

Living in A Small Town

This column was originally published in 2011: John Mellencamp's song, Small Town, sums up pretty well what it's like living in one. For me that small town is Wadesboro. Having been raised just eight miles away in Polkton, living in a small town is something I know a lot about. I didn't filter in from a big city, hoping to figure out how small town living is different. I know from experience, and as they say, experience IS the greatest teacher.

My grandparents, my parents, my job and my education all come from the small towns and communities of Anson County. And though I have friends all over the country, most of my friends and family are from here, the same small town I live in today.

Mellencamp says, "I cannot forget where it is that I come from. I cannot forget the people who love me. I can be myself here in this small town, and people let me be just what I want to be." You cannot forget the town you come from, who its people are, and the freedoms you are provided by such a life. And that's where I find myself at this point, venturing toward "expert status" as it pertains to living in a small town. Knowing the ins and outs, the dos and the don'ts, the pros and cons, is like being handed the answer key to the "how to live life in a small town" final exam, a test everyone should be required to take if moving into small town USA without prior knowledge.

Many among us have those same answer keys and we all understand the differences between big city living and what we have here. Knowing those differences gives us the ability to see things a bit more clearly than others may. We know what the expectations are and we live according to the book of small town etiquette.

Take Mayberry for example. Andy Griffith was from a small town, grew up and worked in that same small town, and was wise beyond years from his experiences. Andy knew every citizen and what to expect from each. Remember Otis, the town drunk? Otis exhibited behavior expected of him. Andy's prior knowledge of that behavior allowed him the chance to help Otis, just like the remaining townspeople - all with their own personal plights.

Now I'm not saying the above scenarios could ever actually happen in real life, but there are lessons to learn from characters like those from Mayberry. Lessons in patience, understanding, concern, and relationships can all be taken from the scripts of television shows depicting small town living. Of course Andy Griffith tops my list (Mayberry), but others also come to mind. Let's see, there's Little House on the Prairie (Walnut Grove), Northern Exposure (Cicely), Leave it to Beaver (Mayfield), Sanford and Son (the Watts neighborhood), Ozzie and Harriett (the suburbs), Gunsmoke (Dodge City,) Alice (Mel's Diner), Good Times (rental housing project), Happy Days (Milwaukee), and let's face it, the list could go on forever.

Some settings took place not in small towns, but rather small spaces, ranging anywhere from a greasy spoon to a junkyard. You became familiar with friends, foes and family. You knew all you needed to know because what you didn't know someone else did!

In my town I know all that I need to, from her people, her places and her small town spaces. I know what's in and what's not. I know who to speak to and who to avoid. I know where to go and what to see. I know most of what there is to know about you and about me. 'cause living in a small town leaves no privacy.

The positives far outweigh the negatives. You can pump your gas before paying; have your check cashed without an I.D. Everyone knows you by name and calls out to greet you in most cases. The stars are brighter and bigger from your own backyard than any big city I've ever seen. Small town life is a choice we in Anson County have made. You either love it and stay, or you don't and move away. Either lifestyle is what you make of it. In the words of Lillian Dickson, "Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you wish, but you only spend it once." And with that said, I try very hard to make the most of this small town life, my personal choice from years past.

"I've seen it all in a small town, had myself a ball in a small town. Got nothing against a big town, but a small town's good enough for me." *By Melanie Lyon*

SERCAP Provides Individual Household Well Loans to Eligible Individuals

The Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP) is a non-profit located in Roanoke, VA. They help low to moderate income families get assistance with water. Eligible individual are individuals who are a member of a household in which all members have a combined income (for the most recent 12 month period for which the information is available) that is not more than 100% of the median non-metropolitan household income for the state or territory in which the individual lives.

In North Carolina that household income is \$57,800. In South Carolina it is \$55,800.

Here are highlights of the program:

- Loans available for purchase of new water well or repairs to an existing well Up to \$11,000
- 1% interest rate
- Terms from 5 to 10 years
- Upfront cost (send with application): Credit Report - \$25
- Loan recipient must own and occupy the home or be occupying the home as the purchaser under a legally enforced land purchase contract which is not under default by the seller or the purchaser.
- The home must be located in a rural area.
- The water well system may not be used to substitute water service available from collective water systems.
- The water well system may not be associated with the construction of a new dwelling.
- Loan recipient must not be suspended or debarred from participation in Federal programs.

SERCAP is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Contact SERCAP at 540-345-1184 (TTY Users Dial 711) or online at www.sercap.org.

Do You Need a Coat or Blanket? Would You Like to Donate?

The Faith-Based Center of Hope continues their "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" program. They have distributed coats to several of the churches and schools in Anson County.

Blankets for the elderly are also available.

Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church is the pick up site, or you can deliver donated items there too. Just call to schedule it.

To donate coats and blankets or to request help, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.

Lions Club Welcomes New Members

The Wadesboro Lions Club meets at the Papa Joe's Restaurant the second and fourth Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m. For more information about these meetings or becoming a member, please call Lion Jim Chandler at 910-571-1448.



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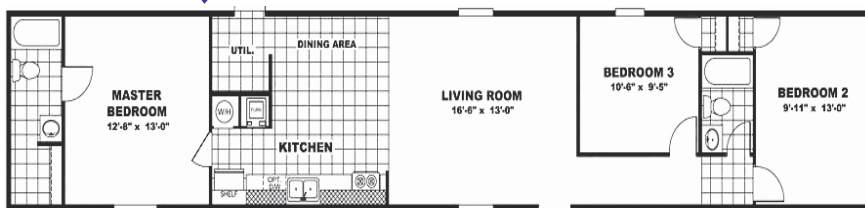
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Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers that a woman may face in her lifetime.

- * 1 in 8 women will get breast cancer
- * Breast cancer can happen at any age
- * Your chances of getting breast cancer increase as you get older
- * A mammogram can find breast cancer at an early stage that makes treating it easier

To find out more about breast cancer and to see if a **free** screening test is right for you call:

Latoya Mallard at 828-446-6344

or email

Latoya.Mallard@carolinashealthcare.org

FREE MAMMOGRAMS

Levine Cancer Institute is providing uninsured women of Anson County a mammogram with no out-of-pocket cost.

To qualify:

- Women must be 40 years or older
- Must not have insurance
- Must not have Medicare or Medicaid
- Must be one year since last mammogram
- Must not be pregnant or breast-feeding