

June 2011

WILLIAMSBURG'S

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VOL. 5, ISSUE 6

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Recently there has been a trend toward eating healthy foods. More people are paying attention to what they eat. Natural and organic foods have gained in popularity and there seems to be more interest in the ingredients listed on packaging than ever before.

For some people, like those we have interviewed for this issue, eating healthy food is commonplace. In fact, some of them have spent their entire lives growing a variety of wholesome foods that they not only eat themselves, but also provide to others. There is no mystery to the fresh fruits and vegetables that are grown on their nearby farms. Like Jim Hill says: "When you grow it, you know it."

For this issue we have interviewed a handful of locals who make their living from the land - people who grow a variety of crops for a variety of reasons. We think you will enjoy their stories. Just in case you decide you want to visit some of the places you will read about on the following pages, I'm going to help you find them. Some of these farms are not exactly on the beaten path and it would take too much space to include directions to each place. Thus, following is a list of ways to contact the folks we have written about in Home Grown:

- | | |
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Meredith Collins, Publisher

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PATRICK DUFFELER

A Mission of Growing

By Linda Landreth Phelps

The air is warm and laden with the scent of newly mown grass as I drive down the approach to The Williamsburg Winery, a narrow blacktop road winding through acres of trellised grapevines. Workers making their slow circuits of the rows bend to their task of carefully trimming each plant to ensure optimum growth. Soon those tender green leaves will form a canopy to shelter the pendant fruit from the summer's harsh sun. Each droplet of rain that falls, every hour of sunlight or cloud, a random cold night or July hailstorm - all will affect the harvest, and, in turn, be reflected in the vintage. As with any crop, wine grapes depend upon the whims of nature. Bacteria, beetles, mildew, and moles are all commonplace killers. Every new season is a roll of the dice. Will the grapes grow?

"Our mission on this earth," Patrick Duffeler, founder of The Williamsburg Winery, says

in his slight, lingering Germanic accent, "is to grow - ourselves, our education, our work, and our families. I was 18 when my classmates and I from Hilton Central High School in upstate New York visited Colonial Williamsburg, and I'll soon be attending our 50th reunion."

I do a quick mental calculation, but Patrick's slim, athletic build and lively manner belie the resulting number.

"I came away from Williamsburg with the belief that life without ideals is hollow, and it influenced the man I became," he says.

As a Williamsburg resident for many years, Patrick is still beguiled by his adopted town's historic beginnings.

"As I walk the little back streets in early morning, I can imagine the excitement of the men who gathered at Raleigh Tavern and can almost hear the echoes of the revolutionary thinking that formed our nation. It is my

most fervent hope that our government today would not forget the wisdom of those founding fathers. I still think of Williamsburg as the soul of the United States."

Patrick has the passion of a convert when it comes to America. He was born of a Germanic family in Brussels, Belgium "on the other side of the pond", as he says.

"By the time I was 15, I had traveled everywhere from Norway down to Portugal, Italy, and Spain. My grandfather came to the New World in 1901. When I was offered a scholarship to a good high school, I joined him there. Later I graduated from The University of Rochester and became an American citizen."

Upon graduation, he began a career working for Eastman Kodak, the corporation that dominates Rochester as an employer. They provided him with the opportunity to work towards a doctorate degree in economics. After

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5 years, Patrick was lured away by an executive who had left Eastman for another powerhouse company, Philip Morris. Patrick's fluency in several languages was a distinct advantage in his marketing position with a newly established Swiss branch of the company. For Patrick and his young bride, Peggy, their arrival in Lausanne, Switzerland in March of 1970 marked the start of a great adventure.

For a young man who loved travel and fast cars, his new position was a dream come true - it put Patrick in charge of the Marlboro Racing Team. Grand Prix racing events took him to exotic and glamorous locations - the circuit then included dozens of races in such places as Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Holland, and South Africa, with the American and Canadian Grand Prix races finishing the season. Every two weeks, he was in a different country. During this hectic yet exciting period, the family grew with the birth of their two sons, Patrick II and Terence.

Patrick made the difficult decision to leave Philip Morris and accepted a new position with an investment company out of Geneva, Switzerland, which had a controlling interest in a wine business. His interest in the fine art of winemaking was kindled, and he became more and more fascinated as he learned its intricacies.

Patrick learned about viticulture and the call of the soil began. He wanted nothing more than the chance to grow grapes and make fine wines himself.

Since Patrick's first visit to Williamsburg in 1961, he had returned many times with his parents, friends, and race car drivers, so he was naturally drawn back to this area. After considering 52 farms, Patrick and Peggy finally settled on, as Patrick says with a chuckle, "the one we couldn't afford."

The first time they saw the land was in January of 1982, when it lay under a heavy blanket of snow. In 1983, it became theirs, and they christened the farm *Wessex Hundred*. "Hundred" does not refer to the number of acres; it is the colonial designation for a plot of land large enough to sustain 100 families.

"We dedicated 37 acres to conservation from the beginning, and began planting loblolly pines, cypress, and oaks. Peggy and the boys moved here while I continued my corporate career in Europe for another four years. I was the grumpy traveling husband who seldom saw his wife and children, but it was necessary to start the operation."

Peggy started planting rootstock in 1985, and they did their first crush of grapes in 1987, at which time Patrick swapped his international corporate commuting for a different way of living.

"I exchanged my job as a reasonably well-paid executive for a job that required an unreasonable amount of work and no pay," he says jokingly. "But happiness does not depend upon either."

Like the sudden gush of champagne at the pop of a cork, success came in a heady rush for The Williamsburg Winery; a Gold Medal award came just two weeks after the release of their first bottle of Governor's White. From that initial small vintage, The Williamsburg Winery has grown to be one of the two largest wineries in Virginia, and *Decanter World Wine Awards* officially categorize some of their products as "The Best Wines in the World". His two sons have joined him in business, and all major policy decisions must be approved unanimously. There have been struggles and setbacks along the way, but that is to be expected as any company changes and grows.

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In 2004, Patrick lost his beloved wife of 37 years to cancer. Sadness still shadows his eyes as he speaks of that difficult year. A few months later, Patrick received an email from an old friend in Europe whom he had not seen in many years, saying that she was coming to the States and would love to visit him and his wife. Patrick replied with his painful news of Peggy's death and a correspondence began. Four years later, Patrick and Francoise wed, and Patrick resumed his lifelong husbandly practice of serving his wife breakfast in bed.

Francoise Duffeler's influence on *Wessex Hundred* is evident. It is already the site of a successful casual restaurant, Gabriel Archer's Tavern. Francoise's extensive background in the hospitality industry led to the addition of Wedmore Place, a grand, European-style inn, to the winery's original Old World-type buildings.

Grapes are not the only things that grow on *Wessex Hundred's* land. Fortunate diners at both the tavern and Wedmore Place benefit from another of Patrick's interests. A large garden is devoted to the growing of organic herbs and produce destined for the tables of his family and guests. Over the last 25 years, Patrick has acquired additional land and planted more than 50,000 trees on what is now 75 acres of woods. Some of the oldest loblollies now top 40 feet. For Patrick, personally maintaining his conservation area is a labor of love.

"It's a very emotional point of pride for me, to have my own Black Forest. The woods have been repopulated with owls, and I have been busy almost every Sunday morning during winter, clearing the trash dumped there from 50 years back, selecting the healthiest trees to save and cutting back or eliminating the diseased ones. There are also certain predatory vines that can take down a healthy tree, so they must be kept in check."

This forest and its 2-mile long nature trail along the James River act as a buffer to help protect the Chesapeake Bay, a commitment that Patrick has made a priority. An avowed environmentalist, one of Patrick's favorite quotes originates with Black Elk, a Native American chief who said, "The earth does not belong to us - we belong to it." A Kenyan proverb entreats us: "Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was lent to you by your children." Patrick intends to leave the earth the better for his passing through. His son, Patrick II, recently named President of The Williamsburg Winery, plans to continue those policies established to protect the earth while harvesting its bounty.

"Here at the Williamsburg Winery, we are in the business of growing things," he says. "We are growing grapes, we are growing our family and business, and I..." Patrick pauses, then finishes his thought with a small, self-deprecating smile, "...am growing old."

As our chat ends, I'm escorted to the door by both Patrick and Patrick II with the gravest of courtesy. I've enjoyed our time together and offer my hand for a last parting gesture. Instead of the expected businesslike handshake, I experience a personal first: Patrick takes my hand and, with a continental bow and near heel-click, brings it to the vicinity of his lips. This surprised Virginia girl is unsure whether to curtsy, bow in return, or just remain upright. I settle for the latter - with the addition of a tiny, inadvertent giggle unseemly in a woman of my vintage and a blush that would surely rival a glass of Patrick Duffeler's best Two Shilling Red. NDN

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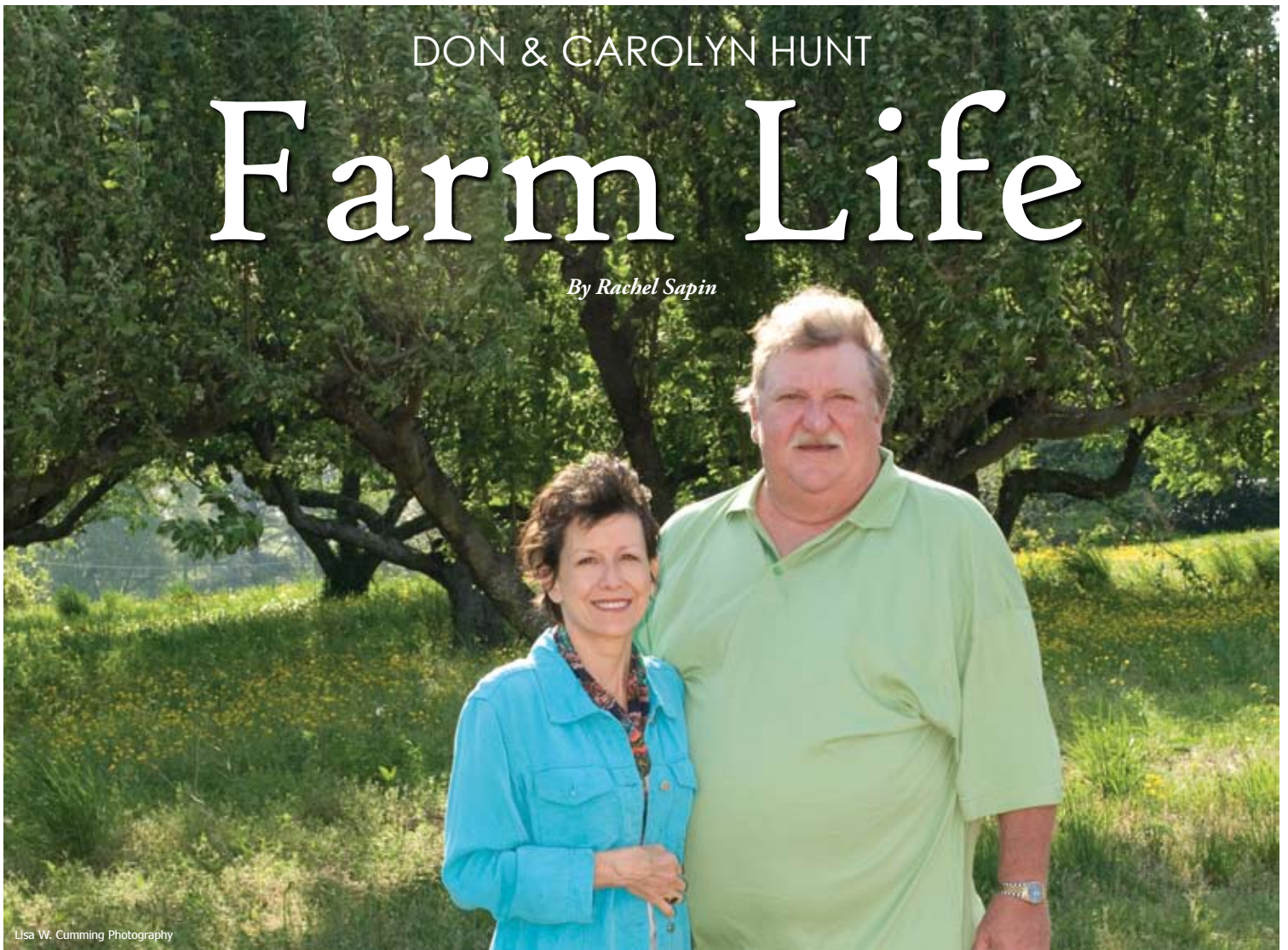
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DON & CAROLYN HUNT

Farm Life

By Rachel Sapin



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The late songwriter and musician, John Denver, wrote that “life on the farm is kinda laid back” in his well-known hit, “Thank God I’m a Country Boy”. For city and even suburb dwellers, the idea of living on a farm can seem quite romantic: working with one’s hands, living off of the land, seeing the tangible fruits of a day’s labor in a beautiful and natural setting.

Don Hunt, now-retired owner of Hill Pleasant Farm on Richmond Road, has spent his

whole life farming. He knows firsthand that the simple life of making a living from the land has its charm, but it has plenty of challenges as well. As a fourth-generation farmer in a family with over 100 years of agrarian history, Don will also attest to the fact that farming is extremely hard work.

The Hunts have been farming since the early 1900s when Don’s great grandfather, Wilbur Hunt, bought the land in 1911. Wilbur, who

was also in the lumber business, owned a team of draft horses and a sawmill. Don’s grandfather, Harold John Hunt, wanted to take over the farm when he was still a young man. Wilbur gave his son the following advice: “If you want to take over the farm, go to Virginia Tech, and learn about animal husbandry and agriculture.”

That’s exactly what Harold did. He completed a two-year program at Virginia Tech and

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eventually bought the farm from Wilbur in the midst of the Great Depression. Don's great-grandfather had fallen into financial difficulty with his lumber business at the time and was relieved to hand the burden of the farm loan over to his son. Harold, however, didn't let the melancholy of the times get in the way of the dreams he had for the property. With a farming education under his belt, he diversified his father's crops with alfalfa, corn, and soybeans and also added dairy products to the list of goods Hill Pleasant Farm produced.

Improving the productivity of the farm required intensive commitment and hard work on Harold's part; being a farmer in the '30s still required some grueling manual labor. The first tractor Don's grandfather ever purchased was a gasoline Farmall, an F-20. At first glance, the design of the F-20 certainly seems to privilege the machine over the man: It has a narrow seat for the driver that provides no protection against the possibility of falling off and getting caught in the tractor's enormous steel

rear wheels.

Don also remembers his grandfather and a neighbor sharing a threshing machine to filter grains. "At that time, they weren't called combines because they didn't move - they were sta-

"I was at work when I stepped out the door, and that appealed to me."

- Don Hunt

tionary," Don says. "First you had to bring the grain to them, thrash it through the machine, and then have one man that was pulling the straw away and another man bagging up the grain. They spent a whole lot more time working. It was hard work."

It was also dangerous work. Don recalls a mantra of safety lessons being drilled into his

head from a young age, sometimes through macabre cautionary tales of farmers getting mangled limbs from not paying attention to the equipment they were working on.

From Wilbur onward, the men have always had a strong woman by their side to share life on the farm. Don's grandfather, Harold, married Gertrude Binns from Charles City County. The newlyweds had a son, Harold John Hunt, Jr., (Don's father) and his aunt, Mary, during the Depression. Harold and Gertrude may have made such a good match due in part to their adventurous personalities. Don tells the story of Gertrude having to row a boat across the Chickahominy

River every day to Toano High School to attend class.

"In the wintertime, when the river froze, I think she would board somewhere with friends," Don says, describing the days when the weather was so bad his grandmother could not make it back home.

Don's father, Harold John Hunt, Jr., who ev-

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everyone referred to as “Jack,” also grew up on the farm and followed in Harold Sr.’s footsteps. He attended Virginia Tech in 1940 and studied agriculture. Jack later married Muriel Rusted. Jack and Muriel raised Don and his sister, Marcia, on the farm as well.

“By the time I came along, we no longer had a dairy farm,” Don explains. “Dad had beef cattle. We had Black Angus, and, of course, they required a lot of attention.” By this time, the farm had an apple orchard as well, which it is well-known for today. The family found that selling apples proved a reliable source of income in hard times.

“The apples were the way we started in the retail business,” Don explains. “It was a crop that gave my mother and my grandmother some spending money. They [the apples] occupied a lot of time, but they were a hedge against having crops fail. Apples can take dry spells and, in fact, dry years.”

Don remembers his parents and grandparents picking, sorting, and cleaning the apples in the field and later loading bushels of them into station wagons to sell in area neighborhoods.

“My dad, my mother, my grandmother, my

granddad - we all worked,” Don emphasizes.

In addition to apple picking, Don took on a variety of responsibilities for the farm at a young age, including checking the electric fencing around the property for grounded wires that could shock the animals. Young boys were expected to do their share. It was not uncommon for him, as an 8-year-old, to drive the tractor down Richmond Road to help with work on another piece of land.

Farm life could often be lonely as well, and it taught Don to be independent early on. “I didn’t spend a lot of time with playmates,” he reflects. “My grandmother played catch with me; she taught me how to hit a baseball, and Dad put a basketball hoop up on the side of the wood shed.” The family also used their acres of space to install a pool for leisure, and Don used the land to improve his golf swing. “I was pretty young when I took up golf because it was a game where I had plenty of space to go out and hit golf balls, and I could play that by myself,” he says.

Following in the footsteps of generations of Hunts before him, Don attended Virginia Tech and received a degree in horticulture. He also

met his wife, Carolyn, at Virginia Tech, who earned a degree in biology. Don pursued farming for many reasons – not simply because farming was part of his family history; he genuinely enjoyed the lifestyle.

“I was at work when I stepped out the door, and that appealed to me,” he says. Farm life appealed to Carolyn as well. She grew up near orchards, gardens, and cow pastures. “I am not a sit-in-the-office kind of person,” she explains. “I love the sunshine and being outside, and I love people - we certainly had people coming here.” Luckily for Carolyn, Don didn’t like pigs. “I told him, ‘I won’t marry you if you have pigs,’” she says with a laugh.

People in the surrounding area began to flock to Hill Pleasant Farm to buy goods and learn more about farming as Don and Carolyn continued to diversify the farm’s crops. During the spring season they started a greenhouse business and later added cider and honey to their offerings. This was something Don took away from his college education.

“I could see the advantage of diversification,” he says. “When you had everything tied up in one crop, if one crop went bad, you were in

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trouble.”

Don also realized that the farm needed to branch out beyond the family in order to survive modern times. “The family relied on themselves,” he remembers. “The last thing in the world you wanted to do was pay somebody to work for you. One thing college taught me was you can’t do it by yourself. You need to pay attention to what other people are doing.”

Don and Carolyn soon solidified Hill Pleasant Farm as a go-to in the area for delicious homegrown fruits and vegetables, and they genuinely loved the visits from people in the community and beyond.

“We had so many regular customers,” Don remarks, “and I used to get accused of glad-handing with the customers because all of the people were interested in what we were doing. They’d ask, ‘How are things going? How are the crops?’ I wouldn’t brush them off with a glib answer.”

Area schools also took advantage of the opportunity to see a real farm. Carolyn warmly remembers giving tours for many years to children of preschool age through high school. “We’d have a cow, or a cow and a calf,” Don

chimes in, “and kids would just be happy to see that. Most of them had never seen a cow.”

Although Don and Carolyn’s two daughters, Adrienne and Alisha, have decided to pursue careers beyond the farm, Don is grateful to have served as the fourth generation in a long line of farmers. “It was a good living,” he emphasizes. “We weren’t in debt; we were blessed. That’s the difference between my generation and my parent’s generation. They grew up with these debts hanging over their heads, where if you had a bad year, you could lose the farm, your house. I never faced that. I saw disappointments, and certainly heartaches from hail storms and hurricanes, but nothing we couldn’t handle.”

Don and Carolyn have a strong appreciation for the life they live at Hill Pleasant Farm. While they have retired from producing crops themselves, they still enjoy the quiet rural setting and the lifestyle that has been a part of their family for generations. NDN

*When the sun’s comin’ up I got cakes on the griddle,
Life ain’t nothing but a funny, funny riddle,
Thank God I’m a country boy!*

-John Denver

Next Door Neighbors

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If You Grow It, You Know It

By Lillian Stevens

Hidden Brook Farm is located just off of Barnes Road in Toano, only a stone's throw from the hustle and bustle of I-64. Sitting on an oversized picnic bench under a massive maple tree, I chatted with Jim Hill, the owner of Hidden Brook Farm, to learn about his life on the farm. With chickens clucking just beyond the yard and an early spring breeze settling in, we began our visit.

"Hidden Brook Farm was so named when we moved here. There's a stream on the other side of Skillman Drive, which is under that field somewhere," he says waving off to a distant pasture. "But although there's water on the other side of the road, there's none on this side, so we kept the name."

Jim and his wife, Wanda, have lived on the

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farm since the early '80s.

"Wanda's from Newport News, but I guess you could call me a 'come here' because I was raised on a tobacco farm near Winston Salem, North Carolina," Jim says with a laugh. "When I moved up here, I was working for a contractor for Virginia Power, and then I got into trucking. I drove a truck for 25 years I guess. But anyway, I'd always wanted a greenhouse and so when I retired I built one – and started growing vegetables."

Situated on a little over 10 acres, the farm requires a lot of planning and a lot of work to produce the variety of crops they grow. Over the years, offerings have expanded to include "U-pick" berries, fresh eggs, and even honey.

"What we grow mostly is our U-pick strawberries," Jim says. "We have 20,000 strawberry plants, which are blooming now, and they will bloom through mid to the fourth week of May. We also have U-pick blackberries and raspberries. The vegetables we grow we sell at the Toano Farmers Market."

Jim and Wanda also grow corn, beans, tomatoes, broccoli, watermelon, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, winter squash, and some ornamental pumpkins.

"If it wasn't for my son, Bobby, and his best friend Matt (who is like a son), I couldn't have kept up with it all these years. They have helped me so much," Jim says. "Bobby is going to help through the strawberry season, and Matt will help me with the strawberries and vegetables. We've also hired hourly help because we can't pick it all ourselves. We plant 500 tomatoes at a time so we'll wholesale some. That's a lot of tomatoes."

They also raise bees. A closer look beyond the chicken coops reveals nine hives.

"We need bees to pollinate our crops, especially cucumbers, watermelon, squash and so forth. I just went through the hives last Sunday evening. They're looking pretty good. So maybe I'll make some honey. Honey is a very popular item, and it's often used for treating certain allergies," Jim says. "Plus, it tastes so good."

In the winter, the bees remain in the hives, going into a cluster to stay warm. They eventually "break cluster" and emerge from their hives when the spring temperatures rise above 50 degrees.

"But during the winter they have to have food so you have to leave them some honey. They don't bother you unless you go out there and try to steal their honey. They are very easy to live with except they do get upset when you go into their hives to take their honey," Jim says with a laugh.

In addition to the vegetables, fruits, and honey, the Hills also raise free-range chickens and sell the eggs.

"The chickens consume nothing but grain – no antibiotics or animal byproducts. Free range means that the chickens can run out and scratch and eat bugs and such. The yolk of their eggs will be darker orange than the ones you buy in the store. It will be a dark, deep orange, and it's fresh. A fresh egg you can break in a pan and the whites won't run."

Jim keeps a keen eye on his chickens, ever watchful for the occasional skunk which will kill a chicken.

"The roosters start crowing about three o'clock in the morning. Weather permitting, I raise my window so that I can hear them; I love to hear them. I get up around 5 a.m. and go out to check on my chickens and make sure there haven't been any predators."

Then, satisfied that the chickens are okay, Jim turns his attention to the greenhouse and the plants he has grown from seeds.

"We start all of our plants in the greenhouse from seeds. That way we know exactly what we're getting."

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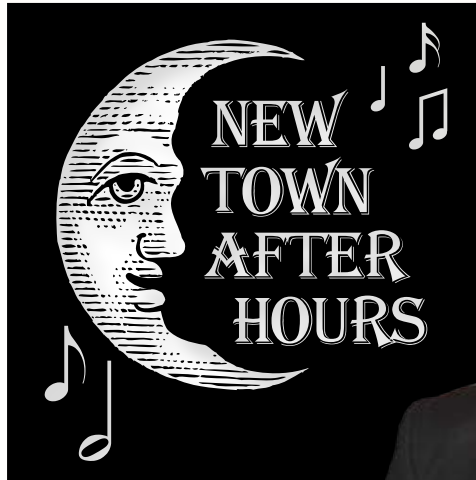
Brings the Community Together with Live Music in New Town

About eight years ago, Inclusion founder and local business owner, Steve Rose, was looking for a fun way to raise money for his charity and involve the whole community. The New Town After Hours concert series was born as a result. It provided great live music to the area on a regular basis and a gathering place for friends and families to enjoy a night out; the concerts were a big hit. As New Town and the popularity of the concerts grew, Inclusion and its' board made the tough decision to move to the newly renovated Lake Matoaka Amphitheater.

After several years in that beautiful location, attendance was still not strong enough to justify all the hard work it takes to put the concerts on. This year, in partnership with James City County and New Town Associates, we have decided to return to New Town. With their help promoting the Concert Series as a true community event and the convenience of the New Town location, we

are very excited about this year's series.

As always it takes a lot of support from local businesses and so far the response from the New Town merchants has been great. The 10-week concert series will be held every Thursday beginning June 23rd at Sullivan Square, 4301 New Town Avenue, behind Legacy Hall.



www.newtownafterhours.org

The concerts will have food and drink vendors, as well as kid activities. Ticket prices for adults are \$7 and now children 16 and under get in free. All of the proceeds go to Inclusion. Please look at our web site www.inclusion-i3.org to learn more about us and how we give back to the children in the community.

Our new website www.newtownafterhours.org is under construction. Please keep checking as we update it. We look forward to your support again this summer!



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Live Music 6-9:30 pm

- | | |
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| June 30 | The English Channel |
| July 7 | Snackbar Jones |
| July 14 | Butter |
| July 21 | Cheap Thrills |
| July 28 | No Reverse opening for Rich Whiskey |
| August 4 | The Deloreans |
| August 11 | Julius Pittman & The Revival |
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First, he rolls up the sides of the greenhouse to let the fresh air in, and then he tends to his plants – starting new seeds or transplanting plants to individual pots.

“It’s really just one big cycle. You need to start seeds in February – or at least a lot of them. When they get big enough, you plant them out in the fields, and then you wait until they are ready to start harvesting. Then in March, you plant your potatoes and onions and beets and radishes and any cold crop you can plant. By April, your first plants are big enough to plant, so we’re going to plant some tomatoes, peppers, eggplants this weekend, weather permitting. And then you plant your corn. So the rest of this month and next month are very busy. May is strawberry month, and then the blackberries are ripe in July with the raspberries coming in toward fall.”

Jim says that while broccoli can be planted in the spring, he usually waits and plants that for a fall crop because it just does better. Tomatoes, however, are planted more often.

“We try to plant tomatoes every month so we’ll have tomatoes right up until frost. Almost anything can be planted in March and April because the average last frost is April 15 in this area, with the average first frost around October 15. That doesn’t mean it’s always true, but on average,” he says.

Jim will plant his strawberries toward the end of September or the first of October for the following spring. Then comes winter.

“Most of the time in the winter there is something to do – either tending to the beehives or painting and maintenance on equipment,” Jim says.

Farmers are, of course, often at the mercy of the weather.

“There are so many things you just can’t control. Sometimes your seed won’t come up like you think it will. Some things just don’t do right, and then things can change so quickly. You’ve got something really good, and then a storm comes and blows things around and tears them up. Last summer it just got so hot – and the heat can be worse than a drought. Our peppers and tomatoes cooked right on the vine. Water didn’t help.”

Then there are other challenges, ranging from the economy to pests which threaten the crops.

“Deer eat the crops,” Jim says. “We’ve got electric fence around everything we’ve got, and it deters them but doesn’t keep them all out. And skunks will eat your bees too.”

The recent spike in fuel prices doesn’t help either, affecting nearly every aspect of farming.

Still, although the lives and times of farmers can sometimes be difficult, Jim thoroughly enjoys farming. From the friendly people he’s met to sitting down at his table at the end of a long day, knowing that the food in front of him is a direct result of his labors.

“If you grow it, you know it,” Jim says. “I don’t have to wonder what was sprayed on my tomatoes. That’s one of the things that I always enjoyed about growing my own vegetables. Our strawberries - we never had to spray them. Some ‘mega-farms’ spray just as a matter of routine - whether there are pests or not. But if I don’t have a problem I sure don’t spray. The worst bug pest is the worms in the corn.”

For Jim, the very best part of running a farm is talking to people and meeting new people – whether at home or at the Toano Farmers Market.

“I really do enjoy this life. You don’t do everything for money, you know. I really have met so many nice people. We should be open every day,” Jim says with a grin. NDN

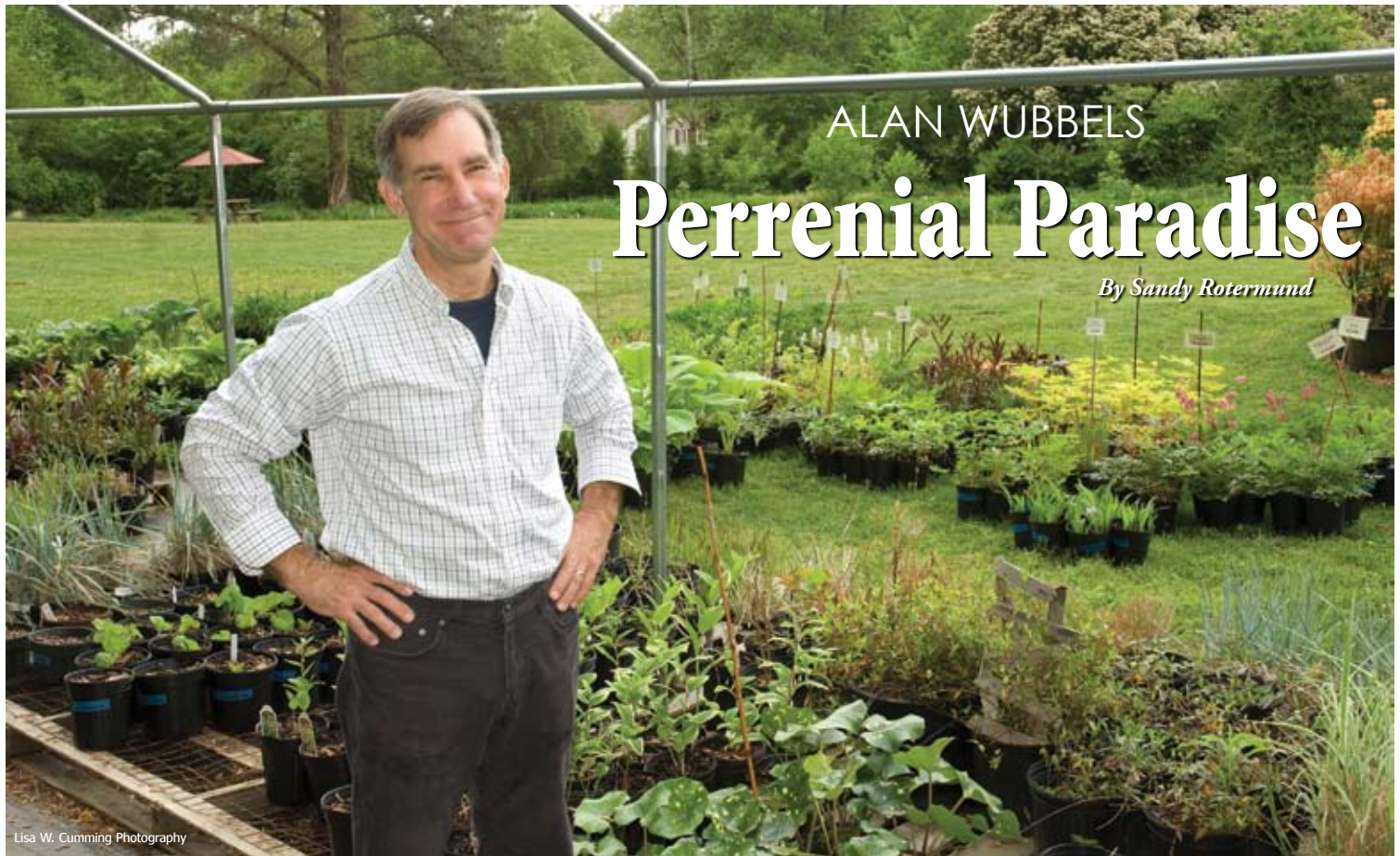
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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

ALAN WUBBELS

Perennial Paradise

By Sandy Rotermund

Apple Crisp. Apricot Swirls. Buttered Popcorn. Crème Custard. Sounding like a dessert menu, these luscious delectables are actually some of the 300 hosta plant varieties grown in Alan and Wendy Wubbels' 5-acre perennial garden, Forest Lane Botanicals. A shaded, mulched path meanders up a hefty grade around flower beds edged in Pennsylvania Blue Stone. Climbing out of the shade, the path opens into a sunbathed field of Candy Hearts, Bold Ruffles, Eskimo Pie and Always Lovely – relatives of over 500 types of daylilies all perched from the soil or raised beds. The yin and yang of this perennial paradise not only reflects native southern gardens, but also the evolution of this couple's homegrown passion.

Beginning their eighth year of business, Alan and Wendy never planned to build a garden wonderland when they bought their 7-acre property in 1982. With two toddlers in tow and two more soon to come, Alan and Wendy's undeveloped wilderness was a natural playground. It wasn't until their kids were in high school that the garden idea beckoned them.

"I realized the peacefulness of it all, of a garden," Wendy says. She remembered visiting a hosta garden and thinking how much she would love to have one of her own. "I started collecting them [hostas], labeling them, planting and dividing them, and then spreading them around." Alan began doing the same thing with daylilies. The next thing they knew

they had too many plants, and the idea of selling them seemed like a natural next step.

A naturalist at heart, Alan loved the dirt from early on. "I always loved doing this. I would plant stuff in my parents' yard, which is kind of strange for a kid to do at 8 years old." Landscape and nursery jobs fortified his high school and college years. It is no surprise that he majored in botany in college and holds a graduate degree in environmental science from Penn State. His career path after college, however, took a turn away from the earth and into the world of retail. Alan's dad, a former dairy farmer, owned a children's shoe sales business and needed a manager for his new store in Virginia. Twenty-five years later, Alan's passion for

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planting sprouted once again.

"I think, looking back, that you reaffirm all the things that you loved, that nobody made you do before this," Alan says. "The happiest memories I have of my college time were walking through the state game lands just doing plant identifications." He glances at a bouquet of dusted burgundy Lenten Roses Wendy just picked from their garden.

Raised by newspaper editors who preferred climbing ivy and ground cover to gardenscapes, Wendy was first introduced to plants when she began dating Alan. Identification paperwork in one hand and Wendy's hand in his other, Alan would take Wendy hunting for wildflowers. Counting leaves and examining plant anatomy was a new experience for Wendy - especially on a date.

Thirty-seven years later, their nature walks together take place right outside their passive solar home with its two-story, south-facing solarium. Sunlight divides the distinct halves of their property. Mature hostas native to this climate fill softly curved beds that envelope tall shade trees and an occasional stone sculpture. Mondo grass carpets contrast with the rich chocolate brown leaf compost beneath the plants. Pink Bleeding Hearts cascade over Virginia Bluebells splaying color amongst the

greenery.

It is the natural setting they have created that truly sets them apart from the typical garden center. Everything is grown in the gardens.

"We try to show people how to pick the right plant for the right spot," Alan says. Whether it's shade or sun plants, customers can see what a full-grown plant looks like in the environment it is growing in. "Like we say on our website, if it works for us, it will work for you."

Mother Nature's heavier hand redesigned the gardenscape during Hurricane Isabelle. "It took down 60 really big trees," Alan remembered. It was a project they hadn't planned for. Cutting, hauling, and stacking logs, Alan's labor of love grew heavy on the labor. Still today, he regularly hauls and carts loads of mulch, dirt and gravel when he's not raking and flipping leaves for his compost. Alan's twinkling eyes defy any tone of complaint. "It's cheaper than a gym membership!"

Despite the 10-to-12-month season for their perennial gardening chores, both Alan and Wendy have other full-time jobs. He markets for Val-Pak, and she is a paper-cutting artist with a packed show and wholesale account schedule. As busy as they are, both insist that no one forces them to do this.

"It is something that, when you wake up in

the morning, you're excited to get out of bed and go do!" Alan says. It's a passion they both share - or a hobby that pays for itself, according to Wendy - and it feeds every element of their lives.

"We really have made so many friends who have a common interest in plants. We talk about people's lives and their kids or whatever."

In addition to extended friendship circles and providing a creative outlet, their gardens have become a haven for renewal.

"Everything that you do out here impacts something else," Wendy says. "You build a pond, and the birds come and then the frogs come. It's really amazing to sit out here and watch what you have done have an impact on something else."

Alan and Wendy reflect on the cycle of life as perennial gardeners. "It has a rhythm to it," Alan says. "It is not random." Alan is quick to add that he could do this forever. "I love doing it." He and Wendy share a smile. "Why would you want to stop?"

Their growing list of perennial offerings attests to just that: Sum of All. Tranquility. Happy Returns. And, once again, Always Lovely. NDN

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RANDY & MICHELLE GULDEN

Sharing KelRae Farm

By Rosemary Van Houten

Farming as a way of life in the Williamsburg area has declined over the years just as it has in many other places, but for the Gulden family it continues to be their present and future liveli-

hood. Randy Gulden's great Uncle Buck Hazelwood owned an 88-acre farm in Toano, and when he passed away, the farming tradition was passed on to Randy and his wife, Michelle.

As a young child, Randy had worked by his uncle's side on the farm and learned how to grow healthy vegetables and what was required to farm the land. When the farm changed

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hands, Randy was prepared to continue the family tradition.

"It's still the same old farm Buck had," Michelle says. "It's just grown and gotten better with age."

Randy and Michelle named the farm KelRae Farm after their first two daughters, Kelsey and Rachel. Now in addition to a multitude of vegetables, they also have four daughters who participate in some of the work and fun of farm life.

Rachel, age 15, enjoys riding horses when she is not washing and packing the produce they grow and sell. Kelsey, a year younger, also washes and packs produce. Gracie, age 6, is too young to help her older sisters, but she loves the Williamsburg Farmers Market and goes there with her

"They are such great therapy. Everyone loves sunflowers."

- Michelle Gulden

parents as often as she can. Two-year-old Jessie is the youngest of the four girls. "She thinks she already runs the house," Michelle says with a chuckle.

Randy and Michelle's parents are also very involved in KelRae Farm. "My mom is like a second mom for our kids," Michelle says. "She helps with everything, and my dad helps Randy in the fields as well as in the greenhouse."

Randy's parents also pitch in on the farm. Michelle values the family help in running the farm and boasts of her mother-in-law's contributions. "She's the best onion peeler in all of Toano," brags Michelle. "I don't know what we'd do without the support of our family."

While the Guldens are all about family and preserving tradition, they are also very much involved in sharing the agricultural world with the community around them. One of the ways they do this is with the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. The CSA program was started in the mid 80s to foster the concept of connecting local farmers with local consumers. Michelle learned about CSA and thought it was a feasible concept for the Williamsburg area.

She decided to start "A Share for a Season" program. This involves her family buying seeds, planting, weeding, watering, and caring for vegetables, after which "shareholders" in the program would be able to pick up a weekly half-bushel of a variety of vegetables the Guldens had picked, washed and packed the night before.

Shareholders receive two half-bushel baskets that display their name. As they pick up one basket filled with produce, they leave an empty one behind for next week's pick-up. Each shareholder decorates their own basket so they can identify them. The produce will typically reflect what is in season at the time, but the offerings do change.

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“We are always expanding our produce with new varieties of vegetables and even melons,” Michelle says.

The first season they offered this program, the Guldens had 25 pleased shareholders. As KelRae Farm begins its sixth season offering CSA, the success of the program continues by serving more families with fresh, local produce. Randy and Michelle enjoy being able to meet the needs of their community.

As the program continues to grow, so do the needs for their farming operation. The Guldens have not only diversified crops, but they have also increased irrigation capabilities and have included a beekeeper as a part of CSA. Shareholders can now purchase fresh, locally produced honey along with a variety of vegetables. In addition, the family is excited about their new chicken coop, home to over 40 new baby chicks that arrived in mid-April. Fresh eggs will soon be available too.

While CSA has been successful for the Guldens and the CSA shareholders, Randy and Michelle share their bounty in many other ways. For 8 years they have been selling produce at the Williamsburg Farmer’s Market on Saturday mornings. They also work with several local restaurants and local schools to provide fresh locally grown produce. Another project Randy and Michelle have developed is a market providing fresh vegetables to the residents of Williamsburg Landing. Randy and Michelle have also partnered with members of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists in which church members who participate in the CSA program also share their produce with the needs of the Grove Christian Outreach program.

“They are really a great group,” Michelle says about Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist. “The work that Grove Christian Outreach does for the community is also remarkable.”

Their community involvement helps the Guldens hear from the local consumers so they can better meet their needs. It also gives the consumer an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the produce they are purchasing.

And as if all of this wouldn’t make one take a deep breath and just feel good, there is another element to the KelRae Farm that not only

makes Michelle smile, but also most everyone who sees them – fields of radiant sunflowers in an array of yellows and showcasing different varieties. Originally the sunflowers were planted for the family’s own pleasure, especially since it is Michelle’s favorite flower; but once they realized how much others liked them, they began to focus more on growing them. From June until frost, sunflowers large and small can be seen in the fields of KelRae Farm.

“They are such great therapy,” says Michelle. “Everyone loves sunflowers.” NDN



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Valuation - The Basis of Estate Administration

Often, our clients are motivated to address their own estate planning by the death of a spouse, parent, or other close family member. In such case, we will likely be handling the administration of the deceased, while assisting the heirs with their planning. Overlap frequently occurs in the area of valuation of property passed from the deceased. This area has recently become confusing, so a brief overview may be helpful.

Valuation is obviously important when the value of an estate is subject to estate tax. However, with a current exemption amount of \$5 million, the estate tax is much less of a concern for most families.

Even in the absence of an estate tax, however, proper valuation is of great importance. Traditionally, heirs of property receive their inheritance with a basis equal to the fair market value at the date of the decedent’s death. “Basis” is the term used to describe the amount subtracted from the amount received for property sold in determining the taxable gain upon sale. Although calculations of basis can be complex, in most instances individuals can conveniently think of basis as the amount paid for property, except in the above-noted instance of inherited property.

In 2010, this was replaced with a “carryover” basis rule, i.e., inherited property retained the basis it had when owned by the decedent. For example, if a parcel of waterfront property purchased long ago for \$5,000 now is worth \$1,000,000, a child inheriting the property could sell it immediately with no tax under the traditional rule. With carryover, he would have gain of \$995,000.00, subject to capital gains tax in the year of

sale.

At the end of 2010, Congress put the basis issue to rest by reinstating value-at-death basis for almost all taxpayers.

The ability to “step-up” basis to a date of death value is a wonderful tax-saving opportunity; thus it is also a risk to those administering an estate, who must see that this opportunity is not wasted. In order to assure this benefit, one must document the fair market values at the time of death. Otherwise, it may be impossible to later show what the true value was.

Many assets will present little problem with respect to valuation. Cash, for example, is simply its face value. Publicly traded stocks and other financial assets are typically easy to value at death - simply check in the financial section of that day’s newspaper.

Other assets present greater difficulty. Real property will frequently require a qualified appraisal to convince the IRS of the fair market value, as local assessed values for property tax purposes may be unreliable. Interests in closely held businesses are perhaps the most challenging assets of all to value, given the lack of a ready market and the unique factors present in each situation.

In sum, it is of great importance that the estate administration attorney be a team player, able to work with the other professionals necessary to insure that the property values determined, whether for estate tax or basis purposes, will survive scrutiny by the IRS.

For more information about this important aspect of estate administration, please visit our website at www.ferrisandassociates.com, or schedule a conference with one of our firm’s attorneys.



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

HEIDI MARTIN

A Healthy Life

By Alison Johnson

In many ways, Heidi Martin owes her business to a 7-year-old boy.

That child (her now 21-year-old son, Jacob) looked at all the extra zucchini and squash he had nurtured in his family's garden – planted as part of his homeschooling science cur-

riculum – and asked if he could sell it at his mother's gift shop in upstate New York. Customers at the store, known for its handmade Amish quilts, rocking chairs and baked goods, couldn't resist Jacob's vegetables.

"People just loved his stand," Heidi says.

"Looking back, that's really how it all started."

Flash forward 14 years and Heidi, now 48, is owner of Heidi's Homegrown & Organics, a cooperative of local farmers based out of her home in James City County. With support from Jacob and her daughters Jillian and

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Only surveys that are 100% complete will be entered into the

drawing. You may choose to skip questions that are labeled "optional". **The deadline for both online and mailed surveys is Monday, June 20th.**

Any information you provide for this survey will be kept confidential. Email addresses, phone numbers and other information will not be provided to any other parties. We will not use this information to contact you unless you are the winner of the \$500 gift certificate. This survey will be used solely by Next Door Neighbors to assess our performance in bringing you this magazine each month and to discover ways we can serve you better.

1. How often do you read *Next Door Neighbors*?

- Every issue
- Most issues
- Some issues
- Never read it

2. Approximately what percentage of *Next Door Neighbors* do you read?

- 80 to 100%
- 60 to 80%
- 40 to 60%
- 20 to 40%
- Less than 20%

3. On average, how many other people in your household read *Next Door Neighbors*?

- None
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 5
- More than 5

4. Do you find *Next Door Neighbors* to be:

- EASY TO READ**
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

INFORMATIVE

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

INTERESTING

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

RELEVANT

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. When you read *Next Door Neighbors*, do you read it:

- In one sitting
- In a week
- In 2 to 3 weeks
- In a month or more

6. How would you rate the quality of the story content?

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Less than Satisfactory

7. In the back of the magazine there is a feature called *Hey Neighbor!* that provides a place for non-profit organizations, churches and civic groups to communicate to the public free of charge. How often do you read *Hey Neighbor!* ?

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

8. Do you find the advertisements in *Next Door Neighbors* to be useful?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
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9. Have you ever done business with an advertiser as a result of seeing their advertisement in *Next Door Neighbors*?

- Yes
- No

10. *Next Door Neighbors* is a theme-based publication that provides you with human interest stories about your friends and neighbors that relate to a theme or topic. Are there topics of interest you would like to see us write about in the future? Please list. (optional)

11. What do you like most about *Next Door Neighbors*? (optional) Please write on separate sheet.

12. What do you like least about *Next Door Neighbors*? (optional) Please write on separate sheet.

13. Please provide us with the following demographic information:

GENDER

- Male
- Female

AGE

- Under 18
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 49
- 50 to 64
- 65+

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (optional)

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$75,000
- \$75,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000+

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Thank you for your participation in this survey. The drawing for the \$500 gift certificate will be held at noon on Thursday, June 30th. At that time, the winner will be notified and provided with a list of all 2011 Advertisers for their gift certificate selection. If you have any questions, please email me at: meredith.collinsgroup@cox.net or call 757-560-3235. Thank you!

Meredith Collins, Publisher

Emily, Heidi has built a business centered on fresh local produce from more than a dozen local and regional farms and her garden. That includes selling Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Shares to customers who get weekly baskets of in-season goods – generally between five and ten different fruits and vegetables each time – from April to September.

Heidi's work has drawn on cherished memories of childhood summers on her grandfather's farm in Iowa. It has given her plenty of time with her own kids and allowed her to educate customers on the health and economic benefits of local foods. The farmers she helps support are from hard-working families and use sustainable agricultural practices that larger farms and businesses may not, she says.

"To me, 'local' means I can tell you what farm something came from and give you directions to drive there," Heidi says. "At a grocery store, 'local' might mean it came from as far away as Florida. The average fruit or vegetable has traveled 1,500 miles by the time it's on

your fork. You can definitely taste the difference."

Heidi fell in love with the outdoors early. The middle of five sisters, she grew up in a ru-

,and rode into town in her grandfather's horse and buggy, where they delivered his produce to the local restaurant. "Those were some of the best days of my childhood," she says.

Heidi took a detour before reaching her current career path. After earning an associate's degree in human services, she worked as an at-risk youth counselor in New York for several years. She later went back to school to study elementary education, but long hours working as an intern and substitute teacher began to wear on her.

"I felt like I was putting so much time and energy into other people's children but not my own," she says. "Lots of money was going to babysitters. I wanted to find a way to be self-supportive, be with my kids, and teach them good values."

Taking a leap of faith, Heidi left school and opened an Amish gift shop near the New York and Pennsylvania border, where local craftsmen delivered their homemade goods via horse and buggy. She homeschooled her children and incorporated lessons into their

"To me, 'local' means I can tell you what farm something came from and give you directions to drive there." - Heidi Martin

ral area of Illinois where she could see cornfields in every direction. Her parents grew fruit trees, had a garden packed with rhubarb and strawberries, canned its own food, and made bread completely from scratch, right down to the flour.

In the summers, Heidi and her sisters traveled to their grandfather's 100-acre farm, which had no electricity. She picked blackberries with her aunt, cooked pies with her grandmother

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work at the shop. Emily, for example, weighed candy to learn basic math at age 4. Now 14, she can often make change in her head at the stand, without a cash register.

When the family moved to Virginia in October 2001, Heidi planned to open a similar store here. Then the economy soured in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. She realized people didn't need quilts and rocking chairs, but they did need food. She knew from Jacob's old experiment that the idea could fly.

After approaching local farmers about starting a market, Heidi discovered they needed someone to sell their produce so they could concentrate on growing it. She now partners with about 14 farms, most near her home with occasional shipments from the Richmond and Virginia Beach areas. She also sells some products that don't grow locally – bananas and oranges, for example – but doesn't ship from further away than Florida and she clearly marks the place of origin. Other items in her inventory include baked goods, grass-fed beef and pork, organic pastas and soup mixes, pure raw honey, bulk spices, homemade soaps, and fresh-cut and dried herbs.

Heidi's front yard features eight raised gar-

den beds, each 12-by-12-foot, with several types of tomatoes and cucumbers, bell peppers, squash, sweet corn, zucchini and more, all grown without pesticides. She also has about 60 chickens – “my girls,” she calls them – and a handful of Peking ducks. “Most people say duck eggs have a richer, heartier taste,” she says. “They're excellent for baking. They make everything lighter and fluffier.”

Heidi's Homegrown & Organics currently has about 50 customers in its CSA, who have the option of weekly home delivery within the Williamsburg area or pick-up at the farm stand in Toano. Heidi also offers fresh eggs and milk in glass bottles from pasture-raised cows given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Contrary to what many people think, fresh eggs don't come with baby birds growing inside, she says with a laugh: “You need a rooster for that, and I don't have a rooster.”

The toughest part of her business, Heidi says, is finding time to do everything. “When I get exhausted, it doesn't matter,” she says. “I have to keep going. I have to tend to the crops, and the chickens need feed and water.”

Thankfully she has had her children, all of whom have a strong work ethic and connection

to nature. Jacob and 19-year-old Jillian, who both go to school in New York, help whenever they come home. Emily, 14, a freshman at Warhill High School, works on weekends and travels to farms to help pick produce.

“I like it because if my mom had another job, we wouldn't have so much time together,” Emily says.

The benefits of healthy eating also have rubbed off on Emily: she doesn't like eating processed foods.

“It's just not good for your body,” she says. “I like that people can come to our house to get food and see our chickens and gardens. We just planted flowers. It isn't that [much] fun when you're doing it, but then everything starts growing and it's so beautiful.”

Heidi, who plays golf and sails in her rare free moments, imagines she'll keep her business going after Emily leaves home – although she jokes that her daughter is “not allowed to grow up.”

“I love this,” she says. “It's a continuation of really great memories from my childhood. It's a way of life that I don't ever want to see die out.” NDN



Chefs on Parade, an exhibit of artistic Chef Coats presented by The Culinary Arts Institute at Brookdale®, is coming to Chambrel Williamsburg. A reception on June 6 will feature a cooking demonstration by our own award-winning Chef Michael Holdsworth. The event doubles as a fundraiser for the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation. Make plans now to be here!

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DAVID & MARSHA
BROWN

Farming Is Their Life

By Brandy Centolanza

Though his father grew up on a farm and had been a farmer for much of his life, David Brown, owner of Bush Neck Farm off Jolly Pond Road, didn't follow the same path until later in life.

David grew up in Hampton. As a child, he helped his dad, Raymond, bale hay and grow watermelons on the farm the family owned in Smithfield. However, David later spent much of his adult life working for the Coca Cola company in Newport News before deciding to try his hand at farming full-time.

David was employed by Coca-Cola more than 30 years, working his way up to Vice President, but when the company was sold in the late 1970's, he chose to pursue another career outside of the office. By that time, his father had purchased Bush Neck Farm, once a watermelon farm, but the land had lain fallow for years.

"It just felt like a natural thing to go back and open the farm," says David, who today operates Bush Neck Farm along with his wife, Marsha, a former York County Schools educator whom he met and married in 1982.

The pair spent years clearing the land on



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

the farm and reopened it as a small grain farm, growing field corn, soybeans and wheat. In the late 1980's, the Browns switched gears, and began to grow fruit trees and berries for sale as a pick-your-own enterprise. The farm remains successful today with droves of people turning out each summer and fall to pick blueberries, peaches, nectarines, and various apples, as well as pumpkins and gourds.

"We just really enjoy sales, the customers, and meeting different people," says Marsha. "On any Saturday when the blueberries and

peaches are in season, there is no parking anywhere. We are so overloaded. People just like the fresh fruit, and to come out and pick as a family."

David and Marsha, who have five children, run the farm themselves, though their sons, Pete, David and Paul, help out when the work becomes overwhelming. The couple stays active as well in the off-season, cleaning up and pruning the trees. They also plant close to 100 new trees each year.

"It's a long process," says David. "Our apple



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trees are trellised, and the peach and nectarine trees are pruned so that the fruit is within easy reach without using ladders.”

The Browns relish their time on the farm.

“I just like being outside, being around people and growing things,” David says simply. “It’s great fresh air, and also great exercise. It’s a good, healthy life. I get plenty of exercise out here, so there is no need to go to the gym. The most rewarding thing is seeing a good crop.”

Adds Marsha, “I enjoy the hard work, and keeping busy. Farming is very hard work. You have to be strong and willing and really love doing it and have a real love for God’s creation.”

Though they may not require much help from other people operating the farm, they do get occasional assistance from their dog, Bear.

“The deer are a big problem because they like the fruit too,” notes David, but Bear takes care of that most mornings, chasing the deer away. “That’s another great thing about being a farmer because you can bring your dog to work. He’s a great sense of moral support,” David says.

Bush Neck Farm sees a lot of repeat business, as well as some new faces, each year.

“A lot of our customers will pick what they want, [and] then they will come and sit with us and talk,” shares Marsha. “Some are people we have known over the years, and some we

haven’t seen before. They are new friends.”

Marsha interacts with many people in the fall when Bush Neck Farm hosts daily school field trips.

“I love it when the children get out of a car and act like they haven’t seen such wide open space,” says Marsha. The field trips include a history lesson on apples, incorporating the Garden of Eden, the Pilgrims, and Johnny Appleseed.

“We discuss the different aspects of planting, growing, and harvesting apples, and then, of course, we talk about all the delicious foods you can make with apples,” says Marsha.

Each season has its ups and downs. Last summer’s drought and 100-plus temperatures did not enhance the apple crop.

“One of our variety of apples actually baked on the trees before we could harvest them,” recalls Marsha. “I’ve never seen that before.”

But it turned out to be a good year for the peach trees.

“Peaches love hot, dry weather,” says Marsha. “They get just as sweet as can be.”

Not only is the weather an unpredictable factor, but so are animals. In addition to the deer, birds are often nuisances. They enjoy feasting on the blueberries, but the Browns find ways to scare them off, such as displaying fake owls or

hawks in the bushes, or sounding off a “percussion” cannon that emits a loud noise to frighten the birds away.

“The most effective deterrent, of course, is just to keep the people in the bushes,” says Marsha.

Indeed, David and Marsha try to do just that by growing fruit that can’t be found elsewhere.

“We like to plant things that you can’t find in the store,” says Marsha. “We want to offer our customers things that are new and different.”

Adds David, “Here, they get a chance to try something right off the tree and decide if they like it or not.”

Last year, the couple planted a tree that grew peaches that were flat instead of round. Their favorite apple is a summer apple called a yellow transparent, which David describes as the best apple for making applesauce.

“It really is in a class by itself,” he shares.

Running the farm leaves little time for other interests, though Marsha does find time to read and volunteer at her church, while David insists that farming is the only thing he enjoys.

“This is pretty much my life,” David states. “People say ‘You never go on vacation,’ and I tell them, ‘I’m on vacation every day.’ You ought to be happy with your work, and I am happy. I’m going to do this as long as I am able.” NDN

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BILLY & MARY APPERSON

O, Christmas Tree! O, Christmas Tree!

By Rosemary Van Houten

In 1914, American journalist and poet Alfred Joyce Kilmer published one of his most famous literary works, *Trees*. The first line of the poem is well known and often quoted: "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree". Poets, photographers, artists and nature lovers try to help us visualize the natural beauty trees bring to our lives. Billy and Mary Apperson have made their vision a reality with their family homestead at Millfarm.

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is located near Croaker, where it blends in with the beauty and natural charm of the rural area. The 100+acre farm was purchased by the Apperson family in 1763. Millfarm is one of only two farms in James City County designated as a Century Farm. This is a rarity, especially when agriculture is becoming more and more a livelihood of the past. To be recognized as a Century Farm, the farm must be owned and farmed by the same family for 100 consecutive years. Millfarm has exceeded that timeframe by several hundred years.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture, which bestows this honor, describes the achievement in this way: *Since the first settlers landed at Jamestown nearly 400 years ago and planted crops to sustain themselves through the winters to come, agriculture has been at the heart of Virginia. Our Commonwealth's traditions and values stem from this heritage and from those Founding Fathers of our state and our nation, many of whom were farmers themselves.*

Today, descendants of these first farmers continue to produce food and fiber on the same land as their forefathers. The Virginia Century Farm Program recognizes and honors those farms that have been in operation for at least 100 consecutive years and the generations of Virginia farm families whose

“The Christmas tree farm happened by accident.”

- Billy Apperson

diligent and dedicated efforts have maintained these farms, provided nourishment to their fellow citizens and contributed so greatly to the economy of the Commonwealth.¹

While many farms have become victim of changing times and tough economies, it's

no surprise that Millfarm continues to thrive under the green thumbs of Billy and Mary, both of whom are passionate and educated in agriculture and nature. Billy is a County Forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry, where he works in research. He has also been with the JCC-Bruton Volunteer Fire Department for over fifty years. Mary, a former pilot, is the Volunteer Coordinator at York River State Park.

“She’s also the manager of the farm,” jokes Billy. “Some bankers could learn a thing or two from her.”

At first glance you would never imagine that Millfarm has not always been a Christmas tree farm. What you see are acres and acres of green trees. Former Apperson generations grew vegetables, produced grain, tended orchards, raised hogs, and other crops and livestock you would find on a typical farm. During the Great Depression many farmers went out of business. The Appersons held on, mostly due to their

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hearty apple and peach orchards which helped to pay taxes and allowed them to survive the hard times.

"The Christmas tree farm happened by accident," Billy says.

The idea of the Christmas tree farm came about 40 years ago when some people asked him how to grow a Christmas tree. He decided to plant a half-acre of trees so he could learn first-hand, and the next thing he knew, people were stopping and asking if the trees (which could be seen from the road) were for sale.

They now sell about 1,000 trees a year - various varieties such as Canadian fir, Leyland cypress and White pine. They have a lot of repeat customers, and over the years it has become a family tradition for both his family and others as well.

Families can visit the farm any time after Halloween to 'mark their tree'. Marking a tree can consist of tying a ribbon to a branch or something more unique and creative. Some people will put Christmas decorations on the tree they choose or some other marker they have created. One time a customer marked their tree with a

snowflake that was two feet wide.

"It's a lot of fun for everyone," Billy says. "Kids can run and run until they can't run anymore."

When a customer returns to pick up the tree they have selected they can cut it down or someone from Mill Farm will cut it and help load it into your car. Billy's son, William (who lives next door), also helps on the farm as do his wife and family.

Christmas trees won't be the only major crop for long, however. Beginning June 1st, blackberries will be available as well.

"This is the first year, and we are so excited," Billy says. He is expecting three to four tons of the juicy fruit. They have been planted above the ground on trellises so picking will be easy and enjoyable for those who want to venture out to their farm. People will be able to come and pick their own blackberries at very reasonable prices and enjoy a pesticide-free product.

Billy and Mary know it is important to diversify crops and they wanted to expand to get away from a single-crop farm. They hope to add blueberries next year and grapes the third

year. He knows that consumers are looking for healthy fruits and vegetables and he is considering pear orchards in the future as well.

"People are looking for wholesome, clean food," Billy says.

The new crops have increased the workload, but Billy and Mary are happy to continue the tradition of farming no matter what changes are made.

"You can't go fishing every day!" Billy jokes.

The Appersons are thrilled with the progress the blackberries are making. They keep an eye on the honeybees pollinating the berries and envision families coming out to enjoy berry picking on their farm.

"We're very family oriented. It's a good feeling, and I like it a lot. I love having the grandchildren here. It brightens up an old man's life," says Billy with a smile.

With grandchildren already enjoying the amenities of farm life it's likely that the Millfarm tradition will continue on. Who knows? Maybe even for a hundred more years. NDN

1 <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/century>

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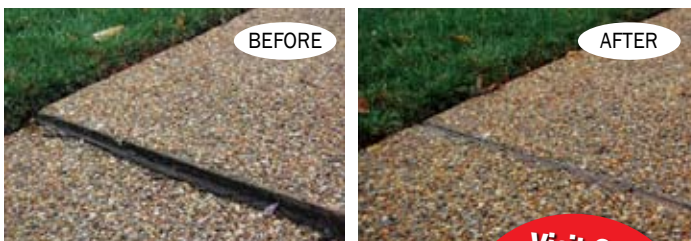
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SHARON ELLIS



ON THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER WILLIAMSBURG

Sharon Gibson-Ellis is the new Executive Director of United Way of Greater Williamsburg. Sharon and her husband, Kevin, spent the last four years in Iowa, and prior to that, lived in Oregon. She worked for United Way of Muscatine (Iowa), and both Sharon and Kevin are actively involved in animal rescue groups.

Sharon has an extensive history

with United Way organizations and took the reins of United Way of Greater Williamsburg in April after the retirement of former executive director Sharron Cornelius. New in her position in Williamsburg, Sharon has given Next Door Neighbors an interview on her philosophy of service, plans to engage the community, and how this job is personal for her.

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BED CRAFTERS
by Michelle

When did you first become involved in the United Way organization?

I went to work for United Way of Benton County in Corvallis, Oregon in 1977 directly from college. My first position was as the Associate Director, and my primary responsibilities were in the area of finance and operations. I became the Director in 1983, and in 2003, that United Way merged with another United Way to create the United Way of Benton and Lincoln Counties. I left that organization in 2006 to take the position of Chief Professional Officer at United Way in Muscatine where I stayed until accepting the position here in Williamsburg.

What prompted you to join the United Way of Greater Williamsburg (UWG) as the new Executive Director?

I am an entrepreneur and adventurer by nature and am always looking for a new adventure. I was interested in the United Way position in Williamsburg because of

the beauty of the area, the opportunity to engage more residents in the work of United Way, and the small city feel with big city amenities. I drank the United Way Kool-Aid almost 35 years ago and serving the community through United Way is the only place I see myself.

What are some new directions you will champion in the United Way?

I am not sure that the new directions I envision are necessarily new, maybe just "renewed." I am very excited about the opportunity to engage residents to be intimately involved with United Way. I enjoy creating new relationships and fostering and nurturing established relationships. For me that is the most enjoyable part of the job. United Way should be a reflection of the communities we serve. So much of the new direction we might take will come from our board members, volunteers, donors, and the community. I want to take time to learn about the

programs and services available to our residents and how United Way can be helpful in the pursuit of their missions. My experience tells me that United Way can help agencies and services beyond the grants that we give each year. There are many other resources both tangible and intangible that we might be able to bring to the table. Time will tell how we move forward!

What do you see as the major objectives of the UWGW?

United Way of Greater Williamsburg has a current Strategic Plan that addresses Governance and Leadership, Resource Development, Community Investment (grants), Marketing and Communications, and Community Building/Information and Referral. If you boil it down, while developing and maintaining the highest level of governance we will work to garner more resources that can be used by the programs we fund and the Informa-

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tion and Referral Program we operate.

How has the organization achieved those in the past and what may be changed/refocused in the future?

I cannot speak to the past with any authority because I simply was not here in the area, but as for the future we will be diligent about maintaining the highest level of integrity and transparency in our governance through leadership planning and training for board members and staff. We are already looking at how we can engage more residents and businesses in United Way, as donors, volunteers, and/or advocates. We have been challenged with older technology that has not allowed us to have an aggressive social media face and efficient turn-around time on data. I am happy to report we received a grant for some technology upgrades, and we will be working on a new Internet face for our constituents and more efficient comput-

ers. Garnering more resources is a very high priority in our future so that we can be as supportive as possible for those very important programs that rely on us for annual support. And, we will be continuing to fine tune our Information and Referral Program that serves over 1,000 families a month with basic needs assistance.

What are the hallmarks for a program to be part of the UWGW grant recipients?

First and foremost we are looking at the ability of a funded program to change people's lives. There is financial, governance, and management criteria in the process but the donors we represent want to affect people's lives. We have great volunteers who serve on the Community Investment Committee. Many of them have committed years to the granting process.

What are some personal experiences you have had that renew your commit-

ment to the United Way agencies?

Again, I have not had many experiences in the Greater Williamsburg area yet, but over my 35 years with United Way in all my locations I have many warm stories about the work of local agencies. The friendships, hardships, cooperative and collaborative work, and the dedication to service that the agencies have is an inspiration. I have been fortunate to be on the front lines with many service providers over the years. In my last job, the United Way was the Long-Term Disaster Recovery provider so when the floods of 2008 hit Iowa, we had considerable work to do. We received \$1.3 million in disaster aid to help the residents of two counties. We had three case managers working out of our office and bringing cases to an interdisciplinary team made up of the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Faith Communities, and other basic needs providers to get financial aid for their clients. I became intimately involved in the recovery



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process which helped me to understand the plight of those affected by the disaster. And, it helped me to understand the difficulty of providing case management services to flood victims. This is only one of many experiences that help me appreciate the work that agencies do every day.

What are ways the community can take action to support the United Way?

Give, volunteer, or advocate! There are so many ways that the community can be helpful, and I believe that everyone has something to give....their time, perhaps money, or maybe even "things." Giving back to your community is good for the soul, and research shows that volunteering prolongs our life. If you want to get involved give us a call at 757-253-2264 or email me at sharon.gibson-ellis@uwgw.org and I will make sure you get to the right person.

These are tough economic times for non-profits. How has the United Way weathered this and how does the future look?

I think that like most non-profits, United Way of Greater Williamsburg took a hit in its ability to raise adequate resources to care for the programs we fund and the community we serve. It is unfortunate that when needs are greater resources are tighter, but that is when we have to get creative about what else we can bring to the table. We need to work harder to tell our story and that of the programs we fund, we need to engage people at a personal level, and we will walk hand-in-hand with our partners and the residents who need help. The glass is still half full.....I will be working hard to fill it even more.


How has your work affected your personal life and outlook?

It is really hard to tell after 35 years if my life is shaped by my work or my work is

shaped by my life. Not that it really matters! I do the animal rescue work because it fine tunes my humanity. I have always believed that how we treat animals is a good predictor of how we treat other humans. I am grateful everyday for the work I call my job. I can only think of a few days in my many years where I was not excited to come to work each day. I truly love this work and can think of no other job where you get to work with the "cream of the crop" and no day is like the next. I grew up in a relatively poor family with few emotional or financial resources, so I know what it is like to feel like you are stuck and may never climb out. A few key people made a huge difference in my life as a child (a neighbor, teacher, and mentor,) and I will always remember where I came from and how that experience helped shape my compassion and respect for those less fortunate. We are all a convergence of our collective experiences! NDN

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YVONNE ROBERTS

On Our Way Back

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“Williamsburg is a special little town,” Yvonne Roberts, a long-time real estate professional, says. “We’re different, a niche market. All the agents in town work really well together. I have friends in all the companies in town.”

The real estate markets throughout the country have taken a beating in the last several years as anyone who has tried to sell their home can attest. Prices soared around the country, and then the bottom dropped out of the market. Williamsburg seems to have weathered the crisis better than most communities.

Yvonne credits the culture and location of





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the area.

“Williamsburg is a healthier market than most,” she states. “It’s a retirement area, it’s historical, and it’s a college town with lots of culture. Our location is great – two hours and 15 minutes from D.C., less than an hour from the ocean. We’re in a hub of airports with Richmond, Norfolk, and Newport News. I think it’s a perfect location. When people come here, they don’t leave, or if they do, they come back.”

She knows about leaving and being drawn back by the charm of the area. Before her real estate career, Yvonne was in the banking industry for 19 years. She then worked in education for 8 years at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

In 1980, Yvonne returned from North Carolina to work with the Williamsburg-James City County School System.

“I’m a native Virginian, born in Chesterfield County. I’ve lived here most of my life,” she

says.

In 1986, while she still worked with the school system, she was asked by a cousin, who was relocating as part of a corporate transfer, to sell his home.

“I reminded him I didn’t have a real estate

wanted her to sell his home because he trusted her judgment and negotiation skills.

“We grew up together back in Chesterfield County,” she says. “We worked together in the tobacco fields, and he’d known me all his life.”

That cousin was an acquaintance of the owner of a small real estate company in Williamsburg, and he set up an appointment for Yvonne to meet the owners.

“I was hired and entered the listing into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and placed a For Sale sign on my cousin’s lawn. Before long an agent brought me an offer that was accepted, and we closed on the property.”

Her first sale had been enjoyable and a success. Yvonne’s name was

in the community and she received more listings.

She continued working her full-time job with the school system and would use her lunch hours and after work time on real estate transactions.

“Williamsburg is a healthier market than most.”

- Yvonne Roberts

license. He replied, ‘Well, get one.’ I signed up for night classes, passed the course, sat for the state exam, and received my license.”

Unknowingly, her cousin had set her on a path that would shape the next 25 years of her professional life. Yvonne explains that he had

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“At one point I was working almost 24/7, when my husband [John Roberts, also a Realtor who at that time was employed by the Surry Nuclear Power Plant] suggested that since it seemed I had found my niche, I should leave my full-time job and devote my time to the new career in real estate,” she says.

She was recruited soon after making the career change by what is now Prudential Towne Realty.

“I worked as a sales associate for approximately 18 years. At that time it was McCardle Realty,” she adds.

In 1990 Yvonne took her broker’s exam and became an associate broker.

“It was certainly one of the most difficult exams I can ever remember,” Yvonne admits. “Lots of education is required to maintain the broker’s license. It allowed me to become the managing broker of a company, which is exactly what I am today.”

Yvonne and John retired and moved to Ari-

zona in 2001. Personal reasons brought them back to Williamsburg in 2005.

“Life was fun in Arizona,” she says. “It was the best four and a half year vacation I ever had. I loved living there, but I’m really a Virginia

She retired again.

A short time later, she was asked by another real estate friend to come in and help with a merger of companies.

“That temporary assignment has lasted about two and a half years,” she says. “I’m very fond of this company, the agents, and its management staff. We’re like family.”

Like family, they have come through some tough times together. “It’s been a couple of challenging years in real estate, but we believe we are on an upward trend. Our agents are busy, our listings and sales are up, and we’re enjoying a very productive spring.”

Yvonne explains that home sales typically increase in the spring. “Spring has always been the best time in Williamsburg to list property. We enjoy that busy time through the end of June.” Then the summer vacations start, followed by the new school year. These are not the times that families like to move. “Retirees come all the time,” she says. “The fall season

“I’m very optimistic. I think it will gradually improve. We’ve hit the bottom, and we’re on our way back.”

- Yvonne Roberts

farm girl. Dorothy (from The Wizard of Oz) was right: “There’s no place like home.”

After returning from Arizona, Yvonne was asked by a long-time friend to provide some assistance with his real estate company. She agreed to do it for 2 years.

“It was fun, a great experience,” she says.

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picks up again. It's a cyclical thing."

What price segments of houses are selling? Yvonne quotes the Williamsburg Multiple Listing Service: "The March 2011 numbers report an average list price of \$251,000 with an average sale price of \$234,750. I think a broad statement is that anything priced in the area of \$300,000 - \$400,000 is still pretty healthy. It's selling a little faster than higher-priced home."

According to Yvonne, the higher ranges sell but may take a bit longer to find the right buyer.

The hard part for sellers is determining a realistic market price. When thoughts of home values from a few years ago still linger in their minds, it's difficult to shake those memories and come to the table with a down-to-earth price. That's when the real estate agent's knowledge and expertise is particularly helpful.

"We're seeing some homes selling at assessed value. That never happened before," she says. "You could usually count on getting 10 percent above assessment, but those days are gone."

Yvonne warns that a person thinking of sell-

ing should watch the neighborhood. Short sales and bankrupt properties drive down the prices of other homes in the area.

"The appraisers use those sales for the neighborhood," she explains. "A short sale can stand against your home's appraisal for 3 to 6 months."

For the recession era real estate seller, Yvonne offers these tips to help make the home stand out among its competition for the buyer's eye: "The first impression is the most valuable and most lasting," Yvonne says. "The front door needs to be clean. The porch needs to be uncluttered. The landscaping needs to be attractive. The lawn needs to be maintained." The home's curb appeal can determine if the home gets a viewing or not.

Home staging is another aspect she recommends. "Staging has become very, very popular," she explains. "People who live with their stuff don't realize how much stuff they really have. Stuff translates into clutter. A professional stager can make some fabulous suggestions."

She also advises scrubbing the windows. "Clean, sparkling windows just light up the

whole house," she says. "I think clean windows, good curb appeal, a professionally staged home, and a fair market price are the four components for a sale."

On the other side of the table, Yvonne has advice for buyers: "The buyer needs to have trust in the real estate professional. That real estate professional knows the market, knows values; he or she is able to do a comparative market analysis based on the neighborhood. The buyer should listen to the agent's advice. The agent will counsel the buyer to make a fair offer."

A realistic buyer and a realistic seller will produce results that are satisfying to all involved in the transaction.

"That's the goal that agents try to meet, that after the papers are signed, everyone feels it was a fair and equitable transaction," Yvonne says.

Yvonne sees an upward swing in home sales in the Williamsburg area. "This is as healthy an area as you can find," she says. "We've weathered the recession much better than other parts of the country. I'm very optimistic. I think it will gradually improve. We've hit the bottom, and we're on our way back." **NDN**

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BRENT HUGHES

Lessons Learned

ON AND OFF THE COURT

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Tennis can be a psychological game. Brent Hughes says the players who can handle pressure have an advantage. "It always helps to be calm, cool, and collected in any sport," Brent says. "Look at your great players: Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic. They're not hot heads. John McEnroe was an exception;

pressure seemed to fire him up."

Brent was a standout tennis player with the University of Georgia champion tennis team, and he was the tennis pro at Kingsmill Resort for several years.

"I grew up in Newport News and started playing tennis when I was seven," he explains.

"My mother was Australian. Tennis is one of their major sports, besides rugby. I played tennis, really all sports, but focused more on tennis in high school and college."

Brent played all the United States Tennis Association (USTA) tournaments growing up and played tennis at Ferguson High School. When

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he graduated from Ferguson, he had established himself in the USTA rankings and had his choice of colleges for a tennis scholarship.

“Usually I was anywhere from 1st to 4th in the state for my different age divisions growing up,” he says. “Colleges looked at those rankings more than what the high school teams did. I had signed with the University of Georgia before we (Ferguson High School) went to the state finals.”

At the University of Georgia, Brent and his tennis team members won the Southeastern Conference (SEC) championship four straight years.

“That was a real plus for me growing up,” he says. “The last couple of summers in college, I would play the satellite circuits with some of the other players – all around the South. Our senior year, we played circuits in the Pacific Northwest and in California. This was in 1975.”

The 1970s were a boom time for tennis in the United States. Tennis players became celebrities: Arthur Ashe, Billie Jean King, John Newcombe, Stan Smith, Jimmy Connors, Chris Evert, John McEnroe, and Martina Navratilova.

“The publicity was high,” Brent says, “and it

was a great time to be in tennis. From college, I played some seasons on the satellite circuits to see if I could make a living. I also taught to help support myself.”

Brent found that he loved teaching. In 1977, he signed on with Huntington Park Tennis Center in Newport News to help open that facility. Along the way, Brent also taught at a few tennis clubs in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and then at the Centre Court Indoor Tennis Club in Newport News.

“I was one of the teaching pros there for a couple of years,” he says. “I was fortunate enough to land at Kingsmill Resort in June of 1983. There were blessings all along the way, especially getting the job at a new resort like Kingsmill. I was fortunate to help open Huntington Park and gain that experience then as Kingsmill opened its tennis club, I learned a whole new aspect of the business. I was not just a tennis pro, I was a manager as well.”

With his management responsibilities, Brent learned more about business. “It was a lot of fun,” he says. “It gave me a great view of the business aspect of tennis. The people I worked with, like Harry Knight who was the General Manager at Kingsmill at the time, really opened

the door for me. As I grew older, I realized how important it was to focus on your passion. Sometimes I really missed teaching tennis to kids.”

Then came the time when Anheuser-Busch was being sold, retirement packages were offered to the long-time employees of a certain age. “Taking a little bit of a chance, and some praying,” Brent says, “I decided to go off on my own and start my tennis academy (Williamsburg Elite Tennis Academy). I haven’t regretted it, fortunately.”

Brent likes teaching all ages, but especially enjoys instructing youth tennis. “I hope I’m able to show them a pathway that, if they really enjoy tennis and have a heart to work hard, they will become very good USTA tournament players, great high school players, and possibly play in college,” he explains.

He wants to train his young students for a collegiate path. “If they decide not to go that direction, that’s up to them,” Brent says. “It’s a busy world. Not everyone is built to play college athletics. I had a great experience, and if someone has the affinity to do something like that, I’d love to help them get there.”

Brent states that the earlier someone starts



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tennis, the better. The USTA has created a QuickStart Program for the 10 and under age group. "They have kid-sized courts and equipment that they can learn with – like Nerf balls. That program gets them to play to learn rather than learn to play," Brent says. "Tennis is probably one of the most difficult sports to play and have fun right away. This smaller court, kid-sized play is taking off." He's excited about this program to ease children into tennis.

Brent likes to encourage his students to watch the players of today, to see the enjoyment of play. "I think today's players are unbelievable. Federer, Nadal," he lists, "now Djokovic has come along and matured in the past two years. Those guys are the epitome of any athlete professionally in any sport, how they carry themselves. If I had the opportunity I would go see them play, I try to catch them on TV when I can."

The tennis stars of the '70s still hold a fascination with Brent too. "For 'flashbacks,' Jimmy Connors, and John McEnroe – I wouldn't call them my heroes, but I gained some things watching them. I'm around the same age. I loved to watch Bjorn Borg play; he was so calm and cool all the way through with beautiful

strokes. Before that, as I was growing up, the United States had Stan Smith and Chuck McKinley."

Those are the tennis players Brent likes to watch, but his all time sports heroes, from any sports are Mickey Mantle and Arnold Palmer. "Growing up, like most kids," Brent says, "I watched the 'good guys' and tried to be like them."

Brent says his personal career highlights flow throughout the years. In his teenage days, his USTA rankings were huge accomplishments for him. "I was always concerned with rankings with the USTA because that is what gains you collegiate exposure," he states. "Of course, winning the state high school championship was nice."

His full scholarship to the University of Georgia and his time there was another highlight in his career. "We won the SEC title for 4 straight years and were ranked in the top ten. I was blessed to be part of that situation. Really, I've been blessed all the way through."

His future plans follow his passion. "Teaching," he says, "that's my passion. I want to continue to grow my tennis academy. I want to give people in the area the opportunity to

learn tennis, to be trained for better tennis, better fitness."

His students make him most proud when they embrace the sport with the right attitude. "They show up in my group and are ready to play," he says. "That's what makes me proud. When the students work hard and want to do the basics to move forward. I'm proud when they carry themselves well on the court; when they are good sportsmen on the court. When they get a win that spurs them on to the next level, they gain confidence. I want to open the door for them to play collegiate tennis."

He hopes that his students enjoy tennis, find the joy he has for the sport. "I have a great faith in people that they can do things that they don't think they can," Brent states. "That comes from my faith in God. He has given us abilities past what we even know. If we just go down that path and open doors, we can do incredible things."

Brent's attitude and outlook have helped him turn his love of tennis into his life-long passion and career. His lessons learned on the court about handling pressure, choosing paths, and trusting instincts have served him well on and off the court. NDN

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PENN RUSSELL

The Magic Is In The Story

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“When I walk on stage, I’m going to bring you into my world for 30 or 40 minutes,” explains magician Penn Russell. “I want the rest of the world to fall away – don’t think about your job, what’s happening in the world. You come into my place, and my place is magic.”

Penn Russell grew up in Newport News in a family with a history in the ship building industry. Penn saw the world a little differently than the view from the shipyard.

“When I was about eight years old,” Penn remembers, “I saw a ventriloquist – Señor Wences – I knew I wanted to be a ventriloquist. That year, I got a Charlie McCarthy ventriloquist dummy for Christmas. For the next year, I tried and tried to be a ventriloquist. I was horrible at it. I got



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interested in magic too. I found I was much better at magic than ventriloquism.”

He began to perform magic tricks for his family and friends. Around the age of 11, Penn discovered a magic store in Norfolk.

“The Magic Shop,” he says. “It was run by Earl Edwards. Earl was probably about 70 then. He had known all the great magicians: Thurston, Blackstone, Dante, even Houdini. This guy was a wealth of knowledge. I walked into his shop with thirty dollars, which was a lot of money for a kid in 1972. I don’t remember what I pointed at on the shelf, but Earl looked at me and said ‘No. I’m not going to sell you that. You do not need that, you need this, this, and this.’ I bought the three tricks he recommended. Sure enough, he was right. And I had money left over.”

A magic club met at Earl Edwards’ shop – the International Brotherhood of Magicians, Ring 103. The shop had a stage in the backroom for the members to practice and perform.

“When I was about 14,” Penn explains, “they decided to give me a junior membership, and I had to perform my initiation act for all these magicians. I was petrified, but I did it.”

That was Penn’s first performance outside his family and friends. He continued his magic practice and soon he was performing at neighborhood birthday parties. “I remember I made \$7 for my first birthday party show and the guy gave me a \$2 tip. It was with Eisenhower silver dollars. I was hooked then.”

Penn admits magic helped him in high school. “I was a geeky kid, skinny, horrible at sports,” he says. “Magic was a way for me to be accepted by the cool kids. It worked. I don’t know if it works for everybody, but it worked for me. I was always invited to the parties. In high school, I didn’t letter in sports, but I was in drama. People knew I was a magician. I never got picked on because I was in with the good crowd. And I could get a date. I could show a girl a trick. I kept her entertained.”

Penn continued performing magic shows and going to the magician meetings. “When I got out of high school,” he explains, “I went to work at the shipyard because my family was in ship building and everyone was expected to do that. I did that for about a year. It wasn’t what I wanted. I quit and got booked doing some opening acts for singer El DeBarge.”

Penn’s parents wanted him to go to college, but he wanted to perform. He engineered a compromise of sorts. “I found a magic college,” he says, “the Chavez College of Magic in Colon, Michigan – the Magic Capital of the World. It was also called the Chavez College of Manual Dexterity and Prestidigitation. It was considered a trade school because you worked with your hands, so my dad said ‘Okay, you can go to that.’ They packed me off to Michigan.”

After Penn graduated from Chavez, he took a bartending job to make ends meet until he booked some paying performances. “I started doing festivals like Bay Days and some private events,” he says. “I’ve preformed for Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Sr., Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the late King Hussein of Jordan, Elizabeth Taylor and John Warner. I continued doing private shows and the festival circuit. About 1997, I became the resident magician in Chowning’s Tavern. I did that for almost a decade.”



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At Chowning's Tavern, Penn had steady work: three shows a night, five nights a week. That allowed him to perfect his core routine. "When you get on stage," he says, "you play the part of a magician. You are not just doing tricks; you create magic for the audience. Of course the act changes here and there, but the core act stays the same. It becomes second nature to you. Magic should come from you like breath, as easy as breathing. You shouldn't have to think about what your hands are doing. Or what the next effect is. It should flow. The only way to do that is to do it over and over and over."

Today, Penn travels the country performing at Renaissance Festivals. "My niche in magic is historical magic shows – everything from the sixteenth century to the present," he says. "I try to include as many authentic props as possible, and the costuming is authentic. The humor and storylines are a mix of historical and modern because most people wouldn't get sixteenth century humor. It's not relevant. I use modern language and give the history of some of the effects as I do them and explain that a lot of the magic they see today has been around for hundreds and hundreds of years."

Penn recommends anyone interested in learning magic to head to the library. "Check out the magic books. They're always checked out, so put your name on the waiting list." He adds that there are YouTube videos and DVDs that teach magicians, but nothing is as good as a book with detailed drawings and diagrams of the hand movements.

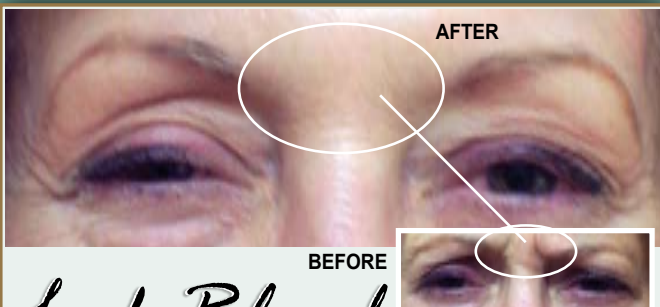
He doesn't regularly attend the Norfolk magicians meetings anymore, but is a part of Williamsburg's local Society of American Magicians, Assembly 226 that meets on a monthly basis.

"There are classes," Penn says. "I'm teaching a weeklong magic camp at Thomas Nelson Community College this July at the Historic Triangle Campus. I'm not going to tour this summer like I have for the past decade because my wife and I are expecting a baby in August." Penn will also lead ghost tours in Williamsburg as his stage character William the Conjuror, a colonial magician.

Magicians are prevalent around the area. Chowning's Tavern continues to have a resident magician. "One of my former students," Penn adds. "Many of the festivals around the area like An Occasion for the Arts, Bay Days – those usually have a magician performing. Even New Town has street performers, not sure about magicians. I'm turning 50 this year, so the lure of playing the street has waned for me."

His years of performing have had an impact on his off-duty life. His performances are more than a series of tricks; they incorporate the history and stories of the effects. "I have no problem weaving a story," Penn says. "I want everything to be a story. Your life is your story. The character of William the Conjuror has gotten under my skin. Often, I feel more comfortable in period clothing than modern clothing. My daughter who will be nine in July, with her, I try to teach her that. When she has a school project or presentation, I tell her to make it big. Tell a story. Don't just give the facts."

Facts mean little without the context, without the characters and storylines that created the facts. "This can be applied to any job," Penn Russell explains, "whether an artist, a pizza maker, a ship builder, the story is the key. That is where the magic is." NDN



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DR. BRUCE MAYER

Back to Basics

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Doctors and patients are a team working toward the shared goal of sustained good health of the patient. That, Dr. Bruce Mayer says, is the core of what to expect from your own doctor.

It wasn't until he had a wake up call from an experience with a patient that he realized he was not meeting his own expectations.

"Back at a past clinic," Dr. Mayer describes of his hurried pace, "I had a patient that said, 'Doctor, I don't think you heard a word I said.' That was like a slap in my face. I really concentrated on what she said after that."

That day from his patient demanding atten-



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tion, put Dr. Mayer on the path to establishing what he calls "old-fashioned care."

Dr. Mayer first visited Virginia when he was still a student. "I was here on the honors committee, the one student on that faculty honors committee, at my alma mater Hobart College out of Geneva, New York," he says. "We had a conference in Virginia back in the mid 1970s and right in the peak of fall colors. I always said I wanted to live here." Williamsburg's proximity to both the mountains and the ocean are aspects that he loved.

He came back to the peninsula area in 1991 to join a medical group.

He also spent time working in an urgent care facility before being employed at Fort Eustis as a civil service doctor in their emergency room, and later, in their family practice clinic.

In the early 2000s, Dr. Mayer was part of a six-doctor clinic in a small town in rural Virginia. When he started there, he was told to manage the clinic his way.

A few months later, a patient came in with signs of a heart attack.

"He should have called 911," Dr. Mayer stresses, "but when he came to our door, we called 911 and attended to him. One of the things you can do, besides giving oxygen and a

secured. I was fine with that caution. I would take full responsibility."

The order went through the channels, but then a few weeks later an administrator called to ask why he wanted morphine in his clinic. He went through the story again for the administrator and was told the request would have to go through the pharmacy committee.

"This was a six-doctor clinic," he emphasizes. "Who was on the committee? All you had to do was ask the six doctors. I asked 'When does the pharmacy committee meet?' They answered that

it was an annual meeting, which would have been about eight months away. I was supposed to be the chief medical officer, but I couldn't get the tools I needed."

The red tape overwhelmed him.

"I decided at that point that dealing with that type of bureaucracy was not the best place for me," Dr. Mayer says. He decided to open his own practice.

As his own boss, he implemented the pa-

"I have a very unique approach. Some people say it's suicidal."

- Dr. Bruce Mayer

few other modalities to cool him down, is you give him morphine intravenously to really cool him down, so the heart is less stressed."

The clinic didn't have morphine stocked on site. The patient survived and recovered in the local hospital. Not having the medicines Dr. Mayer needed prompted him to call his boss.

"I asked to get morphine kept in the clinic," he says. "I knew that since it was morphine it had to be under lock and key and extremely

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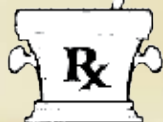
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tient-first philosophy he had tried to adhere to for years. He decided that he would be available when patients needed him, knowing that not everyone could schedule their emergencies to his business hours.

"I have a very unique approach. Some people say it's suicidal," Dr. Mayer says with a laugh. "I'm a solo practice, most doctors join groups. I just feel that you deliver better care if you don't have barricades, fences, walls. I just tear down the walls between doctor and patient without the bureaucracy of large offices. From the very first visit with a patient, I give them my personal cell phone number and my personal e-mail. Patients are just blown away. They say, 'Are you crazy? Don't you have a life?' I don't really get that many calls in the middle of the night or on weekends. But, it's better patient care when I know from the onset that a patient is having a particular symptom."

Sometimes all it takes is a phone call with the patient describing what the concern is. He

documents everything so he has an extensive history on the patient's condition.

"Communication is crucial between a doctor and his patient," he adds. "I consider myself

ing or at least a plan for treatment. "Be assertive, write it down, and demand answers."

Know your own health history, he adds. "I see this all the time. A patient says they went to a surgeon and had a biopsy. I ask about the results of the biopsy, and the patient doesn't know. When you get a biopsy, a blood test, an x-ray, a MRI or CAT scan, or an ultrasound, it is your right to know the diagnosis, the interpretation – normal or abnormal," Dr. Mayer stresses. "Things can slip through the cracks in all medical offices, but badger that office until you get your lab results. Be involved in your health."

Dr. Bruce Mayer had a wake-up call from a patient years ago that changed his direction. His vision of medical care is that of a team effort between doctor and patient where communication is paramount.

"This is basic care," he says. "That's the way I would want to be treated, so that's how I work with my patients." NDN

"I consider myself an old fashioned country doctor."

- Dr. Bruce Mayer

an old-fashioned country doctor."

Dr. Mayer explains that there are certain things that patients should demand of their doctor, things he tells his own mother to insist on with her doctor:

"Do not leave the office until you know what the diagnosis is," Dr. Mayer says. The reason a patient goes to see the doctor must have a find-

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SHAYNA WALKER

Garden Party!

By Greg Lilly, Editor

The fair weather coaxes neighbors out to their yards, the parks, and the river banks. Isn't the weekend perfect for an outdoor party? Shayna Walker says it is. Shayna is a Williamsburg wedding planner who has had experience coordinating many outdoor events in the area. A garden party at your home can be a simple cook-out or a more elaborate affair, and Shayna has some tips to help it go smoothly.

"A lot of considerations go into an outdoor event, but it's all based on size," she says. "If you have six people coming over, you can set up a table in the backyard and have a great time, but if you are going to have 20, 30, 40... or 100, it becomes more complex."

Originally from Santa Clarita, California just outside of Los Angeles, Shayna first came



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

to Williamsburg as a college student.

"This was pre-Internet times," she explains. "I discovered in community college that I was good in history, and I really didn't have a direction as to where to pursue that. I found a book that listed the best history colleges. I applied to William and Mary, Cornell, and American

University. William and Mary was the prettiest. I know that's a really lame reason, but it was fun."

Shayna graduated with a degree in history. She returned to Los Angeles and worked for a cruise line in the catering division. She had earned a certificate in International Tour Man-



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agement while in community college.

"We moved back here," Shayna says, "at the beginning of the economic decline in California. This area had a more affordable cost of living. I had planned a few weddings in California and decided to start a business doing that here. That was in 2004."

She found that her tour management background provided a firm foundation for event planning because of her interaction with the conference systems at different hotels. "It's logistically intensive," she says. "It was the same thing working for the cruise line. I was planning events for five to six hundred travel agents all over the world. That translated into a wedding and events planning career."

Shayna is not exclusively a wedding planner, but that is her specialty. Managing large events like weddings has given her unique insight to planning outdoor events. Many of the mundane details tend to get overlooked by people with little experience in planning.

"There are a lot of logistics in the evaluation of the property or the venue of an event," Shayna explains. "You have to evaluate the needs of the client, translating those into a list of requirements like tents, landscaping, permits, or totally re-adjusting the client's view of the event because maybe they don't understand the logistics of a tent – you could burst through gas pipes, things like that. There are a lot of things that go into getting the right equipment out to the location, like a portable kitchen if you do a larger event."

Her job tends to be a lot of project management. "I'm very much a logistical coordinator," she adds.

To create a fun garden party, Shayna suggests several aspects to consider. First, she says to define exactly what you are trying to achieve. "What is your goal? Do you want lots of guests?" she asks.



Q&A

An Interview with Nan Piland

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condition, mechanical condition, upgrades of the interior, floor plans, or buyer trends.

Next, the appraisal. Market value is the estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of valuation between an educated buyer and a reasonably motivated seller in an arms-length transaction after proper marketing wherein the parties had each acted knowledgeably, prudently, and without undue influence, as defined by the Uniform Residential Appraisal Report. This is a snapshot view of the property generally using the sales comparison approach for typical residential sales. The state licensed real estate appraiser interprets and measures the adjustments that need to be made between the subject property and the recent sold comparable properties for items such as the date of the sale, location, style, amenities, square footage, and site size, just to name a few. These sold comparables have been proven by the market as they have closed recently by a ready, willing, and able buyer.

Automated Valuation Models or AVM's are a mathematical modeling using the tax assessors value, information about the subject property, recent sales history in the geographic area, and transactional information. Various real estate websites use

these figures to give users an estimate of value. The disadvantage of using this type of valuation is that they don't take into account condition, floor plan, or proper neighborhood geographic boundaries. It is computer-generated value that does not have the adjustments that an appraiser would have access to or the current sales data that an assessor would have access to.

Before putting a property on the market, your REALTOR® will complete a Comparative (or competitive) Market Analysis (CMA). It can range from a simple two page report to a detailed 50-page report depending on the agent and your needs. The standard report will include the following: active listings that are critical to review as these are competing for a buyer against your home; pending listings as they are recently under contract but not yet closed; and sold listings within the last six months as an appraiser will also be using them for their analysis. It is important to look at listings that are withdrawn, cancelled or expired as well as they are commonly referred to as "rejected by the market". As part of the CMA, look carefully at the active listings and position your home objectively in that lineup as today's buyers have access to a great amount of data. They are visiting your competition and will know if your home is priced to sell in the market.

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"Do you want a really fun party with games? What are the ages of the guests? What are the dynamics of the event you picture in your mind?"

Once you have the goal of the party defined, go out to your backyard or other outdoor venue and look at the space. "Will it accommodate what you have in mind or will modifications need to be made? Is it a fancy tea party that will need landscaping? Will it be on a July evening when the mosquitoes are most active? Take into consideration the guests' comfort," Shayna advises. "What types of facilities will be needed? How will you prepare your house for an influx of guests? Sometimes it's a plumbing issue or a power issue if you have a large party."

When you evaluate your space, Shayna advises to always have a rain plan too. "I tell all my clients," she says, "having a rain plan is the only guarantee that it will not rain." Look at your indoor space and take that into consideration when making the outdoor plans. "Can this party be moved inside if rain comes? If your indoor space does not accommodate what your outdoor plans are, and your outdoor plans cannot be changed at the last minute, then you need to make serious backup plans. Will you book an alternate indoor space, set up a tent, open up your garage?" A rain plan is essential for a summer garden party.

Don't forget those around you – your neighbors. "Think about noise ordinances and permits," Shayna says, "depending on how many people you will have. Even with 20 or 30 people in the backyard, certain neighborhoods don't appreciate that. You might need to at least notify the neighbors."

Is it good etiquette to invite the neighbors? "That," Shayna says, "depends on the event. You wouldn't invite them to a bridal shower or a birthday party for a friend they don't know. For a barbeque, you should extend an invitation or at least warn them that there will be people coming to your outdoor party."

Once the logistics are in place, you can think about the look and feel of the party. "What's the picture you are looking for: Is it a picnic with checkerboard tablecloths and baskets of silverware or a fancy ladies' tea with a caterer to prepare and serve the food?" Shayna asks. The design of the event brings a set of decisions for table settings, décor, maybe a tent or extra seating.

When do you need help with an event? Shayna says that depends on your personal limits. "Say you're having 20 people over for a barbeque," she describes. "If that's something you do often, it's just four hours of friends together playing games, then most people can handle that themselves. When you start to feed larger crowds, that's a key time to bring in at least a caterer."

If you have an expectation of a more formally formatted party where the guests go from one activity to another, an expectation for the event to run like clockwork (for example a wedding or a corporate seminar), you will want someone to come in and help you. "If it's an event that's bigger or more complex than you have ever done, then it's a good time to bring in help," Shayna advises.

When a party gets too big for the backyard, Shayna lists some of her favorite venues in the area with indoor/outdoor options (remember the rain plan): "Legacy Hall in New Town, the Williamsburg Community Building on North Boundary Street, and Yorktown's Freight Shed. You can plan an outdoor event at these facilities but can always take it inside if the weather turns bad. These places are very popular, so the schedule fills up early."

Call a few neighbors and invite them over for a barbeque. Shayna Walker says when fun is the objective, big or small, your garden party will be a success. NDN

Hey Neighbor!

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

To submit your non-profit event to Hey Neighbor! send a paragraph with your information to: heyneighbor@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

"I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE"

May 19-June 18, 2011

Musical comedy by Joe DiPietro & Jimmie Roberts. 200 Hubbard Lane, Williamsburg Players. Performances Wed - Sat, 8:00 pm. Matinee at 2:00 pm on May 28, June 4, 11, 19. Tickets \$17.00 with \$2 discount for seniors, students and groups of 20 or more. This celebration of the mating game takes on the truths and myths behind that contemporary conundrum known as the relationship. Information: www.williamsburgplayers.org or (757) 229-0431.

Hey Neighbor!

TOANO ROTARY GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 20, 2011

Blackheath Course at Ford's Colony. Registration @ 11:30 a.m. Shotgun Start @ 1:00 p.m. \$500 - Team of four with signage. \$120/player if registered after April 20, 2011. For more information, contact Mark Tison @ 757-565-5795

Hey Neighbor!

YARD SALE TO BENEFIT LACKEY FREE CLINIC

May 21, 2011

8am-2pm. York Assembly of God, 7826 George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17), Yorktown, VA.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Beginning May 21, 2011

At the Ellipse Garden in Freedom Park, the intersection of Longhill and Centerville Roads. All programs run 10:00-11:30a.m. May 21st - Art in the Garden with Linda Miller; June 18th - Growing Antique Roses; July 16th - Butterflies - educational, planting milkweed, and tagging; August 20th - Butterflies - educational, planting milkweed, and tagging; For more information and additional dates contact 220-3575 or www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org

Hey Neighbor!

2ND ANNUAL PIRATES COVE MINI-GOLF SCHOLARSHIP TOURNAMENT

May 21, 2011

The Virginia Legacy is hosting a Mini-Golf tournament to benefit their VLSC Scholarship fund (financial aid for those requiring assistance). The event is held at Pirates Cove Adventure Golf, 2001 Mooretown Rd. \$15 for 1 golfer, \$50 for foursome. Tee times are every 10 minutes. Contact Tracy Trueblood, 757-253-8572 or admin@valegacysoccer.com at Virginia Legacy for more information.

Hey Neighbor!

FAMILY FUN FEST

May 21, 2011

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway. With so many fun things for children to do, you won't want to miss James City County's annual family event. Costumed characters, clowns, face painting, balloon artists, moon rides, Touch-a-Truck, a petting zoo and the Gamer Bus are

all featured. Offered in partnership with Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, Williamsburg Area Bicyclists and Colonial Roadrunners. \$3/car parking fee. For details, call 259-5353 or log onto www.jc-cEgov.com/recreation.

Hey Neighbor!

RUN FOR THE DREAM 8K, FUN RUN FOR KIDS & HALF MARATHON

May 21 - 22, 2011

Saturday: Fit to Run, Fit to Dream 8K Run/Walk and Fun Run for Kids; Sunday: Run for the Dream Half Marathon. Races begin at the College of William & Mary's Phi Beta Kappa Hall. The Run for the Dream benefits An Achievable Dream and military Wounded Warrior programs. To register and for more information, see www.RunForAchievableDream.com or call (757) 559-9472.

Hey Neighbor!

SIGHTSEEING OF MAGNIFICENT MANORS ON THE JAMES RIVER!

May 22nd - May 27th, 2011

Three Centuries of Gracious Living: Country Manors and Town Homes. Register with Program # 7301 at <http://roadscholar.org> Questions? Call (local office) 757-221-3649 or 1-800-454-5768

Hey Neighbor!

DONATIONS NEEDED - WILLIAMSBURG PLAYERS BUILDING FUND

The Williamsburg Players, incorporated in 1957, is getting ready to celebrate their 55th season of presenting Community Theatre. Our new theatre is expected to open this fall.

Please support this wonderful community resource by making a financial donation, which can be mailed to us at PO Box 91, Williamsburg, VA 23187. The Williamsburg Players is a 501-(3)-c non-profit corporation; your gifts are tax deductible.

Hey Neighbor!

EXPERIENCE THE CELEBRATION - WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD SPRING CONCERT

May 21st at 8p.m.; May 22nd at 4 pm

The celebration of the Guild's 35th season culminates with a diverse program of commissioned choral works. One is a world premiere written by rising young American composer Dan Forrest for the Guild. The second half of the program features Rodgers & Hammerstein Broadway favorites. The performances will take place in the sanctuary of the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, 215 Richmond Road, Williamsburg. Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door; for more information, call 757-220-1808 or visit www.williamsburgchoralguild.org.

Hey Neighbor!

CLEAN THE BAY DAY

June 4, 2011

9 am-12 pm. James City County, PRIDE, and the James City County Citizen Coalition, J4C, are organizing numerous cleanup sites in James City County. Litter pollutes our waterways, degrades our neighborhoods, and kills marine and other wildlife. Come join 7,000 fellow Virginians in removing unhealthy debris from our cherished waterways throughout the Chesapeake



Visit us on the web for information about healthy food choices and fitness in greater Williamsburg.

Bay watershed. To clean up litter or coordinate volunteers at a cleanup site in your area, visit cbf.org/clean, call 800/SAVEBAY, or get in touch with your local contact: Craig Metcalfe – cmetcalf2@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

SECOND ANNUAL ICELANDIC SEAFOOD FEST 8K RUN

June 4, 2011
7 p.m. This is an 8K evening run/walk and 1 Mile Fun run/walk for all levels. The race course is in the upscale Oakland Industrial Park in Newport News adjacent to Ft. Eustis off of Rt. 60 and opposite the Pepsi Bottling Plant. \$35 up to May 27. No Race day registration. To register and for more information, see www.icelandic8krun.com. All proceeds from this race benefit ALS Association, American Heart Association, and Shelby Blevins Educational Trust. This is a Colonial Road Runners Grand Prix Event.

Hey Neighbor!

DANCING IN THE STREETS

June 5, 2011
5:00 - 8:00 pm at The Williamsburg Community Building. Shag dancing lessons by ShagN4U, beach music by Bobby Hornsby as DJ, cool

street food by The Virginia Chefs Association, sangria by La Tienda, beer by Williamsburg Alewerks, raffles, tickets are available now \$35.00 each - All proceeds benefit Hospice House. Call 253-1220 or visit www.williamsburghospice.org

Hey Neighbor!

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC SCHOOL FIVE-DAY SUMMER SESSION

June 6-10 and July 25-29, 2011
Morning or evening classes are available for ages 4-35 months (with parent) and ages 3-5 years (without parent). Age appropriate activities are offered in a balanced program of singing, movement, listening, and playing instruments. Introduction to keyboard is available for ages 6-7. The Early Childhood Music School is located at Williamsburg United Methodist Church, 500 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185. For information contact Cindy Freeman, Director, at 757-229-1771 X 108 or cfreeman@williamsburghumc.org.

Hey Neighbor!

17th ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

June 9, 2011
Williamsburg Christian Retreat

Center golf benefit at the Kiskiack Golf Club in Williamsburg. Shotgun start at 12:30 pm. Sponsorship opportunities range from Associate Sponsor (\$250) to Tournament Sponsor (\$1500). Individual golfers also welcome. Dinner following event at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center with awards and prizes. Proceeds benefit WCRC's year-round ministry. Visit www.wcrc.info to download a brochure or contact wcrc@wcrc.info for more information.

Hey Neighbor!

GIANT INDOOR YARD SALE

June 10 - 11, 2011
Everything for the home: tools, furniture, books, kitchen, apparel and much more. Proceeds go to church programs and outreach. 3051 Ironbound Road, Friday (5-8 pm) and Saturday (8 am - noon). For more information: www.wuu.org, Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists.

Hey Neighbor!

THE EVENING OF ELEGANCE

June 12, 2011
LeCercle Charmant, Inc. announces its signature event to be held at the Williamsburg Marriott at Kings-

mill. \$65/ticket. Cocktails and Silent Auction start at 6:00 pm. - Dinner at 7:00 p.m. and a wonderful evening of DANCING to the music of the RA JAZZ Band. Proceeds benefit the organization's Scholarship Fund and other community projects.

LeCercle Charmant, the Charming Circle of young professional African American women (mostly teachers at the time), was organized in 1944. The group sponsors social activities, supports community service projects, and awards Scholarships on a yearly basis. For ticket information, call Margaret Stockton at 757-258-8727.

Hey Neighbor!

8TH ANNUAL WARHILL 5K RUN/WALK

June 25, 2011
The Virginia Legacy Soccer Club is hosting this Colonial Road Runners Grand Prix event to benefit the VLSC Scholarship fund (financial aid for those requiring assistance). Contact Frances Ford for registration or information at (757) 871-8813 or email Tracy.Trueblood@valegacyssoccer.com

HeyNeighbor@cox.net

1/2 PRICE APPETIZER OR DESSERT!

...WITH ANY ENTREE.

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Williamsburg's
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
photo challenge

Find the 12 differences between the original photograph (top) and the altered photograph (bottom).

Enjoy!



**Look for the answers
in the next issue of
Next Door Neighbors.**



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IS IT YOUR TIME FOR A NEW BEGINNING?



101 FIRESTONE

Wonderful 3 BR, 2.5 BA home in Ford's Colony. Colonial details including a replica tavern FP in great room. Large eat-in kitchen, formal DR & screened porch w/pond view. First floor master w/large walk-in closet & jetted tub. Two second floor BRs also feature walk-in closets & ample loft area. Make an appointment to see this home's beautiful custom features today. Offered at \$394,000.



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BERKELEY'S GREEN

Abundance of natural light, great living space, updated granite kitchen, large yard with irrigation, close enough to walk to the pool. Popular schools! An opportunity to live in one of Williamsburg's favorite neighborhoods! \$299,900. Open House - May 22nd 1pm to 3pm.



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105 ANDREWS CIRCLE

Colonial style home w/modern comforts. 3 BR, 4 BA, main floor master suite, large gathering room w/FP, formal DR & study. Eat-in kitchen features island w/gas cook top, breakfast bar & casual dining area w/wet bar. Extensive mill work includes crown & dental moldings, wainscoting, HW floors throughout. Beautifully landscaped .50 acre lot w/fenced rear yard. \$579,900.



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3 BRs, 4 BAs, 3540 sqft. Bright open floor plan with cathedral ceilings. 1st floor master suite. Upgraded kitchen with granite and stainless steel appliances. Large basement - partially finished. Peaceful deck with wooded view. Lots of storage.

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Ford's Colony. The water lovers paradise! It even has its own dock! Great open spaces for family and entertaining. HW floors, crown moldings/trim, wood columns, furniture style cabinetry thru-out. Gourmet kitchen w/custom features, breakfast nook overlooking water. First floor master sitting area overlooking deck & water.

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Light and airy home with neutral colors throughout. Great floor plan. Eat-in kitchen with lots of cabinets that is open to family room with gas FP and vaulted ceiling. Front and back staircases, tray ceilings in Master and DR, new carpet throughout second floor, new HVAC, new water heater. Level and wooded lot with large & private backyard with deck and shed. \$344,900.



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