

Artists exhibit works at Tank

By Pat Farnsworth

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Some may say that culture and Rocky Mount cannot be mentioned in the same sentence, but things are definitely looking up. The Playhouse and the Tank Theatre are exhibiting paintings done by three local artists. One featured artist is Jim Johnson.

Johnson is 28 years old and is originally from Buffalo, New York. Before moving here only a few short months ago, he lived in Alaska, off and on for four years. Johnson says that his style is evident in his earlier works, some of which include figures painted in the abstract, but still discernible as the solid visual center of the painting. Johnson admits that the change in environment has changed his painting.

While his move to Rocky Mount may have changed the way Johnson creates, it most certainly has not been a change for the negative. His paintings are full of vibrant colors and portray their intended scenes with excitement and life. Due to the fact that Johnson's artistic style is quite abstract, one immediately attempts to decipher the action in the scene. This might make onlookers stop and stare for quite a while. This extra attention is probably the intended effect. One opinion might be that these scenes are not actually portrayals of real action, but portrayals of the feeling of action. My personal favorite was a piece entitled "Mimic Dance," which is an earlier piece that does not contain the outstanding, strong-willed colors of his other works, but instead captures the eye with a graceful symmetry which is not evident in his other works. A more recent piece, called "Ogre," seems to be the epitome of Johnson's abstract style. It is filled with many colors and small shapes that have the same effect as clouds in that everyone has a different opinion of what the shapes resemble.

Johnson hopes to be able to get together a show at the Lafayette Museum in Raleigh and sees The Playhouse as a good opportunity to get his work seen. While most of the paintings displayed are for sale, money is not Johnson's objective. "It would be nice to sell some paintings, but I'm really just trying to get my work introduced," said Johnson.

Johnson's works can be viewed in the lobby of the Playhouse in the Rocky Mount Arts Center until Jan 2. Admittance into the lobby to look at the art is free and well worth the time spent. These paintings each tell a story by themselves and, if you like art, then a trip to The Playhouse is highly recommended.

Selling Christmas trees creates holiday spirit

By C. J. Cash

Are you really in the Christmas spirit? It is almost impossible for some students not to be. These students work at local Christmas tree farms.

What is there to do at a Christmas tree farm? "We sell Christmas trees, wreaths, garland and customized Christmas tree stands," said junior Layne Hutchinson. Using a chain saw we trim and cut the trees, and then drill a hole in the bottom and insert the tree in the stand." These duties also include delivering trees to homes and cleaning up saw dust at the farm".

What is the best part of the job? "I like driving the old truck on deliveries," said junior Clay Harwood. "I like working outdoors while making good money." Hutchinson added, "The job is fun and I make fairly good money."

Employees described the worst part of the job? "Lifting the heavy trees," said Harwood. "It is cold, very cold," said junior Tim Ellis. Another problem with the job is that workers leave the job smelling like Frasier firs.

These students cannot help but be excited about the Christmas season. "Seeing everyone coming and buying Christmas trees is a good sign of the Christmas spirit," said Hutchinson. "When I deliver



Photo by C.J. Cash

a tree to someone's home and see the decorations, I become really excited about my favorite holiday," said Harwood. He added, "It's hard not to be excited when you're constantly saying 'Thank you' and 'Merry Christmas.'"

Southern Nash cheerleader participates in Macy's parade

By Stephanie Williams

A local senior at Southern Nash Senior High participated in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Tiffany Howard, 17, is the varsity cheerleading captain at Southern Nash.

Cheerleading captains from across the country were invited to be in the parade after attending the Universal Cheerleading Association camp last summer in Wilmington. Each girl received a videotape of the routine that they would perform.

Howard runs track, plays soccer, and is a member of the Key Club. She is also in accelerated classes. Howard plans to attend East Carolina University's pre-med program next fall.

"It was a good experience for me and was my first time in New York. I felt that it was a privilege to be in the parade which is one of America's biggest events," said Howard.

Parvin joins Christmas Chorus for annual concert

By Jennifer Joyner

Spanish teacher Jane Parvin makes no secret of the fact that she enjoys spreading the Christmas spirit by singing in the Rocky Mount Christmas Chorus. She said, "Singing in the chorus is funny, warm and moving. It really gets you in the Christmas spirit. I love it!"

The chorus, led by directors, Jan Browning and Jim Wiggins, performs annually at the Playhouse theater.

The performance always has surprises for the audience. "The men always do a funny song, and Santa always shows up," Parvin said.

Parvin has sung with the group for 10 years. Her favorite songs to sing with the chorus are "Somewhere in My Memory," from *Home Alone* and "Silent Night."

The Chorus, which did not meet during the year, began practicing once a week in September and they practiced until the second week in December. "A lot of time," said Parvin, "we don't see people that we sing with during the year, and it's fun to see them again."

Members of the Christmas Chorus are



Photo by C.J. Cash

ALTO, YES!--Contrary to what it seems, Spanish teacher Jane Parvin is not practicing for the Christmas concert. Parvin has sung with the Rocky Mount Christmas Chorus for 10 years.

from the community. Housewives, teachers, doctors, businessmen, retired citizens and students make up the group. Parvin said, "They are just a jolly group of

people who sing with lots of heart and lots of love. There is a wonderful camaraderie among us all."

The Chorus performed Dec. 12-15.