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*Celebrating six sensational years
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www.facebook.com/salisburythemagazine

To subscribe
call 704-797-4213 or online at
salisburythemagazine.com

Salisbury the Magazine
P.O. Box 4639
Salisbury, NC 28145-4639
Published 9 times / year

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PLANNING THE PERFECT PARADE

*Celebrating six sensational
years of 'Tis the
Season Spectaculars*



On the cover: Members of the Carson High School marching band make their way along South Main Street in during the "Tis the Season Spectacular" holiday parade. On this page: Festivities continued at the Bell Tower Green after the "Tis the Season Spectacular" holiday parade. (Sean Meyers photos)

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Tidings of Peace, Comfort & Joy

From all of us to all of you, go our
very best wishes for a bright and beautiful
Christmas season filled with love,
friendship, health and happiness.

Luke 2-10

*Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid,
for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy
which will be to all people."*



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'Tis the season

Welcome to our Holiday Issue! May your holidays bring you love, joy and peace. I hope you'll read this letter to the very end for an important update to one of our articles.

This Thanksgiving I am thankful for my tribe of friends and family, who rally 'round when I need them and likewise give a yell when they need help. We are an eclectic bunch and I wouldn't have it any other way.

This issue covers Christmas, as well, which conjures up memories of my family every year circled around a coconut cake with the baby Jesus from our manger scene plopped in the center. We all sang an off-key but heartfelt round of "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus" before returning Him to the little stable and enjoying the confection.

My sister and I had the task of polishing the silver for the holidays. Back in the '60s, silver polish was a thick pink paste that was really tough to squeeze from the tube, much like toothpaste but stinky and nearly solid. It was difficult to rub into the silver and even more difficult to clean off. As a result, all of Mother's holiday efforts tasted just a bit like silver polish. Thank goodness that technology has come a long way and I now enjoy polishing my silver on a monthly basis – with no aftertaste.

We start off with an article by Sydney Smith Hamrick, showing us behind the scenes at the 'Tis the Season Spectacular Christmas parade in Spencer and Salisbury. An enormous amount of work goes into organizing this event every year, and we are lucky to have just the people who can pull it off. You can learn more in the article.

THREE WIDE (no, I'm not yelling. The like their name in all caps...) is a local nonprofit that distributes brand new coats to those who need them, serves a turkey Christmas dinner and more. Founded by local bighearts Steve and



Donna Thomas, the nonprofit often enlists the support of several local churches and Kiwanians.

Susan Shinn Turner brings us the delightful creations of Karen Goodman, who uses vintage jewelry to create one-of-a-kind works of art. Her pieces have been shipped worldwide from her home studio in Landis.

Our Rowan Original is Mayor Mary Ponds of Granite Quarry. No, she's no longer Mayor of that town but she is "Mayor" in my heart and I always address her as such. She's on a first-name basis with her hometown, often just calling it, "Granite." Her exuberance for life, her energy and her willing spirit to lend a hand at any time qualified her for the post and now that she's retired, she's busier than ever with her daily life, including her church, sorority, organization boards and family. Her 11-year-old granddaughter recently texted her to come "home" to Atlanta and to spend a good long time.

Margaret Basinger brings us this issue's Bookish, a review of, "Hello Beautiful" by Ann Napolitano. At the heart of it are four sisters who brave through love and loss and manage to survive it all.

To recognize Thanksgiving, we visit with

104-year-old Wallas Hylton, who, despite his age, showed twinkling eyes and a ready smile. He regaled us with stories from 60, 70, 80 years ago and when directing daughter Pam Coffiel (owner of Stitchin' Post) to find a memento, told her to look in the green scrapbook on the last page – which is exactly where she found it. She also found his first pay stubs neatly catalogued in a plastic recipe card box. Mr. Hylton talked about integrity, about being a man of your word, keeping promises, and looking forward to meeting his dear wife Margaret in Heaven.

Mr. Hylton left this earth just as we were going to press, on a sunny, warm October day. The birds were singing and the sky was blue as his wish came true. Photographer Sean Meyers and I are thankful we had a couple of hours to meet this remarkable man and hear his stories.

Some people say writing is a gift, but what they don't understand is that every time we meet a person and have the privilege of hearing about their personal lives, their dreams and aspirations, it's a gift to us. We are just the instruments to share it with you. This is a wide, wide world with all sorts of people in it and I'm thankful for all those whom we get to meet in this work. I'm thinking of the privilege of meeting Mr. Hylton as I dedicate this issue to him.

Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Happy New Year. Happy, happy to one and all.

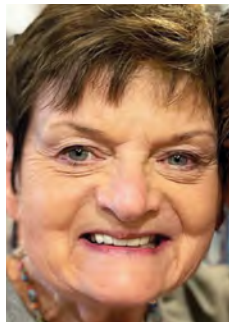
Maggie

— **Maggie Blackwell**
Editor, Salisbury the Magazine

Can love make a person whole?

If you are looking for the perfect holiday gift for the book lover on your list, “Hello Beautiful” is just the one. A book with likeable and strong male and female characters, it asks us the question, “Can love make a person whole?”

“Hello Beautiful” roughly follows the storyline of Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women.” The plot revolves around the lives of the four Padavano sisters, who like Alcott’s March sisters, share an unshakeable devotion to each other. In the book’s beginning, it seems that nothing could undermine this closeness.

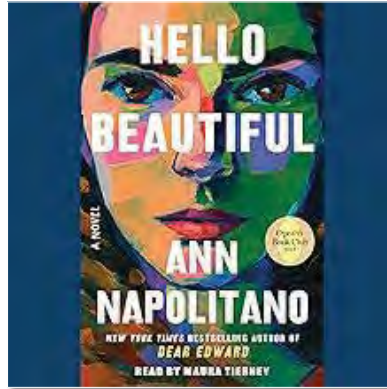


by
MARGARET
BASINGER

Julia is focused and ambitious; Sylvie is happiest with her nose in a book; Cecelia is a free-spirited artist and Emeline patiently takes care of all of them.

The family dynamics change when Julia meets William Waters on the Northwestern University campus. William is the star basketball player and Julia sees in him the potential to be a very successful man. But behind his façade of confidence, William is in a dark place. Unloved by parents who had lost a daughter shortly before he was born, William has grown up never experiencing love. As he grew up, the only joy he felt in life was playing basketball and he became very good at it.

As he and Julia build a relationship and William is warmly accepted into the Padavano clan, he experiences love and acceptance for the first time in his life.



It is when William and Julia marry that the characters’ lives begin to fall apart. Many things happen at the same time that send everyone on separate paths. The biggest rift is between Julia and Sylvie, whose lives had always been intertwined. The past, present and future of their relationship ties together the plot of “Hello Beautiful.” Will the tight bonds of loyalty that once defined this loving family be strong enough to bring them back together when it matters most?

Ann Napolitano received an MFA from New York University. She has taught fiction writing at Brooklyn College, NYU and the Gotham Writers Workshop. In “Hello Beautiful,” she brings her characters to life with compassion and understanding. The writing is beautiful and compelling with thought-provoking themes.

The beautifully developed characters in “Hello Beautiful” will stay with you long after you have finished reading it. I highly recommend it. **S**

Happy Holidays!

Melissa Yates
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Tim Truemper captured a squirrel getting a drink from a bird bath.

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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Mary Ponds shows a historic photo in White Rock AME Zion Church showing the congregation from years ago in front the former wooden church building.

Serving others

Former Granite Quarry Mayor Mary Ponds

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

Mary Ponds, former mayor of the town of Granite Quarry, met us on a sunny autumn day at the church where she has been a member all her life, White Rock AME Zion. Her trademark energy, positivity and zeal for life have not dimmed. “If you’re supposed to feel a certain way at 79,” she says, “I don’t know how that is.”

She grew up the second of four children in Granite Quarry, or Granite, as she likes to call it. Her mom and dad were both business owners; her dad owned a café, club and pool room

and her mom was a hairdresser. Mayor Ponds laughs, as she often does, as she shares her mom did hair for black and white customers alike, and for sane, insane, living and dead, as she worked part time at Noble Kelsey Funeral Home. Her dad also worked for the railroad. This was an industrious family. The children were expected to rise early and make their beds. She still does, she says.

Young Mary helped at the café, standing on milk crates to flip burgers or cook hot dogs. When not helping there, she served as babysitter at home.

She proudly shows us a large photo of her church’s congregation, with over 100 people standing outside a neat white clapboard church. She’s in the front row, a five- or six-year-old girl in a dress surrounded by other children. Today the church is a brick building with granite sills. She remembers the church’s decision to build the new building.

An early mentor was Mrs. Geneva Oglesby, for whom a nearby community center is named. “She was never mayor,” Ponds says, “but if she could’ve been back then, she would’ve.” She adds, “She groomed us, but we never knew we

were under her tutelage.”

Every Saturday she traveled to one of the AME churches on church business, with a carload of young girls along for the ride.

“We were always looking for where the gas hand was,” she says. “It was often on ‘E.’”

There were 17 AME churches in the area. “Sometimes she knew where we were going, and sometimes she did not.”

The girls learned how to set a table, how to be polite, how to serve and how to clean up. She had silverware and china.

Young Mary was best friends at school with Jean Kennedy, longtime educator and school board member. Their sixth-grade teacher told the two girls they would never amount to anything.

“Jean and I have both done what God wanted us to do,” she says humbly.

Education was important in the home. The children’s teachers always pushed them to go on to college, she says. All four siblings graduated college. Mayor Ponds went to Livingstone and spent most of her teaching years in the southern part of Rowan County.

Her sister became a teacher as well; one brother has passed away; the other brother has retired from IBM and designs outdoor kitchens. “He’s trying to retire from that, too,” she says, “but the customers keep calling.”

Teaching is a gift, she says. Every child is teachable and wants to learn. If it’s not your gift, it’s not going to transpire. If you know your kids and love them, you can teach them anything. They must know you’re not afraid: not afraid of them nor afraid to love them.

Former students often speak to her. She doesn’t always recognize them, but they surely recognize her.

“I try my best to tell people I love them,” she says. “I mean it. I try to touch them. You can feel a heartbeat when you touch people.”

Ponds has two children. Daughter Alicia has a doctorate in physical therapy and lives in Atlanta with her daughter Saige.

Son Alvis O’Bryan was normal as an infant, but contracted meningitis somewhere before six weeks old. The doctors told Mayor Ponds he would not live, and if he did, he would be deaf or blind. He lived to be 32 years old, under his family’s care. He grew to be an adult man but had the mind of a two or three-old. He was not



verbal, but his sister Alicia was able to communicate with him. Mayor Ponds lovingly calls him Sugarman.

“The joy he brought me and others, the lessons he taught us as a family, we will never forget: being grateful. Doing what the Lord tells you to do. I think about Sugarman often. I am grateful for a child of his magnitude who was part of my life. God doesn’t give us children we are not supposed to have. We love them like we love other children.”

Today she frequently travels to Atlanta to visit Alicia and Saige. She shared a message from Saige sent just the day prior: “Yaya, why aren’t you here yet? I need you to come home. I have not seen you since August.” When Ponds replied she’s coming soon, Saige responded, “You need to stay a month.”

Mayor Ponds had always said she would retire from teaching in the year 2000. In 1999, someone asked her if she had ever considered running for political office in Granite Quarry. No, she said. A couple of weeks later, someone else asked her — she said no. Then a third person asked and she wondered what was going on. Finally, someone visited her in her home and asked her to run for alderman. She felt her chances were slim as she did not work in town, but they promised their support.

She went downtown on her own and registered to run for office. She steeled herself not to be disappointed if she did not win; it was her first try. When she heard her name and heard the number of votes, she says she was in amazement. “Do you know what that means?” her

friends asked. “You could be the next mayor.” She served as mayor for 14 years and was on the board for 16.

She says her service years started a bit rocky, but once the citizens realized her goals and desires, everyone got along. She has been asked if she might run again.

“I had an awesome board,” she says. “We got quite a bit done. I wanted to get Granite on the map in the county. We were successful. The people allowed me to be their public figure and we got Granite on the map. It’s alive and well. I’m proud to be a citizen of Granite and proud to have served. Two years after I left, many ran me as a write-in and I lost by 17 votes.”

At one time she served on 16 boards of directors. She counts off the ones she can remember off the top of her head: Nazareth Children’s Home, Hospice, Health Department, Rowan Cabarrus Community College, Rescue Squad, Rowan Helping Ministries, Smart Start Rowan, Rowan Partners for Education, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Today she serves on boards for Rowan Regional Medical Center, State Employees’ Credit Union and Rowan Museum, and says that’s plenty. Her daddy always told her you are as good as your word, she says, and this is what she can commit to today.

Her mentors include, first, her parents and her teachers. In addition, she counts as mentors, Mrs. Oglesby, Rosebud Aggrey and Abna Lancaster, Raemi Evans’ mother.

“They taught us how to be women, how to be women of character, to be proud, how to have dignity, to be poised, how to speak correctly, how to sit, how to love yourself, how to dress, how to be professional. They were great role models.”

Her advice to young people of today: “Follow your goals. Have a goal that’s higher than you can reach. If your goal is higher, you will attain or surpass it. Set it high and then reach high. Reach so someone can stand on your shoulders. I sure stood on others’ shoulders, and I don’t want them to be disappointed.”

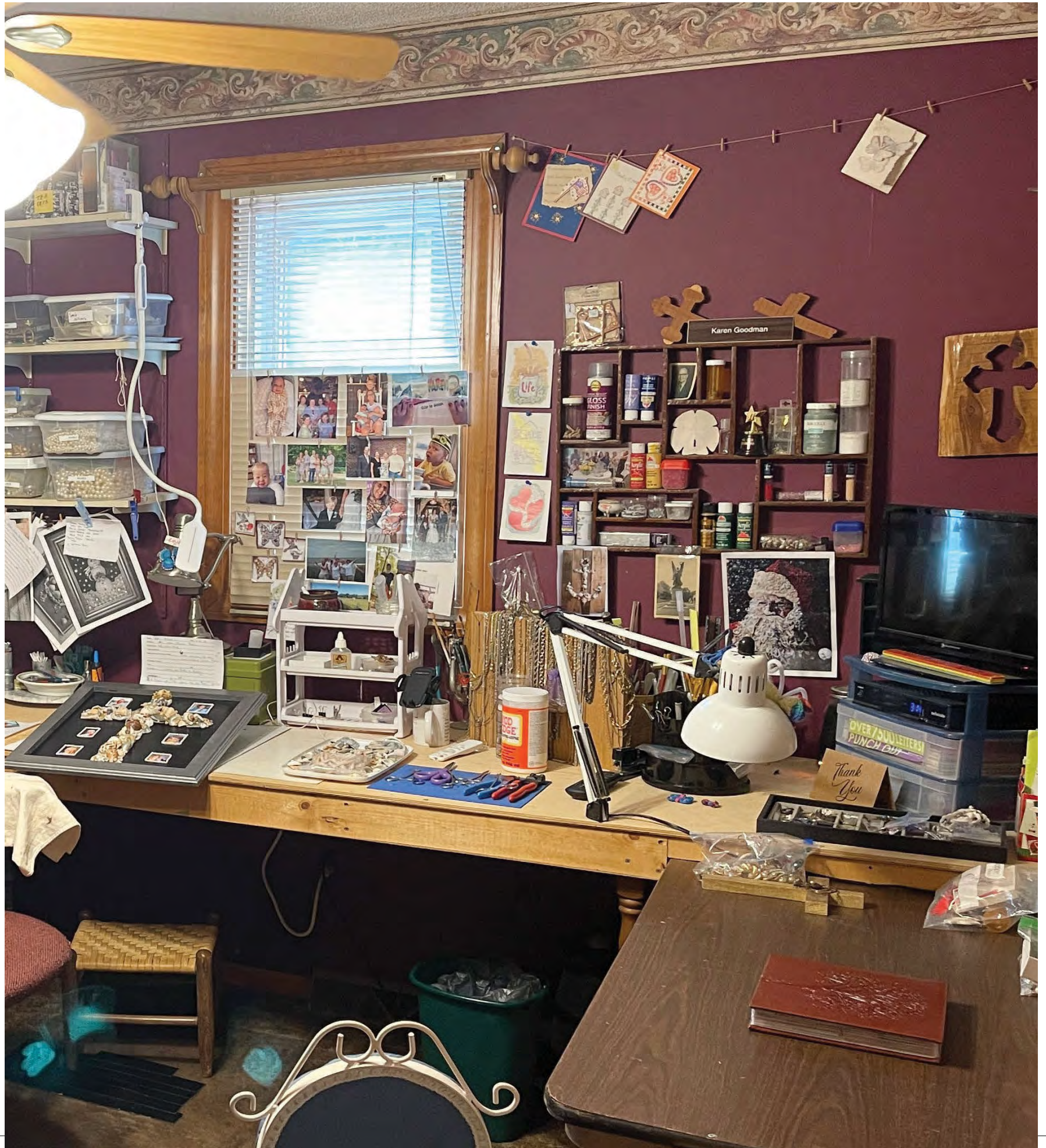
She stays up late and wakes up early. “I think you can get more done if you wake up early. When I wake up, the first thing that comes to mind is, ‘Well God, if you woke me up this early, you must have something for me to do.’”

“I want to stay busy as long as I can so when the time comes, I can’t do it, I know I have done a good day’s work.” **S**

THE ARTS



Karen Goodman in her home studio.





A tree of life featuring Mickey Mouse watches.

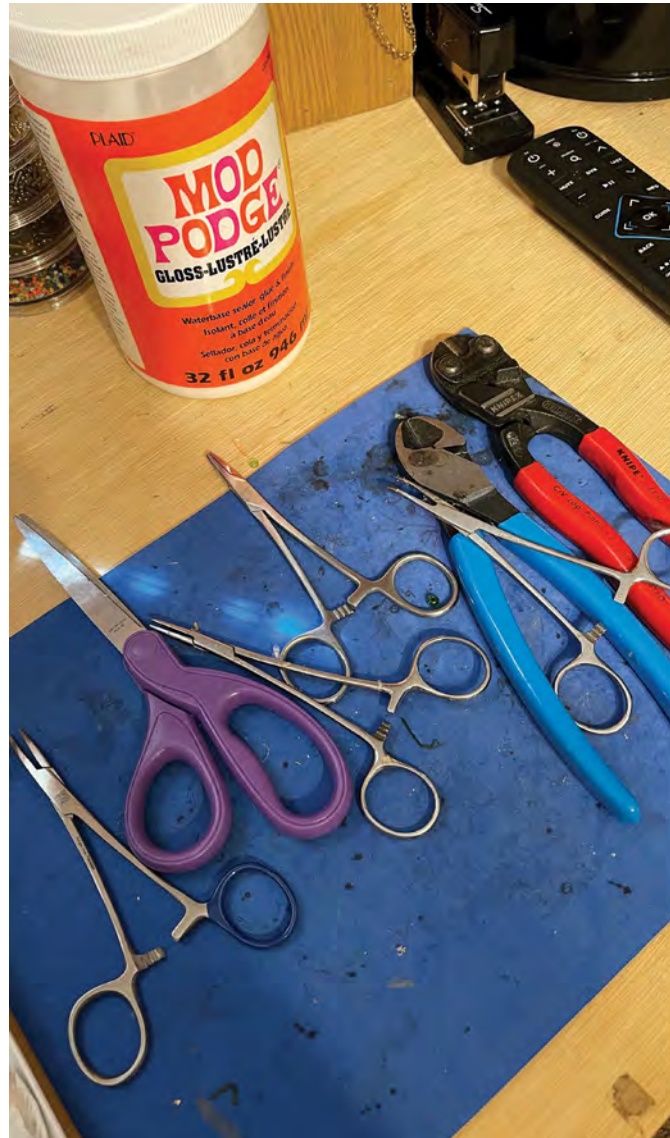
Putting it all together

Karen Goodman repurposes jewelry into art

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SUSAN SHINN TURNER**



A customer sent Karen this work apron.



Some of Karen's tools of the trade.

Karen Goodman has 130 watches — and not a single one works.

Instead, she's fashioned them all on a styrofoam tree, adorned with pearls, her Army medals (1977-1981) and even her Brownie and Girl Scout pins.

She calls it "The Time of My Life."

Karen is having the time of her life as owner of Karen's Kreations. She remakes costume jewelry, watches, seashells, and other upcycled items into beautiful artwork.

"My goal is to have one piece of artwork in every state," she says. She's well on her way since starting her business in 2004. She also has pieces in Germany, France, and Saudi Arabia.

Karen, who lives in Rockwell with her husband, Jay, fully retired in September, which gives her more time to create her creations — um, kreations. She and Jay are also babysitting their grandson Boston, born in April, who babbles happily in the den

with his granddaddy while Karen works in her home studio. Boston belongs to daughter Nikki Burton and her husband, Brad. Their son Matthew and his wife Kristin have two children, Nash, 8, and Millie, born March 16.

Karen started her hobby by making crosses out of old jewelry.

"It was something quick and easy," she notes.

She's now made over 400 crosses. Then she began repurposing jewelry from customers' loved ones to make framed art. Jay makes all her frames. The two will celebrate their 50th anniversary this year.

One recent project was a cross made from seashells, surrounded by photos of Pat Kiker's family. She's already made a Tree of Life plus four other styrofoam trees for Pat, who lives in Rockwell. Pat will share those trees with her family.

"She has done such a good job," Pat says. "I have to show the newest project to everybody who comes in the house. That means

so much for me to have that. Karen is very talented. She does her work with every intention of making it look the best she can.”

Jay agrees.

“She honestly has God place that jewelry where he thinks it ought to be,” he says. “And when she gets done it is a masterpiece.”

Over the years, Jay says, Karen’s pieces have become more and more detailed.

“She has absolutely become an artist at it. She’s made jewelry into something practical that can be passed down through the family.”

Shells are another material Karen uses frequently.

“I do a lot of pieces for beach homes,” Karen says.

She’s made two snowmen for dear friend Madeline Zieverink, as well as a Santa made of seashells. She used an old pair of Jay’s glasses to frame the jolly old elf’s face.

Madeline notes that Karen collected all the shells for the Santa piece from the girls’ beach trips. She’s also made a flamingo and a hummingbird, as well as crosses for Madeline and her sister out of their mother’s jewelry.

“I love them and I think she’s very talented,” Madeline says of her pieces. “She is always looking to expand her horizons. That’s her calling.”

Karen initially shopped at yard sales or consignment sales for her inventory. Now, she’s got plenty from customers because they let her keep whatever’s left from a project.

She typically completes about four projects a month. During the summer and fall, she’s busy with gifts for Christmas.

“Most of my customers are my age or older,” says Karen, 67.

She has a customer from Michigan who’s 82 and has no children. She made her a small tree.

“She just totally loved it,” Karen says, “and then she had this apron made up, which was so sweet. I cried when I opened it.”



**The Time of My Life tree
Karen made for herself.**



Karen made an owl for one customer, not knowing it was her favorite bird.



Above: Santa, made from shells, buttons and stones. Left: Karen searches through her inventory for just the right item for her next project.

Her black apron is embroidered with the words “Karen’s Kreations” with roses underneath, and well as a crystal, locket, cameo, key, lock, feather, and rose in white stitching.

She’s always coming up with new ideas.

“I look on Pinterest,” she says. “People are doing upcycled artwork left and right. It gives me good ideas.”

The e’s also a Facebook page called Upcycle and Repurpose, which has 40,000 members.

“It’s amazing,” she says. “I love looking at that page.”

For fall, she says, “I want to do a pumpkin out of bangle bracelets,” she says. “I don’t know how I’m gonna glue it, but I’ll figure it out.”

When she worked for a Realtor, she collected old keys. She plans to make a tree of life which she’ll dub a Key of Life.

She’s spotted a seahorse made of keys. It’s also on her list.


Since she doesn’t have to buy jewelry anymore, her biggest expense is glue.

“I use three different kinds of glue,” she explains. “I use Crystal Clear Gorilla Glue, Mod Podge, and a hot glue gun.”

Then she seals everything with an acrylic sealant.

“I don’t want anything to come off” she says.

She’s collecting service medals to put together a Freedom Tree to raffl for the Frontier Veterans Group that meets each Tuesday at Christiana Lutheran.

If you have medals you’d like to donate for Karen Goodman’s Freedom Tree project or you’d like to place an order with her please contact her through her Karen’s Kreations Facebook page. 



A new piece for a longtime client that includes members of her family.



Left: Karen and Jay with grandson Boston.

Right: Karen typically uses bracelets to create trunks for her trees of life.



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From left, Adrianna Rhodes, Mourgyn Bates and Jourdyn Bates are all smiles during a holiday meal at the Civic Center.

Kids are big

THREE-WIDE Foundation aims to help those in need

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**



Steve Thomas, white shirt, greets a visitor to Civic Center for a meal.

Two young sisters walked into the room filled with new coats. Each could pick one out for her very own. Not realizing Steve Thomas was in the room, the older sister turned to the younger and said, “This is the best Christmas EVER.”

Steve holds that moment dear as he continues with the seventh year of THREE WIDE, the local nonprofit begun by him and wife Donna.

In March of 2016, their church held a “Minute for Mission” when Keyna Grubb, executive director of Rowan Helping Ministries, gave statistics on local homelessness, food instability and poverty. They were floored.

“We were amazed in this rich community to have this level of poverty,” Donna says. “We are all just a minute away from addiction or homelessness or poverty. We have three sons and would hope someone would be there to help them — so that’s where it all started.”

“Yes, we just wanted to do something with our love for kids,” Steve adds.

The couple sketched out preliminary plans before pitching the idea to their three sons, Dallas, Austin and Taylor, all now in their 30s. Steve initially wanted to call the project, “Kids are





Above: Luke Fisher, left, and Alex Bost prepare the holiday meal at First Presbyterian Church.
Below: Diane Fisher helps Kathryn Martinez Alberto find some winter clothing.

Big,” but the boys booted that name down. The family came up with THREE WIDE. Steve likes the name capitalized to draw attention to the cause, and doggedly kept, “kids are big” as a tagline. With the help of their sons and daughters-in-law, they filled in the lines and identified the scope of what their project would do.

Donna, as a former teacher, knew that partnerships were vital to the group’s success. They reached out to Communities in Schools with the hope of partnering with them to identify children who need their services. Communities in School, a nationwide program, provides tutoring and services to the neediest children in local schools. They went to their pastor, who put them in touch with Meredith Honeycutt, who worked with the school lunch program — another key to identifying kids with needs. With these resources,





Steve Thomas sets a table during a free holiday meal at First Presbyterian Church.



Volunteer Anthony Lockhart serves the meal to Jadun and Brenda Yokum during the holiday event at First Presbyterian Church.





Cynthia Rice snaps a picture of attendees during a holiday meal.



Patrons wait for a holiday meal at during a Christmas celebration.

they had their foot in the door and started in 2016 serving kids from Overton and Isenberg Elementary schools. This year, their seventh, they'll serve nine schools, including Henderson, plus PowerCross kids and families from the Family Crisis Council.

It all started with a Christmas dinner with turkeys, mashed potatoes and green beans at First Presbyterian Church, replete with cloth tablecloths and napkins. THREE WIDE members and First Pres folk served kids and their families who were invited by the schools' Communities in Schools representatives. In subsequent years the group expanded to include members of First Methodist Church and St. John's Lutheran Church, "neighbors" of their home church, First Pres. Today they have volunteers who remind them on the way out, "Please remember to let me help again next year."

"Tha's the funny thing about giving," Donna says. "We get the joy out of it. Our volunteers are a testament to that."

Because of some hiccups in the first year, the Thomase hired an attorney to create for them a 50(c)(3) in their own right. With the appropriate credentials, they had a much smoother road.



Volunteers lend a hand distributing winter clothes to the needy.

The first year, they had toys wrapped under the tree and Santa himself gave them out. This had its own challenges with ages and genders, and the idea was borne to give out new winter coats.

It's been a hit. After the meal, the kids go into a room and select their own coats. Coats are divided by age and gender. There's a full-length mirror to model their selections. Donna recalls one little girl who put on a coat and pulled up the hood. On seeing the fur trim around her face, she squealed with pleasure. "I'll never forget that," Donna says. One mom told her that her daughter had worn the same hand-me-down coat for three years even though it was too small. The Thomases' sons and their wives turn the room into a retail environment and it truly feels like a store.

"It's been really good," Steve says, "because everybody needs a coat."

They coped with COVID by providing meals and preselected coats to guests as they drove through the parking lot "but it wasn't the same," Steve laments.

The family never know the identities of the kids or their families. The CIS reps provide a headcount, gender count and coat sizes. Each child is encouraged to bring family to the meal and as Steve says, "if they want to bring eight uncles and three moms, that's fine with us." Coats are provided just for the kids and they give away 150 to 200 coats a year.

Transportation can be a challenge, they agree. When families don't show up, the Community in Schools reps take their food and coats to them.

Donna does all the shopping for the coats, starting at the end-of-winter sales for the next year. They've rented storage space because the volume was filling up half of their home. They've had Easter celebrations for the last four years, giving ham, side dishes and Easter candy. They give the

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families canned ham because the families' cooking situations are not known — and canned hams are shelf stable. As far as they know, they're the only organization doing something special for kids during Spring Break.

Last year they offered a free Italian dinner early in December at Salisbury Civic Center. With the help of Il Colosseo, families had a hot meal served to them. The organization got the word out via Dennis Rivers, the Salisbury Homeless liaison, Kenny Hardin who works with veterans, and the local public housing authority. They had enough meals to feed 500 people. When Steve worried that more than 500 might come, the local Chick-fil-A gave him cards to give to any overflow.

"People want to feel worthy," Donna says, "so we suggested to bring a can for the local shelter. Some did bring something and some did not and that was fine. But a couple of men arrived for the meal, saw the sign, went home for a can and came back for their meals."

The meals wouldn't be possible without the generosity of Food Lion, the Thomases say. They give them a card to use at their local Food Lion and the manager, Shawn Valley, has been a champ to order what they need and store it in cold until the moment they need it.

THREE WIDE accepts tax-deductible donations and often applies for grants to keep the work going. "What money comes in, goes right back out," Steve says. "The more money we get, the more we give."

You can learn more about THREE WIDE at www.THREEWIDE.foundation. 



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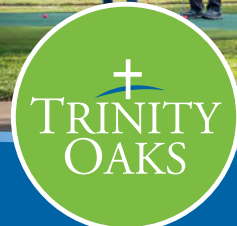


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Volunteers, from left, Jane Patterson, Charisse Peeler, Karen Carmichael and Trish Dunn prepare for the holiday meal at the Civic Center.

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Wallas Hylton

THANKFUL

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A life of honesty and gratitude
served Wallas Hylton well

WRITTEN BY **MAGGIE BLACKWELL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SEAN MEYERS**

104

-year-old Wallas Hylton cackles as he shares the story of his Goodyear manager calling him, irate. “We’re a tire store, Wallas! We don’t sell sewing machines!”

Wallas can hardly get the words out for his laughter. “But we sold \$15,000 of ‘em!” And, he adds, they were just about all sold, anyway. Before he was done, he had expanded to a full city block of stores.

He could sell anything, he says, because first he had to know the heart of the customer. He remembers one of his first customers who said, “I don’t know if I bought the tires or the personality.”

Neither the wheelchair to which he is bound, nor the tube of oxygen across his face, interferes with his telling tales from a razor-sharp mind.

He grew up in Floyd County, Virginia, where his dad had a general store with a pot-bellied stove in the middle. Men gathered to tell tales, whittle and spit. Little Wallas took it all in — and what lessons he did not learn from observing, his dad told him.

“I learned good, honest business from my dad,” he says, and proudly shows us his first paycheck, dated March 31, 1941. Two weeks of work garnered him \$44.55.

His granddaddy had scales to weigh the sheep farmers brought to market, and his home was the boarding house where the farmers stayed overnight for the livestock auction.



104-year-old Wallas Hylton with his daughter Pam and son Billy.

He says his father taught him three things: honesty, integrity and hospitality. His dad was so friendly that after church he'd say, "Come home with me and have lunch." He remembers the time they had 20 people show up and Wallas saw his mother in the back wringing a chicken's neck to prepare food for them.

Oh, he says, it was a happy childhood out in the country. He had a wagon and a pony who took him wherever he wanted to go.

This prompts his recall of the changes over his lifetime. From a cart and pony to men on the moon; from the pencil to the calculator to the computer. He learned the computer when he retired at 79, and put all his real estate, checking, savings, insurance and dividends into it.

He and daughter Pam Hylton Coffiel laugh together as they remember the computer class they took at the community college. "We failed!" she says, and he adds, "But they wanted

me to be the teacher!"

As a child he had a phone on the wall requiring him to turn the crank. It was a party line. "And today you can put a phone in your pocket!" He laughs.

Son Billy Hylton is 10 years older than Pam, and together they tenderly care for him throughout the storytelling.

"I met the Lord Jesus Christ when I was a youngster," Wallas says. I was in church one Sunday, I'll never forget, I was on the second row, and they passed the invitation. The women behind me pushed me, 'Go on Wallas, go on Wallas,' and then I did realize I needed a savior and I took Him into my life. He has been the answer to a lot of questions. I'm happy in the Lord, and I attend Bethany Bible Chapel on Stokes Ferry Road."

He recalls the day he walked out of the room when a manager cursed at him. One time the phone rang, the manager answered it and

said, "I don't know anything about that damn thing." Wallas took the phone. A lady's washing machine was broken and Wallas sent out a repairman that day.

He'd just finished college at Emory & Henry when he met his future wife. He'd decided to move to Roanoke, Virginia, where someone had recommended a boarding house run by Mrs. Watkins. He lived there and developed friendships with three girls and two boys. One of the girls was named Margaret. The group of six would walk together to get ice cream. After three years, he decided to move to Richmond.

He was downtown at a restaurant when the phone rang with a call for him. One of the girls told him that Margaret said she would take a ring from him. He laughs. "And I had planned to move the next day!" Well, the restaurant was across the street from Fink's Jewelers. He went in and asked for the finest ring \$500 would buy. He charged it, took off to find Margaret,

Question Box

For What Are You Thankful At Thanksgiving?

BOB NECHOLS, Catawba student — "I'm thankful that I have the time to think about answering such very important questions as this one."

DALE STONEY BRISSON, Salisbury — "I'm very thankful for life and good friends."

PAM HYLTON, Salisbury — "I'm thankful for my parents, for helping me get started in business and for giving me all the things that they have."

KIMBLE JOYNER, Livingstone College — "I'm thankful that I'm here and alive and in school, not out walking the streets."

JERRY EARLY, Salisbury — "I'm thankful for being alive and general things, but it's hard to get down to the nitty gritty and be particularly thankful for specific things."

GLEND A SHUPING, Salisbury — "I'm thankful for a happy and healthy life, friends that love me and people I can be happy with, and the blessings of life. I'm sure that life will go on, no matter what else happens."



BOB NECHOLS



DALE STONEY



PAM HYLTON



KIMBLE JOYNER



JERRY EARLY



GLEND A SHUPING

THE REV. C. A. PURYEAR — "My special blessings are being able to go where I have to when I have to, to live comfortably, and to be able to experience and enjoy life. Therefore, this Thanksgiving I

am especially thankful that I can live to see another Thanksgiving. **JIM KIRK** — "For five of my children, a loving wife and the sweetest mother in the world."

KIM HUGHES — "That would be to have my husband home. He is in the Mediterranean Sea. I would be more thankful if he could get home for Thanksgiving. **SANDRA TEAMER** — "What I

think I have to be thankful for is being in the world and having two great parents — Mr. and Mrs. John B. Teamer. They are wonderful as parents and to have such a great brother and sister as a

family." **ROBERT BURNS** — "What I am thankful for this Thanksgiving is that I am in as good shape as I am. I have enough to get by on, although I would like a few more things. But I'm

happy my children and their mother and families are O.K. I'd like to see this country get in better shape — other than what it is in now. I wish more people would pray to the Man upstairs, then we'd have a bet-

ter world. **PEGGY HOPKINS** — "I am most thankful for dying on the cross that I be saved and have eternal life. I'm thankful for the blessings of life. He has so much. I'm the better off when I'm helped. I'm thankful for our president. I feel like he has a good job, and for our man in the 8th District, Hefner. Bill has served a long time in Congress and was voted back in. I'm thankful for President Ford and his Christian life."

Text by Kathy H. Photos by Wayne

Next Week
What do you think about this country's balance

A Salisbury Post Thanksgiving article from 1976. When asked what she was thankful for, Pam replied: "I'm thankful for my parents, for helping me get started in business and for giving me all the things they have."

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and they married the next day.

“Oh, the best thing about Margaret, she just wanted to help everybody, including me, such a pleasant mother. She and Pam went everywhere together. She was just a buddy. She went with me to meetings, we went on boat trips, we went to England. One good thing about Margaret, someone would get sick and she would just take over. She didn’t ask anybody, she just did it. It was a good life. That was the happiest day of my life, the day I married Margaret. She was a great woman; wonderful.”

Margaret passed away in 2017.

Billy reflects on his father and says, “I can’t think of a better father than my dad. He’s been tremendous all through our life. He tells us he loves us all the time and all during our child-

hood. He played with us as children. Dad was always doing things with us and teaching us about life, having us in church, teaching us the truth of Jesus Christ and led us into that same direction. I have three children; dad was always on our side and helped us out in every way.”

Pam agrees. “I feel like the way his dad passed down all the business qualities, he passed on to us, led by example all his life. He instilled in us the meaning of money. At one point all my friends in school were getting an allowance, so I asked for one. Dad said, ‘Why do you need an allowance?’ and I told him, ‘I want to buy things.’ He said, ‘Well, I’ll buy them for you.’ He took me to Home Savings & Loan and deposited \$25. He taught me that investing makes your money grow. It all related to busi-

ness. You have to put back every penny the first few years. Billy and I really just all our whole lives been built around Dad’s philosophy, leading by example is the best thing you can do.”

She shows us a Salisbury Post Thanksgiving article from 1976. When asked what she was thankful for, she replied: “I’m thankful for my parents, for helping me get started in business and for giving me all the things they have.”

Wallas says his best advice is to keep honest. Build a reputation of honesty. People will trust and want to help you out.

“I’m thankful I’m saved and belong to the Lord Jesus. Tha’s forever,” he says. “Everything else is temporary.”

And, he adds, his plan for the future is to go “home to see Margaret.” **S**



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Hen Henderlite, left, and Shari Graham pause for a snapshot during the "Tis the Season Spectacular" holiday parade held in Spencer and Salisbury.





PLANNING *the* PERFECT PARADE

Celebrating six sensational years
of 'Tis the Season Spectaculars

WRITTEN BY SYDNEY SMITH HAMRICK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MEYERS



Spectators cheer and wave during the parade.

“T

he greatest compliment we get is when community members and supporters walk up and say ‘well done. This was great. It was even better than last year’,” said Shari Gra-

ham, one of the leaders of Salisbury’s annual ’Tis the Season Spectacular Celebration. Graham, along with her co-leader, Henrietta Henderlite, have long been underway with preparations for the 2023 holiday parade and community celebration and are excited to see their hard work come to fruition once again.

Besides the six years’ worth of parade planning experience already under their belts, Graham and Henderlite have an extensive history in party, event, and fundraiser planning. When the opportunity arose to assume leadership of Salisbury’s annual holiday parade, they approached it with interest and curiosity. In the sum-



Volunteer Tim Witkowski directs traffic during the holiday parade.



mer of 2018, after learning that Salisbury's former holiday parade was set to disband, many community members were upset at the prospect of seeing this long-standing winter tradition end. Salisbury's current Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield asked Graham and Henderlite to sit in on a community meeting to learn more about the opportunity to potentially spark a new holiday tradition.

The spirit to continue the parade was there, but strong organizing skills were needed to coordinate and pull everything together successfully. As various community members expressed how meaningful the holiday parade was to them and their families, Graham and Henderlite didn't speak. They listened. At the end of the meeting, they knew this was

a challenge they wanted to take on because it was an opportunity to create something special for the entire community.

The parade takes shape on Whitehead Avenue in Spencer prior to the start.

When the pair decided to take on the challenge in 2018, they realized there was a lot to learn about coordinating and organizing a parade. Graham and Henderlite called upon their extensive knowledge of event planning to determine the best course of action. "We were used to organizing big events in big venues...this was just going to be an event in a venue that also moves," recalled Henderlite. While many of the same safety and preparation standards applied to both large events and parades, Graham and Henderlite had to approach parade preparations with a fresh perspective.



Hen Henderlite, left, and Shari Graham set-up chairs along Salisbury Avenue in Spencer prior to the start of the parade.

Early in the process, they determined that many of the core aspects of the parade’s tradition would stay the same—for example, the parade would still be held in the afternoon on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and it would still run through Spencer and Salisbury. With these key elements to serve as a foundation for their plan, Graham and Henderlite began brainstorming ways to make the ’Tis the Season Spectacular a truly memorable experience for all.

In the previous five years of ’Tis the Season Spectaculars, Graham and Henderlite tried to incorporate new and unexpected ways to add even more excitement to the event. In 2020, the team pioneered a “reverse parade” in which local merchants, street performers, and community groups gathered along the sidewalks of Salisbury and Spencer to greet folks as they passed by in their cars. Coverage of this parade method spread through various news affiliates and other communities in cities near and far adopted it for their own socially distanced celebrations. In a year where many plans were paused for the sake of health and safety, it was wonderful to see this event continue in a way that still brought the same holiday spirit into the streets of Spencer and Salisbury.

Another big focus on ’Tis the Season Spectacular is an emphasis on entertainment. Henderlite expressed the importance of keeping the parade engaging rather than the traditional experience of merely watching the festivities pass

Lauren Miller,
Dillon Parker and
Nicky Black hang
signs prior to
the start of the
parade.





A large dinosaur from **Dakota and Friends Dinosaur Roadshow** makes its way along Main Street.



Buddy Poole gets things set up on South Main Street prior to calling the parade.



Teresa Ruffy, with TMR Realty gets ready to march during the event.



Festivities continued at the Bell Tower Green after the parade.

**Anthony Nero,
owner of Pinocchio's
Restaurant in Spencer,
watches the parade
go by.**



along from the sidelines. Patrons of 'Tis the Season Spectacular can expect to be entertained and engaged throughout the whole experience. In the past, marching bands, go-karts, antique fire trucks, a Chinese Dragon, and dance teams have marched along the parade route.

Inclusion and reflection of the whole Salisbury community are also huge considerations when designing the parade. The essence of Salisbury involves so many different cultures, religious practices, and celebrations; to ensure

that all of Salisbury is included and represented, Henderlite and Graham make an effort to connect with a variety of different local groups so they can be added into the parade lineup. Many of the community groups had never been asked to participate in the parade before. "We want to do our best to reflect all the different sides of the Salisbury community," said Henderlite. "We want all people to express the spirit of the season and what it means to them."

In 2021, Graham and Henderlite wondered

if anything special could be added to 'Tis the Season Spectacular to continue the fun once the parade ended. Because the parade runs in the early afternoon, patrons had a gap of time to fill between the parade ending and dinner time in the early evening. Brainstorming led Henderlite and Graham to the perfect solution—partnering with Salisbury Parks and Recreation to host a Spectacular Celebration in the recently-opened Bell Tower Green Park. Once the parade ended around 4:30 p.m., parade-goers ambled over

**Hen Henderlite,
center, and Shari
Graham, center right,
work with the parade
committee weeks
prior to the event.**





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to the Bell Tower Green to enjoy a variety of food trucks, musical performers and a visit from Santa Claus. That evening culminated with the lighting of the large, 25-foot-tall Fred Stanback tree right in the center of the park, which coincidentally became one of Graham's favorite memories from organizing these events over the previous five years. "Seeing thousands of people singing together and enjoying themselves is really great," said Graham.

It wouldn't be a true 'Tis the Season Spectacular without a surprise. While the usual public figures, school marching bands, dancing groups, and churches participate, Graham and Henderlite also seek to find other exciting ways to enhance the show. In 2022, the big surprise for parade-goers was the addition of a massive dinosaur and other giant helium balloons one would expect to see at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The balloons were so large that the star normally hanging in Salisbury Square had to be installed in its usual spot afterward to ensure that both the traditional decor and the balloons would be safe during the festivities.

The start of the parade in Spencer.

There is a huge amount of work to do to make the fun happen, though. When asked about aspects of planning 'Tis the Season Spectacular that might surprise some folks, Graham and Henderlite agreed that it would probably be how much behind-the-scenes legwork is required to successfully prepare for the big day. In addition to finding performers and musical acts, there are also safety plans to design, permits to acquire, questions to answer, and insurance to purchase.


A typical 'Tis the Season Spectacular requires around \$50,000 to operate, and to obtain this sort of funding, Graham and Henderlite call upon their fundraising skills to find supportive and dedicated sponsors. "During the first 'Tis the Season Spectacular, we had zero dollars available in our budget," recalls Henderlite as she reflects on how they had to start completely from scratch. They used the momentum of community support for continuing the parade tradition to find community donors who were willing to step up and offer their resources.

Many local businesses and merchants ex-

pressed a great interest in hosting the parade; this helped the women find excellent sponsors to support this annual tradition. "The community trusts us with its funding, and we want to be good stewards of those resources," explained Henderlite.

'Tis the Season Spectaculars aren't possible without the excellent support system working behind the scenes with Graham and Henderlite to bring the events to fruition. The pair credits Miller Davis Agency and Rowan County Tourism for bringing the parade "into the 21st century" by assisting greatly with online tools such as internet-based reserved seating sales, online applications for participation, and a website packed with all the information a participant or parade-goer needs to know about the event. All questions get answered in a timely fashion thanks to the parade's online presence via the website and social media channels. Concerning day-of logistics, the parade lineup is handled by volunteers and the Salisbury Civitan Club, ensuring that the transportation of the parade from Spencer to Salisbury happens smoothly. And of course, Graham and Henderlite extend a lot

of credit to the parade committee. The committee consists of 12 people, all with unique skill sets that help with planning and organization. For example, committee members take charge of training volunteers, securing sponsorships, and enacting the parade day logistics.

As the women near the 2023 'Tis the Season Spectacular and the Spectacular Celebration, they provide hints of some exciting fun to come, such as doubling the number of balloons and returning the giant inflatable dinosaur, as well as some new surprises in store. As the parade nears, Graham and Henderlite invite anyone who is interested in supporting the celebration, whether that be through funding, sponsorship, volunteering, or participating, to visit tistheseasonspectacular.com to learn more. 

Festivities continued after the parade at Bell Tower Green.

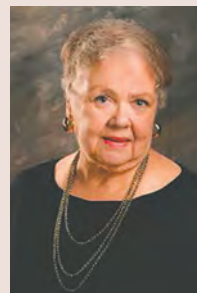


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Jan McCanless

is an award winning and bestselling local author. All 25 of her books are bestsellers. Her latest books, *Vittles and Bon Mots* (Humorous Cookbook), *Murder in the Swamp* (Murder Mystery), and 3 Childrens Books *Herbie and Butterbean*, *Being Me* and *This is My Mommy*, are available now!



Books are available at the Rowan Public Library, Amazon and in local stores. You can also find the books at her website, janmacbooks.com, and empoweryourpublishing.com.



Bonnie and Donnie Walsers, right, with Connie Peninger (Bonnie's twin) and her painting "Worship."



Wesley Stokes, left, and Marshall Stokes. Marshall won first place in the oil painting category.



Jessica Wrike and her painting "Oblivion."

Carolina Artists Expo

The Carolina Artists Guild held its annual Art Expo Show and Sale event at the Salisbury Civic Center in September.

— Photos by Maggie Blackwell



Andy Mooney won first place in the drawing category with "Reflections" pen and ink.

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Terry Wall, Kimberly Stieg and Keith Rhyne



Brian Delaney, Monique Owens, Jason Owens, Tom Kisor, Terri Myers, Craig Myers at the OctoberTour.



Mary Woods' group shares a toast.

OctoberTour

The 48th Annual OctoberTour showcased over 10 historic properties, telling the stories of the people and homes of the past. Historic Salisbury Foundation hosts OctoberTour each year in order to raise awareness of the history of our community and help fund their mission: to preserve, protect, and revitalize Salisbury and Rowan County.

— Photos by Studio 35



Bud Mickel, Alice Stanback, Betty Mickel and Fred Stanback.



Dawn Hobson, Cathy Griffin and Cheryl Gunte



Lori Burke, Kristen Colwell, Leah Champion, Susanna Barinowski and Steve Colwell



Marnie Stoker, Winnie Mikkelson, Melissa Bowden, Tamara Sheffield and Robin Roger



Henry Alexander, Diana Keith and Jason Keith



Diane Hooper, Ed Clement, Fan Moberg, Mona Wallace and Jim Moberg



Left: Barbara and Darryl Corriher entering Patrons' Porch (hosted by Leah and Shawn Campion.

Right: From left, Rivers Williams, Liza Fisher, Luke Fisher and Ben Fisher



“DISCO IN
THE SNOW”

By Chris Smith
— Acrylic on canvas

Disco is a horse who belongs to the
Sloop Farm on Patterson Road.

Artwork for Local Colors may be submitted to
andy.mooney@salisburythemagazine.com.
Vertical orientation is required.





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Photo courtesy of Deborah Young Studio