

County woman finds her niche online

GRAPHIC ARTIST SELLS
DESIGNS FOR MINIATURE
DOLLHOUSES, ACCESSORIES

By STAR TRAYLOR
The Warren Sentinel

FRONT ROYAL — Like many businesswomen, Ann Vanture has regular customers, but unlike most local merchants, Vanture has never met any of them.

The former Northern Virginia graphic designer who moved to Warren County three years ago runs her business — Paper Minis — from her home overlooking the Shenandoah River.

She makes patterns for dollhouses and other miniature accessories and sells them online to subscribers — mostly women in their 50s and older — “empty nesters, not kids,” she says.

“It’s all online and it’s all over the world,” Vanture said. “I just got (an order) from Namibia in South Africa.”

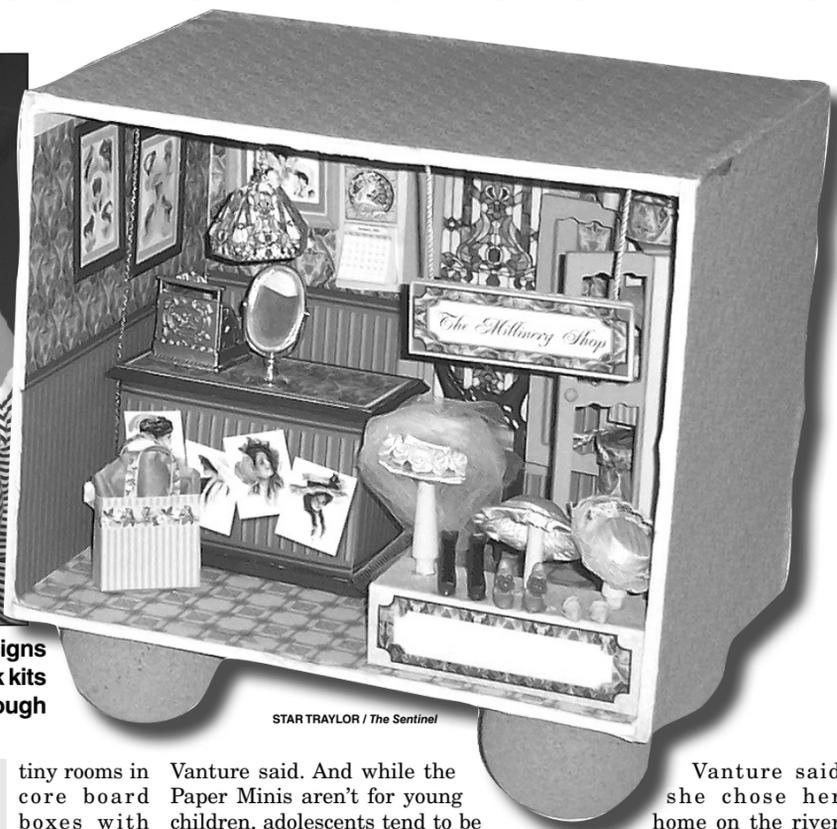
Some customers have subscriptions to Vanture’s “book clubs” and receive the materials and instructions to make one miniature book per month until they have enough to fill a 6-inch bookshelf, which they make themselves.

The 1-inch books are miniature versions of real classic books from publishers such as the McLoughlin Bros. Those with exceptionally good eyesight and a magnifying glass can read the books, Vanture said. One book takes the average person about 30 minutes to assemble. About 24 books can fit into one of the miniature bookcases that are part of the collections. Vanture said collectors often like to display the finished bookcases on their desks at work.

Inside Vanture’s home is a computer hooked up to a fleet of print-



Warren County resident Ann Vanture creates designs and instructions for miniature dollhouse and book kits that she sells to customers all over the world through her online business, Paper Minis.



STAR TRAYLOR / The Sentinel

• **BUSINESS:** Paper Minis — designs and instructions for miniature dollhouse rooms, decorations and accessories

• **OWNER:** Ann Vanture

• **FOUNDED:** Vanture started doing business online in 2002 and made it her full-time job in 2003.

• **FOR MORE INFORMATION:** www.PaperMinis.com

ers where she creates the designs for the books, dollhouse wallpaper and miniature accessories that she sells to clients. She keeps displays of miniature dollhouse rooms in core board boxes in the lower level of her home.

The dollhouse displays have a unique appeal, but selling them pre-assembled isn’t really feasible, Vanture said.

“I couldn’t sell it,” she said of the

tiny rooms in core board boxes with glass covers. “It would be too expensive.”

Instead, she sells kits and instructions to customers who assemble their own miniatures. While the little dollhouse rooms look intricate, they’re not especially challenging to make.

“I make a point of making them easy,” Vanture said. “I try to make things so women don’t have to go buy tools. You don’t need any drills or saws or anything. I try to make it as easy as possible.”

A miniature hat box might take someone half-an-hour to assemble,

Vanture said. And while the Paper Minis aren’t for young children, adolescents tend to be able to assemble them faster than adults.

Vanture took a circuitous route to starting an online business creating prints for miniatures. It started about 20 years ago when her sister, who likes dollhouses, showed her a tiny box of corn flakes she had purchased for around \$4.

“I said, ‘Man, I could do a better job than that,’” Vanture recalled.

It turned out creating designs for dollhouses was more challenging than she thought, but over the years, she labored on the designs at night while working during the day and then taking care of her ailing parents and daughter, who was then a teenager.

She began selling the kits online in 2002, turning it into her full-time occupation in 2003.

Vanture said she chose her home on the river in Warren County because it was a peaceful retreat.

“I worked so many hours, I needed to live somewhere that was nice,” she said. “I needed some place that was pleasant to be in while I worked my butt off.”

Vanture knows her client base is a niche within a niche — women in their 50s and up who remember dollhouses and have the time and inclination to do crafts.

“Kids don’t really play with dollhouses anymore,” she said.

But for collectors, creating miniature dollhouses is a fun way to spend time, she said. The finished product is its own reward.

For more information, visit www.PaperMinis.com.

Ex-superintendent shifts gears, earns LFCC honor

By REBECCA LAYNE
Byrd Newspapers

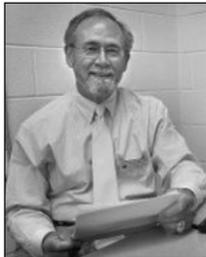
MIDDLETOWN — At 56, former Winchester schools superintendent Glenn Burdick went back to school to become a nurse.

He chose Lord Fairfax Community College because of its proximity, his familiarity with the staff and its “high-quality” education.

“It’s a real community treasure,” he said. After graduating in 2007 with an associate’s degree in nursing, Burdick became a registered nurse, working at Winchester Medical Center for two years.

He then joined the nursing staff of Blue Ridge Hospice, and in 2011 became the executive director of St. Luke Community Clinic in Front Royal, a facility offering free medical care.

The Winchester resident also served on



GINGER PERRY / Byrd Newspapers

BURDICK

the LFCC College Board for eight years, two as chairman. In May, Burdick, 64, received the LFCC Distinguished Alumni Award for his accomplishments. “Dr. Burdick was selected for the award based on his outstanding commitment to LFCC and the community, as well as his professional accomplishments,” said LFCC Educational Foundation Executive Director Liv Heggoy, in an email. “We are very proud of him.”

“I was very humbled, very surprised by the award,” Burdick said. “It came out of the blue.

I just think so highly of the institution and the staff and faculty.”

Burdick began his career in 1970 as a math teacher in the Portsmouth Public Schools.

He went on to serve as a high school principal in Augusta County and as an assistant schools superintendent in Staunton.

In 1991, he became the superintendent for Winchester Public Schools and served there until 2001, when he retired at 52.

Burdick went on to teach a master’s and doctoral program in educational leadership at Shenandoah University until 2004.

He then decided to follow in his mother’s footsteps to become a nurse and enrolled in LFCC’s nursing program.

“I still didn’t feel like I was ready to be put out to pasture,” he said.

In honor of his mother, Burdick established the Margaret T. Burdick Memorial Nursing

Scholarship to benefit a student at LFCC.

The \$1,500-\$2,000 scholarship will help those who may not be able to afford college, such as Burdick’s mother, who passed her licensure exam despite not receiving a degree.

Burdick, who has no plans to retire from his latest career just yet, applauded LFCC for being “well-run with an exceptional reputation and fine faculty” and for being a “good bargain.”

“It should be high on the list of choices of high school graduates and career-changers,” he said. “For those folks who have any doubts, they should not have any doubts.”

Burdick also said the college’s staff offers all students the attention they might not receive at four-year colleges.

“Folks don’t fall to the wayside at Lord Fairfax.”

OBITUARIES

Evelyn Kathlene Clem Carpenter

Evelyn Kathlene Clem Carpenter, 83, of Fort Valley died Thursday, June 13, 2013, in her home.

A funeral service was held on Tuesday at 1 p.m. at the Rivermont Baptist Church in Front Royal conducted by The Rev. Seth Alcorn and The Rev. Jerry Young. Burial was in the Charles Walter Cemetery in Fort Valley.

Mrs. Carpenter was born Oct. 1, 1929, in Seven Fountains, Va., daughter of Ernest R. and Gladys E. Rickard Clem. She attended Dry Run and Fort Valley Public Schools as well as Edinburg and Strasburg High School where she gradu-

ated in 1947. She later attended Stenotype Institute and Strayer College in Washington, D.C. On May 7, 1957, in Guilford Co., she married Charles Raymond Carpenter, now deceased. She held many positions but retired from Avtex in Front Royal after 23 years of service. She was a member of Rivermont Baptist Church since 1975.

She is survived by a son Michael R. Carpenter of New Market, Va.

The family received friends an hour prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements were handled by Maddox Funeral Home.

Jack Palmer “Jay” Stephenson

Jack Palmer “Jay” Stephenson, Jr., 57, of Front Royal, died on Friday, June 14, 2013.

Jay is survived by his sister Pamela Stephenson Wisner and her husband George of Haymarket; one nephew Justin Wisner of Broad Run, Va.; three aunts, Lola Leonard of Charlottesville; Phyllis Kerns of Front Royal; and Barbara Kerns of Pomfret, Md.

He is also survived by his former wife Sandra Whitmer of Harrisonburg; his faithful and beloved caregiver, Carolyn Kellerman of Winchester; his special friend Linda Kelk of Kendallville, Ind.; and numerous

cousins.

Jay was born June 1, 1956 in Tacoma Park, Md., son of the late Jack Palmer Stephenson, Sr. and Barbara Kerns Stephenson. He retired as a cost analyst from Atlantic Research.

The family received friends at Maddox Funeral Home on Tuesday, June 18 from 6 to 7 p.m. and where services were held on Wednesday, June 19 at 1 p.m. Burial followed at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Bill Bauckman, Raymond Heflin, John Lauck, David Seekford, Carl Stock, and Justin Wisner. Honorary pallbearer will be John Maloy.

Phyllis Washington Smith

Phyllis Washington Smith, age 65, of Front Royal, died Thursday, June 13, 2013 at her home.

A memorial service will be conducted on Thursday, June 20, 2013 at 1 p.m. at

Turner-Robertshaw Funeral Home with Reverend Kent Jeter officiating.

Personal condolences may be offered to the family online at www.turner-robertshaw.com.

FRANCES BROWN DICKEY

Frances Brown Dickey, 83, of Front Royal died on Wednesday, June 12, 2013, in the Warren Memorial Hospital in Front Royal.

A memorial service will be held Sunday, June 30, at 3 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Washington, Virginia, conducted by The Rev. Jennings W. Hobson, III. Interment will follow at St. Paul’s Cemetery in Woodville.

Mrs. Dickey was born June 12, 1930, in Culpeper, daughter of the late Harold G. and Helen Miller Brown. She moved to Winchester as an infant and was reared at 423 South Washington Street. Mrs. Dickey was a graduate of Stuart Hall in Staunton, Class of 1948. She moved to Front Royal when she married William Rice Matthews, Jr., now deceased. She was also the wife of the late Charles B. Russell.

Surviving are her husband B. Gordon Dickey; a son William Rice Matthews, III of Rappahannock County; two daughters Westy Matthews Bachelor of Front Royal and her husband Robert and Lorimer Matthews Blanton of Front Royal and her husband Gray; a brother Harold G. Brown, Jr. of Winchester; a sister Helen Brown Buckley of Middletown; three grandchildren Ruth Bachelor Burton, Elliott West Bachelor, and William Rice Matthews, IV; and two great-grandchildren Frances West Campbell and Celia Reid Burton.

The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at Trinity Episcopal Church in the parish hall.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Trinity Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 299, Washington, VA 22747.

Happy Birthday Gary June 14, 1970

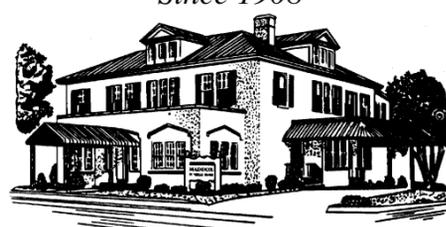
Your birthday comes and goes every year but the pain of losing you is always here. We miss your smile and your beautiful eyes that would twinkle when you were doing something crazy. We miss your laugh that was contagious to everyone around you. Most of all we miss hugging you and touching your beautiful face. We know your watching over us from heaven. So until we see you again we will carry you in our hearts forever.



Love You!!!
Mom, Grandma & Family

Maddox Funeral Home, Inc.

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