

KERRY'S CORNER

When Fall Feels Like Home

Cool mornings, familiar roads, and the comforts we return to



ISSUE NO. 2 • OCTOBER 2026

A monthly letter about life, home, and the communities near Durham

A Letter from Kerry

October has a way of making home feel especially close.

The first cool morning always changes the rhythm of a place. Windows open. Sweaters come out of closets. The light turns softer, and even a familiar drive begins to look a little different.

I have lived in this part of North Carolina long enough to know fall by its small signs: the first bright leaves along a country road, the smell of wood smoke, mums appearing on porches, and neighbors lingering to talk because the heat has finally eased. None of it is grand, but together those details make a season feel like home.

That is what this October issue is about—the comforts we return to and the places that invite us to slow down. We will take an autumn drive through the communities near Durham, talk plainly about preparing a home for a future sale, and finish at the kitchen table with caramel apple pie.

I hope you will read this with a cup of coffee, pass it along to someone who loves these towns, and perhaps take the long way home one afternoon this month.

With warmth,

Kerry Johnson

REALTOR® • RE/MAX Premier • Living Near Durham NC

OCTOBER NOTES

The Season of Coming Home

Fall reminds us that home is not only the house itself. It is the route we know without directions, the grocery store where we recognize someone in every aisle, the lake turning silver late in the day, and the front porch that finally feels comfortable again.

This month, notice what makes your own corner of North Carolina feel personal. It may be a view, a tradition, a family recipe, or simply the way the evening light falls across your yard. Those ordinary details are often the ones we remember longest.

An October Drive Close to Home

Four places close to my heart, each with its own fall rhythm.

ROXBORO

October suits Roxboro. Downtown brick, tree-lined streets, open fields, and the roads leading toward Hyco and Mayo Lakes all take on a quieter beauty. It is a good month to wander without an agenda and notice the pieces of town we usually pass too quickly.

BAHAMA

Bahama invites you to notice the land between destinations: open fields, old trees, and country roads I never tire of photographing. It is a reminder that the drive itself can be part of what makes a place feel like home.

HILLSBOROUGH

Historic Hillsborough feels made for autumn. The scale of downtown encourages a slower pace, while the surrounding countryside adds color, texture, and long views. It is the kind of place where a short stop often turns into a long walk.

ROUGEMONT

Rougemont is a place to appreciate one road at a time. The fields, barns, and stretches of countryside give me reasons to slow down and look again, even on a familiar drive.

Take the Long Way

Choose one road you know well and drive it slowly. Leave the radio off. Look for an old barn, a porch dressed for fall, a stand of trees beginning to turn, or a view you have never stopped to appreciate. Home often becomes more meaningful when we pay closer attention to it.

ALONG THE WAY

Rougemont, Mebane, and the Lakes

Rougemont deserves more than a passing mention. Its country roads and broad views are part of the story of this region, just as Mebane and the roads toward Hyco and Mayo Lakes have their own character. My work is to help people understand those differences and find a place that fits their everyday life.

Before the Sign Goes in the Yard

A home sale usually begins long before the sign goes in the yard.

If you are thinking about selling next spring, October is not too early to begin. This is the comfortable planning stage—the time to look at what may need attention without the pressure of a deadline.

Start with the items that affect a buyer's confidence: small repairs, moisture concerns, peeling paint, worn flooring, and rooms that have become crowded with things you no longer use. You do not need to renovate everything. A thoughtful plan is usually more valuable than a hurried list of expensive projects.

Three Useful Steps This Month

1. Walk through your home as though you were seeing it for the first time. Make a short list of what feels unfinished.
2. Gather records for repairs, improvements, permits, warranties, and major systems.
3. Ask for an early conversation about value and preparation before spending money.

A useful starting point is a conversation about your home, your timing, and recent comparable sales in your immediate area. The right preparation and pricing plan will depend on the property and the market when you are ready to sell.

KERRY'S TAKE

Preparation Should Bring Clarity

My role is not to hand you an overwhelming list. It is to help you decide what matters, what can wait, and where your time and money are most likely to help. Even if your move is months away, a calm conversation now can make the entire process easier later.

Caramel Apple Pie

A cozy October dessert that feels right at home on a Sunday table.



Ingredients

- 1 double-crust pie pastry
- 6 cups peeled, thinly sliced apples
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut small
- 1/3 cup caramel sauce, plus more to serve
- 1 egg mixed with 1 tablespoon water

Method

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Fit one pastry crust into a 9-inch pie plate.
2. Toss apples with lemon juice, both sugars, cinnamon, nutmeg, flour, and salt. Let stand 10 minutes.
3. Spoon filling into the crust. Dot with butter and drizzle with caramel sauce.
4. Add the top crust, seal and crimp the edges, and cut several vents. Brush lightly with egg wash.
5. Bake 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 375°F and bake 35 to 45 minutes more, until the crust is golden and the filling bubbles. Shield the edge if it browns too quickly.
6. Cool at least 2 hours before slicing. Add a small drizzle of warm caramel when serving.

Kerry's Kitchen Note

Use a mix of tart and sweet apples so the filling has more depth. The pie slices most cleanly after it has cooled, although waiting may be the hardest part.

What We Carry Into the Season

The best parts of home are often the ones that cannot be measured.

Real estate naturally focuses on rooms, square footage, acreage, and location. Those things matter. But when people describe why they love a home, they usually talk about something else—the kitchen where everyone gathers, the window that catches the morning light, the quiet road outside, or the neighbors who became friends.

October brings those feelings closer to the surface. We cook familiar food, pull old blankets from the closet, gather on porches, and return to traditions that make time feel connected. A house becomes home through those layers of ordinary life.

Wherever you live near Durham—inside the city, in a small town, beside a lake, or down a country road—I hope this month gives you a reason to notice what you love about it.

In the Next Issue

November will be about gathering: welcoming people in, giving thanks for the communities that hold us, and preparing a home for the holidays without losing the joy of the season.

Keep in Touch

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Serving Hillsborough, Bahama, Rougemont, Roxboro, Durham, Mebane, Hyco Lake, and Mayo Lake

Thank you for reading. Share Kerry's Corner with someone who loves these places too.