

Have you seen this mouse? Well, he has a story to tell

By Molly McGowan / Times-News

Published: Thursday, June 13, 2013 at 18:21 PM.

GRAHAM — Arty the Mouse has been a tenant of the Alamance County Arts Council's Captain White House for a few years now, popping out to help children craft at Family Fun Days and landing himself as the arts council's mascot.

This Saturday, the furry arts enthusiast will have his story told on "Arty the Mouse Day," and lead kids and families on a scavenger hunt through downtown Graham to find miniature bronze replicas of himself.

Every third Saturday at the Captain White House, Arty will be overseeing theme-based crafts and facepainting. And on this Family Fun Day, the mouse will share how he came to live at the big yellow house, through the storytelling of Phoebe Harman.

Cary Worthy, executive director of the arts council, said,

"Phoebe Harman loved the idea of the mascot," said Cary Worthy, executive director of the arts council.

So she wrote Arty's short story.

Worthy said Arty had been lonely and decided to travel, then came upon the big yellow house where "he (saw) all the artwork," and fell in love with the place. Arty stuck around, and started volunteering to sweep and clean the Captain White House.

"And then he finds a paintbrush and starts painting," said Worthy.

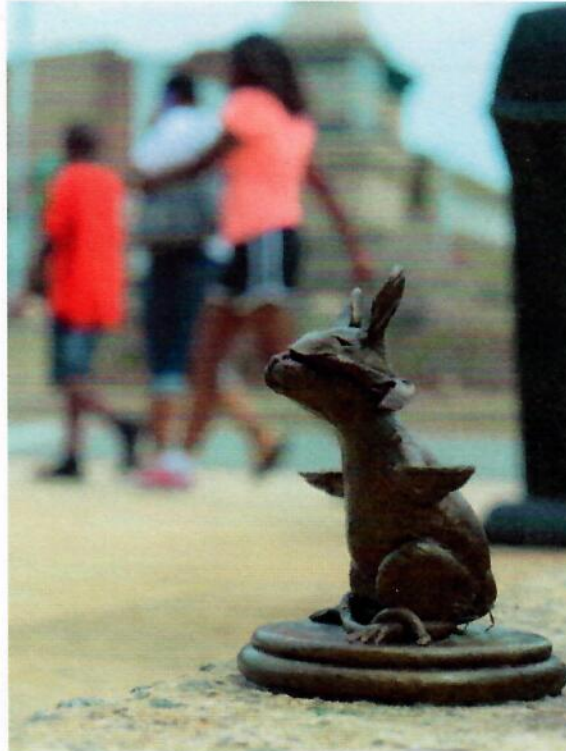
Arty's work became so popular he had his own art show, and then he began to pass along his favorite hobby by teaching a children's art classes.

The "Arty the Mouse" story — illustrated by Carlene Morton — was only one of two ideas Harman had for establishing Arty as the Alamance County Arts Council's official mascot.

Worthy said Harman also came up with the idea to have small replicas of Arty hidden in various locations in Graham's downtown, for children to find on scavenger hunts.

"It's taken us a while to do them, but we finally completed the two projects," which were funded by Harman and her husband, Pat, Worthy said.

On Saturday, Arty and his friends at the arts council will unveil the 11 bronze mice created by Ed Walker of Carolina Bronze Sculpture, on a scavenger hunt during



Family Fun Day. The 6-inch-tall mice are each personalized to reflect their location, Worthy said.

The mouse at Graham Fire Department holds a fire hose, and the mouse at the historic Bank of America building has a moneybag in his paws.

The other nine mice are located at the Captain White House, the Graham Municipal Building, the Alamance County Court House, the Graham Cinema, the Sesquicentennial Gardens, the Graham Historical Museum, the Graham Police Department, the Graham Public Library and the Children's Museum, according to a news release.

Arty the Mouse Day will be celebrated Saturday in conjunction with this month's Family Fun Day, which begins at 10 a.m. at the Captain White House located at 213 S. Main Street in Graham.

The Alamance County Arts Council charges \$3 per family to participate in the day's crafts, and copies of Harman's "Arty the Mouse" book will be available for free. The book will be read after an hour of crafts, and Morton will describe her process of illustrating the book before Arty takes kids on the scavenger hunt.

Brochures giving clues as to where Arty's miniature friends are located throughout Graham are also available at different downtown locations.

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