

Home is where Jenny Yow's heart is

By Judy Hogan

Jenny Yow loves working at the Pittsboro Memorial Library. "I like to help people find the books they're looking for." Until she was 48, she didn't know what she wanted to be when she grew up. She had worked in a variety of jobs, from cleaning houses to handling the showroom of the Southern Supreme fruit cake business in Harper's Crossroads. She had loved to read all her life and liked libraries because they were quiet. When she learned of an online class in Library and Information Technology through Central Carolina Community College, she enrolled. It took her four years to complete her Associate Degree, doing two on-line courses each semester. Meantime she applied for a job at the Pittsboro Library, and soon after she began working there full time.

Although this library is small and serves too many people to preserve total silence, she likes it. She looks forward to the new county library. "It will be a great asset to the community and much needed, but I do enjoy the little library and its coziness," she said. The new one has been postponed because of the current national financial crisis.

Jenny works with the children's librarian, Amber Walsh, who organized TAB, the Teen Advisory Board. They've hosted a prom for teens and made a film called "Locked in the Library," which was shown in late November at the General Store Café, sponsored by ChathamArts.

As we sat on the front porch of her new home in Harper's Crossroads, in well-worn rocking chairs, Jenny talked about how she was raised in the house that had stood for so many years "where that bare spot in the lawn is." Her father had moved a log cabin there, rebuilt and framed it. Her Grandma Phillips lived "on the first house on the right down from me," she said. Jenny's brother lives nearby, too, and has been renovating Grandma's house in order to preserve it. Her nephew and

his family live next door. All up and down the street are her relatives. Her daughter Autumn is her best friend, and they enjoy outings together. While I was there,

WOMEN OF CHATHAM

Autumn dropped in with a huge stack of books. She told us she was going to start a bookstore.

Jenny likes being close to her family and chats with them on a daily basis. She has lived only briefly elsewhere, for a few years after she married, in Moore County, which is a few hundred yards away. Lee and Randolph Counties aren't far either, and Montgomery County is closer than Pittsboro is to that southwest corner of Chatham. Jenny went to school in Moore County and graduated from North Moore High School because those schools were closer than Chatham's. There were no extra fees at that time for going to school across the county line. She was in high school with John Edwards, who was "popular and smart."

When she gets home from the library, she sits down in her porch rocking chair first thing and has a cup of coffee. When she's rested, she makes supper for herself and her husband, Kenneth. In her new home she also has her own reading and computer room. She reads for fun and likes good novels, especially those that take place in North Carolina. Favorite authors include Margaret Maron and



PHOTO BY JOHN SHILLITO

where I am." Jenny has never been in an airplane.

The county issues that concern her are centered more around Pittsboro than Harper's Crossroads, which "doesn't have a growth problem," she said. She'd like Pittsboro to remain the unique small town it is, but she doesn't mind having the Lowe's and MacDonald's at the intersection of 15-501 and 64 bypass. She would like to see Pittsboro's water quality improved. At home they're on a well.

Her advice to others: "Simplify your life. We don't need so much money, such big houses. Spend more time with your family, and be kind to other people. If people are grumpy, don't get mad back. You don't know what they may be going through. Care for other people."

And Jenny does. When you come in the library to collect a book you asked for, she is so glad to see you, as if you, too, were part of her family. Then she sends you home with that book you can't wait to read.

Judy Hogan is a poet, free lance writer, and creative writing teacher at CCCC, who loves to visit the Pittsboro Library. She lives and farms in Moncure.

Nicholas Sparks.

Besides reading, she enjoys interior decorating, refinishing furniture, growing unusual flowers like lantana and butterfly bushes, taking care of the lovely ferns hanging from the porch ceiling. When Kenneth goes fishing, she goes along and reads. She has traveled to North and South Carolina beaches, which she enjoys, and up to Virginia and down to Florida, but, she says, "I'm satisfied

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