

BETH PARKS PHOTO.
Harrington resident Hazel Carter
at work in her studio.

A VISIT WITH...

Harrington artist Hazel Carter

There's nothing pretentious or flamboyant about Hazel Carter, although she'd have every reason to brag about her myriad creations.

A native of Harrington in Washington County, Hazel lives on the same country road where she grew up. Lupines and blueberries festoon the gently rolling hills. Down the road a bit stands the tiny wooden schoolhouse, now a senior center, which

she attended as a girl.

Even in those early days, Hazel wanted to be an artist. As the oldest of seven children, though, she knew there would be no money to send her to something as costly as art school. Her formal education was "quick and cheap." She became a hairdresser and set up a beauty salon in her house, where she was able to tend to her husband and growing family. But with a reputation for creating cakes and other goodies, she soon found herself inundated with requests from friends and neighbors.

"Hair and icing didn't mix," Hazel says of that period in her

life. She soon closed her salon and began cranking out spectacular, multilayer wedding cakes for anyone who wanted them. Her imaginative and brightly colored flower, fruit and vegetable arrangements also told of her underlying artistic gift.

In 1986, Hazel officially became an artist and her barn-style shop features dozens of paintings on walls or in bins. Asked how long it takes her to create something she replies, "About 15 minutes and 30 years."

— Beth Parks

