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Gastroenterologist Dr. Jonathan Lamphier has joined Southeastern Digestive Health Center, an affiliate of Southeastern Health.

Dr. Lamphier earned his medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine in Boston, Mass., in 1991. He completed an internal medicine residency in 1994 at the University of South Florida College of Medicine in Tampa, Fla. He also completed a digestive diseases fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Ga., in 2002.

Before joining Southeastern Digestive Health Center, he was affiliated with Novant Health Gastroenterology, Brunswick, in Supply, NC. He has over 15 years of experience and is board certified in gastroenterology.

Dr. Lamphier is a native of New England and resides in Lumberton with his wife, Lynne. They have three children: Lauren, Rachel and Jonathan Jr.

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FALL & WINTER 2018

VOLUME VI ISSUE II

THE NEWS REPORTER COMPANY, INC.

WHITEVILLE, NC

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JEREMY SIMMONS BRINGS SPIRITUAL CARE TO COLUMBUS REGIONAL

STORY BY DIANA MATTHEWS

PHOTOS BY DIANA MATTHEWS & GRANT MERRITT



Chaplain Jeremy Simmons brings education, dedication and compassion to hospital patients and staff.

“A lot of people think I just go around the hospital and pray for people,” said Jeremy Simmons, chaplain for Columbus Regional Healthcare System. In fact, “Sometimes I go into someone’s room and I don’t pray for them. I talk to them first and see what’s causing them anxiety or fear or guilt.”

By listening, the chaplain may pick up on a clue that will become crucial to the patient’s overall recovery.

CRHS Vice President for Human Resources Andrea West said that, as Head of Spiritual Care, Simmons promotes hope for “people in very vulnerable spaces and offers the compassionate care that is needed in moments of crisis.”

Often, West said, patients don’t have a non-judgmental friend with whom to share feelings or other private things. “Jeremy is able to create that space for them to move closer to their spiritual healing,” West said, which can be key to overall wellness.

Simmons recalled that, “We had a patient who kept coming in to the hospital at about the same time every year, and no one could figure out what was wrong with her. It turned out that her husband had died at that time of year, and this was her way of expressing grief. Talking with her let me see a different side” to her physical ailments in a manner the care team could access.

“You know, I haven’t seen her back this year,” he said.

Caring in a crisis

Simmons doesn’t make assumptions about people’s needs or their religious stance. “Not everybody is a Christian,” Simmons said. “I’m a Christian, but my language has to be interfaith. Some are atheists. We find other ways to connect outside the Christian arena.” That’s why the hospital’s small chapel has no crosses or other symbols, Simmons said.

In that spirit, West and Simmons formed a Diversity and Inclusion Council at the hospital after he was hired in July 2016.

Still, said Simmons, most of the people he serves are used to going to church on Sundays. During the eight days and nights that he was on duty for Hurricane Florence and its aftermath, Simmons arranged a Sunday morning Bible teaching and worship service to provide “a sense of normalcy” for patients and staff. “Everyone needed to hear a word,” he said. “We had a full house in here. We had a beautiful, short service.

“My buddy Wallyce Todd gave a homily. Stayce Bowen and her husband led music. Hospital staff did the Bible readings and prayers.”

Did Florence bring CRHS staff closer together? “Absolutely,” said Simmons.

A routine day

Three weeks after Hurricane Florence, Simmons was having a more or less normal day consulting with inpatients who requested visits and with others receiving chemotherapy in the Donayre Cancer Center.

He charts his patient visits and participates in rounds with the hospital’s Interdisciplinary Team, often being pulled aside to talk to a staff member, patient or family member with an unexpected need.

“Jeremy brings a fresh wave of energy that draws our staff in,” said West. “He is so easy to approach and we would lack his calming presence if he were not here.”

“Throw in a couple of meetings,” with community spiritual leaders, Simmons said, and he has a full day, even without any emergencies.

Columbus Regional introduced pet therapy with the arrival of Sadie, West’s mixed-breed dog, who visits patients in physical therapy and other specialty departments. A harpist brings music therapy twice a month, and the hospital has even offered aromatherapy, Simmons said. “We like to find other ways to treat people,” he said.



Simmons and helper Kris Ravenell surprise radiology department staff with a “Code Lavender” break. Cottonballs infused with lavender oil relieve tension. Cookies bring smiles.



Cancer support group members painted inspirational sayings on these rocks for Simmons to pass out.



Lab technicians gather for chocolate chip cookies. “You will pray for us before you leave?” they asked Simmons.



Simmons spends one-on-one time with patients in the Donayre Cancer Center, the physical therapy department and the hospital's in-patient units.

Routine appointments give way when there is an emergency. "I go to all the Code Blues," said Simmons. "Yesterday I got called to two emergencies at one time.

"I usually don't eat lunch before about 2:30," said Simmons. "That's when I slow down and catch my breath."

Calling plus skills

Simmons grew up in Charlotte and now lives in Wilmington. He felt called by God to ministry work at age 16 and accepted that direction for his life during his freshman year at UNCW. His first chaplain position was at Butner Prison from 2011-2013, followed by three years working in branches of Carolinas Medical Center (now Atrium) in Charlotte.

Is there an area in his work where he feels less adequate than others? "I don't do well with children. That's my weakness," Simmons said. When he sees young patients suffering, he said, "I correlate them with my own children."

He and his wife Jamila Simmons are parents to 7-year-old Jeremiah, 5-year-old Josiah and 2-year-old Jaila, "who runs the house," Simmons said.

"I sent my family away to Raleigh during the hurricane," he said. "By day six or seven, the kids were calling me and crying." When the family finally reunited, said Simmons, the children were "so happy."

Although their home was not badly damaged, the Simmons family knew that it could easily have been worse. As they re-entered Wilmington, Jeremiah and Josiah saw other people's destroyed property and said, "Daddy, we have to help these people."

The boys collected emergency supplies to donate to Community CPR. Simmons is proud that his children "recognize it when neighbors need help. They understand that responsibility at an early age."

If any of his children someday feels called to the field of spiritual care, Simmons will give his encouragement, but he'll also spell out

the challenges of the job.

"It's not easy. It's not enough just to be called. You have to put in the time and develop a skill set."

Building a team

While working in Charlotte, Simmons enjoyed the support of eight other hospital chaplains working nearby. "There's not the same community here," he said.

When Simmons needs encouragement, he counts on Percy Reeves, the lead pastor of Sanctuary Charlotte Church, whom he sees every weekend. He visits a therapist twice a month. And "I talk to my wife more than anybody else," he said.

Simmons has gradually built up a community of local ministers with whom to share hospital responsibilities. "We have five volunteer chaplains now, but we'd like to have more," he said. "If people are interested, they should come see me."

Not every pastor or preacher comes already equipped for hospital work, said Simmons. He mentored each of his assistants by overseeing their interactions with patients and hospital staff.

A well-intentioned person who isn't used to hospital chaplaincy "can make things a lot worse" in a crisis. Now Simmons trusts his backup chaplains completely.

Simmons can drive home to Wilmington at the end of each day, knowing that the on-call volunteer will respond to overnight emergencies.

The 50-mile commute allows Simmons to "wind down and listen to some good sermons and music that relaxes me," he said. That includes gospel, New Wave artists such as Todd Galbreath and Tasha Cobbs, hip-hop and Chance the Rapper. The break allows him to put stresses behind him and "is good for my family," he said.

The next morning he brings his energy and compassion to whatever the new day may bring.

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Dewey Hill

A lifelong grocer who served 20 years in N.C. Legislature

STORY CLARA CARTRETTE

PHOTOS GRANT MERRITT, DEWEY HILL FAMILY & NR ARCHIVE

Dewey Hill is a lifelong grocer, having spent most of his life working in, owning, overseeing and operating grocery stores. He got his start in the business as a 7- or 8-year-old youngster, working after school in his parents' store, Otto Hill Grocery and Farm Supply, which they opened in 1930.

Now he is chairman of the board at Dewey Hill Enterprises with offices off South Madison Street in South Whiteville.

During his last two years at Whiteville High School, Hill worked in Gurganus Grocery in downtown Whiteville. After graduating, he joined the U.S. Navy, serving two years with a rank of Store Keeper First Class in charge of the commissary at the U.S. Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune.

When he returned home from the Navy in 1946, his dad decided it was time for his son to take over the grocery store so he could take over farming.

"The store was very small and I operated it for five years," Hill said. "I had a lot of success. I had a strong meat market and a good customer base, and I bought some property not too far from the store and built a 5,000 square foot store, which was large at that time. We were supplied with grocery needs by G.V. Singletary Distribution



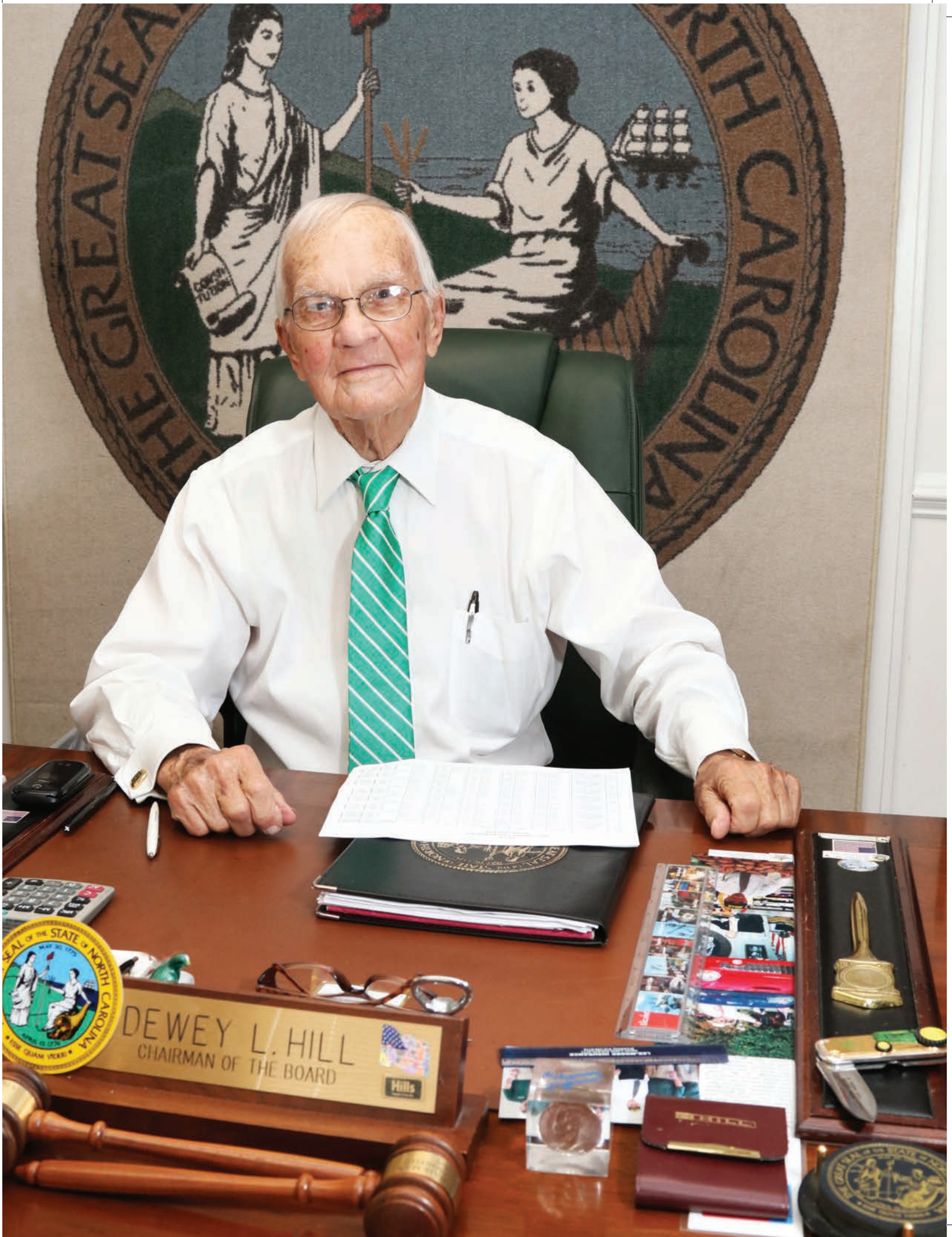
Dewey Hill took pride in offering the cheapest price in town for "nanas."

drugstore, and the growth continued.

"We began to buy other stores, changed our supplier and got groceries from Thomas and Howard Grocery Company in Charlotte," Hill said. "They became a partner with us, buying and building new stores. Then we began looking at another location in Elizabethtown and bought the IGA store downtown. Then we purchased new acreage for a new shopping center, which contained Hills Grocery and

Center, which was a lot of help to make the store successful."

Hill said he started expanding the company by purchasing an existing building in New Hope and opened a second Hills store there. "At that time we were buying property and stores and decided it was time to start a real estate company, which we called Hillcrest," he said. He bought property at Lake Waccamaw and built the first Hills Shopping Center there, which contained Hills Food Store, Jones Variety Store, an auto parts business and the Lake Waccamaw ABC store. He then purchased the Red and White grocery store in Clarkton and purchased property to build another shopping center, which eventually contained Hills Food Store, Jones Variety Store and Rite Aid



Jones Variety Store.”

Hill said the company continued to grow by buying other stores. They bought an A&P store in Wilmington, an A&P in Laurinburg, a Winn Dixie in Mullins, S.C., a Piggly Wiggly in Loris, S.C. and Kirby’s Food City in Shallotte, adding to that center a variety store, Rite Aid drugstore and a Movie Max store.

“We then merged the grocery company with M.H. McLean Company, a grocery distribution center in Lumberton, and bought the Parker Food Store chain in Wilmington,” he explained. “It became a 13-store chain, with seven stores in Wilmington and six in other areas of eastern North Carolina.

“After operating the distribution center for a year and a half,” Hill continued, “we found it was to our advantage to find a buyer. Nash Finch from Minnesota bought the distribution center and became our supplier, working very closely with Hills to help us become a larger and better store operation.

“The next purchase was a Winn Dixie at Oak Island, and then we merged the company with Andrews Grocery Chain, which became part of our leadership team,” Hill said. “In 1991 we sold the company to Nash Finch — all 39 stores — and then I decided that the State of North Carolina people needed me. I was elected to the N.C. House of Representatives and served 10 terms. I was honored to serve most of those years as House Agriculture Committee chairman. I was also vice chairman of the House Finance committee and vice chairman of House Rules and Operations.

“During my service as a member of the House of Representatives, Nash Finch was unable to operate some of the stores we had leases on,” Hill continued. “In order to keep our shopping centers going, we started taking some of the stores back, starting with Shallotte, Whiteville, Loris, and then the Hills store in Whiteville burned. We purchased property called South Whiteville Village and opened a new Hills Store, which also had a Revco drugstore and a pizza shop.”

Hill said a Hills store also opened in Whiteville Plaza Shopping Center and a former Winn Dixie opened as a Hills store.

“We’ve had a lot of success with the new stores we were opening that Nash Finch was not successful with,” he said.

Hill said Hillcrest Real Estate has been very active in its operation of the shopping centers located in Clarkton, St. Paul, Chadbourn and four centers in Whiteville: South Whiteville Village, Hillco Center, Hill Plaza and Jefferson Plaza. Hill Plaza once contained a Harris Tee-ter store that had a Holly Farms chicken restaurant in the front of the store.

Hill named several chain grocery stores that came and left Whiteville: Winn Dixie, A&P, Piggly Wiggly, Colonial and Red and White.

“At that time there was only one grocery store in Whiteville, and that was Hills,” he said. “I ran an ad in Progressive Grocery asking any grocer to consider opening a store and Food Lion came in.”

Satisfying customers and providing the best quality at affordable prices has been Hill’s motto since he opened his first grocery store. Only the freshest meats and produce are offered, and the shelves are always stocked with a variety of name brand staples, sundries and other items that everyone can afford. He has lived in Columbus County all of his life and he cares what his customer friends and neighbors think. He wants only the best for them and he wants to offer courteous service, cleanliness, well-stocked shelves and quality merchandise at a price that keeps them coming back.

Hill says he owes his work ethic to his parents, “who taught me early on to go to work and to help people.”

Hill’s businesses provide many jobs in the community. He estimates that 150-plus are employed in the grocery stores and real estate business.

“We are blessed to have good, loyal people with our company who have been with us a lot of years, some as long as 20, 30 or 40 years,” he said. “Some have never had another job, starting with us right out of high school. We’re also blessed to have good customers.”



Hill on the 2004 campaign trail for the N.C. House



Hill joined the Navy after high school graduation



Dewey Hill and his wife Muriel Hill are long time members of First Baptist Church in Whiteville.



Whiteville High School photo



Hill and his first delivery truck

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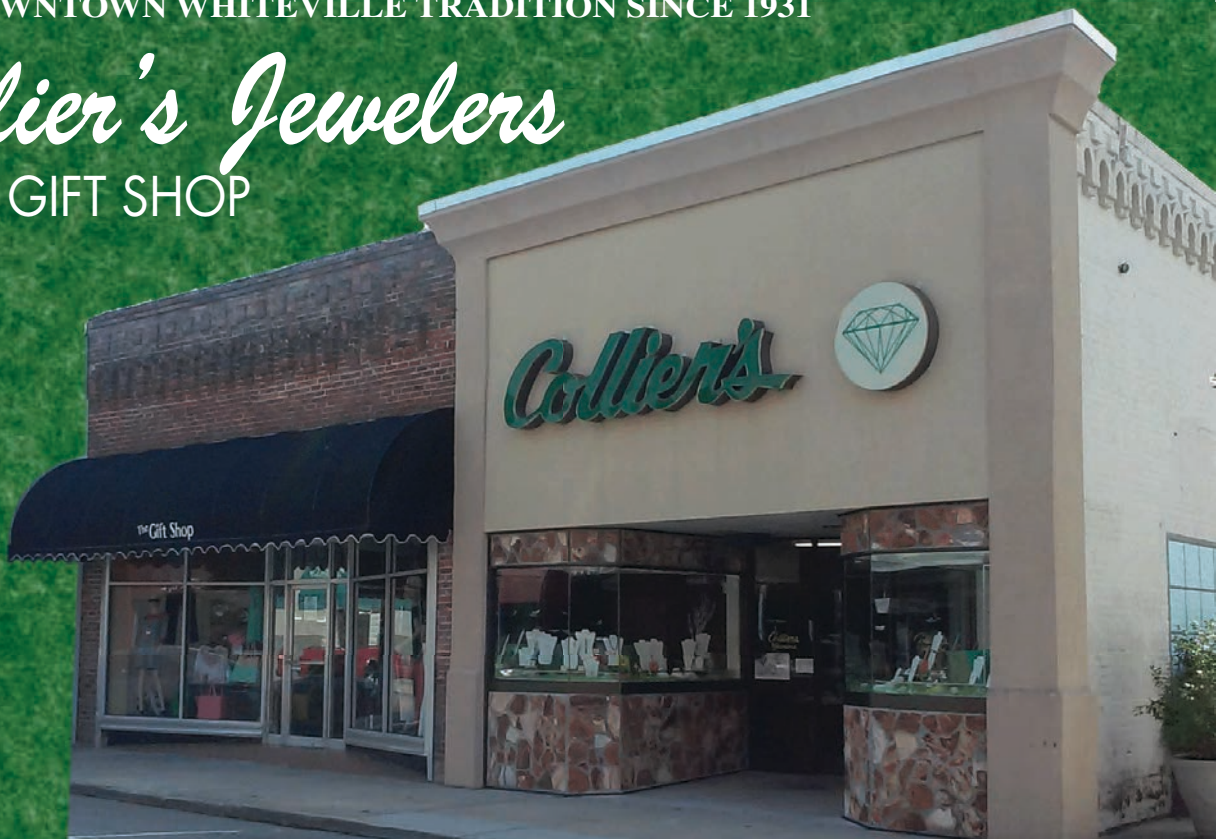
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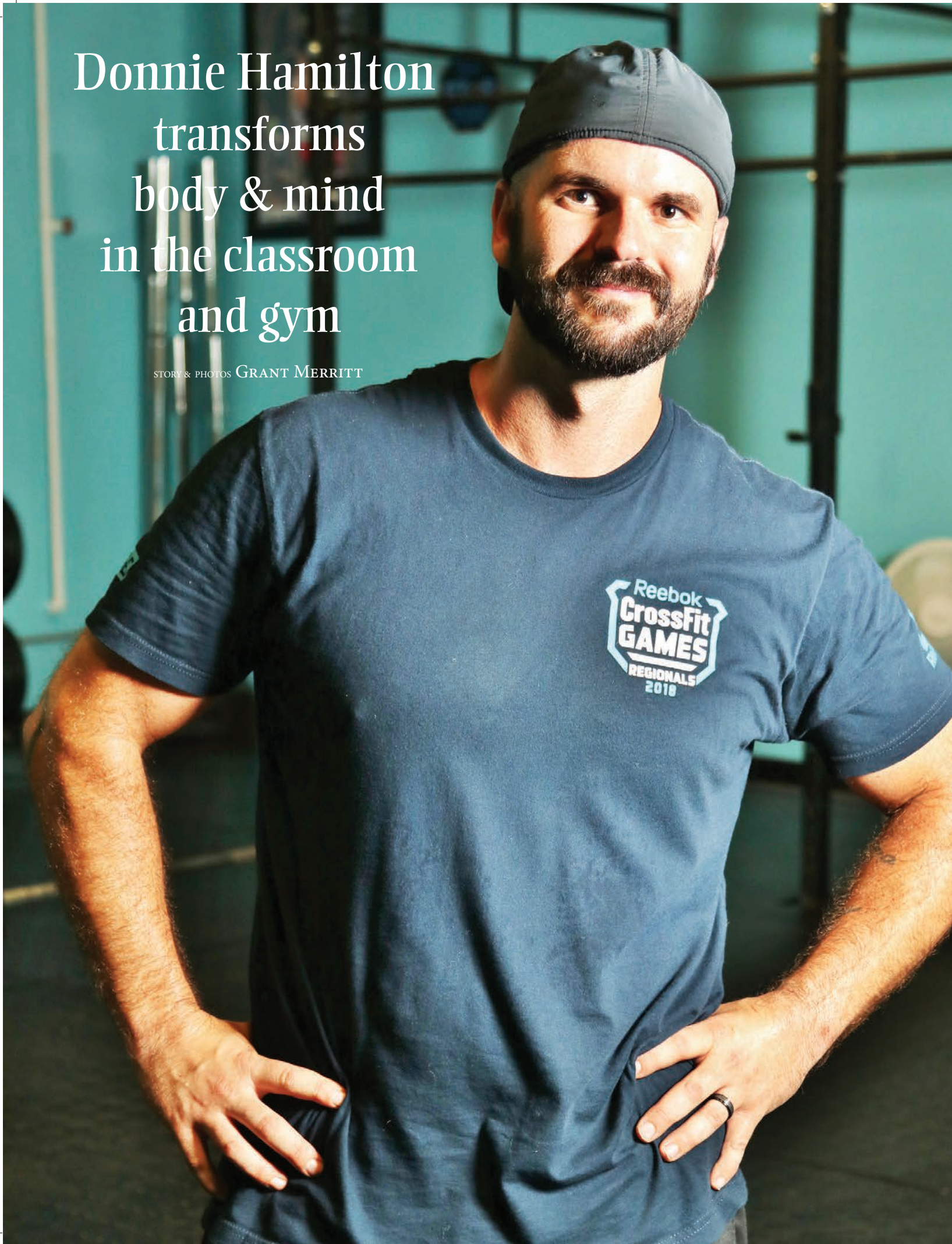


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Donnie Hamilton transforms body & mind in the classroom and gym

STORY & PHOTOS GRANT MERRITT



As a husband, father, veteran, school teacher, student and fitness trainer, Donnie Hamilton has learned the meaning of time management with careful execution of setting goals, outlining objectives and reaching accomplishments at home, in the gym and at school. He provides for his mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health through the support of his wife, his students at Columbus Career and College Academy and clients at Functional Fitness Training Center at Body Shapers in Whiteville.

Hamilton is a 2007 graduate of Whiteville High School, a 2014 graduate of Southeastern Community College and a 2016 graduate of Campbell University. He is currently seeking his masters in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. He is married to Casey Hamilton, and they have two children, Abigail and Benjamin.

Being a certified fitness trainer through the National Academy of Sports Medicine and formally through the International Sports Sciences Association, Hamilton started his own fitness training business, AMA Fitness, in November 2016. As a CrossFit level one trainer, he accepted the challenge of taking on clients and pursuing it as a full-time career.

After starting out in the back room of Body Shapers' 24-hour facility in downtown Whiteville, Hamilton was able to acquire his own space in the Functional Fitness Training Center beside the 24-hour facility. Through a casual business conversation with Jeff Faulk, owner of Body Shapers, about having his own space to give guidance and train members of Body Shapers, Hamilton said that

Faulk acted on this conversation and made the space a reality.

"Without the guidance of Mr. Jeff and Mrs. Cindy Faulk, my business would not have been here today," Hamilton said. "They were, and are, instrumental in my continued passion and success."

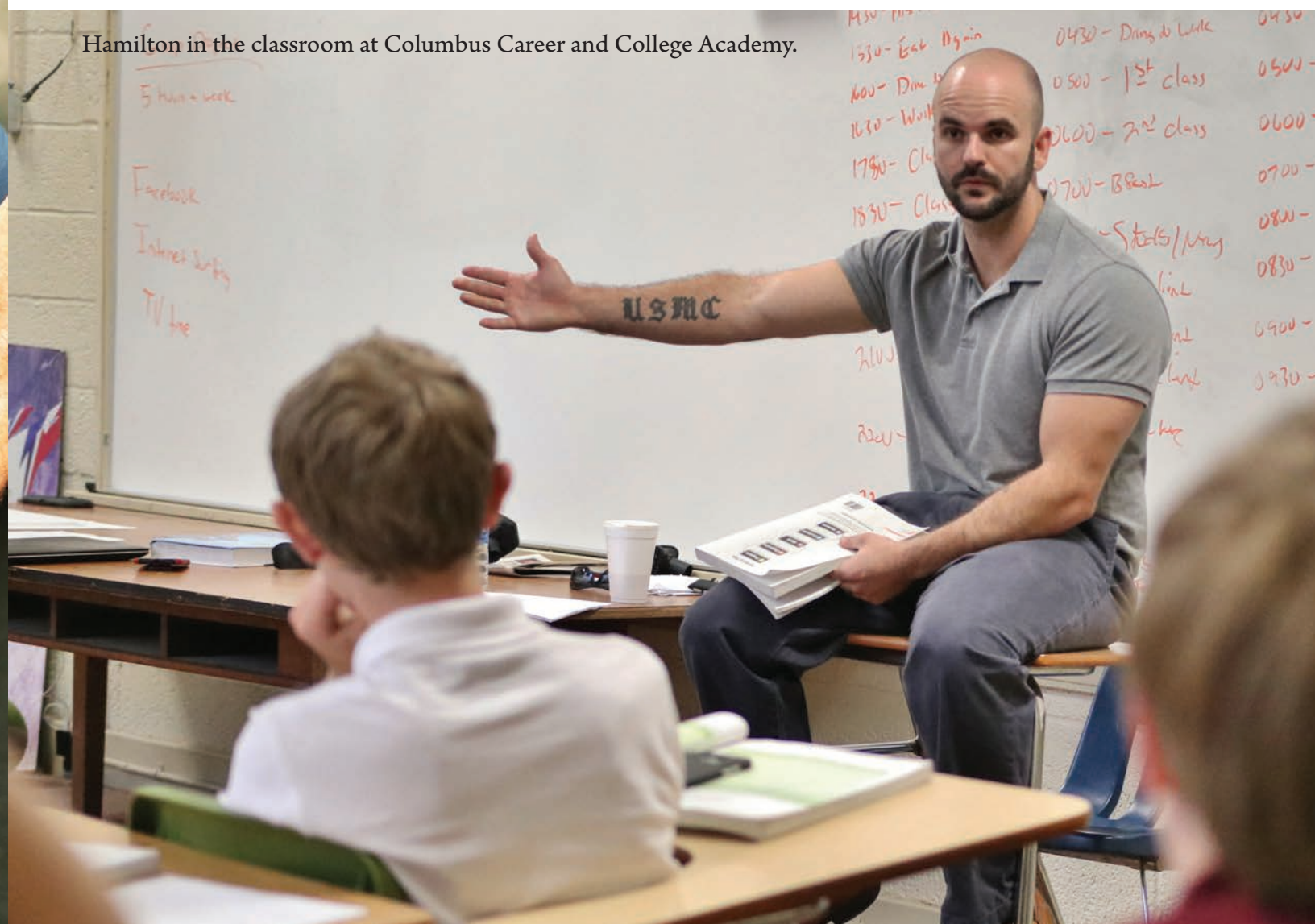
Functional Fitness and Training Center opened in January 2018, and Hamilton was able to provide CrossFit-style instruction to Body Shapers members. After the flooding devastation of Hurricane Florence in downtown Whiteville, Body Shapers was left with three unusable buildings and needed a place to relocate. By Oct. 8, Body Shapers was back in business and running at its new location in Whiteville Plaza behind McDonald's in South Whiteville.

"The process of transitioning Body Shapers from downtown Whiteville to our new location was quite a feat," Hamilton said. "However, our staff and leadership did a phenomenal job adapting to a very volatile situation."

Hamilton explained that serving the members of Body Shapers is their highest priority and their new location will allow them to continue to serve our community through providing comprehensive access to a health and wellness facility that emphasizes the health of its members. Many hours of arduous labor were necessary to transform a former church and furniture store into a fitness facility.

"The new location of Body Shapers will create such a melting pot of fitness," Hamilton said. "All our facilities and services are under one roof now."

Hamilton in the classroom at Columbus Career and College Academy.





Hamilton stationed in Afghanistan in 2009



Hamilton, with Team Rubicon, help clear damage after a tornado hit Greensboro in April.

According to Hamilton, the new Body Shapers location will allow for future growth and create a personal feel for clients and truly make them feel like part of a tight knit community. Hamilton still has his own space for his instructional classes, but instead of being in a separate building, he is right across the hall from the big main gym room within Body Shapers.

“My favorite part of leading classes is the sheer melting pot of people I meet on a daily basis and watching the ‘exercise maturity’ of an individual begin to develop as their confidence grows,” Hamilton said.

Hamilton’s classes focus on movements that mimic everyday motor patterns that prioritize compound movements through deadlifts, squats, presses, pull-ups, burpees and dips. He said that every human being should be able to demonstrate a basic competency in these motor patterns to build strength. He explained that with his classes, an elderly lady would know how to pick up a heavy bag of dog food or pick herself up off the floor after a fall without injuring herself.

When not in the gym, Hamilton is a Success and Study Skills teacher at the Fair Bluff campus of Columbus Career and College Academy. The course starts with a personality and self-assessment test that helps students figure out which path is appropriate for them before entering young adulthood. The class covers topics such as developing a college budget, managing stress and self-care, basic finance, interviewing and resume writing.

“This course is the first course in an early college student’s journey to a degree from Southeastern Community College,” Hamilton said. “As such, I attempt to develop a curriculum that adequately prepares my students for future success at SCC and beyond.”

Hamilton’s favorite part of teaching at CCCA is shaping young minds, and it is rewarding to watch the transformation of his students in the 12 weeks they are in his class. He is helping to develop skills of future leaders in Columbus County. He wishes he’d had something similar to what he teaches when he was going to high school.

Hamilton is in his third year teaching at Columbus Career and College Academy, and he fell in love with teaching through his years as a peer tutor while a student at SCC and Campbell University. Being able to earn money as a tutor while he was a student allowed him to provide for his family and continue as a personal trainer before starting AMA Fitness.

Before Hamilton stepped into leadership positions in the classroom and the gym, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2007 to 2013. He served as a combat engineer where his job was to locate and destroy improvised explosive devices, and he was deployed twice to Afghanistan in his four years of active duty.

Hamilton now volunteers with Team Rubicon, an International non-government organization founded by U.S. Marines William McNulty and Jacob “Jake” Wood. Team Rubicon identifies itself as a veteran service organization that uses disaster response to help reintegrate veterans back into civilian life.

“My favorite part about the U.S. Marine Corps is the people, the purpose and the sense of fulfillment I got from saving lives daily,” Hamilton said. “Being able to save a family, especially a child, from the possibility of losing their life due to a deadly explosion was the best feeling anyone could possibly imagine.”

Hamilton was stationed at Camp Pendleton, CA during his time in the U.S., but he spent much of his time between 29 Palms, CA and Camp Lejeune, NC while training in his specialty. Being a proud survivor of the War in Afghanistan, suffering numerous concussions, a T12 compression fracture, a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, Hamilton said that despite the obstacles we face in life, we are capable of moving forward.

“After experiencing turmoil at home after finding out my mother had been diagnosed with stage four breast cancer, I felt lost, afraid, and without a sense of purpose,” Hamilton explained. “I remember trying to decipher what to do with my life, and I thought, what better purpose and higher calling than for someone to serve their country?”

Owning his own business, while teaching, working on his graduate degree, spending time with his family and volunteering with Team Rubicon, stretches his time thin. Hamilton said that life may be extremely difficult, but it is manageable. With a typical day starting at 3:45 a.m. and ending at 11:30 p.m., Hamilton said he enjoys the satisfaction from being able to rise early and get a head start on the world.

“Each day has a purpose, and that is what I enjoy most.”



Hamilton gives Allison Walker instruction on lifting form.

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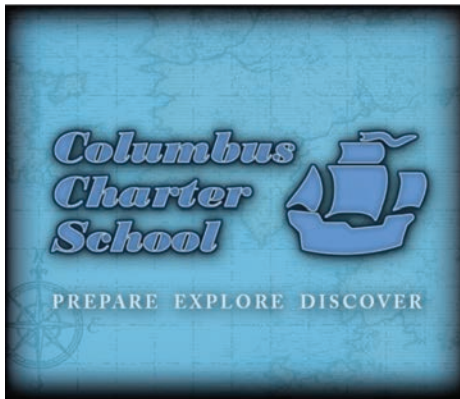


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"We're out here today celebrating our heritage," said Trey Freeman, a men's traditional dancer who attended the pow wow with his seven-year-old son Rylee, who is also a dancer.

Trey chose his regalia for its meaning, and selected his son's to match.

"I picked my colors, black, red, yellow and gray, for the four seasons and the four winds." While father and son share colors, their regalia differs in some aspects. Like most boys, Rylee's bustle is made of hawk feathers, while his father's features eagle feathers.

"Every thread, inch, bead, feather, every bit of it," is meaningful," Trey said. "All the way from my moccasins to my brooch."

He has danced almost his entire life, and says it's important that his son continue the tradition.

"My elders passed it on to me, so I'm going to pass it on to him."

WALKING IN TWO WORLDS

STORY & PHOTOS JUSTIN SMITH

Long before this tract of land was divided into 954 square miles and named after Christopher Columbus, it was home to the Waccamaw Siouan people.

The tribe, known as the “People of the Falling Star,” has celebrated its culture and traditions for the past 48 years during an annual Pow Wow held on the tribal grounds in Buckhead.

Attracting thousands of participants, the two-day event features Waccamaw Siouan history, traditional foods, a drumming competition, gospel singing and an American Indian dance competition.

Several of the dancers agreed to be photographed in their regalia and their everyday clothes to illustrate how, as American Indians, they walk in two worlds as they honor their heritage and preserve their traditions.



AIRANNA BURNETT

“It’s the healing dance,” Airanna Burnett said, describing the jingle dance. “It’s something I’ve been doing for a very long time.”

The 9-year-old has been dancing since she could walk. Her grandmother, Georgia Jacobs, added the jingles to her regalia.

“There are few pow wow dances as ebullient, or as symphonic, as the Jingle Dress Dance,” *Indian Country Today* explains. “The rows of metal cones...dangle from the dresses and rattle and clink as the dancers move. The traditional dance required the dancers to never cross their feet, never dance backward, and never complete a circle.”



A close-up portrait of Kaneesa Dutton, a young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing traditional regalia. She has a large white feather in her hair and is wearing a white t-dress with a black sash that says "Miss". The regalia is heavily decorated with gold fringe, colorful geometric patterns, and large gold buttons. She is looking off to the side with a slight smile.

KANEESA DUTTON

“When you’re dancing, you’re praying. And you’re giving thanks to the creator for being able to dance and being able to dance for the people who can’t dance and want to,” said Kaneesa Dutton, the head dancer for the 2018 Pow Wow and the reigning Miss Waccamaw Siouan.

The 19-year-old Southeastern Community College student has competed in pow wows for five or six years, but she’s danced for much longer.

“A lot of people in my family dance,” she said. “It’s just something that you grow up in.”

Kaneesa is a northern-style traditional dancer.

“You have southern and northern. I’m a northern dancer, which is more of a bounce. Southern is more of a slow, low-tempo dance.”

The 2017 East Columbus High School graduate designed her own regalia, a colorful t-dress, with the help of a seamstress in New Mexico.

“I told the woman what I wanted, and she put it together for me,” Kaneesa said. “I like to be different.”



A close-up view of Dutton's colorful beadwork



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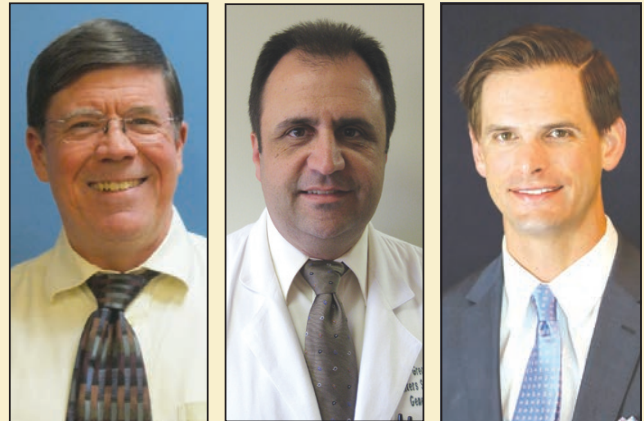
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Priscilla Collette

the collector, artist & discoverer

STORY KATHRYN OGDEN

PHOTOS GRANT MERRITT & NR ARCHIVE

Priscilla Collette was trained at Chapel Hill on the crest of nuclear medicine and ultrasound. She came to Columbus County to set up both the nuclear medicine lab and the ultrasound lab at Columbus County Hospital. She has spent her life devoted to her field and serving the people of Columbus County. She currently has her own ultrasound business and does private contracting.

Many people in Columbus County know Collette as the ultrasound lady. According to Collette, the name fits. “Well, on an average day at the hospital, we would see about 30 patients a day, five days of the week, and then take calls on nights and weekends.”

So that is thousands of heartbeats heard and thousands of unborn babies seen. When I asked Collette about how she chose ultrasound as a career she said it was a moment in her life where gut instinct took over.

“I was completing my training at Chapel Hill, and one of the doctors came in and spoke to us about ultrasound,” she said. He

asked if any of us were interested and my hand instinctively shot up. I just knew that was what I wanted to do.”

He handed her a stack of books and told her to start reading. This led Collette to Columbus County. Running the hospital lab led her to starting her own company. She also has trained other ultrasound technologists who went on to open their own companies. She is a skilled technician and a skilled teacher. Many of the women that Priscilla sees today, she saw them while they were in utero.

“I have been performing scans for so many years, I just know what to look for.”

Performing an ultrasound scan is no simple task. You have to not only know what you are looking for, but you have to look past what you actually see to find what you know is there. It is a skill that requires insight and instinct. These are two qualities that Collette comes by naturally. Her life outside of the medical field has contributed to her excellence in her field as an ultrasound technologist.

The Collector

Collette was born in Tennessee and moved to northern Virginia when she was three years old.

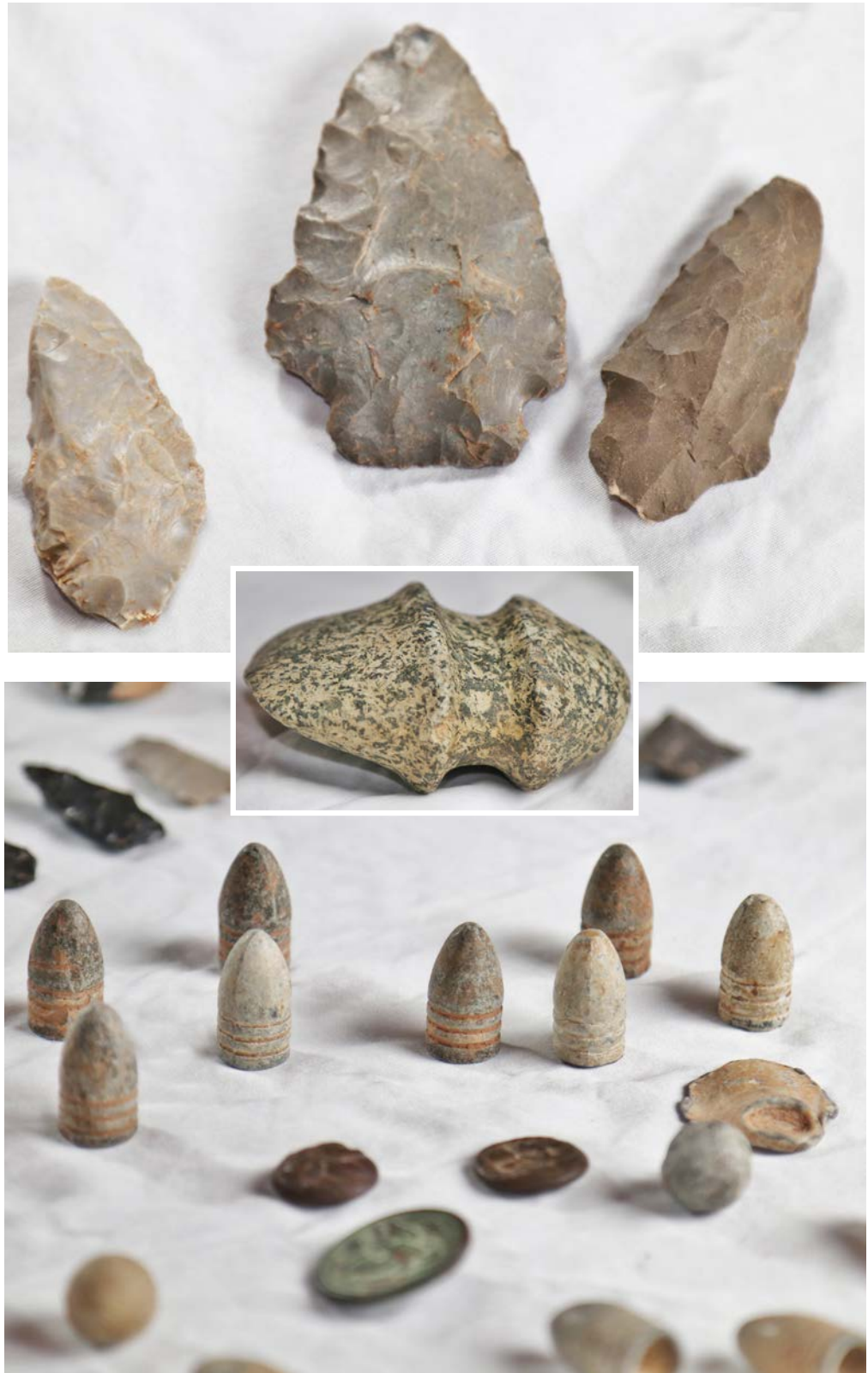
"I count northern Virginia as home," she said. "My father was a farmer who got into the grocery business, so he and my mother owned a grocery store. I have two brothers and a sister, so I am the youngest of four children. We are all musical and we love to get together and sing. They are good, hard-working, salt of the earth people."

It was on her family farm that her passion for collecting artifacts began. Her family's home sat upon a Civil War battlefield, The Battle of Cedar Creek, which was fought on October 19, 1864 and ultimately ended the Confederate invasion of the North.

"That battlefield was my front yard," Collette said. "I would spend my summers tromping across the hills looking for Civil War artifacts, which I did find. I also found Indian arrowheads. I was fascinated by Native American artifacts. I started at about 5 or six years old and I don't think I ever raised my head up from looking at the ground. My eyes were always fixated at the ground trying to find something."

When Collette attended college at East Tennessee State, she would visit her sister who had a farm that was previously a Native American encampment. They would spend their weekends searching and exploring the open fields in hopes of finding arrowheads, ancient grinders and pieces of tools. Some of her most exceptional finds are a 5 to 8 thousand year old stone axe head, a stone knife and a stone celt (axe-like tool). She also has a notable collection of Civil War bullets and Native American arrowheads.

Collette was directly connected to places where artifacts were there for the finding. It was in the natural order of things that she would become the collector that she is today and it makes sense that she would end up at Lake Waccamaw, where fossils lie dormant in the limestone waiting to be found.



The 3 projectile points at the top were found in northern Virginia and are most likely from the Archaic Period (8000-1200 BCE) and used in hunting game such as deer and elk. Below is a full-grooved axe head from the Early Archaic period, 8000 BCE. It was primarily a woodworking tool. Bottom are various Civil War lead bullets from the Battle of Cedar Creek in northern Virginia, fought in October 1864.

COLLECTOR, ARTIST & DISCOVERER

The Artist

Priscilla always had an interest in the arts and was always doing something with her hands. Her love of the natural sciences led her to carving.

"I started carving walking sticks about 10 years ago," she explained. "I would carve lizards and snakes and various animals like deer heads and then I would sell them."

About three years ago, a friend of Collette's gave her a book on how to carve cottonwood as a Christmas gift. The book came with a piece of cottonwood. Collette laid both to the side and thought, "I'll never do this." After a few months, she took a second look and thought, "I think I might enjoy this." Again, gut instinct took over.

"I started with faces," she said. "You have to get cottonwood from colder climates, so I would order mine from Canada or Montana. My carving just kept evolving and I began to create the little houses. I have done many, quite a few, over the years."

The houses Collette mentions are incredibly detailed carvings of mystical little fairy type homes that appear to have sprung up from the ground like mushrooms in a forest after a rainy day. They have detailed shingle roofs, beautifully carved doors and wonderful details like stained glass windows and tiny jewels decoratively placed. They reflect a sense of whimsy, tremendous creativity and technical skill. No two are alike and they can be displayed together in arrangements, on mantles, stairways — anywhere that art can be placed.

The faces she carves are mystical and filled with life, which is what every artist strives to achieve when creating. In her work there is a reflection of synchronicity between the artist and her medium. Her works are intuitively carved and are reminiscent of sculptures by Henry Moore. The forms for both the houses and the faces are organic and they flow with the natural progression of the wood. In a word, harmonious.



Collette started carving faces in cottonwood after receiving an instruction book from a friend.



The house forms take shape and flow harmoniously with the wood.





Reception for the whale fossil exhibit at the Lake Waccamaw State Park visitor center.

The Discoverer

In 2009, Collette and her friend Cathy Nielson were in Lake Waccamaw searching for fossils. They stumbled upon what they thought was a two-foot piece of cypress encased in limestone. They initially thought it might be part of a stump and ignored it. They began to find unique and somewhat strange fossils surrounding it. This prompted them to have the odd fossils identified. When some of the fossils were found to be over a million years old, their interest in the “cypress” was renewed. Collette had a gut feeling that the form jutting out of the limestone might be some sort of bone, due to its triangular shape.

“We snorkeled over it and just knew it was something. Finally the folks from Raleigh came and excavated it,” Collette said.

What they found is the pinnacle of Collette’s lifelong passion of collecting artifacts, her life long quest as a weekend archeologist. That supposed piece of cypress turned out to be the skull of a 2.75 million-year-old Balaenula Whale. The skull they uncovered, along with the help of divers and researchers from the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources and the N.C. Museum of Natural Science, is the most complete skull and jaw of a Balaenula whale in the world and the only one discovered in North America, one of only five partial specimens in the world. It is truly amazing that an archaeological find of this magnitude and significance was discovered in Lake Waccamaw in Columbus County. The Smithsonian-worthy Balaenula Whale is Collette’s El Dorado.

Asked if she had any defining moments in her life, she answered thoughtfully.

“I have two,” she said. “When my hand shot up to do ultrasound and when we found the whale.” This stood out as profound. As an ultrasound technologist, Collette peers into the future. She is showing life for the first time to the hopeful expectant mother. In her quest for artifacts, she is uncovering and preserving the past. With her art, she is creating in the present an artifact for the future. Her life is truly a continuum of collecting, art and discovery. Collette doesn’t plan on quitting ultrasound any time soon.

“But when I do, I know I won’t be bored!”

And maybe there is another whale out in Lake Waccamaw waiting to be discovered.



Lower jaw of the whale



Transporting the whale fossil from the lake to the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh for preservation.

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MURPHEY'S LAW AND THE GREEN SWAMP GHOST



STORY JEFFERSON WEAVER PHOTOS NASA Langley Research Center & NR Archive

For decades, an unlikely landmark in the Green Swamp frightened and fascinated pilots flying over the Columbus-Brunswick border. The shiny wreckage of a World War II fighter plane lay where it fell in the peat bog, barely obscured by pine saplings and gallberry, the tracks of its wheels still visible as late as the 1960s. The plane and its pilot, Lt. Wesley Murphey Jr., were the subject of legend for years.

The P-47 Thunderbolt – nicknamed the “Jug” by some fliers – was a single engine fighter plane, carrying six .50 caliber machine guns for use against enemy planes threatening heavy bombers. It also excelled in ground attack, using rockets and bombs against tanks, fortifications, trains, boats and trucks. Heavily armored, the Thunderbolt was the heaviest U.S. fighter plane in World War II, and had a reputation for getting its pilots home safely from battle.

Lt. Wesley Murphey Jr. was a Thunderbolt pilot, but one whose plane let him down.

Murphey was flying an older “B” model P-47 from Wilmington to a Florida air base in January 1944 when the plane began developing mechanical problems.

Shortly after takeoff from Wilmington, Murphey reported that his landing gear wouldn’t completely retract. His wingman noticed a broken hinge on Murphey’s right gear housing. Since the gear still would lower and lock, Murphey and the other pilot decided to continue on the first leg of their journey. They had dinner plans in Charleston, S.C. that evening, according to an interview with Murphey published shortly after his death.

The pair of planes was about 25 miles from Wilmington when both pilots realized those dinner plans would be cancelled.

Published accounts of the flight describe how Murphey’s engine suddenly caught fire. Flames were rolling out of the engine cowling and down the belly of the aircraft. The men immediately put out a distress call and turned back toward Wilmington, but the P-47 was rapidly losing altitude and wasn’t responding. Murphey began looking for a flat place to land the plane, while his wingman kept an eye on the flames.

The fire went out just after the planes made their 180 degree turn, but smoke was pouring from the engine. Murphey’s flight was over the Green Swamp, just west of the Columbus-Brunswick line, when the stricken plane headed for a clear savannah, a grassy field among

the pines and hardwoods of the swamp. Instead, he had to head for a nearby marsh.

Murphey later recounted how he brought the plane in for a conventional landing, and the plane came to a sudden stop, twisted to one side, and settled into the black mud and swamp grass.

He signaled his wingman that he was okay, and settled in to wait. It was just before sunset, and temperatures dipped below freezing that night. The area was so remote that Murphey spent nearly 24 hours in the woods before a team of volunteers hacked their way through to him. It then took hours for the men to make their way out.

Murphey went on to become an ace, shooting down at least five enemy aircraft in the Pacific theatre, but the Green Swamp Ghost, as the P-47 became known, wasn’t the last plane to worry his family.

Before changing to P-47s in 1942, Murphey flew P-39 Airacobras, learning the principles of ground attack, aerial combat and aerial reconnaissance. Returning from a training mission, his P-39 demonstrated a habit that was disliked both by American pilots and the Soviets who flew the heavily-armed little plane -- the engine on the P-39 inexplicably quit. Murphey made a hard landing, but survived.

Later, after transitioning into the P-51 Mustang, Murphey’s skills were again put to the test when the older “A” model Mustang he was flying had engine failure. He again walked away from what should have been a fatal crash.

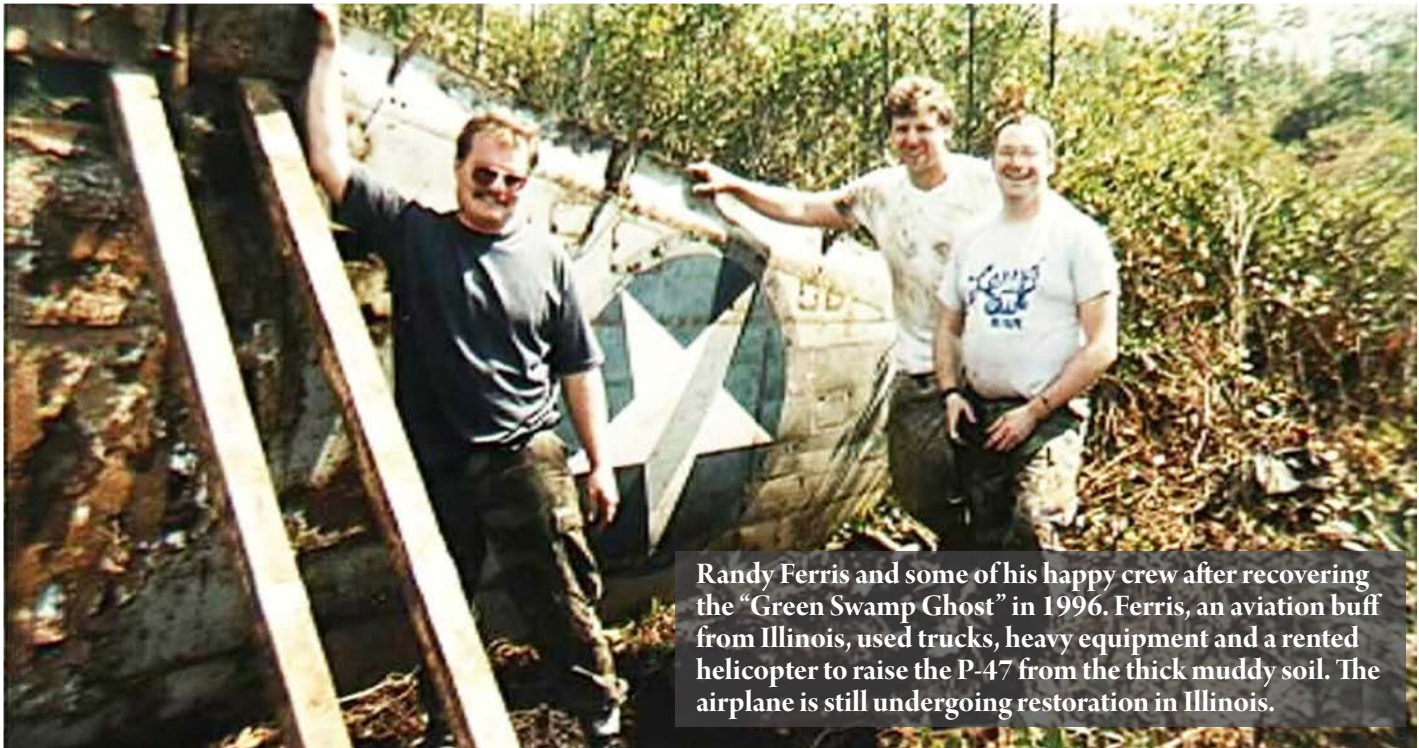
The Japanese Army came close to doing what engine failures never could when Murphey made it to the Pacific, near the end of the war.

Flying a P-51 Mustang, Murphey escorted B-29 heavy bombers striking the Japanese mainland. He and his squadron members were assigned to ambush Japanese airplanes on the ground, keeping the fighters from attacking the heavy bombers overhead.

What Murphey and his comrades didn’t know was that the Japanese placed huge “boobytraps” along the runways in an attempt to shoot down the American ground attack planes. One of these devices exploded about 50 feet under Murphey’s plane, almost destroying it.

The pilot managed to head for the ocean, where he hoped to crash land, then signal search and rescue vessels. His P-51’s windshield was covered in oil, and the engine was threatening to shut down, but he kept nursing the plane until he was out of Japanese air space.

Murphey confirmed that the rescue personnel knew his location



Randy Ferris and some of his happy crew after recovering the “Green Swamp Ghost” in 1996. Ferris, an aviation buff from Illinois, used trucks, heavy equipment and a rented helicopter to raise the P-47 from the thick muddy soil. The airplane is still undergoing restoration in Illinois.

and were en route, and prepared to bail out of his failing plane. There was only one problem – his canopy was jammed by a piece of shrapnel.

Murphey had no choice but to keep flying. He eventually managed to bring the plane in for a safe landing at Iwo Jima. The engine fell apart before he could even get the plane off the runway.

The pilot survived the war, and remained in the Air Corps as it became the U.S. Air Force. It’s not surprising, considering his experiences, that Murphey became a training pilot of some renown. He died in 2007 in Sioux Falls, S.D.

During World War II, the military generally recovered even the smallest pieces of downed aircraft, and in most cases, paid damages to property owners where planes went down. The Green Swamp, however, defied efforts to recover the P-47, and the plane was left in its marshy grave.

For decades, the shining aluminum remains of Murphey’s P-47 were a landmark in the Green Swamp. Numerous pilots spotted the crash and reported it, fearing a plane had recently crashed in the area.

By 1996, area around the plane crash was owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy, but logging roads and hunting trails had long since changed the landscape. Canals were dug immediately after World War II to improve drainage and allow access to the vast tracts of timber.

The improved access to the swamp and a love of vintage aircraft brought Randy Ferris from Marengo, Ill., in 1996. Ferris and a crew of family, friends and paid workers chopped their way through the swamp to the crash site, and, using a helicopter and heavy trucks, recovered the plane. The parts were taken back to Ferris’ home in Illinois, where the plane is still undergoing restoration.

Columbus County has no historical markers, and few official records, relating to the air crashes that occurred here during the Second World War.

Even the most notable and noticed memorial, the Green Swamp Ghost, has disappeared, leaving no signs and few memories of how the luckiest pilot in the Air Corps came to spend an uncomfortable night in Columbus County, creating an unusual and little known footnote in the history of World War II.

Sources:

News Reporter archives, U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency, Wilmington Star-News, High family records, “Fighting with the Filthy 13”, “Very Long Range P-51 Mustang Units of the Pacific War” by Carl Molesworth.

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A photograph of a body of water with green vegetation in the foreground and two wooden posts in the middle ground. The water is a deep blue, and the vegetation consists of many small, green, oval-shaped leaves. The two wooden posts are light-colored and weathered, standing upright in the water. The overall scene is bright and clear.

Hurricane Florence. The Water. Everywhere.

Citizen scientists given the title of water quality monitors
test the water in Lake Waccamaw.

STORY & PHOTOS SARAH CRUTCHFIELD



Chief water quality monitor Jo Wayman looks over test results.



Citizen scientist David Scott retrieves a water sample from Big Creek.

If you were anywhere near Lake Waccamaw during or right after Florence, the pungent smell is most likely what stands out in your mind. Many residents and visitors alike were wondering, “What got into the water?” and “How safe is our lake now?”

There is a group of local volunteers who test the water in Lake Waccamaw biweekly. They are given the title, water quality monitors, or as they like to be called, citizen scientists.

“It sounds impressive doesn’t it?” chief water quality monitor Jo Wayman joked.

The water quality testing is part of a larger program, Waccamaw Riverkeepers, out of South Carolina. “Their main goal is to monitor the quality of the water coming into the river,” Wayman said. There are testing sites from Lake Waccamaw, along the

river to where it enters the Atlantic Ocean.

However, fluctuations in test results are expected after events such as the significant rainfall obtained by Hurricane Florence.

“The program started in South Carolina in 2006 and expanded into North Carolina to include Lake Waccamaw in 2011,” Cara Schildtknecht, the Waccamaw Riverkeeper, said.

October 24 was the first water quality testing day since Hurricane Florence.

“After an event like Florence, we expect to see decreased water quality,” Schildtknecht said.

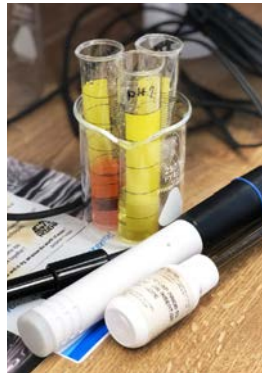
They test four key elements of the water; pH level, which for Lake Waccamaw should be neutral; turbidity or how clear the water is; conductivity, which is the water’s ability to pass electrical flow; and lastly, for nitrates, nitrites, ammonia and bacteria.

These individuals test the lake water on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month in four different locations. “The locations were chosen because they are located in different parts of the lake,” Wayman said.

The first location is Big Creek, located on Bella Coola Road, and it is one of the main creeks that feed into the lake. “[Big Creek] is where the



Rosemary Dorsey and Steuart Link, Julie Stocks and Amanda Worley test the water at the dam.



The testing probes are calibrated to assure accurate results.



In the lab at Lake Waccamaw State Park, Jo Wayman records results from turbidity testing.



Citizen scientists Jo Wayman, Donna Scott, David Scott, Steve Smith and Grant Egley plan water quality testing for four different locations.



Steve Smith pours a sample from Big Creek to be used at the lab for additional testing.



Grant Egley moves the probes around the water sample to mimic the natural flow of water.



Volunteers monitor ammonia levels in the lake water.

water drains from the swamp and the lake gets its water,” Wayman said.

The next location is on Lake Shore Drive near Maple Street. “The reason we chose this location was because of its proximity to a major drainage ditch. If there is a lot of fertilizer run off, we will be able to measure it here,” citizen scientist Donna Scott said.

The third location is on Canal Cove Road near the Wildlife Boat Landing. “This location was chosen because it measures the canal and can monitor the effects from neighboring farms,” citizen scientist Julie Stocks said.

Lastly, the dam at Lake Waccamaw, which also serves as the head of the Waccamaw River, is tested.

There are two additional testing sites in North Carolina, near Crusoe and Pireway, along the river.

After testing Oct. 24, the only item that was elevated was ammonia. It was elevated at three of the four testing sites.

“We see high nutrients (ammonia,

nitrate) which is the result of stormwater runoff,” Schildtknecht said. The only ammonia test that came back normal was Big Creek.

In early October, *The News Reporter* reported on fish kills and low oxygen levels in the Waccamaw River in Pireway and Crusoe. It looks as though the oxygen levels continue to be low in the lake. At the dam site, the oxygen level registered at 93% and typically it reads 110%. At Big Creek, the oxygen level was at 10% and it usually runs at 17%. However, these can also be explained.

“We often see lower dissolved oxygen, sometimes so low that it can result in fish kills,” Schildtknecht said. “This is due to the increased organic matter (leaves, plants, etc.) in the system carried into the waters from flooding.”

However, fluctuations in test results are expected after events such as the significant rainfall obtained by Hurricane Florence. “The riverkeepers

are more concerned with anomalies in readings when they can’t explain them than when they can, like with Hurricane Florence,” citizen scientist Rosemary Dorsey said.

The citizen scientists will continue to test the water to see when it returns to normal.

“Because floodwaters were moving downstream so quickly, a lot of flushing has already occurred,” Schildtknecht said.

If you are interested in joining this group of citizen scientists, there is always room for more. “The water quality monitoring program in North Carolina is powered by volunteers. We welcome anyone who wants to get involved in protecting the Waccamaw through volunteering,” Schildtknecht said. If you are interested in joining these citizen scientists contact Jo Wayman at jolwayman@gmail.com or Cara Schildtknecht at riverkeeper@winyahivers.org.



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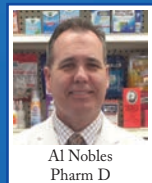
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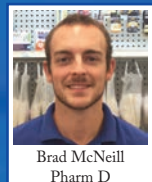
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WILL DORN

GOING THE DISTANCE

STORY DAN BISER
PHOTOS GRANT MERRITT

Will Dorn grew up with a love for running. Lots of it. Miles and miles of it.

In his youth and as a member of the West Brunswick High School cross country and track teams, Dorn spent many hours of his training on the sands of Ocean Isle Beach.

He spent his college days on the campus of Appalachian State in Boone, where he continued to run as a favorite hobby, but he was running on a much different terrain than back home on the Brunswick beaches.

“Running in the mountains, often on snow and ice, was a new experience, but it made me appreciate running even more,” he said.

While doing his practice teaching at Avery County High School in Newland, he became a volunteer coach for the school’s cross country team. It was then that he decided to become not only a teacher, but also a running coach.

“It was something I had wanted to do since I was at West

Brunswick, said Dorn, who is now in his ninth year as a member of the faculty at Whiteville High School.

At Whiteville High, the 30-year-old Dorn has taught both Spanish and American history.

During his first year, he was able to get some early support and a fairly good turn-out to start cross country teams for both boys and girls. He was also given the position of the girls track and field team coach, which competes during the spring.

For the past four years, he has been coaching year-around as he is now in charge of the winter indoor track program.

Success has come frequently for Wolfpack cross country as the girls team has won the last six Three Rivers Conference championships, and the WHS boys team won its first conference title this year.

In 2014, the Whiteville girls finished runner-up in the Mid-East Regional at Cary. That team was led by Madison Creech, Grace Morningstar and Margaret High. The fall sport of cross

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country is run on a 5 kilometer (3.1 miles) designated course. Scores are registered by the lowest point total of finishers (first place gets one point, second place two points and on up).

When he introduced cross country to WHS in 2010, the sport became the first of its kind in Columbus County. The first year or so, he didn't have a strong turn-out.

"A lot of the students had never heard of the sport, and those who had really were not that interested. I guess you can say I've done most of my cross country recruiting in the hallway."

It got to where he tried to get every student he spoke to interested in trying the sport.

"Of course in the fall, there is football and soccer for the boys, and volleyball and tennis for the girls, so running cross country had not been the top of the list those first few years, he said.

The WHS cross country squads compete in the Three Rivers Conference along with St. Pauls, Red Springs, South Robeson and Fairmont in Robeson County as well as East Bladen and West Bladen.

Most weekly conference events are run at Luther Britt Park in Lumberton while Whiteville has hosted occasional meets at Whiteville City Park, Southeastern Community College and most recently at Whiteville Country Club.

WHS cross country runners undertake their training on the streets of Whiteville. Many times, passing motorists can see Dorn running right along with his athletes.

"It's worked out that I get in a lot of my own training while running with them," said Dorn, who takes part in various runs and road races throughout the year.

Dorn encourages his athletes to set goals and to stay with them. "It's not as much about going out and winning championships as it is being dedicated and meeting goals - just like in the classroom," he said.

Just like in his running and coaching, Dorn is a very high energy and entertaining teacher at WHS.

During his first four years on the WHS faculty, he taught Spanish. After that he taught four year of history, and he has moved back to Spanish this year.

"It's a little bit of a transition, but I enjoy teaching both subjects. I love the opportunity to be with the students and I try to get all of them involved in the curriculum as much as possible, hoping to make learning both enjoyable and interesting.

WHS junior Jalen McMillian, who holds the boys school record in cross country this fall, said cross country running became a new outlet for him when he joined the team as a freshman last fall.

"It's a sport where hard work can really pay off, said McMillian, who along with sophomore teammate Brandon Nguyen competed in the state 2A meet on Nov. 3 in Kernersville.

"Coach Dorn has really helped me develop as a runner," Nguyen said.



Dorn in the classroom at Whiteville High School.



Bryce Faircloth, Jalen McMillian, Brandon Nguyen, (back row) Tylor Phillips, Jackson Friese, Jamias Black, Alexander Scott, James Spurgeon



Coach Dorn, Maria Rojas, Shanekera Faulk, Ashley Dinh, Fatima Reyes, Alex Bellamy, Brooklyn Slater

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STORY & PHOTOS JANNA SASSER

Hurricane-force winds were demolishing the barn at the Gerald Green farm as Esther Collier embroidered its red tin roof and wood plank walls on a patch of cloth. What's now an abandoned relic stands in the patchwork as it did in 1900 in its prime, with wooden barrels ordaining its outskirts and budding trees sprucing the grounds.

Always an artist at heart, one might call the retired school teacher now a professional at her craft. She's also one of several women — along with the occasional man — who meet throughout the year to design and embroider quilt patches that illustrate the personality, history and complexity of their home grounds.

Several guilds are dedicated to sharing history and culture, but few groups have taken on the challenge of defining their county through quilts.

"When I retired in 1991 it was suggested we start Columbus County Fair quilts," Collier explains. "I like to sketch and I like to sew, so it was a happy match."

Many quilt blocks are completed solely by Collier — which may seem a small feat considering the approximately four-by-four inch canvas, but the process often includes sketching the design first, then replicating it in thread on the quilt square.

Some, however, are painted or pressed on, revealing old photographs and faces, or created with the help of hundreds of grade-schoolers who leave a thumb print and name.

Several others are completed in collaboration with friends, local artists and community members who have contributed a few or several thousand stitches, lending a variety of styles and techniques to each quilt.

Fragments of county history are carefully presented in each patch — some facts that may catch longtime locals and history enthusiasts by surprise.

"The first set of triplets born in Columbus County were born to a woman who thought she couldn't have children, and in two years she bore five," Collier says, pointing to the record carefully stitched in cursive letters.



Collier prepares at her county fair exhibit for fellow quilters to finish a project.

There are squares noting the history of the layout of Whiteville in 1810, details of the early 19th-century Marsh Castle that the town would eventually develop around, and local structures restored with the help of General Lee.

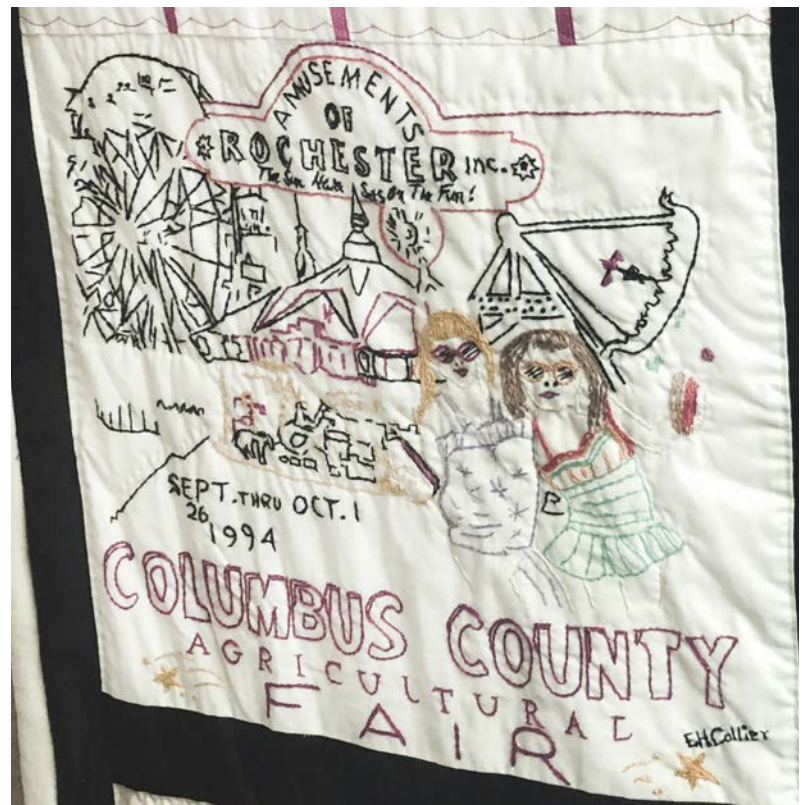
Inevitably, there are squares capturing the delicate handiwork and imagination of those who have passed — some, too soon to see their square added to the patchwork.

“This patch, the mother and father were killed in a wreck right after they did this for me,” she says. Next to it is a patch showing a one-story house surrounded by tall pines created by another couple, who were killed with their daughter shortly after giving the finished embroidery of their home to Collier.

“Quilts, to me, should have a meaning,” she says. “It bothers me to see people throw them on the sand because of the work that goes into them, and no one knows unless they’ve made one. It’s their heart and their soul.”



The Gerald Green barn sketched and stitched by Collier.



A patch stitched by Collier representing the 1994 county fair.



One of the first barns decorated with quilt squares in Adams County, Ohio, where the quilt trail originated.

Don O'Brien Photo

One simple square may take seven hours to embroider, while more detailed designs may have more than 25 hours of work put in, Collier explains. Her displayed quilts typically contained 16 squares.

“Last night I did a sketch, and that’s what I’d like for the fair book cover to be next year,” she says. “I paint or sew or do something every day, honey.”

The Quilt Trail

It’s no surprise that Collier is helping pioneer another artistic project for Columbus County, and one that combines several of her favorite pastimes: quilt trails, or routes through scenic regions taking participants to view vividly painted quilt “blocks” installed on barns, homes or buildings.

The idea behind quilt trails started in Ohio, when Donna Sue Groves decided to spruce up an old barn for her mother, a celebrated quilter. It was a simple idea: hang a plywood square painted to look like a traditional quilt block.

The idea didn’t stop with one square. In 2001, along with her neighbors, Groves created a driving trail of squares hung on barns throughout Adams County, intending for the colorful painted “barn quilts” or “quilt squares” to attract tourists to stop and spend money on gas, food or local gifts.

Today more than 40 states have organized quilt trails. The highest concentration is found in western North Carolina, with

more than 200 quilt squares on nine or more official trails. One of the most easterly barn quilts can be found in Williamston, as part of the Tar River Quilt Trail. Local artists can partner with community members who’d like to be part of the trail — or who’d simply like to display a design on their home or other building — to design and paint a square.

Most are made of simple geometric shapes that include large blocks of color, making them easy to spot from a distance. Some are traditional patchwork designs replicated in paint, while others are created from scratch and symbolic or whimsical.

Each pattern is named based on the history, land, building or family it is associated with, and every square is unique — no duplicate designs allowed.

“This one represents the Columbus County Quilt Trail, and I’m going to put stars on it for all the locations of hosts,” Collier notes, anticipating increased participation as momentum moves toward the eastern part of the state. She looks forward to displaying her own quilt square, symbolic of her family structure, on her home.

Still early in the works, the scenic routes one can find in the North Carolina mountains may soon be rivaled by quilt trails extending toward the state’s coast, including Columbus County — each brightly painted block unique with its own story to tell, a lot like Collier’s quilts.



A pattern painted for the quilt trail by Collier symbolizes her and her husband, with Christ, and their three children.



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HISTORY BUFF MAKES LOCAL HISTORY COME ALIVE



STORY MARGARET HIGH
PHOTOS GRANT MERRITT &
LAKE WACCAMAW DEPOT MUSEUM

Joseph Williams looks like he comes from the historic era he loves talking about. His mustache and flowing brown hair resemble the age of monarchies. Dress him in robes and add a crown, he could be the reincarnation of an English king.

Maybe that's what drove Williams to his love for history.

The senior at Appalachian State University is pursuing a bachelor of science degree in history and is also a Whiteville High School alum returned home for the past two summers, much like the figures he gave presentations on at the Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum. The way his brown eyes come to life when referring to the *Bohemian Girl* or the French Revolution prove he was a perfect match for the little slice of Columbus County history safely guarded a few hundred meters away from the lake shoreline.

Williams never expected himself to be returning to his home county for an internship after his first year in college. He was always a history buff with a love for local stories, but he didn't see any opportunity to blend his passions until he

met with Karen Gore.

Gore, who was director of the Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum during his internship, quickly noticed Williams' talent for making history come alive.

He grasped dates and names quickly. He was an energetic, youthful voice that captured the attention of museum visitors.

Together, they created an opportunity for Williams to teach and learn.

It almost started by accident. Williams began his job at the depot, watching Gore give tours while manning the front desk. One day, Gore needed Williams to give the tour.

"I began giving tours, which was a fun experience," Williams says. "Karen Gore picked up on that and she was inspired by that, and after a week or so she asked me if I would be willing to give a lecture or presentation of some sort at the depot museum."

So he did.

Williams' first presentation was about Samuel Chatham Potts, a local celebrity at Lake Waccamaw for being a man of many talents. Most notably, Mr. Potts owned the

Bohemian Girl, one of the first steamships to come to the lake.

Potts is remembered in local oral history as the personal telegrapher of Robert E. Lee, former commander of the Confederate States Army.

After researching the story, Williams found nothing connecting Mr. Potts to the memorialized commander. Mr. Potts was a telegrapher during the Civil War, but the only connection he had to Robert E. Lee was potentially two telegraphs from General Wade Hampton III to Lee. The official records indicate a Mr. Potts, but nothing clearly indicated Samuel Chatham Potts played a part in the messaging.

"That's a very tenuous connection for me to make," Williams says. "As much as I would like to believe it, the way I have rationalized it is that Mr. Potts, on this one occasion, handled a telegram written by Robert E. Lee."

It took Williams two months of digging to find unconvincing evidence, but it was enough to rally 70 people to attend his summer seminar in 2017.



Second from the left is Sam Potts and his wife Louise at a Lake Waccamaw dockside party



Captain Sam Potts standing next to the *Bohemian Girl* February 10, 1886.

“I think it shows that people are interested in hearing about their own history,” Williams says. “I understand that it can be difficult to access some of this information, given the case that this is local history.”

Other projects Williams took on during his internship included transcribing 14 issues of “Kin’Lin,” a Hallsboro High School magazine published from 1970-1985. The magazine provided written accounts of local oral history, something Williams finds to be very valuable.

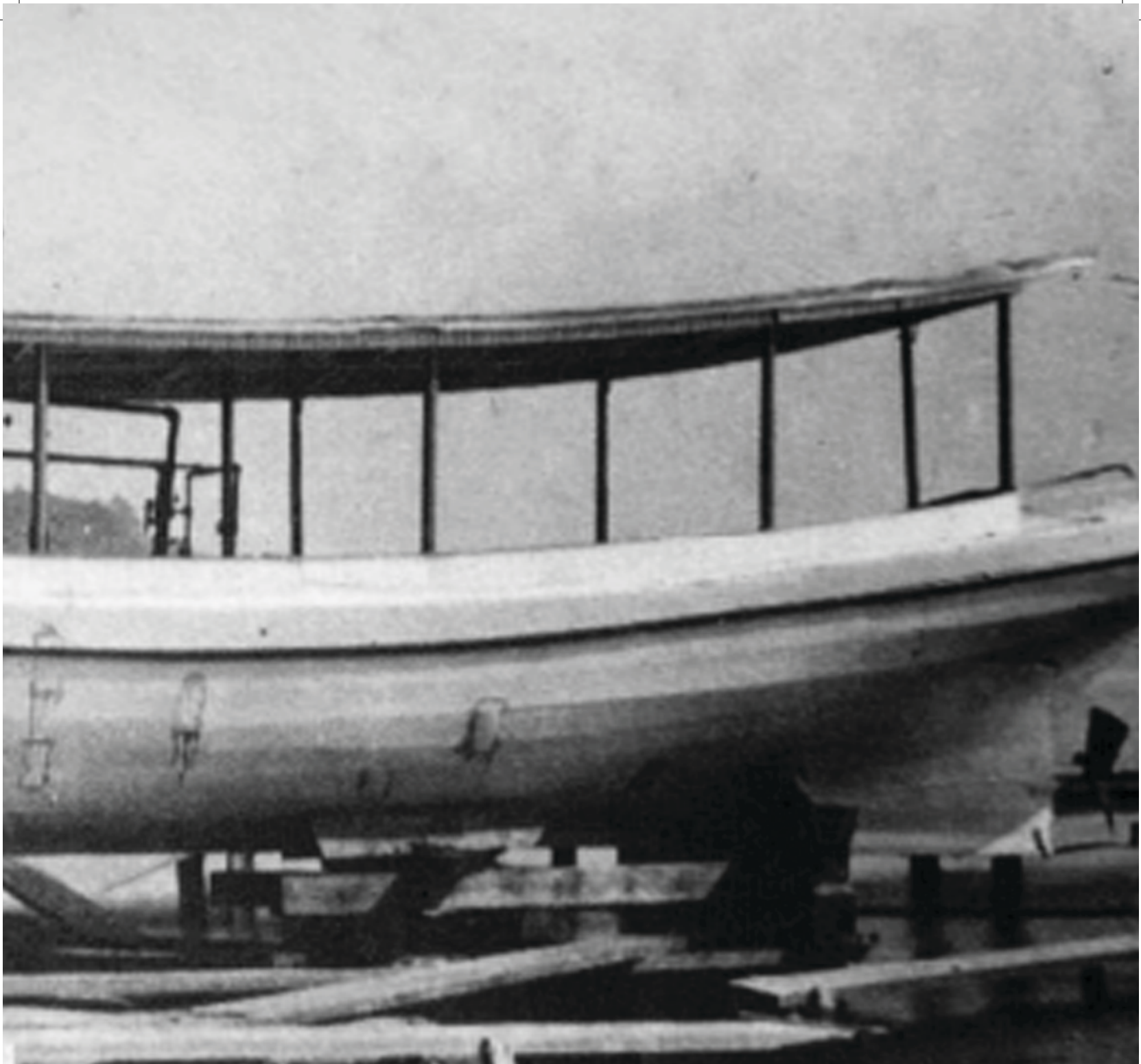
The hours Williams spent for his internship may sound like a lot of tedious labor to some, but for Williams, it took Williams two months of digging to find unconvincing evidence, but it was

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spent making the past come alive.

Despite excruciatingly detailed searches, like the case of Mr. Potts, it's the countless hours spent digging for information that has Williams hooked on history.

"I suppose it just has to be a love for the discipline," Williams says. "That's something that is to be expected with the nature of historical inquiry, that not everything will be spelled out for you. Sometimes you have to persevere in spite of the many roadblocks that you will encounter over the course of your research."

Roadblocks include a distorting of truth in oral history versions, which contradict primary documents that actually nail down names, times and places.

That can be said for the story of Dr. Jean Jerome Prospier Formy-Duval, the subject of Williams' 2018 Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum presentation.

Williams came to find out the legend of Jean Formy-Duval is rich and full of exaggeration. The oral history passed throughout generations told about a French man who escaped the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution and was one of the first settlers in Lake Waccamaw.

Formy-Duval was a friend of King Louis XVI, the king of France going into the French Revolution. Because of Formy-Duval's close ties to the king, once the Revolution happened, he was to be killed by a firing squad.

MAKING LOCAL HISTORY COME ALIVE

Formy-Duval and others lumped into meeting their final destiny plotted their escape by tampering with the execution. They figured out a way to swap out the real gunpowder with a non-explosive powder ahead of time and put pig's blood in their shirts to make it look like they had been shot. When they were brought in public for execution, some of their friends, posing as the firing squad members, shot the guns without explosives inside, and the pig's blood surrounding the conspirators after was enough to convince the crowd that justice had been served.

Formy-Duval made it out to the woods and was reunited with his wife before locals recognized their faces. They escaped to Haiti, then a French colony. How Formy-Duval made it from Haiti to Lake Waccamaw always gets a bit hazy, but he somehow finds himself establishing a home in the Columbus County swampland.

"So, as it turns out with legends, most of the stuff is quite mythical," Williams says.

The supposed firing squad meant to kill Formy-Duval was credited as the Citizen's Committee, a non-existent group with

a somewhat similar name to the Committee of Public Safety, founded in 1793. Formy-Duval left France in 1789.

"So that kind of complicates the legend in and of itself," Williams says.

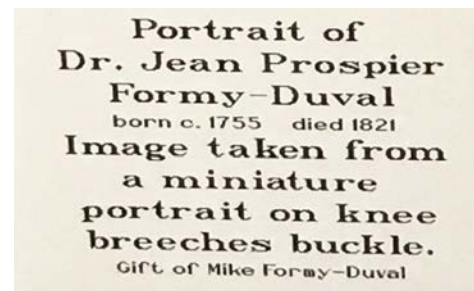
Lake Waccamaw's Depot Museum is never short on interesting history and Williams is happy to add his exciting commentary to the lesson. It might be surprising to find the most knowledgeable historian in the area to be a 21-year-old college student, but then again, Williams is full of surprises.

In August 2018 Williams was presented with the Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum's David Neill Powell Endowment Scholarship after his program on "The Formy-Duval Legend." The scholarship was presented by Jane Scott Bell, the niece of David Neill Powell, and her daughter, Elizabeth Powell Scott Kelly.

The Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum is located at 201 Flemington Avenue in Lake Waccamaw. The museum is open Wed - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through the holidays. For more information call 910-646-1992.



Portrait and personal items from the Dr. Jean Formy-Duval collection at Lake Waccamaw Depot Museum.



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Pictured at the scholarship presentation are Nancy Sigmon, Elizabeth Powell Scott Kelly, Joseph Williams and Jane Scott Bell.

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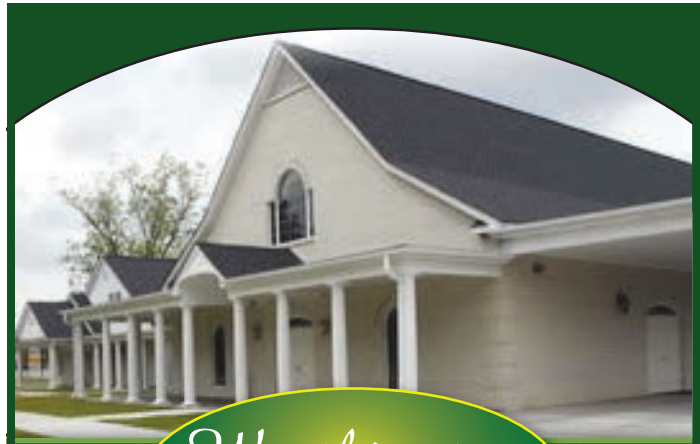


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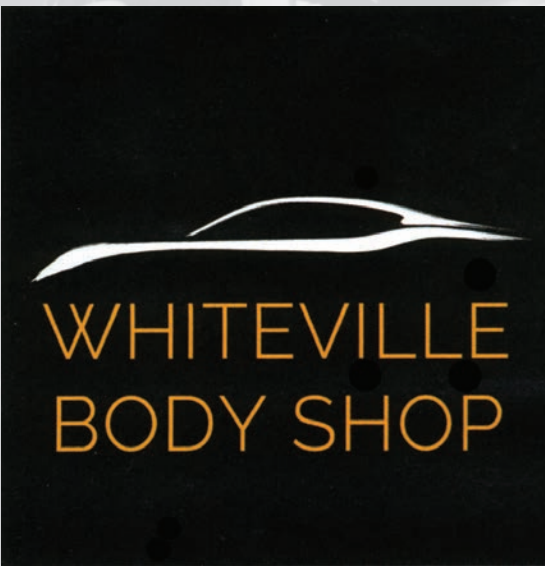




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Southeastern Oratorio Society will present G.F. Handel's Messiah, Part I, December 17 at First Presbyterian Church, 511 N. Thompson St., Whiteville. The free one-hour concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Soloists and a professional orchestra will perform with the local singers.



82nd Annual Meeting &

Mini-Business Expo

Monday, January 28, 2019

5:30 pm ~ Northwood Assembly

Grand event

The Columbus Chamber of Commerce & Tourism will celebrate 82 years of community development, support, and advocacy at the annual meeting and business expo Monday, January 28, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at Northwood Assembly. This event is a good opportunity to network with over 200 business leaders. Showcase your business by decorating a table at the banquet. Call the Columbus Chamber for details at 910-642-3171 or visit thecolumbuschamber.com



Always a crowd pleaser

Dancing with the Vineland Stars is February 23 at Vineland Station. This is a fundraising event to support the historic Vineland Station in downtown Whiteville. For more information, visit vinelandstationdepot.com



Music takes center stage

The Dr. Sharyn Edwards 41st Annual Piano Festival and Competition to be held at South Columbus High School March 1 & 2, 2019. The guest artist this year is Dr. Milton Laufer, Associate Professor and Director of Music at Western Carolina University. "Laufer has delighted audiences on four continents in prestigious venues from Lincoln Center to Tchaikowsky Hall." His concert will be Friday evening, March 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. The competition for 5 year olds through high school aged students will be Saturday, March 2. The artist concert is part of the Richard Burkhardt Fine and Performing Arts Series. The Festival is sponsored by the Columbus County Schools and SCC.



A trip back in time

Southern Farm Days is March 15 - 17, 2019 at Boys & Girls Homes Exhibition Center in Lake Waccamaw. Events and exhibits include a tractor parade, antique swap meet, children's games, Civil War demonstrations, craft vendors, farm and farm life activities, entertainment, wagon rides, wild west show and more. Visit southernfarmdays.com for more information.



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Learn more about your health and have some fun with the kids at the Columbus Regional Family Health Festival, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., March 30, 2019 at Vineland Station in downtown Whiteville. Educating the public on health resources that are available in our community is the main goal of the festival.

Vendors will be on hand to share their expertise along with a variety of activities such as Yoga, face painting, Children's inflatables and much more!

For more information about the event call 910-642-9303.



Golf for a good cause

The Captain's Choice tournament will begin with registration and lunch at 11 a.m., followed by a shotgun start at noon. The tournament is limited to the first 120 golfers registered.

Golfers from across the area are invited to participate in the Annual Columbus County Industrial Golf Tournament, hosted by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. The entry deadline is Friday, April 26, 2019. Call the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, 910-642-3171 or visit the website to register, TheColumbusChamber.com.



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THE LIFE OF A WOODSMAN

SHOTGUN ETIQUETTE

STORY **Bill Woodsman**

The South is a funny place, especially the rural South, far more so than the large cities. There are a lot of things that young men and, for that matter, young women should be able to do and recognize as being part of their proper upbringing as southerners: stand up when ladies come into the room, have correct table manners, understand and carry on polite conversation and always say thank you.

In addition to these social expectations is the hope that young men and women can handle and shoot a shotgun well. They will on occasion attend a dove shoot or a duck hunt, and it is certainly a source of embarrassment if the guest can't shoot a shotgun.

The ability to use a shotgun well is a learned experience and despite what a lot of southerners think, it is not learned by osmosis, but instead by picking up the shotgun and pulling the trigger, what I call practical experience. Too often we ruin young children by starting them off with a heavy gun that kicks severely, and they remain "gun-shy" for the rest of their lives. I, for one, believe that all boys and girls

should be started on shooting shotguns and learning the rules of safety at an age that is commensurate with their physical ability to handle the gun well and that is usually between 10 and 12 years of age.



I began teaching all my girls how to shoot at about 10 years of age with a .28 and a .410 gauge that kicked only slightly, and they learned how to handle the guns with reasonable safety and surprisingly good accuracy. The point behind all this is, teach a child how to shoot at flying targets, not the beer can or glass bottle "busting" that many of us old timers call "plinking," but at a real skeet range where the targets represent a flying object that is very similar to that of a flying bird.

Gentility is a thing of the past in a lot of places, and it is made up of a lot of different things. But I believe a southern gentleman or belle should be able to handle a shotgun with as much ease and aplomb as saying, "thank y'all."

THE HUNT

STORY **Mary Mac Ogden**

Southern culture is not an oxymoron. Home to grits, sweet tea, the SEC and deep religion, the South is a mecca of culture. Asheville is among the most cultured cities in the region and known for alternative lifestyles, drum circles and topless protests.

Like Asheville, I am at once southern and progressive and daily mediate the tension between old traditions and cultural change. This tension accented an experience I had with a custom long revered by my southern ancestors: hunting. My first duck hunt forced reconciliation between the traditions of my forefathers and the progressive values I support and marked a moment of clarity, introspection and change.

One December morning I left home at 5 a.m. with my 77-year-old father to duck hunt at a small bog alongside the highway. A lifelong hunter, his year started in September and ended in April, a calendar defined by hunting seasons, rituals, family gatherings and game feasts.

To Daddy, morning mists on a meadow or a pond affirmed his existence. His tonic was the black marsh bottoms of the Dismal Swamp, his staple the mid-September corn fields, his bible, the Shotgun News and his delight, a good gun. He grew up in the red clay hills of Georgia and spent his youth testing the boundaries of Mother Nature.

As a teenager, he worked at a pawn shop where he refinished gunstocks for a Jewish shopkeeper who paid him five dollars a day. He parlayed every dollar into a payment on a gun and eventually owned a small arsenal. He was a sportsman, the real deal, who spent every spare second in a field or marsh with his shotgun and dog. When afflicted with Parkinson's disease, he moved to Asheville. With no farm, hunting friends or dog, his seasonal rhythm faltered.

Not one to give up his passion, he found the bog one afternoon while driving around in search of a fallow field. For weeks he drove to the bog and watched various types of duck fly in and set on the water. When opening day of duck season arrived, I went along because he had no one else to hunt with.

That morning the bog was silent except for a few cracks from the ice on the trees. Setting up in the dark was 90 percent of the excitement. Daddy stood by an old log shed on the edge of the water, and I walked to the opposite side of the bog directly across from him where he told me to wait to shoot until instructed to do so. In silence we waited, listening to cows moo in the pasture nearby, the wind ripple the water and the quiet sounds of a winter morning.

At about 6 a.m., the ducks flew in and when daddy called out,

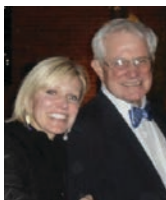
“Shoot!” I aimed, shot and killed a duck. With no retriever, I assumed the role and paddled a little dinghy parked on the bank to pick up the kill. Tears poured from my eyes as I pulled the duck from the water, beautiful and glistening in the dawn yet bleeding and dying from the shot. I did not want daddy to see me cry, but I was devastated.

Paddling back, I knew I was no hunter, but torn as I was, I also knew that morning on the bog was my way of helping him find closure to a dying tradition in his life. On the drive home, frosty fields zipped by. I smiled. Despite shooting the duck, I loved that cold morning standing camouflaged in the cattails and reeds, freezing and crying because I shared in the closing chapter of my father’s life. He lost hunting grounds, rituals and friends when disease led him to a place unfamiliar and void of his history. My giving him a little pleasure of company on the edge of a bog on a gray December morning offset the pain I felt for killing that duck. The real pain was the realization this was his final season of hunting, as Parkinson’s tremors rendered a steady shot impossible, the hunt and a good shotgun the casualties of changes unforeseen.

I reached across the console and squeezed his hand. Rings of smoke floated from his beloved root briar pipe as he looked out the car window, zipped up in an old Barbour jacket in need of oiling and a weathered wool Packer hat.

“I love you, Daddy.”

In that moment I understood the meaning of tradition, the mechanics of change and the sense of place a memory imparts. The epiphany was bittersweet. My first duck hunt was his last.



Dr. Mary Mac Ogden is a historian, writer and advocate in Asheville, N.C. She is a graduate of The St. Mary’s School in Raleigh, N.C. (‘85HS) and the University of South Carolina (PhD’11). Her research examines the politics of progress in the advancement of social and political justice in the United States South. She is a Guardian Ad Litem in North Carolina court system and has two daughters, Anabell and Mary Laci Motley.



“Bill Woodsman” was born in 1954 when eighth grader Billy Ogden created his nom de plume “Willie the Woodsman.” He wrote weekly hunting articles for his all boys junior high school in Macon, Georgia. When Dr. Ogden entered college and medical school, “Willie” matured into “Bill” as he has continued to write about the sports of hunting and fishing.

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THE SHORT ROW WE ARE NOT ALONE

..... PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN SMITH



Hurricane relief from near and far has met the many needs of Columbus County residents since Hurricane Florence. Far-away friends and sisters Jennifer Kamin Kulbersh and Heidi Kamin Enzor collected and shipped goods from the Jewish communities of Birmingham and Atlanta to *Community CPR*, a local non-profit. *Community CPR*, led by Wallyce Todd, connects people and resources in our area.

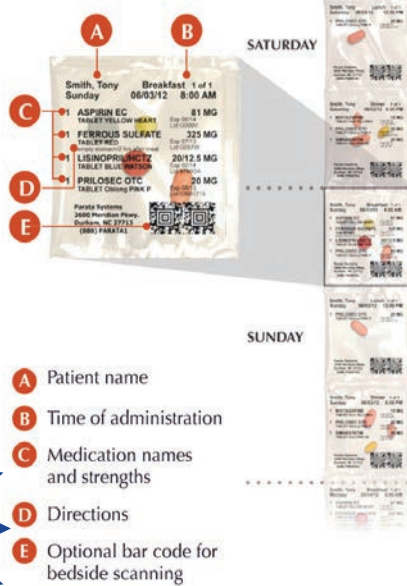


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**Medicine Mart
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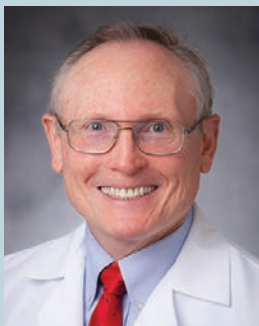
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Cardiology



Matthew Cummings, M.D.



William Herzog, M.D.

Cardiovascular/Thoracic Surgery



Charles Anene, M.D.



Terry Lowry, M.D.



Teresita Ruoff, P.A.



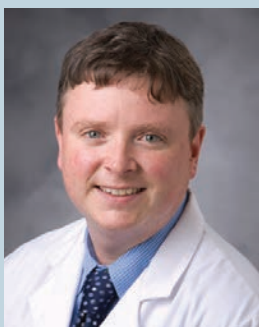
Sydney Short, M.D.



Don Metzger, P.A.



Zan Tyson, M.D.



Chris Walters, M.D.

Vascular Medicine



Chompunut Asava-Aree, M.D.

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