

2022 festival features familiar faces

The volunteers of the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival Planning Committee invite old friends and new to to attend this year's celebrations in downtown Whiteville.

Our committee has arranged to bring favorite entertainers, some new talent and fun activities for all ages. We've worked to expand on activities curtailed by COVID-19 or weather in recent years.

After two years' hiatus, and with the help of local homeowners, the committee is reviving the popular Pecan Festival Tour of Homes following the midday Queen's Luncheon on Friday, Nov. 4. Tickets to the luncheon and home tour are available now.

A familiar smiling face will be underneath the Pecan Festival Queen's crown again. After this year's queen selectee had to bow out due to a family medical concern, we asked Pamela Young-Jacobs, the 2021 queen, to remain in place for a second year. She is a great

ambassador, and we feel really good about having her in the role of queen again.

Those who attended the 2021 festival will remember that windy, rainy, cold weather cut the fun short for many visitors. We hope this year Queen Pamela can accept greetings from her friends and subjects all day under more pleasant conditions.

Grand Marshal Dwight Burleson will lead the festival parade this year, and he will be on hand at the Thursday evening reception. Although in his first year as marshal, Mr. Burleson is well known to generations in the area as he has maintained a direct connection between local children and Santa Claus for more than 50 years.

Thursday and Friday

The public is invited to meet the queen and parade marshal at the free Queen's Reception, to be held at the Columbus County Arts Council from 7–8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3.

On Friday, Master of Ceremonies Bill Thompson will

introduce Queen Pamela and her court of Pecan Belles at 11:30 a.m. before the Queen's Luncheon. These six selected young ladies from Central Middle School will attend the queen as she presides over the festivities. They are Ila Simpson, Montayza McCullough, Maddalyn Williamson, Caroline Palmer, Jubilee Baldwin and Dennisha Richardson. The presentation will take place inside Vineland Station.

Combination admission armbands to the Queen's Luncheon and Tour of Homes are \$25 and are available through Monday, Oct. 31. See descriptions of this year's tour homes elsewhere in this special section.

Saturday is the big day

After the 10 a.m. parade on Saturday, downtown Whiteville will be full of varied activities for all ages. Bill Thompson will introduce dignitaries on the central stage at 11:30 a.m., and entertainment will run from noon–4 p.m., featuring beach

nusic from the Pink Slips Band.

The Classic Cruisers will host a car show sponsored by Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge, with prizes for car owners and a 50/50 drawing for the public.

Brian King of Whiteville Rescue is organizing an EMT competition. Vendors are still registering, and we look to see 70–80 spaces filled. Whiteville High School band boosters and local restaurants will provide the traditional burgers and hot dogs, and committee member Terry Mann is in touch with a few food truck owners who will bring in alternative menu options.

Volunteers Melissa Williamson and Caroline Smith are planning Kids' Block activities for the 600 block of S. Madison Street from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday. Plans include a miniature train and a clown. Nonprofit groups are welcome at no charge to set up areas offering fun activities for children. They may email Melissa Williamson

at mdjones251@yahoo.com.

Bring the family and plan to have a great time at this year's festival!

> With sincere best wishes, Members of the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival Planning Committee



Flimsy the clown entertains in the Kids' Block in 2021.

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Historic preservation group hosts open house

The Reuben Brown House

128 E. Columbus St.

The Reuben Brown House Preservation Society announces that it will offer an open house Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

This event is in conjunction with the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival, and all visitors are invited to visit the house, located 128 E. Columbus St. in Whiteville.

The Reuben Brown House, circa 1830s, is preserved and maintained by the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society, a countywide nonprofit organization. The group's objectives are to encourage the preservation and usage of historic buildings and sites throughout Columbus County as well as to encourage fine arts countywide. RBHPS sponsors the Columbus County historic landmark plaque program, the Ammons Poetry Contest and other events throughout the year.

(The Reuben Brown House will not be open during the festival's tour of homes on Friday, Nov. 4.)

Recent upgrades to the house, outside kitchen and smokehouse make the site an even more appealing place to see, so RBHPS members urge the public to come by on Saturday, Nov. 5.







Elegant Homes of Whiteville Tour

The Blackwell House 2488 Old Lumberton Rd.

The home of Deborah and James "Bankey" Blackwell is a custom-built traditional design. It was constructed in 1995 by contractor Edwin Ezzell. The brick two-story home features an interior with custom millwork and cabinetry. The owners' fondness for chinoiserie style is apparent, as it is blended with vintage and family heirlooms.

Deborah enjoys collecting artwork by area artists. The upper floor has three bedrooms, one of which is used as a den-bunkroom for the grandchildren.

Two back entrances to the home lead out to a beautiful patio area surrounded by amazing landscaping and a kitchen garden.

The backyard then leads to a completely finished building. The "boat house," as it is fondly called, was built by Bankey to store his boat. The interior still represents his love for all things "Tarheels" and golf. The "boat house" is used for gatherings and relaxing on the front porch or fire pit.

James "Bankey" and Deborah Blackwell





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The Brown House

3089 Old Pine Log Rd.

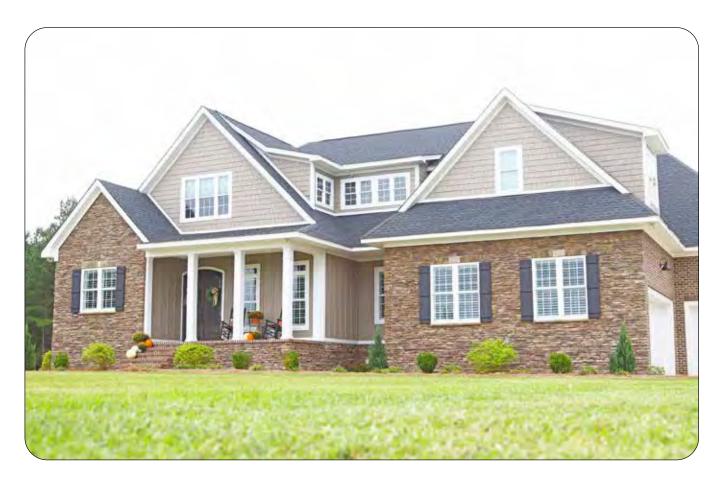
The Brown home is a Frank Betz design dubbed "Summerlake." It features a modern farmhouse theme throughout, with 10-foot ceilings and 8-foot doors on the first floor and 9-foot ceilings on the second floor. The home was built in 2019 after a fire destroyed the original home on the property.

The first floor of the home features a study, a dining room, the kitchen, a living room with a coffered ceiling, a large master bedroom with a his-and-hers walk-in closet and a master bath that features a double walk-in shower.

The second floor has two bedrooms with a jack-and-jill bath, a bonus room used as a game room/tv room and a sitting area.

The home also features a screen porch, an open porch and a large patio area used for entertaining.

Chris and Suzanne Brown







The Fisher House

305 E. Oliver St.

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The John Fisher House was a more recent dwelling influenced by European new day design.

It is now in the process of changing from an Italian appearance to a French exposure, beginning with a color of French aqua trim and a French garden sculpture. It will take time to develop, but it has begun. Enjoy the watch as it goes from an Italian influence to a French statement.

John Fisher





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Festival Schedule

Thursday, Nov. 3
Queen's Reception

7–8:30 p.m. Columbus County Arts Council

Friday, Nov. 4

Queen's Luncheon (by advance tickets only) Vineland Station Depot, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Tour of Homes 1–4 p.m. and 5–7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 5

Car Show, Kids' Block, First Responders' Block, Crafts and Arts Vendors, Food Vendors and more Downtown Whiteville, throughout the day

Open House at historic Reuben Brown House 128 E. Columbus St., 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival Parade Madison Street, 10 a.m.

Introduction of Queen, Parade Marshal and Belles Main Stage, 11:30 a.m.

Entertainment by The Pink Slips Band Main Stage, noon–4 p.m.

Beer and Wine Garden arts fundraiser Columbus County Arts Council, noon–7 p.m.

Entertainment by Paleo Sun Columbus County Arts Council, 4–7 p.m.



The volunteers of the organizing committee asked Pamela Young-Jacobs to repeat her role as Pecan Queen in 2022.



Suzanne King, 2021 parade marshal, waves to the crowd.



This project received support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment of the Arts.

The Landers House 227 E. College St.

The Landers home was built in 1952 by the Powell family. This traditional-style brick home was constructed on a sweet .35 acre lot on College Street. The 12-room home has 3,000 square feet with custom iron gates that lead into a backyard oasis with patio, pergola, two car garage and two koi ponds. The property is surrounded by a beautiful mature landscape with a basket weave brick fence for privacy.

Several renovations have restored this home to near perfection. As you walk up the paved pathway to the front entrance, you are invited to sit and rock in the rocking chairs for the afternoon.

Upon entering the home's foyer, you are greeted with luscious polished hardwood floors and a staircase leading to a master bedroom with a spa en-suite bathroom. The master is fit for a king, containing two walk-in closets, a garden tub and a large floor-to-ceiling glass shower.

The foyer also leads you into a newly renovated kitchen with stainless steel appliances, granite countertops and custom cabinetry. Utilizing an open concept design, the home opens up to a large den and sunroom, featuring a floor-to-ceiling brick fireplace with sparkling gas logs. The doors and windows allow a view of the backyard patio and a large Japanese



maple that provides shade and a habitat for birds and squirrels. A formal dining space invites you to dine with friends and socialize in the attached traditional living room.

This home features four bedrooms and three and a half bathrooms with laundry on the main floor, and all bedrooms

have nice, large walk-in closets. It has many characteristics of traditional and modern living, but they do not take away from the character of 1952.

Jennifer and Alinette Landers





The Whichard House 1312 Spivev Rd.

The Whichard home is a traditional family home that was built in 2003. The home was purchased by the Whichards in 2019 and underwent extensive repair and renovation work. The home features three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms on the first floor and a recreational room and a full bathroom on the second floor.

The home has a familial theme, as the family treasures time and memories made together.

The home also has nautical touches to reflect the love of the ocean.

Marc and Courtney Whichard



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The Colonel N.B. and Mabel Chestnutt House

106 N. Madison St.

When Patricia L. Woodard bought the Chestnutt House at 106 N. Madison St. in April of 2018, Hurricane Florence was a few months away and the COVID-19 pandemic hadn't happened yet. Both of those events had an impact on the restoration of her 1927 Spanish-style house, but eventually progress was made and the structure and the yard started coming together.

The small, two-bedroom, one-bath home has plenty of charm and space for entertaining. With a living room, dining room, kitchen, den and sunroom, plus a patio, Woodard says she has all the space she needs. The plaster walls have been repaired, plumbing and electrical work updated and a new shower installed. The terra cotta roof, not the original, was replaced after damage from the hurricane, and the crawl space was also brought up to date. Most of the windows have been replaced, and what's left to do now is to repair the hardwood floors and patio and develop a plan for the yard.

Woodard and her cat, Mr. Gracie, feel grateful to have been in the right place at the right time to call this jewel their home and look forward to continuing with the improvements.

The Chestnutt House was inducted into the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society plaque program in Columbus County in December 2018.

Patricia L. Woodard





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Luncheon armbands on sale through Oct. 31

Admission to the Nov. 4 Queen's Luncheon is by advance-purchase armbands only. The armbands include admission to the home tours that run from $1-4~\rm p.m.$ and $5-7~\rm p.m.$ that day.

Combination luncheon/tour armbands are \$25. The last day to purchase them is Monday, Oct. 31.

There are two places to buy the combination admission. The Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Tourism will be open from 7:45 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday–Friday (601 S. Madison St., phone 910-642-3171 or 910-770-1991). The Columbus County Arts Council, 822 S. Madison St., is open Tuesday–Thursday from 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

On Nov. 4, tour-only arm bands will be available at the chamber office from 1–4:30 p.m. for \$15.

Arts Council fundraiser provides another way to socialize downtown

On Saturday, Nov. 5, the Columbus County Arts Council will hold a new event offering festival-goers a way to slow down after the hustle and bustle of the street celebrations. Sally Mann, arts council director, has planned a beer and wine garden from noon–7 p.m. Saturday in the courtyard of the art gallery at 822 S. Madison St.

The event will be an arts council fundraiser. The music groups Paleo Sun and Flood Water Connection will perform from 4--7~p.m.



The Marching Wolfpack comes down Madison Street.



Youngsters ride a train in the kids' block at the 2021 festival.

Growers association greets new friends and old

Dear visitors to the 2022 N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival:

On behalf of the members of the North Carolina Pecan Growers Association, I wish everyone a good time at this year's festival.

Great news is that there should be plenty of pecans available for sale this year. Conditions during the spring and summer have made 2022 a good year for pecans in spite of losses to Hurricane Ian. Representatives from our organization will be on hand Saturday, Nov. 5, to provide educational materials for anyone interested in growing pecans. Our professionals can answer your questions about what kinds of trees to plant as well as offering all kinds of other information for growers both new and not-so-new.

We also invite you to join our association. Members have access to educational events year-round, both live and online. University agriculture instructors specialized in pecans will help you learn your way as you get into the pecan business, take care of diseases and solve other problems.

Check out the many ways we promote this important and healthful crop at our new website, NCpecangrowers.com.

My fellow pecan growers and I look forward to seeing you Saturday, Nov. 5, in downtown Whiteville!

John Taylor

President, N.C. Pecan Growers Association ncpecangrowers@gmail.com

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'A good year for pecans'

John Taylor, president of the N.C. Pecan Growers Association, lives in Bladen County. He told *The News Reporter* that, "There should be plenty of pecans available at the festival" this year in spite of Hurricane Ian, due to unusual weather conditions during the spring and summer.

Most pecan growers have older trees of "hardware store" varieties such as papershells or Stuarts, Taylor said. Those older trees have poor resistance to fungal diseases that have become common in recent years.

Taylor said that, during typical "muggy, steamy spring and summer" weather in southeastern North Carolina, immature pecans tend to "turn black and fall off the trees in July because of fungus." Thus a promising crop is often reduced before nuts can develop and ripen.

However, 2022 is shaping up to be "a good year for pecans," Taylor said. That's because "This year was dry," and "the fungus didn't develop as it usually does."

By the time Hurricane Ian arrived in September, the region was expecting "a bumper crop," Taylor said. Although many growers lost 20–30% of their nearly-mature crop to Ian, there are "still plenty."

Instead of waiting for an excessively dry spring and summer, Taylor said a better way growers can beat fungus is to plant newer, more resistant pecan varieties. He's learned that lesson firsthand in a lifelong pecan-growing career.

"I planted some pecan trees for my father when I was little," he said. For years, "We never really did anything to them, but we got pecans off them." As more fungal diseases have become common, "We've lost immature nuts to a fungus called scab."

Because of fungus, "The older varieties of pecans only produce a good crop every five years or so," Taylor said. He recommends that prospective growers check out the N.C. Pecan Growers Association website at ncpecangrowers.com for the best varieties to grow in this area and other information.





The 2021 Queen and Pecan Belles float



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