

Out and About

By Sara Barbee

Two very different walks—but both a pleasure

Cemeteries can be nice places to visit. It was nearly All Hallows' Eve when I went to New Bern for a "Ghost Walk." Sixteen of us lined up on the sidewalk, spaced apart, to wait for our ghoulish guide. Quietly, as dusk fell, we followed her into the first section of our tour. As we were walking, we began to hear women's voices in a spirited conversation. Three "ladies of breeding" in late 1950s dress were reminiscing, and their conversation gave us an idea of New Bern at that time. One had a tea room in her home, one was a house mother for a fraternity house at UNC, and one was a flamboyant decorator who always wore lounging pajamas and was driven all over town by her chauffeur. These three and all of the actors and actresses who brought these stories from history alive were dressed to the nines in period costumes.

Each character presented facts of their lives in the context of the historical period in which they lived. They played in little vignettes, some solo. There was the son of the founder of Pepsi Cola, an NC Supreme Court Justice who defended the "downtrodden" (his own word), a barber who was a freed slave and a camp cook who cooked when Babe Ruth came hunting. Lawrence Stith, who used to come into the library in Beaufort to order music was there, in tuxedo, and with his piano and his first wife, the lovely singer Jane Morgan. He wrote "Fascination" for her and many other original songs. What ghost tour would be complete without the grim reaper, and there he was sharpening his blade.

Our tour ended with a 1930s radio show parody. Two Shakespearean actors proffered us a deal to stay while they quoted diatribes at each other. There was a sale on coffins and an unlikely original ditty about a skateboard and a hearse. There were too many scenes to mention, and I loved the ambiance, the actors and actresses, the costumes and the history of times in New Bern. It might have been spookier after dark but, for me, this was a perfect evening.

The beach is always great. I love walking on the beach, especially in September, October and November. The sky is a rich blue, the waves gentle, and the sand caresses my bare feet. There are generally very few people around—and usually no facemasks are needed. It is positively glorious. December usually follows with (maybe) the need for shoes but can still offer a marvelous sky. January and February might call for my down coat, but I remember that spring and summer are not far away.

In Memoriam

Justin Cote
Keith Kelley
Charles Peterson
William Smith Sr.

Protecting Yourself From Scams

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should always get a quote in writing prior to any work being started. If a contractor is not willing to furnish a quote and wants to be paid upfront, you should look for a new contractor. It is also a good idea to request a list of previous clients to call and see how their experience was. Trusting internet reviews alone can be problematic since it is easy to put multiple reviews on a website from the same person. Checking the Better Business Bureau for previous complaints and a company's ratings is a good practice as well.

So what happens if you get a phone call and you think it is a scam? Hang up the phone. Scammers will typically never call you back if you hang up on them and will simply move on to the next number on their list. If you think the call may be legitimate, take a few extra steps and verify their identity prior to giving them any information. You can always request a police officer to come to your home by calling our non-emergency dispatch number (252-726-1911). Our police officers would much rather come to your home and help you verify the call as legitimate or a scam than have you give information and become a victim.

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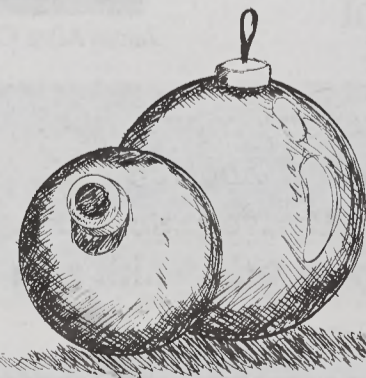
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