

# ROY SAYLOR

BY BEN WHISENANT

Roy Saylor first came to Tennessee in his early years; his family had a dairy farm, and they lived in the Tri-Cities area. A little later, his family moved to Bedford County and purchased a larger dairy farm in Bell Buckle. He attended high school, and upon graduation in 1980, he enlisted in the Navy. He started to work in nuclear power production and spent two years in training before graduating to work on the nuclear-powered submarines. He was stationed in South Carolina for a time, and then went on to work in recruitment in Illinois and Missouri. He spent 10 years stationed in Georgia, where he served on two different submarines and had a shore assignment in between working on those vessels. At one point, Saylor's wife was working for a company that was major a sponsor for several Habitat for Humanity builds. Saylor started by joining her on some projects, but later, he took a more active role. One of his submarines got involved with a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, and they needed someone to organize the volunteer rotation, so Saylor stepped in and began administering that. He finished up his time with the Navy in northwest Washington, right outside of Seattle. His career in the Navy lasted 22 years.

## BUILDING UP

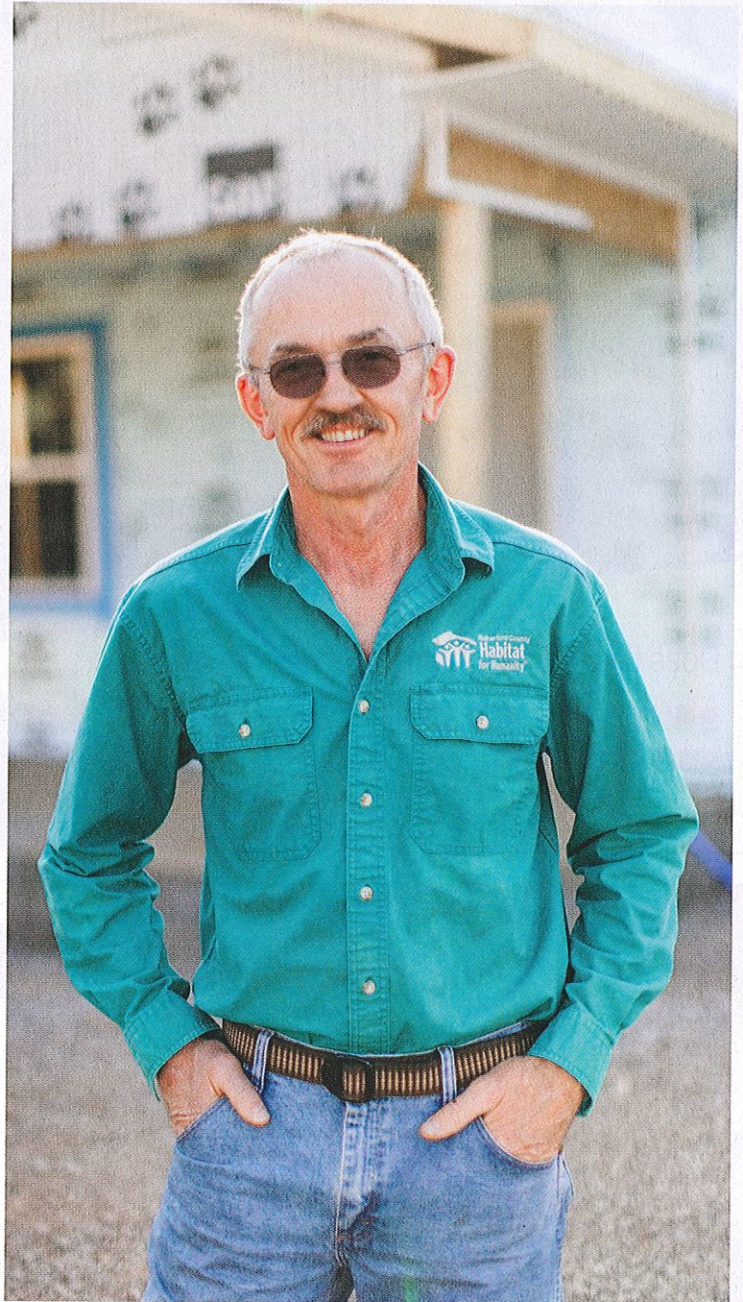
After retirement from the Navy, Saylor was looking for something else and answered a want ad for the Rutherford County Habitat for Humanity; he accepted the job as a construction manager. Saylor summarizes Habitat for Humanity's mission this way: "eliminate sub-standard housing in the country."

In order for an individual or a family to be eligible for a Habitat for Humanity build, there are three basic criteria that have to be met, and Habitat has a Future Homeowner Selection Committee that evaluates the situation to see if these requirements are met. First, there must be a need for housing; sometimes, this need would be met through homelessness, but issues of overcrowding, housing costs being more than 30 percent of household income, or living in a dilapidated structure can also satisfy this first criterion. Secondly, the potential homeowner must fall within a certain income range and, finally, they must be willing to work with Habitat and participate in the process.

Saylor stresses that these homes are not "handouts" but are instead "handups"; the homeowner will pay a mortgage to Habitat for Humanity, but it will be a zero percent loan. These homes are built by volunteers and materials are donated or purchased with financial contributions. For some builds, there is a single sponsor; in our area, MTSU and Nissan are examples of organizations that partner at that level. On average, the Rutherford County Habitat for Humanity builds eight houses per year.

## QUALITY WORK

As the construction manager, a main focus of Saylor's work is overseeing the day-to-day labor at the building sites. He hopes to accomplish two basic things here: he wants volunteers to enjoy themselves and feel that they



are making a valuable contribution, and he makes sure that the work that's being done is of a high quality. When he is not at the construction, Saylor's job is to handle the logistics of the projects—making sure that necessary materials are ordered, picked up, and delivered to the site. For Saylor, the most rewarding part of his work is the day that the new homeowner receives the keys to the new home.

This year, the Rutherford County Habitat for Humanity is starting a new project: a veterans' build. They have reached out to various veterans' organizations to supply the volunteers for the build; furthermore, the new homeowner will also be a veteran. The Rutherford County Habitat for Humanity is the first affiliate in the state of Tennessee to do an official veterans' build, and the plan is to organize one of these each year.