

July 2008

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors[©]

VOL.2, ISSUE 7

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

OUR ENVIRONMENT

**Caren Schumacher of
the Williamsburg Land
Conservancy**

Scott Thomas

An Environmental Protector
for Our Community

Bill Williams

Bird Watcher &
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Meredith Collins,
 Publisher

When I decide on the themes for each issue of *Next Door Neighbors*, I try to select ones that have a broad, general appeal. I can't think of any topic that is more universal than this one. No matter where we live we have to recognize how important our individual actions are on our environment. This is particularly meaningful in our own community.

As a youngster, your parents may have taught you to turn out the lights when you leave a room and to not hold the refrigerator door open for too long while you search the shelves for something to snack on. You may also be familiar with the three R's: reduce, reuse or recycle. Perhaps you even fill containers each week with plastic, glass and paper and set them by the curb. For some, contributing to the health of our environment rises to a whole new level. One of *Next Door Neighbors'* writers, Sara Lewis, often arrives to her interviews by bike, pedaling to and from her appointments and making other short trips around town.

The point is we are all familiar with the basic concerns relating to our environment and there are a myriad of little things we do to 'do our part'. So the question becomes, what does it take for us to step up our efforts and take 'our part' to the next level? The more we educate ourselves about ways we can make better decisions relating to our environment and the more we become participatory by our individual actions, the better things will be for us all.

In this issue, we have interviewed several locals whose work touches our local environment, or who choose to engage in environmental issues because of their personal interest. I hope you not only enjoy reading about a few of your neighbors, but that you also learn something new and take a refreshed insightful approach to your individual contributions for improving our environment right here at home. NDN

Inside

PAGE 3
Love of the Land
Caren Schumacher of the Williamsburg Land Conservancy

PAGE 17
Leanne DuBois
Providing a Practical Approach to Being Environmentally Friendly

PAGE 7
Scott Thomas
Boyhood Experiences Influence his Life's Work

PAGE 20
Williamsburg Climate Action Network
Dr. Christine Llewellyn

PAGE 10
Bill Williams
Our Most Avid Bird Watcher & a Man of Nature

PAGE 23
Hey Neighbor!
Find Out How You Can Get Involved with Your Community

Cover Photography by Lisa Cumming



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LOVE for our LAND

"The world we all share is given to us in trust. Every choice we make regarding the earth, air, and water around us should be made with the objective of preserving it for all generations to come." - August A. Busch III, Chairman and President, Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.

By Sara E. Lewis

Caren Schumacher has an appreciation for the land, one that stems from growing up in a place where land was scarce. She spent most of her life in Northern Virginia, where growth had overwhelmed the natural landscape with cars, strip malls, highways, and parking lot after parking lot. After a while, she didn't notice. "Because you live in that environment, you truly become desensitized to it," Schumacher explained.

Eventually her oldest child moved to the Williamsburg area. Schumacher and her husband visited their daughter about twice a month. "We found it was almost impossible to go back on Sunday night to the DC area," she said. After a year, they realized that there was a different way to live your life and that there was a quality of life that they had been missing.

"We made the decision to leave executive jobs, the hustle and bustle of Northern Virginia," Schumacher continued. "And why? Because we saw an environment that was respectful of the land, and that was inviting and peaceful."

Once in Williamsburg Schumacher began looking for work. Through an executive recruiter, she found the Williamsburg Land Conservancy where she started as a volunteer. The Conservancy works to protect over 3,000 acres of land in the James and York River watersheds and joins with other land protection organizations and programs to ensure land owners use the best conservation tools to protect their land.

Eventually, the Executive Director position became available and she was promoted.

"And so for the very reasons that we moved here, the irony is that my job would be to protect that quality," Schumacher remarked. "I believe that it's not by happenstance."

Schumacher had worked as vice-president of a national trade association and the Conservancy needed someone with her skills in organizational management, strategic planning, public relations, and marketing. Her professional skills and her love of natural beauty fit together perfectly.

"Before coming here I knew that I loved the land. I knew that we all have to be responsible citizens in taking care of the land and that what we do is for the generations that come," she said. "I embraced that; I believed that."

The Executive Director position was a natural fit for Schumacher and the experience gave her the opportunity to learn about the many ways people can take measures to protect the land. A landowner who wants to preserve his land for generations to come can place it under a conservation easement and reap tax benefits. He can still farm his land and walk on it, but an organization like the Conservancy will become the steward to ensure that the natural resources shade the soil, clean the air, and protect water quality perpetually.

Simple enough, but the decision is much more complicated for a landowner to understand and to warm up to emotionally. Schumacher appreciates the landowner's af-



fection for the land.

“The Historic Triangle is a really special place and we really have to make sure that the character and ambiance of this community is kept intact ... forever. It is the essence of who we are,” Schumacher said, reflecting on what she has learned in her work. “The second thing I’ve learned is what a conservation easement is and all the details of placing land under permanent protection.”

Schumacher sees that the business of conservation has changed a lot in the last seven years because the Virginia Conservation Easement Act provides a tax incentive. “There are greater benefits for the landowner,” she said. However, the decision to place land under permanent easement is a very large one. Because of the economic and emotional considerations, the average time for a conservation easement to be sealed is three years.

A landowner can take more than one route to protect his land. “One way to protect land is to donate and take advantage of tax benefits,” Schumacher explained. “Or in James City County, through the voluntary Purchase of Development Rights program; the county purchases the development rights and the owner gets cash out of it.” Several years ago, the Conservancy worked with the Board of Supervisors to put a bond referendum on the ballot that provided \$15 million for the Purchase of Development Rights and \$5 million for the preservation of green space. “It was a key victory for this organization,” she added.

Because the options for protecting land are varied and can be challenging for a land owner to understand, the Conservancy hosts ‘Conservation Conversations’ to educate landowners about options. Landowners are

invited to bring their financial and legal advisors to these meetings.

Schumacher points to the Duffeler family, owners of the Williamsburg Winery, as an example of a family for whom the donated conservation easement program made sense. “They believed very strongly that they wanted future generations of their family to have the property.” While excluding the developed winery and hotel operation, the conservation easement protects the land that extends from the winery buildings to College Creek.

“Every one of our deeds is a unique agreement between the land trust and the owner,” Schumacher said. Each agreement takes into consideration the use of the land by the owners. Some may allow agriculture and others may allow walking trails for public enjoyment.

For example, one section of protected land includes the Virginia Capital Trail. “I wasn’t here very long when one of my first experiences with the Conservancy was a meeting with Fieldcrest homeowners, the county, and the Conservancy, which owns the land.” Beavers in the swamp between Jamestown High School and Fieldcrest were building dams and the water was backing up, causing problems at the Fieldcrest neighborhood swimming pool. “People wanted to know, ‘What are we going to do with the beavers?’” Schumacher said. Schumacher learned about devices called ‘beaver deceivers’ and worked with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) to address the situation. This was important since the Land Conservancy must review land easement stewardship annually and the VDGIF is the better steward for that piece of land. “They know how to care for the beavers,” she pointed out.

Schumacher feels that her work with the Conservancy is the most meaningful position she has held. “It’s also the most challenging,” she said. “I think I have the best job in Williamsburg, but it’s a big job - working with land owners, local government, trying to make a difference. No two days ever look the same. I feel like there is so much to do.”

Because of her life’s work, she notices more and enjoys nature. She keeps a plant guide in her purse and a bird guide and binoculars on her kitchen table. As a grandmother of four, Schumacher believes strongly in the importance of nature, green spaces, and buffers. “I don’t want to see this town that I love be turned into ‘Anytown, USA’, and if we aren’t careful, it will be,” she commented.

The Conservancy wants stronger language in ordinances to ensure that growth doesn’t move out of bounds. “We need to take responsibility for the land around us,” Schumacher emphasized. “We are a community that is reliant upon tourism. If we begin to look like ‘Anytown’, no one will want to come back.”

The Conservancy’s Board decided several years ago to work with interested parties in a collaborative spirit. Recently, a landowner came to them with a development idea that protected pockets of land; the board gave input about the importance of contiguous land corridors for wildlife. Schumacher hopes that this is one of many instances when the Conservancy will help landowners think about how they can do things differently.

“I am passionate about what I do and the things I work on for the community good,” she said. “My job is not only my vocation, it’s an avocation. I believe in helping to maintain the character of this community personally and professionally.”

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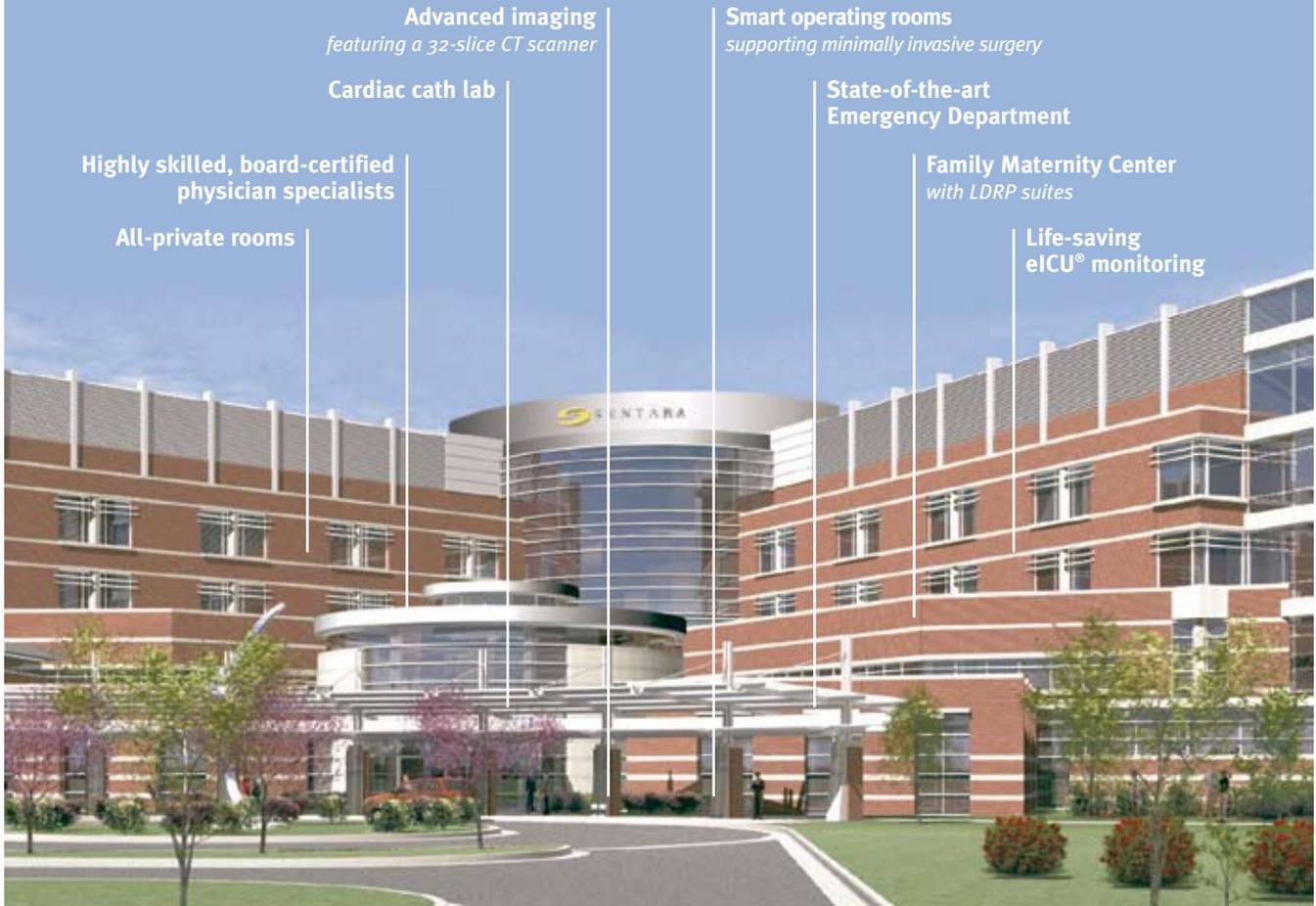
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Schumacher knows more about the land, conservation, wildlife, birds and plant life from her work experiences. "All of these things are now a part of my life because I am acquainted with people who have educated me. Before, I didn't have the time or the circle of people that provided the kind of

education I have gotten since I moved here. I have a heightened and renewed affection for nature and the land around me." **NDN**

For more information about Williamsburg Land Conservancy, please visit:

www.williamsburglandconservancy.org

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

CAREN SCHUMACHER: "I recently attended an environmental conference and listened to a scientist talk about climate change. I took pages of notes. I don't have answers, but I do have a heightened concern and am seeking answers. It can be overwhelming, but I believe we can all contribute to preserving the environment. There is certainly something that everyone can do, something that everyone should do. If you're not recycling, start recycling. Buy a cloth bag for your groceries ... and remember to carry it in the store! Use less water on your lawn. Plant more native plants. A lot of this is personal. Speaking for the Land Conservancy, though, I can say that not everyone has a parcel of land to permanently protect but if you care about land, support your local land trust that is working with the landowners to protect land. And support other environmental organizations either as a volunteer or with a financial commitment. That's a start. Support the organization with your time and your money. They're both equally important."

Next Door Neighbors

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Boyhood Experience Shapes Scott Thomas into
An Environmental Protector
for our Community

By Sara E. Lewis

Scott Thomas

Scott Thomas, Director of James City County's Environmental Division, was just twelve years old in 1977, when a line of severe thunderstorms stalled over his western Pennsylvania hometown, Johnstown, dumping more than a foot of water in some places and overwhelming old earthen dams that had been built to power steel mills. The Johnstown Flood and the history of the area's two earlier devastating floods in 1889 and 1936, impacted the young man. In a sense, it became a catalyst for his professional interests: Thomas later earned a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

"I am struck by water as the most destructive force of nature," Thomas said from his office, surrounded by maps of planning regions and stormwater facilities in James City County. "There was no such activity as stormwater management then," he added, referring to the devastating floods in Johnstown.



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In the early days of stormwater management, curbs and gutters were routinely installed to quickly send runoff to storm drains. Culverts and paving allowed stormwater to wash fertilizer from lawns and oil from driveways directly into the rivers. Now, planners keep ditches vegetated and minimize clearings so that rivers won't be overwhelmed with sediment and litter, soils don't erode, and pollutants will be filtered. Plants take up water and naturally cleaned water seeps back into the ground to refill aquifers, James City County's underwater storage tanks.

"There is a stereotype that we're not business friendly, but we're protecting public health, safety, and welfare," Thomas said. Plans that minimize lawns, retain woody vegetation, and use mulch instead of pavement save money while contributing to a cleaner environment.

Thomas's experience makes him well suited for vigilant planning in a county where citizens don't mind saying they are concerned about the pace of growth. After college, he worked on industrial projects in Pennsylvania. Later, he moved to the Fredericksburg area where he planned commercial and residential developments. Eventually, he felt the urge to give back. "I wanted to put everything I'd learned to work to help citizens," he explained. When he saw an ad for a civil engineer position with James City County he answered it and was hired.

After working in the division for nine years, Thomas became Director in July 2007. He is excited about his job because he wants to make sure that land disturbing development is properly planned and controlled. He has ample opportunities to talk about plans that preserve land, control erosion, filter stormwater, maintain natural resources, and add to the general quality of life in the county. "I deal with every aspect of our community from the supervisors, to other county offices, state agencies like the VMRC (Virginia Marine Resource Commission) and DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality), the Army Corps of Engineers, developers, and citizens," Thomas said. "I deal with an array of people. It's non-stop from the minute I get here until the time I leave."

Thomas loves to drive around the county and see the fruits of his labor. "When I started, I kept a list of all of the projects that I worked on and it's up to 1,200. I can see them anywhere and everywhere in the county," he said proudly. He points to a plan on his office wall as an example. The Warhill Project was in his division for almost two years. "We make sure developers meet the ordinances and make suggestions along the way to make it a little better for everyone: the developer, the owners, and the citizens."

Thomas is glad that people are more interested in environmental stewardship today. "It is tough for people to understand that we were plugged into this many years ago," he emphasized. The public is finally catching up and the green terminology that was a familiar language of planners is now common among the general population. "The staff has known the science behind this, but it just takes time," he added. For example, the recently designed Prime Outlets parking lot is made of pervious pavement that allows water to pass through and sends much less pollution and sediment-filled runoff to area waterways. Finally, the Environmental Division, county and Chesapeake Bay Act* regulations, and emerging technologies are all coming together.

Another example is the change in planting beds in developed areas. "You know how you used to see islands in parking lots with a tree in the middle and soil mounded up? The water runs off and

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the plants have to be irrigated. Now, you see islands with mulch to hold water and curb cuts to let the water in," Thomas explained. Planted areas like those in New Town are a winning proposition because there is less runoff and irrigation isn't usually necessary.

Ponds like the one at the intersection of John Tyler Highway and Route 199 were constructed a decade ago, before bioretention areas with plantings were common. Thomas points to the stormwater runoff bioretention area on the front left side of the James City County Courthouse. The low area is full of woody plants and wildflowers. "We try to use natural solutions to let water pool and be filtered by the land," he said. Another natural solution promoted by the Environmental Division is planting grasses and other plants, rather than using large rocks, to stabilize eroding banks and streams. Vegetation binds and holds soil in root mats.

James City County's Environmental Division works under Thomas on new construction plans. The County's Stormwater Division deals with older neighborhoods where technologies were not as kind to the environment. In older neighborhoods, education is a key tool used to suggest environmentally responsible changes like disconnecting down-

spouts that drain directly to the nearest pipe and planting rain gardens to absorb water before they add to stormwater pollution and erode soil.

"I guess you can tell I'm passionate," Thomas said. "I feel lucky to have a job like this. The Johnstown flood experience is deep in my heart and soul."

The old steel mill dam above Johnstown was smaller than the dam that holds Lake

Matoaka, but the town was below the dam. When it broke, people were killed and the town was destroyed. "I tend to get passionate about the force of water and engineering standards because of this," Thomas concluded. **NDN**

* To find out more about the Chesapeake Bay Act, please visit: www.dcr.virginia.gov/chesapeake_bay_local_assistance/theact.shtml

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

SCOTT THOMAS: According to Thomas, James City County's PRIDE brochure and website are the most important materials that have been developed by the County to help individual citizens do the right thing for the environment. "It's a starting point for what citizens can do to be better water managers in their own back yards," said Thomas. PRIDE, which stands for Protecting Resources in Delicate Environments, urges citizens to take note of ways they can ensure water quality and protect the highly erodible James City County soil. Some actions that can be taken include using less pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer; using grass clippings as natural fertilizer; planting instead of paving; directing runoff away from paved areas; not washing driveways; and picking up after pets. The PRIDE program offers small grants to community groups to plant trees and stabilize stream banks, and to stormwater facility owners to restore natural filters. To find out more, go to www.protectedwithpride.org.

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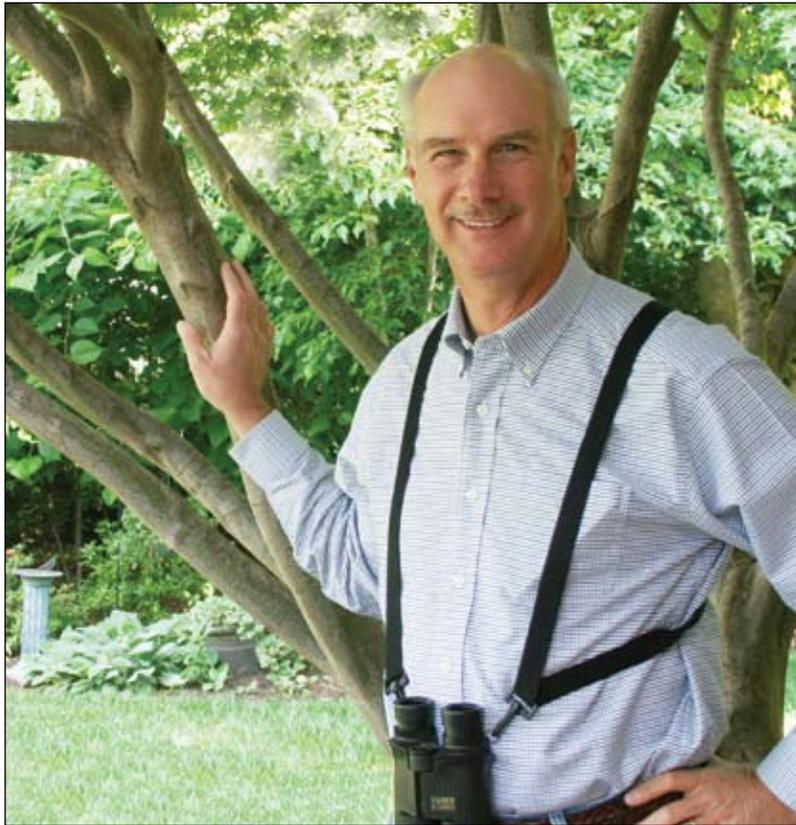
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A Man of Nature

By Brandy Centolanza



Surrounded by family members who liked to fish and farm, it was inevitable that Bill Williams would grow up to be a lover of nature. Today Williams works diligently to keep the natural world safe for those with the very same passion, through his efforts with

the Williamsburg Bird Club, the Williamsburg Land Conservancy, and other environmental organizations.

“I remember when I was six years old, I knew I wanted to be a biologist,” Williams says. “I always wanted to do something out-

doors.”

His first fascination was with amphibians and reptiles. As a child, lizards, snakes, turtles, and frogs, could often be found roaming throughout his home. Later, Williams developed an interest in birds that soon turned into a life-long devotion.

“I knew a number of people who were enthusiasts, who were bird watchers,” he recalls. “I remember an aunt and uncle who said they saw 200 different kinds of birds, and a college professor who said he saw 250 different birds each year. I never knew there were that many birds.”

Bill Williams

Williams majored in Biology at Emory & Henry College in Emory, VA, and later earned a masters degree in Biology with a concentration in Ornithology from the College of William & Mary. He went on to work as a Biology teacher in Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools. In 1987, he became the school division’s science curriculum coordinator. Williams retired in 2002, though he still remains dedicated to his aviary research, which deals mostly with hawk migration.

Williams is an active member of the Williamsburg Bird Club, which he helped form in 1977. Today, more than 100 members meet monthly and attend numerous field trips locally to learn more about birds.

“The bird club serves as a gathering point for people who are interested in birds, and provides information and education about the conservation of birds,” Williams states. “We all enjoy the camaraderie. We all enjoy

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learning more about birds.”

Williams is drawn to birds because of their natural history, diversity and behavior. His favorite bird is the Virginia Rail, a marsh bird. “It’s very secretive, but extremely fascinating, and beautiful,” he shares. “I like the challenge of learning and understanding about all plants and animals here,” Williams continues. What he doesn’t like is how their habitat is rapidly disappearing.

It’s a major concern for Williams, which is why he participates in various organizations to promote education and awareness about environmental issues. Williams is a founding member, former president, and current board member of the Williamsburg Land Conservancy. Williamsburg Land Conservancy, which started in 1990, protects more than 3,000 acres of land in the James and York River watersheds. Williams is also a founder of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, a former president of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, and has been a member of other bird organizations for decades.

Currently, Williams teaches an aviary class through the Christopher Wren Association, and is the education director for the Center of Conservation Biology at William & Mary. For 15 years, members of the Center have conducted research on various species of birds and they are all dedicated to the common vision that the natural environment is an important part of our quality of life. The Center’s work is used to determine which parcels of land warrant protection, how government policies should be written and implemented, and how vulnerable species should be managed.

It’s not all work and no play for Williams, however. Whenever time and finances allow, Williams travels to observe various birds of the world. His favorite place to watch birds has been the Chan Chich Lodge, a private natural reserve in Belize, which he has visited twice.

“I absolutely loved it,” Williams says. There are between 9,000 and 10,000 different types of birds worldwide, and he’s seen roughly 2,100 of them, but he’s not done yet. “My goal is to see 3,000 birds,” he says with anticipation. **NDN**

To find out more about Williamsburg Bird Club, please visit:

<http://williamsburgbirdclub.org>

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

BILL WILLIAMS: “Locally, my biggest concern is the loss of habitat. It is having a negative influence on the diversity of native wildlife. What people can do is support land conservation and stewardship locally and throughout the greater Tidewater region. They can participate in and support local organizations such as Williamsburg Land Conservancy, Williamsburg Bird Club, Native Plant Society, and Williamsburg Botanical Garden.”

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EILEEN WELDON PUTS HER GREEN THUMB TO WORK
AT BUSCH GARDEN'S

Backyard Wildlife Habitat

By Natalie Miller-Moore

Eileen Weldon is the 'queen of green' but she stumbled into the thicket of landscaping by accident. In 1974, she was one of two people who landscaped Busch Gardens the year before it opened. She'd just graduated from college with an education degree, and had enjoyed her summer job at a garden center. It was meant to be a short-term job.

When the park opened the next year she stayed on. That was 34 years ago. For Weldon, it's been a remarkable sidetrack that's turned into a rewarding and exciting career.

Although the theme park is seasonal, the plants in it need care year round. She is responsible for putting her 'green thumb' to work everywhere in the park - on flowers, trees, shrubs, hanging baskets - basically all of their plant life.

One of the things Weldon likes most is the greenhouses where all the growing happens. "I love the way a greenhouse smells...



new eye-popping displays of tulips in front of the Fes-thaus. In addition, she supervises more than 25 employees and more than 100

Eileen Weldon

acres of the park.

A project in the park that is close to her heart is the Backyard Wildlife Habitat in Jack Hanna's Wild Reserve. About a year ago, this part of the park was transformed into what Weldon called a 'teaching garden.' It offers advice relating to some of

the features included in this area - plant life, food, water and shelter for animals. "Some of the plants will be eaten, deliberately, and there are places for water to pool, both for birds and butterflies," she explained.

The Backyard Wildlife Habitat is a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation designed to provide park guests with things

it's so alive," Weldon said.

Weldon is delighted that Busch Gardens emphasizes the proper care of their greenery. "It's wonderful, because landscaping is valued so much here," she said. The sheer volume of plants, trees and shrubs keeps her busy. She does everything from tending to seedlings in the greenhouses to designing



they can do at home to restore habitats for wildlife and improve the environment. It features education areas, as well as a gazebo and a running stream. The stream runs over concave rocks that provide small pockets of standing water for the birds to bathe in.

According to Weldon, this area of the park is maintained differently from other areas. It has been established as more of a natural environment. "We leave the dead blooms on the flower so birds can eat the seeds," she cited as one example of how the area is maintained. A few other features in the area are blueberry bushes, which are often picked clean by the birds, a compost area and a *shag*, which is a dead tree left standing to provide food and shelter for animals.

Weldon's own home landscaping is lower maintenance than the parks, out of necessity. She works a busy schedule. Weldon keeps her own habitat needs simple - and pet-friendly for her two big dogs, Cody and Hannah. "Hannah's most obvious aspiration is to dig her way to China and judging from my yard, she's well on her way," Weldon said with a smile.

She's taken some of the tips from the Backyard Habitat back to her own yard. "I'm passionate about this, and I've put in native plants wherever I can - they take less water. I've got nesting boxes and food sources for

birds, but I need to keep it dog-friendly as well. Our yard is loaded with birds," Weldon added.

Weldon is an avid bird-watcher and she enjoys keeping track of the birds that visit the Backyard Habitat as well as her own yard. She points out a bird taking advantage of the bushy cover nearby and identifies it: "That's a catbird, a relative of the mockingbird, but he's not nearly as social. I think it's the same one who was here last year." When she does get a spare moment to relax, she's planting at home and bird watching with the Williamsburg Bird Club.

Weldon is delighted to see a part of the park where she spends her days become even more friendly to wildlife, and to become a place where people can think more about their environment. "I hope people come through here and read the signs and think about what they could do at home," she said. **NDN**

Weldon's Quick Tips for You at Home:

- Plant some butterfly bushes, even if you have to do it in containers. It's easy to plant a pot of one type like salvias or lantanas...they'll add some beautiful color and attract butterflies.

- Make sure not to over-water your plants. Not only is it a waste of water, it's one of the most common gardening mistakes.

- For kids, a good place to start is with a vegetable garden where they can sow the seeds and then harvest the vegetables.

- It's never too soon to start thinking green!



NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

EILEEN WELDON: "My biggest environmental concerns have to do with both the quantity and the quality of the natural habitats that we have left. I'd encourage everyone to look outside of their immediate needs and focus on what we can do to ensure environmental health and stability by protecting what we have. Plant for wildlife. It's easy to provide cover and food sources for native birds and other wildlife. Reduce the use of all pesticides and look for alternative solutions. At Busch Gardens, we have more than a decade of experience that proves beneficial insects do work."

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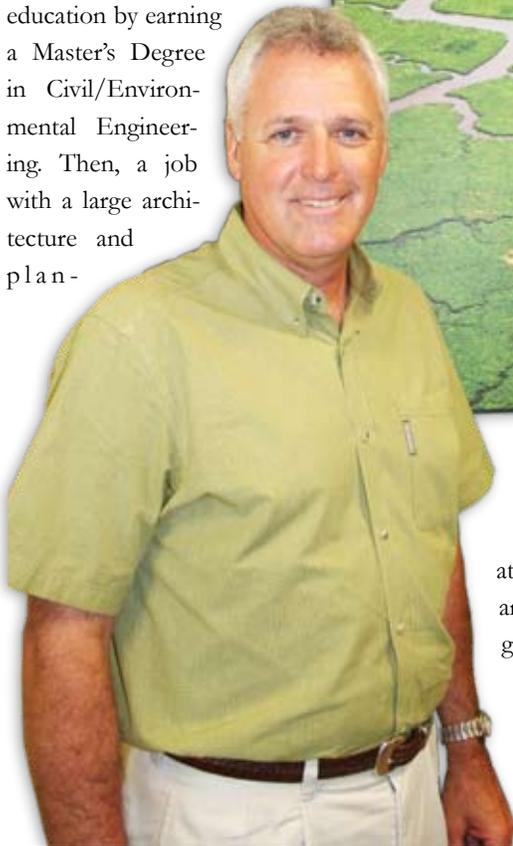
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WORKING TO ENSURE Environmentally Responsible Growth

By Sara E. Lewis

After earning his bachelor's degree in Meteorology from Texas A & M in 1978, Ron Boyd furthered his education by earning a Master's Degree in Civil/Environmental Engineering. Then, a job with a large architecture and plan-



ning firm moved him from his native Texas home to Northern Virginia, where he met his current business partner, Michael Kelly.

It never entered Boyd's mind at that time that those experiences would help propel him toward his current status as the owner of Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. (WEG) a successful local business that has more

than 100 employees.

Boyd and Kelly, both former college athletes, became fast friends when they met and they took every opportunity to work together.

"My background was in water resources engineering and Mike's was in permitting, so we were put on projects together a lot," Boyd remembered.

In the 1980s, wetlands were an im-

portant consideration for land developers who called on their team player oriented talents. Boyd honed skills in wetlands planning and Kelly helped developers through the permitting process. By the close of the 1980s, expertise in water quality and storm-water management were in high demand in the region due to the 1988 passage of the Chesapeake Bay Act.



The duo began to shape their business strategy as the Bay Act re-shaped the way development was done in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, a 16,000 square mile area that stretches from Cooperstown, NY, to Virginia Beach, VA. The Act was adopted at a time when rapid growth often pitted developers against environmentalists, but it was formulated to help ensure that the aims of healthy economic development and the future of healthy waterways were not mutually exclusive.

Boyd and Kelly worked to prove that with proper regulation, sensitive areas can be protected while developments include features that make them more aesthetically interesting

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and less expensive in the end. Their athletic team mindset was a natural asset that helped them show others that by playing together and following rules, they built a stronger future.

WEG was launched in 1990. "We wanted to do it on our own," said Boyd of his and Kelly's desire to start the company. But instead of being broad-based like larger architectural and planning firms, they took on a specialty niche market. With a small staff and temporary quarters in a garage in Governor's Land, they began working on local projects. Boyd moved to Windsor Forest, but because he believed in the future success of Governor's Land, he bought property there as well.

It has been almost 20 years since they launched the company and today WEG's much larger staff services more varied clients, but they still operate within a unique

niche. They are well-known and respected nationwide for their expertise in high quality environmentally planning and their teamwork focused approach. "We get people through the process," Boyd explained. "If you take the headaches off your client, they appreciate that."

"I'm not no-growth. I am a big believer that things are going to change. Better to be on the front of it and be part of the solution than just sitting on the sidelines complaining about it."

- Ron Boyd

the most power is telling the person, 'yes, you can do that,'" he said. "Now, we have other options too."

Boyd and his staff draw up alternatives that show the opportunities for more green space. "We show him he doesn't have to go through a long, drawn out permitting process and he hasn't had to take a black eye," Boyd summarized. "When all is said and done, it's

Boyd takes pride in working with clients to make responsible development seem like it was all their idea. He explains that a developer might come in with a plan that maximizes units and pavement. "Where I have

a nice project."

Boyd is happy to have his clients pick and choose from alternatives that work with the landscape to preserve important natural resources. Ultimately, the client decides how he or she will do the right thing for the environment.

"I like doing what I do," Boyd asserted. "When we're doing things like planning and having people follow the right procedures, and restoring wetlands, you feel kind of good about that stuff. I like doing this kind of work."

Boyd isn't all work and no play, but he continues to teach and live the interpersonal skills that have made him successful by coaching youth sports and working at a second job as a collegiate football referee.

Boyd believes Governor's Land is one of the best and most environmentally responsible projects he has worked on. Now, he lives there. "I travel around a lot and see a lot of developments," he said. "When I think about where I want to retire I keep coming back to

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where I live right now. It's a great place."

Boyd has compassion for the development community as they work within regulations and go through the sometimes long and laborious permitting process. "When you're doing something right, that's the toughest thing," he commented.

Boyd wants his clients to be successful and he isn't against growth. "I'm greatly moved by environmental issues. I wouldn't be in this business if I wasn't," he emphasized. "Am I an activist? No. I'm not no-growth. I am a big believer that things are going to change. Better to be on the front of it and be part of the solution than just sitting on the sidelines complaining about it."

New Town is another good example of a project he's proud of. His company was involved from the beginning, helping to guide the environmental process. Once again, he believed in the project so much that he moved his company there.

He advises landowners to inventory the constraints and look for opportunities in

Recycle plastic bottles, newspapers, glass and aluminum cans. their land and its topography and water resources. Then, they can plan to work with and accentuate the features of the site.

A father of three, Boyd is hopeful about the future because he sees people getting active in environmental issues. When people get involved, they are being a part of the solution.

"No growth is one side of the coin. You're never going to get no growth and you don't want unrestricted growth," Boyd said. "You want responsible growth. Everyone fights up front, but things turn out better than they think. We have a lot of regulations and ordinances."

Boyd thinks that James City County regulations are there to ensure that projects turn out right. The controlling ordinances can be a good thing when the result is to create a more attractive county. "For the most part, it is the quality of life we have here," Boyd surmised. NDN

Visit WEG's website at: www.wegnet.com

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

RON BOYD: "I think it would be to make sound decisions that don't have a negative effect on the next generation." Boyd believes this is the core meaning of sustainable growth.

"It's not rapid growth, it's responsible growth."

He reflects that we need to ask ourselves how what we are doing to the environment is it going to affect the next generation.

"This whole sustainability thing is what our company is all about. These wetland mitigation banks are adding back for what we destroyed."

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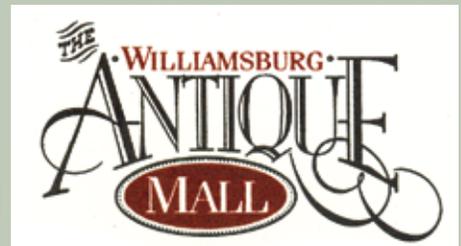
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BEING ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CAN BE BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND PRACTICAL

By Rachel Sapin

When I met with Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources for the Virginia Cooperative Extension, I was impressed to learn all that her job entails and how much she knows about our natural environment.

“My job is so multi-faceted,” DuBois says. “I’m a specialist in horticulture but my job title is actually under agriculture and natural resources. A lot of my background has involved not only horticulture but community organizing.”

DuBois’ interest in community-oriented environmentalism stretches back to her days as an undergraduate in college. Growing up a self-proclaimed urbanite in Louisville, KY, DuBois fell in love with working in rural communities while attending Eastern Kentucky

University where she received a B.S. in Horticulture.

“Many students at my university came from Appalachian coal-mining towns and brought with them culturally rooted traditional values,” DuBois remarks. “Some of the more rural gardening techniques were fascinating to me; families in rural areas grew their own food and it was totally intriguing to me, having grown up in the suburbs.”

As her interest in the rural community blossomed, DuBois went on to join AmeriCorps where she worked on a rural land project in Alabama. There, DuBois interacted directly with the rural community and encouraged small farmers and landowners to try to diversify their crops.

“Typically, the farmers grew peanuts, cotton and other commodities that weren’t producing a good income and farm

families were losing their land to development and foreclosures,” she says. “We tried to encourage them to grow more high-yielding, high-producing crops.”

As an extension agent for the Virginia Cooperative Extension, DuBois still deals with community outreach and environmentalism.

“The Virginia Cooperative Extension is basically an outreach arm of Virginia Tech,”

DuBois explains. “We bring research-based education to the community. It started out with the agriculture extension agent, working more with farmers, and they still do primarily but things have

changed over time.” Today, DuBois deals not only with environmental and horticultural issues affecting the rural community but issues that affect the urban community as well.

Part of DuBois’ job in the urban community involves working to encourage sustainable landscape management in Williamsburg, James City County and New Kent County. In promoting sustainable landscape management in this area, DuBois encourages homeowners to incorporate more drought tolerant and native plants into their landscape.

“What I really try to promote is learning about the environment and working with the environment instead of against it,” she explains. With the vast amount of landscaping that makes this area such a green and beautiful area to live in, it seems that it would be impossible for DuBois to promote sustainable landscaping all by herself. Luckily, she doesn’t have to.

Another facet of DuBois’ job involves managing close to 200 volunteers known as Master Gardeners. The Master Gardeners are individuals who serve as volunteer educators within their community after receiving specialized training in environmental horticulture through the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Williamsburg and James City County Master Gardeners go out to work with communi-



**Leanne
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ties, industry and individuals in order to educate them about aspects of horticulture that help to protect and enhance the environment.

"One of our largest programs that's actually funded by the PRIDE program, an educational component of James City County's water quality program, is called Turf Love," DuBois notes. "It's a program where volunteers and a paid coordinator go out to work with homeowners on a one-on-one basis."

The Master Gardeners involved with Turf Love, individuals DuBois has lovingly given the nickname of 'lawn rangers', conduct an on-site analysis of the homeowner's property in order to help them produce healthy turf while reducing the use of fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides that have the potential to pollute streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Homeowners who participate in Turf Love receive a soil sample analysis, recommendations for fertilizing/liming their lawns and a personalized Nutrient Management and Best Management Practices Plan for seasonal lawn care.

"We send a soil test to Virginia Tech that comes back with the exact amount of lime or fertilizer that the homeowner needs so that the individual is giving the plant exactly what it needs," DuBois explains. "If a homeowner over-fertilizes, the nutrients are not going to be utilized by the plant and are more apt to wash off and go into our watersheds which decreases our water quality. Water conservation is also a big part of our program so we teach homeowners about better watering and landscape practices that require less water generally."

In addition, DuBois' 'lawn rangers' let the homeowner know whether or not their property is located in a Resource Protection Area (RPA). RPAs are the corridors of environmentally sensitive lands that lie alongside or near the banks of streams, rivers and other waterways.

"People buy these beautiful waterfront properties and they want to have this beautiful view of the York and the James Rivers but the Chesapeake Bay area is really very vulnerable when it comes to urbanization," DuBois says. As urban environments are composed primarily of impervious surfaces such as concrete, roof and asphalt that don't allow for the infiltration of water into the soil, when rain falls, pollutants such as fertilizer and seemingly negligible amounts of chemicals surrounding a home get picked up and deposited into surrounding water bodies.

"RPAs are said to be the last line of defense in our water quality," DuBois emphasizes. When left in their natural condition, RPAs protect water quality by filtering pollutants and reducing the volume of storm water runoff that enters a lake or stream. "Even though your property may not look out onto the water, there's a good chance that you're living on or near an RPA if you live in Williamsburg or James City County," she adds.

James City County alone straddles two major watersheds, the James and York River, that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. Within the James and York River watersheds are eleven sub-watersheds: Powhatan Creek, Chickahominy River, Yarmouth Creek, College Creek, Diascund Creek, Gordon Creek, Mill Creek, James River, York River, Skiffe's Creek, and Ware Creek. Taken as a whole, there's plenty of water to protect from urban pollution. "We try to help homeowners understand the bigger picture," DuBois says. "We say, 'you know, you have this beautiful home and this beautiful lawn but it may not be suited for this watershed because of your sensitive soils.' We just try to increase the homeowner's awareness of the environment that they live in so that they can make better choices for a lovely landscape that

Unplug TV's, stereos, computers, and appliances when they're not in use. In the average home, 75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. complements the environment."

Examples of environmental horticulture are spread throughout this area. The George Reid Learning Garden and The Shield Learning Garden are two historic heirloom gardens that are housed in Colonial Williamsburg and maintained by DuBois' Master Gardeners. "Both demonstrate heirloom varieties and low maintenance techniques such as trickle irrigation and raised bed gardening," DuBois says.

Melissa's Meadow, located near the William & Mary Law School, is maintained by the Master Gardeners in joint partnership with the Virginia Native Plant Society and is a garden composed solely of native plants. Those interested in incorporating more drought tolerant plants into their landscape can also visit the Water Wise Garden located at the entrance to the James City County Human Service Center. "The Water Wise Garden provides a showcase of colorful, low-maintenance perennials and native plants requiring little watering," DuBois explains.

If you don't have time to participate in the Turf Love program, you can always visit Williamsburg's weekly Farmer's Market and spend time with Williamsburg's Master Gardeners while also supporting local farmers and businesses. "The Master Gardeners are at the Farmers' Market every other weekend," DuBois says. "People can come and bring plant samples or talk to Master Gardeners about really anything regarding their landscape."

Sustainable horticulture means being environmentally conscientious in a manner that is both beautiful and practical. "The educational programs I oversee as an extension agent are really trying to encourage homeowners to first of all, understand the larger issue, the bigger picture here, and to understand what they can do in their own backyard," DuBois explains. "Second, we want them, to know that environmental horticulture can be attractive. It doesn't have to be weedy or shrubby. There are options." NDN

To find out more about your local Virginia Cooperative Extension, please visit: <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/view.cfm?webname=james.city>

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

LEANNE DUBOIS: "I would say that each individual is responsible for making this world and our community a better place. It really sometimes starts in your own backyard: just understanding the bigger picture and understanding the delicate resources that we're fortunate to live around, this community that we all enjoy, and knowing that being environmentally aware benefits us all. Whether it's using a more drought-tolerant grass like Bermuda grass for your yard or installing a driveway or patio that is made of gravel, brick or other porous surfaces that encourage water infiltration, every effort counts. Every little thing that we do really has a multiplier effect on so many different things. So it's just important to understand the bigger picture and to focus on the little things that each of us collectively can do. That's the way we can insight the most change I think."

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Global Warming

MORE THAN TWO CONTEMPORARY WORDS FOR DR. CHRISTINE LLEWELLYN

By Ashley Bateman

Dr. Christine Llewellyn's desire to take an active role in her community began early in life. "I must say that I have to give some credit to my mother who I watched the whole time I was growing up," Llewellyn said. "She was very active in community volunteer work all her life. I saw that as a role model."

Born in Harrisburg, PA and raised outside of Philadelphia in South Jersey, Llewellyn moved to Virginia in 1980, and has lived in the Williamsburg area for about 13 years. She is keenly aware of the effects that climate change has on Virginia with its diverse topography and proximity to water.

Llewellyn's interest in the environment goes back to her days as a student. She received her B.A. in Biology from the University of Delaware and later attained her medical degree from Rutgers Medical School in New Jersey. After graduating, Llewellyn trained as a radiologist at the Medical College of Virginia (MCV).

Greatly interested in nature and the environment from her youth, a particular mo-

ment forever changed Llewellyn's view of the environment and the role humans play in it. While watching cable pay-per-view with a friend on one cold Saturday night in January, 2007, *An Inconvenient Truth* came



up as an option. The documentary presents Al Gore's views on global warming as a worldwide problem.

"We'd been meaning to see it for a while, so sort of as a nothing else to do on a Saturday...we watched it," she recalled.

"And I have to tell you, it changed my life. I saw that movie, a documentary, and I was just in an incredible state of agitation and anxiety for several weeks after seeing it. I thought, how can we have this knowledge and be doing virtually nothing?"

Llewellyn took the next opportunity to address her concerns by attending a Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) town hall meeting in Richmond a month later. Her work as a radiologist at MCV made it convenient to attend and her interest was strong. The meeting left her energized about the global warming issue, but also won-

Dr. Christine Llewellyn



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The Williamsburg Climate Action Network (WCAN) is a grassroots, environmental organization organized in early 2007 to heighten awareness and take action on global warming. Their mission is to compel the community to act in defense of our natural environment by promoting energy efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy.

dering what to do next.

"I just can't stop here. I have to do something," she said to herself.

For Llewellyn, the timing was right. "I guess it was my moment in time so to speak; everything kind of converged together," she said. Her two children were in college and her professional position allowed her the time to focus on her passion for the environment. Llewellyn took the next step soon after the town hall meeting.

"I contacted the powers-that-be and said, 'what do I need to do to start a chapter?'" Llewellyn said. "They said 'just be willing to work your butt off. You got it. You don't have to fill out any forms, you don't have to pay a fee, all you have to do is pay in your own personal blood, and time and sweat and tears and worry and energy.'"

Thus, the Williamsburg Climate Action Network (WCAN) was created. Almost immediately, Llewellyn and the WCAN were completely occupied by planning for the na-

tional 'Step It Up' campaign addressing global warming. They organized the local William & Mary campus held event and were armed with information and literature.

"We gave out over 800 compact fluorescent light bulbs that we had arranged to get donated from Home Depot and Wal-Mart," she explained. The event was held in the Wren courtyard coordinating with about 1,500 similar events across the country. Despite poor weather, the turnout was encouraging. The goal was to send a message to Congress to 'cut carbon emissions by 80% by the year 2050'.

Llewellyn believes that the national media and the American population in general, have been moving towards a change, but she is concerned we are running out of time. She says she cannot go back to her 'convenient' way of life. "I need to start facing myself, the inconvenient part of the truth," she admitted. "Everything is connected. Just thinking about what you do in your day - do

you leave the water on when you're brushing your teeth? You're making your coffee in the morning - is your coffee pot already plugged in? If it is it's sucking vampire power because it probably has one of those clock digital displays on it."

Llewellyn also suggests combining trips when going out in your car so you're taking the most efficient route between destinations. She also advocates driving slowly.

"In 1973 during the original oil embargo, we nationally lowered the speed limit to save gas," Llewellyn recalled. "The airlines have already got that figured out and they're flying their planes slower to save gas."

Compared to other countries, Llewellyn knows how behind we are in conserving our energy. "If we paid what Europeans pay for gas, we would figure out public transportation in six months time," she predicted. "There would be a high-speed train going from Richmond to Virginia Beach and Norfolk."

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Though she sees our current situation as critical, Llewellyn maintains hope for the future. "I think we have the capacity to catch up," she said. "I think we are an amazing country. We need some sort of sustained 'nudge' and I think the fuel prices are it. The higher (the price) goes, the more creative, and adaptive, and sustainable we will start becoming."

The WCAN's outreach in the community has included information tables at Farmer's Markets, William & Mary's Earth Day celebration, and CNU-NASA's Earthfest event. This outpouring of information is vital to environmental success in Llewellyn's opinion. "The facts are very important to get right," she emphasized. "There's a lot of misinformation out there, and selective presentation of the facts."

Currently, the WCAN's most prominent project is the 'Low-Carbon Diet.'

"Individuals can sign on and pledge to lose five thousand pounds of CO2," Llewellyn explained. "It just gives you a nice formula to follow - in your home, in your life, at work. More importantly, it gives you the support of other people going through it at the same time, holding one another accountable to it.

Once people get started, you don't have to encourage them much."

Llewellyn is going full speed ahead with pro-environment plans for the organization. This month alone, the WCAN's agenda included a Water Forum at the Williamsburg Regional Library, attendance at several 'After Hours Lecture Series' at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), participation in a Jamestown High School used book drive to benefit Avalon and the Williamsburg library, and continued focus on the 'Low Carbon Diet' project.

In the months ahead the WCAN has more planned activities, including attendance at the Virginia Energy and Sustainability Conference in September.

There's no doubt about it. One quiet Saturday night watching TV became Llewellyn's powerful catalyst for change. The organization she started is still young and has already accomplished a great deal. What's next? **NDN**

To find out more about Williamsburg Climate Action Network, please visit:

www.williamsburgclimate.org

NDN: What would you share with our community about your environmental concerns - about how we can all take a more active role in our own lives to impact our environment in a positive way?

CHRIS LLEWELLYN: "I would encourage people to just stop, and think about the impact of everything they buy, and everything they do. Their daily lives. I think that we could save so much energy if we were just more careful. If we were paying the true cost of our energy, and our water to that extent too, we would not be nearly so cavalier about wasting it the way we are. So I would say just stop and think about everything you do. Once you make that your personal campaign, you will be amazed at what you can save."

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PARENTS & ADVOCATES FOR SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS (PASHN)

PASHN was formed a little over a year ago by a group of parents and siblings of very special individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Mission of PASHN is to raise the funds needed to create affordable and accessible homes within the Greater Williamsburg community that will house persons with these disabilities. PASHN has identified approximately 150 individuals in the community who are living at home with aging parents. This population is growing at an alarming rate, and will need appropriate housing with a staff of trained caregivers to ensure that their physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs are fulfilled. These current residents of the Greater Williamsburg area deserve the opportunity for supervised independent living, without having to leave the community they call home. For more information, contact Nancy Kowaleski at kowaleski1@cox.net.

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