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News

Wineka column: Hydrants become art in Granite Quarry

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Friday, August 12, 2011 12:00 AM |

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Faith Cannon, a member of the Granite Quarry Fire Department ladies auxiliary, has been using her artistic skills to transform a few of the fire hydrants in to pieces of themed art. Cannon has completed two hydrants and is working on a third. An American flag, a dalmation dog and the mascot for the elementary school is the themes. Photo by Jon C. Lakey, Salisbury Post.

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By Mark Wineka

mwineka@salisburypost.com

GRANITE QUARRY — Usually only dogs and firefighters hang out around hydrants.

So why has Faith Cannon been spending hours lately with a few fire plugs in Granite Quarry?

Cannon, 35, has found a way to combine her artistic talents with a passion for her town where she and her husband are raising three children.

Over recent weeks, Cannon has been painting several fire hydrants in Granite Quarry, making them pieces of urban art that often lead to a second look.

"Our fire hydrants have character," Mayor Mary S. Ponds says.

With the Fire Department's blessing and encouragement, Cannon has painted the folds of an American flag on a U.S. 52 (Salisbury Avenue) hydrant outside the barber shop.

She transformed the hydrant at the fire station into a playful Dalmatian, and this week she has been putting the finishing touches on the hydrant outside of Granite Quarry Elementary School.

The school's hydrant includes three dragons — the school's mascot. It also has colorful stars in addition to the school's official blue and white colors incorporated into a sky-like background. Cannon made sure to add the words "Go Dragons."

Cannon describes herself as a stay-at-home mom, but she also is a jewelry maker and tattoo artist, who has put the latter career on hold. Her husband, John, is a Granite Quarry firefighter, and she gladly obliged when the department asked her to paint the hydrant at the fire station.

"Then I asked if I could do more," she says.

It wasn't as easy a proposition as you might expect. Chiseling off the old paint and preparing a hydrant as a new canvas takes some elbow grease. Firefighters have provided that.

The "bonnets" (top parts) on fire hydrants also are painted red, green, blue and orange to indicate for firefighters the water flow to hydrants. Those colors have to be there.

"It kind of limits what she can do," Town Manager Dan Peters says.

But with the hydrants she already has painted, Cannon has found a way to incorporate the color of the bonnet into her artwork. She hopes to paint two more, including a hydrant at Granite Lake Park.

Themes she is thinking about are a North Carolina flag and some kind of 10th anniversary memorial related to Sept. 11,

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Granite Quarry firefighter Sean Dunham uses the hydrant in front of the fire department. The hydrant was painted to look like a dalmation dog by Faith Cannon, a member of the FD's ladies auxiliary. Photo by Jon C. Lakey, Salisbury Post.

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2001.

Peters and Fire Chief David Morris purposely decided that only five of the town's 100-plus hydrants should be done for now. They didn't want to overdo a good thing.

Peters says he has seen other towns where all the hydrants are painted with the same kind of artwork. When that happens, he says, they tend to lose whatever unique appeal they were supposed to have.

Cannon has donated all her time. Peters says her artwork is a nice citizen-driven complement to the planters on the square. "Little steps," he adds of the community appearance efforts in tight budget times.

"I think it's awesome," Ponds, the mayor, says of Cannon's painting contribution. The hydrants have flair and a side benefit, the mayor thinks.

"It makes you look to see where there are fire hydrants and how close they are to you," Ponds says.

Peters says Cannon takes a long time with each fire plug and does it right. He especially likes the American flag hydrant along Salisbury Avenue, and Cannon says it's her favorite, too.

"It just jumps out at you," Peters says.

Cannon also has designed two T-shirts for the Fire Department. She says she can do anything "craftsy," and has always had a natural talent in art.

"I was born with it," she says.

Sgt. Todd Taylor of the Police Department provided a tent for Cannon while she was painting the hydrant along U.S. 52. Shade trees have been a great help at the elementary school.

"It kind of makes me feel good," Cannon says. "I enjoy painting, and I enjoy doing something for the community, too."

Contact Mark Wineka at mwineka@salisburypost.com or 704-797-4263.

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A fire hydrant located near the stoplight on US 52 in Granite Quarry was painted by Faith Cannon. Cannon, a member of the GQ FD ladies auxiliary, has completed two of the proposed five hydrants. Photo by Jon C. lakey, Salisbury Post.

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[its me again](#)

Score: 0

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6:26 PM on 8/12/2011

I love them all and cant wait to see the other ones that you will be doing. forget the haters!! I can tell you what the color codes are by the looks of them and as long as the firefighters know their codes (and I know they do) then it dont matter about any bodyelse! Im sure I will see you around town working on the other hydrants and I will be sure to stop and tell you how great they look. My kids LOVE the one for the school:)



[sierraann](#)

Score: 0

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6:17 PM on 8/12/2011

I love it. The American Flag is my favorite also. We do need more citizens like her to put a smile on other peoples faces during hard times like today.

[wayne shoemaker](#)

Score: 0

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5:56 PM on 8/12/2011



Hey gal, Faith you have done a wonderful job with these pieces of ART!! I recon these that have a problem with your painting's, either AIN'T from round here or just have to be a negative critic on someone else's doing's. If these with the problem would ask the fire department about cleaning up an ugly hydrant, I'm sure the squad would be glad to repaint or clean up the problem. Keep up the awesome work honey and let these "bothered" complain to the ones who need to hear it. Again girl GREAT JOB!!!!



[little red hen](#)

Score: 1

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4:42 PM on 8/12/2011

Those are beautiful...especially the American flag one!



[p.k](#)

Score: 4

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1:38 PM on 8/12/2011

Read the article before you comment. They are color coded. They look great and I think the town should be so proud of them.



[village idiot](#)

Score: 3

Report Abuse

11:57 AM on 8/12/2011

She's good but Salisbury still has Clyde's underwear!

 1 reply



[additup](#)

Score: 7

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11:23 AM on 8/12/2011

What a great contribution to the community! Ms. Cannon is to be commended for sharing not only her talents, but also her time and commitment to the town.

Every community should be so fortunate to have citizens who volunteer with a giving spirit in such a positive way.



[xactlymypoint](#)

Score: 7

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11:10 AM on 8/12/2011

So kind of you to share your talent to beautify GQ.



[southernmost point](#)

Score: 6

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10:39 AM on 8/12/2011

excellent.



[coolbeans](#)

Score: 4

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9:41 AM on 8/12/2011

Very talented lady.. Good Job!!



[nomex](#)

Score: -5

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8:11 AM on 8/12/2011

Beautiful art work however the hydrants are color coded for a reason. These instruments are for saving lives and property not art work. The next thing I guess is doing art work on police cruisers....cant believe this Fire Chief went along with this...

 1 reply



[love my kids](#)

Score: 1

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7:04 AM on 8/12/2011

Dont get me wrong these are beautiful and I live in Granite but why did the fire dept. tell me I could not paint the one in my yard?..... It is ugly the color it is sitting in my flower bed but the fire dept. said it had to stay that color because they are color coded to let them know how much water pressure the hydrants have. Beautiful art work Ms. Cannon :)



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