

January 2011

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors®

VOL. 5, ISSUE 1

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

PRICELESS

Write Here!

MEET SOME OF WILLIAMSBURG'S AUTHORS



Dr. Cecil Johnson

BUSINESS

John Williams
Business Advice

HEALTH

Jane Hersey
What's In Your Food?

HOME

Terry Deaver
When to Do It Yourself

Visit our website at www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

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la, la, la, la.

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Williamsburg is a magnet for authors. If you think about it, our community is the ideal environment for someone who aspires to write. It is rife with the type of amenities that are conducive to research and reflection: a rich history, a preeminent university, countless parks and trails, a rich variety of cultural institutions and activities, and a never-ending supply of fascinating people from all walks of life. It is fertile ground for developing outlines, plots, and content to keep a writer's computer humming at a steady pace.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

In this issue, we have interviewed a few of our local authors in an effort to learn more about them and the books they have published. We also wanted to find out what words of wisdom they could share for those of us who consider ourselves just one step away from being a published author (a.k.a. "wannabe" author). I expect there are plenty folks who will read this issue who have given serious consideration to writing a book (like me) and maybe there are those who even gleefully wrote that first chapter or two. But somehow life got in the way, or we just couldn't decide how to start that next sentence, or we changed our mind about how the story should be told and somehow it just stalled.

Whatever your situation may be, I hope you enjoy reading about some of your neighbors who made it all the way - locals who became successful authors "write here". NDN

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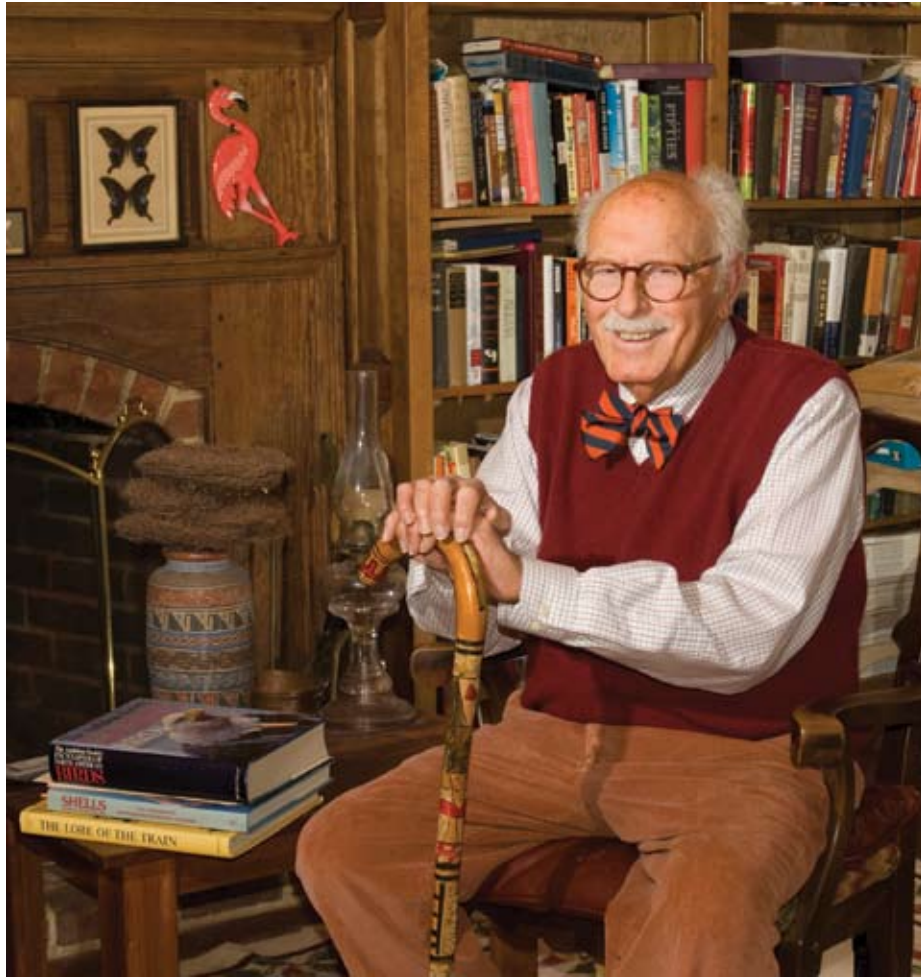
By Lillian Stevens

On a gently winding street just a stone's throw from the Colonial Parkway, there sits a three-story house, circa 1790. The property boasts the only "pleasure garden" located outside of Colonial Williamsburg, and its backyard has been designated a National Wildlife Refuge by the National Wildlife Association.

This historic, stately house is home to local author Dr. Cecil Johnson and his wife, Edith, an art historian.

Dr. Johnson was originally from California where he was a biology professor for many years. He is also a former talk show host, and newspaper columnist. Passionate about the planet and the creatures which inhabit it, he has authored seven books and anthologies, and dozens of articles which have appeared in magazines like *Natural History* and *National Geographic*. He is also proud of the many op-eds written for publications ranging from *The Los Angeles Times* to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Locally, however, he might best be known for a column that ran nearly a decade in *The Virginia Gazette*. Cecil Johnson was the 'Curmudgeon'. He says that his philosophy – which



he characterizes as "the positive value of negative thinking" – made him perfect for the assignment, which ended several years ago.

"That column was my main joy for seven years," Dr. Johnson says with a chuckle.

Presently, he is in the final throes of a book called *Drugs and the Mind*, while also putting the finishing touches on another book to be published in a few months, entitled *The Natural History of Suburbia*. The latter expands upon an article he wrote for *National Geographic*, published in 1980, 'The Wild World of Compost'.

Dr. Johnson's writings range in topics from ecology to sex and human relationships – even one about his research and experience with

a hallucinogenic plant called *Datura*.

Without question, he has built a full, significant and interesting life sharing his scientific brain trust with anyone who wants to read his books. He trained himself by writing letters to the editor and encourages anyone with an interest in writing to do the same. From there, he harnessed his own passions and paired those with the kind

of expertise gleaned from years in academe.

"What you have to do with writing is you have to grab the podium," Dr. Johnson explains. "You're not just talking to a group in a room when you write a book or put a series of essays together. So you must find a market and then pitch your work to potential publishers."

For the writer just starting out, it can be hard to sell to big publishers but that was never a problem for Dr. Johnson, whose work has been picked up by publishing powerhouses like Simon and Schuster, McGraw Hill and John Wiley and Sons.

"The thing about the books I've written is that they each have a purpose. As a biologist I've always been concerned about overpopula-



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tion and pollution, which led me to write books like *Eco Crisis* and *Natural World: Chaos and Conservation*,” he says.

But how does a writer go from writing to landing a publisher?

Dr. Johnson has used – and endorses – a book which he calls an absolute necessity for a prospective author. *The Writer’s Market* takes the writer through the process from start to finish.

“To begin with, it is absolutely essential that your pitch or query letter be very good. Explain what you want to write about– articulate the essence of your book or article. Don’t listen to friends and family who tell you your work is good or not good. You be the judge. And don’t be afraid to edit or re-write altogether. I do that all the time. Still, my wife who has edited every piece of my work, often says that the best thing that I write is often the first thing that I wrote.”

That is advice that translates to all types of writing, from novel to non-fiction – poetry to magazine features. Dr. Johnson characterizes his own work as socio-biology, integrating literature and science, and marvels at the scientists and writers whom he has met along the way – people like British writer Aldous Huxley, science great Edmund Jaeger, and Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winner, John Steinbeck.

“Edmund Jaeger, of course, is famous for discovering a bird in a state of hibernation called a Poorwill, which was huge in the bird world,” says Dr. Johnson.

He was also fascinated with Huxley, author of *The Doors of Perception*, the story of Huxley’s own experiences and insights on the hallucinogenic drug mescaline.

“Being a naturalist biologist I’m interested in plants, even hallucinogenic plants. I knew such plants were used in Indian rituals but after reading about Huxley transcending this world into the cosmos of another, getting inside the atom and seeing things that other people don’t see – well – I was curious. So I ingested Datura (the Nightshade) to see what would happen,” he says.

Dr. Johnson wound up in the hospital strapped to a bed.

He chronicled the experience in *The Mystical Force of the Nightshade*, a vivid account of the drug’s hallucinogenic power which was published in the *International Journal of Neuropsychiatry* in July, 1967. In the clutches of the powerful plant, he says that he experienced what it might feel like to suffer crippling mental disease that cannot be turned off or on – cannot be ridden out.

Another trip, albeit a different kind, involved a summer stint spent working as a marine biologist at Hopkins Marine Station in Monterey, California alongside author, John Steinbeck.

“Steinbeck had written *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* which was among my favorites. He was an amateur marine biologist,” Dr. Johnson says.

When they weren’t studying and preserving marine life, there were less scholarly pursuits.

“I remember music, hippies, and parties. There was one big party where the wine was 47 cents a gallon – so cheap you had to strain the insects out,” he insists with a twinkle in his eye.

These days, Dr. Johnson is content to hang out with his bride of 65 years at their picturesque home, reading, and writing as many op-eds as he can place, and enjoying the pleasure garden adorning his front yard and the sanctity of the wildlife refuge out back.

Apropos for the gentleman and scholar, who calls nature his higher power. NDN

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Something to Say

By Ryan Jones



Have you ever thought about writing a book?

Many of us have entertained the idea at one time or another. A quick trip to the book store and a scan of the well-stocked shelves inside certainly present convincing evidence for the possibility of becoming a published author. If you ask writer Barbara McLennan whether she believes it's realistic for you to begin plucking away your pent-up story on your desktop at home, she'll likely respond by asking three questions.

Your answers will help determine whether or not you are on the right track:

What do you want to say?

Is it worth saying?

How do you want to say it?

"If the answer to those three questions will

produce something that's book-length, I think you should go ahead and do it," she remarks.

It turns out that Barbara, a six year resident of Williamsburg, knows a few things about writing and publishing full-length books. Listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*, Barbara has published five books, four law review articles, more than a dozen research reports, nine contributions to books, and numerous magazine and academic journal articles.¹ Barbara's

latest book, *Reagan's Mandate*, is a memoir of her experiences while serving under the Reagan administration in the departments of Treasury

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“To write a book, you have to devote a year or so to the project,” she explains. “Some books are churned out much quicker than that, but you don’t want to write that kind of book if you can avoid it. You don’t want to write for money, because unless you’re a celebrity of some kind, you don’t have access to the mass market. I think you really just have to love the project.”

**“The brain is like a muscle,
and writing is like exercise.”**

- Barbara McLennan

Barbara has been involved with many worthwhile writing projects over the years, and says she has looked for ways to express herself through the written word for as long as she can remember. After high school and college, she worked to earn her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin, where she actively sought out opportunities to develop her writing skills.

“When I was an undergraduate, there wasn’t a whole lot of writing being done,” she reminisces. “I wrote because I intentionally selected courses that required writing. I’ve always written compositions and papers; much more so than my classmates. My mother knit...I wrote. That’s just the way it was. I’m not a diarist, but if there was a problem that needed to be investigated, I liked doing that. I liked the research part of it.”

After college, Barbara accepted a variety of jobs that led her progressively closer to a career in politics. Along the way, she took a job as a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When she realized that she preferred writing assignments to full-time teaching duties, Barbara took a two year sabbatical and worked at Stanford University as a research assistant. While there, her writing capabilities were realized in full.

“Stanford did the main contract on strategic issues for the United States Army,” she says. “They briefed the generals, and it was very heavy foreign policy stuff. It was all very interesting to me. They needed someone to fabricate these fictional war scenarios; someone had to think up situations where certain military actions by another country would require us to use certain kinds of weapons from our country in response. I felt like I was inventing doomsday! I would ask myself, ‘How is this [particular military escalation] going to happen?’ Then I would answer, ‘Well, this General is going to be drunk, and he’s going to do this, which will lead the United States to do this....’ It was all very fascinating. It was like writing a bunch of short stories. I had to be given heavy security clearance to write these papers. It was beyond top secret. I had to know the weapons, how they were targeted, where they were located, and what



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their ranges were. Needless to say, I don't have copies of these papers. They were locked up somewhere in the Pentagon. It was very innovative, very creative, and I loved it. That's what a writer does, and I really enjoyed writing by this point in time."

Barbara continued to develop her writing skills as her career shifted toward the hub of the nation's government in Washington D.C.. Serving under the Reagan administration in the 1980's provided her with interesting material for compiling a memoir. She served the government working as a minority staff member on the House Budget Committee, in the Treasury Department working on tax reform, and in the Commerce Department, where as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Trade Information and Analysis she represented the United States to international organizations and supervised the preparation of numerous government publications.²

"That sounds terrifically glamorous," says Barbara, laughing. "But if you have to go from Paris to Singapore and back four times a year, boy does that get old fast, and the glamour wears off." Referring to her time working on tax reform, Barbara says, "I kind of knew that I was in a special place at a special time. President Reagan had sent down his budget, and we were in charge of it on the House floor. We were in a very centralized, very dramatic place. I knew that I would eventually want to write it down."

After retiring in Williamsburg in 2006, Barbara decided to do just that.

"Those stories were just sitting there in the back of my mind," she says. "I had to go look things up, which I enjoyed because I got to call up old friends. I'd ask, 'Do you remember this?' or 'Do you remember what we said when that happened?' It was very fun. I had all this information, and I narrowed it down as I went along. I need a big project. I wouldn't be content with a two or three page paper. I need to have a mountain of information about a subject that I can go through and organize. Then, the book writes itself; I don't even think about the wording."

With such a wealth of hands-on experience, one can't imagine that Barbara's fingers will let her keyboard cool off for long. "I like using my brain," she says. "Everyone utilizes different muscles. The brain is like a muscle, and writing is like exercise. When a project is done, I can throw it all away and move forward, because I've done my job."

While talking with Barbara has shed much light on what has made her successful, there are still a few questions left. What does the future hold for Barbara and her husband in Williamsburg? Does she still enjoy taking on the mountains of research and other challenges that come with publishing a full-length book? Will she leave the heavier writing ventures behind and take on some lighter projects? For a moment, Barbara's mind goes back to her top-secret roots at Stanford, and she smiles as she leaves us with a fitting cliffhanger.

"Maybe I'll write another book," she says with a twinkle in her eye. "I showed you how doomsday could happen. Now let's move on to the next thing." NDN

¹ <http://www.reagansmandate.com/book.htm>

² <http://www.reagansmandate.com/book.htm>



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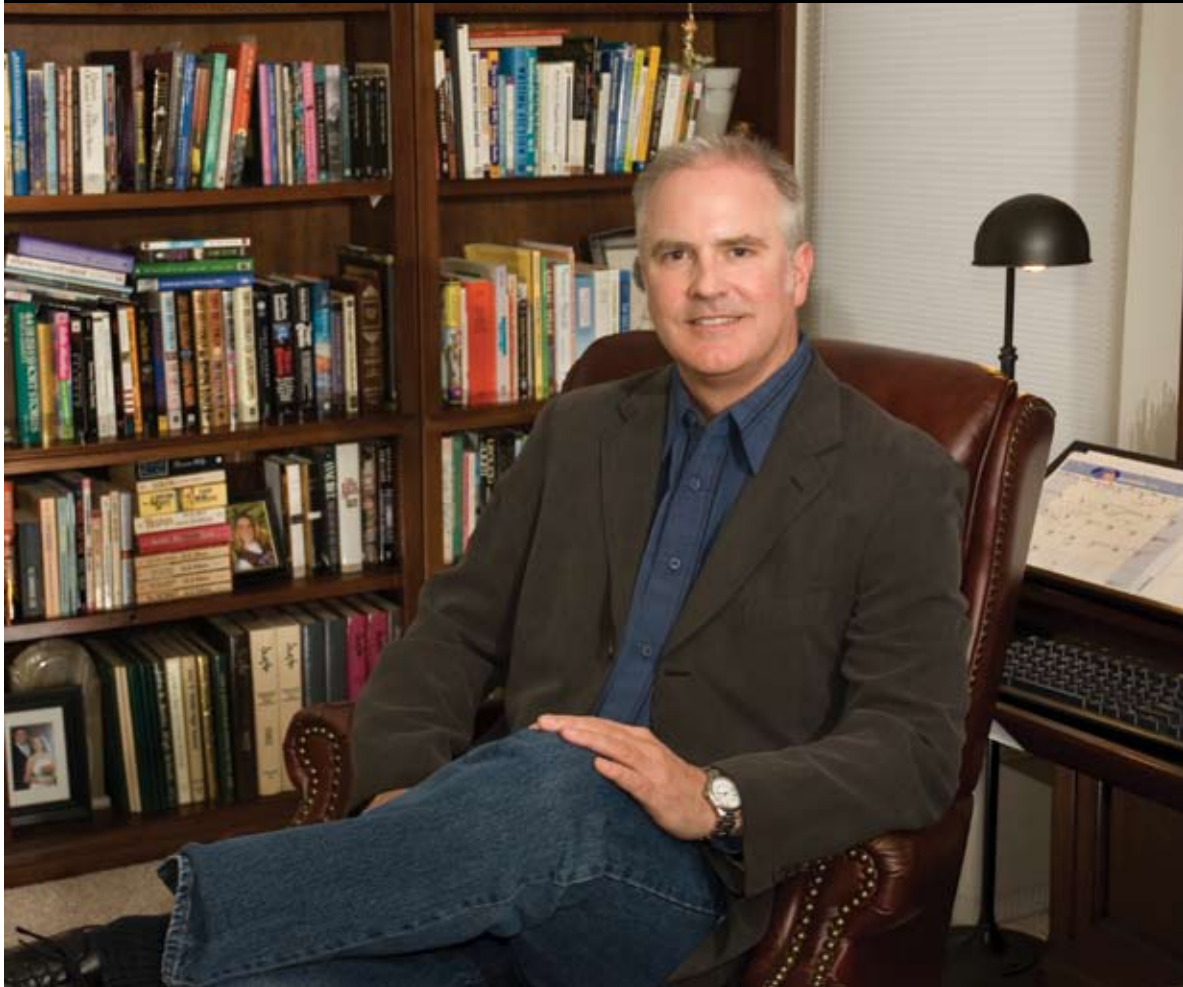
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GREG LILLY



WRESTLING ALLIGATORS

By Linda Landreth Phelps

For every mountaintop experience and literary success, a J. K. Rowling or Stephen King selling millions of books, there are thousands of writers slogging through the swamps of rejection. Those who lack drive or who are

thin of skin soon sink and disappear, but Greg Lilly persisted and beat the odds. He's living every writer's dream and making words his livelihood.

"Ninety percent of my time is spent writ-

ing," Greg says. "It's been great, but at times I do miss that steady paycheck I used to have. My income can be wildly variable. Book royalties can be good one quarter, then the next I'm embarrassed to take the check to the bank," he

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says with a laugh.

Greg didn't dream of a writer's life as a boy growing up in Bristol, Virginia, a small city tucked snugly away in the southwest corner of Virginia. His father was a practical man and told his son: "When you go to college, make sure you are equipped to make a living by the time you're through."

Greg graduated from Virginia Tech in 1985 with a degree in Management Science. He was one of the first to major in a new field that combined business skills with computer technology. Greg also had enough elective credits to earn a minor in English Literature, choices indicative of his eventual vocation.

After college, Greg found employment with Belk department store at their headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina. His job was to train staff in computer skills and write technical manuals. Though he was glad to have steady work during a period of recession, it failed to challenge him.

"The problem was that I was getting bored

with writing the manuals," Greg says. "In an effort to make them more interesting, I invented a couple of fictional characters enjoying a fast food lunch together. In my story line, they were sitting in Hardee's chatting away about

starting with a novel when his initial attempts might never be published. So, as his boss had advised, Greg began with short stories. After he wrote about twenty, he realized they had the potential to be marketed as a novel.

"Ninety percent of my time is spent writing. It's been great, but at times I do miss that steady paycheck I used to have."

- Greg Lilly

"I gained confidence and skill as I wrote, and a publisher was actually reading my book, *Devil's Bridge*, when I decided to leave Charlotte and move to Arizona to accept a new position," he says.

Greg had vacationed in Sedona, Arizona for years, so when the opportunity arose to become Managing Editor for *Sedona Home & Garden* magazine, Greg jumped at it.

"That job turned out to be a crash course in writing articles," Greg says. From there, he moved on to become the operations manager for a local art gallery.

"After about five years, family ties began tugging me back to Virginia, so I returned and have lived in Williamsburg for the last three years," he says.

Greg's most successful novel so far, *Under*

how computers would make their jobs easier. Then a supervisor arrived with a young sales associate and my characters began speculating about a possible affair." Greg's boss said he appreciated inventiveness, but encouraged him to restrict his fictional efforts to short stories.

This suggestion took root, leading Greg and a few like-minded friends to form a critique group. With his logical mind, Greg couldn't see



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a *Copper Moon*, is a work of historical fiction set in a western mining town in the 1890's. It is selling briskly, especially in the Sedona area. While Greg was living in Arizona, his series of Derek Mason mysteries began publication. The series kicked off with *Fingering the Family Jewels*, and continues with his current *Scalping the Red Rocks*, published in July, 2010. His latest novel is again set in Sedona and the plot involves an unscrupulous developer bent upon ruining the land for his own profit.

"In my books, the setting is always such a significant part of the story that it becomes a character," Greg says. His next novel will be a Virginia-based story about the persecution of a young woman known as 'The Witch of Pungo'.

In 1706, Grace Sherwood's neighbors accused her of witchcraft. She somehow survived a ducking in the Lynnhaven River, but since innocence was only proven by drowning, she was subsequently imprisoned. Grace's ghost is said to haunt the present Witch Duck Point area of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

"Centuries later in the lives of her fictional descendents," Greg says, "my story will illustrate how society still forces people to con-

form."

From witches to weddings, there is little boredom in freelance writing because there's variety in what you do.

"It keeps you learning," Greg says. "I'm currently working on a piece for a wedding guide, so ask me now and I can tell you all about rings - gold versus platinum, which styles are hot today, and how to find a good buy. Next month? I'll have forgotten it all!"

Greg's present avenues of interest include teaching for W.A.L.T., the Williamsburg Area Learning Tree, a public education program offering reasonably priced classes that is sponsored and organized by the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist Church. At the moment, Greg is teaching a four-week course on the short story.

"I take my students through the different elements of character, setting, plot, and conflict, and at the end, they'll have a completed story," Greg says.

Greg's most publicly visible job is Editor of this publication, *Williamsburg's Next Door Neighbors*, which has a direct mail circulation of 37,000 homes. Greg works closely with the Publisher, Meredith Collins, to constantly im-

prove the content and style of the magazine. His role has expanded as the magazine has grown and there are now four departments that are Greg's special fields of interest: Health, Home, Arts & Entertainment and Business. He makes content decisions, determines who he will interview and writes separate pieces for each of these departments every month.

Writing professionally requires discipline, vision, and, in most cases, a willingness to sacrifice the higher income levels associated with the corporate world. Despite the challenges, Greg wouldn't go back to that steady paycheck for anything. He can't imagine a life that doesn't include bringing to life characters that live only in his inventive mind.

"I really love the freedom!" Greg says.

The late author, William Saroyan, summed up his profession this way: "Writing is the hardest way to make a living, with the possible exception of wrestling alligators." Using that statement to measure Greg's career arc, you might say the Williamsburg author, editor and teacher is somewhere on the road between gators and glory, but definitely headed in the right direction. NDN

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JOHN BRAY



Just Write!

By Lillian Stevens

John Bray is a local author who never really thought about writing a book until recent years. He simply didn't have the time.

While serving as an officer in the New York City Police Department, John earned a law degree, was subsequently promoted to Lieutenant and assigned to the internal disciplinary system as a prosecutor. He took early retirement after seventeen years of service, and then went into private law practice for three decades, specializing in criminal defense law. He followed that by earning a Master's Degree in Theology.

In 2005, he and his wife, Vera, left their home on Long Island, New York and moved to Williamsburg. This is when John finally found the

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time to write. The former police Lieutenant who worked in one of the world's largest cities is now a published author and the President of the Chesapeake Bay Writers Club.

His first novel, *The Ballad of Johnny Madigan*, was published in November. It is the story of an orphaned, penniless 16-year old boy – claiming to be 18 – who enlists in the Union Army to fight in the Civil War. It is a story of war, of love, and of survival.

If that sounds like an unlikely story for this law enforcement professional turned theology scholar, it isn't.

"What really inspired me to write this novel was a Civil War site in Fredericksburg, Virginia," he explains. "We have a daughter and son-in-law in Fredericksburg and they took us to visit the site of the Battle of Fredericksburg. Just seeing the original stone wall behind which the Confederate soldiers met charge after futile charge – and the National Cemetery at the top of the hill, I was so moved. So during a writing course I was taking, I started penning scenes as I imagined them. My instructor was a Civil War buff who encouraged me to keep going with my writing. So it just grew. The book is fiction but the historical backdrop is as accurate as I could make it."

Vera says that over the years, at family gatherings, her husband always told stories and everyone encouraged him to write his stories down.

"I was always too busy to really do that before we moved here," John says. "But with all of this encouragement from people, I started taking some writing courses online. Then I took a correspondence course with a school in Connecticut, and a class through William and Mary's Christopher Wren Association."

John started writing in late 2006, investing a lot of time in "Johnny's" story – a character which came straight from his imagination. It would be nearly two years later before the manuscript was accepted by an independent publisher, BeWrite Books, to which John had pitched his work.

Writers promote their work via a letter of query, usually to a publisher, in which they describe their body of content and attempt to place it in a particular market.

"My first queries were rejected a couple times. "Johnny's" story is not really the kind of book mainstream publishers look for because it's historical and the protagonist is a teenager, but this is no kid's book," John says.

It was a freelance editor who helped John get a foothold in the industry. Her name is Sofia Starnes, a local editor and poet whom John met through a mutual friend. The two sat down together, went through the manuscript word by word, and Sofia made suggestions and even coined the book's title.

"She is an amazing editor so I took every shred of advice she gave me," John says.

He sent the manuscript to BeWrite Books, and they called him two weeks later. That was in December; by March he had a contract.

John spent countless hours researching everything. Every button, every insignia, every weapon had to be exactly correct.

"All of the units that I mentioned in my book were precisely the ones from the Battle of Fredericksburg. I put them in the so-called 'Irish Brigade', because most of the men in the unit were Irish immigrants from New York," he says.

John holds a special place in his heart for Irish immigrants from New York because they represent his roots. He acknowledges them in his book by writing:

To those Irish men and women in my past, both family and passers-by in life: I still hear your voices. I hope, in some small measure, to have reproduced an echo of the way you sounded to me.

Other characters were modeled after people he knew from his service as a U.S. Marine when he was a young man.

“One thing that turns off publishers, editors and agents is bad grammar. Grammar and a good and broad vocabulary are all-important.”

- John Bray

While writing sounds easy for someone with a knack for story-telling, John calls it hard work that requires many different skill sets, not the least of which is a firm grasp on language.

“One thing that turns off publishers, editors and agents is bad grammar. Grammar and a good and broad vocabulary are all-important. So when you are editing your work, remember that you can’t use the same word three times in a paragraph,” John says.

He has more advice for those who have a passion for writing and want to become an author.

“Finish the damn book. Just write until you run out of stuff to say,” he advises. “Edit your work last. Also, as each chapter comes to an end, make sure that the reader is compelled to turn the page to the next chapter. In other words, end each chapter with some kind of hook or suspense. If you’re writing a chapter that doesn’t include your protagonist, mention him anyway to hold the reader’s interest.”

With his first book behind him, John is working on a second novel, a mystery presently titled, *The Baited Trap*, set in another historic time in our nation’s history – the final years of the Vietnam War. It was a time of upheaval in law enforcement on the national landscape. The book is based loosely on people that John knew in the police department in the early seventies, though fictionalized. BeWrite Books has asked John for the manuscript.

What’s more, BeWrite executives have indicated that *The Ballad of Johnny Madigan* screams for a sequel which should create another opportunity for John.

“So I’m working on a sequel and that is a real struggle. For the first time, I’m really agonizing over the story,” he says. “But I’m taking my own advice – don’t agonize, just write. Edit later.”

For now, John has plenty of work on the horizon to keep him busy. However, he is still happy celebrating the success of his first novel which he dedicated to Vera, his wife of 51 years, his best friend, and the mother of their ten children. NDN

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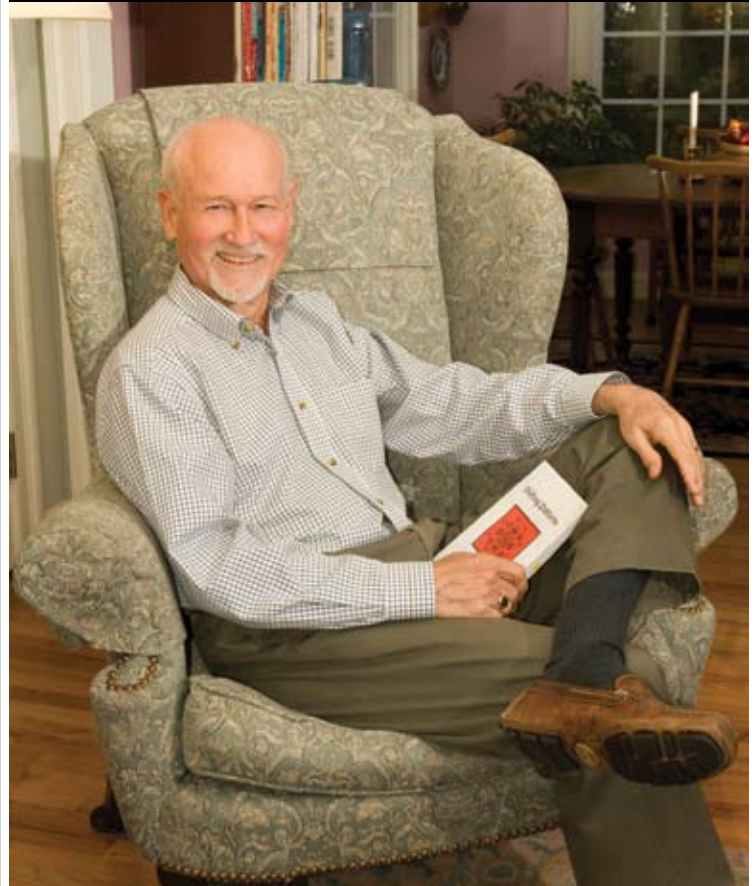
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The Poet

CHARMED BY WORDS

By Brandy Centolanza

Though he is retired, E.S. “Ed” von Gehren isn’t sitting idle. He is busier than ever, taking pen to paper with his poetry and essays, and he even self-published a few in his book, *Shifting Patterns*. Ed didn’t begin focusing on his passion for writing until later in life. However, he’s been a lover of language for as long as he can remember.

“I’ve always been charmed by words,” he says. “It is the taste and textures of words in their most synthetic exuberance that urges me to capture the rhythms of my inner life on paper.”

Ed credits his mother, Caroline, with instilling in him an appreciation for poetry. She used to read poems to him as a child growing up in

New Jersey. His own poems first started taking shape as Christmas riddles when he would write down clues for his wife, Linda, and children, Erich and Gretchen, to search for their presents.

“It was a nice little ritual, something the family looked forward to each Christmas,” he says.

In 1984, Ed informally put together several of his poems into a piece of work he entitled, ‘First Collections’. More than two decades later, in 2007, his wife and children encouraged him to take it a step further, and create a book of his poetry.

Ed spent a year compiling his best pieces, doing research, labeling, writing, revising, and editing. He then his work to a printer in Newport News, with the end result a book he titled, *Shifting Patterns*. The book, released in November 2008, features more than 100 verses about Ed’s views on love, nature, and world events, as

well as the writing process and what it means to be a writer.

“It was a very exciting thing to do,” Ed says of creating the book. “I was absolutely delight-

switched to psychology after one course piqued his interest in how the human mind works. His life took a detour that involved a stint in the Army, then falling in love and marrying. Eventually Ed returned to night school to finish his degree in psychology.

In the 1970’s, Ed lived in northern Virginia, and worked for the government, assisting with the development of email. He was part of a newly developed Department of Defense project called Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) - the precursor to the Internet. ARPANET served as a test bed

for new networking technologies that was the beginning of Internet technology. Ed and his colleagues attempted to make the only three computers in the country involved with this special network communicate via email.

His involvement with the creation of what would later become email became the subject

“I never know when the muse is going to whisper something in my ear, and if it isn’t captured then and there, it may be lost forever.”

- Ed von Gehren

ed to see it published and to know that my words would be seen by future generations.”

Though he still has poems that he wrote while in high school, Ed was never drawn to writing as a profession. A lover of nature and science, he originally wanted to major in astrophysics at Rutgers University, but instead

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of one of his essays, 'At the Event Horizon', because the experience reminded him of its similarities to facing a black hole, and what would happen if one fell into a black hole.

"Our society has fallen into it, and with that our world has changed," he clarifies.

Ed's career later took him to Canada, then to Dallas, Texas and back to Northern Virginia. He and Linda eventually settled in Williamsburg a few years after his retirement in 1997.

Ed's writing quickly kicked into high gear, with Linda serving mostly as inspiration. Ed enjoys penning a new piece for her every holiday and special occasions they share together.

He also looks to other writers for inspiration and is a member of the Emerson Society, a group made up of essayists who gather to share and critique each other's work. He has joined other similar groups - the Poetry Society of Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay Writers.

"Finding a proper critique group is critical if you want to advance your writing," he says. "For me, getting a critique from other poets is really good. I find it quite valuable."

Ed always carries a notebook with him so

that he can jot down notes about anything that moves him. On the morning of this interview, for example, he was sitting on his porch, studying a spider web and taking notes on thoughts that came to his mind.

"I never know when the muse is going to whisper something in my ear, and if it isn't captured then and there, it may be lost forever," he says. "Creativity is an ephemeral thing."

Ed does not write daily, but when he does want to get serious about his writing he usually heads to Panera Bread, one of his favorite places to work. He settles in with a cup of coffee and a Danish pastry beside him and writes.

"When I am there, I find the background hubbub easy to block out, and I can really focus on what I am doing," he says. "I can't have personal distractions when I work. I can't be creative when I am at my computer."

Ed also says he does not experience writer's block when it comes to his poems, though he does admit that he finds himself often pondering over a verse once he is finished. Reviewing his material is a part of the process.

"To me a poem is never done," he says. "I

seldom revisit a poem without considering the need for a tweak here or there."

In addition to poetry and essays, Ed has a number of other pieces he is working on, including a collection of short stories about a young boy and his stuffed bear, Tarkington. He is also writing a fantasy adventure novel about a boy named Cooper who is trying to save the world from being locked in time, where tomorrow never comes.

When he is not writing, Ed enjoys playing tennis and listening to classical music, and hopes to one day be fluent in German, a language he is interested in learning. He also would like to try hang gliding. Up next, though, is another book of poetry that will include four poems written by his mother.

Ed says that his intent with his writing is not to sell books, but to craft words that will emotionally move others.

"It's more about hoping that readers will appreciate what I have to say, to know who I am," he says with emotion. "It really excites me to think that other people like what I write." NDN



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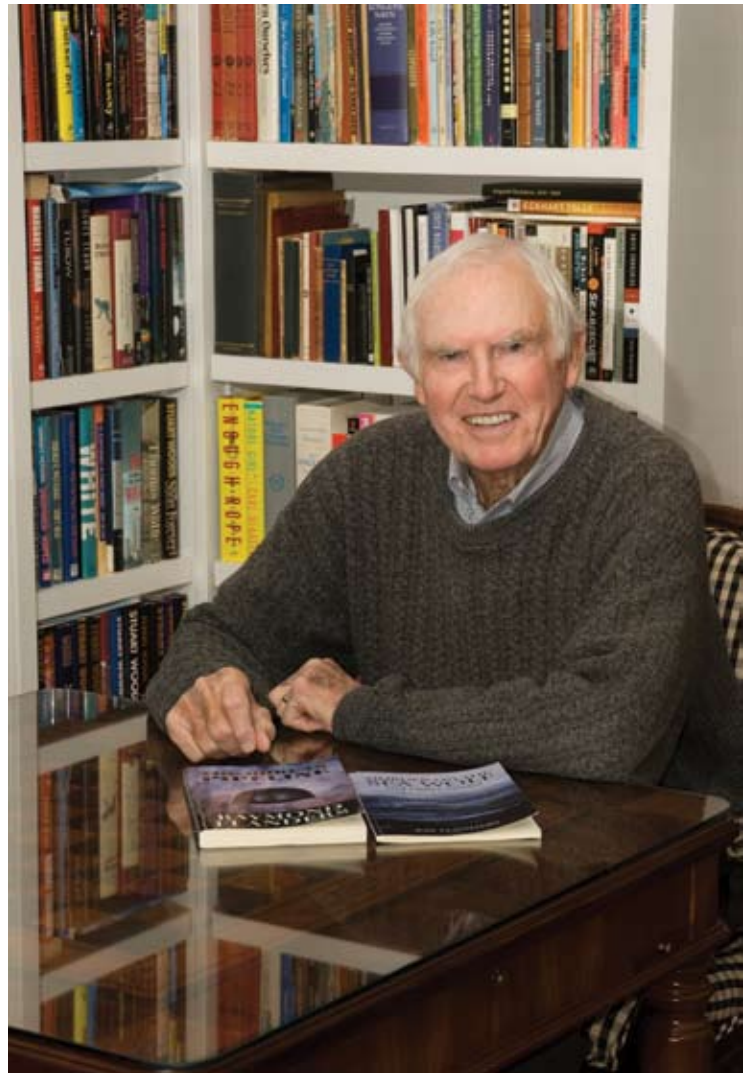


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From Dentist to Author

By Erin Zagursky



During his long career in dentistry and public health, Raymond Flanders did quite a bit of writing. In fact, by the time he retired, he had published more than 35 articles in professional journals.

However, after his retirement, Raymond thought he'd try his hand at a different kind of writing: fiction. The result so far has been one book of short stories and a novel that was inspired by Raymond's experiences in the Korean War.

Born in Maine and raised in upstate New York, Raymond enlisted in the Army directly after high school, serving in Italy. He went on to study at Colgate University before being recalled for the Korean War in 1950. Raymond served with the Army's 24th Division during the conflict.

After his service in the Army, he went to the University of Miami and then the University of Maryland's dental school. After dental school, he again joined the Army, but this time

as a dental officer who would be stationed in Germany. This was Raymond's last stint in the Army, finally leaving the Armed Forces with about seven total years of service.

He practiced dentistry privately for a time and then became involved with Project HOPE, an international health foundation. Raymond worked with that organization on several occasions, including three years in Brazil where he went to language school and served on the faculty of a dental school on the northeast coast

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of the country. He also worked with Project HOPE in Grenada shortly after the United States' intervention there in 1983.

Following his work with Project HOPE, Raymond returned to school, earning a Masters of Public Health degree from the University of Michigan. Later, he was appointed as the state dental director of Illinois, serving in that position for about 13 years. As the state dental director, he was in charge of all of the state's dental programs, including preventative programs in schools. He received more gratification from that broad-based work than his private practice.

"I've done both, and I really did enjoy it," he says. "Just the idea of preventing things rather than treating - it was more interesting to me."

Finally, about 13 years ago, Raymond and his wife, Anne-Liss, moved to Williamsburg to retire. It was then that he began thinking about doing a different kind of writing.

He first started working on a collection of

short stories, which would be published in 2006 as 'Murder on the Sea Wolf and Other Stories'. The title story is based on an experience Raymond had as a young man sailing with a group of friends on a 45-foot sailboat

"I always felt that I would like to write something about Korea because I was there the first year of the war."

- Raymond Flanders

from the Canary Islands to Trinidad.

The two other stories in the book include 'The Star of Our Show' which focuses on a burlesque performer, and 'The Bushwhacker and the Plaster Man', which centers on two bushwhackers who practice illegal dentistry.

A customer review on Amazon.com® de-

scribed the book "a great little beach read".

"Three great stories with colorful, quirky characters," the reviewer wrote. "The settings of the stories are quite different, but all have the same edgy flavor. Fun for a rainy afternoon at the beach with the sea churning! Highly recommend."

Raymond says the short stories were fun to write, but he soon went to work on a more serious topic - his first novel, *The Korean Pipeline*. The title refers to the nickname given to the country's quick mobilization and deployment of thousands of troops for the Korean War.

The Korean Pipeline focuses on three enlisted men, following their lives from the time

they were recalled to active duty through their service in Korea and their lives afterward. In addition to the main three characters, Raymond describes some of the logistics involved in the war and leaders such as President Harry Truman and General Douglas MacArthur.

"I always felt that I would like to write some-

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thing about Korea because I was there the first year of the war," Raymond says.

Though he said that none of the characters are based on him or specific experiences he had, Raymond's time in Korea certainly gives him unique insight on the war that claimed the lives of about 400 enlisted men per week during its first year.

"Korea has been called the forgotten war, and boy, it was," he says. "Now that the memorial is up in Washington, things have changed."

Raymond said he set aside about an hour each day to dedicate to his writing. He first created an outline and then wrote his first draft of each chapter by hand on legal pads. After each chapter was finished, he typed it into the computer. Creating the draft was time consuming but the rewriting process was even more tedious.

"You go over this stuff thousands of times, and you still want to change it again," he says.

Finally, after many hours of focused efforts, Raymond read his book and felt it was ready to be published.

He recruited Bob Oller of Oller Studios in Williamsburg to serve as the book's illustrator and he helped Raymond send his book to the

publisher.

The Korean Pipeline was published in late 2009 by Publish America in Maryland, a publishing company Raymond had heard about from a friend who had used it before. This same company published his short stories.

Now that the book is in circulation, Raymond is in the process of publicizing it. He said he is not currently working on any other stories but may continue writing fiction.

Though his children and friends have known him by other titles throughout his life – veteran, health professional, even competitive tennis player – they now also know Raymond as a writer. His children are naturally quite pleased with his book and his friends have also remarked on it, some even kidding him about the exaggerations in his short stories.

Still, Raymond said he never would have thought he'd one day become a published fiction writer. Even today he still does not think of himself as a writer. No matter how you label him and his more recent accomplishments, writing is certainly something Ray has developed a talent for and it is an endeavor he finds very rewarding. NDN

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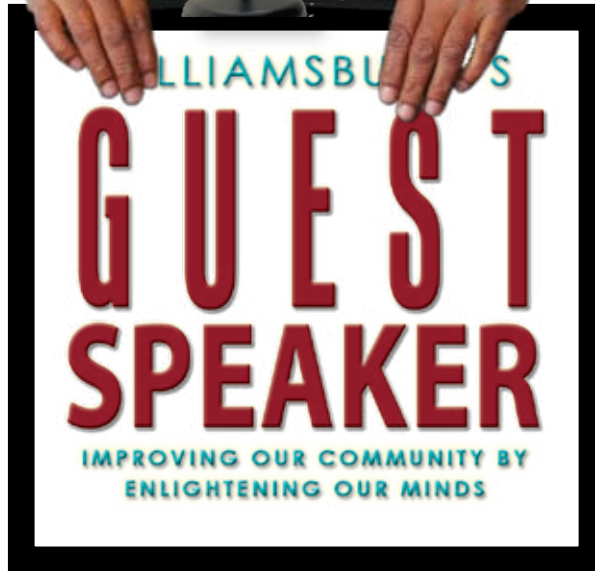
LARRY JOHNSON



ON LITERACY FOR LIFE

Larry Johnson was born in Massachusetts but spent most of his youth growing up in Detroit, Michigan as the youngest child of a family of twelve children. By the time Larry was in junior high school, he was behind in his education and subsequently dropped out. He had never learned to read but no one but family was aware of it. He kept his secret to himself.

Larry knew he needed to go to work and his brother-in-law helped him get a job at a recycling factory. From the time he was 16, for most of his life, Larry relied on a strong work ethic and his own for-



titude and creativity to find work and take care of himself, and later on, his family. Since he could not read he had to find other ways of getting new jobs and his resourcefulness always enabled him to find employment. Larry almost always had two jobs - sometimes three - in order to make ends meet.

In 1995, Larry moved to Williamsburg and was able to find work as a custodian in the W/ JCC County School System. It was there that he befriended a teacher, Mr. Paul Murphy, who he eventually told his secret to -



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that he could not read. Paul introduced Larry to the non-profit organization Literacy for Life, and for the past six years Barbara Finley, a Literacy for Life volunteer, has been devoting her time teaching Larry to read. Through their efforts, and his own, Larry's life has changed in wondrous ways. Now at age 53, Larry shares his story. Following are excerpts of a recent interview with Meredith Collins, Publisher of Next Door Neighbors.

How old were you when you left school?

16

Did you have any reading abilities at that time?

I'd been winging it.

When you first got a job at age 16, what kind of work did you do?

My brother-in-law got me a job at Goodman Recycling Factory. So I basically never thought about going any further than that.

And it didn't require you to be able to read?

No, you just got to learn how to listen to what your boss is saying and try to do it,

basically clean up you know, a junk yard.

And so, did you do other jobs like that?

Yes, I was blessed to get a job on the Seeder Program by the city. I knew each job. I figured I wouldn't get to another one, so I tried to perform well on each job. I made my diploma in the work world by getting recognition from my bosses, to get me from one job to another job, to another job. I got a letter of recommendation everywhere I went up until now. Because that's the only diploma I could get.

What is a Seeder Program?

It's a program that will put you on a trial basis for six months and get you a job and then after the program expires, then you're on your own. And when I got to Seeder Program, the guy said, 'How will I know how you're going to work out?' I said, 'You won't know unless you try me.' So he tried me and it was supposed to be for six months but it lasted for two years.

So all your life then, you were kind of winging it, job to job. Did anybody know that you had trouble reading?

Just immediate family.

And you kind of kept that to yourself?

Yes.

That was a burden wasn't it?

Yeah. I ended up working in schools to hide it.

How do you mean?

Because by not going to school, I ended up working at some of them. I worked at Western New England College, Springfield College, then I came here and I worked at the hospital, then I got a job for the school system and worked for Clara Byrd Baker [Elementary] for 12 years and now I'm at Berkeley Middle School.

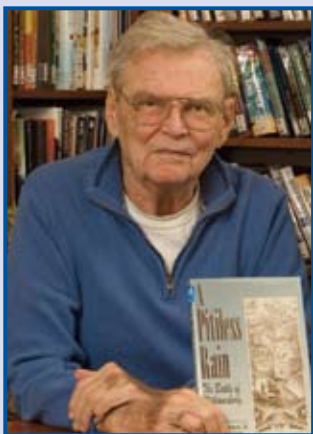
And what do you do there?

Custodian. So I really didn't have to answer too many questions. You could avoid some situations as long as you did what was asked or adapted to what you needed to learn.

When did you find out about Literacy for Life and how did you become connected with the organization?

I got blessed. I had a teacher at Clara Byrd Baker named Mr. Murphy. He taught the little kids, the kindergartners or maybe 3rd

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or 4th grade. And I would confide in him that I had a shortcoming. I was trying to get some help and he made the first call here to get me in here [Literacy for Life].

Were you nervous the first time you went to Literacy for Life?

After I got here, it was hard to accept people wanting to help me who didn't know me. Because see you can't let anybody know what you're incapable of doing or they'll use it against you.

How have they helped you?

They started helping me see myself and read for myself and find ways of filling out applications and being able to do these applications and get job interviews and just keep going with what I had. Because I had the drive but I just didn't know how to present it. They helped me, made me try to do it myself, let me know, I'm not the only one in that situation. So, I just kept on, kept on plugging along.

Now how often did you come here?

At least once a week every week.

And do you still come here?

Yes, six years. I just got through a class. My teacher, Ms. Barbara Finley, she's been a blessing in my life.

Has she been teaching you the entire six years?

Yeah, all through it.

Now, I would imagine, like anything else in life, when we don't have a competency in something and then we gain that competency, we feel better about ourselves and our life. Have you gained confidence?

I gained extreme confidence, although not just confidence, it made me express the will to help others. So I guess that made me vulnerable in points, but I didn't mind helping others because I knew that's to me, that's the only way I got help. Somebody helped me that didn't know me. So I don't mind helping nobody, you know, if I could, lead them the way or telling them about this way, I would. Where I came from you stayed on your guard. And there ain't too much stuff you reveal unless you have to. So I'm always on guard. I still am, I still got it in me but now I know when to be on guard, you know what I'm saying?

And when to open up?

Yeah. Before I just, first thing I'm on guard, “What, why, who, well why you asking?”, you know. Now I know to listen and see how it's presented so I can respond in a more sensible manner. I used to stay on guard. Still am to a point, but I want to help people because I've been helped. Especially I want to talk about this place [Literacy for Life], because it's here and people don't know it's here. And you can get help, as much as you want to get help. You know, everybody has a different level on starting to learn, but the level can go up. It doesn't have to stay where it is.

In the time you've been coming here can you see how much you've improved?

Yes. I see I improved in when I don't know, asking for help. When I do know, absorbing it, and trying to use it to my ability. Being able to shop, being able to fill out an application for a job. Now I'm starting to try to do computers and that's how I got my recent



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job at Colonial Williamsburg. And I ran from computers on purpose. But my teacher got me email and had me check email and I put in an application and didn't know how to put in one on the computer but the computer guy at the school would help me. I got a hit from Colonial Williamsburg, you know. So I ended up getting that job eventually. It just keeps going and going.

You work there now?

Yes.

What do you do there?

I'm a custodian, now a historical custodian for the places there. Everybody can't go in them places, certain places like the Capital, the Palace and different places like that. I clean those places.

So you're not with the schools anymore?

I still am with the schools.

You have two jobs?

Yeah, three. I do the flea market too. My thing is there's no shame as long as it's honest, I'll do it. While I can do it. And that's why I've never been afraid of work. I never thought I would get no more than what I had. There at Goodman Recycling Fac-

tory, so I already instilled in myself you've got to at least have a job. You don't know nothing else. You've got to at least have a job. So every job I worked on I tried to, I insisted on making a good impression, everywhere I went. That's why I got. . . I couldn't write so I got them to write a letter of recommendation about me. Every job I worked on, up until now.

Have you ever been out of work?

No, I'll get something. I can't remember having no less than two jobs.

Really, your whole life?

Just about. And I got lucky enough to get surrounded with these people here at Literacy for Life and got stuck on them. I got hungry. And the more they kept helping me, helping me, I just kept getting hungry, I don't know, inquisitive, I just wanted to know. I wanted to know whatever I could absorb, I wanted to know.

Now I'm curious, because a lot of young people that maybe don't have skills, they fall prey to the streets and perhaps sell drugs. Were you ever tempted to do that as a young person?

Yeah. It's out there. It was out there, that's

the first thing at your door - the street. You basically got to start taking responsibility and choices for your life. You can make it go up or down. You can blame the sun, the moon, the car, the dog, the day but when it all boils down, it's you, the choices you decide to make. The person that's on the bridge and tell you to jump and he stay there and you jump, who's the fool? You know what I mean? . . . I was trying to be the best I could be, what I knew, the sense that I had of myself. I was trying to maintain. I always wanted to take care of my mother. I was the youngest but she told me I acted like my father that wasn't there. You know, so that was a given. I seen her do what she did for me. It was automatic to make sure I try to do for her. Up till she took her last breath, it was automatic in me. So she had enough care to raise me the best way she could with what little she had, to make me grown. I'm never too grown to not want to give it back to who helped me. And that's the way I feel about this place.

There are people that will get my magazine, but they won't be able to read it. There are other people who may know somebody like that who could help them

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Presented by Ed Golden, President

According to AARP, an organization for people age 50 and over, when baby boomers are asked where they want to live as they age, 90 percent say, "in my home". For a myriad of reasons, most seniors prefer to "age in place". The home provides a safe, familiar haven and offers a comforting sense of belonging. Friends, family, neighbors, and even pets are a vital part of their lives at home. Seniors can find it difficult, if not impossible, to let go of their home environment. Non-medical home healthcare can make it possible for a senior to remain living at home. Seniors' needs change, even overnight. Home healthcare services can be added and enhanced to meet their changing needs.

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like Mr. Murphy helped you, to connect you to this organization. What would you say to people out there that may read this story and know someone who could use some help in reading?

If you know a person that wants to grow and shows it, tell them about this place and let them grow. Because you can't help but grow up in here. You can't help but absorb positive, meaningful things up in here. Nobody says you got to be a president or a rocket scientist but what you absorb will help you and you can help others with it. If there is anybody who understands what I'm saying, is help those that want it and show them there is a place they can come and get as much food as they want to consume here. It's not going to be an easy thing, but it's a worthwhile thing. And it's a filling thing. It makes you hungry but it fills you at the same time. If you can understand my meaning, it makes me hungry but it fills you at the same time.

How well do you read now?

I understand what's being presented to me by repetition. Honestly a lot of things I can understand that I would have never looked at. I would have never opened up to see what was in front of me.

It would have been intimidating?

I wouldn't have done it. You couldn't have paid me, you couldn't have talked me into doing it. Now I need to know. And what I don't know, I'll stop at that and ask somebody what the rest of that is. The right people though. That's how I get through it.

And right now, you're learning how to use computers?

Ms. Barbara's got me doing so many things. I've got homework in my pocket now and she ain't playing. There's so many things she hit on that helps me be a better man. I have a place, a one room castle that's mine. But I have everything because during the flea market I acquire anything and everything that I want, for the price I can afford. And I learn how to talk to people and if I got it, I got it and if I don't, I got credit until I get it. You know what I mean? And it just works. And I'm a happier person for it because I know I did it. I didn't beg, borrow or steal from nobody to do it...I appreciate you letting me say something about this place because I just, just this year I would never have imagined accomplishing some of the things I have accomplished with no money, but a lot of sincerity. And it showed and it worked.

You've known a lot of people in your life, in different jobs and different places. What do you think it was about Mr. Murphy that allowed you to confide in him?

His sincerity to help his students and his sincerity how he greeted anyone.

You observed him?

Yes, because he was in my area. And how he greets and respects everyone, kids on down. Plus he was the last one to leave. I had to almost throw him out every night because he was into his work, trying to help his kids and once in a while we would converse. You know, Mr. Murphy, you've got to leave. . .

Do you know his first name?

I can't think of his first name but he's still at Clara Byrd Baker. I'm sure he's the only Mr. Murphy there. But he's the sweetest guy. I had pneumonia once and no family and he came to the hospital. I had nobody, because having a divorce, they wasn't coming. So you know, he came and I just . . . it's good to have somebody on your side. NDN

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Ready for Recovery

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Murmurs from some, shouts from others, heralded a gradual recovery in the economy. John Williams has spent his career working with businesses large and small, steering them through turbulent times and on to sunnier days. For several years, John worked as a business consul-

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tant before recently joining a local medical supplier as their new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

John grew up in the Boston, Massachusetts area where he says he acquired an appreciation for New England weather that has driven him south. "I received my bachelors degree in accounting from Boston University," he explains. "From there I moved south and got my MBA from the University of Pittsburg. At that point, I became the CFO (Chief Financial Officer) of a large poultry company in the western part of Pennsylvania." After that job, John moved farther south when the seafood company he had begun to work for relocated from Camp Hill, Pennsylvania to Newport News, Virginia.

"After a few other companies here and back in Pennsylvania," he adds, "I moved back to Williamsburg because this is where we decided we wanted to end up. I started my own business as a consultant helping small businesses."

A client of John's, Burlington Medical Supplies, asked him to come help them reach their goals. "So, now I'm CEO here," he says. "This really is a challenge. I saw a company that was doing well, but also had a great deal of potential. Being the CEO of a company and getting a free hand to grow the organization really appeals to me." He has increased jobs in the community in the past year. "Our sales were up about 20%, our employment is up about 10%, and we expect to hire more people in the coming year. We sell x-ray protection supplies to the medical industry."

John has seen signs of economic recovery for the past year in the Williamsburg area. "People are adding jobs," he explains. "We've added seven people in the last three months. One was unemployed; the other six we hired away from other companies. That didn't happen a couple of years ago. There are instances where we can't get materials from China because there are no boats available."

He admits this isn't occurring in all parts of the country. "I'm sure the people in Arizona, Florida and Southern California would probably not share the feeling that things are getting better," he says. For the Williamsburg area, however, John describes this as the opportunity for small businesses to ensure they have a firm foundation to move forward.


John recommends business owners consider these key points as the economy continues to recover:

1 – Financial Reporting

"In my mind, the first thing you always analyze is where you are," John says. "Look at the financial statements. Often small business owners try to do the financials themselves with no training, or they find someone with little training and receive financial results that distort the health of the business." A big tax bill may surprise a business owner, or the business may run out of cash and the owner won't understand why. "That's the first thing people should watch: the financial reports." Constant monitoring and demanding timely, accurate information on the business ensures clear and reliable data on which to make decisions for the future.

2 – Great Personnel Decisions

"You get what you pay for, but pay for what you want to get," John says of hiring the right people to work for a business. "Demand competence. Everything I can say for small companies goes back to people. I've heard a number of people say they can get someone really good, really cheap in this economy...even if you get a great person, inexpensively, they




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won't stay long. The market is better somewhere and they'll go quickly. It's flawed thinking and short-term in its nature. You have to get good people and make a decision to pay them for what they deliver."

On the other side of personnel decisions, John says a business owner can't become too attached to his or her staff. "I've seen a lot of people treat their employees like family," he says. "It's like they fall in love with the staff. Too often, I've seen company's needs change dramatically, and the business owners keep the staff they started with." The business may require different skill sets over time than it originally did, and sometimes the existing staff can't adapt and deliver. "The staff doesn't fit the business need any more, but since that employee is 'like family,' she can't be let go or re-purposed in another area," John describes. "This creates unnecessary overhead and lowers morale among the staff who is delivering as needed. Also, recognize that your competition is not doing these things, not creating additional overhead."

3 – SWOT Analysis

"Do your SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis," he advises. "That's a very consultant thing to say, but people need to understand the position they're in. Owners are so busy trying to get deals, other lines of business, or trying to capture this or that, they don't understand the positions they put themselves into. For example, if you have a raw material supplied from only one company, that's not a good thing." He considers that scenario as a threat to a company because the narrow supply line could stop. "Then you have nothing," he sums up.

"Intensify the strengths, capitalize on the opportunities, work to mitigate the weaknesses and defend against the threats. Do your SWOT analysis," John stresses.

4 – Contingency Plans

"Prepare for surprises," John says. "Many people don't have contingency plans. If a fire burned the plant or office down, what would you do? Or what about fraud? Seventy percent of businesses experience some kind of fraud over a three-year period. It can be small and deadly to a company. Simple controls can be put in place to minimize or eliminate the threat of fraud. Don't let foreseeable events destroy your business."

The four areas John refers to above are basic to any business but when a demanding economy presents business owners with new challenges, sometimes it's good to revisit the basics. He says many business owners analyze their market and their product, but don't know their business as well as they should.

"These points get into understanding the business and how it's running," John says, "and how you can protect the continuation of making a product and selling a product in the market."

As the economy recovers, where does John think the best "bang for the buck" is?

"Marketing and selling is absolutely the best place," he states. "Having good marketing people out there and getting the product sold at the right price are essential," he says. "Plus, get the support in place so the customer isn't disappointed after the sale." That solid marketing and selling infrastructure is "the best use of anyone's funds."

John pilots his new company toward sunny skies based on fundamentals that apply to all businesses, large or small:

"Know your business," John says. NDN

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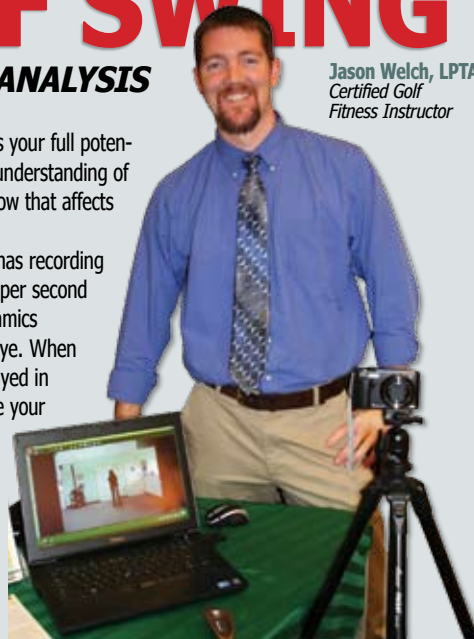
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JULIET KIRBY

Artist and Teacher

By Greg Lilly, Editor

One of the most popular artists in the area is also a teacher who sows the seeds of creative expression to her students. Juliet Kirby paints wonderful, detailed, illustrative images of botanicals. Her paintings are highly sought-after and collected throughout the country. From London's Slade School of Fine Art to Williamsburg's This Century Art Gallery, Juliet's progression in the arts, like the plants she paints, sprouted, grew, bloomed and branched to bloom again.

"I grew up in England from an artistic fam-

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ily,” Juliet says. “My father was a publisher with a private press. My mother was a wood engraving artist, a wood engraver is the term, quite well known in England. This was in the 1920s and ‘30s when wood engraving was extremely popular, in its heyday.”

Juliet says her first subjects for her own art were not plants, but people. “I did a great deal of figure drawing, life drawing actually – from the nude.” The art school she attended in London would dictate the subject of the work. “The school’s models would come in, short, fat, thin, whoever they could drag off the streets,” she says. “I actually had very traditional teaching – drawing from plaster casts, the statue of David, things like that – to learn light and shadow, which has come in very useful since then. Light and shadow are just as important in the botanicals I draw today as they were in figure drawing.”

The techniques of the art schools focused on craft, the mechanics of drawing and painting. “I was in reasonably large classes,” Juliet explains, “and the teachers would come around every three days and stand behind your work. She would sort of say ‘humph’ and move on. I didn’t feel that teaching was very intense in

England. We were purely learning the figure, not what it conveyed. I’ve noticed that the current thinking is what spaces that person in the drawing is in, what are they thinking, what are they trying to convey?” Juliet wasn’t taught to try to communicate a deeper meaning to a pastoral scene, or an abstract concept to a simple representation of a flower, or any aspect of the subject’s personality from a portrait. Her training was to draw exactly what she saw. “That’s how it used to be,” she adds. “It was better to have your two fine dogs with you than anybody looking into your character.”

Those classes were training her on the illustration of the human figure and “learning to have a steady hand,” she says, “which has become very useful to me.”

After art school, she met and married her husband, Michael, and they moved to the United States. “Because he had been here before and he loved it,” Juliet explains. “England was in a very difficult time then – post war – economically in terrible shape. If you wanted to make anything of yourself, it was better to come here. We moved to California, and I proceeded to have a fair amount of children.” With a growing, young family, Juliet didn’t have a lot of time

to devote to art.

She started studying ceramics as time allowed while in California. “It was great fun,” she says. “That was one of the things you try along the way to see what you enjoy. We all dreamed of being ceramics artists, showing huge pots in Big Sur.”

A few years later, the family moved to the East Coast. She put her pottery on the shelf and concentrated on a small business she’d started providing plants to offices and houses around Connecticut and New York. She missed drawing and went to the nearby New York Botanical Gardens to take a few drawing courses. “Not really thinking that flowers would be my thing,” she admits, “I wanted to see if I still had any skills.” She did. Her aptitude and talent returned quickly.

She began drawing the plants, flowers, blooms and buds she saw around her at the Botanical Gardens. Her skills in figure drawing, those methods and techniques, provided fertile ground for the support of her botanical art career.

“Botanical drawing, the sort that I do,” Juliet explains, “is more about drawing the plant. I’m not drawing the atmosphere around the plant.



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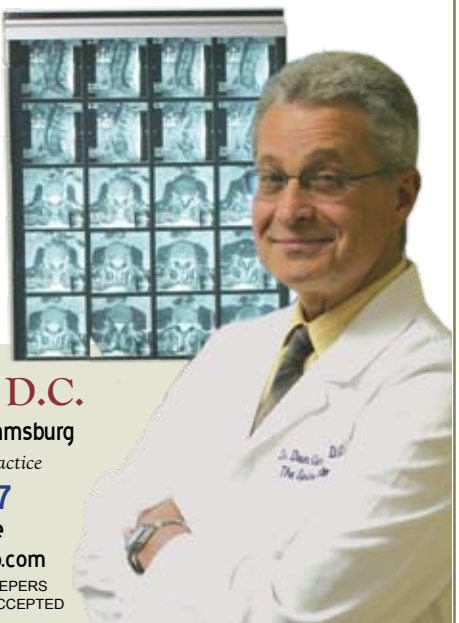
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I'm trying to create the plant's life history. I don't want everybody in full bloom." Her paintings show the buds, the blooms, the seed pods. The stages a plant cycles through are captured and exemplified in her work.

Plants also endeared Juliet to Williamsburg. "Beautiful, magnificent trees," she says of the area. "It's a beautiful town. There's a lot of English people here; I think we feel very happy among the old brick buildings. I came here originally to meet my mother who was demonstrating a craft at Busch Gardens." After Juliet and her family moved to Williamsburg, she started teaching botanical art at the Peninsula Fine Arts Center in Newport News, at This Century Art Gallery here in Williamsburg and at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond.

"This Century Art Gallery started the Art Center," Juliet says, "I teach there. I have beginners that I teach basic drawing. They all learn from each other. I seem to be teaching what they haven't learned elsewhere. I'm not sure what that is, but I think it might be observation. I make them look." She has them focus on what they're drawing, the tiny, minute details like how the leaf connects to the stem. "There are stories attached to the plant about insects, things like that," she explains. "What

the students usually say is they start looking at the world quite differently after the class." This is Juliet's way to create acute awareness in the fine points of a plant, to examine life at all stages and phases. "It's creating interest, and the students seem to love it," she adds.

Her philosophy on art is learning the craft in order to express yourself effectively. She isn't the type to go slapping paint on canvas and labeling the result art. She stresses that strong, skillful techniques are the basis for cultivating a higher art. "It's taken very seriously in England, for instance," she explains. "If you want to show your work at the Royal Horticultural Society, which I have done, a lot of the approach is botany." The English are disciplined in the proficiency of drawing and of knowing the subject matter. Juliet, in her classes, adds to that the eloquent and fluent language of art. "I want people to have a wonderful time, but I also want them to know what they're doing. I want their drawing to be perfect, as perfect as they can make it without losing their self-expression."

She says she resented being taught in art school that there was only one way to draw, and that was the teacher's way. "As if there was only one way to do something," she says with a dismissive shake of her head. "The more ideas you

have the better."

Her artistic expression has branched out to another area: jewelry making. "I started quite recently because I couldn't paint, I broke my finger." Although she had broken a finger on her painting hand, she was able to work with beads. "I continue to make necklaces and earrings," Juliet states. "I've always loved the natural beauty of semi-precious stones and am delighted to know how to put them together. For someone whose paintings may take weeks to complete, designing and making a necklace is almost instant gratification." Working with color, shape and designs in jewelry feels like a natural extension to her drawing and painting.

Now that her artist hands are strong and healed, Juliet is ready to tend her next creative bud. "I always hope I'm getting better or have a better idea," she says. "I'm starting to add birds to the paintings. You have to get the anatomy just right." She's using the bird feeder outside her kitchen window to study the birds that frequent it. "They have tremendous personalities," she says. While studying the local birds and their anatomy, her thoughts go to how she could teach what she learns to others. "I found that being a lonely artist is not nearly as much fun as teaching," she concludes with a smile. NDN



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Jane Hersey's quest began without her really knowing it. In the late 1960s, chemicals used in the building materials of their new home and the foods they ate, began to cause physical harm to her family. Forty years later, Jane still fights her battle to educate the public on the destructive effects of chemical additives, especially in the foods we all consume.

In 1968, Jane and her husband, Harry, bought a new home. "It was outgassing," Harry explains. "These building materials were outgassing, and I began to have migraine headaches." Outgassing is a term used when materials like carpets, paint, adhesives, drywall and insulation release toxic fumes into the air.

Jane took Harry to several doctors to help find the reason for the migraines. "They gave Harry medicine to relieve the symptoms," Jane says, "but we didn't know at that point what was causing it. That went on until we moved to Northern Virginia in 1971." Harry continued to have headaches, he believes resulting from the initial trigger of the building materials and compounded by their diet of fast foods.

"I was the happy homemaker, the convenience cook with all the mixes," Jane admits. "Harry's headaches became more frequent and more severe. Later we realized that the chemical exposure set Harry up to be



JANE HERSEY What's in Your Food?

By Greg Lilly, Editor

more sensitive than the average person." When he ate their usual foods, things that contained MSG (monosodium glutamate), 'put him over the edge'.

Through her years of research, Jane has concluded that some people have a genetic predisposition to be more sensitive to chemical additives. These more sensitive people exhibit problems from exposure to smaller amounts than most people. Harry and their daughter, Laura, both proved to be sensitive to additives.

"Different people in the family would have different symptoms," Jane explains. "In Harry's case, he would get very jumpy and irritable. If he had enough of an exposure, he'd develop a full-blown migraine that would last three to four days." All he could do was lie in a dark room until it subsided. "Our oldest daughter exhibited, what today is called ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), the inability to focus, the dreaminess, irrational behavior at times," Jane adds. Different people have different reactions.

In 1975, a neighbor who was aware of the health problems of both Harry and the daughter discovered a book in the library, Dr. Ben F. Feingold's, *Why Your Child is Hyperactive*.

"Jane and I both read it," Harry says, "and I saw symptoms explained that I had and symptoms our daughter had.

We started eliminating what we could read on the food packaging. It helped!"

"Dramatically," Jane adds.

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day when Harry had lunch at his workplace's cafeteria. He bought a bowl of cottage cheese. It had a maraschino cherry on top. "I knew to take the bright red maraschino cherry off, but I ate some of the cottage cheese with the red dye on it," he explains. "I started to get a headache that afternoon. That's when we got serious."

They talked with someone at the Feingold Association in Long Island, New York. A group planned to get together in Washington, D.C. to discuss how to spread the word about Dr. Feingold's findings and the results people had achieved. Jane and Harry attended that first meeting.

"When this was taking place in the '70s," Jane says, "we and all the other parents involved thought we'd put together a support group to help new parents since we had already accumulated a lot of practical experience. We knew it would take a few years of studies for the doctors to confirm that additives are triggering this hyperactivity, at least for many children, and we'd finish up and go back to our lives. Well, here it is forty years later, and the food industry is very powerful, the chemical companies are extremely powerful, the pharmaceutical industry is unbelievably powerful. Now ADHD has become a thriving business. We, in our naiveté, never thought we'd be doing this so many years later."

What Jane and Harry found was that small, easy changes had the potential to make a big difference. Not everyone is as sensitive to chemical additives as Harry, but most people wouldn't mind limiting the food additives ingested. "There's the junk food crowd and then there's the alfalfa sprouts," Jane says, "we're in the middle." She adds that there are some simple substitutions for a person's regular diet that can be made to help eliminate the potentially harmful additives.

"It was never our intention to be doing this after all these years," Jane says. "It is so incredibly exciting and fun when I hear back from people and the results they have from eliminating additives from their diet."

Jane offers four simple steps to having less chemical additives in your diet:

1. Look for color plus number. If it says Yellow #5, that's a dye, a chemical additive. Artificial colors have to be listed as ingredients. Check the tiny print on the back of food packages.

2. Beware of the words 'artificial' or 'imitation' in the flavoring. Look out for 'vanillin' because it is fake vanilla. Don't expect flavoring to be labeled as artificial because sometimes the ingredients will simply say 'flavoring' instead of apple or banana or chocolate – things that are specific, not generalized.

3. Check the ingredients label length. Why does something as simple as macaroni and cheese have so many ingredients?

4. If the ingredients are things that your grandmother had in her pantry, then it's probably a good choice. Avoid any ingredient that you can't identify. People are buying food that they have no idea what it contains. Dyes are made from petroleum. Artificial flavors are primarily petroleum. The three preservatives BHA (Butylated Hydroxyanisole), BHT (Butylated Hydroxytoluene) and TBHQ (Tertiary Butylhydroquinone) are mostly petro-chemicals.

Each person's reaction to reduced or eliminated additives is different. "It's hard to tell how you may benefit," Jane admits. "It varies enormously, depending on the chemical additive sensitivity of the people in your family." Behavior is usually the first change a family may see in an additive-sensitive child or parent. "The more drastic the problem, the more dramatic the change may be," she states.

"Humans are meant to eat food," Jane sums up her philosophy. Her interest is in helping people understand what foods are healthy to eat.

To find out more about synthetic food additives visit: www.feingold.org



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TERRY DEAVER AND SONS

Do It Yourself... or Not?

By Greg Lilly, Editor

The new year spreads out before us with home improvement projects queued up, allowing for priority: upgrades, fixes, maintenance, paint, plumbing, yard and electrical. Terry Deaver along with his sons, Kevin and Brian, carry on a family tradition of assisting

area residents with those projects and guiding the homeowner through the do-it-yourself (DIY) or hire-a-professional decision.

Terry grew up in the hardware store business. "In Northern Virginia, inside the Beltway, my father's hardware store was in Annandale," he

describes. "I was in the hardware business since the time I was old enough to work, which was about 14." He worked for his father through college, but after he graduated, he went into the insurance business. "Five years in that business before my father became ill, and I re-

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turned to his store to run the business with my brother until about 1984.” By that time, Terry and his brother had two stores. Terry took one and his brother took the other one.

In 1989, Terry sold his Northern Virginia store and bought Peninsula Hardware from longtime owner, Herb Watson. The store has an extensive history in Williamsburg. Today, Terry sees his two sons running the business – from one family to the next, generation to generation.

“When we moved to the area in ’89,” Terry says, “Kevin was ten years old, and Brian was eight years old. In 1995, I opened the second store in Governor’s Green Shopping Center. By that time, Kevin was old enough to work. That’s where he got his feet wet; he worked after school and on weekends. Several years after that, Brian did the same.” Just as Terry had done with his father, Kevin and Brian worked summers and weekends during high school and college.

One of the great things about hardware stores is that you can usually find employees who have a good bit of knowledge about any number of things relating to home improvement. Terry says the people who come into the store are 80% homeowners, individuals looking to complete a project themselves, and 20% of the customers are professional trade or commercial service providers.

“Sometimes it’s hard to tell the difference,” Terry says. “There are a lot of one and two person businesses here.”

Homeowners tend to focus on two main areas of home improvement: painting and the lawn. “Those are our two biggest categories,” Terry says. “Those are the things the average homeowner feels comfortable with. Most people aren’t afraid to try to paint a



Q&A

An Interview with Nan Piland

PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMSBURG AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Email Nan at info@waarealtor.com

How has the Internet changed the way people buy and sell homes?

PILAND:

The real estate industry has been impacted by the explosion of Internet usage as much as any industry. Not only is there more information about available homes online, but that information is packaged and presented in ways that provide home buyers and sellers with a wealth of information. How is all this information changing consumer behavior?

The Internet has become one of the most useful tools for an individual to research the real estate market when buying or selling a home. Most of that information is timely, accurate and reliable which means people can learn and discover opportunities on their own by investing as much time as they want online.

In a 2009 survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 60% of home buyers said they went to a Multiple Listing Service (MLS) website for online information and another 46% searched other real estate company websites. The survey also said that people rate many website features as useful when they are in the market for a home – photos, detailed information on the properties for

sale, virtual tours, agent information, interactive maps, neighborhood information and more. There is no doubt that many people start the home buying or selling process right in their own homes where they can quietly research the possibilities at their own pace.

However, the Internet is still only one valuable tool that consumers rely on. Traditional methods of evaluating real estate options have stood the test of time and are alive and well today. In fact, in the 2009 survey by the NAR, 89% of respondents who used the Internet to research also cited real estate agents as an important information source and another 60% utilized yard sign information as well. In addition, 40% of respondents who used the Internet to search for a home actually found the home they purchased through a Realtor® – not through online searches.

While researching for a home online can be very helpful, buying or selling a home is not a transactional process. It is very personal, emotional and is most people’s largest investment in their lifetime. Thus, most people still want a more personal approach to buying or selling a home.

In this same survey, 77% of all buyers drove by or viewed the home they purchased, and 61% walked through the home they

viewed online. Of course, there are many buyers and sellers that do not use the Internet and rely solely on traditional home buying and selling methods. The survey data shared in this column only reflects data regarding Internet users.

Regardless, enlisting the services of a Realtor® to bridge the gap between research and purchase is as important today as ever before. Your Realtor® can help you connect the online information to the realities of the property, the neighborhood, and the local market. Your Realtor® contributes a personal and knowledgeable component that is based on their day-to-day hands on experience in the marketplace. The value that a real estate professional can bring to the home buying or selling process cannot be found on the Internet because it is the personal relationships and real life encounters that help develop that Realtor’s® expertise. Those traits just can’t be found on a computer screen.

For more information regarding the 2009 NAR Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers contact WAAR at 757-253-0028. For up to date local market conditions, to find a Realtor® or to find out more about the Williamsburg Area Association of Realtors® and all the information we provide, visit our website: www.WAARealtor.com.

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wall."

With lawn and garden projects, local homeowners are more likely to fertilize their own lawn than calling in a service, according to Terry. "People will mulch," he adds, "those types of projects that don't take a whole lot of expertise are usually DIY as opposed to someone who might want to change a circuit breaker in their house."

That tends to be the dividing line in DIY and calling a professional: the amount of expertise needed. "A lot of people are afraid to change a circuit breaker," Terry says. "We sell circuit breakers and we sell them to homeowners. But that's a project that not everyone is comfortable doing."

Electrical tasks are the ones that most people call professionals to complete. Terry, Kevin, Brian and their team usually advise a homeowner to call a professional when it comes to the more complicated electrical projects.

"Although some electrical projects," Terry clarifies, "people may want to try for themselves, like fixing a lamp or changing a light fixture or hanging a ceiling fan. If you get much beyond that, then no. There are some people who come in and ask how to do certain things, and I tell the associates to advise them to call a professional."

Kevin says they usually have one strong piece of advice for DIY project people: "We do recommend that they turn the power off before attempting anything electrical, or the water off with the plumbing repairs," he says with a smile. Sometimes the common sense tasks get lost in the concern over the technicalities of a repair.

An example of a project that may be completed by a homeowner that sometimes goes awry is the hot water heater. "On the plumbing side, or maybe the electrical side, depending on how you look at it, we sell elements for hot water heaters," Terry explains. "It's really not tough to do. We always tell the customer this: you drain the water from the water heater, you turn the power off, you change the elements in it – there are two of them – then make sure you fill the thing with water again before you turn the power back on. But what will happen sometimes, they turn it on before refilling it with water. It will melt the elements. That's a common mistake."

He says it's not a hard job to do, because he's done it himself. That is a part of a homeowner's self-assurance. The more projects successfully completed, the more willing you are to try new ones. Knowledge and confidence build on themselves.

"The Internet has changed the way people learn to do home improvement projects," Kevin says. "Lots of times people come in with the basic knowledge, and we answer questions." This time of year, many homeowners are weatherizing their homes by researching the best products and procedures on the Internet and then buying the materials and installing them. "Caulking, door sweeps, insulation," Kevin lists, "people do a lot of that."

Terry sees a lot more people trying projects. "The economy has had people putting projects off," he explains, "then when they can't put it off anymore, they try it themselves." Pride in ownership, in doing a job with your own two hands, along with the cost savings help boost the DIY projects. "Personally, if I can do it myself, I'll do it," Terry adds. "I don't like to pay someone to do a job I can do. But, I also know my limitations." NDN

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Please visit www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com and click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current community announcements.

Hey Neighbor! CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

December 17, 2010

The W-JCC Community Action Agency has been coordinating the Christmas Food program for over 35 years. Last year we served 495 economically disadvantaged families which benefited 1,566 individuals in James City County and Williamsburg. You can assist us in this effort by donating canned goods. Food donations can be dropped off at WJCC Community Action Agency, 312 Waller Mill Rd., Suite 405, Williamsburg, VA 23185. For more information, please contact Rosalind Dodd or Yvonne Joseph at 229-9332.

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A Colonial Road Runners "Grand Prix Event" the Sentara Sleighbell 5K Run/Walk, starting at 10:00 am at the Geddy Outpatient Center at Sentara Hospital Williamsburg VA. Register at www.active.com or download a flyer at <http://www.colonialroadrunners.org/>. The 1 mile begins at 9:30 am and is free. All proceeds will benefit area youth in afterschool activities provided by SHIP the W-JCC School Health Initiative Program and the R.F. Wilkinson YMCA.

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Hey Neighbor! COLONIAL HERITAGE TRAVEL CLUB -- A TRAVEL EXPO

January 9, 2011

1- 5 PM. Colonial Heritage Clubhouse Ballroom. Speak with representatives from all areas of the travel industry; hear presentations from cruise lines, and relax in a tropical setting. Fun, prizes and surprises! Free to all. For more information contact: Arleen Rinker, Travel Club Coordinator, at Afrinker49@AOL.com or 757-564-8048; or Bonny Young at The Colonial Heritage Clubhouse at 757-645-2001.

Hey Neighbor! NAACP/ACT-SO BREAKFAST

January 17, 2011

9 a.m. The 22nd Annual Martin Luther King Breakfast, sponsored by the local NAACP Branch and hosted by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, pays tribute to the late civil rights leader and recognizes high academic achievers in the WJCC and York County High Schools. Proceeds provide support for student participation in national ACT-SO Competition. Breakfast held at Williamsburg Lodge-Virginia Room. 253-0841 for tickets - \$35 adults; \$25 students.

Hey Neighbor! PIANIST VALENTINA LISITSA BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

January 29, 2011

Presented by the Williamsburg Symphony League at Phi Beta Kappa Hall at the College of William and

Mary beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for the concert only. Reception tickets for pre-concert wine and hors d'oeuvres at 6 p.m. and post concert champagne and dessert including a visit with Valentina are available at additional \$90 and \$35 respectively. Call 757-221-2674 to reserve your tickets today or visit www.wm.edu for information and ticketing. All proceeds to benefit The Williamsburg Symphonia.

Hey Neighbor! OPEN HOUSE - PROVIDENCE CLASSICAL SCHOOL

January 30, and February 17, 2011

Greensprings Center, across from Jamestown HS, For more info contact Jean Henry jhenry@pcsvirginia.org, 757-565-2900 Learn about Williamsburg's only classical, Christian school, and its fastest growing private school. Celebrating our 10th year. K-10 and growing. www.PCS-virginia.org.

Hey Neighbor! BUNKO TOURNAMENT FOR BREAST HEALTH AWARENESS

February 5, 2011

7 pm. Walsingham McAuley Auditorium. Benefiting Beyond Boobs! and Susan G. Komen/Tidewater. Tickets:<http://sites.google.com/site/BunkoTourneyWmbg/> or email KMBunko@yahoo.com. Hosted by Kingsmill Bunko Ladies & Friends.

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Lorraine Funk
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