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provides bond with horses
for therapy

On the cover: Emily Hall, riding Pumpkin, maneuvers around the arena as volunteer Marisol Sanchez leads at Saving Grace Farm. (Sean Meyers photo)
On this page: A chemistry exhibit at the new Salisbury Academy high school campus. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)

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What does summer mean to you?

When I think of summer, I think of long, hot days in Montgomery, Alabama, with my brother Richard — with the freedom to roam or bike where we liked. I think of days so dry the dust of red clay coated our bare feet and thunderstorms so hard that steam rose from the rain splattering on the asphalt. I think of softball and dodgeball and a backyard swimming pool made from a water trough for cattle. I think of the sweet taste of honeysuckle growing over the fence and the sharp thorns of a mock orange tree as we scaled up, up, up. I think of coming in for dinner when the streetlights came on, and when we got older, running back out to play “Kick the Can” after dinner in the dark. Once we each stole a pear from the tree up the street in the dark, and then worried about getting in trouble. Luckily, no one was ever the wiser and our criminal records remained clear. What does summer mean to you?

This month we feature the growth of local private school, Salisbury Academy, from a JK-8 school to a JK-12. Writer Susan Shinn Turner talks to the head of school, headmaster, parents and students about what's to come.

We visit Salisbury Eyecare & Eyewear, where Dr. Melanie Denton Dombrowski partnered with Community Care Clinic to provide free glaucoma screening for low income patients of the clinic.

Saving Grace Farm has been around for years, but many in the community are unaware of their mission. Deirdre Parker Smith talks to owner Janna Griggs and staff about the healing relationship between horses and people. Griggs dreams of expanding the farm and shares her vision for helping even more people with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

Kristine Turco, “How Sweet It Is,” has been a fixture at Rowan Farmers’ Market for almost 20 years. She provides freshly baked treats there as well as at the Davidson Farmers’ Market. After owning



a legit brick-and-mortar bakery in New York, she decided upon moving here to only be “open” on Saturdays so she could have more freedom. Brenda Zimmerman weaves the story for you.

Andie Foley gets the scoop on Bread Riot, a local nonprofit that seeks to support local farmers. You’ve likely seen their booth at local festivals or attended a “Riot in the Pasture” or “Riot at the Brewery.” The group helps local farmers by becoming a marketing arm of sorts, creating programs that can use their produce. In addition, they provide fresh food for the to those who may not have access. Their leader, the industrious Dottie Hoy, is ever smiling and takes delight in being a part

of win-win situations.

The Rowan Original this month is Chief District Judge Beth Dixon, who shares her passion for her work and her family and her unusual way of letting off steam. Read about this kind, down-to-earth woman in black robes — and learn why her trajectory was a bit unexpected.

Our Bookish this issue is by Margaret Basinger, who reviews, “Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe.” Turns out, Poe wasn’t the rake we’ve heard through legend and even in literature books. Author Mark Dawidziak provides extensive research to show a happier, more playful Poe, despite the gloomy nature of his work.

So, there you have it! We hope you enjoy it while sipping a dewy glass of lemonade, enjoying your summer.

Maggie

— Maggie Blackwell
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

Unlocking myths of Edgar Allan Poe

It's summertime -- time to read something fun and easy! Mark Dawidziak's "Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe," is one of the two. It is fun but more difficult than most summer fare. But who can resist a book about Edgar Allan Poe? Poe's poem, "The Raven" and



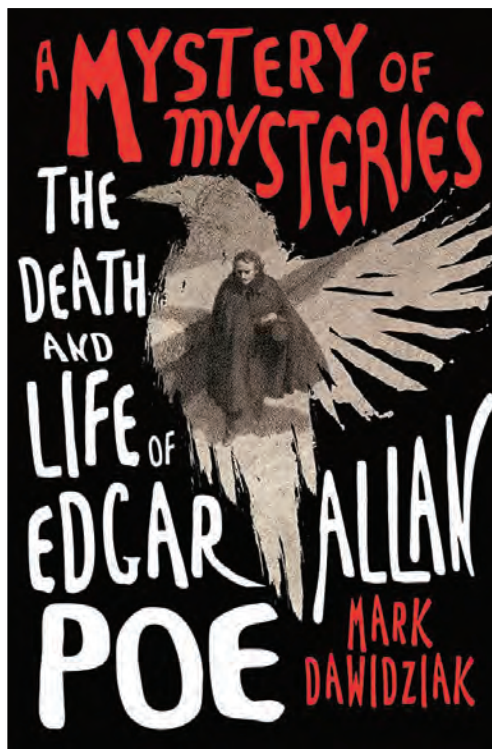
by
MARGARET
BASINGER

his short story, "The Telltale Heart" are taught to every ninth grader and he is the best-known American author in the world. His woeful, haunted face is on mugs, t-shirts, and other paraphernalia in gift shops and bookshops across America. We all know about his life, but in this book, the author contends that many

of the things we think we know about him are myths. Dawidziak brings Poe's less dreary image into the light.

Many of the myths about Edgar Allan Poe can be attributed to Rufus Griswald, editor of the New York-Tribune, who, having a grudge against him, depicted Poe in his obituary as "immoral, unbalanced, unscrupulous, dishonest, envious, conceited," an alcoholic and a drug addict. From this one despicable article the stereotype of Poe was begun. Dawidziak dispels the addiction myths with careful, well-substantiated research. Apparently, it took very little alcohol to inebriate Poe, and although he took an overdose of laudanum in a failed suicide attempt, there is no evidence that he was a habitual user. The author's book dispels many more of Griswald's lies.

Poe was a seasoned traveler, moving from



Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe

by Mark Dawidziak, Publisher St. Martin's Press (February 14, 2023), 288 pages


Richmond to New York to Baltimore to Philadelphia numerous times. As he describes the travels from city to city, Dawidziak reviews for Poe fans the stories about his youth as the child of actors and their deaths at a young age; The Allans who took him in but never adopted him; Maria Clemm and her daughter, Virginia, who became his longed-for loving family; his money troubles; his relationships with other writers, notably Charles Dickens and finally, his mysterious death. In "Mystery of Mysteries," Dawidziak

examines each of these stages in Poe's life and offers credible alternatives to the biographies we have read in the past.

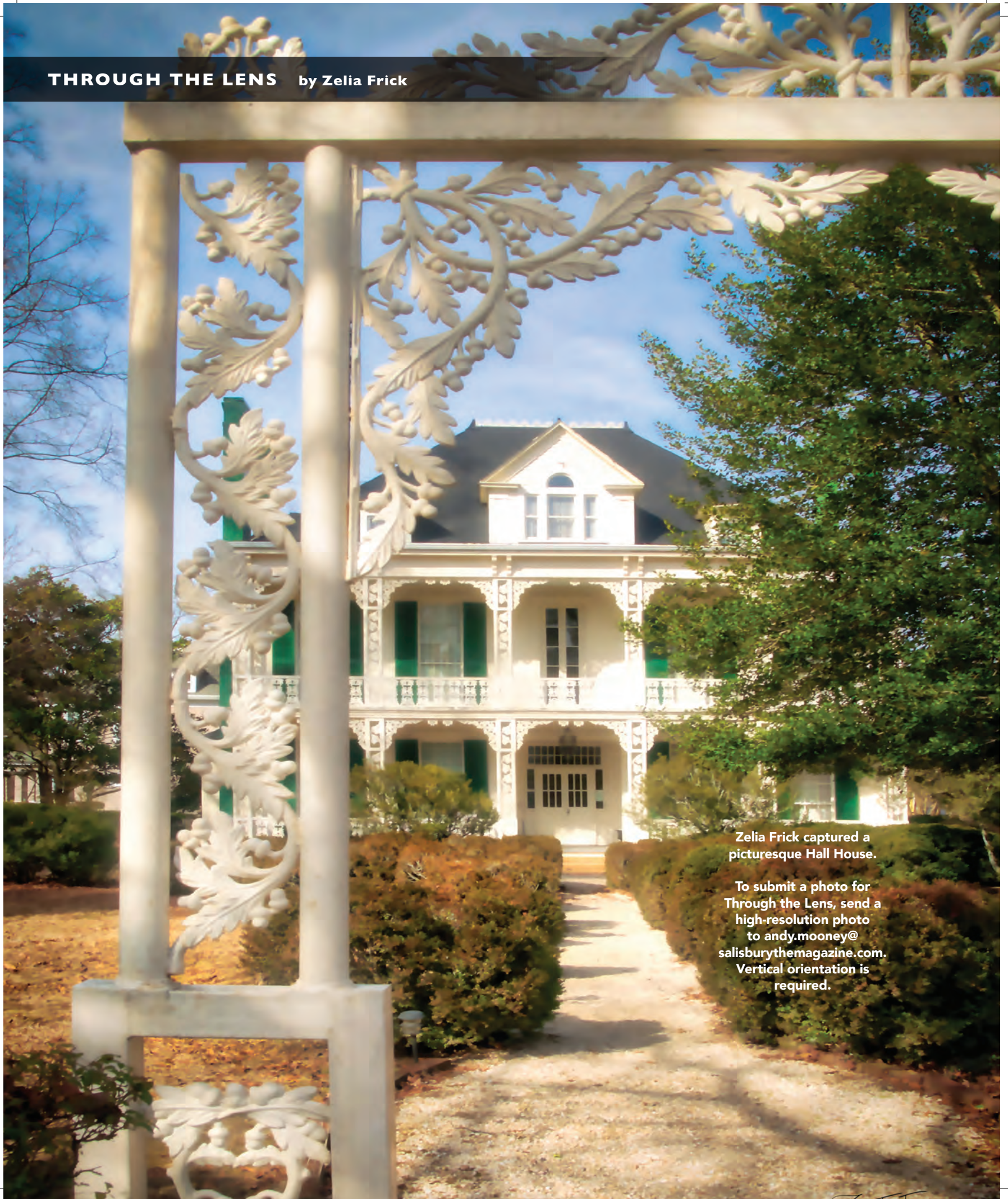
While Poe is universally known as the originator of the American version of the gothic horror story and as the father of the modern-day detective story, he did the bulk of and some of his finest work as a literary critic. His opinions were feared and revered as he reviewed other writers' work. Dawidziak's Poe was a very hard worker; pleasant, not sorrowful. There were no reports of him lying around in a drunken stupor.

Poe saw himself primarily as a poet but poetry alone could not support his family. Seeing readers' interest in tales of horror, Poe, in dire need of money, responded and the rest is history. With his "Fall of the House of Usher," he introduced the genre of the psychological thriller; the "Pit and the Pendulum," "The Mask of the Red Death" and "The Cask of Amontillado" followed. He was consumed with the thought of death and this is evident in most of his work. His modern-day disciple Stephen King says, "Poe's stories are wonderful and they still stand up. They're as readable now as they were when I first encountered them in my teens."

What makes "Mystery of Mysteries" such an interesting read is the author's picture of a man who was far more than the doleful caricature of a man textbooks have portrayed. Dawidziak's Poe has a fine sense of humor. He plays leapfrog with his nephews and he loves a good joke. With his skillful research Dawidziak brings Poe out of the darkness and into the light.

There will be plenty of books more conducive to reading while in a chair with the surf at your feet, but "Mystery of Mysteries" may give your brain a tad more exercise as you while away these lovely summer hours. 

THROUGH THE LENS by Zelia Frick



Zelia Frick captured a picturesque Hall House.

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



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| Q & A |

The heart of the law

Chief District Judge Beth Dixon

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**

“Here’s what keeps me up at night,” Judge Beth Dixon says. “Are the efforts we’re making, doing enough good? We had practices in the past that wreaked havoc on families, like, ‘Get tough on crime,’ ‘Scared Straight’ and sending Native Americans away to schools.”

Dixon is Chief District Judge for Rowan County and was, for years, the only female judge in the courthouse. Today Judge Cynthia Dry has joined the ranks and she welcomes the company. She was first appointed to judgeship in 2002 and has served since.

Q. *What kinds of cases do you see on a day-to-day basis?*

I see many cases regarding custody all kinds of domestic relations cases; child welfare court, primarily foster care; juvenile delinquency and general criminal matters. I do the majority of child welfare cases because of my interest in it. I work with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Tell me about your work with trauma.

Virtually everyone who is in the court system has experienced trauma. We've learned more and more about trauma and its effect on the body and mind. We've worked to train judges on trauma awareness and understand its language; this helps us make better decisions and meet families where they are. We want to do this in every court, but especially family court.

I've got a team we meet with, representing stakeholders in that court. We ask, "How can we improve services for families? How can we improve outcomes for children?" We want them in a permanent family home as soon as possible — preferably their family of origin but lacking that, what's second best? You hate to tell a parent, "I'm so sorry." They're not overcoming their addiction or not developing the tools to be a parent. There are lots of tears in our courtroom. It's always the struggle.

I wrote a grant and we were chosen a couple of years ago to work with the council's expertise to implement best practices and become a model court. That's when we developed the mural.

Is it exhausting? It can be. Some courts are easier mentally. Motor vehicle court for a week is like a vacation! When a family is separated and I must decide — did I make the best call? If there's one strong and one weak parent, it's a clear decision. Two strong parents, you can't mess up. Two weak parents, it's a tough call.

Are drugs an issue in family cases?

We've recently looked at reasons children come into foster care, and 90 percent of the cases are due to substance. Fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamines. But it may not be the only reason. Forty percent have domestic violence. But by and far, most every case has a substance abuse component. We must understand how addiction affects the brain and what's available

to help treat it.

It's so sad, just because someone has a substance disorder, doesn't mean they can never have their child. There is help, but it's a hard, hard road. It's important to be encouraging to families. I'm not judging or blaming them; we want them to get better for their children. Withdrawal is painful. They can feel desperate and hopeless. If they don't have support, it's doubly hard, so we connect them with a resource to support them.

That's not the kind of thing they taught us in law school. It was more, guilty or not. Today social services is intertwined. You don't just hand down a sentence. You build ties with a family and celebrate their successes and mourn their losses.

How have things changed over the span of your career?

Case law changes. Tradition changes. You have to keep up. You understand it and then the legislature changes it again. You have to stay current.

What I'm doing now is so far from what I envisioned as a law student. I was in law school before laptops. You had nothing but on-the-job training. My law experience was corporate law and workers' compensation, where it was pretty black and white. You don't know the client, you're not involved in their affairs, you don't know their children. District court is the workhorse of the court system, everything from speeding tickets to protection orders.

It's not as simple as mom and dad anymore. We have gay couples, surrogacy, egg donation. Laws are slow to recognize anything other than biology or adoption. I'm hoping to advocate for the Uniform Parentage Act; a few other states have adopted it as law. There's no proposed legislation for our General Assembly at this time. My dissertation for my recent master of law degree was on determining parentage in the age of assisted reproduction. Whew! I had not been in school for 30 years. I loved the academic challenge of it.

We didn't always have metal detectors; they came about after 9/11. Everyone got more security-conscious after that. We had nine entrances and no detectors. Now we have two entrances. I've had threats over the years; all judges have that. The screening helps.

How do you unwind?

My Jeep is my pressure valve. This is my third year of off roading; I never dreamed I'd love it. It's a lot of fun.

There's so much to learn: mechanics, upkeep, physics, tire size, tire pressure, airing down and airing back up. Ten years ago, I never dreamed I'd have a winch and air compressor in my car! I just wish I'd started before my 50s. It's not just the driving. The whole Jeep community is so wonderful and generous. Jeeps build family. They don't care what I do for a living and it's a fun community to be a part of.

Jeep offers badges of honor. They have designated about 60 trails throughout the U.S. as badge trails. You check in on an app when you start a trail and then when you finish. They send you a little badge. I have five but of course I want all 60!

Tell me about your family.

My husband Glenn is an attorney as well, but he's retired now. We met in law school. Our son Roy is practicing law in Charlotte. Our son Spencer is a grant writer for Family Crisis Council. Our twins, Susannah and Grace — Susannah is an audiologist in New Orleans; her fiancée is a med student at Tulane. Grace was born with a rare disorder and graduated from UNCG in 2019. She works with children in Spencer.

How about your upbringing?

My dad was Army Air Corps in World War II, then became Air Force when it was created. Mom was actively involved with us as a Girl Scout leader, PTA secretary and very involved in the church. We moved a lot. I attended three schools in the fifth grade.

Dad grew up in a family that farmed for other people. My mom was one of 12 children; her parents died when she was a teenager.

I'm a first-generation college graduate. When my dad retired after all those years, he had a staff of Ph.D.s working for him. He felt it was unfair they had to work for someone with no degree. It was his dream for me and my younger sister to be college-educated, saying education was the only gift he could give us that no one could ever take away. He would be thrilled to see where I am today, not doing too bad for a sharecropper's grandchild. **[S]**



Bread Riot President Dottie Hoy speaks with the owners of Farmer's Daughter Organics in Mt. Ulla, which received a grant from Bread Riot to help with the farm production.

Getting fresh

Bread Riot works to make local foods more accessible

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



Some 160 years ago, full of righteous indignation and concern for their families, 50 women — wives, mothers and daughters — marched in solidarity upon Salisbury businesses. Their goal? Accessible, government pricing for food to feed their hungry kin.

Their act, which amassed 23 barrels of flour, two sacks of salt, half a barrel of molasses and \$20 (that's about \$480 today) by the end of the day, was just one of many so-called "bread riots" across the south — acts of protest as the Civil War caused market blockades affecting civilian lives.

The name, the concern, and a fair helping of the passion resurfaced generations later in 2007 as a group of concerned locals met and began to ask the question: what's going on with local food?

What was going on with local food? The answer was as unsettling then as it is now. According to Rowan County's 2022 Community Health Needs assessment, while 27.7% of residents live within one mile of a grocery store, 33% live

within one mile of a fast-food restaurant. By comparison, a whopping 49% live within one mile of a store selling alcohol and/or tobacco.

Those who gathered struggled to make the numbers make sense. Why was access to healthy choices so limited when, in 2007, the county boasted around 982 farms and 117,617 acres of farmland?

"Our average produce goes 1,500 miles before it gets to us and that just doesn't make any sense when we have produce right here in our backyard," said one of those original few, C.J. Peters, "The idea was to keep the local economy vibrant and to keep our local farmers fed, basically, with a good income. And then eat local. Everything local is delicious. You can't get around that."

And so, Peters and his compadres banded together, taking the name of their concerned predecessors to form the nonprofit, Bread Riot. Their mission? To link farms to tables by supporting small farmers and providing access to locally produced foods throughout the community.

**Talton Correll, 16,
of Correll Farms in
Woodleaf received a
grant from Bread Riot
to help with his chicken
and egg business.**



What started with local fare-centric potlucks quickly grew to fundraising festivities — “Riots,” they’re called — in the Pasture and, later, at the Brewery. Funds are filtered back to local growers and producers in a variety of programs.

“To me the key words of our mission are ‘link’ and ‘community,’” said another founding Bread Riot member, Andrew Pitner. “It’s all about fostering the economy of viable, local agriculture. When we were doing this in the beginning, the farmers’ market was really just getting going. Now? We have a really vibrant farmers’ market. The work that Bread Riot does is all about making things churn in our local economy.”

The work they’re doing appears to be working: the county’s 2017 Census of Agriculture profile found a 91% increase in direct-to-consumer sales when compared to 2012.

SPANNING THE SEASONS

So how does one use gatherings centered around local tunes and local brews to create such measurable change? Two words: Community saturation.

Bread Riot has eight program offerings outside of its fundraising efforts, not including the work members and volunteers do to help local growers with marketing and publicity. While some — its Sustainability Book Club and Educational Events — work to keep the community informed on the environment and clean eating, others have a more direct economic impact.

The group started by noting holes in the market, periods of hardship for local farmers who were still producing product but struggling to find buyers. The “Winter Harvest CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) Box” was born, a biweekly subscription service for locals looking

to have access to homegrown products throughout the off season

For a set price, members can pick up items such as pasture-raised eggs, fresh bread and hydroponic lettuce, as well as seasonal produce such as collards, carrots, spinach, tomatoes, herbs, potatoes, squash and sweet potatoes — plus, local jam, honey and goat cheese.

But the November through March service left some gaps throughout the year. Even with the boxes’ set fee and pickup site, and delivery an option, members began to wonder...were there ways they could make local products even more mobile? More accessible?

The answer was a resounding yes. Since 2016, the organization has worked alongside Rowan-Salisbury School’s summer nutrition program through its own program, Summer Feed.

The group carries fresh produce purchased



From left, Jessica Moorman, Carol Corken, C.J. Peters, Dottie Hoy, Trish Dunn and Catherine Dalton work the first day of the Farmer's Market. The local food advocacy non-profit Bread Riot works with local food vendors to help supply much needed fresh foods to area churches, schools and citizens and is regularly set up at the Farmer's Market.

from local farms to identified summer nutrition sites, letting adult caregivers of children take what they need to feed their families.

“We’re doing more and more with seniors at the same time,” Dottie Hoy, current president of Bread Riot’s Board of Directors, said as she explained how the organization used Summer Feed sites to target Rowan County’s aging populations. The correlation of school children and seniors just made sense to her, she said: “For one thing, sometimes it’s grandma who is doing the cooking.”

And she’s right. The Community Health Needs Assessment shows a 21% increase in the number of grandparents living with grandchildren from 2015 to 2019.

It’s this thought that led the group to expand its student-centric offerings this year by offering School Harvest Bags, a free version of their “Winter Harvest” offering to students identified at Koontz Elementary and North Rowan Middle School.

“We estimate that three to six people used the produce in those bags,” said Hoy, “Our assumption is that with this amount of fresh produce going into those children, they did better in school this year.”

And the list of ways Bread Riot is filtering farm-fresh produce into the Salisbury area doesn’t stop there. There’s the Mobile Vegetable Market, set up in a refrigerated trailer at the local Habitat for Humanity Restore throughout the summer in a donation-based, “take what you need, give what you can,” sort of format. There’s also the organization’s Faith Harvest, wherein farms prepare \$125

Kim Porter and board member Dee Ellison help with Bread Riot’s School Harvest.



of produce for a select number of faith leaders to distribute among their congregations.

“That goes a long way,” said Hoy, “You’d be surprised. When you go to the farmers’ market, it’s really hard to spend \$125.”

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION

In doing their work, members of Bread Riot are careful to make the distinction: they are working to make healthy foods more in reach, not more affordable.

Why? Because locally grown and produced food already is affordable. Studies that cite the opposite often price food by the calorie rather than nutritional density or gram.

“When you eat food that is denser in nutrients, you don’t need as much,” said Jill Downing of Downing Farms LLC, a recent Bread Riot grant recipient. “If you’ve ever eaten a bag of potato chips, you can sit there and mindlessly eat the whole thing and still feel hungry after. That’s not the case with fresh produce.”

Despite this, the greatest reported reason locals aren’t eating fruits and vegetables each day? They’re “too expensive,” according to Community Health Opinion survey results reported on Rowan’s most recent Needs Assessment.

So, Bread Riot members and volunteers continue their effort to remove this excuse from the menu, paying farmers their market price while providing these nutrient-rich products at low or no cost to those with limited access.

THE ECONOMIC CHURN

For Bread Riot members, volunteers and for farmers connected to the organization’s work, the value of this local economic infusion has a wide-spanning ripple effect

Member-at-large, Pitner, explains — 70 cents of every dollar spent locally will stay local.

Tim Downing, with Downing Farms, explained that: “For a farmer, the economic activities that are going on in his farm are right here in Rowan County. Then, his product is sold in Rowan County. That dollar gets spent, again, in Rowan County. I think that economically has a really huge impact in our area.”

And Bread Riot? They only want to do more to help see these farmers are producing more and making more sales — even if it’s to them for Winter Harvest or School Harvest Boxes



Above: James Reynolds, left, and C.J. Peters get the Farmer’s Market crowd going in the morning. **Left:** Lyn Wilson helps with School Harvest and delivery of fresh produce to North Rowan Middle School.



throughout those chilly months. They’ve provided the Downing Farm with funding for a greenhouse, Correll Farms with money to refit a dairy barn into a chicken coop — the list of grant recipients is long and their products ever — (pun very much intended) — growing.

By bolstering local growers, Bread Riot is ensuring Rowan Countians don’t miss out on what Talton Correll of Correll Farms calls the best part of getting to shop, and eat, local — knowing your food’s source.

“It’s all about getting to know the person who put in the labor, all the hours it took to grow that food and produce it for you,” he said. “When you buy local, you can ask questions that you

couldn’t ask someone in a grocery store. You can really get that in-depth knowledge of where that food came from.”

Tim Downing agreed.

“When local farmers come and bring things to the market, they’re bringing themselves and they’re bringing their pride and joy,” he said. “They’re bringing their best. When you mass produce these things, you don’t get that added element.”

But as for what Bread Riot believes? Well, according to Hoy, their effort is simple as keeping local farmers in business.

“One of the whole points of this is to pay the farmers their prices to keep them in business,” said Hoy. “It’s kind of a win-win for everybody. The farmers get money. We get produce. People get food. What more could you ask?” **S**

For more information, visit the Bread Riot website at www.breadriot.org, find them on Facebook, or check out their Instagram at @BreadRiotNC. Request additional information by email at info@breadriot.org. Donations can be made through the website or by mailing a check to Bread Riot, P.O. Box 296, Salisbury, NC 28145.

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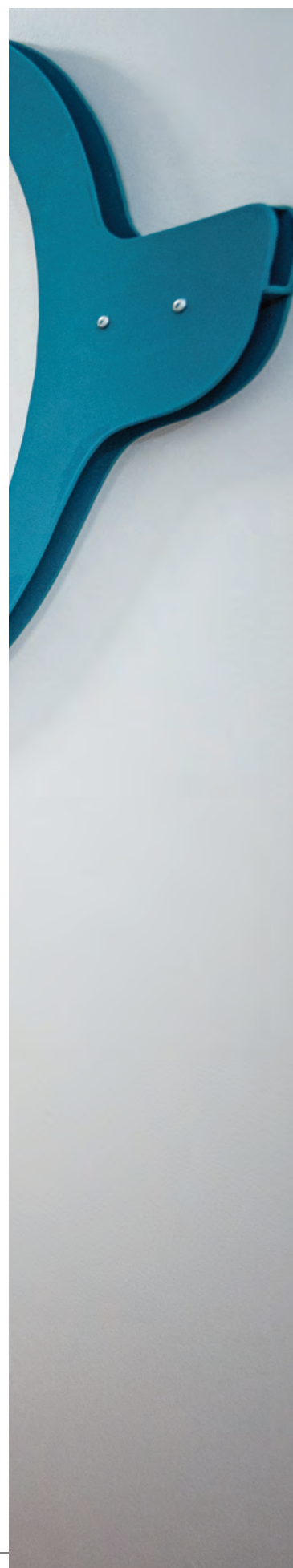
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in Rowan County and is a
Catawba College graduate.

WELLNESS



From left, Courtney Williams, Debra Bailey and Dr. Melanie Denton Dombrowski. The Community Care Clinic has offered free glaucoma screenings at Salisbury Eyecare and Eyewear.



Seeing the need

Clinics partner to offer free glaucoma screenings

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**



A trip to Salisbury Eyecare and Eyewear with Dr. Melanie Denton Dombrowski is not like a visit to an ordinary doctor's office. For starters, it's housed in the former Blanton Law office — a Victorian house at 228 West Council Street in Salisbury. The interior is designed to make patients as comfortable as possible — from the stylish interior designed by a professional to the spacious eyeglass area to aesthetic treatment to forms being available online and very brief wait times when you arrive for your appointment.

“The whole vision (pun intended) is to have a practice that provides something different. For the optical, that means boutique care of the highest level for our patients. I want all my patients to feel seen, understood and leave with options for care and hope. It's a throwback to care like it used to be, always

going the extra mile. I want patients to feel like everyone is just so nice and it's clean and beautiful and they listen to me as a patient.”

Denton Dombrowski (or “Dr. D” as her staff call her,) has her O.D. and her M.B.A degrees and has been practicing since 2009.

She recently held, in partnership with Community Care Clinic (CCC), a series of free glaucoma screenings for low-income patients of the clinic who were at risk of the disease.

“We talk every day about saying, ‘Yes,’ before we say, ‘No.’ These people have heard, ‘No,’ for so long: ‘No,’ to care; ‘No,’ to surgery,” says Krista Woolly, executive director at CCC. She and Dr. D partnered on a two Fridays in January and March to provide glaucoma screenings for low-income patients who were at risk of the disease.



Dr. Melanie Denton Dombrowski speaks with a patient.

Glaucoma is an eye disease that causes damage to the optic nerve and can cause blindness. Diabetes can make a person high-risk for glaucoma. There are no early symptoms and the CDC says 50 percent of those with glaucoma don't know they have it.

The partnership was the brainchild of Community Care Clinic volunteer Courtney Williams, a Salisbury High senior who aspires to be a pediatric ophthalmologist. While volunteering at the clinic, she noticed the patients received no optometric services and asked Woolly if she could pursue eye care for the clients as her senior project. With Woolly's encouragement, she asked Dr. D if she'd like to partner with the clinic. She and the doctor identified glaucoma screenings as the perfect project due to the lack of symptoms and dire consequences. It's also a very common disease.





Deborah Bailey works at the front desk at CCC and helps in other departments as time allows. Bailey organized the screening. She contacted those referred by the physicians and coordinated with Denton Dombrowski's office for days, times and patient information. Then she called the patients again the day before screenings to remind them.

The Friday of the March screening was her off day, but that didn't stop Bailey from attending. "I love what I do and our patients get their help. It's all worth it."

Dr. D's office ensured screening days were clear of regular patients' appointments. The doctor volunteered her services as well as her paid staff and testing equipment. She tested all the referred patients and wrote prescriptions for drops to those who tested positively. Those patients can get their drops from the clinic free of charge.

Wanda Price-Ford has been a patient at CCC for years. She sees Dr. Amy Wilson and loves her. "She saw

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something,” Price-Ford said. “She referred me and I didn’t even have to wait 30 days. I really appreciate CCC for being there for people like me with low income. And they’re very friendly.”

Lynne Clark has been a patient at the clinic for ten years. “They take care of everything,” she said. “Amy Wilson takes care of me, checks everything and makes sure I’m okay. It made me concerned to hear I might have glaucoma but today they’re going to check. I love going to CCC and Amy Wilson is so nice.”

Dr. D is happy to help. “It’s something I’ve thought about for a long time. Connecting with CCC made it possible. The clinic had diabetes covered as well as glasses. Because glaucoma is silent and can blind you without your being aware, it was a perfect opportunity to serve the community. CCC did a phenomenal job of identifying the patients. Patients showed up. It was a truly flawless experience. I enjoy being able to give back and — well we’re set up here. It’s nothing to shut down for a day and help out.” 



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FOOD

A photograph of Kristine Turco, an older woman with short white hair and glasses, wearing a pink shirt and a white apron. She is standing in a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a stainless steel refrigerator. She is holding two black trays filled with round, golden-brown specialty sweets. The kitchen has a wooden floor and a doorway leading to another room in the background.

Kristine Turco, owner of How Sweet It Is, has been baking and selling her specialty sweets at the Salisbury Farmer's Market since the mid 1990s.

Baking the world a better place

How Sweet It Is a fixture at local farmer's markets

WRITTEN BY **BRENDA ZIMMERMAN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**



What makes a pound cake exceptional? What makes an apple pie perfectly flaky and juicy? What makes a warm chocolate chip cookie downright addictive? A tried-and-true recipe is essential, but that's not what makes a completed dish superlative. If you watch Kristine Turco at work, you can see her toss in a little sparkle of love that is unique to her kitchen. And that's what makes the local farmers' market a better place.

Kristine learned to love cooking in the kitchens of her mother and her maternal grandmother, who lived next door. One of her early memories in the kitchen is rolling piecrust for her grandmother. The e were times she rolled as many as 20 piecrusts so they could be frozen.

"We had pie for dessert at every meal," she recalls. Of all the things she loves to bake, pies continue to be at the top of her list. "A traditional apple pie," she states, "is one of my favorite desserts." Her mother also baked cookies and made waffle. Freshly made sweets were a big part of growing up for Kristine and her two older sisters.

Nine-year-old granddaughter Reagan has declared she wants to be a baker just like her grandmother. "Of course, the week before she wanted to be an engineer," Kristine says. Perhaps baking is in their genes and she will be a third-generation pastry chef.

A regular vendor at the Salisbury and Davidson farmers' markets for 28 years, Kristine has established quite a following. All are eager to tuck her sweet confections into their shopping baskets. With prices ranging from a dollar for cookies to snack on while you shop, to \$55 for a whole cheesecake to serve for a special occasion, her homemade goods suit every budget.

Having left her brick-and-mortar bakery in upstate New York, Kristine wanted a place to continue baking and marketing her wares but with less overhead and without being constantly tied down to a business. Being at a local market allows her to be more creative, not have to maintain a specific set of items daily and to have a more flexible schedule. In the off months she can concentrate on special orders. She



Turco meets with a friend at this year's opening day Farmer's Market.

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Turco often pulls out her well-worn recipe book to make the perfect sweets.

has certain customers who look to her for a pound cake for the family beach trip, a steady supply of chocolate chip cookies and other standing orders throughout the year. A predictable stream of orders come during the holidays.

Kristine has the organization of the kitchen down to a science. The kitchen is equipped with three ovens but is small to be cranking out such volume. "I am a clean-as-you-go cook. I can't stand a mess," she says. Prepped items are set out, premeasured ingredients at the ready. The 54-year-old KitchenAid mixer she and husband Mike received as a wedding gift whirs steadily as the magic begins. Although there is a newer version of the mixer in the house, she prefers her vintage one. "Every time I turn it on, I just hope it makes it through the day!" Soon the entire house is filled with delicious aromas of cinnamon, chocolate and sweetness.

Preparing the inventory for a Saturday morning generally begins early in the week, starting with jobs such as making and freezing piecrusts to fill just before baking. Streusel topping and coffee cake

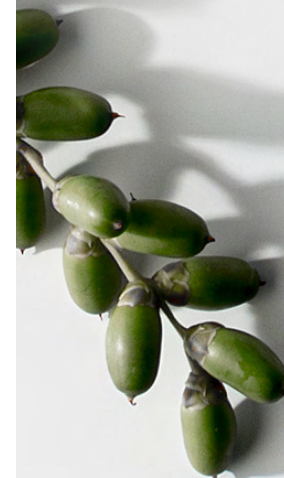


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fillings can be mixed ahead of time. Mike helps with the shopping, which usually includes stops at several stores to get the very specific things on the lists. He laughs, “I am cheap labor. I’ve asked for a raise, but that falls on deaf ears.” Mike also keeps the household running while Kristine is in the kitchen for hours at a time. She doesn’t have to worry about laundry, cleaning the house or carrying out trash and can concentrate on the task at hand.

Mike’s market-related jobs include helping Kristine with the packaging, pricing and labeling. Since most goods are prepared on Thursday and Friday, it’s a tight schedule to get those tasks completed for the early start on Saturday. “Every available surface in the kitchen and dining room is covered as we work,” Mike said. He also loads up both cars. He takes the inventory to the Salisbury market while Kristine heads to the Davidson location.

On a Saturday morning both Kristine and Mike’s vehicles are loaded with a generous inventory of cakes, pies, cookies, breads, muffins dinner rolls and brownies as well as specialty items and specific orders from the previous weekend. Specialty items include cheesecakes, carrot cake and layer cakes. Products are neatly packaged and labeled and ready for display. The couple says that the most difficult part of the entire business is the early Saturday morning start. To be at the respective markets, set up and ready for customers, they pull out of the driveway about 6 a.m.

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Turco hands a load of her homemade cookies to a young customer at the Farmer's Market.

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Kristine attributes her continued success to her great clientele who have stayed with her over the years. Cindi Owen has been a regular customer since How Sweet It Is started in Salisbury. Her favorite fresh-from-the-oven item is a traditional apple pie. “The crust is perfect,” she notes. Next on her list is the lemon streusel muffin with raspberries. According to Cindi, Kristine’s products are so delicious because, “they are carefully made small batch goods from family recipes she has used for years.” As Cindi got to know Kristine, she offered to help her with signage and labeling. Her BFA degree in graphic design was helpful in creating a logo, crisp signage and labels that added a polished look to the business. Cindi knows the product line and process so well that she can fill in at the farmers’ market if Kristine and Mike need a break.

Most of her goods sell at the market. At the end of the day if there are leftovers, those are divided between the home freezer to be used later for family and Rowan Helping Ministries for meals there.

The local farmer’s market has evolved over the years. Kristine has been with them from the beginning and at all locations, a total of 28

years. The first booth she had was in the parking lot of Towne Pharmacy (now Moose Drugs) on Innes Street. For a while the setup was at a bank parking lot on North Main Street. At one time it was in the parking lot where the Sidekick Karate Studio on South Main Street is currently located. From here the group moved to the parking lot across from St John’s Lutheran Church where the Bell Tower Green is situated. The current location is Railwalk on North Lee Street. It’s an ideal location with covered space and plenty of parking.

The local market vendors have changed their offerings over the years. Originally the market offered only local produce. Today’s market also highlights many of the local agricultural businesses such as grass-fed beef, goat cheese, local honey as well as jewelry, candles and soaps. Local entertainment has also become a part of the market over the years.

The Salisbury Farmers’ Market is open from mid-April through the last Saturday before Christmas from 8 a.m.-noon. Winter hours October through December are 9 a.m.-noon. **S**

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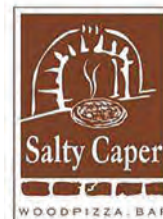


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Meredith Williams will head the Salisbury Academy Downtown campus. She talks to prospective students on how the classes will be taught.

ready for
STUDENTS

Salisbury Academy set to open new
high school campus

WRITTEN BY **SUSAN SHINN TURNER** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WAYNE HINSHAW**



In 2023, Salisbury Academy is celebrating its 30th anniversary in a big way. Thanks to the \$3 million Opening Doors campaign, the school will literally open the doors Aug. 16 at a new high school campus in Downtown Salisbury for grades 9-11. Grade 12 will be added the following year.

The Wallace Family Foundation provided a \$1.25 million matching grant, which has been met. The school is about \$400,000 from reaching its goal.

Meredith Williams will lead the SA Upper School located at 316 Depot St. (the former Team Chevrolet call center). That modern workspace will be retained for whole group, small group and individual study.

Williams, a Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was a biology major until the summer enrichment programs steered her toward education.

"I've always been attuned toward instructional design," says Williams, who taught this past fall at Catawba College. "How do we design instruction that is student-centered?"

Williams taught science in Charlotte before becoming principal at North Rowan High School, her alma mater.

"I'll be teaching science at the SA Upper School, so it's a full-circle thing for me," she says.

Williams assisted Beverly Fowler, Salisbury Academy's head of school, in meeting with stakeholders for nearly a



Lucy Black reacts as she pours chemicals from one tube to another without spilling.



year to design the school.

They asked parents: “What’s the No. 1 thing you would like to gift your child with as they are leaving high school?”

The answer: Confidence

“We realized with standardized learning in grades 9-12, there was no room for students to become their best, unique selves,” she says.

Eva Rich sits at her math desk in a glass walled classroom, waiting to be filmed for video.

The Upper School will provide a strong academic foundation for its students with classes taught by talented, experienced faculty. Additionally, grades 11-12 will offer design classes based on students’ personal interests. These could include internships and apprenticeships. Students can take classes at Catawba College to explore their vocation — all while having full support of the faculty.

Alison Doby will provide counseling and college support, while Tommy Wilson will serve as athletic director. The school will follow the model of Salisbury Academy in offering golf, tennis, swimming, track, soccer, basketball and volleyball based on student interest, growing its sports as the student body grows.

The daily schedule at SA Downtown will mimic that of Catawba — Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes will be one hour, while Tuesday-Thursday classes will be 90 minutes.

“Students can easily switch out one of our classes for Catawba’s,” Williams notes.

The downtown location is critical to the design format, Williams says. Students will walk out the door to find themselves surrounded by local businesses, arts, culture, non-profit organizations, and city government.

“It allows the community to be their classroom,” Williams says.

Williams sees the downtown location as a springboard for learning opportunities.



The front of the school on Depot Street.

“We will be doing real work for the real world,” she says. “That’s my thing. We will integrate that into every class and apply it to real problems in the community.”

She adds, “We understand where teenagers are developmentally, and we understand where they need to be graduating from high school. We have designed this school to bridge that gap.”

Fowler came to Salisbury in 2001 when her husband, Chris, started working at Young Life. A year later, she became a fifth-grade teacher at Salisbury Academy. This is her eighth year in the role as head of school.

The reason she’s stayed at Salisbury Academy? “The people. I truly love the work with the kids. This school lives out its mission. Even our adults are lifelong learners.”

Fowler asked Williams to help with design of the new upper school, not knowing she’d ultimately lead it.

“Meredith was a Salisbury Academy parent and a respected educator,” Fowler says. “When she stepped away from North, we asked her to help with parent focus groups and visioning workshops. It became apparent that she would be a perfect leader for the model and expansion.”

Fowler adds, “Salisbury Academy started as a grassroots effort. We are no strangers to starting small and building on that again.”



Adair Doran talks with prospective students. She will teach history classes when the school opens.



Allison Doby, kneeling, talks with prospective students Hope Thomas, Noah Bardinas and Lucy Black.



The high school is something families have asked for since the school was founded, says Sandy Jordan, longtime junior kindergarten teacher. “Staying true to Salisbury Academy learning styles, it will be different than your average high school. Students will have another choice here in town. The school will serve students who are interested in experiential-type learning at the high school level.”

Luke Bardinas and Baxter Heilig play chess in the front lobby of the academy.

Traci Williams is the current board chair. Her two daughters are SA graduates — Courtney is a senior at Salisbury High School and Meredith is a freshman there.

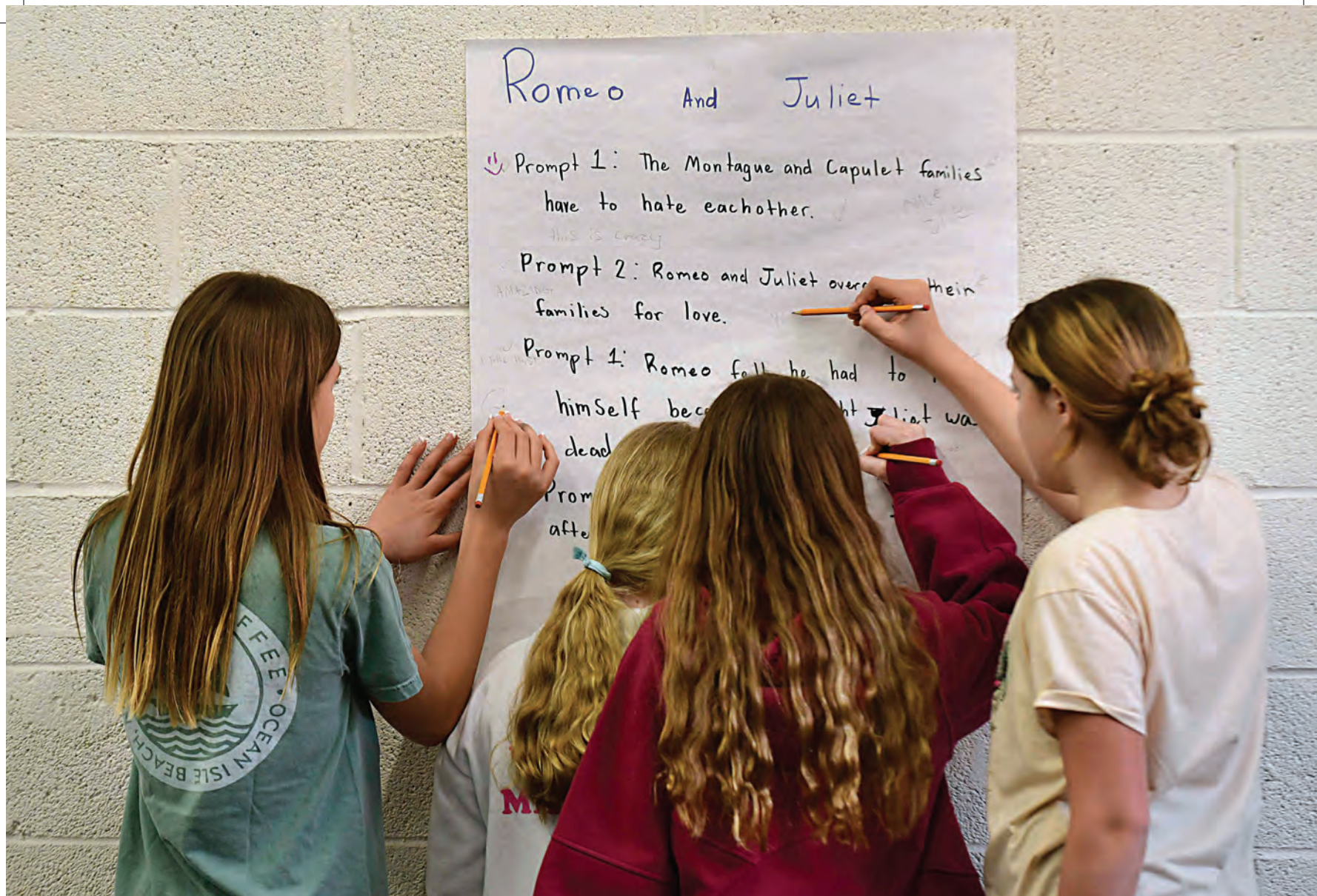
“The whole place just felt very warm and inviting from day one,” she says of Salisbury Academy. “We felt like we belonged. We felt it was the right place for us to be.”

Over the years, Williams says, she and her husband Brad have supported the school with their time, talent and treasures. Brad chairs the building and grounds committee.

“We put in a lot of effort to make sure that Salisbury Academy is sustainable for the next 30 years,” she says.

The addition of a high school, Williams says, is “the right thing and the best thing to do. Who knows? My grandchildren may go there someday.”

This is her seventh year on the board, and she notes, “This proj-



ect has lit a fire under us like I've never seen before. The board is electrified to find out what the next steps in the projects are. This is the best board I've ever been a part of.

"We could maintain or we could grow. We chose to grow."

A WORD FROM INCOMING STUDENTS

"I was thrilled to see a new vision of high school that focuses on the aspect of learning in a much different environment not seen in ordinary high schools," says Noah Bardin, who will enter the SA Upper School as a junior. His brothers, Luke, a sophomore, and Jacob, a freshman, will join him. "The more discussion-driven classes, to me, show what you're capable of learning, more so than a simple timed test."

Noah says he's most looking forward to "the partnership with Catawba College as well as the Downtown Salisbury environment, which could

A class of prospective students works on a project together making a poster for the wall.

include a class lecture outside a coffee shop. Mainly taking advantage of the surrounding environment versus sitting in a desk watching a chalkboard for an hour and 30 minutes."

Alice Rich and her daughter, Eve, an incoming junior, use the word "excitement" to describe their anticipation for the new school.

Eve attended Salisbury Academy for grades one through eight and Salisbury High School for grades nine and 10.

"She's very excited for a change," her mother says. "Everything about the curriculum at the Upper School is really exciting for her. She is an artistic kid — heavily into art and theatre."

Rich adds, "It's not about Eve fitting into a mold. The curriculum can be made for her — her strengths, her capabilities, to be the best Eve

she can be."

"She is super excited about being a founding student and the leadership capabilities it has."

A WORD FROM DOWNTOWN SALISBURY

Sada Troutman is the downtown director for the City of Salisbury.

"We're thrilled Salisbury Academy is coming downtown for a lot of reasons," she says. "It's taking us to another level in integrating education into our downtown economy. Other cities don't have the connection with high school students that we will have. It's valuable to get some young energy in downtown — energy, enthusiasm and the capacity to bring new ideas. Also bringing families downtown is a huge plus for our economy."

She adds, "Meredith and Beverly have done an amazing job connecting with the Downtown Salisbury community. I applaud them for what



they have done. This is going to be a big reason that SA Downtown will be successful.”

MORE AHEAD

The main campus, built 20 years ago, will break ground on a new early-childhood and community connection building. The 8,500-square foot building will house a new three-year-old program in addition to its junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes. The main campus will also get a facelift.

A LOOK BACK

There are a lot of full-circle moments in reflecting on the Salisbury Academy 30th anniversary.

In 1993, Georgi Goss led a group of parents in opening a school with 13 students in grades one through three.

Goss was interested in hands-on, experiential learning through academics, enrichment and

Left: Meredith Williams leads a class of prospective students on how the academy will teach. Right: Hope Thomas, a future student, enters the front door on Depot Street.

faith-based learning.

“We wanted to inspire students to become lifelong learners,” Goss says.

The plan was to add lower grades and upper grades, and the school did just that, doubling enrollment every year for the first five years, until there were 200 students in three separate buildings.

“It was a lot to keep up with,” Goss acknowledges. “We needed to build a building. The goal was to combine everyone in one school.”

That happened in 2003, when the main campus opened at 2210 Jake Alexander Blvd. North.

Stan and Sandy Jordan have been involved with Salisbury Academy since the beginning.

Stan was on the board that helped start the school. A couple of years later, their daughter, Ashley Jordan Jones, started first grade there. Their son Miles started kindergarten there in 1996, the first year kindergarten was added. Sandy Jordan “started” school that year, too, as a junior kindergarten teacher, where she’s been ever since.

Jordan says that Goss’ passion and excitement for hands-on learning brought her to Salisbury Academy.

“She was like the Pied Piper, bringing families in,” she notes.

So why is Jordan still there?

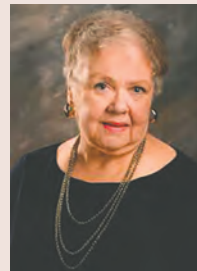
“It’s just a wonderful place to be. Even as we’ve grown, we’ve stayed like a family. I believe young children should learn through play, and the heads of school have allowed us to be creative with our teaching tools. It’s a happy place. It’s brought me a lot of joy.”

She adds, “It’s hard to believe it’s been 30 years. It’s gone by fast.” **S**



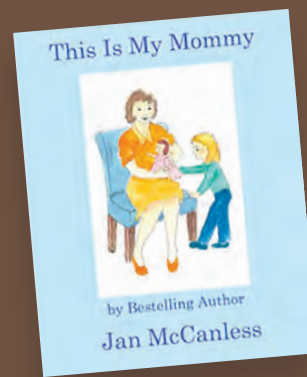
Above: Noah Bardinas prepares himself a cup of coffee in the front lobby of the academy.

Below: Prospective students work on a poster for a project.



Jan McCanless

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Saving Grace Farm
Executive Director
Janna Griggs adjusts the
stirrups for Nathan Page
and a riding session.

REIN *and* SHINE

Saving Grace Farm provides bond
with horses for therapy

WRITTEN BY DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS



Get back in the saddle, they say. If you fall off, just brush yourself off and get back on there. That's what Saving Grace Farm is here for — to get people back in the saddle and back on track.

"Horses give biofeedback to people. They help us know what is going on," says Janna Griggs, owner and therapist at Saving Grace.

Children four and up and adults come to her farm either as part of a therapy guided by a doctor, or as the therapy itself.

"A common thread is anger but sometimes that's just the beginning," Griggs says. "That anger could be caused by stress, trauma, dissatisfaction. Horses sense that. Horses live in herds, not like a dog that's immediately loyal. You have to build relationships with horses."

"So, we work on what we need to do to work on the relationship. They are prey animals, so they're very vigilant, they're non-verbal and non-judgmental, and they're very honest, too, which makes for good therapy.

They deal with something, then they calm d wn again."

Saving Grace provides Equine Assisted Service, which includes Therapeutic Horsemanship. For children with autism, Down syndrome or other needs, or veterans with post traumatic stress disorder, the relationship with a horse can open a world of possibilities.

"Horses react differently to people. Sometimes, they're nurturing, sometimes they don't want to be bothered until the person works through some things first, then they will approach and work with them. It's funny to see the immediate change."

Griggs and the other certified therapists might make the first connection in the ring, "using the horses' body language and intelligence to see what's going on. It can be very calming, but you need confidence, too, to let them connect, to know what energy you're feeling. The horses sense the person's energy. The same horse can be different with different people," Griggs says.

She is an ESMHL — equine specialist in mental health and learning. "We always have a mental health specialist in these situations. We are very serious about safety. We identify horse behavior and client behavior."

The therapists have found that children will talk about themselves more in sessions with the horses or the other equines.

Saving Grace is a small operation looking to grow and serve more people.

The farm has nine full-size horses, two miniature horses and a donkey; all are used in the therapy. Pumpkin, a Norwegian Fjord horse, is Griggs' "rock-star." He works well with everyone.

"The minis are more for mental health and sometimes travel to other sites for therapy." Griggs was preparing to take them to a home school.

"I'm hoping to be more mobile, one day, when we have better facilities."



From left: Kelly Cagle, Gabriel Miller, Janna Griggs, Grayson Griggs, Julie Cagle, Amber Hardeman, Alex Gardner, Kait Gardner and Marisol Sanchez.

And that's the biggest challenge Saving Grace faces. The need more space, covered areas so therapy can continue when it's raining, more horses, more pastures.

More funding is the main issue. They have small fundraisers, such as a spring dinner and a May concert, this year featuring Too Much Sylvia. Those events help, as do individual donations, but there are no big donors who commit to ongoing support.

Grants often don't fit what they do. Some therapy is covered by insurance, and Griggs also has riding lessons, but 60 percent of clients are funded through scholarships.

Fully accredited by PATH International, the certifying agency for people who use horses for therapy with children and adults, Saving Grace has a small staff

Griggs is assisted by Amber Hardeman, also PATH certified, and Kelly Cagle, who works part time taking care of business and coordinating volunteers.

What started in 2000 with 10 students and a different owner, now has 40 to 60 regular clients and a waiting list.

The horses, pastures and working rings are all on Griggs' property. It's not ideal, but she makes the most of what she has.

"We need more room. We need more covered areas so therapy can continue even in bad weather. Right now, we can get rained out," she says. She's looking for a larger piece of land to set up her dream center, with therapy options in-



Volunteer coordinator Kelly Cagle and Executive Director Janna Griggs watch as Marisol Sanchez leads Emily Hall around the arena.



Ella Lucas makes her way around the arena as volunteers, from left, Julie Cagle, Alex Gardner and Kait Bryant lend a helping hand along the way. Saving Grace Farm provides therapeutic horsemanship and equine assisted activities to people with special needs and disabilities.



Seven-year-old Nathan Page tosses a hoop toward the pole during a recent ride.



Emily Hall, a four time gold-medal champion at the Special Olympics, makes her way around the arena with volunteer Marisol Sanchez assists.

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Volunteer Julie Cagle secures a rider's leg for safety.

side and out. And she needs more pasture for the horses. They ate through the pasture behind her house, so it's been replanted and is resting until the grasses grow. She always needs hay for the horses.

"We struggle with having enough horses for the clients; the demand is certainly there."

Sometimes parents see a need in their children, other times, the clients are referred. Shelby Carpenter, whose daughter Emmy, has been a client at Saving Grace, says her daughter feels more confident when around the horses and that the lessons have improved her balance and hand coordination. She started with two helpers to keep her balanced in the saddle, Carpenter says, but now, "she is riding almost independently with just a leader to ensure she has an 'emergency brake' if she needs it. The rest



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Emmy is doing all on her own. She has improved so much with her balance and motor skills that she has gone to two Special Olympics North Carolina Equestrian Tournaments and received gold medals in every class.”

Griggs remembers a woman who had been in a domestic violence situation. She noticed one horse sort of pushing the others away. The horse wanted attention. The woman knew that horse was the leader and identified it as her aggressor. “We asked her to tell the horse to back off, but she didn’t mean it at first. It took a while, but when she meant it, the horse moved away calmly.”

Beth Dixon, chief district court judge in Rowan County, is a board member who has first-hand experience with the farm. “Saving Grace Farm is such a special place. My daughter, born with a rare syndrome, first began therapeutic riding there. She loved it and couldn’t wait for her weekly session. I saw the confidence it gave her, not just on the horse but also at home. I’ve encountered children in court who have been clients at SGF. These kids have experienced tremendous trauma and the horses have helped them heal. The therapy provided at the farm is so needed in our community and I’m proud to be a supporter and board member.”

The horse-guided therapy builds self-esteem and independence, as well as physical needs. The ’ll do horse camps in summer and riding lessons throughout the year.

Sometimes when kids sign up for lessons, “We discover they have issues, so we do equine assisted learning, educational and team programs, which are more sustainable,” Griggs says.

Volunteers are always needed, and they need to be flexible. “One day they may be scooping poop, another fixing fences”

She’s found horses have a personality that draws people in. “The want to connect. It’s fun to walk with a 1,000-pound animal who will walk with you and who you can give treats to.”

“We try to give individuals independence by working with the horses. It’s all about building relationships. It’s not a lot of pressure. We work with them at their level.”

“We have to juggle lessons and sessions; the timing can be challenging, and we don’t want to overwork the horses. We have to treat them well.

Horses tolerate a lot, probably more than humans, but horses give us signs. We have to gauge the safety for each person, the limitations of riders and horses; we are very aware of precautions.”

“A lot of people don’t know we’re here or what we do,” Griggs says.

“We have good people who are passionate about what we do. Lots of love and passion are behind this effort.” **S**

Saving Grace Farm is at 725 Jackson Road, Salisbury. Call 704-209-6577 or visit the website, <https://www.savinggracefarm.com> or Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/sgfequinetherapy>



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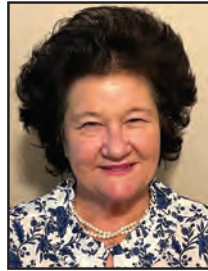
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Atlas Urbina holds a bunny. Fabric pouches kept the bunnies safe from an accidental drop.



Jaelle and Seana Robinson enjoyed the bunnies.



Carl Peters enthusiastically applied Easter tattoos.



Chenoah and Jazmine Popat at a coloring table.

Hall House Hop

Historic Salisbury Foundation held the Hall House Hop for families to enjoy Easter together. When the forecast called for cold, rainy weather, the Foundation pivoted to hold the event in the Depot. The event was, nonetheless, quite well attended and children had a great time. Stations throughout the Depot offered children a sensory garden, coloring pages, tattoos, a bouncy house, snacks and lemonade, free seeds to plant at home, and most popularly, the bunny petting station.

“Planning an Easter Event for the children of Salisbury was a blast,” Events Coordinator Weston Ewart said. “We can’t wait to make it bigger next year! Special thanks to Wonderland Arcade of Salisbury, Tamie Files Rabbitry, and our great volunteers!”

— Photos by Maggie Blackwell



Board member Sherry Beck welcomed children with a sensory garden.



Perfectly-dressed girls have just the shoes for the occasion.



Maddy and Macy Haas came in matching dresses.



The event was quite well-attended.



Sydney and Ellory Holmes enjoyed the fun.

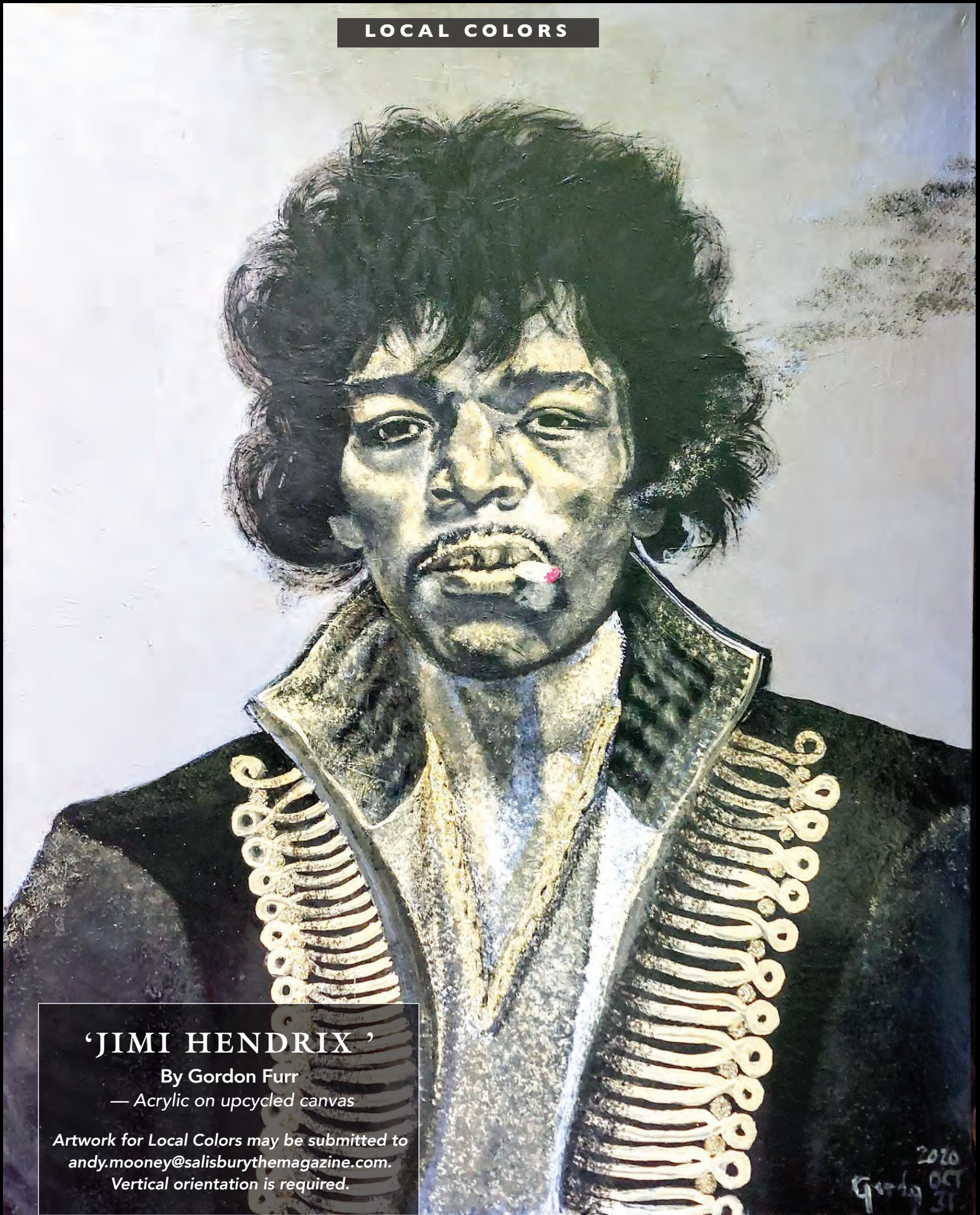


A bouncy house helped children release some energy on a cold, rainy day.



Above: Joel Daniel took baby Jack to his first Easter event. Right: Events Coordinator Weston Ewart organized the event with painstaking care for all the details.





‘JIMI HENDRIX’

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