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About STANLY the magazine

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Signage for Stanly Community College awaits visitors at College Drive in Albemarle.

Brown, Patterson lead way in creation of Stanly college

BY CHRIS MILLER

In the Nov. 3 1972 edition of the Stanly News and Press, an article profiled the eight full-time founding instructors at the newly-established Stanly Technical Institute.

STI officially opened in December 1971, though classes didn't begin until the next fall at the old South

Albemarle High School, in what is now the E.E. Waddell Community Center.

At the time, there were 31 students studying auto mechanics, air conditioning and refrigeration, secretarial science, industrial management, brick masonry and business.

The founding eight instructors at the

time were all fairly young, with several around the same age or slightly older than many of their students.

They included Dan Hazlett, who taught English; Dan Antion, who taught science and math; Sandra Sebring, who taught early childhood education; Lloyd Pendly, who taught auto body repair; Andrew McPher-

“To those founding stakeholders, what you have sown is certainly providing a bountiful harvest for Stanly County, its students and the entire region.”

— SCC President Dr. John Enamait

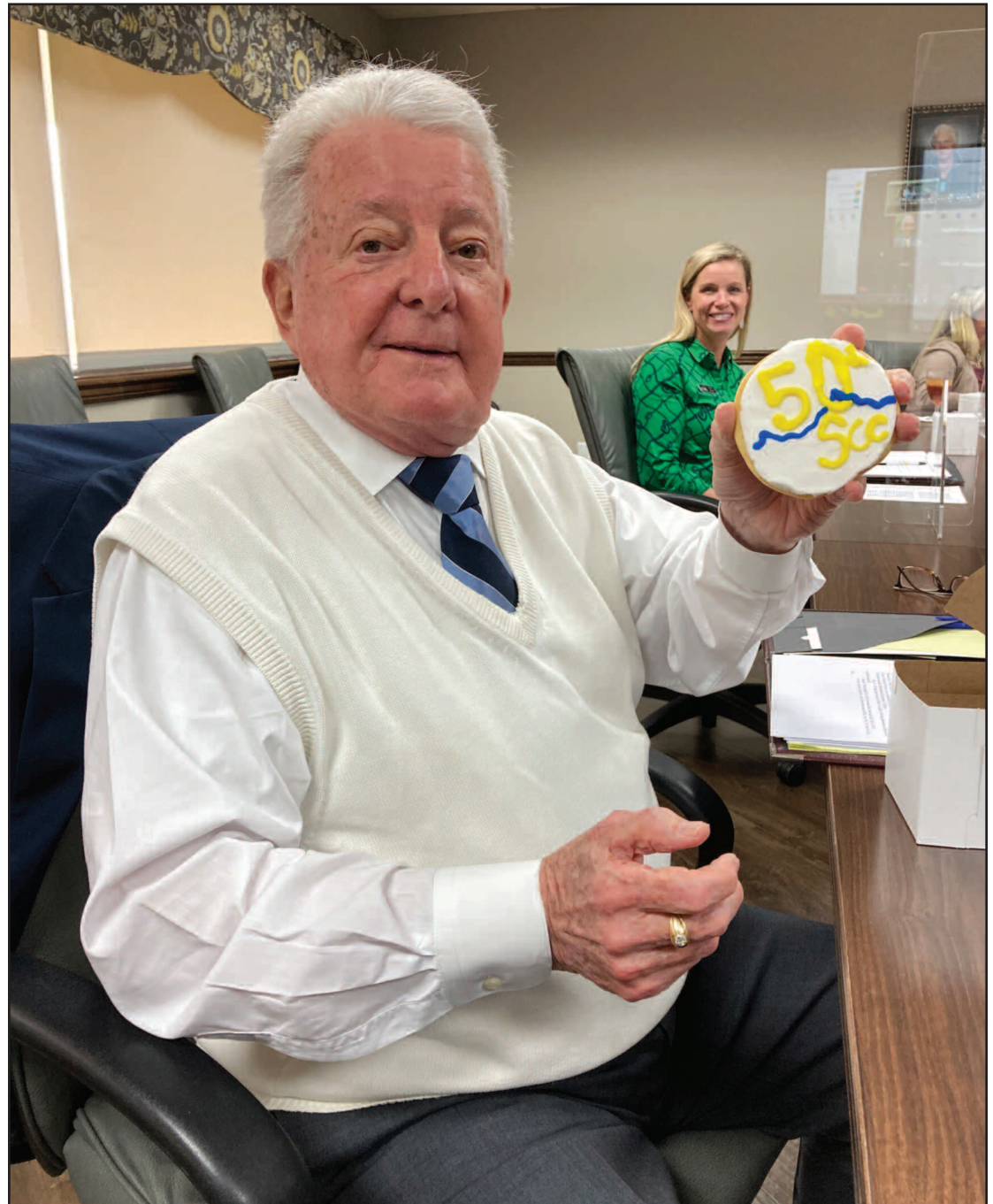


son, who taught business and economics; Karen Bailey, who taught office administration; Talmadge Moose, who taught commercial art; and Tom Clifford, who taught electrical installation and maintenance.

Hazlett, who was 24 at the time, had relatively little teaching experience aside from a year as a high school English teacher in Virginia.

In the SNAP article, Hazlett said the “newness” of the college is what “pulled me here.” He then added: “It’s a challenge to know a school will become exactly what you and the other faculty members are willing to make it.”

While they didn’t know it



Lane Brown III enjoys a cookie at a celebration in honor of Stanly Community College’s 50th anniversary. Brown was Stanly’s representative in the N.C. House in the early 1970s and helped fulfill the dream of establishing a community college in the county. (Contributed)

at the time, Hazlett and his seven peers clearly built a robust foundation because, 50 years and a few name changes later, Stanly Community College is stronger than ever, providing an assortment of educational programs to some 10,000

students each year.

The college was recently ranked the second best community college and the top online college in the state, according to the 2022 Niche rankings.

A recent economic impact study revealed just how

critical the college is to the county. From the 2018-2019 fiscal year, SCC added \$70 million to the county’s economy, with alumni of the college generating almost \$50 million in additional income to the county, he said. Addition-

ally, the cumulative higher future earnings that SCC students will receive over their working careers is estimated at around \$162 million.

“To those founding stakeholders, what you have sown is certainly providing a bountiful harvest for Stanly County, its students and the entire region,” SCC President Dr. John Enamait said during the 50th anniversary kickoff event in July.

In honor of the historic milestone and wanting to know more about the legacy of the college, the SNAP spoke with several stakeholders who were associated with SCC in the early 1970s, to get perspectives about what those piv-

otal first years were like and what the college still means to them half a century later.

In this edition of Stanly the magazine, meet “the architect.”

The Architect

Stanly Community College’s beginnings can be traced back to the late 1960s, when the county was struggling with a lack of quality vocational programs to offer to young people to help train them for the workforce.

Also during this time, veterans were arriving home from fighting in Vietnam, many of whom had not completed high school. This again underscored the need for more educational programs, including ones

allowing people to obtain their GED.

Feeling some pushback from the community, Dr. Toby Webb, superintendent of Albemarle City Schools, and Dr. Luther Adams, superintendent of Stanly County Schools, developed a plan to create an industrial education center to meet the student needs. It would be located in the vacant South Albemarle High School.

Lane Brown III had begun pushing for an IEC in 1968 when he first ran for a seat in the General Assembly in Raleigh. Though he lost, he ran again and won in 1970, becoming the youngest member of the House at age 30.

Brown, who was a UNC

Chapel Hill graduate, always had a good appreciation for the importance of education as his father had served as chairman of Albemarle City Schools for about 16 years. His father also helped to spearhead the building of Albemarle High School in the late 1950s.

“I would hear about schools and the need for good schools for a long time,” he said, noting his father helped to “germinate” the seed within Brown about the need for a institution of higher learning.

After much discussion, the idea soon evolved into raising support for the creation of an actual technical institute. The original plan

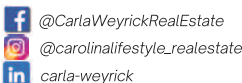


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was to get the college approved by the State Board of Education and chairman Dr. Dallas Herring. Even though Dr. Craig Phillips, the state superintendent of public instruction, had already given his blessing for the college, Herring was against it. His justification was that Stanly County was not part of the original statewide plan for community colleges.

At the time, there were more than 50 community colleges already established, including several in the Charlotte region, though a sizable void existed in the area around Stanly.

“We were the doughnut hole in the center of that circle that was not getting served by the system and we had to plug that hole,” Brown said.

Despite efforts to persuade him, Herring remained uncooperative.

“He was one of those absolutists,” Brown said. “If it’s not black or white, but it’s gray in between, he wouldn’t budge or fudge.”

There were also some



A building (above) is named after Frank Patterson (below), who was the veteran state senator representing Stanly County when funding was approved in 1971. He died a few weeks after legislation was passed. (Contributed)

people in the community that also pushed back, concerned that a college would raise property taxes.

After Herring’s refusal to support the college, Brown and Frank Patterson, the veteran state senator representing Stanly County, had to seek legislative authorization.

With the support of the county, Brown and Patterson introduced legislation in both the house and senate on April 7, 1971 to authorize Stanly Technical Institute. It would be under the control of the State Board of Education and its department of community

colleges. The companion bills were designated as HB 619 and SB 390.

Once the legislation was introduced, the two representatives engaged in an aggressive lobbying effort to try and win support for the issue. Brown leaned upon the experience of Patterson, who was more than 20 years his senior and who served as Senate President Pro Tem.

“I’ve always given Frank great credit because in many respects, he helped write the legislative roadmap,” Brown said. “He knew who to reach out to in the state education bureau-



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crazy to get help on numbers.”

Competing against many of their peers for limited state funds, the two legislators knew they faced an uphill climb in securing legislative approval. Many other established community colleges were also requesting additional appropriations to help account for increasing student growth.

Brown and Patterson requested \$750,000 for STI, but that amount was decreased to \$525,000 by state budget experts, Brown said.

After the bills received approval from both chambers’ education committees, they then went before the appropriation committees. Thanks to enough behind-the-scenes arm twisting and networking (Brown and Patterson had cultivated solid relationships with the chairmen of the House and Senate appropriations committees), they were able to find the needed money to fund STI and the bills were approved.

“Politics in that setting was not a game,” Brown said, “it was the serious business of developing relationships and these relationships would carry over from one piece of legislation to another.”

While both bills had garnered support among the required committees and were on the calendar to receive a final vote, HB 619 was quickly placed on hold

by Speaker of the House Phil Godwin. Brown learned that the Lt. Gov. H. P. “Pat” Taylor, who was from Anson, had some “concerns” he wanted addressed.

Brown, who was completely caught off guard, recalled Taylor telling him, “I cannot let your Stanly Tech bill move forward unless Anson Tech can get some of your requested funding.”

Taylor specifically wanted funding to create a new campus either in Wadesboro or somewhere close by along U.S. 74, Brown said. For a freshman representative trying to shepherd through his first major bill, the encounter with Taylor was intimidating.

“I thought I had gone into the den of thieves,” Brown said about the situation.

Both Brown and Patterson believed any argument or debate would have been “fruitless” and so they agreed to Taylor’s request.

The amended house bill, which allocated \$150,000 to Anson Tech, was adopted on July 15, 1971, four months after it was first introduced. The final amended appropriation for STI was \$375,000. The Senate bill was approved a few days later.

“When I walked back from the Senate chamber to the House chamber that day, I felt that I had been through a legislative baptism in the dividing waters of the Rocky River,” Brown joked.

Brown called the tense episode a learning experience about the importance of compromise and it stayed with him throughout his career in Raleigh.

“If you want to get something through the General Assembly, and that was certainly true in that era, you had to be able to reach across the hall, you had to be willing to negotiate and you had to be willing to do your homework,” Brown said.

The college officially opened in December 1971, with Dr. Charles Byrd serving as STI’s first president.

Brown was appointed to the original STI Board of Trustees and later reappointed for two more terms. Unfortunately, Patterson unexpectedly died July 31 of a massive stroke, a few days after the final passage.

Though Patterson never lived to see the dream of a community college become a reality, once the college moved to its current location on College Drive in the late 1970s, one of the initial

buildings was named after him.

Brown, who visits the campus at least every six months, would go on to serve two additional terms in the House, where he introduced several other pieces of legislation. But none were quite like HB 619.

“Well as a matter of personal pride and satisfaction for doing something for Stanly County, this was the cream on the top,” he said about the bill.

Knowing that Stanly Community College has become such a valuable institution and a source of pride for so many generations over the past half a century, “it gives you a sense of satisfaction that the effort that you made 51 years ago was working,” he said.

* * *

More on the history of Stanly Community College will appear in the next issue of Stanly the magazine.



Granville Lane Farms stakes claim in flower business

By CHARLES CURCIO

What started as a hobby for one local couple has quite literally grown into a full-time business.

With the tagline “sharing beauty with blooms and canvas,” Granville Lane Farms, owned by Rick Mullis and Sandy Selvy-Mullis, has created a unique fresh-flower business.

Raising flowers of their own, the Mullis family can be found Saturdays at the Albemarle Farmers Market selling fresh-cut flower arrangements off the back of their 1967 Dodge truck.

That truck, Mullis said, has made a big difference in the business, becoming a symbol for it.

“I had a new white truck but it just doesn’t look the same,” he said, adding the older truck “just adds so much to it.”

Along with the farmers market, arrangements can be bought at several local businesses, including Vac & Dash.

From sunflowers to dahlias, the farm has many flowers growing, along with bushes bearing fruit like raspberries, blackberries and more.

But what grows on the farm is only part of the venture.

Mullis, a professional photographer who has worked in the past with many families and companies including The Stanly News & Press, offers families photography sessions surrounded by the natural features of the



Rick Mullis picks a flower for closer inspection at Granville Lane Farms in Richfield. (Photo by CHARLES CURCIO/staff)

farm.

From the flowers to the barn and more, Mullis can produce large canvas-sized photo prints for families of

images taken at the farm.

Mullis said the farm had 75 flowers planted last year just to see how it went.

**“Let’s plant some more and see what happens.”
— Rick Mullis and Sandy Selvy-Mullis,
owners of Granville Lane Farms**

Flowers bloom at Granville Lane Farms in Richfield. (Photo by RICK MULLIS)





This 1967 Dodge truck has become a symbol for Granville Lane Farms. (Photo by RICK MULLIS)

"I've always liked flowers, loved them," Mullis said.

After early sales went well, the couple decided, "Let's plant some more and see what happens."

Planting sunflowers seeds, snapdragons and zinnias, Mullis also constructed a greenhouse in order to raise flowers year round.

The farm uses landscape fabric with holes burned in them and tiny plants get put in the ground using a mini tree planter.

Freshness for the farm, Mullis said,

is important, with flowers cut and delivered the same day to local businesses. The flowers should last about a week to two if kept in a vase, depending on the type of flower.

Plans for the farm include turning the area into a destination for events like weddings, with ample photo opportunities all around the farm.

Glamping, a recently new hobby where people camp out but with the amenities and comforts of modern life, will be in the future for the farm.

With a pond out back, Mullis said he

can see a glamping tent or maybe a cabin go up for families to rent. People could spend the evening out in nature, but still be able to have indoor plumbing and electricity, along with possibly a hot tub or jacuzzi.

Mullis said he hopes to build relationships with places like the Hall House and the Stanly County Historical Society to provide flowers and arrangements.

* * *

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Bratcher enjoys ‘ewe’nique textile art of spinning yarn

BY CHRIS MILLER

A few years ago, out of the blue, Dakota Bratcher decided to take up spinning.

Not the popular physical exercise also known as indoor cycling, but rather the old-school action of actually converting fibers into yarn.

And the 29-year-old discovered the textile art in a rather roundabout way.

As a Stanly County native who lives with her husband and two young boys on a farm in Aquadale, she is used to being around a bunch of animals. And she has quite a lot of them: Cats, dogs, goats, chickens, guineafowl and peacocks.

“Everything that we have, it does something, it has a purpose,” Bratcher said, noting that her dog protects the goats and her cats chase away the mice.

About two years ago, Bratcher wanted to expand her assortment of animals to include sheep. But, like her other animals, she wanted them to serve a specific purpose while on the farm. That’s when she realized that she could shear the sheep and learn to spin their fiber to create yarn.

Only problem was Bratcher knew virtually nothing about the craft and none of her friends or family knew anything either.

But that didn’t stop her.

“I literally just jumped headfirst,” she said about taking up spinning.

It wasn’t easy though as she struggled in the beginning with the specific terminology.

“I didn’t even know what a spinning wheel was called,” she said, noting she initially Googled “yarn spinny



Dakota Bratcher enjoys finding a good yarn to put to use in her textile art. (Contributed)

thing” when she first expressed interest.

Once she purchased two sheep and a spinning wheel, she took to Google and Youtube to learn as much as she

could. While many of the online videos made the craft look really simple and easy, the reality for Bratcher was anything but.

Learning mainly through trial and

error, Bratcher estimates it took her about six months to fully feel comfortable spinning. There were many days where, overcome with frustration, she wanted to just quit and throw in the towel.

"I would do maybe 15 minutes a day, and get mad and rip off what I had just done and do it over again," she said.

Bratcher spins her yarn by hand by utilizing a spinning wheel and a bobbin (a spindle on which the yarn is wound.) The yarn gets connected to the bobbin, which is attached to the wheel, through the orifice hole and once Bratcher steps on the treadle pedal, that's when the magic happens as the fabric is then quickly spun onto the bobbin.

But gradually she got better and she learned from her mistakes. After she became adept at the craft she began to dye her fibers all sorts of colors. She's currently into pastels, but has also

worked with bright colors.

"It's whatever my mood is," she said regarding what colors she uses to dye her fabric.

After several months, Bratcher eventually got rid of the sheep as their voracious eating habits were affecting her beloved goats (the only animals on the farm she refers to as her pets), who she noticed were getting skinnier, due to the dearth of available food.

But even without her original source of fabric, due to online connections she'd forged since taking up spinning, Bratcher now purchases animal fibers, such as wool and fleece, from various local vendors.

While people of all ages spin, Bratcher is not aware of anyone else that does so in Stanly County; many of the spinners she knows live in the mountain areas in the western part of the state.

While there are several different

ways of winding yarn, Bratcher forms hers into 4-ounce skeins, or balls of coiled yarn. It takes her about an hour to make one skein and she estimates she makes around six skeins a week. She likes to work at night after cooking and taking care of her kids. Unlike some people who enjoy the craft, Bratcher's yarn is 100 percent hand spun and comes exclusively from animal fibers.

Spinning yarn is still just a hobby for Bratcher. For her day job, she works at Atrium Health Stanly as a certified medical assistant in the Gastroenterology unit, which she said she really enjoys.

She regularly spins and sells her yarn at the Farmers Market in Norwood, has appeared at local craft and vendor shows and has her own company Be"ewe"tiful Fiber Designs. She's also currently working on setting up her own Etsy page.

About a year ago, Bratcher got con-

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nected with Robin Davis, owner of 110 Main Mercantile in downtown Norwood, and starting selling her multicolored skeins at the shop. Her products have been popular, especially around the holidays, she said.

“As a vendor, Dakota brings a unique and extraordinary talent to 110 Main Mercantile,” Davis said. “Her fiber work helps showcase the tradition of yarn spinning and the history of our textile heritage.”

Her skeins typically cost anywhere from \$15 to \$30 depending on the quality of the fiber and how hard it was to acquire. Romney fiber, for instance, is generally cheaper than silk or cashmere, she said.

Bratcher is still learning new things each day and finding ways to tweak her craft.

“It’s just relaxing,” she said about the process. “I can sit there and do it for hours and hours and hours.”

If anyone is interested in purchasing her yarn, they can message Bratcher via her Facebook page or purchase her skeins at 110 Main Mercantile.

* * *

Dakota Bratcher demonstrates her art at a show where she sells her handmade items. (Contributed)



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Juneberry Ridge continues work to expand, educate

By CHARLES CURCIO

It sprawls out across 525 scenic acres in the southern end of Stanly and feels like a different world of its own.

But Juneberry Ridge has grown from beyond being a productive farm into an event venue and vacation destination.

Located less than three miles from Norwood in under a 20-minute drive from Albemarle, the farm's roots have continued to spread into the community.

Formerly two companies (Lucky Clay Farms and Lucky Clay Fresh), the new moniker came when the two entities formed under one umbrella. Both companies, according to CEO Suzanne Durkee, were looking for sustainable practices.

"There's no profitability with sustainability, and there's no sustainability with profitability," Durkee said. "The question was, 'How do we demonstrate to the world if you use regenerative practices, you can make a living?'"

Looking for a symbol to fit that, the staff came up with a tree with juneberries on it. The berry reflects the four seasons, emerging as a flower in the spring with pollen for the bees. Later, the white flower turns into green leaves, the red juneberries appear, a great food and source for Vitamin C and antioxidants. The leaves turn a golden copper color in the fall, then drop to the ground in winter, completing the season cycle.

The farm's vision of finding a better way to grow food and serve the community along with the world came from owner Judy Carpenter.

A state champion competitive shooter in 1977, Carpenter retired from National Welders Supply and bought the land in Norwood on the recommendation of someone working on her house in Charlotte who was an Aquadale native.

"There was no great vision. I just wanted to buy a trap (shooting) field," Carpenter said. "Then it got bigger and bigger and bigger."

Initially, the greenhouse on the property was to raise food



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The conference center for JuneBerry Ridge can host parties, receptions and other events in a scenic location which includes a gazebo over a pond. (Photo by CHARLES CURCIO/staff)

to fix for the farm's employees sustainably.

"I didn't trust what I got at the grocery store all the time. I wanted something I knew was clean."

Juneberry has 35 employ-

ees, most of whom are from Stanly. As the staff grew in employees, the idea of becoming an event center was born, Carpenter said.

Hiring locally and advancing locally, business devel-

opment manager Rob Boisvert said, was a focus for the farm.

"That's something Judy has often talked about, is the desire not just to create a space here, but a space in

which she can hire local people and give them hope to stay in the rural area," Boisvert said.

Durkee added: "It's not like we're hiring employees that have no background in



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what we're doing. These folks live locally, but also come with college degrees, skills, interests and aptitudes for this work."

"You have some of the most creative people here in Stanly County," Carpenter added.

The farm grew to include a 4,800-square-foot two-story conference center, five one-bedroom cabins and the Longleaf three-bedroom cabin. Near the cabins is the Saskatoon Lounge, a type of clubhouse where a cabin renter can exercise, play pool and just hang out.

Sustainability is the focus of the farm, finding a use for everything on the property. For example, the podium in the conference

center was built on-site from trees cut down on the farm.

"Something we have often heard from Judy is that she wants to leave the planet in better shape than she found it," Boisvert said.

Quoting information from the Allan Savory Institute, Carpenter said "if you can get people to grow 10 percent of the food they eat in their yards, you could save the planet."

Juneberry uses regenerative farming techniques to nourish the topsoil, which Durkee said has become depleted in places like the Midwest.

"We're not in the scolding business...we have absolutely no interest in pointing out all the things

people are doing wrong, ourselves included. It's more about if we do one thing different, could we actually improve the planet?" Durkee said.

The vision of Juneberry, she added, is to change the way the world grows food.

"Our mission is to nourish, educate and build a better future," Durkee said.

Ashton Thompson, the senior operations manager for Juneberry, handles the farm's day-to-day operations. Thompson, who went to North Stanly High School, got a two-year degree from Sandhills Community College and later graduated from North Carolina State University with an agricultural degree. Thompson was planning to

get a master's degree at Cornell before the job opportunity came with Juneberry.

Having grown up on a 300-acre farm in New London, Thompson said no week working on the farm is exactly the same with all that goes on.

"We do have a lot of irons in the fire and we have a lot of what I would call regional experts," Thompson said. "We value our pioneering spirit and we get to create new things. It's incredible to have the resources and the support from Miss Judy to explore things which may be prohibitive to others."

The way Juneberry delivers the message, said Durkee, "is to create

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experiences and opportunities for the world...that means we need to get them on the farm. We are a regenerative farm first and foremost...we want to educate. We know a part of that is to nourish (visitors') souls and their bodies, nourish their minds."

Creating a place different from Charlotte and other places in the world, Durkee said, helps show the farm's vision.

"We create events to get your attention...we're not in the preaching business. The only way (people) will be able to understand what we're doing here is to come see it," Durkee said.

This summer, JuneBerry Ridge hosted an outdoor concert series inviting resi-

dents to bring their blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy live performances. Different live events, shooting competitions and such will allow Juneberry to bring more people onto the farm to see what they are doing.

Keeping things local matters to Juneberry Ridge. According to Boisvert, the farm is committed to purchasing at least 51 percent of the goods and services it needs locally, which he added is not easy nor inexpensive.

Those goods and services range from auditing and legal services to T-shirt printing, office supplies and more.

For the future, Juneberry Ridge will continue to host concerts and events, but it



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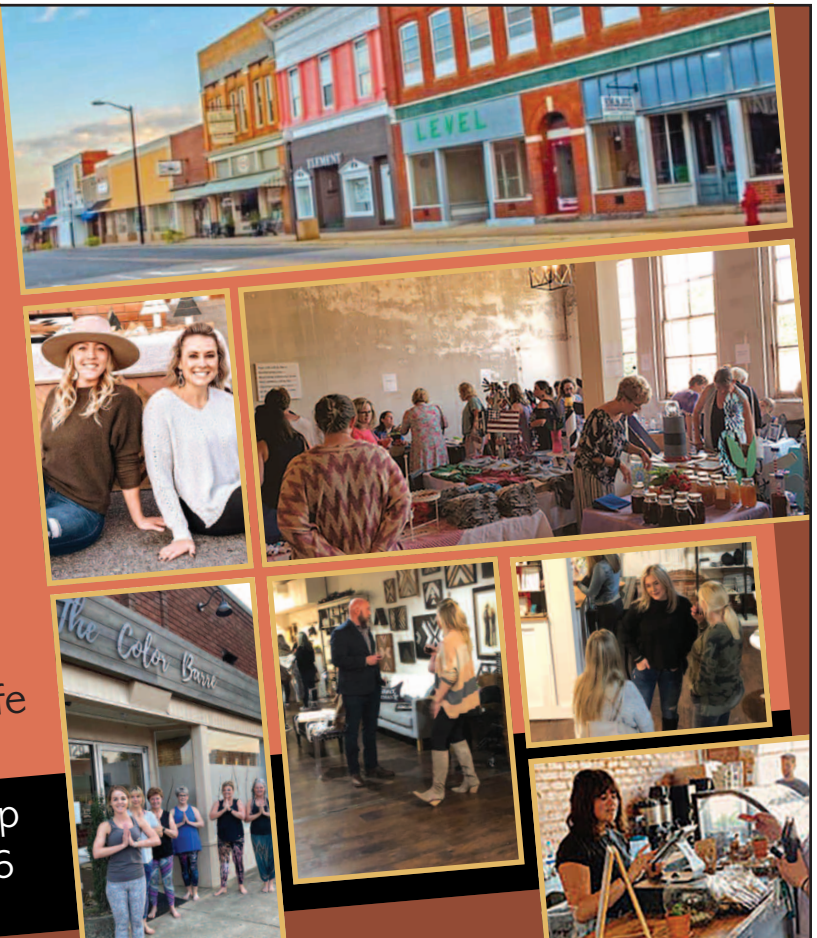
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The living room and bedroom of the cabins at Juneberry Ridge are cozy yet have all the modern conveniences. (Photo by CHARLES CURCIO/staff)



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(Above) The Saskatoon Lounge can host social gatherings and exercise classes for cabin renters and potentially future guests of the proposed inn. (Below) Solar Panels help power the greenhouses raising crops year round at Juneberry Ridge. (Photos by CHARLES CURCIO/staff)



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is looking to build even more on the land.

Plans for the 525-acre facility potentially include a hotel which will have a restaurant

and bar. The farm is continuing to look into having parts of the property annexed into the town of Norwood. This would allow the

hotel restaurant to apply for a liquor license.

“As we’ve said from the beginning of this process, we want the residents and elected leaders to be excited about the construction of an upscale inn at Juneberry Ridge,” Boisvert said.

Events will continue at Juneberry Ridge this fall. The concert series will continue, while the farm will

host a free community meal and concert on Founders' Day Oct. 9 to celebrate the founding of the facility.

With the focus of buying and hiring local while continuing to grow, Juneberry Ridge looks to take its sustainability message to the world in the future.

* * *



Along with crops in greenhouses, Juneberry raises chickens. (Photo by CHARLES CURCIO/staff)



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