

OPINION

LEISURE

LETTER From page 8

cultural land to business in pursuit of economic development in a vacuum, or will we consider the bigger picture? The latter approach would pursue the right kind of business development in the right place while preserving our heritage, historic connections, unspoiled rural setting, sustained agricultural future, and scenic land-

scapes – consistent with the 2037 Plan. If you would like to connect, email KeepEbonyCountry@gmail.com.

ANNE HARTLEY
On Behalf of the
Ebony Preservation Group

CHAMBER From page 8

is coordinating a Shop at Home for the Holidays contest. From November 18-December 18, for every \$25 you spend with any of our 25 local business partners, you receive one entry into the contest (i.e. spend \$100, get four entries). You can enter at all the partnering business locations. Entries will be gathered on December 19, and we will draw for one lucky winner to receive a prize package of \$625 in local gift certificates, just in time where you can use these for last-minute Christmas shopping if you so choose. Who are our partnering businesses? Ace Hardware of Lake Gaston, B&J's Cash and Carry, Bass House, Best Kept Secret Boutique, Creative Designs & Gifts, DrugCo of Lake Gaston, Halifax Studios, J.B. Jones & Company, Lake Gaston Coffee Company, Lake Gaston Jet Ski & Powersports, Lake Gaston Outfitters, Lake Gaston Pizza &

More, Lake Gaston Surf Garage at Poplar Pointe Marine, Lake Life Clothing Company, NAPA of Lake Gaston, Once Upon A County Line Emporium, Quilt Lizzy, Rest E-Z @ Shell, Riverside Mill, Rivertown Consignments, Sherry's Sew What?, The Hen & The Hog, The Pointe at Lake Gaston, WatersView, and Wildwood Nursery & Garden Center. For more information about any of these partners, click on Find a Business on lakegastonchamber.com, check them out on Facebook, or call the Chamber at 252-586-5711.

Finally, don't forget to come out on Saturday night at 7:30 and enjoy the annual Lake Gaston Holiday Flotilla, featuring beautifully lighted boats beginning at The Pointe, crossing the lake to WatersView, and returning to The Pointe where the top 3 boats will receive trophies. We look forward to seeing you!

FRANK From page 8

"What do you mean by that?" He answered, "I'm going to put him to sleep if you won't take him." Then I said, "John, you old buzzard, you knew that I would take him before you told me that. Give me few a days to build a pen."

After three days of hard work and \$1,800, we had a secure, roomy and comfortable pen ready for Simba, and we went to get him. After an emotional good-bye with lots of licking and purring, we brought him to his new home, which he loved. We thought that we could keep him under our rehab license, but later had to get special authorization through the courts.

If Simba ever missed John, he didn't show it. He very quickly bonded to Kristye and Anthony, my daughter and son-in-law. At first he was just friendly, allowing them to scratch his back and rub his ears as he purred, but as time passed and he grew to love them, he began to play very roughly. He would wrap his powerful front legs around one of Kristye's legs, and she said it felt as if her leg was in a vise. The harder he played, the louder he purred. Eventually he loved us so much that he played too roughly. One day I went into his pen to pet him, and he pinned me against the wall and started giving me love bites; harmless, but one of his teeth tore my shirt. He was so powerful that I couldn't move. Anthony and Kristye had to rush in and pull him off me. Right then we made a rule that no one was allowed to play with Simba. He would come to the wire and purr as we petted his head.

We didn't realize until later just how close Simba came to being put to sleep, probably a matter of 24 to 48 hours. We indeed were his last chance, and even though it cost us dearly to feed and care for him, we never regretted it. That huge lion was a beautiful animal, and he provided close-up pleasure for hundreds of people. We never knew his exact age, but we do know that he was at least 21 years old. We had him for 14 years, and John said that he was 7 years old when he came to us. In those 14 years, countless people visited him, including school groups, boy and Girl Scout troops, and individuals. The average lifespan for a cougar is 12 to 15 years, and Simba far exceeded that age.

About three weeks ago, Simba's health began to decline. His body began to shut down, and he wouldn't eat. Kristye kept him alive for several days by giving him shots and medication, but his time had come. In his final hours, he would purr weakly when they came to tend to him. Last week, the big cat with the big heart died peacefully. We will miss him.

Americanisms



"If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people you love."
— Maya Angelou

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"Spotlight on the Colonial"

By: Lauren Epps
Director of Operations at the Colonial Center

It's that time of year again! Thanksgiving is upon us, Christmas is quickly approaching, and the Colonial Center is a thriving hub of activity. With performances of the C.A.T.S. Community Theatre production of A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS on December 6, 7, 13 & 14 at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, December 15 at 2:30 p.m. plus the Dance It Out/Act It Out/Sing Out performance of "Jingle Jury" coming to the Colonial Center's stage on Friday, December 20, the Colonial Center staff and volunteers are definitely in the Christmas spirit!

Rosa Lee Jordan and Missy Turner have truly outdone themselves with this year's red-and-gold-themed Christmas tree in our main lobby! This tree brings joy to many people each Christmas, and I can guarantee that this year's display will not disappoint. I cannot thank Mrs. Jordan and Ms. Turner enough for sharing their time and skills with the Colonial Center.

When stopping for a photo-op in front of the Colonial's tree, be sure to take a moment to look for the "Memory Ornaments" that have been spread throughout the branches. Each ornament has been purchased by a Colonial Center patron as a way to honor a loved one or to show their own support of the performing arts in South Hill. These ornaments are a permanent part of the Colonial Center's Christmas decorations and they are prominently featured on a tree each year.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit, the holiday shopping season is once again upon us, and I'd like to remind you all that Colonial Center gift certificates and C.A.T.S. Community Theatre Flex Passes make wonderful gifts or stocking stuffers for those "hard to buy for" people on your list. Give the gift of theatre this holiday season, and treat your family members, friends, and neighbors to a night out at the theatre.

Gift certificates can be issued in any dollar amount and are redeemable towards the purchase of tickets to any Colonial Center event or merchandise. These certificates are valid for 18 months and provide recipients with versatility in how they choose to use them!

C.A.T.S. Community Theatre Flex Passes are \$75 each and entitle the recipient to six tickets to C.A.T.S. performances. All six tickets may be redeemed for a single show, or the tickets can be spread out over many shows. These passes are also valid for 18 months and are a wonderful way to say, "Merry Christmas" to the theatre-lover in your life.

To purchase tickets or for more information about any of our upcoming performances, Memory Tree ornaments, Colonial Center gift certificates, and Community Theatre Flex Passes, call the Box Office at (434) 262-4170. Stop by the Box Office, located at 220 S. Mecklenburg Ave. in South Hill, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to pick up your gifts. And don't forget, visiting our website, www.colonialcentervirginia.org, is the best way to stay informed about upcoming shows, events, auditions, and more!

In closing, I would like to say that even if Colonial Center gifts are not exactly what you're shopping for this Christmas season, please remember to shop locally and to support small businesses in our area! You will be surprised by all of the wonderful gifts you can find right here in South Hill and around Mecklenburg County.

Thanks for reading and I hope to see you around the theatre soon!

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