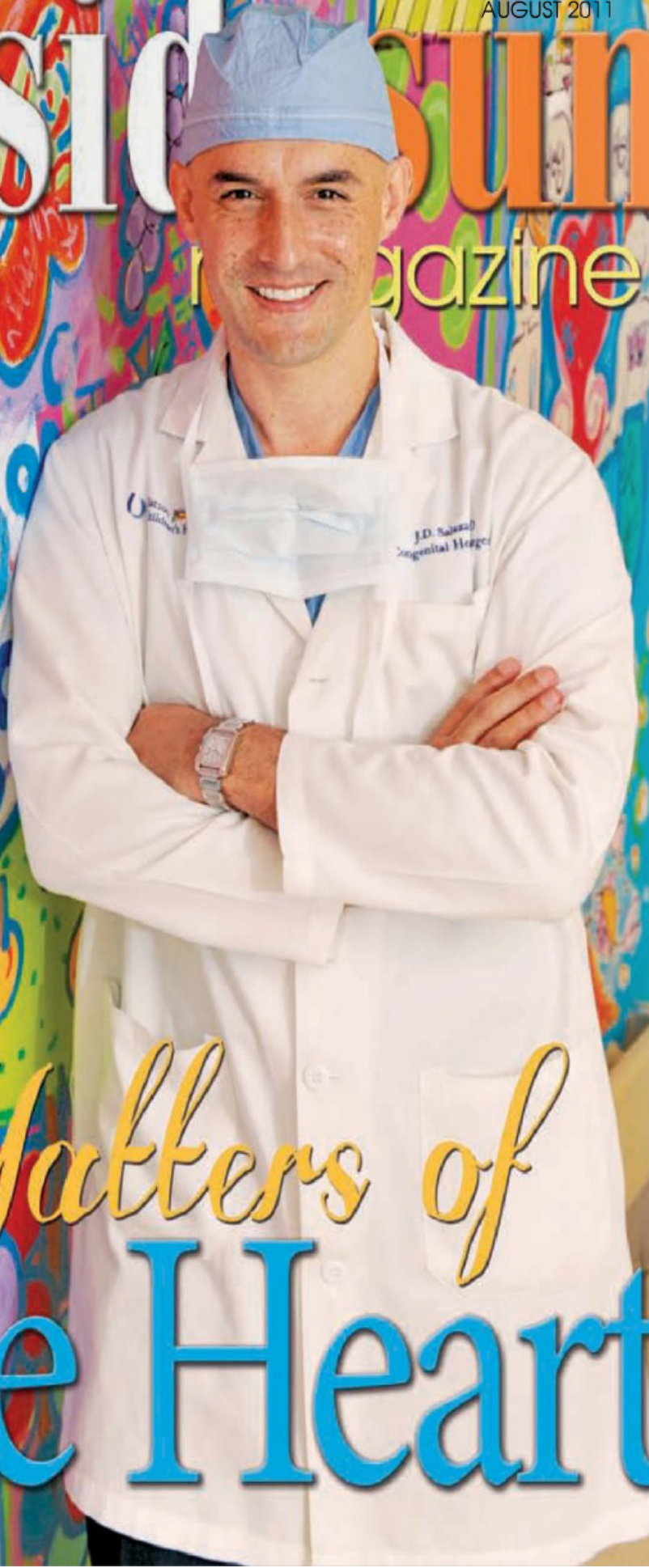


the
northside
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Attackers of
the Heart

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20 The Highest Mountain

Could four men over the age of 60 from Jackson climb the highest mountain in Africa? Well that was just what three doctors and an honest lawyer decided to do. The players were Dr. Ralph Sulser, Dr. Bill Sneed, Dr. Charles O'Mara and Jim Overstreet. The challenge was to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. The men did not set out to prove their manhood or add to a bucket list, according to Sulser who said Kilimanjaro has a glacier on top which was rapidly melting and because they weren't getting any younger, they decided to do it.



24 Pilots n Paws

William Tomlinson, former Northsider now residing in Chattanooga, never thought when he purchased his plane that he would be transporting more animals than people. Tomlinson is a volunteer pilot with "Pilots N Paws," a program in which pilots at their own expense provide transportation to animals booked for euthanasia from "kill shelters" to "no-kill shelters," from puppy mills and hoarders to foster and adoptive homes.



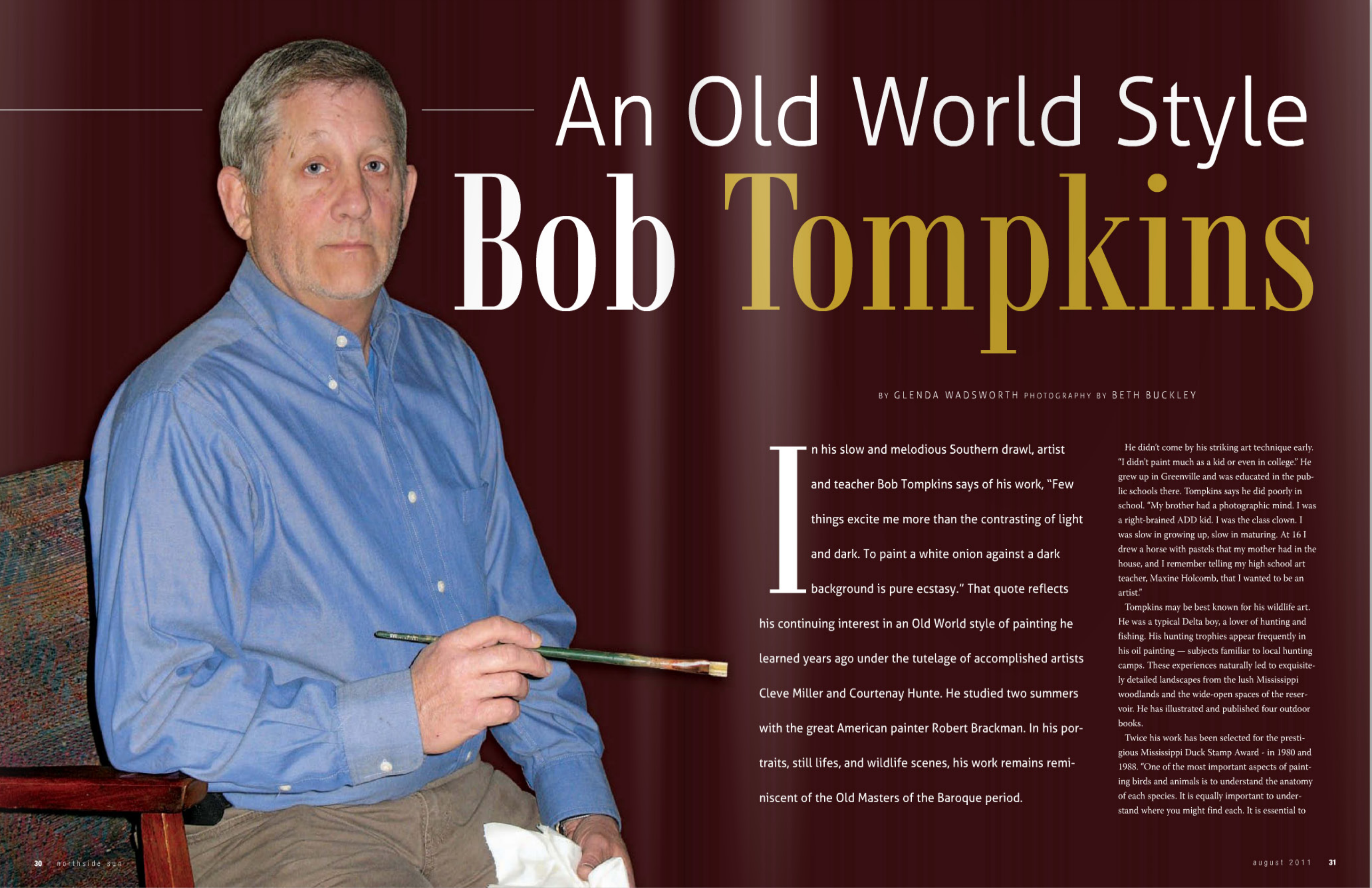
26 Matters of the Heart

Northsiders Dr. Jorge and April Salazar moved from Texas to Mississippi last year when he joined University of Mississippi Health Care as chief of congenital heart surgery. They chose their Eastover home not only because of the beauty of one of Jackson's oldest neighborhoods, but also because of its proximity to the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Minutes matter when it comes to the lives of some of the most vulnerable patients at Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children. "If a child becomes gravely ill, the sooner I can get to the hospital, the better chance I have to save them," Salazar said.



30 An Old World Style

In his slow and melodious Southern drawl, artist and teacher Bob Tompkins says of his work, "Few things excite me more than the contrasting of light and dark. To paint a white onion against a dark background is pure ecstasy." That quote reflects his continuing interest in an Old World style of painting he learned years ago under the tutelage of accomplished artists Cleve Miller and Courtenay Hunte. He studied two summers with the great American painter Robert Brackman. In his portraits, still lifes, and wildlife scenes, his work remains reminiscent of the Old Masters of the Baroque period.



An Old World Style Bob Tompkins

BY GLENDA WADSWORTH PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH BUCKLEY

In his slow and melodious Southern drawl, artist and teacher Bob Tompkins says of his work, "Few things excite me more than the contrasting of light and dark. To paint a white onion against a dark background is pure ecstasy." That quote reflects his continuing interest in an Old World style of painting he learned years ago under the tutelage of accomplished artists Cleve Miller and Courtenay Hunte. He studied two summers with the great American painter Robert Brackman. In his portraits, still lifes, and wildlife scenes, his work remains reminiscent of the Old Masters of the Baroque period.

He didn't come by his striking art technique early. "I didn't paint much as a kid or even in college." He grew up in Greenville and was educated in the public schools there. Tompkins says he did poorly in school. "My brother had a photographic mind. I was a right-brained ADD kid. I was the class clown. I was slow in growing up, slow in maturing. At 16 I drew a horse with pastels that my mother had in the house, and I remember telling my high school art teacher, Maxine Holcomb, that I wanted to be an artist."

Tompkins may be best known for his wildlife art. He was a typical Delta boy, a lover of hunting and fishing. His hunting trophies appear frequently in his oil painting — subjects familiar to local hunting camps. These experiences naturally led to exquisitely detailed landscapes from the lush Mississippi woodlands and the wide-open spaces of the reservoir. He has illustrated and published four outdoor books.

Twice his work has been selected for the prestigious Mississippi Duck Stamp Award - in 1980 and 1988. "One of the most important aspects of painting birds and animals is to understand the anatomy of each species. It is equally important to understand where you might find each. It is essential to



Left: Bob Thompson, 2000, near Meridian.
Below: Bob, 2002, Black River Camp near Kilmichael



Allyson, Olivia and Sara Grace Harrison



Ella, Sara Grace and Olivia Harrison

An Old World Style Bob Tompkins

realize the anatomy of a cloud, a tree, the forest floor, a grass field or any of the thousands of other aspects nature presents in order to make the painting believable as a whole."

Tompkins today arranges his work life around the hunting seasons. He says, "I guess you could say I am obsessed with hunting and fishing. I do most of my painting after hunting season." He and brother Billy, a vascular surgeon in Texarkana, spend June through January hunting and fishing. They hunt deer and turkeys in Iowa, turkeys in Nebraska and Missouri, and fish in Texas. They do muzzle loader hunting in Arkansas and Iowa.

Billy Tompkins calls his younger brother, "my best friend." He adds, "Bob has a wonderful dry wit and sense of humor and never meets a stranger. He is great fun to hang out with." Billy is semi-retired and arranges his schedule as well around hunting season. Both men love to hunt and fish, and as important, they both are great cooks. In fact they are in the process of writing a cookbook of recipes to use at a hunting camp which will be out the first of the year. The title is (pardon their French) Any Camp Bitch Can Cook. Billy is in charge of the printing; Bob is doing the illustrations.

Tompkins' mother, Sarah, was from Blue Mountain. She taught piano and was a divisional manager for World Book Encyclopedia. Father, William Charles, worked at Kings Daughters Hospital in Greenville. Bob also has a younger brother, Harry. Bob is the father of two, Allyson Harrison, a teacher in the Canton school system and mother of Bob's three granddaughters, and Michael, who teaches in the American School of Rome, Italy.

Through Tompkins' life flows a line of coincidences or, as he might put it, divine interventions. Rooted in his Christian faith, Bob fervently believes that every major turning point in his life was placed there and directed by God. After graduating from Delta State University (DSU) where he received a bachelor's degree and a master's in art education, he taught art a year in Greenville.

It was the time of the Vietnam War. Restless,



Art student Rory Steed with Bob

he made a trip to Millington, Tenn., seeking to qualify to be a navigator. On return to Greenville, he stopped at DSU after 5 p.m., and bumped into his fraternity advisor, Dr. McRaney. McRaney flagged him down with a question, "Do you want a job to teach in Jacksonville?"

Tompkins immediately thought "teacher deferment," and answered yes, although he had no idea where Jacksonville or Lakeshore Junior High School was. "I barely knew where Florida was." He taught one and a half years there, where he met Miller and Hunte and took their art courses. "In the class we painted portraits from life. That's where my painting career started. Now I have taught hundreds of artists, and it all started with these men in Florida. I am convinced God led me to Florida."

After a time in Florida, he returned to Mississippi to spend 26 years teaching art in the public schools of Greenville, then 17 more years at Northwest Jackson Middle School. He moved to Madison in 1999, retired in 2000, opened the Bob Tompkins Studio and began giving private lessons.

His studio, now located off Highway 51 north of Gluckstadt, is a 5,000 square foot state-of-the-

art facility for student artists interested in advancing their oil painting talents. His classes are always at maximum capacity and have a waiting list. Tompkins instructs 70 adults in classes of 15-20, offering each student five feet of table space, a personal and permanent enclosed cubicle with its own light source. He teaches using the philosophy of the Old Masters, learning to paint from life using a strong, directional source of light. "The only way to learn how to paint is to paint from life. I always discourage my students from painting from photographs. A camera's eye does not see as we see," explains Tompkins.

He expounds, "There are basically three main concepts to completing a successful painting: lights and darks or value; warm and cool colors



or intensity; and textures or thin, transparent darks and imposto, opaque lights. When a painter has all three of these concepts in the proper relationship, a successful painting has been achieved."

Tompkins believes it is important "to demonstrate to the student how to solve a painting problem. Too often painting instructors offer verbal instructions to solve a problem. When I was struggling my old teacher would take my brush and demonstrate on my canvas the proper way to handle the situation, which afforded me the opportunity to better understand the concepts of painting."

His students have the highest praise for Tompkins, and he is equally proud of their many successes. Miriam Etheridge of Madison has been Tompkins' student for a number of years. "He is just a great teacher. When he took me on as a student I had never had a lesson in my life. He started me on the very basics and led me as far as I could go. Within a year of working with Bob I sold my first painting, and now I am represented by Jackson Street Gallery."

Gay Anderson has been Bob's student for 10 years and is represented by Jackson Street Gallery. "After the first year of lessons my husband said, 'Well, now you know how to paint, so you can quit taking lessons.' I told him, 'Oh no, I've just started to learn.' Bob is really good with beginners. He can teach people who have never painted and who think they have no talent for it. He teaches them the basics and then encourages them to develop their own style. He is generous with his time and talent. He asks us to paint every day to better ourselves. He is warm and funny, and after 10 years I feel like he is a relative."

Because of his deep religious commitment, Tompkins has supported numerous charity auctions by graciously sharing his oil painting talent through donations to the community. Currently he has his art hanging in the Paula Jackson Gallery in Ridgeland and at Lenora's Restaurant in Oxford.

Bob intends to continue painting and teaching as long as he can, even if he gets to the point of "having to tape my brushes to my fingers." Retirement is not in his vocabulary. "The Lord has been good to me," says Tompkins. "I am a successful painter and teacher - not the richest, but I consider myself a success because I get so much satisfaction out of my life."

Recipes from the Tompkins brothers' cookbook

FRUIT COBBLER

(Bob's favorite)

- 9x13 Pyrex dish
- Blueberries, apples, or peaches
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ sticks butter
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup self-rising flour
- 1 pkg crescent rolls



Fill pyrex dish half full with fruit. Mix 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup self-rising flour. Pour on top of fruit. Cut one stick butter into pats and put on top of flour/sugar mixture. Lay crescent rolls on top of this. Sprinkle sugar on top of crescent rolls. Put remaining butter pats on top of this. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.

VENISON MEAT LOAF

- 2 lbs. ground venison (with beef fat)
- 2 tsp. butter (melted)
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. pork sausage
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chili sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. Lea & Perrins



Mix venison and sausage. Add other ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Put in greased baking dish and bake at 400 degrees for 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

STUFFED GRILLED DUCK BREASTS

- 6-8 duck breasts (skin off)
- Philadelphia cream cheese
- Sliced Jalapenos (canned or fresh)
- Bacon

Pound duck breasts to about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Spread cheese on one side and add jalapenos. Roll up, wrap with bacon and secure with toothpick. Grill on hot charcoal 2-3 minutes per side. May be served as appetizer or entrée.

