

## Back-to-school strategies for self-employed artists

by Heather Allen

Is it too early to plan for fall? My summer-loving inner child says yes. But my part-time adjunct professor, full-time business owner-self says it's never too early to plan ahead.

First things first. There are still plenty of trips to the Outer Banks and late night stargazing opportunities to be had while summer fun is here. Which is why now is the best time to stoke the campfire on your art business before the next season officially begins.

Whether you come from a year-round or traditional school of thought, here are three ways to make the most of the back to school shift without putting a damper on your summer barbecue.

**1. Plan your life events.** Then, plan your business events. It was Louis Pasteur who asked, "Do you ever observe to whom the

accidents happen? Life favors only the prepared mind." While you may not be cramming for a chemistry exam with Professor Pasteur this fall, there will be times in which you wish you had more time! Do your future self a favor: plan out the events that bring you joy over the next five months, like Frisbee games and family events. Then, fill in your business activities as a means of supporting your life.

**2. Next, run your numbers, manifest abundance and be prepared to receive.** What comes directly after the back-to-school season? The holidays. And we both know they arrive earlier and earlier each year. That said, help your patrons and customers to give from the heart with a hand-stitched ornament, set of thrown bowls, or commissioned landscape painting. When you give people an opportunity to reduce headaches with early bird finds, you'll extend the benefits

of holiday sales in your studio.

**3. Keep the momentum high as you roll into the New Year.** Now, you may be thinking, "Gee, she's really getting ahead of herself—I thought we were just at back-to-school!" And you'd be right. I aim to help you ace the art of planning in your art business. Which is why I encourage you to set a goal of planning your marketing calendar six-months out.

Doing so is more of a habit than a chore. I like to take in a cup of Saturday morning coffee while flipping through the events section of the paper or browsing conference calendars online. But the real reason you'll benefit from planning six-months out is that no one else is! If there's a trade show you want to be juried into, a TEDx talk you want to speak at, or a class you want to teach at the arts center, get your bid in early to secure that seat.

To help you take action and reap big rewards, you can also join me this October 29 and 30 for Essential Edge Live, an annual planning and marketing retreat for arts professionals who want to nail down their marketing for 2016. For tickets, visit EssentialEdgeLive.com.

Whatever your post-summer dreams are, connect the dots between dreaming and living the dream with planning that keeps the lights on while you enjoy the glory days of the season.

*Heather Allen, MBA, is the author of "Let Your Creativity Work for You: How to Turn Artwork into Opportunity." As a college professor and socially-minded entrepreneur, she teaches practical marketing and small business essentials to creative entrepreneurs and artists. Get the online edge for your art business at www.HeatherAllenOnline.com.*

## A profile of Red Roots Farm

by Cheryl McNeil

It is always exciting when new farmers, often after honing their skills privately for several years, decide to take the plunge and become full-time farmers—bringing their vegetables or other farm produce to the public at market. Chatham Mills Farmers' Market has several such rising stars. One of those stars (currently in their second year of market farming) is Red Roots Farm.

Jason Butler and Kristen Scheckelhoff raise vegetables, herbs, and mushrooms on just half an acre of rich, red soil in the heart of Chatham County. Jason is a graduate of the CCCC Sustainable Agriculture Program and, among other endeavors, Kristen used to work as a bike mechanic, developing the kind of handy skills which prove invaluable for a farmer. Their enterprise began as a large garden in 2009 and, after producing so many great vegetables that they were giving much if it away, they decided to begin farming for market in 2014.

Jason and Kristen are committed to farming the land in a sustainable manner without the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. By utilizing strategies like good crop rotation, cover cropping, and the fostering of beneficial insect habitat, they strive to maintain soil fertility while creating as little impact on environmental resources as possible. Tractor use has always been minimal on Red Roots Farm with nearly all of the work being done with hand-tools.

They are excited to have recently acquired a walk-behind-tractor as this will allow them to step up their production without any serious negative impacts on soil health. They are planning on growing through the winter this year, using low tunnels in the field to protect their crops during the cold season. Low tunnels (versus one large greenhouse) are a great strategy for extending the season for winter vegetables while maintaining the mobility and flexibility that supports good crop rotation and soil management.

Red Roots is involved in three farmers'

### UPCOMING EVENTS AT CHATHAM MILLS FARMERS' MARKET:

- **FALL PLANT SALE ON OCT 3.** Many local nurseries are invited to the event! Learn about native plants and stock up on landscape and horticultural plants, bushes and trees.
- **HOLIDAY ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR ON NOV 7.** Meet the talented artists and crafts-people in our community and enjoy shopping for local and hand-crafted items for the gift-giving season.
- **THANKSGIVING TASTING ON NOV 21.** Enjoy delicious foods and get recipes from our farmers using the great seasonal produce available for creating your Thanksgiving dinner.

markets in the Pittsboro area. They also fill occasional orders for local restaurants, like Oakleaf and Angelina's. Some of their most important crops are Shishito peppers and shitake mushrooms as well as several winter staples, like beets, carrots, and kale. Red Roots Farm is currently located at Silk-Hope Winery and on several borrowed plots around the community, but Jason and Kristen are hoping to find their own piece of Chatham red earth in the future to give Red Roots Farm a permanent home. You will find Jason and Kristen and their great variety of produce

at Chatham Mills virtually every Saturday offering fresh, seasonal produce and happy to share more with you about their story, their projects, and their farming philosophy.

The Chatham Mills Farmers' Market is on Saturday mornings on the lawn of the historic Chatham Mills Building in Pittsboro. Market hours are 8-1, winter market hours (starting in November) are 10-1. Find us at [chathamillsfarmersmarket.com](http://chathamillsfarmersmarket.com)

*Cheryl McNeill is the manager of the Chatham Mills Farmers' Market. You can contact her at [cmfmanager@gmail.com](mailto:cmfmanager@gmail.com)*

## CHATHAM PARK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The "how we grow" discussion allows for needed flexibility in the debate and provides a path to the future.

And by using that filter, the community can focus on questions and decisions about density, vertical spaces versus horizontal sprawl, low impact development strategies, water and sewer infrastructure, alternative

energies, parks and recreation, green spaces, smart grid technology, broadband needs, arts and culture, transit, schools and education, the community college system, bolstering existing businesses, investing in the downtown, rural buffering, support for the agricultural community and ensuring that growth brings a balance of residential, institutional and commercial investment to the community.

Furthermore, by utilizing good public policy tools to implement win/win strategies as opposed to win/lose strategies, leaders will naturally gravitate to more innovative solutions such as a special tax overlay district for Chatham Park rather than the simple duality of the "Town is the regulator" and "the applicant is the regulated". Given the nature of what is at stake, a real constructive dialogue and exchange is vital and will make the difference between creating something worthy of our community as opposed to pointless obstructionism or suing our way to mediocrity.

A simple shift of attitude and strategy

to win/win models will allow the Town, the County, Chatham Park and other stakeholders to work together and address the required infrastructure needs for Chatham Park and the surrounding community without burdening the existing tax base and falling behind on school construction.

So what should we do? For starters it is time to stop fighting and start working together. We have the opportunity to harness and leverage Chatham Park and create something new, different, and potentially great.

And I am not referring to Cary version 2.0. Cary started its pathway toward growth in an ad hoc, unplanned manner back in the 1970's and has managed to evolve to its current incarnation and place in the Triangle without the benefit of a start point based on one coherent master plan.

We can learn from their successes and failures and collectively make something much better in Chatham County. We need to fully engage Chatham Park with creativity, energy, and ideas.

This needs to be a partnership that

reflects not only the vision of the developer, but also the culture, character, and DNA of what makes Pittsboro, Bynum and its surrounding areas interesting and desirable.

We will not accomplish this through lawsuits, threats, calumny, and clumsy ideological posturing. We can accomplish this through a variety of channels including, but not limited to, the Chatham Park Compass Committee, which had its first meeting in June and second meeting in September.

The time is ripe for bold action and real vision from our leaders. It's time to put on the press, throw down field or swing for the fences.

We need to elect leaders with strength and vision and encourage our current elected officials in the Town and County to be bold, dream big, and play for the future—which will make all the difference.

*Randy Voller, former Mayor of Pittsboro, is President of VRC, Ltd. and Co-Chair Compass Committee.*

### WRITING, RESEARCH, AND ARCHIVAL SERVICES

RETIRED UNC LIBRARIAN will assist writers or students with research, writing, editing, or proofreading. Other services include cataloging personal libraries, collections, photographs, ESL support, computer skills for seniors, etc. \$25 p/h. Free initial consult. (Fee neg. for longer term projects) 2-hr. min., 3 hr. max. per session Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. (360) 451-8373 or [geigersusan@gmail.com](mailto:geigersusan@gmail.com)

### EXPERT, FRIENDLY DOOR REPAIR

 **The Door Doctor**  
Doors and Hardware Specialist

Door Repairs • Weatherproofing  
Door Adjustments • Replacements  
Garage Doors • Lock changes

Residential • Commercial  
LOCAL REFERENCES  
Robert Sprenger | 919.444.1533  
[www.fixyourdoors.com](http://www.fixyourdoors.com)



**for your sustainable life**

Cool, very reasonably priced, gently used & redesigned furniture, antiques, curiosities, and home accessories.

3 MINI SHOPS INSIDE: Hourglass Collectibles, Lyla's, and My Vintage Cottage!

(919) 200-2176  
102 Hillsboro St., Pittsboro  
[www.reclamationhomefurnishings.com](http://www.reclamationhomefurnishings.com)

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO TALK

**FRESH**  
POULTRY, LAMB,  
TURKEY, PORK, BEEF  
SEAFOOD & SAUSAGES  
TALK TO CLIFF

**CLIFF'S**  
MEAT MARKET

100 W Main St, Carrboro  
919-942-2196 • Mon-Sat 9 am-6 pm

**N.C. CRAFTS GALLERY**

212 West Main Street ■ Carrboro  
(919) 942-4048

■ Featuring a large selection of traditional and contemporary crafts from across the state. Pottery, blown glass, wood turnings, jewelry and more. ■

Hours: Mon-Sat 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
and Sundays 1 to 4 p.m.  
[www.nccraftsgallery.com](http://www.nccraftsgallery.com)