

# Fuquay-Varina Independent

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FUQUAY-VARINA, NORTH CAROLINA

## Mineral Spring Inn included in "Inns of Christmas" series

BY RON PAGE  
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One of the world's premier aviation and landscape artists of the past century, William S. Phillips will be at Ashley's Art Gallery Friday and Saturday for a book signing and to show canvas prints of his third "Inns of Christmas Series" — this one specifically of the historic landmark known as The Mineral Spring Inn and Garden in Fuquay-Varina.

The inn today is the home of Fuquay-Varina Mayor John Byrne and his wife, Patty, who bought the 1927 building in 1998 and spent the next two years doing renovations that did not affect the historical significance. Phillips had stayed at the inn last November and was so impressed he later produced the painting that will be available in new canvas prints this weekend.

Located in the heart of the Fuquay Springs National Registered Historic District at 333 South Main Street, the local landmark takes one back to an era of bygone days. It was a special time in this community when the spring's water flowed to heal those in need. People came from around the east coast to partake in the healing waters of the Fuquay Mineral Springs. Located on a corner lot, the entrance drive is from East Spring Street.

Perched on a hill, the Inn was built in 1927, the home of Dr. W.S. Cozart and his wife, Pauline, and family. The Cozart

family owned and built one of the hotels — the Ben Wiley, celebrating the mineral spring. Both were very community minded and their home was used for many community functions throughout the 1970s.

Dr. Cozart was the town's doctor and was mayor for 10 years. Pauline was known as one of the community's best gardeners and the grounds reflect her caring touch, even today. A poetic gazebo and stoned patio and arbor are found in the garden. Antique furnishings grace the accommodations.

John Byrne was elected the 27th Mayor in Fuquay-Varina in 2001, and Patty has been teaching English at Fuquay-Varina High School for 28 years. The house and the location in Fuquay has meant a lot to him, Byrne said, pointing out the importance development of that area over the years has meant for the town itself. The inn is located less than a block and a



CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

Fuquay Mineral Spring Inn and Garden as seen in the "Inns of Christmas Series" by William Phillips.

short walk up Main Street to a variety of shopping and dining.

As for the artist whose works are known throughout the world, Phillips is now the aviation artist of choice of many American heroes and the landscape artist of choice of many American collectors. After one of his paintings was presented to King Hussein of Jordan, Phillips was commissioned by the Royal Jordanian Air Force. He developed 16 major paintings, many of which now hang

in the Royal Jordanian Air Force Museum in Amman. The Smithsonian Institute's National Air and Space Museum presented a one-man show of William S. Phillips in 1986. He is one of only a few who have been so honored.

In 1988 he was chosen to be a U.S. Navy combat artist. For his outstanding work, the artist was awarded the Navy's Meritorious Public Service Award and the Air Force Sergeants Association's Americanism Medal.

In 1996, three of William S. Phillips' works were chosen as part of the top 100 in "Art for the Parks," the prestigious national fundraiser for the National Park Service, and one painting received the "Art History Award" from the National Park Foundation.

There are about 4,000 properties on the National Registrar of Historic Places in Wake County and the Inn is one of those, but there are less than 90

that have been designated as Landmarks.

Phillips is known for his nostalgic images of landscapes and American family life. About the canvas he prepared of the Fuquay Mineral Springs Inn — in which he pictures a young boy pulling a cart carrying a small Christmas tree in front of the Inn — Phillips captures a snowy Christmas Eve at the Inn, he remarks, "An unusual Christmas Eve snowstorm has descended upon North Carolina,

bringing holiday travel to a near standstill. Highways and airports are closed, forcing travelers to find shelter as the roads are cleared. For the fortunate family who has checked into the Fuquay Mineral Spring Inn and Garden, it will prove to be a most wonderful Christmas experience. The Inn's gracious owners, John and Patty Byrne, knowing their guest's disappointment at not spending Christmas Eve with loved ones, have sent for a Christmas tree with all the trimmings to be delivered to their room. A young boy with his faithful friend has volunteered to provide the delivery service in his wagon. After an elegant Christmas Eve dinner, and some eggnog and spiced cider with cookies by the fire, our stranded travelers will return to a room decorated with the cheerful glow of a very special Christmas Eve tree."

Ashley's Art Gallery is located at 701 North Main Street (552-7533), and is a Greenwich Workshop "premier" fine art studio. Greenwich Workshop is North America's leading Publisher of Fine Art Limited Editions.

Proceeds will benefit the North Carolina National Guard Soldiers' Assistance Fund. Members of the guard will be on hand during Phillips' appearance.

The event will be from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday and 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday.