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INSIDE:



POWER SCAMMERS
Page 6



WINE CRAWL
Page 2

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ASK OLLIE — A DOG DISHES ADVICE

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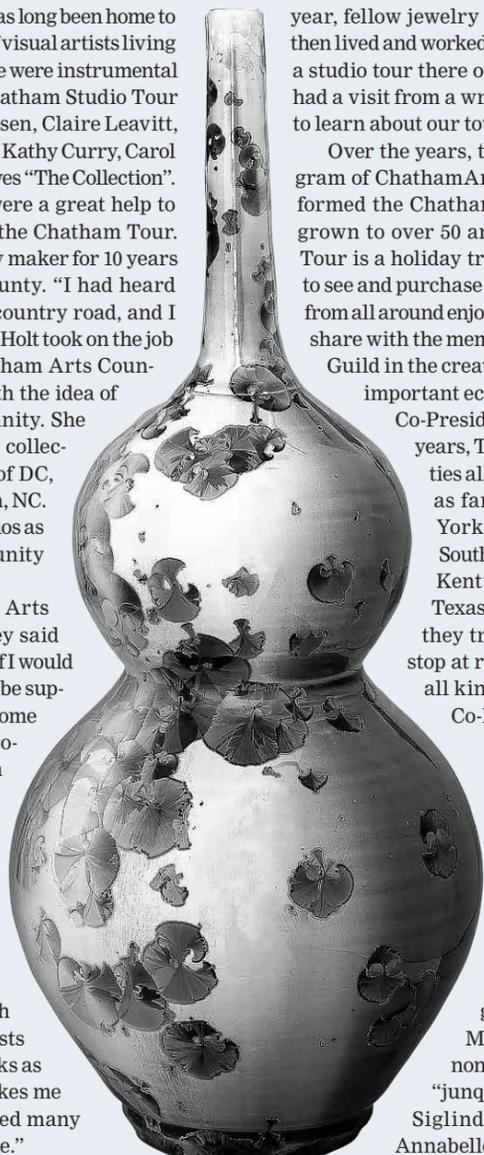
Chatham Studio Tour reaches Silver Anniversary

Chatham County North Carolina has long been home to a diverse array of artists. A group of visual artists living and creating in Fearington Village were instrumental in the organization of the first Chatham Studio Tour in 1993. The artists, Vidabeth Bensen, Claire Leavitt, Jackie Hammer, Fran Schultzberg, Kathy Curry, Carol Own and Rita Spina called themselves "The Collection".

"Those Fearington artists were a great help to me," says Cathy Holt, founder of the Chatham Tour. Holt had been a successful jewelry maker for 10 years when she moved to Chatham County. "I had heard that there were artists up every country road, and I wanted to meet them," she asserts. Holt took on the job of Executive Director of the Chatham Arts Council (now called ChathamArts) with the idea of fostering a vibrant artist community. She drew inspiration from an artists' collective she had visited just outside of DC, and an antiques center in Cameron, NC. She envisioned a tour of artist studios as a mechanism for building community among local artists.

Holt proposed the idea to the Arts Council Board of Directors. "They said there were no funds available, but, if I would raise the funds myself, they would be supportive" she recalls. She secured some starter funding from Central Carolina Community College, and began to talk to businesses. "I pointed out that artists are small business people, who attract visitors to other local business," Holt emphasizes. "On my own time, I began meeting with artists, to describe the idea of a tour, and get them involved." In 1992, the first Chatham Studio Tour launched with 32 artists. "Then, most of the artists had full time jobs and created works as avocation," Holt notes. "What makes me most happy is that the Tour helped many artists to pursue their art full time."

The Chatham Tour, first in North Carolina, became a model for other arts groups. The next



Vase by Allen Mccanless

year, fellow jewelry maker Monnda Welch, who then lived and worked in Orange County, patterned a studio tour there on the Chatham plan. "I even had a visit from a writer all the way from Boston to learn about our tour," Holt recalls.

Over the years, the Tour flourished as a program of ChathamArts, and in 2007 Tour artists formed the Chatham Artists Guild. It has now grown to over 50 artists. The Chatham Studio Tour is a holiday tradition, and an opportunity to see and purchase unique original art. Visitors from all around enjoy Chatham's rural beauty and share with the members of the Chatham Artists Guild in the creative process. "Our Tour is an important economic engine," notes Guild Co-President, Beth Goldston. Over the years, Tour visitors came from counties all around North Carolina, and as far away as New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona and California. "As they travel around Chatham, they stop at restaurants, gas stations and all kinds of local businesses," says

Co-President Beth Bale. Over the years of the Chatham Studio Tour, over 200 artists have opened their doors to the public. Guild members who have consistently participated include screen printer Vidabeth Bensen, potter Mark Hewitt, painter Carol Owen, sculptor Bill Moore, gourd and mixed media artist Martha Danek, painter Shannon Bueker, potter Joyce Bryan, "junque" artist Rita Spina, Potter Siglinda Scarpa and fabric artist Annabelle Stein.

TOUR CONTINUED, PAGE 6

For 2018, One Prediction and Two Suggestions

by Randy Voller

At the end of every calendar year prognosticators make predictions for the coming year and then disappear as we collectively forget whether they were right on the money or dead wrong.

For this holiday season I will make one prediction augmented by a short, two-item wish list of actions that I hope will occur in 2018 in Pittsboro and Chatham County.

Let's start with the crystal ball. This is not earth shattering, but based upon the election of President Trump and the speed and volume of the various revelations of sexual harassment in business, entertainment, and politics. I foresee that 2018 will be the "Year of the Woman" at the ballot box.

Some may call this the "Weinstein effect"; regardless, the #MeToo movement is a watershed moment for gender relations and a collective catharsis with staying power that is multigenerational and highly influential.

Consequently, America will see a wave of women who will step up locally, regionally, statewide, and across the nation to loudly proclaim that "enough is enough". Female leaders will push through forward thinking agendas that reflect less of a "Mars" approach to process and policy with an advent of "Venus" processes and policy implementation.

These Boomer, Gen-X, and Millennial women will be proactive about pay equity and parental leave, funding for education and training, women's health care, universal healthcare as well as other bread and butter issues that modern families and households in communities across our state and the nation have in common.

The days of the patronizing male patting the female constituent on the head as he "hears her pain" and then smacking her on her rear as she leaves his office are crashing to an ignominious end.

This will be a bright new future where the sunlight of transparency will incinerate the vampires who have survived far too long in civilized society utilizing clever non-disclosure agreements and large payoffs to hide their egregious behavior and insatiable appetites.

Say "goodbye" to Harvey, Roger, Bret, Kevin, Bill and their ilk. Say "hello" to feminist executives, community leaders, teachers, and nurses who will be changing communities across our nation.

Moving on from the one prediction, let's focus on what could move forward Chatham County and the Pittsboro in 2018:

With the growth and change we are witnessing in Chatham County and Pittsboro, the composition of the governing boards and



2018 CONTINUED, PAGE 6

'Greedonomics' and the importance of doing right

by Joe Jacob

On a recent hike along the Haw River with my Elon University canoe camping class, one of my students and I began discussing why he has chosen to major in political science. I asked him if it was his plan to some day run for public office. I was surprised when he said no. I then asked, "so why political science if you do not wish to be a politician". His reply seemed very mature for someone his age. He said that he thought politics was another way of being consciously aware of where you are in the world and where you hope to go. He said "life is all about making choices instead of having others make choices for you. You can choose to play the game of politics or you can choose to be unaware. Either way, choices are being made for you by those in public office." He went on to say, "You don't have to hold public office, but you had better do your best to influence how those in public office vote if you want what is best for you and those you care about."

This recent conversation reminded me of another conversation I had several years ago with Elon University students taking the course I teach in Alaska. Midway during a two-week, back-country, wilderness trip on the Kenai Peninsula, we stayed up until 2 a.m. discussing the condition of the world and what they perceived to be their future. Some time before turning in for the evening, I apologized to the students for the way my generation has failed them. I was particularly referring to the

issues of pollution, climate change, species extinction, racism, war, poverty and hunger. I will never forget when one of the students said "no, no. It is our time to step up to the plate and deal with the world as it is." I thought to myself at the time how more mature young people are today than when I was their age.

I often wonder how things have gotten the way they are. I am currently reading the book entitled "Asking for the Earth: Waking Up to the Spiritual/Ecological Crisis" by James George. The book was first published in Great Britain in 1995. Mr. George, a former Canadian Ambassador, writes that we cannot rely on politics, economics or technology for the fundamental changes needed to address the world's problems. He believes that our society is primarily dominated by commercialism and self-interest and it must change to one that is "based on our highest and best spiritual and moral values".

A local, nonprofit, volunteer organization recently conducted a series of scoping sessions where various stakeholders were asked what they would like to see happen with the Lower Haw River State Natural Area, the area on both sides of the Haw River from Bynum to Highway 64. I was invited to attend as someone with a business interest in the area. I expressed that my biggest concern for the State Natural Area was not an economic one, but rather an ecological one. The area is not large enough and the boundaries are not drawn correctly enough to maintain its ecological integrity. Someone

in the group then said that if the economics were right for the developers of Chatham Park, it might be possible to have the boundaries expanded and redrawn. It is not about economics I said. It is all about "greedonomics". How much do the investors really need to make in order to feel they have enough. There are more currencies in life than money. Where do spiritual and moral values come in to play? Who is making choices for the trees, the fish, the turtles and the birds. Do they count or are humans the only ones that matter?

Of course, you won't find the word "greedonomics" in the dictionary. It is a word I completely made up, but I think you probably get the idea. I would define "greedonomics" as the fear of not having enough. Seems like our values have been replaced by fear. Fear of what you might ask. Fear of not thinking that we have enough of what we want, not necessarily of what we need to survive.

We have got to find a new way of thinking. As Albert Einstein said after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "Now, everything has changed, except our way of thinking, and so we drift towards unparalleled catastrophe".

Joe Jacob, a Chatham resident for more than 30 years and a marine biologist by training, is president of The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co., www.hawrivercanoe.com; 336.260.6465. He worked for The Nature Conservancy for 20 years and served as Director of Science for TNC's Southeast Region.