three plays by Adam Long, Daniel Singer and Jess Winfield, "The History of America (abridged)," "All the Great Books (abridged)" and Shakespeare. It helps that Romans learned about Shakespearian performance at Catawba.

There's some improvisation involved, but they stick pretty closely to the script.

"Those are some of the most versatile roles an actor could do," Brian says.

There are madcap routines, naughty jokes, numerous costume changes and characters galore. Romans played,

among others, Macbeth and Hamlet. How do you make those roles funny? Just watch him.

Romans was born in Baltimore in 1982, an only child — “That explains a lot,” he says — who attended a Jesuit high school where he was a performer and a winning debate team member. “Public speaking takes away all your fear.”

He chose Catawba College because freshmen could be cast right away — some schools don’t do that. He had four roles as a freshman and proved in “Applause” that he’s no singer.

Sophomore year, he played son Geoff in the classic, “The Lion in Winter,” about Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

He also played one of his favorite roles, Matt in “The Marriage of Bette & Boo,” a biographical work by Christopher Durang. He was hooked when he learned Durang was an only child whose mother read A.A. Milne to him. “My mother read A.A. Milne to me,” Brian says.

“The best part of college was reading texts and learning about a character. Finding moments on the stage.”

Then he took a year off and began “an extended sabbatical in restaurant studies” realizing “multiple jobs in the food industry makes college seem easy.” He eventually earned a BFA in performance theater.

For two or three years after that, he continued his restaurant work, and then Lee Street Theatre came into being, with Justin Dionne, another Catawba gradu-

ate, at the helm.

At the same time, Brian began dating Jessica Buckwalter, to whom he is now married. They have four furry children, all pit bull rescues, Matilda, Bubba, Norman and Randall.

His first show for Lee Street was “The Rothko Room;” Claudia Galup was his costar in a moving, bittersweet performance.

He also did “A Life in the Theater” with Craig Kolkebeck, now affiliated with Catawba, about two actors, one a



Photograph by Jon C. Lakey

veteran, one an up-and-coming talent.

Then came “Now are the Foxes,” an improv comedy group with branches here, in Hickory and in Charlotte, doing quick-hit comedy, short gags and jokes. It requires a good deal of preparation.

The Foxes attended a workshop with comedian Kevin McDonald before his performance at Lee Street. Romans learned to write longer form comedy, 5-6 minute sketches.

Brian then took on the role of Philo Farnsworth in “The Farnsworth Invention” for Piedmont Players, directed by

yet another Catawba grad, Reid Leonard. A true story, Farnsworth was a self-taught inventor who was trying to create a television. His competition is a West Coast media mogul, who got all the credit, despite the advances Farnsworth made.

And he thoroughly enjoyed “Almost, Maine,” a sweet play about love in which he, again, played several characters.

“I like ensemble work. There’s no one play I want to do, or role. I like to do in-depth work. ... It’s not about the applause or the reviews. It’s all about me.

It really is.

“It rewinds my brain. It’s good for my mental health.”

Brian likes to get to the theater early and set up his props and other people’s props.

“I love the smell of the costumes from Catawba.” He inhales deeply. “I love that funk from so many people using them.”

And he likes direction and challenge. “I like to work with people who make me work harder. It’s all about the work.” He loves getting

notes from the director. “I like to see a thing form and transform.

“I like to make something really honest, even though it’s a script, it’s not real.”

If he could get paid for playing out his passion, “that would be great. If not, it’s still who I am.”

His plan is first, to take care of his family, and then see where performing can take him. Salisbury’s central location is great, but a time may come to move on.

“I came here for opportunities and stayed because of opportunities and will stay as long as opportunities remain.” S



Jody and Maggie Blackwell :
frequently spend time on the
small porch of their home on
Mitchell Avenue in Salisbury. :

Southern STYLE


For many, front porches are still
a part of everyday life

By Jeanie Groh

Photography by Jon C. Lakey and Wayne Hinshaw

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Front porch living can be quite splendid – sweet tea, rocking chairs and a gentle southern breeze harken back to a simpler, less frantic time.

Porches are “one of those bygone luxuries that many people don’t have access to,” says Karen Windate, owner of Turn of the Century Bed and Breakfast on South Fulton Street.

Although demanding schedules and technology may threaten quiet interludes on porches, and much more of a family’s home focus has shifted to back decks and patios, plenty of Rowan Countians still rely heavily on their front porches as a way of life.

Salisbury Mayor Pro Tem Maggie Blackwell and her husband, Jody, have an eight-foot by 12-foot porch that she considers “just another room” of their Mitchell Avenue home.

RELAXED PACE

..... Above: The front porch of the “Turn of the Century Bed and Breakfast” is all decked out for a porch party facing South Fulton Street. Right: The Blackwells enjoy sipping lemonade as they relax on the porch.



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Right: Flowers brighten the front porch view of the "Turn of the Century Bed and Breakfast" on South Fulton Street.



ACCENTS

Left: On Mitchell Ave., light shines on a front porch fern.

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“It’s part of our everyday life,” she says, adding that it’s a retreat within their home.

Maggie Blackwell loves to sit on the porch and enjoy the breeze blowing through, the birds singing and the wind chime playing. The Blackwells spend three seasons out of the year on their porch – spring, summer and autumn. “If it’s real chilly, I’ll put on a jacket just to sit out here,” Maggie Blackwell says.

Each spring, they clean and freshen up the porch. They strip, seal and wax it and modify the decorations. “We change something each year,” Blackwell says.

Kendall Vaughn says he grew up on a porch, and as a 40-year-old today, he still finds it his favorite place to hang out. The chiropractor’s home in the Olde Salisbury subdivision has a two-story porch. It’s where he and his friends have their deepest conversations and make their best memories.

“I don’t see why people would want to sit inside if they have a porch,” Vaughn says. He enjoys people-watching and returning the waves of people walking by. “The neighbors walk a lot,” says his neighbor and friend Laura Eberly, a frequent visitor to Vaughn’s porch, which he claims is “responsible for creating friendships.”

Vaughn is always inviting the people he meets to visit on his front porch, and it’s such a popular place, his friends even check-in to “Kendall’s Front Porch” on Facebook during their visits.

“You never know who you’re going



“So often in today’s hectic world, we just can’t relax. The porch is a respite.”



to see – who’s going to be sitting on the porch,” Eberly says.

Windate calls her porch “the heart of the house.” Her home boasts a deep wrap-around porch with 12 columns and 126 spindles.

“It is definitely one of the things that spoke to me when I saw the house,” she says. “So often in today’s hectic world, we just can’t relax. The porch is a respite.”

Windate often finds her bead-and-breakfast guests outside on the porch talking or reading during their stays. The porch “connects the house to a neighborhood and a community,” Windate says.

“It builds community and helps strengthen contacts and interaction,” she adds. “Porches are very conducive to conversation.”

Maggie Blackwell often likes to sit out on the front porch late at night and watch movies on her tablet, or listen to her husband play the guitar and harmonica. When it’s nice, she also will do her yoga on the porch.

“Fulton Heights is a porch neighborhood,” Blackwell says. “The neighbors will walk by and stop and visit.”

One of those neighbors, Mandy, is Blackwell’s best friend. Before Mandy moved away, the two of them spent a lot of time on their porches drinking wine, building dreams and sorting through grief.

“We’d sit on each other’s mutual porches,” Blackwell says. “We shared our lives with each other. Our friendship really grew on our porches.” S

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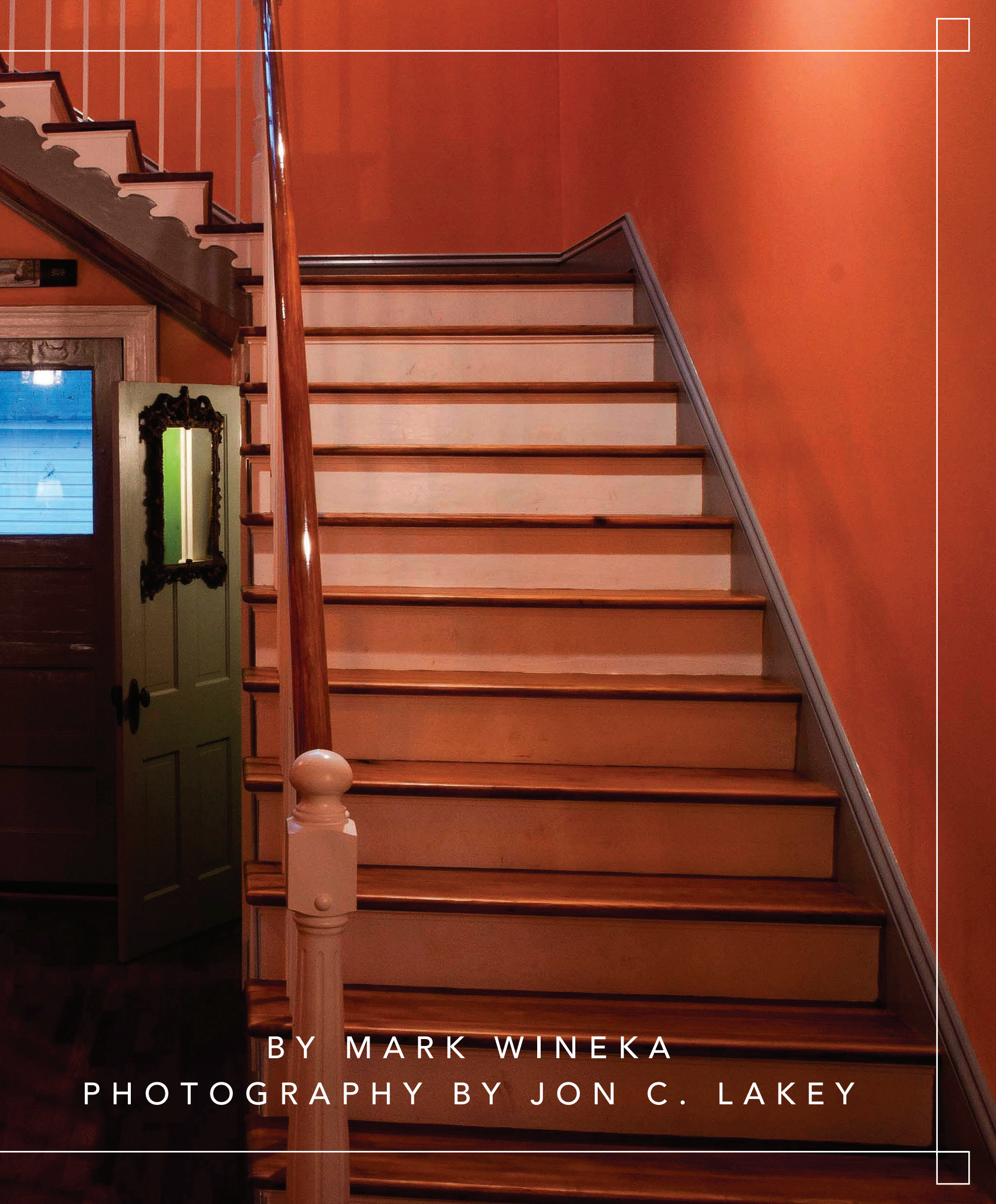
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rising from the
ASHES

Dixons bring former Blackmer House
back after fire



BY MARK WINEKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY

That Valentine's Day in 2014, when Glenn and Beth Dixon sat at a card table in the Blackmer House's dining room and celebrated their purchase of this historic but beleaguered residence, the couple had no second thoughts.

A less courageous pair might have. Around them stood a structure still marred by a devastating Dec. 1, 1984, fire. Walls, floors, doors and stairways remained charred, unable to reflect even a shadow. Much of the second floor and parts of the first floor weren't entirely safe to walk over. Years of standing empty had led to all manner of decay inside and out — what most people would judge as ruin beyond repair.

But within a few days, contractor Al Wilson and his crew were on the site, confident the 1820 house at 112 S. Fulton St. not only could be saved but become a showplace again. "I didn't worry about where to start," Wilson says, believing enough had been done in the past 30 years to ensure it could be brought back to life. "Everybody along the way had done the right thing."

Wilson possessed insights into the house, having made repairs to the roof and front foundation in 1989. He also had recently teamed up with architect Jon Palmer on the Lee Street Theatre project. Palmer, working closely with the State Historic Preservation Office, had a plan for the house, known by most Salisbury-ans as the onetime home of stage and film actor Sidney Blackmer and his actress wife, Suzanne.

Steady progress was essential. The Dixons needed to have the bulk of the



Beth and Glenn Dixon and a talented team of craftsmen have completed the 13-month restoration of the Blackmer House, a reference to onetime owner Sidney Blackmer.

restoration completed by Dec. 31, 2014, to take advantage of North Carolina's 30 percent tax credit for rehabilitating qualified historic residences. The state credit was set to go out of existence with the new year.

When Sidney and Suzanne Blackmer and their boys lived here, the house had a beautiful front portico highlighted by four two-story columns. The columns, dating back to 1906-08 when the Mock family owned the house, survived the fire, but they had been taken down and stowed

away in various places including inside the house, at Grimes Mill, in the carriage house (garage) in back and at Wilson's shop.

An entire city seemed to watch and wonder if the Dixons' dream of making this their "forever home" could come true. People came by, wanting to share memories of the Blackmers and give the couple mementos, such as a kitchen apron that had belonged to Suzanne Blackmer, or things they had purchased during a three-day yard sale at the house in 2012



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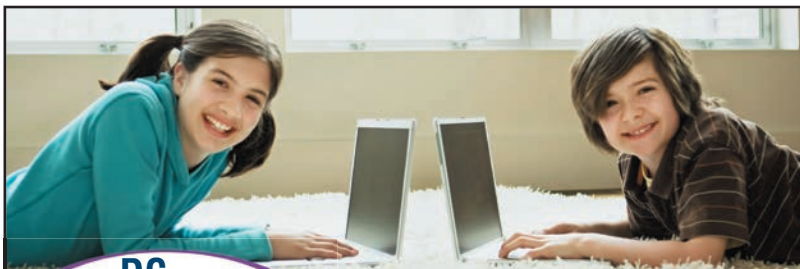
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HARDWORKING CREW

Right: Glenn Dixon, top left, and Beth Dixon had a great experience working with interior designer Chad Morgan, top right; contractor Al Wilson, bottom right; and Jon Palmer, bottom left. Below right: A look into the Decatur Room, the closest thing Glenn Dixon has to a man cave.

before Jonathan Blackmer sold it to the Historic Salisbury Foundation.

Glenn Dixon shows a letter opener and pen and pencil set fashioned for them out of the house's discarded wood. And when it comes down to it, the Dixons say, the house wouldn't be here without so many people fighting for it since the 1984 fire. Numerous times, the house faced a ticking clock toward demolition as a nuisance, but preservationists such as Ed Norvell and Ed Clement, city leaders, Suzanne and Jonathan Blackmer and tolerant neighbors did what they could to block any wrecking ball.

"It took the community to do it," Glenn says, and that's why the Dixons look forward to sharing their house's transformation with the public when it is one of the highlight stops on this year's OctoberTour. In 2013, Historic Salisbury Foundation opened up the house to tour-goers when it was a charred shadow of itself inside. This year's OctoberTour patrons will not recognize the home as the same place.

Beth Dixon likes how Brian Davis, executive director of Historic Salisbury Foundation, has described the house's rebirth as the most public restoration of a private residence Salisbury has ever seen.

Today, it serves as home to the Dixons, their four children, two dogs and a cat. One of the dogs, a Labrador named Sidney, is named for Sidney Blackmer. Appropriately, she is a rescue dog.

In about 4,500 square feet of space, where the rooms have 13-foot-high ceilings, the family has a first floor that includes a central hall, living



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room, den, master bedroom and bath, a half-bath under the stairway, dining room, kitchen and mud-room.

The second floor has another central hall, used by the children as a gathering place, and two spacious bedrooms on each side that are mirrors of one another. Each side also has a full bathroom between its two bedrooms. More stairs lead to an attic used for storage.

Only the master bathroom at the back of the first floor is an addition to the house's longtime footprint.

Palmer says a guiding principle in his design work for the project was "really staying out of the way

INTERIOR WORK

Above: Beautiful wood finishes abound in the dining room.

Right: The kitchen features granite countertops and shelves for cookbooks..

of the house and simply respecting it." Glenn Dixon adds that all kinds of historical evidence on how the house should look were available through photographs and what the shell of a house still had to offer. A gracious Jonathan Blackmer, who grew up in the house, also was available to fill in some of the gaps, if they had questions.





Left: The Dixons saved a panel of Decatur wallpaper that was original to the 1820 house. Center: Taking a look up the restored stairwell, which includes a design by Chad Morgan. Right: The house has eight working fireplaces, but this one in the living room has summer visitors.

“The vision was there,” Glenn says. After living for many of their children’s growing-up years in the Country Club area, the Dixons, who had previously restored a South Ellis Street home, were ready to move back to the West Square Historic District. Beth Dixon was especially interested in the Murphy-Murdoch House on West Bank Street, though it needed considerable work. As a way to show Glenn how its restoration might be easy compared to something else, she contacted Historic Salisbury Foundation for a look at other houses on the market, including the Blackmer House.

Thanks to hundreds of volunteer hours, Historic Salisbury Foundation had cleaned up the grounds and interior, glazed and repaired the windows, returned the ironwork

brackets and balconies out front and built a new back porch made partly from lumbers salvaged from Grimes Mill. Wilson says all the things the foundation accomplished after purchasing the house from Jonathan Blackmer in 2012 gave it curb appeal again. “When they got it,” he says of the foundation, “they turned the corner. They did a tremendous amount of work.”

But Beth Dixon hoped once Glenn opened the front door to the Blackmer House and saw the amount of devastation left inside by neglect and the 1984 fire, he would quickly back away and have renewed interest with her in the Murphy-Murdoch House.

The opposite happened.

“Beth came in here thinking I would be discouraged at the state of the house,” Glenn said. “I said, ‘Oh, no, this is perfect.’”

Glenn Dixon knew with the Blackmer House the restoration would basically mean taking everything back to the studs, down to the ground and up to the roof and starting over with what was still a magnificent skeleton. He actually preferred that to most other types of old house restorations where the walls, floors and ceilings might hide a lot of secrets — expensive secrets.

With the Blackmer House, the Dixons would have a house with completely new wiring, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning, and Glenn preferred that. Besides, the house still contained evidence or clues in each room as to how things such as molding, door frames, staircases, rails, wainscoting and fireplace mantels should be reproduced and be historically accurate. He loved the back of the house and saw the potential for an attractive garden.

Something about the house just spoke to him, too, and Beth Dixon acknowledges she also sensed it. “It was much easier to see the family in this home than the other one,” she says. “From the time we walked through with Brian (Davis), we knew.”

It was a formality, but the family vote was an overwhelming 5-1 to go with purchasing the Blackmer House, rolling up sleeves and becoming part of the 13-month restoration. Beth was the lone vote against it, but in the end, it was a weak dissent. The Dixons received their certificate of occupancy March 13, and Beth Dixon can't imagine having not taken on the house, watching everyone associated with the project do their best work and feeling like it was giving something back to Salisbury.

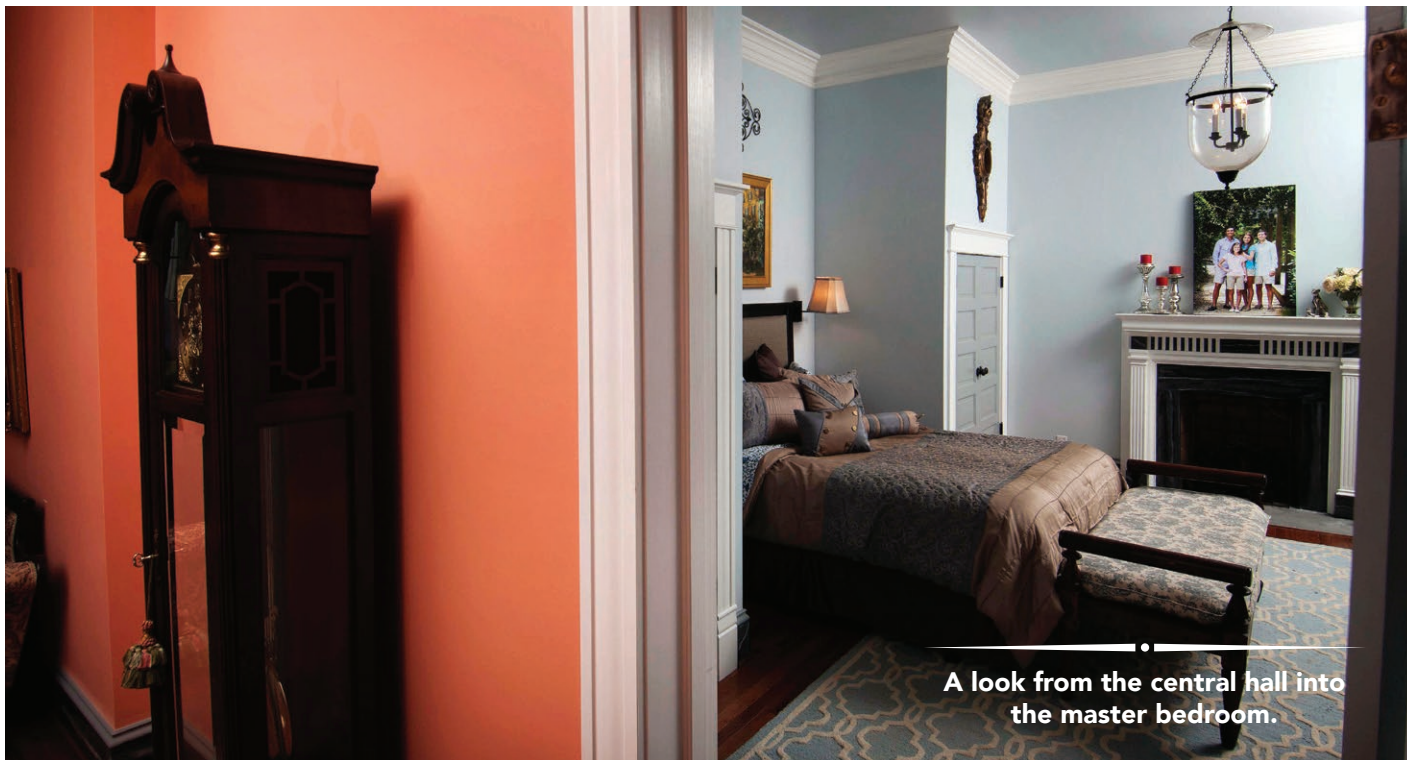
“It was just such a fun team,” she says.

Wilson and his crew had to raise entire floors and dig down to bare ground. They uncovered original design flaws, which had led to a sagging floor structure upstairs. You could call the restoration approach bottom-to-top, top-to-bottom or side-to-side, but everything was touched and transformed. When possible, elements of the original interior structure were recycled. Treads on the main staircase were fashioned from wall boards salvaged from the second floor. Several original doors, still showing blisters from the fire, were painted and reused.

The Dixons like the way they can



A circa 1905 piano that belonged to actor Sidney Blackmer, and period furniture accent the front living room in the Dixons' newly restored home.



A look from the central hall into the master bedroom.

run their hands over some of the saved structural pieces and feel the history, even if it recalls the fire.

“It is not pristine,” Glenn says. “That’s not what we wanted.”

Wilson rejects the notion that this is a completely new house inside an old shell. He knows the care taken in reproducing things exactly as they had appeared in various incarnations of the house. “Historically, it’s 100 percent original,” Wilson says.

Glenn Dixon points to the center hall’s elaborate crown molding as an example. It is made from six to eight different pieces of wood. “To me, the molding in here is what makes it,” Glenn says. A fireplace mantel in the front den had been salvaged from the parents’ house of Gov. John Ellis in Davidson County. The team knew it was of the same 1820s time period be-

cause an original mantel in the living room had survived.

Woodworkers Butch Hollifield and Gary Curlee contributed greatly to the project. Among other things, Curlee reproduced a lot of the needed architectural components, and Hollifield recreated what seems like miles and miles of trim inside and out.

Wilson’s crew included carpenter Brad Hartle, who framed a mirror for the Dixons out of 1820 wallboards salvaged from the house and a piece of upstairs flooring.

Salisburyans passing by could only guess what was going on inside the Dixons’ house during the restoration. Outside, however, they realized things were moving quickly. Last July, the columns returned, set onto new brick pedestals

and concrete plinths. New capitals made of cast epoxy resin — one of the few manufactured pieces of millwork in the project — came later.

Meanwhile, the city also watched as the Blackmer House’s four chimneys — the home has eight working fireplaces — were taken down and rebuilt completely by Robert Earnhardt and Red Tucker. The original bricks that could be saved were used to encase completely new chimneys of higher-density bricks.

The distinctive deodora pines (cedars) remain in the front yard.

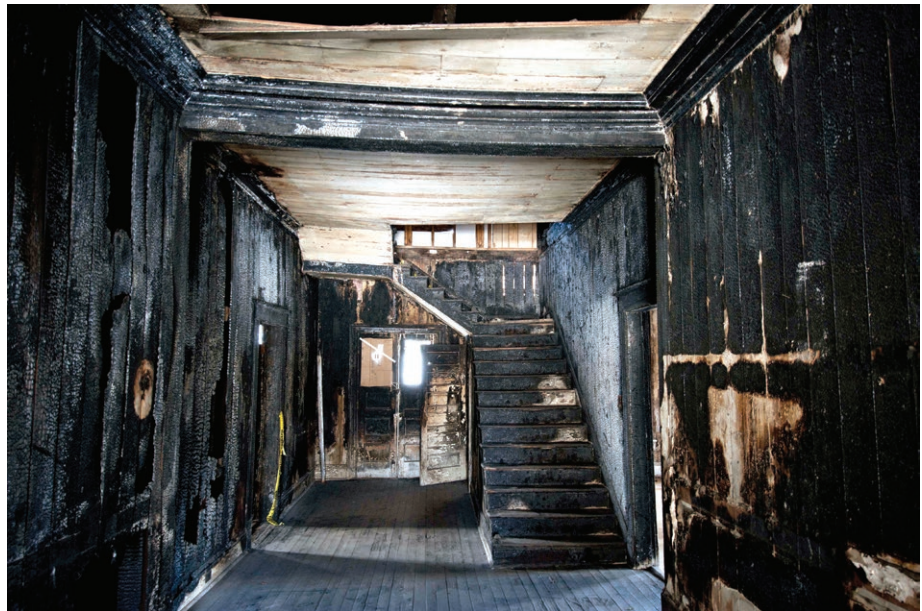
The first floor’s center hall and the layout of primary rooms is quite similar to the Hall House on South Jackson Street. Both antebellum houses are among the oldest in Salisbury. Chad Morgan has painted a signature design under the staircase, and the door at



the far back is original to the 1820 structure.

To the front left is what the Dixons call the Decatur Room, a reference to the original 1820s Decatur wallpaper uncovered there. A sample of the Prussian blue block print wallpaper was preserved and is displayed. It memorialized Stephen Decatur, a Navy commodore who was killed in a duel in March 1820. This house originally was finished in December 1820.

Otherwise, the Decatur Room is the closest thing Glenn Dixon has to a man cave. It has a large flat-screen television, pool table, bar and fireplace and still has plenty of room for comfortable furniture.



AFTER THE FIRE

Top: Doug Black, with the Historic Salisbury Foundation, walks around the corner toward the back of the 1820 Fulton-Mock-Blackmer House during the renovation.

Above: Interior of the hallway after flames gutted the house.

One of the project's biggest "magic tricks" was keeping the Decatur Room's ceiling in place while everything above and below it was replaced, Wilson says.

The living room, to the front right of the main hall, includes the 1905 rosewood Weber piano that has been meticulously restored by Klutznick Piano. The piano belonged to the Blackmers and somehow survived the fire and the past 30 years inside the house. Over the mantel, the Dixons also plan to hang a gilded Rococo mirror, a Blackmer artifact that also was sold to them as part of the house.

Pocket sliding doors, beautifully restored, separate the living room and dining room. The dining room leads to the a kitchen that proved to be a most demanding design challenge for architect Jon Palmer. Beth Dixon loves to cook, and through many different discussions and configurations, she wasn't sure that once the appliances and cabinets were in she would have the countertops and storage space she needed. She was pleasantly surprised. "It's a beautiful kitchen," she says.

The kitchen leads to an all important mudroom and the handsome back side porch.

The Dixons transformed a back left parlor on the first floor into their master bedroom. A wall in the master bedroom was recessed to create closet spaces on both ends of the room.

Throughout the house, Beth Dixon has chosen a wide-ranging palette

of colors, executed by painter Ebbie Denker. "You couldn't do a project like this without a good painter," Wilson says.

Interior designer Morgan's expert faux painting created the look of marble around the fireplaces and it fooled Glenn Dixon when he first saw it. He almost complained to Beth that they could not afford the expense of marble.

Morgan says he learned quickly that Beth Dixon, a District Court judge, made decisions quickly. "I'm finance and exterior, she's design," Glenn says. Beth still depended on Morgan for a lot of guidance as they set about furnishing and decorating the house.

"I didn't realize how much I needed him until he got on site with me," Beth says of Morgan.

Beth Dixon estimates about 50 percent of the furnishings come from the family's former home, while 50 percent are period items picked up at salvage warehouses, Habitat stores and Goodwill. "Some spaces just called for something different," she says.

Getting various assignments from Wilson on weekends, the Dixon family invested a lot of their own sweat equity into the house. Wilson recalls how Beth and daughter Susannah looked like coal miners trying to remove the black from an 1820 door.

Glenn Dixon polished and oiled hardware saved throughout the

house, and the family, outfitted with goggles and face masks, took part in demolition duties among other chores. The Dixons still have some major projects ahead, such as a brick sidewalk out front, installation of up to 50 shutters and renovations of the three-car carriage house.

Before sheetrock covered the interior studs, the Dixons buried some of their own family artifacts into the wall like a time capsule that maybe some other family will find 100 years from now.

Which brings up the inevitable question: What do you call this house? From history's perspective, it sometimes has been referred to as the Fulton-Mock-Blackmer House, referencing all the significant owners in its past. Modern-day Salisburians still call it the Blackmer House.

John Fulton built the 1820 house as a residence and boarding house for girls attending the female academy located at the Hall House. The A.J. Mock family became the next significant longtime owner, followed by the Blackmers in 1931.

Beth Dixon says her new home, only five years away from its 200th birthday, is anything but a house museum. But she likes that it holds bits and pieces from every family that has lived here over many different eras.

Now come the Dixons.

"A new family has moved in," Beth says, "and we change things." S



..... Sam Penegar grills out almost daily in his backyard kitchen with his Weber gas grill.

BY JOSH BERGERON



THRILL
on the
grill

Practice makes perfect
when it comes
to cooking out

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



one by one, smoke slowly starts to rise in suburban backyards as winter woes and spring showers make way for clear summer days. With the smoke comes mouth-watering smells. It's grilling time, and the endless continuum of concoctions are roasting on grills across Rowan County.

Perhaps the most conventional grill creations are hot dogs and burgers, which can come in an endless number of shapes and sizes. Barbecue surely has a place on North Carolina grills, too. And, if it's edible, there's likely a spot waiting on a grill somewhere in Rowan County. Some cooks develop their own, special creations.

Salisbury resident Sam Penegar has a special concoction he calls the "Sam What." Much like a burrito, the "Sam What" is rolled-up chicken breast filled with a mixture of whatever tickles the palate.

Its name is a product of the uncertainty that surrounds the ingredients. One warm, May evening, Penegar chose chicken as the dish's exterior and rolled into it spinach and different kinds of cheese. On this night, Penegar's creation is a "Chicken What."

"It's called a Chicken What because I never know what I'm going to put in it," he says. "It's usually whatever I have or whatever sounds good at a particular time."

When Penegar serves his "Sam Whats," he also whips up a mix of grilled vegetables

and risotto.

As with the endless mixture of meals, grills also come in various shapes and sizes. There are old ones, new ones, gas, charcoal and grills handcrafted by their cooks.

Regardless of a grill's price, Penegar says, the tool doesn't boost a cook's ability.

"You've still got to know what you're doing," he says.

Dribbling more sauce on the final creation, likewise, doesn't boost the taste, says Salisbury resident Jack Moore, a master griller who also markets his own barbecue sauce, Blowin' Smoke.

"It doesn't matter how your barbecue sauce tastes," Moore says. "It can be the No. 1- tasting sauce in the world. If the guy behind the grill doesn't know what he's doing, it's not going to turn out any good."

Moore and Penegar both say practice and experience build cooking talent. The pair, differ, however, on the best method to cook a meal on a grill. Penegar favors a gas grill, which he says is more convenient.

"I dare say that I can cook a hamburger on a gas grill and the other on the charcoal grill, and you won't be able to taste the difference," Penegar says. "I use gas at the moment just because it is more convenient. The charcoal, however, is usually going to impart a certain flavor, but for most things you won't know the difference."

In the endless debate between gas and charcoal, Moore says he's exclusively a charcoal man and usually tosses hickory nuts into the bed of charcoal to add some flavor. Moore says he once pur-



CHARCOAL OR GAS?

Sam Penegar says "I dare say that I can cook a hamburger on a gas grill and the other on the charcoal grill, and you won't be able to taste the difference."

chased a gas grill, took the propane tank off and used it exclusively for charcoal.

"Real barbecue fans will know the difference," Moore says.

The cooker Moore is proudest of is an oil drum that he modified to be used for cooking with charcoal. Moore said he burned all potential oil out of the barrel and cleaned it before using it as a cooker. Moore's cooker may not have fancy dials and knobs, but it's more fun to use, he says. His converted oil drum requires a bit more regular attention during the cooking process.

"It's old school, and I do mean old school," Moore says.

Perhaps the one thing all cooks can agree on is keeping beer around as a regular companion, Penegar says. Both Penegar and Moore also claim any clear day is a great day for grilling.

Penegar's grilling setup includes a couple countertops, spice rack, mini-fridge, sink, a shelter that protects his operation from sun and rain and, of course, a grill.

He's got nearly a dozen catchphrases — if you can cook it inside, you can cook it outside; you can always add, but never take away; and taste the meat, not the heat — that describe grilling mantras.

One thing Penegar says you won't hear him offer as advice: "If all else fails, nuke it." **S**

Gail Kimball and Barbara Setzer :
get a refill of coffee from Jennifer
Carter at College Barbecue. :



The Breakfast Clubs

by SUSAN SHINN
photography by JON C. LAKEY

Sometimes the best way to start the day is with friends.



omma always said breakfast was the most important meal of the day. However, Momma never specified you had to fix it yourself. That's probably why restaurants all over Rowan County are filled in the early-morning hours with friends, families, co-workers and retirees — all gathered around the breakfast table.

These folks believe that there's no better way to start your day than with someone about whom you care, or with whom you share a common interest.

Here are a few of their stories.

Gail Kimball and Barbara Setzer started having breakfast together in 1980.

"We were just gonna go to breakfast because we never saw each other," says Gail, a retired nurse practitioner. Barbara worked for years at Waterworks Visual Arts Center.

They decided to get together once a week. Well, that lasted one week before they thought, well, let's go twice a week. And finally, they said, what the heck, let's just go every day.

"We have spent millions of dollars on breakfast," Gail says.

They meet at College Barbecue, always in the circular corner booth — unless

someone steals it, Barbara says.

"We don't take kindly to people who do," she says. "Oh! Don't put that!"

They've been through a lot together over the years. Gail, 77, and her husband Bob, will be married 54 years in October. Barbara, 76, has been married 53 years to husband David. They had their children about the same time. Gail and Bob have three daughters; Barbara and David have two sons. Barbara very nearly had both

"We talk about our families, and talk about who's sick. We just harass each other every week."

"Til we get tired of telling tales. When we start repeating ourselves, it's time to go."

children at Gail's house since Gail lived so close to the hospital. (We'll spare you the details; if you want to know, ask Barbara.)

"Usually," Gail says, "one of us is in some kind of a crisis. But Barbara is a wonderful friend. Even if I'm wrong, she supports me."

"We have seen each other through our

careers," Barbara says.

After breakfast, the two friends don't part. They head to the J.F. Hurley Family Y.

"If I eat breakfast, I am honor-bound to go to the Y," Gail says.

"We are pretty faithful," Barbara says.

And faithful to having breakfast with each other.

"Semper Fi, brother."

The greeting is always the same, between active or retired Marines. The dozen or so Marines who gather every Friday morning for breakfast at Jeter's often share these words with one another.

Around the table this morning: Ned Carter of Lexington, Jim Murphy of Mocksville, Charlie Harvel of Advance, Mark Beymer, Bob Bruce, Bob Westfall, Jim Board, Dean "Meat" Kroll (we'll get to that nickname later), Michael Catus, Doug Black, Dick Richards, Perry Hood, Tommy Tucker and Monroe Goodman.

Carter and Hood met on the bus going to Atlanta, and wound up in the same platoon. They kept in touch over the years.

Beymer served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Bruce served during the early '60s.

"When I was growing up, I knew I couldn't go to college," he says. "As far as I was concerned, the best branch of service was the Marines. I knew in high school that's where I was going."

He went into aviation electronics

and served in Cuba, Japan and Taiwan. Thanks to the military, he went to college in electronics training, and eventually worked in sales and marketing in the field.

"I owe a lot to the Marine Corps," he says. "The GI Bill was a kick-starter for me."

Board served 4½ years in the mid '60s. He had promised his girlfriend they would get married as soon as he got out of service. He was good as his word. He was discharged at noon, and he and Jackie married two hours later, at a justice of the peace in Coronado, Calif.

At 86, Bob Westfall is the oldest member of the group. He served in Korea and was among the band of Marine brothers known as the "Chosin Frozen," who braved the coldest North Korean winter in 100 years.

"I'm still trying to thaw out," he quips. "The temperature was 40 below, and we slept on the ground."

Catus was in Beirut in 1983 when the Marine barracks were destroyed by a bomb. Because he was in communications, he knew most of the Marines who were killed.

"It's still really hard to talk about," he says. "I still have nightmares. Being with this group has helped a lot. It's something to look forward to every week."

Tucker agrees. He's coping with chronic health concerns caused by Agent Orange.

"If I keep my diet right," he says, "I'm good."

He looks forward to this time every week with these Marines and with other veterans.

When you get out of service, Tucker says, "You can fight and fight to keep it



WHAT'S COOKIN'

Barbara Setzer and Gail Kimball flank Doug Veitch after breakfast at College Barbecue. Veitch, who is the breakfast cook, knows what the ladies are going to order and starts preparation as soon as they get to the restaurant.

the same, but it catches up with you sooner or later. The camaraderie helps take the edge off for some of the guys. You don't ever forget it. It's always with you."

According to Black, the group got together about a decade ago through the efforts of the late Joe Cody and the late Doc Wagoner. They first met at the place that used to be the Big Pig, then the Farmhouse, and then it closed.

"You're seeing a pattern, aren't you?" Doug asks. "So we're over here now to ruin this place."

"Some people go on vacation, and others play golf once in a while," Beymer says, "but we're here most of the time."

"This is normal for us," he adds, as the guys hustle to put a fourth table on the

row.

Richards is a retired physician's assistant who served as a Navy corpsman in the late '60s. That's OK with this group, because the Navy corpsman oftentimes served with the Marines.

"I got drafted into the Army and went into the Navy instead," he says. "I dropped out of Catawba (College) and they got me."

Richards served in Okinawa and "a lot of other places."

Kroll earned his "Meat" nickname "when I was a little bigger and more muscular." At 55, he's the youngest member of the group, and served 24 years. He was in Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

"It's been a very good group with all the camaraderie," Kroll says.

Hood served on the presidential helicopter squad from September 1961 to 1965.

"It was good duty," he says. "President Kennedy was very gracious to the military. He really respected the military men because he was a vet. Once you got a White House clearance, they didn't transfer you out."

Murphy had a similar four-year assignment in Washington, as a part of the ceremonial platoon that guarded Camp David. He also guarded helicopters at President Johnson's Texas ranch.

"It was kinda cool," he says.

In the early '60s, Murphy was still gung-ho to go to Vietnam, and even requested a tour.

"In the beginning, it was still a positive thing," he says. "You were helping out, you know?"

Staying stateside, he says, turned out to



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be a good thing.

“Holy moly!” someone says when Monroe shuffles in. His health prevents him from coming as much as he would like, but he’s here this morning.

Black explains that Monroe lost a large fuel farm (a refueling area) to the North Vietnamese during the Tet offensive of 1968, near the DMZ (demilitarized zone — the border separating North and South Vietnam).

“They blew the living pee out of his supply,” Black says.

It didn’t matter to Monroe. He found a tanker off shore and began to send boats out, ferrying back the fuel. His customers loaded up at the docks.

When Monroe first enlisted, his IQ was tested at 88.

“I started buckling down and taking correspondence courses,” he says. “They tested me again and my IQ had jumped 40 points. That allowed me to become an officer and I did.”

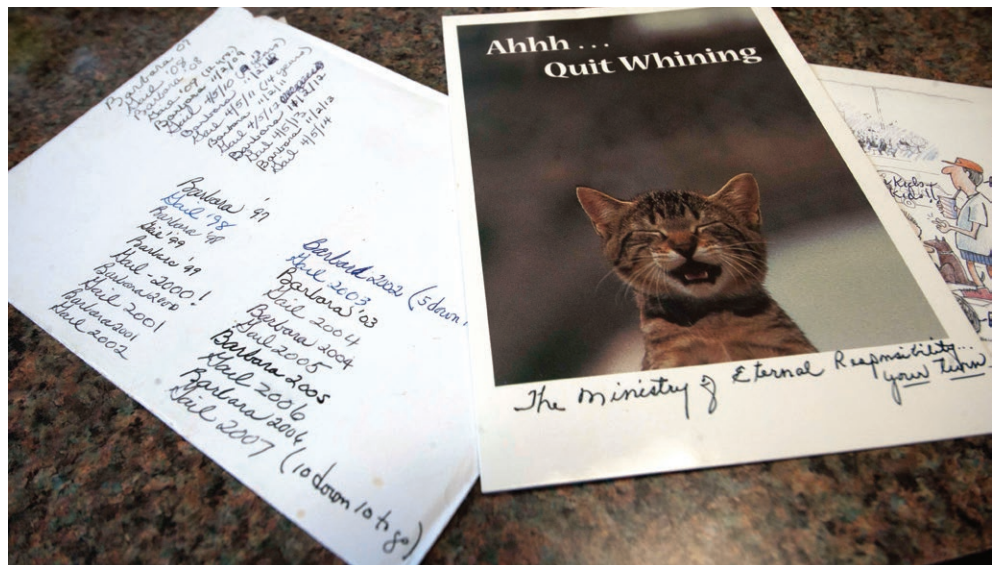
Enlisting in 1952, he served 23 years and says. “I was an old country boy,” and it was a good life.

He eventually came home and built houses. These days, he has breakfast at 5 a.m. before heading out to his garden. He’s got tomato plants and has planted the fourth of 14 crops of Silver Queen corn.

He takes off his worn cap to show a picture of the front of a bronze star and five good conduct ribbons, among the many he earned.

“I don’t consider it good conduct,” he says. “I consider it undetected crime. That’s just a joke, now.”

A lot of laughing goes on around the breakfast table. Beymer says the men talk about anything and everything, including



PASSING IT AROUND

When their birthdays roll around, Kimball and Setzer just pass the same card back and forth until it’s filled up and time for a new one.

what’s going on with the services and world events.

“We trade old war stories,” Westfall adds.

Of course.

“We talk about our families, and talk about who’s sick,” Beymer says. “We just harass each other every week.”

“Til we get tired of telling tales,” Hood says. “When we start repeating ourselves, it’s time to go.”

Every fourth Wednesday, the men take coffee and doughnuts to veterans at the Lutheran Home.

“Some tell us the same thing over and over, but that’s OK,” Hood says. “We’re all brothers.”

Don Bost worked at China Grove Middle School from 1980 to 2007, the last 10 years as principal.

“We were so close with the group we had at China Grove,” he says. “A lot of us

came at the same time and retired at the same time.”

Don had heard about other retirees who gathered from time to time, and decided he’d like to do that with his CGMS coworkers.

“I just got on Facebook and checked, and the majority of the retirees are on Facebook,” he says.

So Don issued an invitation, and they got together last August — fittingly, on the first day of school. They met at Porky’s, just a few doors up the street from the middle school.

But members of the group — which typically has 15 to 18 retirees, Don says — don’t talk about school.

“We talk about what everybody is doing,” Don says.

For him, that means playing golf a couple of days a week and taking his two grandsons back and forth to school. One goes to Millbridge Elementary School and the other one is, you guessed it, at China Grove Middle School. **S**

Freelance writer Susan Shinn lives in Salisbury.



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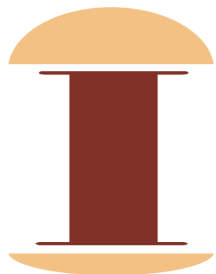
Terry Allen, owner of Emma's of Salisbury, serves up a half-pound beef patty with chipotle slaw and eastern N.C.-style barbecue on telera bread. A side of sweet potato fries rounds out the entree.



THE BEST burger

Five different versions
of the American classic

BY JOSH BERGERON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



It's one of the quintessential components of American cuisine, but each variation of the hamburger is unique in its own way. Whatever the components,

a memorable burger is hardly complete without a few extra accessories to tickle the taste buds.

Salisbury the Magazine sampled burgers from five different restaurants around Rowan County, each with their own special flavor and character. The restaurants are not listed in any particular order.

Emma's of Salisbury

A trip to Emma's feels much like walking into a family member's home for a

BURGER TIME

Greg Culp cooks up burgers at Hap's Grill on North Main Street in Salisbury.

meal. The Salisbury restaurant is located in a historic 1901 Victorian cottage at 209 S. Lee St.

Burgers aren't a prominent feature on the restaurant's menu, but on select days Emma's will whip up one of its multiple creative burger creations as a special.

A particularly good choice features chipotle slaw, eastern North Carolina barbecue and a half-pound patty sandwiched between telera bread. It doesn't come with any sort of sauce. The combination of the juicy patty, slaw and barbecue are enough to tantalize any palate.

The burger was served with a side of sweet potato fries. The total price, with a water to drink, came to \$7.99.

Hap's Grill

Nearly impossible to miss, Hap's Grill sits near the center of downtown Salisbury in a small, skinny building at 116 1/2 N. Main St. During lunch, a line nearly always stretches outside of the building's interior.

Burgers are part of Hap's main attraction. For that matter, Hap's is part of Salisbury's main lunch attraction. A cheeseburger all the way will give diners onions, mustard, chili and a patty inside a standard hamburger bun.

The burgers are reasonably priced (a cheeseburger all the way is \$3.50), quick-



ly served and tasty. The restaurant doesn't accept credit or debit cards. A burger by itself costs just about as much as any change in a diner's pocket.

Once the burger is served up, there are two choices for places to eat, standing up. A small counter hugs the wall adjacent to the grill. The sidewalk in front of Hap's also includes a couple of tables for enjoying a meal.

Gary's Barbecue

With its name, one might think that Gary's is only focused on barbecue, but the well-known China Grove eatery at 620 Highway 29 North serves up a burger that's sure to satisfy.

Featured in the center of Gary's

GRUB TIME

At Uncle Buck's, Amanda "Squirrel" Evans brings out a Bad Boy burger that comes with two quarter-pound Angus beef patties, fried jalapeños, American and Swiss cheeses with house-made diablo sauce with a side of fried pork skins.

.....
 menu are two burgers with distinct names — The Big G and Big Al burgers. Both are equally tasty, but the Big G Burger is a classic.

A half-pound hamburger patty is the centerpiece of the Big G. It comes with the always reliable burger partners — cheese, lettuce and tomato.

The first, juicy bite won't let you down and neither will the several,

perhaps a dozen, others that will follow.

The menu price of the burger is \$5.95.

Uncle Buck's All American Pub & Grub

Uncle Buck's decor is as distinct as the more than 20 burgers that fill its menu, and each creation comes with its own personality.

Faced with so many choices, the most delectable option appeared to be the Badboy Burger. Its mouth-watering flavor rivals, and perhaps beats, any carefully crafted burger.

The Bad Boy is comprised of

Diablo's Dip, lettuce, stacked quarter-pound patties, "Amer/Swiss" cheese and jalapeño bottle caps. The cheese is a combination of American and Swiss. The jalapeño bottle caps may seem exorbitantly spicy at first glance, but they mesh with other ingredients to form a combination that's hard to beat.

There are two options when choosing the Badboy Burger. It comes in sizes called "Lil-Buck" and "Big Buck."

The smaller version is \$8.49, and the large is \$10.49. Uncle Buck's is located at 127 S. Main St.

Wahoo's Diner

Located in Granite Quarry's Brinkley Center near the intersection of East Bank Street and South Salisbury Avenue, Wahoo's Diner has quickly gained a following for producing fast, tasty and affordable cuisine.

The restaurant has been open for less than a year and has already been forced to expand its eating area to serve its customer base. One of the best items on Wahoo's menu is its namesake burger — The Wahoo. The burger's contents include a half-pound patty, fresh pineapple, provolone cheese, crispy bacon and roasted peppers.

The Wahoo's taste is complemented by the sweet pineapple, and the half-pound burger is worth coming back for.

The Wahoo costs \$4.99.

So there are five Rowan County burgers worth trying out, with plenty more worth mentioning. Let the debate over the best burger begin. S



HOT OFF THE GRILL

Jamie Vanhoy prepares to serve a couple of hamburgers to customers at Wahoo's in Granite Quarry.

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8holes 8humdingers

LOCAL COURSES' MOST
FORE-MIDABLE CHALLENGES

BY MARK WINEKA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON C. LAKEY



A golfer hits his tee shot on the tough No. 7 hole at Warrior Golf Club.

Several years ago, a regular player at Corbin Hills Golf Club in Salisbury told everybody within earshot — and he repeated this many times — that when he died, he wanted his ashes spread on hole No. 8.

“That hole’s gonna be the death of me,” he said.

Sure enough, the time came when the golfer passed away, and his friends

and family followed through on his wish. His ashes were spread on the hole that had always proved to be his personal Waterloo.

All golf courses seem to have at least one hole that causes players to shake their heads, throw things and curse the golfing gods. These are the kinds of holes where elation creeps in when you manage a par, or even a bogey. If you ever record a birdie, you immediately want to call the newspaper or at least nominate yourself to the golfing hall of fame.



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Salisbury the Magazine contacted personnel at Rowan County's eight different golf courses and asked them to choose the toughest hole on their courses. It wasn't always an easy decision.

Chad Campbell, golf pro at the Country Club of Salisbury, offered up hole No. 5 as the Donald Ross-designed course's toughest, but players will tell you the par-4 16th hole can be a bear, as can the 4th and 12th holes.

At The Club at Irish Creek in Kannapolis, the final four holes constitute one of the tougher finishing stretches in the state. Golf pro Alan Cress says the finish is respectfully called the "Love Trap," in reference and tribute to Davis Love III, who redesigned the course in 2007.

Cress says Irish Creek's first 14 holes offer some birdie opportunities, and the course "lulls you into thinking, 'I've got a pretty good round going here.'" But beware, Cress says, drawing comparisons between the Love Trap and the challenging Green Mile finish at Charlotte's Quail Hollow Club.

"If you have a good round going," Cress says, "Those last four holes, in some form or fashion, rear their ugly heads." The Love Trap has stolen victories away from teams in collegiate tournaments and killed dreams of players competing in PGA qualifiers at Irish Creek.

Not surprisingly, the Love Trap includes Irish Creek's toughest hole, the par-4 16th.

A disclaimer: The eight tough holes listed here are not necessarily the eight toughest in Rowan County. Again, each course was asked to offer its toughest — only one — and many of the courses could have easily nominated several holes.

Another disclaimer: Don't always go by what's listed as the No.1 handicap hole on a course's scorecard. Club spokesmen for Foxwood and Rolling Hills golf clubs nominated par 3s that are not listed as their No. 1 handicap holes, but they still consider them the most troublesome for players of those courses.

Out of the eight headache holes offered up, none is a par 5. Also of note is how several of these toughest holes look manageable to the golfer as he or she stands on the tee box. But then the fun begins, and nuisances such as creeks, ponds, sand traps, narrow fairways and undulating greens



TOUGH HOLE

The second shot on No. 8 at Corbin Hills is one of the toughest on the course. If you can get past the creek, the sloping green makes for hard putting.



SAND SHOT

Dave Garwood watches his shot from the sand bunker on the No. 3 fairway at the Crescent Golf Club. The hole is considered the hardest play on the course.

take over, adding up to a great deal of misery.

It can be the death of you.

Course: Corbin Hills Golf Club

Toughest hole: No. 8

Par: 4

Yardage from blue tees: 408

Comments: This is one of those holes that looks to be straightforward but never is. With a good drive, a golfer still might face 150 to 175 yards to the hole, and it's amazing how many of those approach shots find their way into the creek in front of the green. The sloping green itself is scary. If you leave yourself a downhill putt, hang on because "it's extremely quick,"

says Glenn Stirewalt, who has worked in the pro shop at Corbin for 18 years. The highest score Stirewalt has ever heard for the hole is a 14, but just recently a player eagled No. 8 by holing his second shot. So there is hope.

Course: Country Club of Salisbury

Toughest hole: No. 5

Par: 4

Yardage from blue tees: 382

Comments: Players face a tight fairway. The road on the right is out of bounds, and the fairway bunker to the left often comes into play. It requires good placement of a tee shot and maybe even a better second shot slightly uphill to the green,

which is not very receiving to a golf ball. The back right of the green slopes away, as does the front left, and it can be especially tough to get the ball close to the hole, depending on the pin placement.

Course: Crescent Golf Club

Toughest hole: No. 3

Par: 4

Yardage from blue tees: 453

Comments: The hole is a dogleg left, which is unusual, and the fairway is protected by a bunker to the right and two to the left. Frank Hedderich III, the pro and owner of the course, says the fairway landing area between the bunkers is only 40 yards wide. With a good drive, golfers



ON THE GREEN

Grey Starnes, from Concord, arrives at the No. 6 green at McCanless Golf Club. The 6th hole is considered the hardest on the course.

still face about 180 yards to the hole, which is protected by a left-side bunker. Woods line the entire back and right side of the green. “I do believe it is one of the toughest holes in North Carolina,” Hedderich says.

Course: Foxwood Golf Club

Toughest hole: No. 18

Par: 3

Yardage from the blue tees: 227 yards

Comments: Because of its length and a wind direction that blows in your face and often makes it longer, it’s not easy to land a ball on this green. Josh Mabe says with only Potneck Road behind the green, there’s no tree to use for lining up your uphill tee shot. “I try to play for something in front of the green and have an easy chip,” Mabe says. Likewise, many other golfers try to run something up to the green, which is relatively small. “It’s just difficult,” Mabe says.

Course: The Club at Irish Creek

Toughest hole: No. 16

Par: 4

Yardage from blue tees: 440

Comments: Swirling winds on this hole often give players something extra to think about, besides water (a small cove) all the way down the right side and deep rough to the left. The elevated fairway slopes gently down toward the water, so you have to hit a well-executed tee shot. A long second shot plays downhill across an inlet to a green, which is protected by bunkers on the left and right. Golfers have to deal with an undulating putting surface, including a hump to the right which often kicks balls in the wrong direction.

Course: McCanless Golf Club

Toughest hole: No. 6

Par: 3

Yardage from blue tees: 230

Comments: This is one of the tougher par 3s in the county. Club pro Scott Perry says golfers have to hit into “a dime-sized green,” and only a handful of the better golfers can fly a ball onto it and see it stick.

Because of its length, “most people have to hit a long iron or wood, and those tend to be the least accurate clubs in the bag,” Perry says. Golfers often find themselves dealing with some big pine trees on the right or a hedgerow behind the green that gobbles up balls. “A lot of people consider a ‘4’ to be a pretty good score on the hole,” Perry says.

Course: Rolling Hills

Toughest hole: No. 2

Par: 3

Yardage from blue tees: 204-215

Comments: At first blush, this slightly uphill hole seems fairly navigable, but golfers sometimes run afoul of a close out of bounds to the left, and it’s difficult to land your tee shot on the small, sloping green, which gives you only about 30 feet to shoot for, clubhouse manager Derek Lipe says. Tough pin placements usually make it even more of a nightmare.

Course: Warrior Golf Club

Toughest hole: No. 7

Par: 4

Yardage from blue tees: 390

Comments: This hole, dubbed “War Party,” has multiple hazards, including three different ponds to avoid. Your tee shot has to fly over a big pond and land left of the second pond, but the longer your tee shot, the smaller the landing area you have to work with. Some regulars advise cutting back on the drive and going up a club length on your second shot to the multi-tiered green with a false front. “It makes it a pretty challenging hole,” club pro Brian Lee says. The hole plays extremely uphill, and you want to avoid hitting left on your approach shot because of the third pond and a green-side bunker. S



Photo by Jon C. Lakey

spin cycle

**Classes on stationary bikes
pack in intensity, camaraderie**

BY SHAVONNE WALKER



The beads of sweat were wiped off from the forehead of Jim Murtaugh as swiftly as they formed, while his hands clutched the handle bars of a stationary bicycle in the darkened room.

The 68-year-old military veteran changed the tension on the bike as instructor Ruthie Pardue yelled out another change in the routine.

The 45-minute spinning session took the class through hills, sprints and jumps complete with a lively soundtrack. It's one of three spin classes taught each day at the J.F. Hurley Family YMCA.

Murtaugh had done some road bike riding and suffered some stress injuries, so the spin class was a good way to do exercise and rehabilitate at the same time.

“The interval workout is good mental therapy,” he added.

After Murtaugh’s return from Iraq, he was at a place in life where he needed something to fill his days. He had long been into fitness, but the former marathoner wanted to get involved in an activity that wasn’t so hard on his knees.

He likes that the spin-class routine changes with each session and there’s a different interval level with each set. The upbeat music matches the pace of the routine, he said.

Participants don’t have to be cyclists. Fitness levels and ages vary widely in most spinning classes.

“We all start at day one sometimes,” Murtaugh said. “New people come in all of the time.”

In addition to spin class, Murtaugh swims and does cardio pump, a class that infuses weights with cardiovascular exercise.

Pardue said many people who take her class are outdoor cyclists, but for many reasons — training purposes, weather conditions or just a change of pace — they also like to take their biking indoors.

Not everyone has the same fitness level, she said. There are many first-timers who may not adjust their resistance or just pedal at their own pace. She encourages them to “do what’s comfortable for them.”

Pardue said she mainly wants the spin-class to get their legs moving. “It’s a great cardiovascular workout,” she said. “You have to stabilize your core, add tension and move quick.”

Pardue has been teaching for nearly three years and is constantly learning new techniques, changing her routines and music.

It has been about a year since Reginald Heilig started spinning classes at the Forum Fitness Center. He has worked out for many years, but Heilig found that spinning allows him the chance to complete an intense workout in a short amount of time.

Heilig, 64, was an avid runner and hard-core bodybuilder, then “my knees started talking bad about me,” he said. Heilig needed something that was lighter on his knees, yet offered the same energized feeling he got from running.

“It met all my expectations,” he said of spinning, and he also enjoys motivation and camaraderie connected with the other class participants.

Jennifer Cekada has been in her spin class for only two months after signing up with friend and fellow nurse Leslie Hartley.

The two take the class at least two times a week, in addition to other cardio classes at The Forum.

Cekada said the spin class offers a way for the women to exercise together and an intense workout within a short timeframe. **S**



Photo by Shavonne Walker

ROLLIN’ ALONG

Previous page: The J.F. Hurley YMCA offers 45- and 60-minute spin classes to members. Spinning is riding stationary bicycles at various difficulty levels to mimic the same workout as one would receive if they were riding outside in an area of various terrain changes. Ruthie Pardue is one of the coaches for the class.

Above: This midday class at The Forum is usually packed, participants say, many of whom have lost weight, increased their fitness training and just overall enjoy the class.



Photo by Jon C. Lakey



looking back

Conversations with old friends

Growing up in the South, we were always told to “respect our elders” because they have much to teach us. We can apply this rule to more than just people, but to places and things that have come before us as well.

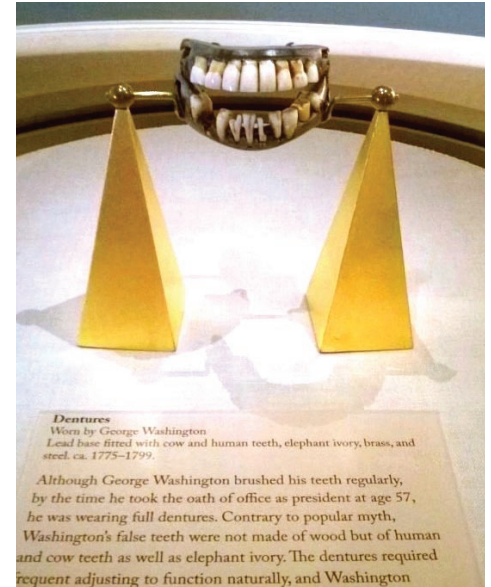
Since we never know how long they may be around, we should value our time with them, listen to what they have to say, and learn as much as we can. Our past defines who we are today – both as individuals and collectively as Americans. Our tickets to the past are memory, history and relics.

How often have you seen, smelled or tasted something that instantly transported you back to your grandmother’s kitchen or your great-grandparents’ front porch by memories from your past? What items do you treasure, just because of their connection to a relative or close friend?

Knowing our past gives us context for stability and a sense of values we carry with us as we move ahead through life. This is one reason many banks and civic buildings in the 19th and 20th centuries chose classical architectural styles, which gave their patrons reassurance that their money and government were strong, virtuous and secure, much like the temples of ancient Greece and Rome. The same can apply to areas where historic buildings and



by
**BRIAN
DAVIS**



FROM THE PAST

Previous page: Games of marbles occupied many childhood hours in the past. Left: Relics from John Fulton’s early house (circa 1770-1820) on display at the Hall House Museum in Salisbury. Middle: Finding an arrowhead takes us back to a time before written history. Right: In this item from Mount Vernon, we find out that George Washington’s wooden teeth weren’t wooden after all.

modern needs work together in harmony. Vibrant historic downtowns and neighborhoods say that this community has been a healthy, viable place to live for many years and chances are that it will be around for many years to come.

History teaches us about the great and sometimes not-so-great deeds of the men and women who influenced the world we now live in. Experiencing the same physical space and objects from the past gives us insight into their lives. We imagine ourselves going about the same daily tasks using the same tools they used and comparing life then and now.

Much like finding an arrowhead, marble or other lost or discarded item, we think back to the person who last held them and wonder how different

their lives were. The past puts our lives in context and not only makes us think about the advancements we’ve made, but they also make us wonder how life will be in the future.

In 50, 100, 300 years, will future generations think kindly of us as they look back and compare what we valued and protected with what we abandoned? What insights about us will they be able to gain from excavating our landfills and back yards?

Finding the value in the past can take many forms. It may be the reuse of architectural salvage or the rehabilitation of a (to use an archaic term) “dilapidated” building and giving it a new life. It could mean documenting the stories or recipes shared with you by your family and passing those down to future

generations. No matter what route you take to connect with the past, the return on your investment of time will be well worth the effort and appreciated by more than just yourself.

The moral of the story is to slow down, look, listen and learn. Take time to stop and read that roadside marker you’ve driven by for years. Tour that historic battlefield or site you’ve always heard about but never visited. Walk the downtown or farm where your ancestors grew up and for a brief moment, take an opportunity to listen to the past and walk in their shoes.

It may teach you more about yourself than you already knew. S

Brian M. Davis is executive director of Historic Salisbury Foundation.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming dates in Salisbury-Rowan and the region

■ **Sept. 1**

Motown the Musical

• *Charlotte* •

The J.F. Hurley Family YMCA sponsors a trip to see “Motown” at Belk Theater of the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center. Non-members are welcome. Buses leave from the YMCA, 828 W. Jake Alexander Blvd. Contact information: 704-636-0111, or lklaver@rowanymca.com

■ **Sept. 4**

Buskers Bash

• *Downtown Salisbury* •

Streets performers will be entertaining in the downtown from 6-8 p.m. Shops and restaurants will be offering specials. Winners among the “buskers” are determined in a vote by the public, announced during Finale on East Fisher (Street) at 9 p.m.

■ **Sept. 7-12**

Iredell County Fair

• *Troutman* •

Visit www.statesvillekiwanis.org for more information.

■ **Sept. 8**

Trip to Old Salem

• *Winston-Salem* •

The J.F. Hurley Family YMCA will be selling \$25 tickets that include transportation to a self-guided tour of historic Old Salem. Non-Y members are welcome. Buses leave from the YMCA, 828 W. Jake Alexander Blvd. Contact: 704-636-0111, or lklaver@rowanymca.com.

■ **Sept. 11**

Casino!

• *Salisbury Station* •

The second annual fundraiser for Friends of the Symphony offers games, prizes, food and drink. 7:30 p.m. at the historic train depot. Contact: 704-637-4314, or ljones@catawba.edu. salisburysymphony.org.

■ **Sept. 11-19**

Cabarrus County Fair

• *Concord* •

Visit www.cabarruscounty.us for more information.

■ **Sept. 12**

Denton Street Festival

• *Denton* •

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Food, crafts, games, local entertainment, including a visit from “Elvis,” Eric and the Chill Tones and Tim Smith from “The Moonshiners.” Rain or shine. Harrison Park, 20 W. Salisbury St. Free. Contact: 336-859-4231 for more information.

■ **Sept. 16-18**

Preservation NC Annual Conference

• *Salisbury* •

This first statewide preservation conference in Salisbury will focus on the work of revolving funds in saving historic properties. Keynote speakers Donovan Rypkema and Tom Mayes. Visit www.PreservationNC.org for more information.



FAIR SEASON

The Iredell County Fair will be Sept. 7-12, the Cabarrus County Fair is Sept. 11-19 and the Rowan County Fair is coming Sept. 25-Oct. 3. *Photo by Jon C. Lakey*

**■ Sept. 17-20, 24-26
Calendar Girls**

• *Lee Street Theatre* •

Directed by Claudia Galup, written by Tim Firth. 7:30 p.m. each day, with a 2:30 p.m. matinee on 9/20. A production by Center for Faith & the Arts' St. Thomas Players. Theater located at 329 N. Lee St. For more information: leestreet.org, or 704-310-5507.

**■ Sept. 19
Germanfest**

• *Old Stone House* •

4-8 p.m. at 770 Old Stone House Road, Granite Quarry. Sponsored by Rowan Museum. For more information: 704-633-5946, or www.rowanmuseum.org.

**■ Sept. 22-26
On the Verge**

• *Catawba College* •

Written by Eric Overmyer, "On the Verge" tells the story of three early 19th century female explorers and their symbolic journeys through time. Showtimes, 7:30 p.m., Hedrick Little Theatre. Directed by Kindra Steenerson. Produced by Catawba College Theatre Arts.

**■ Sept. 25-Oct. 3
Rowan County Fair**

• *Julian Road, Salisbury* •

Visit www.rowancountyfair.net for more information.

**■ Sept. 26
Music at the Mural**

• *Downtown Salisbury* •

7 p.m., outdoor concert at the mural in the 100 block of West Fisher Street. Visit www.downtownsalisburync.com for more information.

**■ Sept. 26
Gold Hill Founder's Day**

• *Gold Hill Park* •

Sponsored by Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation. For more information: 704-267-9439, or www.historicgoldhill.com.



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Carolinas HealthCare System

the scene

N.C. SYMPHONY *reception*



Above: Margaret Kluttz and Fred Standback.

Left: Sarah Kirkland Snider, center, is writing a composition based on memories of her Salisbury grandparents for the N.C. Symphony. With her are Sandi Macdonald, symphony president, and Secretary of Cultural Resources Susan Kluttz, at the Kluttz home in Salisbury.

Below: Kevin Cherry and George Kluttz



Above: Britt Snider, Jody Blackwell and Bill Kluttz



Above: Karin Cochran and Martin Sher

Submitted photos

Historic Salisbury

FOUNDATION *meeting*

John Laughlin, Rosalie Laughlin, Lynda Errante, Jack Errante and Doug Black at the Historic Salisbury Foundation meeting.



Left: Nicole Amos and Kimberly Pepper. Above: Andrew and Mary Walker. Right: Don Conner and Leah Campion.

Photos by Mark Wineka



Above: Alice B. Mitchell and Kevaun Ford



Right: Dee Dee Wright, David Post and Veleria Levy at the Elizabeth Duncan Koontz Humanitarian Awards.

Elizabeth Duncan KOONTZ *awards*



Above: Shirley Harshaw, Earlene Sifford and Jerry Sifford.
Left: Chris Sifford, Rev. William Turner and retired Salisbury High School Principal Dr. Windsor Eagle.

South Salisbury **FIRE** DEPARTMENT *groundbreaking*



Top left: Rowan County Commissioner Mike Caskey and China Grove Fire Department Chief Mike Zimmerman at the groundbreaking for the new South Salisbury Fire Station expansion. Above left: Tim Deal, Dan Peters, Gary Gaskey and Crystal Bost. Above right: Steve Miller, Jason Burnett, Terry Eller, Cory Orbison and Michelle Orbison



Above: Don Menius, Herman Ritchie and Wayne Taylor. Right: Bobby Burleyson, Elaine McCaskill, Jonathan McCaskill and Brycen McCaskill.

New Salisbury city manager reception



From left, Rowan County Chamber of Commerce President Elaine Spalding, Catawba College Vice President of Development Rex Otey, Pam Abernathy and Diane Greene.



Salisbury Police Chief Rory Collins and Diversified Graphics owner Frank Goodnight.

Below: Rowan Helping Ministries Executive Director Kyna Grubb and Assistant City Manager Zack Kyle.



Fibrant Director Kent Winrich and Salisbury City Council member Brian Miller

Photos by David Purtell



Above: Nancy Muñoz, Pam Troutman, Lucas Troutman and Ronnie Troutman
 Right: George Kluttz, Rowan County Chamber of Commerce President Elaine Spalding and central office architect Bill Burgin.



RSSS central office

groundbreaking reception



Above: Mary Miller James, Nancy Davis, Vallerie Jenkins and Jessica Jenkins. Right: Ava Huffman, Kelly Street and Stacye Huffman.



County Commissioner Jim Greene and Rowan-Salisbury Schools Assistant Superintendent Anthony Vann.

Photos by Jeanie Groh

the scene



Above: Lee Street theatre Managing Artistic Director Justin Dionne, left, and Walter Wall. Left: Salisbury the Magazine publisher Greg Anderson and Rita Foil at the launch party at Lee Street theatre.



SALISBURY

the magazine
launch party



Photos by Jon C. Lakey

Above left: Alice Jamison, Tina Jamison-Cowan and Kristin Byars. Left: Ed Cook and Susan Musselman. Above: Salisbury Post Editor Elizabeth Cook and Salisbury City Manager Lane Bailey.

the scene



Above: Salisbury the Magazine information packets available at the launch party at Lee Street theatre. Right: Salisbury the Magazine editor Mark Wineka and Rick Eldridge.



Above: Salisbury the Magazine's Creative Director Andy Mooney, left, and Director of Photography Jon C. Lakey pose for a photo. Above left: Architect Karen Alexander, left, and Novant Health Rowan Medical Center President Dari Caldwell. Left: Salisbury the Magazine Advertising Director Chris Ratliff, right, poses with Bill Marino.

*Our house is a very, very, very fine house
With two cats in the yard
Life used to be so hard
Now everything is easy...*

If you're as old as I am, you might recognize that Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song from the 1970 "Déjà Vu" album. When I'm feeling content and fortunate, the song pops in my head and reminds me that my life in Salisbury is pretty darn sweet.

There are no cats in our yard, but we do have two dogs, six chickens, and a pair of nesting bluebirds.

As I write this, my husband is taking the dogs on their daily sniff through Chestnut Hill Cemetery. Sometimes I go along – for the walking, not the sniffing – but today I'm sitting in the back yard, watching the chickens spray gravel all over the patio as they scratch aggressively for bugs and grubs. One hen wanders over to a flower bed and, in a wanton act of destruction, flattens an iris stalk.

The stones, of course, can be raked up, although I'm not going to lie, probably not by me. And a mashed iris stalk is a good excuse to put some yellow flowers in a "vahz," even if I didn't buy it today.

Chickens will do as chickens will do. On the plus side, our Golden Comet girls lay six eggs a day – a gracious bounty that we share with friends and neighbors. Thank you, Salisbury, for being a chicken-friendly city, and thank you, Fulton Heights, for being a chicken-friendly neighborhood.

Fulton Heights somehow manages to be both old-fashioned and funky fresh. It's an unusually tight-knit neighborhood, and it's also close to almost all the places I go on a regular basis: The YMCA. The cheap grocery store and the fancy grocery store. Goodwill. A job I love at Lutheran Services Carolinas. Church. Friends' houses. Pops at the

chicken friendly



by KATIE SCARVEY

Post. Two great theaters: The Meroney and Lee Street. Wonderful places to eat like Sweet Meadow Café, Sabaidee Thai Restaurant, Mambo Grill and Sidewalk Deli, among others. The public library. There's even a Little Free Library on my street where I miraculously stumbled upon the exact book – "The Goldfinch" – I'd been dying to read.

One of my favorite Salisbury places is the ecological preserve behind Catawba College. Over the years, I've logged more than 1,000 miles on the trails back there, which I know almost as well as my own backyard. It's a place that serves as an anchor and a touchstone for me, a place where I've felt the seasons change in a visceral way, knowing when to expect to see the remains of reptile eggs and when to watch for wild blackberries to appear. It's a place to think, sweat, and sometimes, to cry. My life in Salisbury would be much less rich without it.

I first heard about Salisbury on my

freshman hall at Wake Forest University. My friend Deirdre Parker would regale us with tales of her quirky town, which was home to Food Lion, Cata-Waba College and Cheerwine, which confused me ("So, is it alcoholic or not?"). I listened happily to her tales, with no inkling Salisbury would ever be on my radar again.

But in the strange way life works, Salisbury became my home and has shaped my life in countless ways. Salisbury has given me perspective, allowing me to see the big picture that is made up of a multitude of smaller ones. Although I was certainly a grownup when I moved here, with a husband and two kids, Salisbury has been a place for me to grow and forge a new identity. Having the privilege of writing stories and columns for a newspaper – and, amazingly, short plays that have actually been produced by Lee Street Theatre – has contributed to that.

I remember describing my life in Salisbury to a college classmate who lives in Atlanta, a friend who, by traditional measures, has achieved far more worldly success than I have. He told me that my life in Salisbury sounded wonderful, full of harmony, creativity, and connection.

He's right. My Salisbury life does have all of those things.

And chickens, too. S

Katie Scarvey is a communications specialist with Lutheran Services Carolinas.



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