

AUGUST 2023

SALISBURY

the magazine

pursuing life with a
PASSION

*Bob Harris has devoted
years to serving others*

**Murphy the
Therapy Dog**

IS STAR AT TERRIE HESS

Heart of Salisbury

IS PATH FOR CULINARY WELLNESS



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*On the cover: Bob Harris goes for a ride on the giant swing he built.
(Wayne Hinshaw photo)*

On this page: A soldier comfortable wrapped in a blanket presented to the Westminster Hospital, London, by the English-Speaking Union on behalf of the Westminster Chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire, Cleveland, Ohio.

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A purpose in life

At a party at the home of mutual friends, Bob Harris asked if I'm enjoying my work as editor of this magazine. I replied that I wouldn't have taken a job at this age if it weren't what I love to do. "Good," he said. "I'm convinced that a sense of purpose leads to longer life."

His words have intrigued me ever since. In talking with Harris for the cover article, I learned the magnitude of what he's accomplished in his 81 years — including over 50 mission trips, helping build 100 Habitat houses and his latest venture, hiking the Appalachian Trail. He has a passion for literacy for at-risk kids. Thanks to him, I've been inspired to do more and be more in my own life, to be the best Maggie I can be. I hope you'll find the story inspiring, too.

The English-Speaking Union has been around for 103 years and started as a war relief group. After the war, they amended their mission and now share compelling stories from people of interest. Writer Andie Foley spent hours in the Rowan Public Library finding the very best vintage photos from our local chapter to accompany her story. What the group accomplished is nothing short of amazing.

Murphy the therapy dog works at Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center. As writer Ben White shows us, Murphy seems to have built-in radar; if a child needs quiet time, Murphy chills out on the sofa. If a child is energetic, Murphy drags out his toys for some fun and games. His two years of training prepared him for this important job.

Heart of Salisbury is a gem located in, well, the heart of Salisbury. Offering yoga, cooking classes, a shop and office for massage and therapy, they are approaching healthy living in a holistic way. Deirdre Parker Smith visited and experienced a cooking class. She shows you the Heart of Salisbury from the inside.

We visit with Lee Spears in his microscopic kitchen to learn the secrets of his pastry. Spears is a sort of Renaissance man who seems to perfect his art in everything he does, from French pastry to hand-crafted dulcimers. He'd gotten up early that morning to prepare a sample for me. I wish there were a way to share it with you here. Suffice to say, this sweets-lover has never tasted



better fare. We share his recipe for Key Lime Pie.

Our Rowan Original is Dr. Derrick Anderson, pastor at Soldiers' Memorial AME Zion Church. Dr. Anderson's father served as pastor at the same church. Young Anderson attended Knox Junior High School as the only Black student in 1963. He remembers the pressure on his young shoulders to represent his entire race of people in an all-white school.

Our book review this month, written by Sydney Smith Hamrick, shares "The Last Resort," by Sarah Stodola. It's about the environmental effect of luxurious resorts in exotic places. Smith Hamrick works at the East Branch of Rowan Public Library. We may see more from her here in the future.

Each of our stories shows people — and a dog — fulfilling their sense of purpose in life. We hope you are inspired by their stories.

Maggie

— Maggie Blackwell
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

Maybe not the ‘beach read’ we wanted, but the one we needed

By Sydney Smith Hamrick

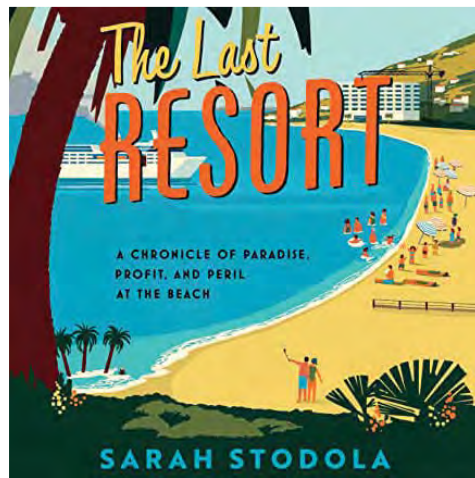
If you're already dreaming about your next big vacation, consider snagging a copy of Sarah Stodola's "The Last Resort" before you hop on the plane or load up the car. In this 2022 nonfiction title, Stodola explores the shocking realities lying directly underneath the shiny yet always-thinning veneer of tropical resort culture.

I stumbled upon this book by accident — ironically, while browsing digital eBooks I could download and enjoy on an upcoming cruise to the Bahamas. One of my latest reading obsessions has been tropical gothic fiction. The idea of something terrible and tragic happening in some of the most beautiful places on Earth is alluring to me in an eerie way. As a lifelong lover of both horror and the beach, this deep dive into a very niche corner of writing fascinates me. Getting to learn more about what actually drives many of the recurring themes of gothic tropical fiction, such as colonialism, capitalism, industry development and the depletion of natural resources gave me a broader understanding of why resort culture is breaking down so drastically.

Stodola, an accomplished travel writer with work published in the *New York Times*, *Slate*, *New York Magazine* and the *BBC* (to name a few), tackles the biggest issue facing travelers, vacationers and resort industries today: what is the world's obsession with the tropics doing to the planet and its peoples in the long-term, and what — if anything — can be done to fix it

Beach towns and tropical getaways draw millions of vacationers every year with promises to deliver ultimate resort culture experiences. Fancy mixed drinks, ocean views, seaside brunches, warm temperatures and deep relaxation all serve as a part of the resort promise. Whether a traveler stays in a fancy five-star hotel or a small seaside cabin, their expectations are the same: they want a perfect tropical experience.

Stodola's descriptions of her travels to some



of the most beautiful and exotic beaches in the world are both enchanting and unsettling — the perfect parallel to her examination of what is negatively affecting different tropical destinations all around the globe.

Stodola begins her exploration of resort culture by reminding readers that the beach wasn't always a dream destination. She points to a variety of times in history when the beach was often the last place anyone would want to go. For example, Stodola explains how rich, upper-crust English beachgoers typically spent time by the sea due to a doctor's orders, whether their ailments were real or perceived. Documented as early as the 1500s, time in an inland sea spa was offered as an ideal treatment over other courses of medical intervention for a variety of health complaints.

After taking a tour of the beach's shaky beginnings as a destination for relaxation and recuperation, Stodola then explores the travel industry's genius rebranding of the beach as a sort of adult playground. In areas around the world affected by political corruption, succession and beyond, many natural resources and opportunities for creating revenue dwindled. Many of these towns struggled to keep up amid cultural shifts and changing borders. At this time, some rich investors saw a unique opportunity: if they could find a way to make beach areas more appealing, they could attract large crowds

of people looking for escape and relaxation. Stodola names Monte Carlo as a prime example of a struggling-city-turned-fabulous by such an investor. Once money was poured into the city by means of installing a variety of attractive features such as luxury accommodations, gambling establishments, fine restaurants and more, people began to flock to Monte Carlo for one of the earliest examples of the resort experience.

Between historical excerpts of various destinations around the world becoming resort hotspots, Stodola includes her present-day impressions of these places as she visits them in person. She reminds readers that resorts have attracted many travelers over the years and all of those travelers make a massive impact on the environment and culture of the resort towns. For example, she describes areas along the shores of the Hawaiian islands and Miami, Florida. Much of these once sandy coastlines are dwindling drastically, with only thin retaining walls stopping the sea from taking claim over the hotels dotted all along their shores.

Stodola closes the book with some reasonable ways beachgoers can travel to tropical destinations more ethically and responsibly. The beauty of nature is meant to be enjoyed, but it is crucial to understand how insidious many aspects of resort culture are — being aware of how a visit can create a long lasting negative impact, whether you leave trash behind on the beach or ignore the local customs of the area in favor of the familiar, is critical.

The entire book is incredibly enlightening. As someone who loves visiting beaches, I must admit that I'll now think twice about the implications of my visits anytime I go. While I will still enjoy a walk along the shore, I'll be aware of the breakdown of resort culture chugging along restlessly in the background, much like a track of ukulele and marimba music playing on repeat over a hotel's lobby speakers.

Sydney Smith Hamrick is a librarian at Rowan Public Library East Branch. **S**



Baby birds wait in their nest to be fed by their mother.

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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Rev. Dr. Derrick Anderson, pastor of Soldiers Memorial AME Zion Church. He is sitting in the sanctuary of the historic church with beautiful stained glass windows.

Breaking ground

Soldiers Memorial AME Zion Church pastor Dr. Derrick Anderson

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

When young Derrick Anderson started at Knox Junior High School in 1963, he was the only Black student there. His parents and the community had asked him, his brother and sister to break the color barrier so that desegregation could start in local schools. His siblings attended Boyden High, now Salisbury High School.

“It was important for the desegregation experiment to succeed,” he says. “The concept of ‘separate but equal’ was always

going to be ‘separate but never equal.’ Materials and supplies at Black schools were inferior. For lunch at Monroe Street School, we had pinto beans, yellow grits and once a while we got chicken backs. When I got to Knox and particularly at Boyden, I was just shocked at the food. It was a regular buffet!

Anderson remembers his siblings had each other for support at Boyden; at Knox he was alone. He remembers the discomfort of discussing the Civil War, feeling that everyone was looking at him. He remembers stares in the locker room as boys changed

clothes for gym class.

“Being the only Black student put more pressure on me,” he says. “My siblings were better students. I had had a single focus on football, not academics. But when they asked me to attend Knox, I knew I had to make some changes. I was representing my race of people. At Monroe Street School, the teachers were phenomenal. They not only taught us but prepared us for life. They were so caring in making sure we were prepared, could handle ourselves and pursue education. This was helpful when I got to Knox.”

Anderson’s father served as pastor at Soldiers Memorial AME Zion Church at 306 N. Church Street in Salisbury, where Anderson serves today. The family lived in the Glen Manse, next door on W. Liberty Street. He’s a legacy pastor, with his grandfather, Bishop Herman L. Anderson Sr. and his father, Bishop Felix S. Anderson Sr., preceding him in the ministry. All three generations attended Hood Theological Seminary. Anderson’s grandfather played on the first football team at Livingstone College.

Anderson remembers his father, saying, “He gave of himself not only to the family, but to the congregation. Our family time was at the dinner table. He always made certain he was available. I had great respect for him and what he did.” Before being called to the ministry, his father had been a banker in Louisville, serving as the first Black branch manager, the first Black loan and savings officer.

His siblings went on to work in healthcare. His sister is a retired nurse; his brother, a retired doctor.

Anderson has served at Soldiers now for eight years. He recalls entering the Glen Manse when he returned to town.

“It was sad. It had been standing empty close to 20 years. The condition was not livable. We’ve had two contractors working on it; they almost gutted it but kept the hardwood floors. It’s almost ready now.”

It will be ready for occupancy soon. Anderson says he’s proud to have been part of the restoration. His father had been a leader in “brightening up” the sanctuary during his ministry at the church. The building, erected in 1865,



In Anderson’s office are portraits of his grandfather on the left and his father on the right. Anderson and his wife are in the center.

has beautiful dark curved pews and hardwood floors. At the time, it had dark walls, as well, and Anderson’s dad had them painted. Anderson’s glad to have made a physical improvement there, as well.

Anderson’s wife, Margaret Roberson Anderson, is a retired teacher. She serves at Soldiers today as an ordained elder. She grew up in the area, attending Dunbar School and North Rowan. They have two sons, two daughters and four grandchildren. None serve in the ministry.

“I wound up in the family business,” he says, “but it’s not something you push on someone. My children knew who they were and did the best they could to carry themselves well.”

He chuckles as he remembers being the church janitor as a boy. The official janitor was 90 years old and not doing the best job. Anderson’s father couldn’t bring himself to let him go. So, he hired young Anderson to clean the church for pocket change. Today he’s Dr. Derrick Anderson, pastor.

“The thing I remember most when I was a boy,” he says, “the adults were called by their first

names at work, or ‘Boy.’ At church, everyone was Mr. or Mrs. and everyone dressed to the nines.”

His biggest challenge on returning to Soldiers is likely a challenge facing every pastor in town: how to chart a course as a congregation for this new age.

“We have tremendous people, a very proud history. Our church and members have made significant contributions in our community. The challenge is to chart a new course. It’s difficult to transition from a traditional church. Things have changed a lot. There is new technology. The challenge is to jump on board of that and make certain we do it right.”

Then he heads back to his roots here.

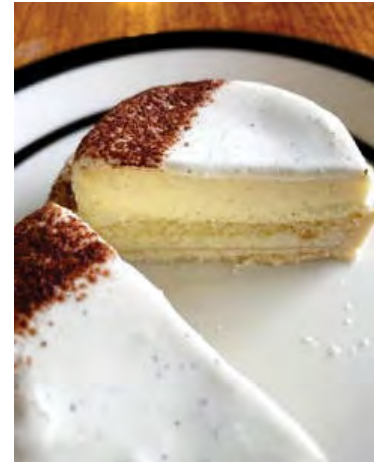
“Being at Monroe Street and Price, we knew who we were as a people. We knew our history. With integration, that piece was lost. We were viewed by society as if we were inferior, and we had to work hard to know who we were — not allowing how we were depicted to affect us. Our parents tried to help us know who we were and be encouraged to do our best.

“I have a special interest in understanding our younger generation and being of support of them in these times. Many in our congregation have passed away. We’ve got to build our congregation and retool how we minister. There’s a lot of need, particularly in our children, and a lot of need in our community.” **S**

FOOD



Lee Spears grills catfish for his friends



The perfect pastry

Numerous visits to Paris have inspired Lee Spears' baking

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LEE SPEARS AND CARL STOKES**

About 20 years ago, Lee Spears' farm across the Yadkin had raspberries so plentiful, he could make a pie every two days all summer long. Trouble was, he didn't know how to make a pie. So, he taught himself. He gave pies to friends and ate pies himself. Over time, he got pretty good at it.

"People say baking is a science and cooking is an art," he says, his eyes twinkling. "I'll say baking can be an art, too. I'll find a recipe and decide I'm going to use less flour and I always use less sugar."

He acknowledges it's grown into a passion, including 10 trips to Paris to explore new pastries.

Rhubarb pie is his favorite. He tastes the rhubarb first, though, to see how much he needs to adjust the sugar. He makes all crusts from scratch, and although others may use shortening or lard, he always uses butter. He carefully folds and then refolds the dough so the crust is an intricate maze of layers. "People eat my pies and say it was good but man — that crust!" He loves to watch someone's face when they take that first bite.

"That crust" is no mistake. Spears got so immersed in his hobby that he decided to compare butters. He bought five different butters, from store brand to more expensive Irish and European offerings and grilled five cheese sandwiches. He says he had his fill of grilled cheese sandwiches! But he found the butter he prefers. He's also tried 10 different apples to see which he likes best in his pies. His intention is to create the best he can from scratch using the best ingredients and without shortcuts.

His crust recipe evolved from several recipes.



Tim Isenberg, Jack Riggs, Bob Loflin, Lee Spears, Mark Mo low and Phil Dettinger after enjoying a catfish meal

Over 20 years, he's gotten into desserts in general. He enjoys making pies and breads, but says cookies and cakes are not really his forté. "One can watch YouTube videos all day long and experience how others cook," he says, "but eventually it comes down to what works for you."

You could call his first trip to Paris spontaneous. It was a bitter cold winter and Spears had been through a change, causing him to feel a bit down. He got an email from U.S. Air offerin a round-trip to Paris for \$275. He'd never been and had always heard you need to see Paris before you die. He pondered on it for a few days, then called and asked if there were seats available the following week. The agent replied that all seats at that fare were booked for the following week. He thought for a while, called back and asked, what about this week? They had one seat for that very afternoon, the day he called.

Spears called a few friends and said, I'm headed to Paris in a couple of hours — what do I need to know? One friend had hosted a French exchange student and suggested he call her. So-



phie was now living in Paris with her boyfriend.

He flew to Paris, grabbing a French English dictionary at the airport. Sophie graciously allowed him to spend the first night in their apartment. He stayed eight days on that first trip. He's returned to Paris nine times.

"I'll find a pastry I'm interested in trying, buy the necessary molds, and make it 10 to 15 times," he says. The Cannalé du Bordeaux, a custard pastry with a little rum, takes several days to prepare and requires little copper molds costing \$28 each. He bought six and experimented with



the recipe. The first part is made several days in advance and bakes for over an hour, caramelizing the sugar.

"All that trouble for six tiny morsels," he smiles. "They're gone in three minutes, but it's a pleasure to watch people's faces."

He developed skill at tarté au chocolate and tarté au citron. Then he discovered macarons.

"I'd see them in the windows at patisseries," he says, "but finally someone said I needed to try them at Laduree in Paris. I found out what a real macaron tastes like — the good ones. If you get

frozen ones at the grocery, you won't understand what all the fuss is about. They don't taste like anything."

He likes to make pistachio macarons, roasting and grinding pistachios to make flavorful flour.

The toughest thing he's tackled is tarte infiniment vanilla, or infinitely vanilla tart. Every layer, he says, has fresh vanilla bean in it. It takes seven hours to make eight small tarts. He shakes his head saying, "It's the best ever."

Spears is a musician and played for a while at a Wednesday church service in Winston-Salem. A covered dish dinner always followed the service; over time he was expected to bring dessert. He laughs as he recalls observing a lady snagging three pastries for her pocketbook before the service even began!

Although he has many talents, he says cooking is his passion. He's sold over 100,000 copies of his dulcimer music; he builds hammered dulcimers; he's worked as a sound engineer and likes to "piddle" with vintage BMWs.

Spears has built thousands of instruments over

the years but treasures a time around 35 years ago when he was showing his instruments at a dulcimer festival in California. A young woman from South Africa studied and played his instruments. Handing him a deposit for a custom-built hammered dulcimer, she said to him, with sincerity, "Thank you for not stooping to mediocrity." He says, "That line has stuck with me and has guided me through many of life's endeavors including the making of pastries."

You might imagine he has a large, gleaming kitchen, replete with stainless tables and professional appliances. Spears lives in a log cabin in a stunning pastoral setting, and his kitchen is about 12 feet square. His refrigerator is five feet high by 30 inches wide. He has a sink-drainboard combo atop white metal cabinets, a relic from the 1950s. His stove is a four-burner Frigidaire with one oven. There's no counter space per se, just the drainboard and a small pine table in the center of the room.

Some time ago, Spears got in the habit of inviting a group of guys over for a catfish lunch

on Fridays. At first, he served catfish he'd cooked with store-bought slaw and yeast rolls and a homemade key lime pie. Over time, he started making his own rolls and slaw, as well.

"I just put out the word, 'catfish tomorrow, can you come?' and we all have a good time," he says. "Then catfish more than doubled in price. Some of the guys leave a tip when they leave to help offset the costs. We usually have about six to eight guys and we enjoy it."

His spacious dining room is welcoming. A stone fireplace stands on one side and three sideboards groan under copper pans, china and glassware. An old, long pine table with a lovely patina stands in the center, surrounded by chairs and a long bench.

"If I have a passion at this point," he says, "It's making food. Cooking is a hobby and sort of a passion, whether I'm eating alone or for cooking for others. There's nothing like having a meal at your house or someone's house. There's an intimacy there — it's special and brings people closer."



The group enjoys a catfish dinner in Spears' home.



“If someone wants to go to all the trouble to make a key lime pie, it’s definitely worth it,” he says. “You go to all that work and it’s gone in just a few minutes. It’s a labor of love, for sure.”

LEE SPEARS’ KEY LIME PIE

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Filling

- 4 large egg yolks
- 4 tsp lime zest
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- ½ cup lime juice

Whisk egg yolks with zest until creamy. Whisk in condensed milk, then juice. Let sit for 30 minutes.

Crust

- 8 graham crackers

- 5 Tbsp. melted butter
- 3 Tbsp. sugar

Pulse in food processor until fine in texture. Pulse in butter and sugar until blended. Bake 13-18 minutes until slightly brown.

Pour filling into warm shell. Bake 15-20 minutes until firm yet center jiggles slightly. Cool 3 hours. Top with sweetened whipped cream.

Whipped cream

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 Tbsp. confectioners’ sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1-2 tsp lime zest

Whip to soft peaks. Then add sugar, continue to whip until stiff and add vanilla and zest with the last few whips. **S**

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WELLNESS



Mary Walker, left, works with Megan Marsh, center, and her daughter Ella during a Mother's Day English High Tea cooking class.

At the Heart

Heart of Salisbury's kitchen is one of many paths to wellness

WRITTEN BY **DEIRDRE PARKER SMITH**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**



Sweet potatoes are peeled prior to the start of a cooking class.

Heat of Salisbury is like a three-legged stool with movement, nutrition and counseling all interconnected.

The demonstration kitchen is part of the old Flowers Bakery building, in a space that was a sort of mechanical room.

Step into it now and you may feel like you're about to be on a television show, with a large island in front of you, ovens, four stainless steel prep tables and lots of dishes and glasses.

The kitchen "was inspired by an experience in Florence, Italy, where I took some classes," says Wivi DeSouza DeHaas, owner of Heart of Salisbury.

Her concept for the business is to blend many things that can make life better under one roof. The kitchen is one way to bring different people into the welcoming space in Downtown Salisbury.

Heart of Salisbury also has an eclectic shop, yoga rooms, rooms for counseling and therapy, and the welcoming kitchen.

For Wivi, the kitchen brings in the mind and body aspects of healthy living. "It's all interconnected. Healthy body, healthy mind. It's body care, an achievement to connect you to other people... It's good to cook your own meals and fit what your body's needs are. Cooking for others strengthens your connections with other people."

Mary Walker, owner with husband Andrew of Across the Pond Bed & Breakfast on North Fulton Street, has taught seven classes in the kitchen, starting with a Christmas menu in 2021.

"I do seasonal classes, for Valentine's Day or Mother's Day," Mary says. She did a class one October in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month.

"Vivi is so good at the details," Mary says. "She had pink aprons and decorations for us that time."

At a recent class for a Mother's Day tea, aprons were lavender, to reflect the lavender lemon scones Mary was making.



Above: Gayla Bucher is all smiles during a Mother's Day English High Tea cooking class. Beside her is Sherry Beck. **Below:** Butter is added for the scones that will be prepped and cooked by participants.





After Mary's afternoon tea classes, members enjoy treats they've made in one of the yoga rooms. Tables are covered with white tablecloths, each with a small floral centerpiece. Wivi sets the tables with china she has picked up at thrift stores or sales.

Each table gets its own three-tiered tea stand, decorated and filled with the scones, tea sandwiches and tiny fruit tarts made in class.

Wivi approached Mary about teaching classes. "I have known her for years," Mary says.

The class "is something they can take home and try with family. Some people have been to about three of them. You can tell they've had some experience."

Mary likes the setting. "The kitchen is so light, bright, with the murals on the wall, the four high-top tables. That works very well; you can do individual instruction at each one, then I can go on to the next step. I really like that for organization.





Clockwise from above: Haley Wilhelm prepares a scone for cooking; Tracie Garner and her daughter Jayne work together; a class participant preps the cooking area; a participant smells a jar of herbs during a recent cooking class on herbs and spices; Chef Katie Eyles gives instruction during a cooking class.





Once we're finished, they can enjoy the food in a nice spot where they teach yoga. I remind them of that every time they get to eat."

Mary has plenty of equipment to work with. The kitchen is well-supplied with whisks, spoons, measuring utensils, knives, silverware. The prep stations have a shelf where you'll find stand mixers, hot plates and large stainless-steel bowls.

The two ovens and microwave provide plenty of cooking space, as well as a large cooktop on the island. There's a commercial refrigerator and a large household fridge, too.

Along the walls stands a large, black china cabinet full of white dishes, cups and bowls. Another cabinet holds various glassware, and there are storage areas for pots and pans. Well-stocked pantries hold a bit of everything a cook might need.

Two overhead televisions allow everyone to watch the prep.

While Mary is very hands-on, the kitchen is also used for demonstration classes.

Chef Katie Eyles originally came to the shop at Heart of Salisbury, then saw the kitchen and said she would like to teach a class there.

She has a background in education and has traveled widely to teach people how to have fun. She taught middle school math and science, then got a culinary education because she has struggled with her digestive health.

That's when she turned to Ayurveda, a "sister science to yoga, focused on the body, on health, on lifestyle practices to balance it all," Katie says.

Ayurveda emphasizes the individual because everyone's physiology is different. The practice matches foods, herbs and spices to the four seasons and the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and space, or ether. It's a complex system that she tries to simplify for others.

"For good health, you have to have good gut health," Wivi says.

Katie did an intensive class on Ayurvedic herbs and spices, showing how to use them for optimal health.

She brought spices some people had never heard of, including asafetida, which helps with the poor circulation and slow digestion common in winter. She started by making a Grounding Digestive Tea of fennel, coriander and cumin seeds, all steeped in hot water.

Wivi DeHaas, owner and yoga instructor, fits in as a sous chef during a recent cooking class.





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She also made a vegan, gluten-free bread, serving it toasted with a basil-parsley pesto. It was delicious. She had plenty of hand-outs including the recipes and a detailed description of the herbs and spices and their functions.

Mary likes to do scones because they are quick and easy, and has done cookies, which take a bit longer. She usually brings the fillings for tea sandwiches, which class members make, and the little shells for tiny tarts.

Renovating 5,000 square feet of the building led to the creation of the kitchen, yoga rooms, counseling and massage suites, the shop up front and walls perfect for art exhibits.

“It’s all part of mental health,” Wivi says. “It’s all interrelated, there’s a lot of linkage; at Heart of Salisbury, the sum of all the parts is greater than the parts themselves. The e are diffe ent parts to well-ness, and they all work together to bring

balance.”

Wivi says, “We’re very people centric. We’re in the people business.

“The kitchen brightens my day when I hear people say this place has really helped me live a life I wanted to live.”

Her goal is “to get more chefs to come and teach classes. I want to make it more local. Two chefs have already agreed to come, Gianni Moscardini and Heather Teeter; Matt Trexler hopes to do it.

“We have had great support in community for being a new concept. We love our community; we wouldn’t survive if they didn’t support us. We live in a beautiful town, and we want to collaborate with others here.” **S**

Heart of Salisbury, <https://heartofsalisbury.com>, is at 120 E. Innes St. Call 704-245-6654 or go to <https://www.facebook.com/HeartofSalisbury/> for a list of classes and activities.

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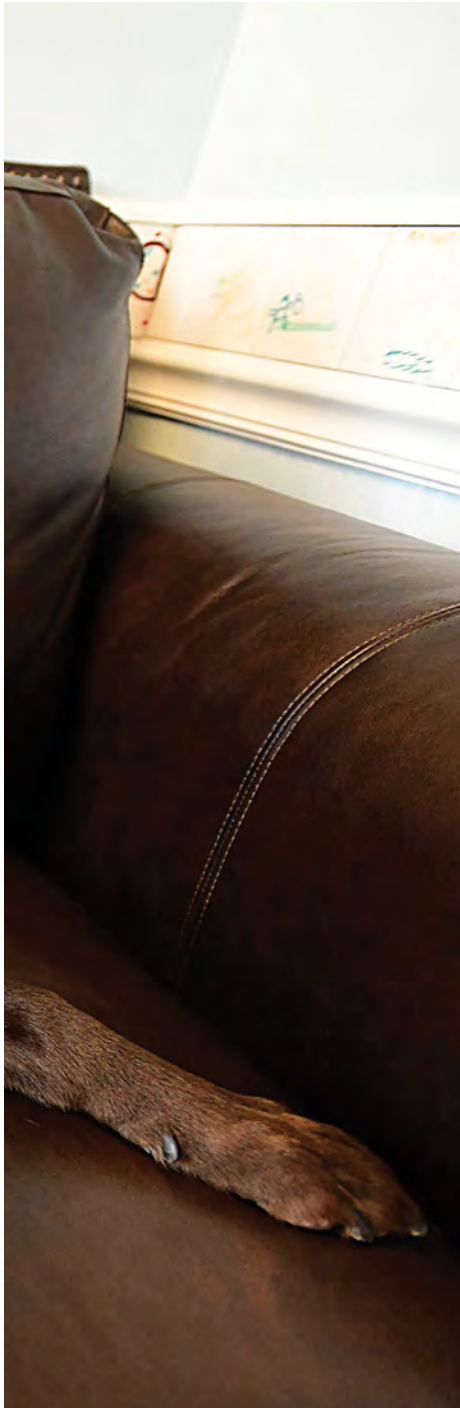


Murphy the Therapy Dog at Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center has plenty of love for everyone. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)

Star player

Murphy the Therapy Dog is a vital part of the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center

BY BEN WHITE



There are drawings and paintings of Murphy all around the building. The children like drawing his picture. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)

One step into the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center and there is an immediate feeling of peace. The soft gray walls and white trim are inviting and offer the reassurance of being in a safe place.

Their mission is to serve the needs of children and families in Rowan County by providing a community-based center using best practices in prevention as well as the identification, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse.

Those who make it their life's mission to serve children in need of help in traumatic situations are highly educated and offer their expertise in specific capacities. They're considered the best of the best.

There's one member of their team who's hailed as their star player. He is their Richard Petty, their Michael Jordan, their Tom Brady. He's only seven years old and stands about two and a half feet tall. Height isn't important when compared to what he's done to make the lives of hundreds of children better and happier. Rest assured: he stands quite tall in the eyes of residents of Rowan County.

His name is Murphy, a chocolate Lab who works full-time as a therapy dog. Murphy once had his own challenges before receiving



help to become a key part of helping make others stronger. Murphy was rescued through the Rowan County Animal Shelter in July of 2019.

“We have 12 people on staff here and that counts Murphy,” said Erin Moody, Prevention & Education Coordinator, Forensic Interviewer, Certified Therapy Dog Handler. “He is definitely one of us”

Like those needing support who come to the center, Murphy did as well five years ago.

“He was sick. He was rather malnourished,” Erin said. “He was not crazy skinny. He wasn’t real brittle but just real bleached out from the sun. He didn’t look like a chocolate Lab. He was not super well cared for. We think

had been outside his whole life.”

Cheryl Peevy of Canine Caregivers Therapy Dogs, N.C. and formerly of Catawba College gave Murphy his “freedom ride” home from the shelter. From July 2019 through March 2020, Murphy completed his necessary medical quarantine, heart worm treatment and live-in training with Nina Dix at Doggie Holiday Boarding & Training.

Once that was completed, Murphy was announced as the therapy dog in training for the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center. In November 2020 Murphy passed his AKC Canine Good Citizen test. In April of 2021, Murphy completed his training hours and passed his final test to become a



Above: Murphy hangs out with Erin Moody, Prevention & Education Coordinator, Forensic Interviewer, Certified Therap Dog Handler with the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)

Above right: Murphy sports his gear from New Sarum Brewing Co. (Submitted photo)



Certified Therapy Dog, joining Canine Caregivers Therapy Dogs, N.C. The two-year process had finally been completed.

He's been a huge part of the daily activities of Terrie Hess Advocacy House ever since. One could say Murphy gives out hugs and snuggles to those who come to the center in the form of laying his head on their lap. That's followed by soft stares from some very caring eyes that make one's heart melt.

Murphy doesn't do interviews, as his time is better served elsewhere.

He interacts with visitors, community partners and supports children recovering from abuse. His warm greeting and comforting presence can reduce the fear or anxiety that a child may experience and remind them that they aren't alone. Murphy also helps give tours, attends community events and is often featured in the center's marketing material.

Murphy is a Canine Good Citizen through the American Kennel Club and a certified therapy dog with Canine Caregivers Therapy Dogs, N.C. He's generously sponsored by Doggie Holiday Boarding & Training, Rowan Animal Clinic, and Uptown Dogs & Cats.

In 2022, Canine Caregivers Therapy Dogs, N.C. returned to volunteering in the community after a break during the pandemic. Murphy and other group members worked with staff at the WBTV Newsroom in Charlotte for grief support, attended Exam Jam at RCCC to help reduce student stress during their exam period and visited campers at the Next Generation Academy.

Murphy is a frequent visitor around Rowan County businesses such as Koco Java, South Main Books and

Murphy has his own place in Erin Moody's office that he can go to when he needs a quiet time for himself away from work. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)



with gifted apparel from New Sarum Brewing Co. He visits community events, youth activities and civic organizations to help promote public awareness about child safety and abuse prevention. This past April, Murphy was featured for the month in the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina 2023 calendar.

The e must be time for a little fun along the way. In May, 2021, Murphy won second prize in the Salisbury Post Cutest Pet Contest. In December 2022, Murphy was named the Novant Health Community Hero of the Month and was honored at the Charlotte Checkers' Game with THCAC staff in attendance

And on June 17, a plaque was dedicated to Murphy and the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center, located in the lobby of the new building at the Rowan County Animal Shelter. It was unveiled at the grand opening on June 17, 2023.

"Murphy does a lot of work to help children feel comfortable and safe," Erin said. "He reads people really well. It's really amazing because I don't give him cues. I just supervise him. He really acts out. He'll really be goofy and toss toys to them and jump around. Then we have some kids who are really over-stimulated and can't settle down. They're nervous and have a lot of energy. They can't put their words together. He will crawl up in the couch with them and usually bring his blanket with him or his toy and subtly lay on them and within a couple of minutes you'll notice that their breathing has really leveled out, they're holding still, they're in the rhythmic motion of petting a dog. We don't give Murphy cues on what to do. He just reads people and what they need.

"When he goes to Trinity Oaks to visit some of the older folks, he very calm and quiet when he's there."

Murphy has skills that some of us wish we had. He can read people, filters their moods and knows what to do to help.

"He has a really innate gift of picking people out of a crowd who are stressed out or upset and we will hone in on them," Erin said. "So, we laugh. The person he hones in on at the office is, 'All right, it's me. I admit it.' Sometimes with adults, whether you like it or not, he's going



Murphy is a comfort for the children that come to the Terrie Hess Child Advocacy Center.
(Submitted photo)

to pick out the person who's in distress of some kind and he'll pester them until they interact with him.

"The only thing I'm working on is if he doesn't always read is when people's nervous energy is when they are nervous around dogs (laughter). You can't help their nervous energy because you're the one making them nervous. That's why he doesn't walk freely when there are kids here. We will talk to the kids and their guardians and say, 'Do you want to meet Murphy? Is that something that would make your day better?' If kids are afraid of dogs, that's not going to make them feel relaxed. They won't even see Murphy."

Erin looks for the optimistic side of the job and points to the end result of a not-so-pleasant situation. The goal for those in traumatic situations is to emerge stronger in the end and excel in their lives.

"A lot of this is rewarding," Erin says. "When you're sitting with a child and they are telling you something that just breaks your heart to hear that they even know what it means, let along



Murphy waits patiently for a treat at Koco Java.
(Submitted photo)

that they experienced it, there is something really amazing about watching a child empower themselves to tell their story, reach out and get some help. But the great part about this facility is that's just the first step. Pretty much all our kids are going to go to therapy after, because that's how they make meaning of their experience. That's how we help them learn coping skills. Trauma exposure does change how our brain processes things, especially when we're young. So we're going to have to learn coping skills for some of the trauma that we've experienced to help us be successful.

"What do they want their life to look like? How can we support them toward getting there? So that's really amazing to see them eight months later coming back for therapy knocking on the door, saying, 'Can Murphy come out? Is Murphy home? Or can I have some orange soda?' Or they'll say, 'I made the soccer team' or 'I'm going to camp this summer.' It's really great. A lot of our kids come back and we still see them. Any child who walks through these doors, we're happy. You feel relief that they're here and they're getting help and they are surrounded by a support system."

Without a doubt, Murphy is a huge part of that support system. He is definitely the star player on their team. **S**



Murphy and Erin on certification day. (Submitted photo)

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CULTURE *exchange*

Inspired by British-American relations, Salisbury branch of the English-Speaking Union enjoys learning, socializing

WRITTEN BY ANDIE FOLEY | PHOTOS COURTESY ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

For 82 years, the Salisbury Branch of the English-Speaking Union has been entertaining locals with a vast array of unparalleled lectures. Topics range from the ties between NASCAR and moonshine to the surprising, naturalistic journey of famed pirate William Dampier.

And the whole thing started...with socks.

Well, socks and a fair (make that, heaping) collection of other wartime necessities. The Salisbury group was chartered in March of 1941 at the Mocksville home of Mrs. W.R. Craig. With 30 in attendance, the group voted "to take advantage of every opportunity to present an interesting speaker or artist, and to enter into as many activities as were possible or practicable," all in effort to fundraise for and support individuals serving in World War II.

Until this point, members had worked in tandem with Salisbury's Namesake Towns Committee, taking "active part" in knitting and gathering gently used clothing to pack and send to the British Destroyer Salisbury, which had been adopted by the committee. The donation of a sock-knitting machine gave the group more power to function on its own.

And so, by June, along with 23 pairs of socks, members also contributed pajamas, overcoats, shirts, sweaters, woolen trousers, undershirts, shorts and more.

Their August shipment, which included blessings from chipped beef all the way to tobacco, was capped with 29 more pairs of...

You guessed it. Socks.

FROM FOOT TO MOUTH

So, what on earth do socks have to do with English-speaking, and particularly, a unionized group of so-skilled individuals? To understand, one must first look across the seas to the founding of the first English-Speaking Union in the British Commonwealth.

The group was founded in 1918, the year that saw the end of World War I. Accordingly, its founder, Sir Evelyn Wrench, aimed to foster both international fellowship and, according to



Men gather at the celebration for the inauguration of Margaret Thatcher, held at 302 S. Ellis St. on Monday, May 28, 1979.

the organization's website, peace.

His focus, and that of his newly formed, gender inclusive, non-party, non-sectarian social club, was to promote understanding and "unity in purpose" between the United States and the British Commonwealth. Specifically, Wrench believed that people who shared a common language would discover they also shared similar values, provided they were able to know one another personally. This would be regardless of any otherwise perceived difference in nationality or background.

Two years later, the English-Speaking Union of the United States began operation, and in 1922, in Australia. The international organization spent the next several years focused on providing both education and opportunity for fellowship. Teachers were sent abroad on scholarship to learn. The Secondary School Exchange funded highschoolers a chance to experience the world across the pond in either direction.

But it was the declaration of a second war in 1939 that led to the organization's temporary re-cast toward relief efforts. Its headquarters at the London Dartmouth House converted to an air-raid shelter, and focus shifted to humanitarian

relief.

Which brings us to Salisbury's original crew of 43, working behind that donated knitting machine, pooling funds, and sending continued and ever-larger shipments overseas.

CONTINUED EVOLUTION

Today, the endeavors of the Salisbury English-Speaking Union look far different than its mid-century beginnings, but for its 165 members, the value of its efforts remains just as high.

"What is the English-Speaking Union? People even ask you that: 'what, do you have to speak English to join it, or what?'" said Mary Miller James, the membership chair and ESU participant since 2006. She pointed out the name isn't meant to be exclusionary, but rather, to harken back to the union's original focus. "They've always tried to promote this cross-cultural connection between Britain and America, but it's gone so far beyond that."

Just how far falls back on the group's ability to continue recasting itself as times and circumstances in the Salisbury area changed. Four and a half years after the Salisbury branch of the English-Speaking Union was chartered, the second

World War ended, and with it, altruistic efforts inevitably began to shift.

Education, rather than relief, was the immediate focus: the group hosted the English-Speaking Union's National Shakespearean Competition for students in Rowan-Salisbury high schools, supporting teachers as they led their students through the art of Shakespearean sonnet reading. The group also sponsored Excellence-in-English awards, volunteer English-in-Action tutoring, hosting of overseas scholars, speakers and students — the list went on.

And in a central, unifying throwback to both Wrench's mission of international fellowship and the founding members' promise to bring forth interesting speakers and artists at every opportunity, the new era of Salisbury's English-Speaking Union brought with it guest speakers, picnics, stage performers and more.

Events ranged from a one-man performance of Lord Byron performed by Ian Frost, an exploration of the life of Beatrix Potter through the lens of one Jacqueline Mock, and even a garden party held at 302 S. Ellis Street to celebrate the election of the United Kingdom's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, with over 100 people in attendance.

TODAY'S ESU

Today, after myriad changes in Salisbury and the world at large, current union president Gerry Wood sums up the organization like this: "It's a charity working to give people the speaking and listening skills and the cross-cultural understanding they need to thrive."

And given this, he said, its name has evolved into a bit of a misnomer.

"That gives off an impression that is something totally different than what it stands for," he said, then continued with a laugh. "It's really the wrong name for what it is, but it's not my position to challenge that."

Instead, Wood and other board members focus on meeting the mission through its latest iteration. Currently, the group of 62 couples and 41 singles meets monthly September through April, excluding December. These seven sessions, hosted at the Salisbury Country Club, consist of cocktails, dinner and then (are you listening,



Red, white and blue bunting and British and American flags decorated the outside of the Hayden Clement home Monday at the party held in honor of Margaret Thatcher, new British prime minister.

Mrs. Craig?): speakers, presenters, musical performances or dramas — all packaged, sealed and delivered in one 6:30 to 9 p.m. slot.

"I say to everyone, out of seven programs, you'll love three of them, you'll completely hate one or two of them, and the others will be sort of ho-hum," said Wood. "We have such a wide variety of presenters; we just can't predict the people who will love a given subject or who will hate a particular subject."

But Wood undersells the ESU experience, if the words of regular attendees are to be believed. Betty Mickle was a member along with her husband in the 1970s when the ESU welcomed just two speakers each year. These guests would be part of an international ESU Speakers' Bureau, and lecture on English history or English literature.

While Mickle said she and her husband stepped away for a bit when family took prior-



Mrs. Leo Wallace, president of the Salisbury Branch of the English-Speaking Union, with William B. White of Winston-Salem on May 28, 1979.

ity, they recently became reacquainted with the organization through the Salisbury Post.

“I think the value of this lecture series is that it brings a community together to hear the same information at the same time and provides a platform to share reflections and exchange ideas,” she said, highlighting her favorite lectures: “a particularly enlightening talk” by a UNC-Charlotte history professor Dr. Peter Thorsheim on Brexit, and an “outstanding, well-received musical program” that featured former Salisburian Matthew Brown, to name just a couple.

But for member Chris Bradshaw, this communal learning experience may be more focused on what’s going on at one’s table rather than on stage. “We end up sitting with somebody different about every time we go. And you get to know different people: they’re all ages there. Almost every time we go, I feel like I end up

talking with somebody that I thought I knew, that maybe I didn’t know as well as I thought. You never know what to expect.”

“I’ve enjoyed the camaraderie with the members and the fact that we’re just striving to make the world a better place,” said treasurer Veda Dry, “A lot of times, information is your power.”

Gerrie Blackwelder became involved with the organization through the National Shakespearean Competition as a local teacher, and she and her husband became official members three years ago. Like Mickle, Bradshaw, and Dry, she praises the caliber of those whom Wood and Wink and Christy Cline can secure.

“The level of speakers and their ability to share information that’s not necessarily published but has been well-researched and lived just makes your attention rapt,” she said. She noted how each presentation and performance is capped with a Q&A session, where audience members



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can ask broad or detailed questions: “The e is interaction after the attentive part that’s on a higher level than we have in normal conversation.”

Dr. Bethany Sinnott, who previously judged the local Shakespearean competition and has served as an ESU guest speaker herself, says while she wouldn’t go for this opportunity of interaction alone, there is great value to be placed on the opportunity for real, human interaction:

“I’m very worried about the direction of society these days when people are communicating so much on ... their phones and connecting with people at such a distance,” she said. “We’ve lost a lot of the humanity of people interacting with one another.”

Membership Chair James, agrees, but calls the ESU experience truly one-of-a-kind for this: it satisfies a journalistic need to be ever-learning something new, all while providing this pivotal opportunity for fellowship.

“The e’s just something magical in the camaraderie of sharing that experience with other interesting people,” she said. “The e’re all bright, interesting people or they wouldn’t be mem-



The first consignment of itamin Toys to arrive at the English-Speaking Union Headquarters in London from the English-Speaking Union of the U.S.A being received by Mrs. Neville Keith.

bers.... I would call it the best kept secret in Salisbury.”

Membership costs for single registrants to the Salisbury English-Speaking Union are \$60 for

singles, \$110 for couples. To register, reach out to President Gerry Wood at 531 Muirfield Way, Salisbury, NC, 28144, or go to <http://www.esu-us.org/salisbury/> for more information. **S**

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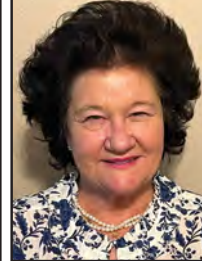


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Bob Harris operates his mini excavator, moving a pile of dirt with the big scoop. He said he spends a lot of time on the machine digging, but digging isn't all that exciting.



Margaret and Bob Harris on their back porch at their home on High Rock Lake.

Pursuing life with a
PASSION

Bob Harris has devoted years to serving others

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

Lanky Bob Harris is sitting on a tiny blue chair in the Overton Elementary hallway beside a chunky 7-year-old boy, holding a book. The boy is steadfastly shaking his head as Bob pleads with him to read just one page. Continued headshaking. Finally, in exasperation, Bob promises, in his recognizable drawl, “If you’ll read this page, I’ll stand on my head right there,” pointing to the center of the hallway. The boy giggles. He haltingly reads the page. Harris stands on his head, no mean feat for a man of 73.

He’s 81 today and continues to have a passion for literacy.

“I was 65 when I first walked into Overton, and my goal was to build 100 churches in 100 countries before I died. At the time, I had built 25 or 30 already. I had the resources, time, help and my wife’s support. I ultimately learned I just didn’t have the Almighty’s direction to do that. He sent me to Overton and that dream went away. There was a greater need, a higher call: literacy for at-risk kids.”

Harris’ church had adopted Overton as a mission and he faithfully signed up to tutor. As he walked in the first time, though, he wondered why he was there. He’d always assumed the reason so many kids couldn’t read, was a lack of intelligence. His work there showed him that they were just as smart as kids who could read — they just hadn’t had the same opportunities.

“I was dumbfounded that, being raised by a schoolteacher, I had been completely unaware. It was a real eye-opener when I realized they could turn around. It still bothers me to this day, that we’re not doing more.”

It bothered him so much that when his friend and fellow small-group member Jody Blackwell bought a dilapidated church to create a music venue/music school for at-risk kids, Harris offered to put a new roof on the building under one condition: the board must agree to expand their mission to include literacy. The board quickly agreed. Harris not only paid for the entire 3,000 square foot, 50-foot-high roof, but installed a major por-



**Bob Harris, up top,
helps build a school,
a church and Habitat
houses in Brazil.**

tion himself. When he turned 80 that year, he hired a contractor to finish the job.

EARLY YEARS

His childhood reads like a storybook. He grew up in Old Fort, a small city in western North Carolina. His dad ran a hardware store and his mom taught school. When Harris was 10, his dad bought the farm he'd grown up on and built a small house for his father beside the "big house." Harris and brother Fred had complete freedom to run and climb and build as they liked, with few rules.

"It was a blessing to live next door to my grandfather. I enjoyed listening to his stories. My dad talked about World War II and my grandfather talked about the Depression — two of my favorite memories."

He says growing up as a city/country boy benefited him and Fred as they could identify with both cultures. His dad had only completed the ninth grade, but his wisdom and logic were far above his education. He highly respected his dad and considered him a wise man.

He and wife Margaret met in their teens and married soon after graduating high school. He attended N.C. State University and she attended Meredith College. Although Harris had always dreamed of being an engineer, a scholarship in textiles changed his mind. He worked for Fieldcrest until a merger and was the first in the company to promote Black workers to positions of leadership.

The Harrises have four children and promised to put them through their colleges of choice. When he realized he made just enough to exclude his kids from financial aid but not enough to fund costlier schools, he bought rental property — 73 units — and maintained them after working long days at Fieldcrest.

"I got into rentals to fulfill that promise to my children," he says. "It was low-income rental, but not a government program — and I respected my tenants by listening to their needs and desires. I met their needs or explained what prevented what they wanted, and I gained their respect. I've always considered it my second col-



Bob Harris constructed this giant swing. At 82, he still enjoys the thrill of the swing as do kids when they visit.

lege education."

Brother Fred says growing up, he and Harris weren't very close; Bob was athletic and academic while Fred was a "cut-up." They are quite close today. What he does say about Harris is he spent an inordinate amount of time with his sons as they were growing up.

"He was a good daddy with the girls, but Margaret focused on them and he focused on

the boys. He took those boys to the woods, to the river, to the lake. He took an extraordinary amount of time to be with them. He was a big manager at a major textile plant and didn't have much time to spare, but he made sure he took the time to devote to them."

Son Michael concurs. "He was 'Pops' to us, and 'Uncle Bob' to our friends. Pops took my brother David and me on an adventure trip about once a month, from about the age of eight to 18. It was sometimes a canoe trip down a river, sometimes a hike, or maybe even a mission trip out of the country. It was his way of staying

in touch with us through our teenage years, and it gave us a love of the outdoors and a deep pool of memories we enjoy talking about when we get together. Like the time he made turtle soup in the shell of the turtle, and after we wouldn't take much, he drank it all down, only to not feel well for the next 24 hours and to swear it off for the rest of his life."

PIEDMONT FOOTINGS

After Fieldcrest, Harris was looking for his next step. His next-door neighbor was building 50 houses in Concord and asked him to build his footings for him. He did — and Harris' company, Piedmont Footings, was born.

"I will say I was fortunate to get a partner who was honest and hardworking. His children became our grandchildren. The greatest benefit was Fred Bryan becoming my friend, almost my kin. Anything I lost at Fieldcrest by not getting to retire there, I gained in health and the relationships I made through Piedmont Footings." He's still owner today, organizing jobs while others perform the labor.

Fred Bryan becomes a little emotional in talking about his partner and friend. "Bob and I worked together and were business partners for many years. I knew he was a hard worker and a good businessman. Little did I know what an influence he and Margaret would have on my family and me. Bob is the most giving person I know. He and Margaret work all year to ready the farm for the Dads' Weekend so kids can have an amazing, unplugged weekend that is simple and liberating to all.

"One time in our construction business, we had a good employee take money that was left in a truck. Bob asked me what I thought we should do. I thought if he stole from us once, he would do it again and we should fire him. Bob's wise and truly caring heart had a different plan. He said, 'This man has had some rough times and no one else will employ him and care for him and his family like we can. Let's keep and try to help him.'

"This was only one of the humbling lessons he taught me: look at the other person's situation and help them even at your own sacrifice



Bob Harris hikes the Appalachian Trail.

"I will say with Bob it's a package deal: all the good things Bob does, he couldn't do without Margaret. They are like yin and yang — stronger together. They're such role models for us all. We are not blood related but I consider them family.

"Bob is also caring enough to share with his

friends when they are going in the wrong direction. Your closest friends hold you accountable even if it is uncomfortable. Some people don't give him a chance because of his gruff exterior, but they're missing out. Bob and Margaret are role models for us all."

MISSIONS

Harris started going on mission trips while



Clockwise from left: Bob Harris built his “Teepee” on his land off Long Ferry Road for large gatherings like Christmas breakfast for his friends and guests. It is 50 feet tall and will hold 70 or more people. He built it thinking kids might like to camp in the Teepee, but they have not been to eager to try it; Bob Harris with his granddaughters posing in front of the school in Brazil that he helped build and it named for him; Bob Harris doing construction work on the Beacon Hall building in Salisbury.

“*Bob’s desire to be Christlike is immeasurable.
His need for recognition is zero.*”

— JOSEPH CATALDO



working at Fieldcrest and has participated in over 50 on every continent but Antarctica. He chuckles, saying he's lost exact count.

"I was in a church that sent construction workers to South America and it seemed like the funnest thing in the world!" Harris enjoyed it so much that he took his sons along on other trips when they were old enough.

Among his mission trips are many here in the U.S. He has helped rebuild churches and homes following storms in New Jersey, Florida, North and South Carolina and others. He helped rebuild in Pascagoula in nine separate trips after Katrina.

He's helped build 100 of the 150 homes the local Habitat for Humanity has erected; he's dug the footings for them all.

When he heard that his church has a challenge in getting people to serve

breakfast in their monthly time slot, he adopted that timeframe. He's funded and cooked the meal one Friday a month for over 20 years, finding substitutes to serve when he's away.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Harris aspires to be the oldest person to complete the Appalachian Trail and has hiked 1,200 of its 2,200 miles. He's scheduled to do another 100 this summer.

Hiking buddy Steve McNamara is a distant relative and a volunteer EMT. McNamara hadn't known Harris much until a family reunion where Harris mentioned he was hiking the Trail. McNamara expressed interest and, despite his looming goal, Harris offered to take McNamara on an



Above: Bob Harris' newest project is the construction of his own saw mill. Harris gets a log into position to cut.

Above right: The school in Brazil that Bob Harris helped build that is named for him.

Right: Bob Harris helped build a school, a church and Habitat houses in Brazil.



easy three-day loop he'd already completed. McNamara was hooked. Today he's Harris' regular hiking partner.

Among his many stories is one about scaling sheer rock in the White Mountains in New Hampshire, generally considered the most formidable terrain in the entire trail.

Harris took a brutal fall and plunged down the slippery stone. Initially he did not respond to McNamara's calls. McNamara had his medical bag and cleaned up Harris' many scrapes. The had to hike another three hours to the hut for overnight. Next morning Harris felt sick and encouraged McNamara to proceed without him. He refused and stayed with Harris. When Harris accepted a decongestant pill, McNamara knew it was bad; Harris never complains. Turns out, they both had COVID.

Joseph Cataldo has hiked a portion of the Trail with Harris and says everyone has a Trail name. Harris' is Camel. While other hikers refill wa-

ter bottles six or eight times a day, Harris drinks only one.

"It came to me while hiking the trail that the Overton experience proved something could be done for the literacy problem," Harris says. "I overcome boredom by thinking about Overton. I've put over 1,000 hours into figuring out what needs to be done and how to accomplish that. The trail is significant in growing spiritually in my life."

THE CAMP

In 2003, a friend suggested the idea of a men's weekend. Harris offered up the farm Margaret owns on top of Black Mountain. The weekend was a hit but when it was over, Bryan said the name would have to change to Dads' Weekend as he was bringing his daughter next time.

For the past 20 years, friends of Harris — and friends of friends — have been taking their kids or grandkids or in one case, great-grandkids to

the camp. No women are allowed, excepting Margaret, who always prepares a mammoth pot of chili for the first meal. The camp convenes twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, rain or shine. And there's been plenty of rain.

For an enchanted weekend, kids are free to run, roam, play in the creek, build dams, catch crawdads and sit by a roaring fire. Over the years, Harris has built many additions: a giant rope swing with a wood platform to jump from, a concrete pad with a roof for shelter while eating, a Rumford fireplace for much-needed heat. Dads bring tents and sleeping bags. Moms send plenty of extra socks. Each dad pays a nominal fee towards the cost of food. While one dad heads up the cooking, all dads take a turn at something. The largest crowd was 60 and Harris felt it was just too many; he's capped attendance at 50. Photographs show kids with uncombed hair, plenty of facial dirt and ear-to-ear smiles.

"The No. 1 thing it does," Harris says, "is cre-



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ate for a weekend, precisely how I was raised: the freedom to roam with very, very few rules. I grew up exactly like those kids get to see for two days. It's a highlight of my year. It's a joy to see the kids' faces. Not much has changed in 20 years."

Cataldo has also participated in Dads' Weekend. He recalls an evening around the campfire when a dad piped up and asked, "Why don't we fix four or five turkeys for Thanksgiving and give them to people who need them?" Cataldo countered with, "Why don't we do a hundred?" Harris asked Cataldo how much it would cost to provide 100 Thanksgiving dinners; Cataldo calculated a minute and gave a figure. Harris pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check, and said, "OK, do it." That year, Cataldo gave 100 vouchers to school principals to pass on to kids who may need a Thanksgiving meal. He set up smokers at his church the week of Thanksgiving, and 100 families came through for full Thanksgiving meals to take home.

He summarizes in this way: "Bob's desire to be Christlike is immeasurable. His need for recognition is zero."

SAWMILL


Harris always dreamed of owning a sawmill. In 1970, Margaret found a farm in Virginia with a sawmill run by a Buick engine. Bob was thrilled! They owned it for seven or eight years, but they'd been transferred to Georgia and never got to run it. In 2008 he had a sawmill on order but the recession caused him to cancel. His son owns a commercial sawmill and Harris has seen how one runs. He decided when he retired, he was going to get one.

Today he enjoys his new sawmill. The first wood he cut was a mantel for a friend's home. Now he's cutting logs into beams and accumulating an inventory. He promises he'll soon have a website advertising beams for sale. He laughs and says he's compensating for the log cabin he never finished when he was nine years old.

PURPOSE IN LIFE

How many seniors are this busy? "My life is peace, joy and excitement," Harris says. "The e's pretty good data that having a purpose in life makes for more joy and satisfaction and living longer. That's exciting to me because I automatically have two or three things to do every day that I'm excited about — to pursue with passion. The real problem is determining which ones to do. Then I must balance which of those conflict with one another. That's where literacy comes in.

"A sense of purpose is naturally important and statistics support it. I easily have more things to do than I'll ever get done.

"I'm 81 and I don't take any medicine. I can walk five miles in 75 minutes without any problem. I think the trail and my routine to stay ready for it, have contributed significantly to my health — as well as continuing to work. The right genes, a little faith, a little luck" 



A Habitat house in Brazil in that Bob Harris helped build.

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Earth Day Jam

The annual Earth Day Jam was a success again this year at Bell Tower Green in Salisbury. Happy Roots is a local non-profit that provides nature-based therapeutic and educational opportunities to enhance the wellness of the community.

— Submitted photos





From left: Guests Erica Robinson, Marcia Emerson, RCLC Board Member Macon Stewart and guest Alexis McIntyre



Ethan Chirico, RCLC Program Coordinator Samantha Jones and RCLC Board President Donald Doering



Most Creative Hat Contest winner Tracy McMillin, left, and Kim McAdams

Literacy Council Hat-i-tudes

Rowan Literacy Council held its annual Hat-i-tudes celebration of Derby Day.

— Submitted photos



Guests Jerry and Carla Neidigh



Pam Bloom wears a Kentucky Bluegrass hat, takes second prize in the Derby drawing.

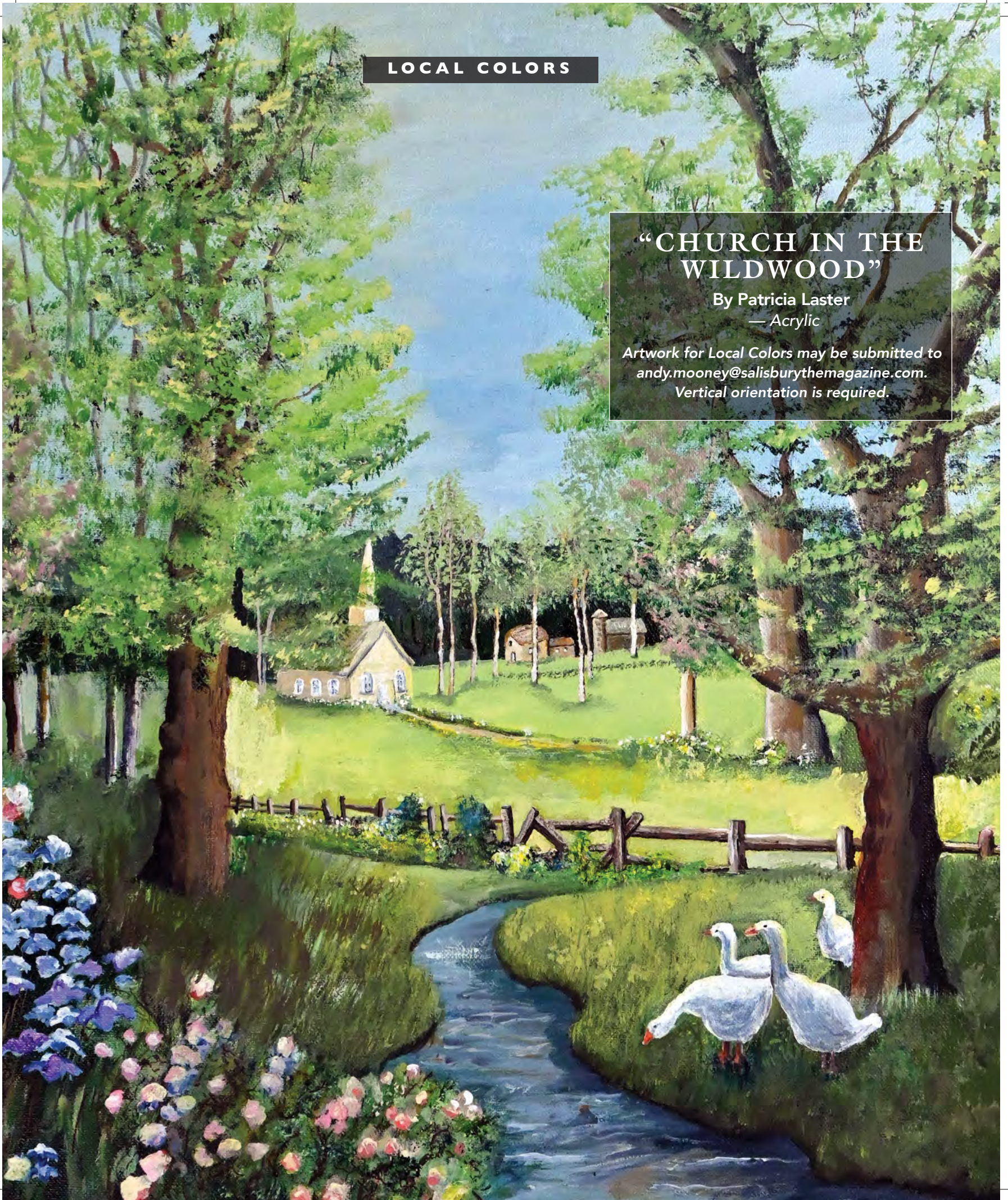


RCLC Board Member Davian Ellison, Most Stylish Hat Contest winner Mia Stockton, and Meeka Ellison

“CHURCH IN THE
WILDWOOD”

By Patricia Laster
— Acrylic

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Some people play nine holes. Some dig post holes.



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