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Calculating pie

This time of year is known for the goodwill and charity we share. Remember, though, charity comes in other forms than a wallet handout. Simple deeds like cleaning out a neighbor's rain gutter or offering to carry in a few bags of groceries can go a long way. Who knows – unsolicited favors on your part may even help your Thanksgiving meal seem to taste even better!

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A cornucopia of spirit

Daydreaming of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, I was lifting my spirit with visions of a lovely table setting graced with colors of fall.

Vases of fresh-cut flowers and the traditional cornucopia spilling forth fruit and nuts upon the center of the table.

The background check on cornucopia and the story of Amalthea, the she-goat who offered her cut-off horn to Zeus — spilling forth fruits and nuts — just didn't inspire me.

"Yuck!" was all I could think.

For some unexplained reason, my envisioned flowers began to wilt, my china plates turned to paper with a motif of a large turkey in the center and my cornucopia was replaced by a plastic bowl of fake fruit and nuts.

Yuck, again! ... At about the

Tid Bits

By Bev Leitch



same time, my computer went on the blitz and my holiday spirit fizzled out. I needed a long walk in the sun.

Recent local rain had broken one mini drought and things were greening up again.

By that, I mean berry bushes, nut trees and others of nature's bounty looked like they would produce fruit, nuts, pods and other seeds.

I put on my sweatshirt and light duck boots and began my walk.

Temperatures were cool and

a minimal amount of foliage was showing color.

The sun was out, and the promise of Indian summer was lingering in the background of my mind. Please, lift my spirit from "Yuck!"

Walking slowly and scuffing at the fallen leaves I stubbed my toe on what I figured was a stone. No, a walnut.

Scuffing about, I saw many more and put them in the pouch of my sweatshirt.

Looking up to try to identify the tree, which was easy, I also saw rambling wild grape vines laden with tiny berries.

I reached up and yanked down a portion of the vine and fruit, twisted it into a wreath form and placed it on my head. It was my

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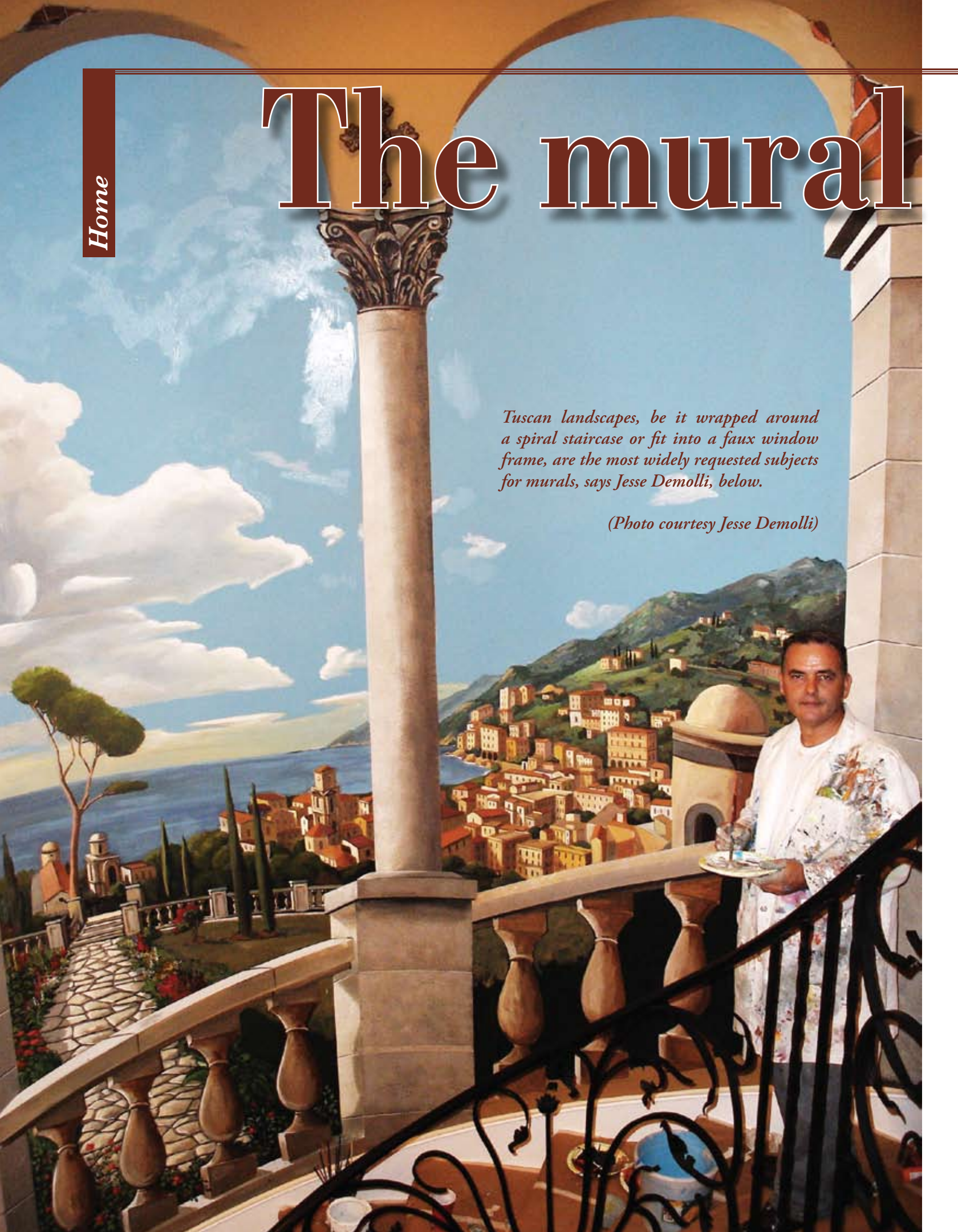
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The mural

Tuscan landscapes, be it wrapped around a spiral staircase or fit into a faux window frame, are the most widely requested subjects for murals, says Jesse Demolli, below.

(Photo courtesy Jesse Demolli)



is the story

A mural could be your answer on what to do with that blank wall

Story by Sean Clougherty

A blank wall in a home is an opportunity. Most times, framed pictures that go up: Family photos, landscapes or knick-knack racks are some of the usual suspects.

One option that gets passed over perhaps too quickly is murals.

Murals can open up a room “even more than a mirror, that’s one of the coolest things about them,” according to Kurt Plinke, an artist and teacher from Greensboro who has painted 11 murals to date around the Mid-Shore.

“What I like about murals is how it lets me think bigger,” Plinke said. “I like the scale and the reach of them,” he said.

He said he enjoys *trompe l’oeil*, or “trick the eye,” painting, that gives the illusion of more space, which is best for a mural’s large scale.

Most of Plinke’s murals are in public places, but he said recently he’s been getting more calls from homeowners who are thinking about putting a mural across an entire wall.

Sure to be a conversation starter, murals can work in a variety of settings — from a dining room to a great room to a child’s room.



Kurt Plinke is perhaps best known for his work with watercolors, which can “take on a mind of thier own” on the canvas and works well with this “Stop in the Fog” scene.

(Photo courtesy Kurt Plinke)

Along with making a room look bigger, a mural can bring another part of the world into the home in a near-lifelike way.

Jesse Demolli, a muralist from Florence, Italy, who’s lived in St. Michaels and painted several murals around the town and many Maryland

homes, said Tuscan landscapes are the top-requested scene for a mural.

He said those people want to be able to drift off to another place in their mural, not something they can see outside their window.

“They just say ‘Oh, no, if I want to see the city I’ll just go downtown



The long walls in two Rusticana restaurants gave Demolli a large space to give the feeling of looking out onto the Italian countryside.

(Photos courtesy Jesse Demolli)

and see the city,” Demolli said.

Demolli has done murals in states up and down the East Coast, and was recently a featured artist at the National Museum of Murals and Mosaics, but he said there’s something special about St. Michaels.

“I was most inspired when I moved to St. Michaels. I would go down without a sketchbook and then some of the sketches wound up on walls,” he said. “I’m still active in St. Michaels and love to go and visit.”

Demolli also added that the painting goes a lot smoother in “The Town That Fooled the British.”

What would take three days to paint in New York City only takes a day in St. Michaels.

“I thought it had to do something with the Bay and the water. The



energy is different,” he suggested.

Demolli has painted more than 200 murals — and like Plinke, most were done in public places.

“Good public art says something about the public, about the community,” he said. “I get guided by the people. The best murals are the one’s around the people.”

And like a public mural, Demolli said his best private mural comes

from collaborating with the people who will see it the most.

“Their ideas and my ideas together make the best landscapes,” he said.

With a larger space to work, a mural allows the artist to expand an idea beyond a picture frame, Demolli said.

“A lot of artists use the words that painting mu- (PAGE 14)