

OCTOBER 2023

# SALISBURY

the magazine

*the house that*  
**DISAPPEARED**

*Martin brings back home  
that was on the brink of demolition*

**Scroll,  
scan and  
swipe**

**ARTIST CLYDE  
JOINS THE  
DIGITAL AGE**

**Restaurant  
row**

**CHINA GROVE'S  
QUARTER-MILE  
QUINTET**



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*A variety of eateries are clustered in the heart of China Grove*

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### THE HOUSE THAT DISAPPEARED

*John Martin brings back Thomas treet home that was on the brink of demolition*



**On the cover:** John Martin stands in the stairwell of the 1922 McCanless-Busby-Thompson House. (Sean Meyers photo) **On this page:** Various sample of appetizers and sauces at Thai Tair Restaurant in China Grove. (Wayne Hinshaw photo)

# SALISBURY

the magazine

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# A TRADITION OF MOVING FORWARD



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Owner, Mabelle Frick, (middle) and her team at Lora Belle.



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# New seasons

October, glorious October. Th month of changing leaves, cooler temps (we hope!) and... OCTOBER TOUR!

Many locals will recall the home at 128 West Thomas in Salisbury, the home that disappeared under a blanket of foliage and had a hole in the roof the size of a Volkswagen. Volunteers from Historic Salisbury Foundation worked hard to pull down the greenery and the organization bought the home to save it from demolition.

What happened next is the story in this month's magazine. The day that he signed to buy the house, owner John Martin went to a meeting at City Hall where the Historic Preservation Committee was still discussing demolishing his new (old) home. Check out the story for astounding before and after photographs.



The 128 W. Thomas St. house before renovation. (Submitted photo)



And in honor of October Tour, our Rowan Original this month is Historic Salisbury Foundation's Executive Director, Kimberly Steig. Kimberly hosted us in her new West Square home just days after purchasing it — we were, in fact, her first guests! Learn about this warm, determined and witty woman. She has one of the most positive attitudes this writer has ever observed.

Our area boasts many talented artists and Jamie Gobble is surely among the best. Her watercolors have a transient value while being true to life. Susan Shinn Turner brings us the story of an exceptional artist who took a winding path to

appreciate her own gift.

Pete Prunkl brings us a review of five — count 'em, five! restaurants all located in China Grove's quaint downtown. From Thai to hot dogs, you can enjoy a variety of food all within a block of one another.

Surely everyone in the county knows Clyde. He's a talented artist, the original recycler, and quite a character. A well-known, self-proclaimed Luddite, Clyde has... a website? Thanks to the patient, months-long encouragement from David Cline, Clyde has joined the 21st century. Susan Shinn Turner brings us the story along with a sampling of Clyde's artwork.

Sydney Smith Hamrick brings us this month's Bookish, a review of "Dead Eleven," by Jimmy Juliano. It's the perfect horror tale for October's spooky times.

Unpack those sweaters. Pour yourself a cup of pumpkin spice tea. Cuddle up with an afghan and enjoy this October issue. Boo!

Maggie

— Maggie Blackwell  
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine



# A horror tale to satisfy '90s nostalgia

Spending the month of October getting seasonally settled is important to me. I am an unabashed lover of pumpkin spice, I get excited when the leaves begin changing colors, and I am always ready to pull my sweaters out of storage. Another thing I love to do in October is dive deep into a good horror novel, which is exactly what I got when I picked up Jimmy Juliano's "Dead Eleven."

This June 2023 release is Juliano's first novel, and he really knocked the story out of the park. When I initially read the synopsis for the book, I thought the premise sounded ambitious and fresh. This atmospheric horror tale combines a few different popular topics, such as cults, hauntings, and forces of evil trying to take over the world. While these tropes are nothing new to the horror genre, the way Juliano twists them all into each other makes this an extremely creepy (yet fun!) read for the Halloween season.

The story is told in shifting perspectives, but the main plot line focuses on Willow, a grieving mother whose son passed away in a terrible accident a couple of years prior to the beginning of the tale. In her grief, Willow is unable to continue teaching at the local high school or living anything resembling a normal life. Instead, she focuses on tasks she can check off her to-do list to keep herself distracted. Her favorite task happens to be keeping her deceased son's bedroom exactly as he left it, right down to the rumpled bedspread and crooked posters hanging on the walls. She cleans everything in the bedroom meticulously so it looks like time never passes.

One day in her cleaning regimen, she discov-

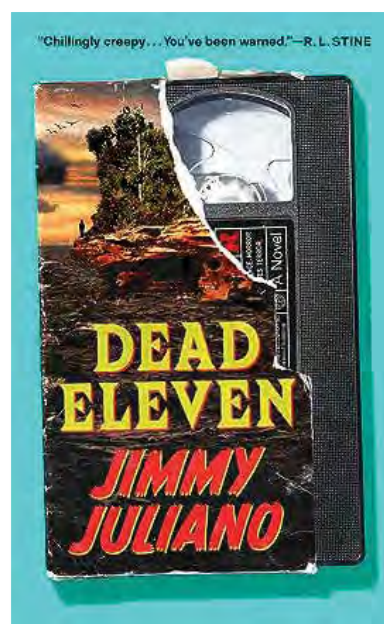
ers something written on her son's bedroom floor, peeking out from underneath the edge of a toy chest: Clifford Island. Willow is shocked—she'd never noticed the writing before and has no clue where Clifford Island is or why her son would have written it there, much less even known about it. She clings to the name like a life raft, believing that it surely must have something to do with her son's tragic and seemingly random demise.

After doing a deep research dive, she discovers that Clifford Island is a bigger mystery than she could have imagined. The tiny island is surrounded by other popular

tourist destination areas in northeast Wisconsin; there is very little information, however, to offer about Clifford. No ferries ever visit it and its name appears to have been scrubbed from every online newspaper, brochure, or tourism guide for the area. Desperate for any possible answers about her son's unexpected death, Willow decides to visit the island so she can figure out exactly why her son would have cared about it enough to scrawl its name on the floor.

On the island, Willow begins to assimilate into the island's community as she searches for answers, but

she notices many oddities about the people of Clifford. The people frequenting the town's bar always seem to be watching the same footage



from the OJ Simpson car chase, and everyone's fashion sense seems to be at least a quarter of a century out of date. Modern technology, like smartphones and television streaming services, are strictly forbidden. Everyone is determined to keep Clifford Island locked into the year 1994, and the extremes they go to do this puzzle and frighten Willow.

During her stay on the island, Willow makes some major discoveries about Clifford Island and the people there. When

the locals realize Willow is learning a little too much information about their community, she mysteriously vanishes. This causes her brother, Harper, to come searching for her—and the information he uncovers about the island, its citizens, and his sister is both shocking and heartbreaking.

As far as horror tales go, I thought "Dead Eleven" was a wonderful example of reimagining common tropes in a new and exciting way. Every time I thought I had one of this story's many mysteries figured out, I was pleasantly surprised by a twist that took the conclusion in an unexpected direction. If you're into books with palpable atmospheric storytelling, grotesque humor interlaced with horror, and tons of '90s cultural references, grab a copy of this book. I can't wait to see what Juliano releases next. **S**

*Sydney Smith Hamrick is the supervisor of the Rowan Public Library East Branch.*



by  
**SYDNEY  
 SMITH  
 HAMRICK**

**THROUGH THE LENS** by Andy Mooney

Two meteors are captured during the recent Perseid meteor shower in August.

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

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ROWAN ORIGINAL

# Can-do spirit

*Historic Salisbury Foundation Executive Director Kimberly Steig*

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE BLACKWELL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS

**H**er Facebook profile reads, “I Can. And I Will. Watch Me.” She left her corporate job in the midst of the pandemic to open a vintage art shop — and it showed a profit from the first month. She’s a sunny-side-up kind of gal. Kimberly Steig.

Steig has been executive director of Historic Salisbury Foundation for a year and a half and says it’s been nothing short of amazing. She finds the people welcoming, sweet and, while sometimes opinionated, that offers lots of perspectives. “Everyone is passionate,” she says, “and that’s fun.”

**Q. Why Historic Salisbury?**

As a little girl, I wanted to work in advertising, like Darrin on “Bewitched.” It was creative. I would watch commercials on TV and rewrite them, thinking, “I can do better than that.” And, although I majored in marketing, most of my work has been in the nonprofit sector.

**Tell us about your roots.**

I was born in Mustang, Oklahoma, where you can see for miles. It’s so flat there, you can fully appreciate every sunrise and sunset. I’ve also lived in Alabama and Georgia, but when I returned to Oklahoma, I missed the South. People in Oklahoma think they’re friendly, but here — here it is extreme. So when I had the opportunity to move back to the South, I jumped at it.

**What is it like, working for HSF?**

Working for a nonprofit can be really exciting and wonderful if you have the right mindset. I find the power of having a board is exceptional and gives you something you could never have in the corporate world. You have expertise you couldn’t afford otherwise — attorneys, accountants and others. I’ve worked for many nonprofits and never had a board with such strength.

Ed Norvell is the current president, and he’s very important in the organization’s life. We are considering the sale of the depot. Norvell was there when we purchased it years ago, when we raised money to renovate and he was there during construction. He is a critical partner. He’s good at reminding us of all we have done to get to this point. When we look at the future of the station, we have numerous people interested and they all have different ideas of the best use of it. We are taking our time and considering all things to keep it historically accurate. And we have covenants in place to protect it, too. We also care deeply about its impact on the community. So

as we look at alternatives, we ask, How will it benefit the community? the sale will but money in our revolving so we can save more houses. We had never intended to keep it so long.

Ed Clement, the man who started it all. The first week of my employment here, I made a point to meet as many people I thought I would be working with. I ended my week with Mr. Clement. It was the icing on the cake! It made sense of all I had learned. He is so caring and loves to share about the history of our city, and why preservation is so important. I think of his words all the time. Occasionally, you’ll see him on the sidewalk. Wherever you might be, he will turn, see a building and tell you all the history of it! What a resource!

Preservation is important: some people think saving a house is just about the house. And it is important. It’s recycling at its best. But it’s also about the people who built that house and lived in that house. When HSF goes into a neighborhood — we have protective covenants for 125 properties — we are helping revitalize that community. And that matters to us.

If Ed Clement had not had the vision he did, we wouldn’t have the bell tower today. It’s symbolic of our town. Same as the depot. It was in terrible repair — weeds everywhere, inside and out. It’s all the work of our board, our volunteers. The work the organization over the last 50 years is something to be proud of.

I would be remiss if I did not give credit to the dedication of the HSF staff for all they do to help me guide our mission to preserve, protect and revitalize the historic fabric of Salisbury and Rowan County.

HSF is now 51. My job is to make sure we go another 50 years. That’s my part if we do it with knowledge and passion and remember to partner with other nonprofits

**Q. Tell us about your personal life.**

I found Scott, my husband, six years ago. It took him 10 weeks to ask me to marry him and I said, “What took you so long?”

The best thing is learning he was handy! Once I knew this, my love of historic homes merged with his skill. This is our 10th real estate transaction in six years. Of those ten, eight were historic. He had never lived in a historic home until we got together. We’ve restored a couple of historic homes. And now we’ve purchased a restored historic home in the West Square, the Heilig-Dyer House. Sidney Heilig built the house in 1900. He owned the land around here.


We like to go “treasure hunting” to find vintage treasures for our historic homes. Once we were headed to a Jeep trail in Colorado and I saw a yard sale. “Stop!” The Jeep was loaded with stuff for a week-long adventure, but when I found some things, he patiently unloaded the Jeep and repacked it with all our treasures. That stands out as the type person I married.

We cannot wait to hike the North Carolina mountains.

Scott and I believe and invest in Salisbury through volunteering, giving financially to other nonprofits and “living” local — shopping, dining, entertainment. We’ve been that small business owner relying on community support. It matters.

**Q. Who is your mentor?**

All things in my life have come down to trying to honor the memory of my grandmother. She was the kindest person I have ever known. She had her own construction company back in the day when women did not do construction. In all my entrepreneurial things, I’ve had her in mind. And I try to be kind.

My favorite quote: “I’ve learned people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” — Maya Angelou 



David Cline shows off his GoPro skills at Off Main Gallery. (Susan Shinn Turner photo)

# Scroll, scan and swipe

*After years of resistance, artist Clyde joins the digital age*

BY SUSAN SHINN TURNER



Clyde has made simple, hand-lettered paper signs for his website address and Instagram page. (Susan Shinn Turner photo)

**T**wenty years ago, David Cline was a college kid with aspirations of making it big in Hollywood.

He ended up as a peacekeeper in “The Hunger Games,” which was filmed in North Carolina.

It all came about through a Salisbury connection.

The set designer visited local artist Clyde to source antiques for the movie. Clyde introduced David to the set designer, and David later got a part in the film

“Clyde always brings the magic,” says David, now 40, and working at Bank of America in Charlotte.

David says the two “just clicked,” and became fast friends — and have been friends ever since.

Clyde is a prolific artist. He creates pen and ink watercolors of scenes around his home in Salisbury and of scenes around Rowan County. In the summer, he paints acrylics en plein air — huge canvases of flowers.

Sunflowers are a oft-visited subject. In late summer, sunflower paintings adorned the window of his gallery, Off Main Gallery, 114 E. Council St. in Downtown Salisbury. Clyde hosted a September garden party at his home on Bank Street — he now owns multiple properties on the block — once the “skeeters” backed off “Follow us on Instagram, you’ll find out when” Clyde says.

What!?

Because Clyde creates, David wanted to create something with him. He

“East Bank Street” wood panel by Clyde. (David Cline photo)





There's always new artwork to see outside Clyde's shop. (Susan Shinn Turner photo)



Clyde's new stamp. (Susan Shinn Turner photo)



David gets ready to take the GoPro in front of Clyde's store, Off Main Gallery. (Susan Shinn Turner photo)

wanted to bring Clyde into the 21 century, putting his artwork online.

If you know Clyde, you know that David faced a Herculean task.

Let Clyde tell it:

“Name three things Clyde doesn't do: Scroll, scan or swipe. No cellphone, no television, no Internet — until now. Thanks to David Cline, a friend of 20 years, I may be coming of age.

“David, a Bank of America employee and captain in the Army Reserves, has recently put clydeartwork.com onto the World Wide Web and marketplace, complete with three amazing videos and lots of shots of my artwork. We have both been truly surprised with





Clockwise from top left: Apple painting by Clyde; Clyde holds one of his paintings at his house; "Roof," pen and ink with watercolor; two corner cupboard painting by Clyde; a painting of Clyde's houses; a pen and ink of a barn. (David Cline photos)



*“It seems like a gateway to heaven to me. You can hear the birds, and it’s quiet. It touches me still. This video is an ode to him. An ode to the man.”*

— DAVID CLINE, ON FILMING VIDEO  
IN CLYDE’S GARDEN

the results.

“News comes fast every day or so on clyde.artwork on Instagram.”

Not only does Clyde have his own website — complete with three fascinating videos all about Clyde — he’s on Instagram!

Who would have thought?

Certainly not Clyde.

“No Internet!” he told David.

For years.

“He went kicking and screaming,” David admits. “You cannot cajole him. You cannot force him. You’ve got to find a secret passageway to get him to say yes.”

Finally, David got tired of asking.

“To heck with it!” I said. “In a couple of weeks, I had a domain name, and then I built a website. I said, ‘Clyde! Look! You have a website!’”

Then David shot a short video of Clyde and added music.

“That was the genesis of our first video, ‘Clyde Finds His Muse,’” David said. “Even after I created the website, I needed content, and Clyde still wasn’t playing ball.”

Then Stephanie and Bob Potter, owners of Salisbury Wine Shop, saw the video, and showered Clyde with compliments on the results.

“Then he was on board,” David says. “I didn’t have anything to put on the website. When word of mouth spread about the video, then BAM! I had a portfolio. Clyde said, ‘Here! Put this on there!’”

Although still in the Army Reserves, David left active duty with the Army in October 2022. He was in between jobs, which proved fortuitous to Clyde.

“I had nothing but free time,” David says, “so I launched the website, started shooting video, and launched Clyde’s Instagram page.”

For now, Clyde only has two simple, handwritten paper signs in his store window which read “clydeartwork.com” and “@clyde.artwork.” He says he needs to make some better signs.

Well, yeah.

For his part in the project, David has had a ball.

“It’s been a lot of fun,” he says. “I get a kick out of it. It gives me a reason to bug him every day.”

A graduate of Appalachian State University with a degree in political science, he completed his MBA from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2020. David’s girlfriend is Sara Killam, and he lives in Salisbury with his dog, Hank. He attends St. Luke’s Episcopal.



**It took years for Clyde to warm up to the idea of showcasing his art on the internet.**

David shot the three videos of Clyde using a GoPro camera. Just basic equipment, he says.

Clyde still doesn’t have anything to do with the technology.

“He’s got that GoPro,” he says. “I don’t hold it. I don’t touch it.”


“From concept to shooting to editing, it’s a solid week of work,” David notes. “It’s brutal. He’s jumping around and I’m following him. By the third video, he’s playing along, and that’s my favorite.”

Rarely, David says, does Clyde truly let down his guard. But he does in this video, called “Clyde’s Transcendence.”

“Where does your inspiration come from?” He asks Clyde at the beginning.

Clyde answers in one word, his voice barely above a whisper: “God.”

The camera disappears into one of Clyde’s paintings, then emerges into the garden behind his house.

“It seems like a gateway to heaven to me,” David says. “You can hear the birds, and it’s quiet. It touches me still. This video is an ode to him. An ode to the man.” 

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Sunflower, left, and barn art from a Cabarrus County watercolor workshop by Jamie Gobble.

# Coming full circle

*Artist Jamie Gobble fulfills lifelong dream*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SUSAN SHINN TURNER**

**W**hen other little girls were flitting to dance classes, Jamie Gobble was taking art lessons.

Jamie's mom Gail ferried her fourth grader and only child to visit Betty Bonner Carmichael, who lived on Maupin Avenue in Salisbury.

Years later, her teacher told her, "People just kept coming and bringing their children, so I just kept teaching."

Jamie, 57, took art classes through middle school, South Rowan High School, then design classes at N.C. State Uni-

versity.

"You didn't hear about many people who went on to be artists," Jamie says. "That's why I went into design."

She received a degree in environmental design from State's School of Design. But she soon discovered graphics jobs didn't pay all that much, so she became certified to teach graphics and multimedia. She eventually became a technology facilitator when son Evan and daughter Anna were in elementary school.

Jamie completed stints at all the southern Rowan elemen-



Jamie Gobble at her watercolor station in her studio.



Acrylic flower paintings by Jamie Gobble. She's trying to paint more loosely; she'll make her small pieces into notecards.

tary schools, eventually moving to South, from which she retired in 2019.

One day, Jamie always promised herself, she'd be an artist.

"It's so hard to believe that my 'one day' is here," she notes.

Jamie had started following artists on social media. One of her favorites, Roisin "Ro" O'Farrell, is based in Ireland. During March 2020, Ro offered a virtual art workshop at 30 percent off for St. Patrick's Day.

Jamie thought to herself: "I'm never gonna have this opportunity again. I have always wanted to be an artist."

"When the world shut down, I needed a course that was going to get me back in to art," she says.

She signed up.

During the height of COVID, Jamie was learning to paint with oils. Years before, she'd taken a watercolor class with local

artist Janet Isenhour. They go to church together at First Reformed in Landis.

"After that, I was all in with watercolor," Jamie notes.

She started dabbling in acrylics, too, and joined Carolina Artists in summer 2022.

"That upped my game" she admits.

She purchased new paints, new palettes and new brushes, and even though she felt a bit like a fish out of water since many of the artists had known each other for years, she jumped right in.

She took a one-day watercolor workshop in Raleigh with JJ Jiang and started listening to artists' podcasts during the 30-minute drive to see her mom, her cheerleader and biggest fan.

She also calls friends while she's in the car, and each month,



Jamie Gobble's tools of the trade.



Painting of husband Chip fishing



Notecards painted by Jamie. At left is a card for Jenni Ritchie's birthday and a close up of a dog for Lee Ann Freeze.

Jamie has dinner with a group of high school girlfriends.

One of them, Kandie Lambert, is a Realtor. Jamie painted a watercolor of Kandie's son and daughter-in-law's new home in Landis for a wedding shower gift.

"Kandie started commissioning me to do paintings for her real estate clients," Jamie says. "All of my friends have been so supportive of me. That was my foot in the doo."

Kandie and her husband, Terrell, own Red Dirt Properties and build homes for customers. Kandie is also a Realtor with ReMax Leading Edge. She and her husband moved from Kannapolis to China Grove in 2016 to be closer to her family.

"I had forgotten how talented Jamie was

in school," Kandie says, but is glad to put her friend's expertise to work for her own customers.

When painting artwork of houses, Jamie focuses on the fact that it's not just a house — it's a home.

She painted her childhood home for her mom, and Gail makes sure to point the watercolor out to every visitor.

Kathy Hardwick commissioned Jamie to paint watercolors of homes as Christmas gifts for her mother, two sisters, son and daughter.

"I wrapped them all the same, they were all the same size, and everyone opened them at the same time," Kathy says. "It was just the neatest gift. They loved them."

While Kathy did not order a painting of her own home, curiously enough, she found a pack-

age under her tree on Christmas Day. It was a painting from Jamie with a note, "You did so many homes for others, so I wanted to do yours for you."

"Was that not sweet?" Kathy says. Jamie had slipped the gift under the tree when the girlfriends' group was at Kathy's home for an ornament exchange.

"It's such a personal gift," she said, "and that's something you always have."

Jamie finally launched an Instagram page, @jamiegobble, on Dec. 30, 2021 — at practically the last minute of the year. Her website is [jamiegobble.weebly.com](http://jamiegobble.weebly.com). You can contact her through either platform.

"I don't like putting myself out there," she says. "I'm a back row girl."



Jamie Gobble in her studio, with stations for acrylic, watercolor and oil.

Case in point: She and Dawn Franks, her “partner in crime,” have been planning Vacation Bible School at First Reformed for the past 25 years.

“We develop our own theme and write the script,” Jamie says. “It’s like VBS on steroids.”

They created a whale for the story of Jonah; the River Jordan; the wall of Jericho; and the Red Sea — shout out to the Landis Fire Department for fire trucks and fire hoses that ran the water.

“God is good,” Jamie says, more than once during the conversation. “My sweet spot is design, planning and prep.”

Then she fades into the background.

At one point, VBS had 250 attendees. It lost momentum during COVID, but the June 2023 edition had 200 children, despite the stormy weather. It takes 100 volunteers to pull off the five-day event, which concludes with a pool party at the Town of Landis pool.

This year’s theme was “My Jesus — Stories of the Life of Jesus,” and it bears repeating that even during the tornado drill,



A recent commission for Lori Hough. (Submitted photo)





**Above:** Jamie's creativity extends to their new patio with this repurposed artwork.



**Right:** A beach landscape in oils.

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the kids were singing ‘Let Me Tell You About My Jesus’ at the top of their lungs.

“This year,” Jamie says, “we felt the call that our kids needed to have a personal relationship with Jesus. It was really awesome.”

When not in her home studio — she has separate stations set up for oils, acrylics, and watercolors — Jamie enjoys spending time with husband Chip. They have a place at the beach, and she is gaining the confidence to paint outside the e.

Chip is also a huge supporter of her art and wants to buy her an easel so she can do plein air painting.

But, she says, “Painting outside makes me nervous. People are drawn to you. They want to come up and see what ou’re doing.”

While she may not quite be ready for an outdoor easel, she does have a “go bag” and a “go chair.”

Jamie is still taking commissions for this Christmas — but not too many.

“I learned a couple of years ago not to overcommit at Christmas, because I don’t enjoy the holidays.”

Meantime, she’ll keep painting in her home studio, which she’s painted Sea Glass Blue. She typically paints three to four hours a day, but not every day. She’ll often sketch first, then sit with a finished piece for several days to make sure it doesn’t need further tweaking.

She’s a perfectionist. The sunfl wer she produced for Salisbury the Magazine, for example, she painted three times before she was satisfied **S**



Various oil paintings hang on Jamie’s walls.

*Freelance writer Susan Shimm Turner lives in Raleigh.*

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Jamie Gobble's mom's house. (Submitted photo)



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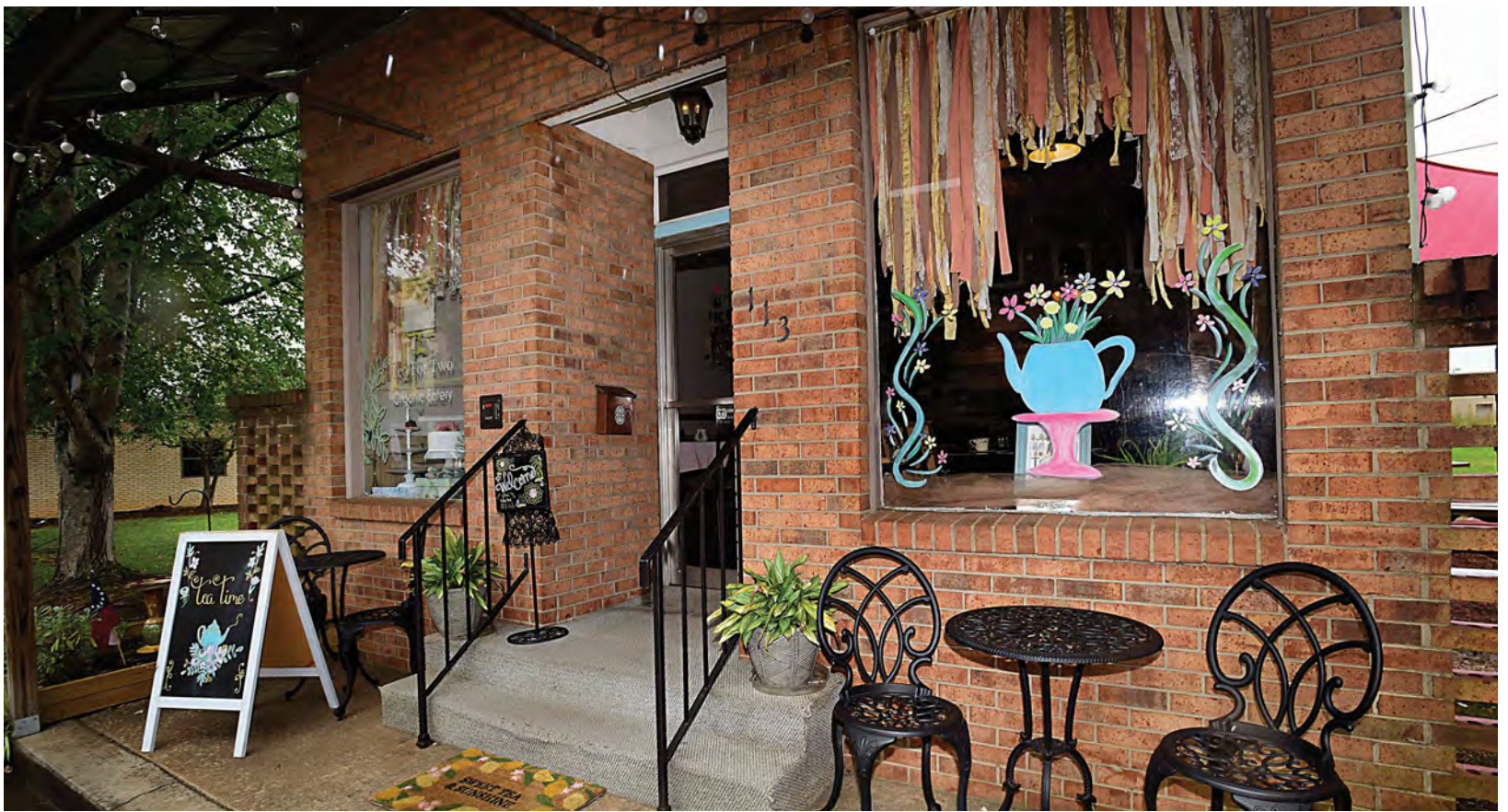
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*quarter-mile*  
**QUINTET**

A variety of eateries are clustered  
in the heart of China Grove

WRITTEN BY **PETE PRUNKL** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WAYNE HINSHAW**



Opposite: The Grove Cartel building and the Meadows Restaurant. Clockwise from top: Tea for Two; Steven Symeuangxay prepares an appetizer at Thai Tair; Brian's Grill; fried pickles at The China Grove Family House.



It takes five minutes to walk from the supersized China Grove Family Place to The Grove Cartel, the town's first craft brewery. In between, you'll pass Tea for Two, Brian's Grill and Thai Tair, China Grove's newest dining hotspot. That's five restaurants, all on the town's Main Street with no need to even turn a corner. Stand at Tea for Two and you can see one to your left and three on the right. It is a street scene to make your mouth water.

Each restaurant has a story, a specialty and a surprise.



Customers at Tea for Two enjoy tea and dessert.

## Tea for Two

Angela Vaught, owner at Tea for Two, developed her love of cooking at age nine when she earned her Girl Scout cooking badge for an apple spice loaf. Although she grew up surrounded by bakers and good cooks, she chose private duty nursing as her career. That choice hit a brick wall when hospitals began buying private practices and patient care became corporate. “I am more about the person, not the money,” she says. She opened Tea for Two in 2018 as a place of peace, where people can hang out and feel taken care of. “I like our sense of community,” she adds.

“Everything we do is non-GMO, organic and a cleaner, lighter fare,” says Angela. Her specialties are foods with what she calls “vintage flavors”: Southern tomato pie and New York style cheesecake. She has been surprised that customers think of her restaurant only as a bakery with tea parties. “We are a full-service bakery that serves light lunches such as chicken salad sandwiches, middle earth bowls and quiche.” Tea for Two is small. There are only five tables seating two, four, six, eight and 10. Angela also provides a catering service for larger numbers.



Oatmeal cream cookies that Angie Vaught made with her aunt's recipe.



Clockwise from left: Owner Angela Vaught; hot fudge sundae, strawberry cream and chocolate with cream cheese cupcakes; strawberry basil cheesecake; the building on Main Street in China Grove.



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Duvan Montoya removes a cooked pizza from the wood-fired oven at Meadows Restaurant.

## *Grove Cartel and Meadows Restaurant*

Jason Overcash also made a career change. A member of the Class of 2000, South Rowan High School, Jason was a narcotics officer for a time with Concord and China Grove Police Departments. Before opening Grove Cartel and Meadows Restaurant a year ago, he had direct experience with drug cartels. Isn't it an odd choice for a brewery and restaurant? "Cartels employ local people," says Overcash. "They keep their business inside their region. When I built this place, I knew I wanted to use nothing but local resources. Our vegetables come from Patterson Farms. The grain, yeast and hops for the brewery are all local. Our meat is from North Carolina." When he renovated the old 1928 China Grove farmhouse, "100 percent of the construction was from Rowan County businesses." There was another more creative reason: "It was a catchy name."

Specialties are wood-fired pizza and smash burgers, but customers rave about Meadows' steak and Brussels sprouts. Because of the emphasis on freshness and local suppliers Meadows is freezer-free. Refrigerators, yes. Freezers, no.



Owners of the Meadows Restaurant David Cavalier and Jason Overcash with a mural in the restaurant behind them.





Left: Duvan Montoya flips pizza dough into the air before cooking. Right: Two wood-fired oven pizzas ready to be served.

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Owners and husband and wife Steven Symeuangxay and Parima Bunthee prepare a meal at Thai Tair.

## Thai Tair

Thai Tair was opened in June 2023 by Steven Symeuangxay and wife Parima Bunthee for their daughter Nita. In August, when Nita returned from Boston, the restaurant became hers, with Parima as the chief cook and Steven working part-time on sauces and prep. After immigrating to the United States from Thailand in 1980, Steven operated Thai restaurants in Boston and Tilton, New Hampshire. Now he's ready to retire. "When I was younger, I liked the snow and cold," says Steven, age 66. "Now I like it here. The weather is nice. It is a quiet town."

Asked about Thai Tair's specialties, he circled five entrees on the menu: pad Thai, drunken noodle, Thai fried rice, kow gra pao and yellow curry. Is there anything about Thai Tair that would surprise customers? "Yes," says Sethaphob "Tyson" Deachakriwai, an employee and part-time cook from Thailand. "Tair means authentic in the Thai language. Everything we serve is the same as you would have in Thailand." For example, holy basil, a spice native to Asia, tastes and smells different from sweet basil, the dried herb found in grocery stores. "Our curry is Thai curry," says Steven. "We want our customers to open their minds to new flavors."



Coconut sticky rice with mango appetizer.



Left: Lunch box with miso soup. Right: Thai Tair Restaurant in China Grove.

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Chance Honeycutt prepares a hot dog at Brian's Grill.

## Brian's Grill

Brian's Grill resembles Salisbury's famous Hap's Grill – small space, limited menu, extremely popular – and the resemblance is no coincidence. Brian Culp, age 47, and Greg Culp, the original owner of Hap's, are brothers. Brian never worked for his brother, but he observed, learned and copied some of Hap's menu and vibe. When he was laid off from Freightliner in 2001, Brian vowed he would never again work for anyone else.

"We are a bit different from Hap's," says cook Jonathan Shuping. "Our chili is a little bit different, and we cook breakfast and have dine-in." The specialty of the house, says Shuping, is hand-patted burgers and house-made chili. "Everything is made in cast iron pots." A sign warns customers: "Danger: Men Cooking." It could also say: "and Men Eating." This is a place where guys in work clothes come for a grab-and-go sandwich with just enough grease to get their protein boost.





Above: The grill in China Grove is ready for customers.

Left: Brian's Grill in China Grove at lunch.




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The China Grove Family House Restaurant in China Grove.

# China Grove Family House

With 78 employees and a dining room the size of Catawba College's Crystal Lounge, the largest of the five restaurants is China Grove Family House. Owner John Kazakos, age 41, of Winston-Salem is the son of Andreous and Vasiliki Kazakos, restauranteurs and immigrants from Greece. His college was the Culinary Institute of America. John's family, education and work ethic have produced a man as enthusiastic about fresh, home-made food as Billy Graham was about saving souls. "I have always enjoyed cooking and feeding people," says John, who owns three other restaurants. When in China Grove, he spends most of his time in the Family House kitchen. "I was born and bred in this business."

The specialties of Family House are written on a large board above the cash register. From Monday's slow roasted pot roast to Sunday's chicken pot pie with flakey biscuit topping, every specialty is prepared from scratch in house with equal amounts of love, attention and fresh ingredients.

Thirteen years ago, Family House was a Captain's Galley, owned by John's uncle. Each of the four Kazakos children are in the restaurant business with one close to home. John's twin brother Alex owns Salisbury's Breakfasttime

**Cynthia Torres serves up a big smile and a dish of country style steak, mashed potatoes, and green beans with a cornbread muffin**





Waitress Michelle Arnette serves Rachel Lipe and Carissa Parks their lunch of chicken tenders, fries and fried pickles.



...

Here are a few characteristics that might help you decide which restaurant to try first. For those who prefer an alcoholic drink with lunch or dinner, the choice is straightforward: Grove Cartel now or Thai Tair, whose liquor license arrives sometime soon. Patrons at Grove Cartel can access the restaurant menu from the first floor tap room or upstairs at Meadows, but not the drink menu. Alcoholic drinks are ordered downstairs and walked upstairs.

If you forget to check hours and days of operation, you are on safe ground in finding China Grove Family House open. Family House is a seven-day-a-week operation from 11 am to 9 pm. Thai Tair is closed Monday; Tuesday through Sunday it opens at 11:30, closes for an hour at 3 and reopens from 4 until 9 pm. Meadows opens at 11 am and closes at 10 pm every day except Sunday. Brian's Grill is closed on Sundays and Mondays. Tea for Two is open late mornings and afternoons Tuesday, Thursday and Friday --and Saturday from 9 am until 3 pm.

For the budget-minded, the best choice is Brian's Grill where everything on the menu is under \$5. For \$15 you could take a date to lunch. At Family Place, 92 percent of the 77 menu items are under \$15. Fifty percent of the lunch items at Thai Tair are under \$15.

Taking the children along? You will find a kid's menu at China Grove Family Place and Meadows at Grove Cartel. At Tea for Two, children and adults alike enjoy the cupcakes.

Breakfast? Brian's is the place and on Saturday, try Tea for Two.

Whether eating solo or chowing down with family or friends, you've made a good choice in trying any of the restaurants on China Grove's Main Street quarter mile.

No Way Jose, China Grove's popular Mexican restaurant amid the others, declined to participate in this article. **S**

*Pete Prunkl lives in Salisbury and he has worked as a freelance writer for the past 30 years.*



A period copper ceiling fan spins in the sunroom of the 1922 McCanless-Busby-Thompson House.

# *the* HOUSE *that* DISAPPEARED

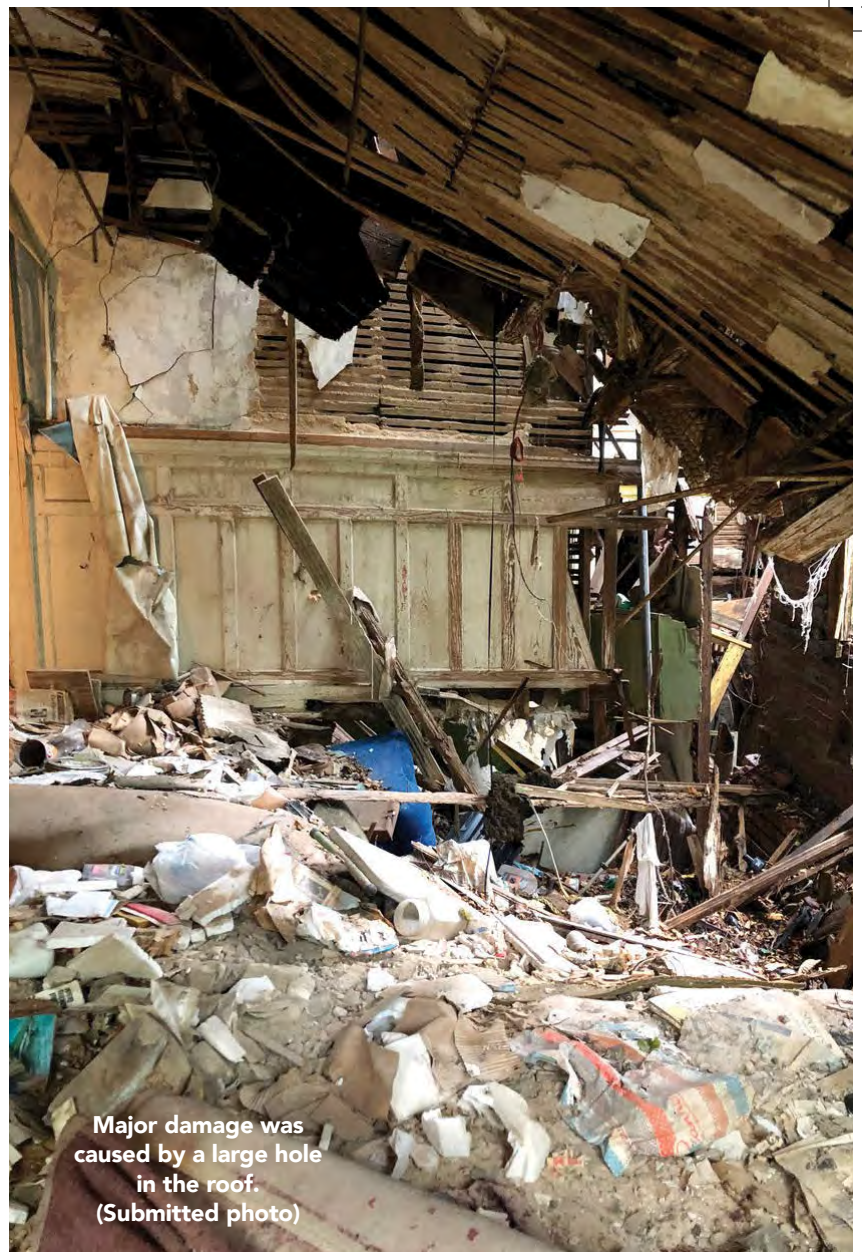
John Martin brings back Thomas Street home that was on the brink of demolition

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





The original stairwell survived many years of neglect.



Major damage was caused by a large hole in the roof. (Submitted photo)

**O**n Sept. 20, 2022, John Martin signed the contract to purchase the partially restored McCanless-Busby-Thomson House at 128 West Thoma Street, then drove to City Hall where the Historic Preservation Council was debating whether to demolish it. It had been shrouded in vines for years. A hole in the roof the size of a Volkswagen had caused weather to destroy the back wall and the floors of an several rooms. Much of the house was not safe for walking. Neighbors were weary of the disrepair and not optimistic for its future.

The home's long journey from construction in 1922 by Charles McCanless, son of Napoleon Bonaparte McCanless, had seemed to come to an end. The most recent owner and resident had been a collector of sorts, with items piled three feet or more deep in every room of the home. Only one exterior door would open — and it would only open ten inches due to the debris.

In 2016, Historic Salisbury Foundation was able to purchase the home from the owner with their revolving Preservation Fund. This fund purchases historic homes that are threatened with demolition, stabilizes them to some extent, and tries to sell them to individuals for restoration. Some homes have covenants protecting the façade to its original design.

And the façade of this one is excellent. The home's brickwork features many unusual patterns; a broad, open terrace fronts the home; a semi-circular drive goes through a porte-cochere leading to a side door. The hipped roof is topped with green ceramic tile.

Dylan and Taylor Ellerbee, successful home renovation artists and youthful optimists, purchased the home from the fund.

"They did the early, hard work," Martin says today. They hired engineers and properly supported the home — heavy, difficult labor. They rebuilt the roof. They cleared the massive debris — both from the home's deterioration and from the former owner — overwhelming, dirty work. They built a cased opening from



the kitchen to the dining room.

They knew Martin from Durham, where they had all lived. They invited Martin to come to October Tour in 2019 and showed him the house. He asked them at that time if they would sell but they were not ready to entertain the notion. Martin liked what he saw of Salisbury, so he returned with his sister in January 2020 and looked at several historic homes. “They all needed work, too,” he says. “Kitchens are not cheap, and I didn’t see anything that compared to the bones of this house.”

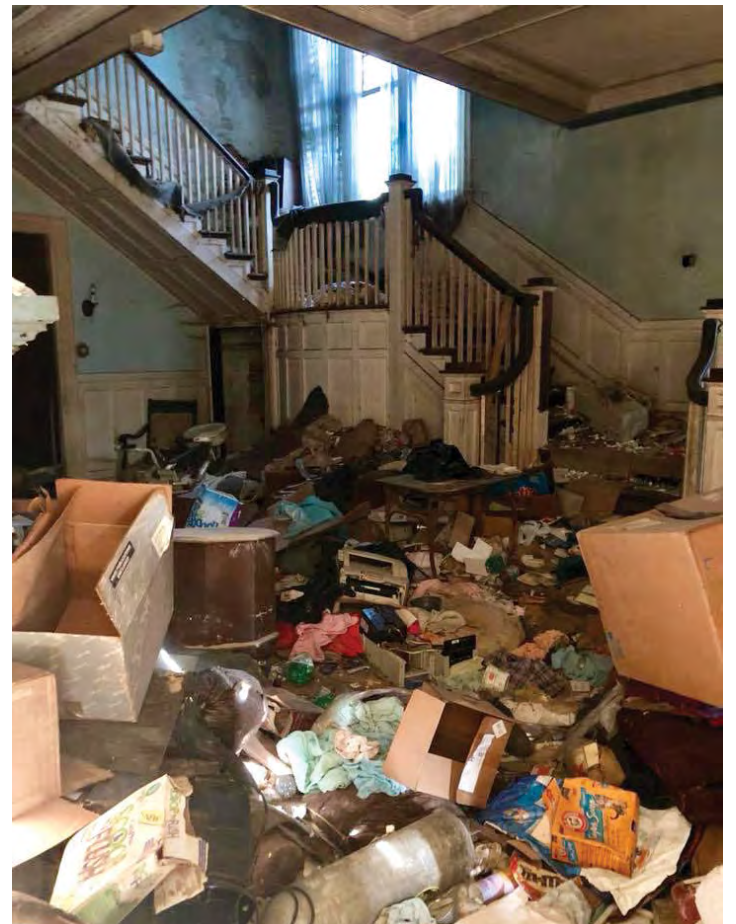
John Martin is a retired history professor at Durham Tech. He chuckles as he says he taught everything from Plato to NATO. He’s tall and lanky and characteristically captivated by his home’s 100-year journey.

The pandemic hit. Building materials pricing went through the roof. Martin stayed in touch with the Ellerbees and finally, they agreed to sell.

Under contract with Martin, once the house was stabilized, they continued to develop the remodel, rearranging bathrooms, adding glass showers and completing other work on



**Clockwise from above:** The 1922 McCanless-Busby-Thompson House will be on this year's OctoberTour; vines and vegetation were taking over the vacant home (submitted photo); the second floor guest room with no floor, dining room below. (submitted photo)



**Clockwise from top:** Eight-foot windows provide light to the original staircase; debris in the living room before renovation; the original main room fireplace was intact but needed repair.



The dining room.

the home.

When the Ellerbees had other projects to get to, Martin hired local contractor C.J. Peters. “He saw each challenge as an opportunity,” Martin says. “The triple-herringbone flooring in the living room was missing many pieces. Flooring contractors refused to deal with it, recommending that Martin have the entire floor removed and replaced with new. Peters, however, saw an opportunity to restore the floor to its former beauty. He borrowed some pieces from rooms whose floors were mostly gone and when he ran out of those pieces, he fashioned a few himself. The resulting living room floor is striking, and a strong feature of the home.

The house was transformed from a sad relic to an airy four bedroom, three bath, three 1/2 replacement home with all the amenities of a home built today, but with the beauty and details of the historic home she is.

“I’d have to say it’s the stairs for me,” John says, in selecting his favorite feature. The grand, sweeping stairway has eight-foot windows on the second landing, streaming the southeast sunshine into the stairs, living room and upper hallway. It has eight — count ‘em, eight — newels. The second landing gracefully curves out, overlooking the living room. The living room wall below is wainscot paneling. Yet the balusters are simple — in fact, the newels and stairs are simple: it’s the overall design, that luscious curve and the majestic windows that make it such a feast for the eyes.

The house features three 1/2 replacements; the 1st is in the living room. Initially, the Ellerbees had to deal with an abyss just past the 1/2 replacement. Many tiles in the hearth were cracked. Peters stole some tiles from less visible places and replaced the cracked ones.

Also on the 1st floor are a southeast-facing sunroom, a spacious dining room, kitchen, rear vestibule, full bath and den.

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**Above:** An upstairs bedroom soaks in the afternoon sun. **Left:** The living room before renovation. The floor ends right in front of the hearth (submitted photo). **Right:** A desk lamp as seen through the beveled glass study doors.

The Ellerbees made creative use of the former pantry, expanding a half-bath to include a glass shower, creating a tiny library and a utility closet for cleaning supplies.

Upstairs are four bedrooms — although one is used as an office — and two more full baths. The main bedroom and office share a jack-and-jill bath that Martin had completely reconfigured. It now has a glassed-in shower, not a commodity in 1922 but surely convenient. Another convenience is an upstairs laundry room in a former open room. Martin had a front wall and door added to the area so it's not the first thing one sees upon arriving at the top of the stairs.

Martin has searched extensively nationwide for details for the home. His finds include period





A newly remodeled bathroom with period pieces was added on the first floor .

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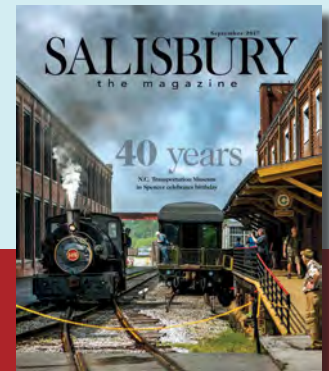
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The study at the 1922  
McCanless-Busby-  
Thompson House.



lighting fixtures, a gem of a copper ceiling fan for the sunroom, a “martini” pedestal sink in the downstairs bath. Lighting and plumbing fixtures range from brass to copper to bronze and most are authentically period, not reproductions. It’s easy to get caught up in these details and miss larger components of the home.

And these larger components are worth seeing: the broad entry steps, the arched entry door to an airlock room, the coffe ed ceiling, the rambling, connected layout, the built-in linen closet and more.

The McCanless-Busby-Thompson House is only one of ten sites for tour on this year’s October Tour, a fundraiser for Historic Salisbury Foundation in its 48th year. The event is on October 14-15 and includes the Bank Street Festival and Biketober. The Patrons’ Party, a separately ticketed event, is at the Salisbury Depot this year on October 13, 6:30-11:30. Party tickets include admission to the tour and access to the Patrons’ Porch both days for refreshments. Tickets can be purchased online at [OctoberTour.com](http://OctoberTour.com) or by calling the Historic Salisbury Foundation Office at 704-636-010 





Above: An intricate door lock and keyhole.

Below: The original stairwell survived many years of neglect.



Don't miss these details as you enjoy your tour:

- **Living room:** period Art Deco lights, triple-herringbone floor
- **Sunroom:** tiny copper ceiling fan and ten double-hung windows
- **Dining room:** Bronze lights, broad windows and curved-glass china cupboards
- **Downstairs bath:** graceful, curved oval pedestal sink and patterned hex tile; even more

period lights!

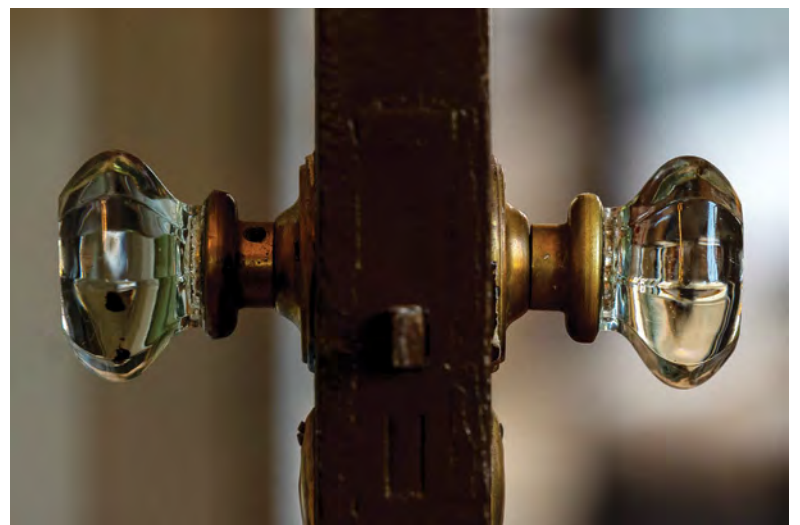
- **Kitchen:** Bronze pot filler above a gorgeous stove, more lights!
- **Den:** Second fireplace, door to porte-cochere
- All doors and hardware are original to the home
- Many windows retain original, wavy glass
- French doors with beveled glass throughout the home



The central room as seen from the stairwell.



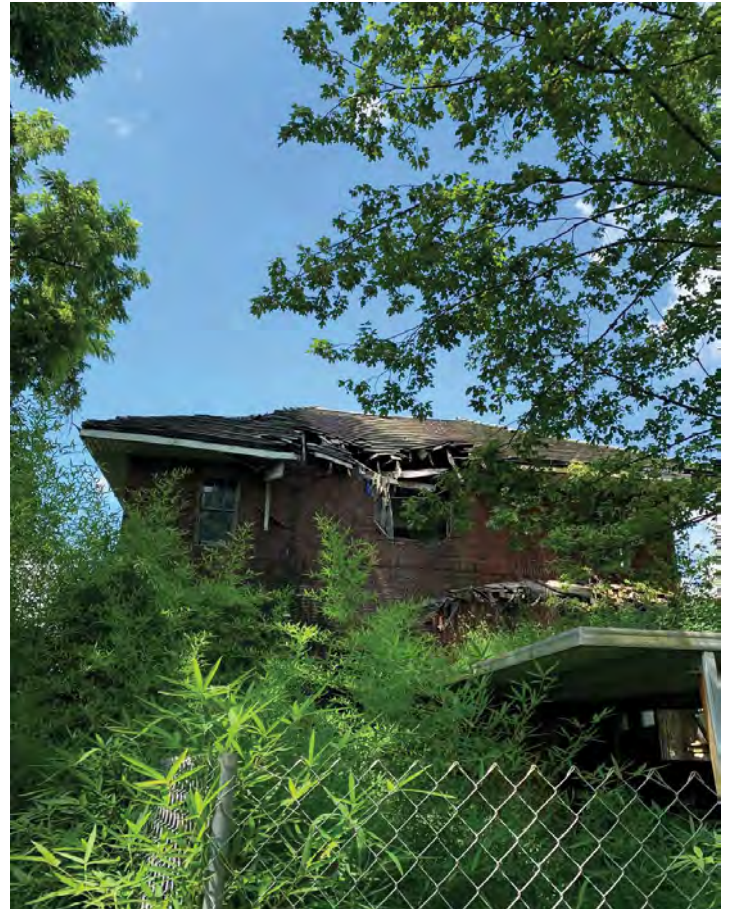
Looking through a hole in the back of the house into the breakfast room/kitchen/dining room. The floors have collapsed so all of that debris is in the basement. A large piece of dining room wainscoting is visible. In the back are the doors to the pantry, the hallway and the pocket doors from the dining room to the living room. (submitted photo)



Original glass door knobs remain intact.



**Clockwise from top:** An upstairs bedroom; the roof had a hole the size of a Volkswagen, which caused major damage inside the house. The former owner continued to live in the home despite the roof and collapsed floors (submitted photo); plants add color to the sunroom.





Employees from the city of Salisbury.



Catawba cheerleaders



Livingstone cheerleaders

# College Night Out

Students from all area colleges — Livingstone, Catawba, Hood Theological Seminary and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College— enjoyed games and music at Bell Tower Green for College Night Out. The event is sponsored annually by Salisbury Parks and Rec.

— Submitted photos



Salisbury Police Department tent



The HOPE tent provided information on substance abuse.



Pride tent



Livingstone band members



Fraternity members

# “TRICK OR TREAT”

By Susan Linn  
— Watercolor

Artwork for Local Colors may be submitted to  
[andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com](mailto:andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com).  
Vertical orientation is required.

Susan Linn

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