

# Irmo-Chapin LEADER

by Kristi Antley

## Alpine Springs

“Birds and Blooms” expresses just part of the interests of Alpine Springs of Chapin. “That’s the name of my shop,” she points out. “Right now, it’s who I am. In the past, I have been a realtor as well as owner of a dress shop and a toy store. All right here in this wonderful community.”

Called “Pine” by her closest friends, this entrepreneur grew up in the Lake City area, learning about hard work in life on a farm. She graduated from Scranton High School and was married at 16 to James Springs Sr., “an old man of 20.” This marriage produced six children, two of them adopted after being orphaned.

She’s been into gardening all her life, gifted with the “green thumb” that makes things grow. As a child, she puttered in a greenhouse in the backyard, and that grew into her own business. Birds and Blooms began in White Rock and later moved to St. Peters Church Road in Chapin; it’s celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, and, at age 88, Pine is still helping her neighbors with plants that will bloom and supplies for the birds of the Midlands.

The community’s favorite bird, no doubt, is “Bloomer,” the 11-year-old parrot who has been a fixture at Birds and Blooms for many years. “I used to sell exotic birds,” recalls Pine. “Keeping up with their care was pretty demanding, so I phased it out. But I couldn’t give up Bloomer, she belongs here just as much as I do. She talks a lot, and everybody who comes in visits with her.”

Bloomer’s recent spirit of adventure led her to a risky outing: She flew away when some open doors provided the opportunity. There was much wringing of hands over her loss, until a kindly neighbor found and rescued her. At this writing, the savior has been in touch with Pine and plans to return Bloomer to her real home.

“That’s just typical of people in this community,” says Alpine Springs. “Neighbors help neighbors, if anybody needs help everybody is available. It’s a great place to be.”

She is available to share her expertise in the Midlands. Her most recent gig: hosting the Chapin Garden Club in May for a special class. The subject: Birds and Blooms, of course. ■

