

MUSEUMS ON THE LOOP

Museum of the Albemarle

By Claude Milot

Have you ever heard of the “Ton Litter Contest” or the trophy that went to the winner? Unless you’re from North Carolina you probably haven’t. Neither had I until I learned that Elizabeth City’s Museum of the Albemarle had acquired the Gates County Ton Litter Contest trophy. Why would it do that? Because of hogs.

You see, raising hogs is big business in North Carolina. And not so long ago someone came up with the idea of recognizing the owner of the sow with the biggest litter. The trophy in question lists “contest winners between 1946 and 1955, along with the number of pigs in their litter and the combined weight.”

Now, exhibiting such a trophy might not seem as prestigious as having a Monet or a Van Gogh on display. But it is far more important to hog farmers of North Carolina than Impressionist paintings—and much more germane to the history of the state and the region. And that gives you an idea of what the Museum of the Albemarle is all about.

Walk through the front doors of the museum and your eyes are immediately drawn up to an authentic North Carolina shad boat hanging from the ceiling, which tells you right away that North Carolina is very much about the waters of Albemarle Sound and the shores that surround it. “Our story,” as the museum’s headline goes, “is the tale of how our communities have adapted to the challenges and opportunities of our unusual home.”



Loopers who are interested in the Albemarle region and its history will be greatly rewarded on their migration north this spring if they make it a point of stopping in Elizabeth City and making a visit to the Museum of the Albemarle a journey of discovery.

The largest museum on the Loop is free of charge, is open every day but Sunday, and is just across the street from Elizabeth City Mariners’ Wharf. Do stop in. And don’t forget to check out the Ton Litter Contest trophy.