

September 2009

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VOL. 3, ISSUE 9

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

Teachers and Mentors

**W-JCC 2009
Teachers of the Year**
Scott Bowser,
Cynthia Lee, Stan Whalen

**Dave Coppinger
Barbara Husted
Hubert T. Alexander, Sr.**

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Being a teacher or mentor in life may or may not include a job title or a paycheck. There are no age limitations or specific requirements. There are no time limits, rules or regulations. Being a teacher or mentor merely requires that you are pretty good at something and you have enough passion for your area of expertise to share your knowledge with someone else with the goal of furthering that individual's development.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

The folks we interviewed for this issue have been highlighted for their admirable qualities as teachers and mentors. Some, like the 2009 W-JCC Teachers of the Year, have been most deservedly recognized publicly for their dedication and success motivating and educating students. Others, like Dave Coppinger, Barbara Husted, and Hubert Alexander, have been quietly leading their lives investing their time and themselves in others because of their keen interest in what they do and their desire to make a difference.

Whether you know the locals we have highlighted in this issue or not, I think you will agree with me that these are people who are inspiring and well-deserving of the public recognition they may receive from our efforts to share their very motivating stories. I encourage you to read them all and find out more about your Williamsburg neighbors. NDN

Inside

PAGE 3
W-JCC 2009
Teachers of the Year

PAGE 17
Holly Carlson
Making French Fun!

PAGE 8
Dave Coppinger
A Leader for Our Youth

PAGE 23
HEALTH
Bill Hansell
Teaching Tai Chi

PAGE 12
Barbara Husted
53 Years of Teaching and Still Going Strong

PAGE 27
HOME
Andrew Koenig
Master Arborist

Lisa W Cumming
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Teachers to Remember

W-JCC 2009 Teachers of the Year

By Muna Killingback

"They're the single most important profession in the country because they're shaping the future."

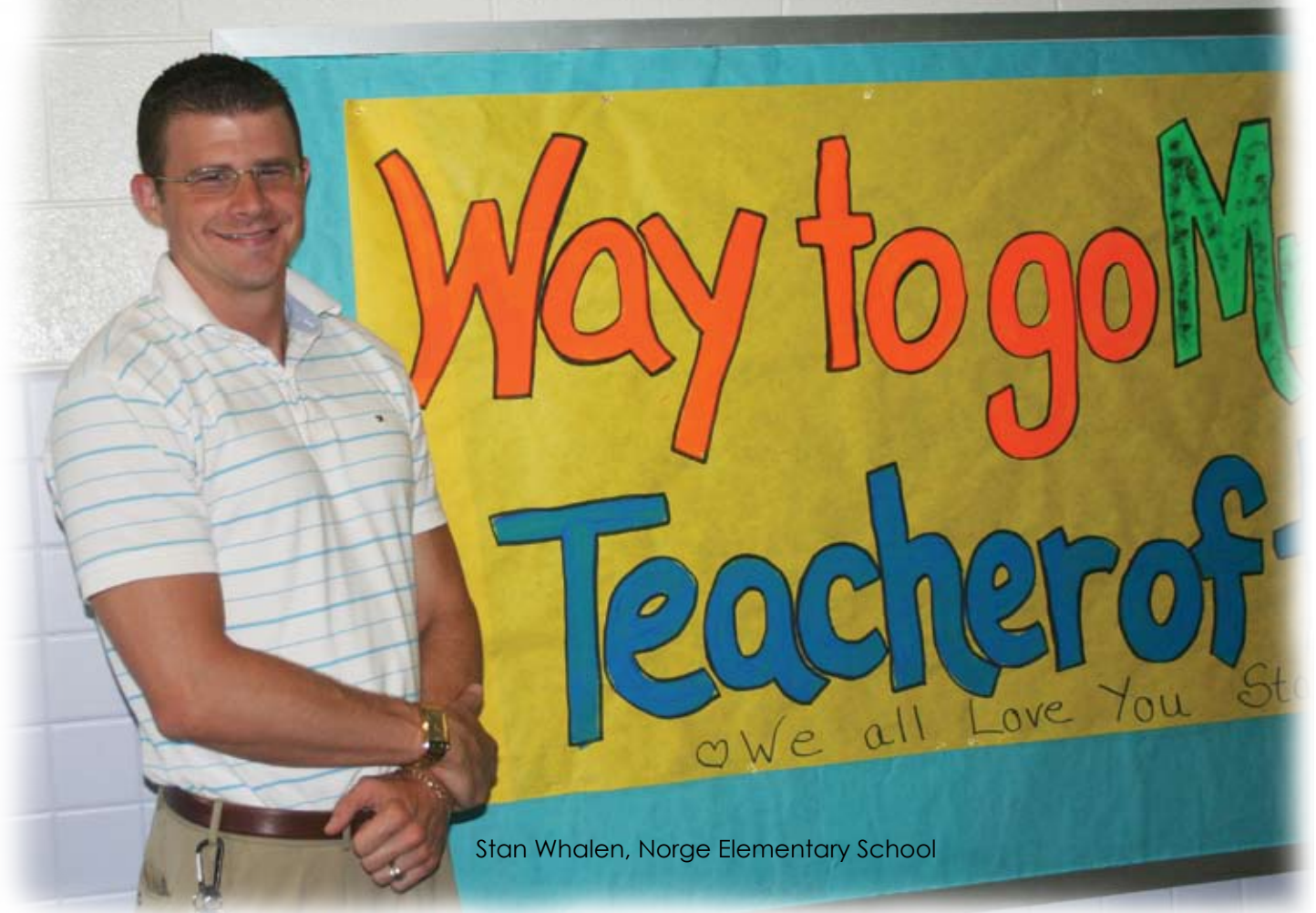
- Pulitzer prize winning author and longtime teacher, the late Frank McCourt

Williamsburg area schools are fortunate to have many outstanding teachers in both private and public schools. While there are any number of teachers who are specially recognized throughout the year for their work, we have selected three to highlight - this year's teachers of the year in Williamsburg-James

City County Public Schools: Stan Whalen, Cynthia Lee and Scott Bowser. According to Dr. Gary Mathews, W-JCC Public School Superintendent, these individuals were selected for going the "extra mile in creativity, community service, caring or a combination of all of these." Each of these individuals also

has a passion for their profession that comes with a strong love and respect for children.

Stan, a 5th grade teacher at Norge Elementary School and the 2009 Teacher of the Year for Elementary Schools, believes teachers should connect with the children they teach. "Love kids - love them, and enjoy



Stan Whalen, Norge Elementary School



Cynthia Lee,
Warhill High School

them,” Stan says. “Teaching is loving the kids, allowing them to be themselves, to use their creativity. I would hate it for kids to conform to one thing. Just love them - period.”

Scott Bowser, Teacher of the Year for Middle Schools who teaches Science at Toano Middle School, shares the belief that teachers should connect with students by caring, communicating, and coping. He also thinks it is important to have compassion and the ability to listen. “One of my students, Ricky, gave me the best advice,” Scott says, not focusing on the words the student used, but the impact of his message. “He said: ‘Would you just shut up and listen?’ They just want someone to listen and show that they care. Once I took that advice, my teaching days have been better.”

The Toano Middle School PTA describes Scott as being “smart, inspirational, funny, and challenging”. He has a sense of humor and renown love of delicious food (“cheesecake takes the edge off a bad day”) that makes his lessons entertaining as well as educational. Scott likes the middle school age group because they are at an age of development where they are expanding their minds. “You can discuss things with them and they are starting to have opinions,” Scott says. “They are in the middle - they’re not quite adults, but not small children, so you can talk to them; you can still inspire them and influence them. I like to watch them change. They come in as young 6th graders and when they leave to go to high school, they have matured physically, emotionally, and cognitively.”

However, Scott admits that middle school students can be difficult at times as well. “The teachers have chosen to be in the middle school,” he says. “We’ve been trained to deal with their quirks and their emotions and how they’re changing. They will survive.”

Cynthia Lee, Teacher of the Year for High Schools and a veteran mathematics instructor at Warhill High School, believes teachers have to put the student before the subject.



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“You teach individual children first - and then your subject comes after that,” Cynthia says. “You can’t assume that everyone is coming into the classroom ready to learn what you want to teach them. There are so many other competing factors in their lives.” Cynthia notes that many of her students have jobs outside of school, often working late and coming into class tired. “We have to work with that,” she adds.

Cynthia also thinks it is important for parents of high school students to be involved. “Know what your children are studying - know what they’ve learned,” advises Cynthia. “Every day, touch base with your kids. It’s important to kids that their parents think that what they’re doing is important. Most kids want their parents to appreciate them, to know what they’re doing, and to be interested in what they’re doing. They want to please their parents and if their parents take an interest in their education, they’ll want to do well in school.”

Stan says he would tell parents two things:

Scott Bowser,
Toano Middle School



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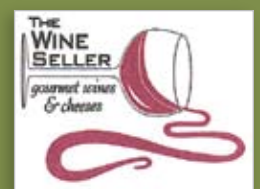


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“Number one, love your children unconditionally,” he says. “With loving comes support. Support what they do both in school and outside. Love unconditionally, support them, and get involved. Teachers are vital in children’s lives, but parents are the foundation.”

In their own ways, each of these three exceptional teachers gives beyond what most would expect. Cynthia helps students find a quiet place to complete homework, schedules math tutors to come to Warhill High School, and arranges for honor students to tutor other students. She also creates review sheets tailored to specific students and the concepts they are struggling with. Scott is part of the AVID team (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a program that encourages students to develop the skills needed to achieve their educational goals. Stan is a 5th grade team leader, a member of the Science Committee, and a member of the KidLink Team for the Student Health Initiative Program (SHIP).

All three teachers seek to equip their students with a capacity to problem solve that will stay with them and help them far beyond the subject matter they are studying.

“I hope they can leave and find the answers to their questions,” Scott says. He would like each student to gain “a toolbox of time management, organization, higher level thinking, and problem solving skills.”

“You have to be able to think,” Scott says. “In high school, especially, they will need that toolbox of skills to be successful.”

In Stan’s class, students are encouraged to question. “What is so special about the facts and can we prove the facts to be true? I know their minds are ready,” he says. “The scientific method goes beyond science - you can take it to all subject matters. Even in reading, you’re making predictions and hypotheses, testing them, and proving them. You can even use the scientific method of problem solving in your own life.”

High school level math requires a thorough understanding of the concepts, which

cannot be learned without concentration and focus. “There are so many things competing for their (students) attention like their iPods™ and cell phones,” Cynthia says. “They are used to multitasking, but to learn math, they need to focus. They need to understand basic concepts first. And unless they truly focus, they don’t learn those concepts.”

For these teachers, teaching is not just a career, but a vocation. Stan explains for him, teaching is a higher calling. “I really believe I have been called to be around children. I believe in the power of the mind and that all children are capable of learning.”

For Cynthia, the challenges of teaching and the energy of her students keep her engaged. “Teaching is different every day. There are new challenges every day,” she says. “I love being around kids. I think they keep you young. I don’t think I ever wanted to be anything else.” NDN

Some information for this story was obtained from the W-JCC Public School website at: <http://www.wjcc.k12.va.us/content/pressrelease/PR-teacher.html>

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DAVE COPPINGER

An Adventurous Mentor

By Kelsey Pacer
Intern, University of South Carolina

On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Dave Coppinger whole-heartedly believes that this simple mantra encourages living a good life. "If you conduct your life by the (Scout) oath, you are doing well. Take the ideals to heart, and you're doing something right." He should know. He has seen hundreds of Boy Scouts grow and succeed during his 20-plus years as a leader in Williamsburg's Scouting community.

Dave first realized his love for Boy

Scouting at an early age. He began his journey as a Boy Scout when he was eleven, while living in

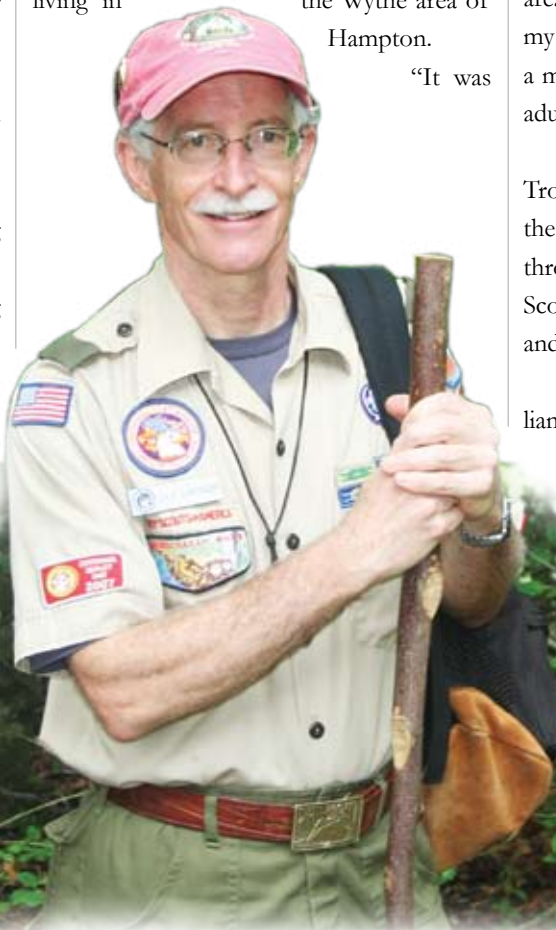
the Wythe area of Hampton.

"It was

sort of a 'Leave it to Beaver' neighborhood - tree-lined streets, a classic old Hampton area," Dave says. "I walked to school and to my Scout meetings and was fortunate to be a member of an active troop with dedicated adult leaders."

Dave earned the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 20 in 1964, and developed his love for the outdoors while camping with his troop throughout Virginia. He took a hiatus from Scouting during his final year in high school and during college.

After graduating from the College of William and Mary, Dave married, started a local



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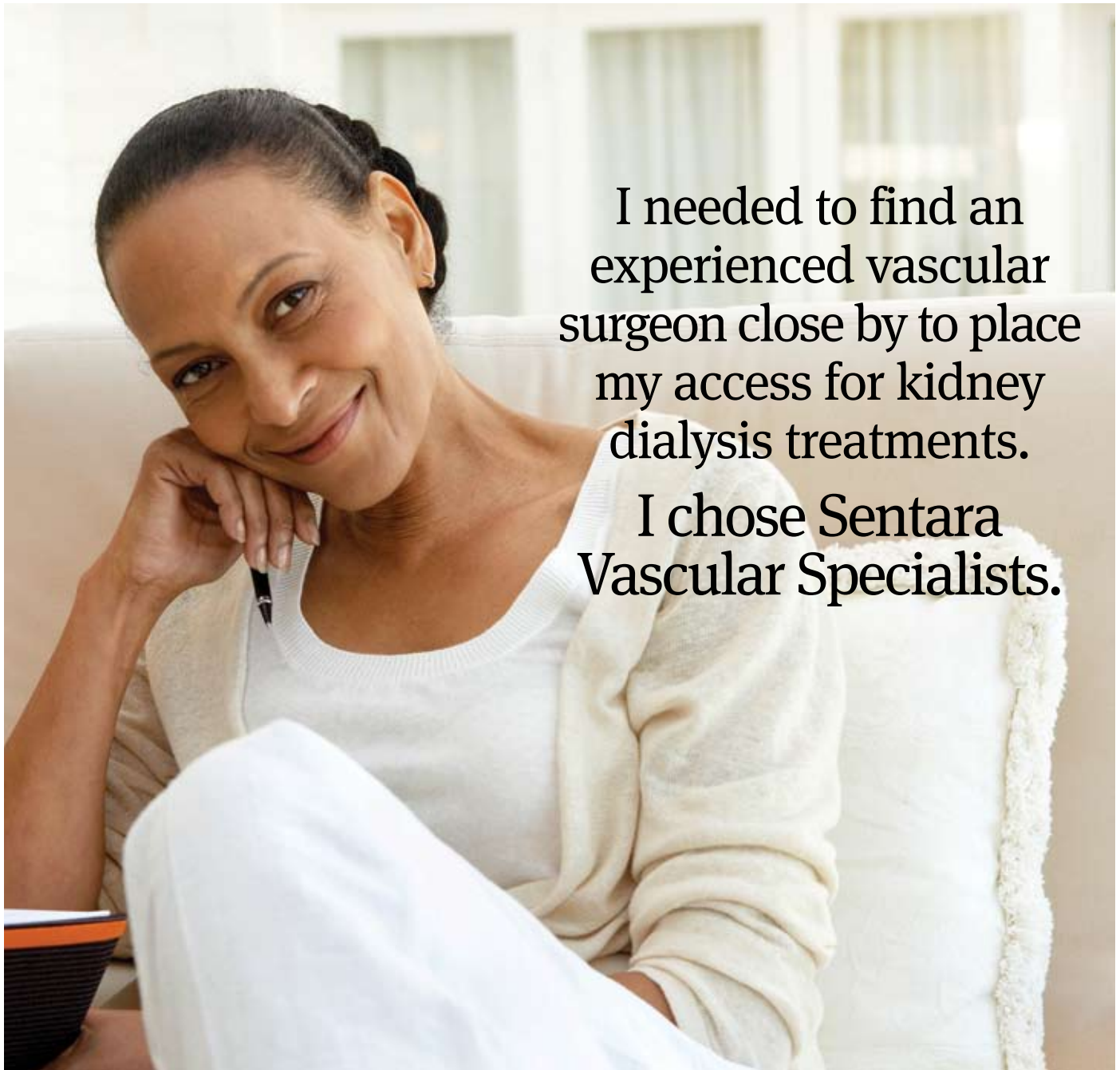


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business and became reacquainted with the Boy Scout program when his two sons began their own Scouting journeys as Cub Scouts.

Dave started out as a Den Leader while his sons were Cubs. He then served as the Committee Chairman in Cub Scout Pack 103, and finally rose to the position of Cubmaster. Dave followed his sons into the Boy Scouting joining Troop 103 in the early 90's.

"I have been fortunate to be able to participate with my sons and their Scouting friends on numerous adventures," he says. "We have hiked hundreds of miles together in the mountains of Virginia and New Mexico, cycled the length of the C&O canal three times, attended National Jamboree - the world's largest encampment of Boy Scouts - not to mention the numerous days and nights camping locally and touring our nation's historical landmarks."

The Scouting program allows parents and their kids to share some unique experiences. There are a lot of other programs kids can participate in, and many adult programs as

well, but few where they spend time together and still have a fun time.

"The fact that both my sons remained engaged in the Scouting program through high school and ultimately became Eagle Scouts, is a testimony to the quality of the program offered by our local troop and the commitment of its leaders," Dave says.

He was appointed Scoutmaster of Troop 103 a year and half ago and became the fourth Scoutmaster to serve in that capacity in the past 59 years. Williamsburg's Troop 103 is one of the oldest troops in the area. It was established in 1924, and has since cultivated some excellent Boy Scouts.

"Recently, we had a ceremony where six young men received their Eagle Scout honors. It was an unusual and rewarding experience because it is not often that six boys grow up through the ranks and receive Eagle at the same time," Dave says.

The troop usually has about 50 to 60 youth and more than 20 active adults, and together they go on some spectacular ad-

ventures. "We do a lot of camping; the expression 'Scouting is outing' is still relevant today," Dave says. "We just returned from a Camporee at the US Military Academy in West Point, which was hosted by the cadets. Over 140 different troops from all over the East Coast were there, and we participated in skill competitions, saw sky-diving and assault team demonstrations and lots of really exciting activities."

The Boy Scouts are always accompanied by adult leaders, but ultimately rely on themselves to make their experiences fun and comfortable.

"A really great trip we take is a 200-mile bicycling expedition along the C&O canal, from Cumberland, MD to Mount Vernon, VA. It's a wonderful adventure that takes about a week. The kids do all of the cooking, set up tents, and carry everything on their bikes. Our job as adults is to watch and mentor them, but ultimately they work on everything themselves. The whole idea is that kids are required to take care of themselves and

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run the activities. It's a real chance to be responsible and be a leader."

The years of involvement with the Scouts has given Dave a wealth of wonderful stories to share. One momentous experience really stands out in his mind. While it is commonly said that man impacts nature, he and his Scouts went on a trip where nature demonstrated its power.

"One of the best memories I have was a Philmont trip," Dave explains. "I took ten kids out to one of the most beautiful places in the world, the mountains of New Mexico. We climbed peaks over 12,000 feet and lived entirely on our own for ten days. When the Scouts came back, they were changed in a profound way. On the last night of the trip, we sat in a circle, and talked about what we experienced. Basically, the kids went through a life-changing event. They all said it was one of the most amazing things they had done in their lives, and I was so happy to be a part of it. It was an anchor point for a lot of things they will do in the future."

Dave believes that the Boy Scout program provides a unique opportunity for young men to become real leaders in their community and in their own lives. "There is no program as well-rounded as the Boy Scouts," he

who have served before me. Jim Fuller, Dave Nunn and Jim Etchberger are hard acts to follow. Their dedication to Scouting is legendary."

Dave has no doubt that the time com-

“There is no program as well-rounded as the Boy Scouts.”

- Dave Coppinger

explains. "You may be a phenomenal soccer player, but not a leader. You may be a great student-body president, but not be able to cook a thing. Boy Scouts is a real soup-to-nuts experience. It's a very diverse program."

He also acknowledges that it is a lot of work to be an adult leader, but it is worth the effort. Like most other Scout leaders, Dave has fulltime work to focus on. As the owner of Taproot Hearth & Patio, Dave must balance his business obligations and Scoutmaster duties. "My hat's off to the Scoutmasters

mitment and work is well worth his time. "Scouting can be lot of work, but I think the adults have a great time doing it, and it's very rewarding to see the kids grow and develop into responsible young men. I've been on many great adventures. Most I would have never been a part of outside of the Scouting program - camping, backpacking, canoeing, amazing trips in general. You have fun, you're doing a good thing, you're helping kids grow up. I've gotten every bit as much out of it as I've put into it." **NDN**

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Barbara Husted

A Lifetime of

TEACHING

By Alison Johnson



The phone call that Barbara Husted will never forget came sometime in the late 1980s. Barbara found herself talking to a man she remembered as a 5th grade boy, one of her students years earlier. Back in elementary school, his family was breaking up and he felt sad and lost.

Barbara was the one who listened to him. That little boy, she learned during the phone

call, had become a very successful business executive. Now he wanted to know if, should he fly down to Williamsburg from his home in New Jersey, could he take Barbara out to lunch at the Williamsburg Inn?

“He said, ‘I don’t think I could have made it through that year without you,’” Barbara recalls. “He told me how upset he was and that talking to me had made a difference.

I must have done something to make him happy. I tell you, hearing that was a beautiful feeling.”

That feeling is why Barbara, 75, has kept teaching for 53 years. Now a teacher’s assistant for a kindergarten class at Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School, she has brought a lifetime of experience – starting from her own childhood days tromping a mile to get

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to school – to local children.

“I just can’t let go,” she says of her work. “It gives me a reason for getting up in the morning, knowing that there’s someone I may be able to help that day. My job as a teacher is to find something inside each child so that they want to keep learning and learn to love themselves.”

Barbara learned to appreciate hard work and education as a very young child. She grew up in Leetsdale, PA, a small town outside Pittsburgh, where steel mills produced wartime weaponry. The Ohio River flowed through and a railroad line passed near Barbara’s backyard. She and her two younger sisters would stand outside and wave to soldiers riding the trains.

Barbara’s father was in a tricky situation: He was German by birth, but he worked as superintendent of a mill that produced bombs dropped on Germany. Barbara says he was under watch by federal authorities and forbidden to teach his children any foreign language. Her mother was Czech and worked long, exhausting days cleaning the mansions of rich families in the Pittsburgh area.

Money was tight. Barbara and her sisters figured out that if their shoes got too small, they could cut off the tops so their toes could still move. They needed shoes for the daily one-mile trek to school. Students also walked home for lunch unless the teachers decided the snow was so deep that they could bring their lunches to school. “We feared being late, but my teachers were very understanding,” Barbara says. “They taught me that being in control doesn’t have to mean being nasty.”


The 30 to 40 students in each class sat in alphabetically ordered rows and couldn’t make a sound in the hallways. “You came in, sat in your seat and that was it,” Barbara says. “There was no cooperative learning, small groups or special services. It was, ‘Here’s your pencil and paper, now do the work.’ But we all learned.”

When Barbara was five, a teacher taught her a lesson on tolerance that she tries to pass on to her students. When a girl named Betty went into diabetic shock on Halloween, the teacher didn’t want Betty’s classmates to be afraid of her. She comforted them, told them the illness wasn’t contagious and asked them to be kind and respectful of each other’s differences.

Barbara wasn’t much older when she decided she wanted to be a teacher herself, especially after she worked with children in a gymnastics program (Barbara is a former competitive gymnast). She took on a midnight shift at a steel mill for a semester to raise money for college and graduated from Indiana State Teachers College – now Indiana University of Pennsylvania – in seven semesters.

Barbara went on to earn a Master’s in Education from the University of Pittsburgh, where she also met her husband, Bryan. As the couple raised their three sons, they moved often for Bryan’s corporate job. Barbara has taught in schools in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland and has worked with kids from kindergarten to 8th

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grade. The journey has included hosting some famous visitors in her classrooms, including former President Bill Clinton.

"He signed a guest book, and the only assignment I gave the students was to describe exactly what his hand looked like as he signed," she says. "I wanted to see how observant they had been. Being observant in life is a very important skill."

In 2004, Barbara and her husband, now married 51 years, settled permanently in James City County. She works at Clara Byrd Baker during the school year and has helped elementary school students with special needs over the summer. Although she has mastered a stern look and expects students to do their best, she likes to give out comforting hugs and rewards for good work. "I have kids come up to me teary-eyed and say, 'I need a hug,'" she says. "I say, 'You know what? I need a hug too.'"

Barbara's warmth helps her young students adapt to school, says Phyllis Dorsey, assistant principal at Clara Byrd Baker. "As kindergarten children start on the adventure of public schooling, she provides comfort and reassurance that school is a caring place," Phyllis says. "She always takes the time to listen as children tell her their problems. She seeks out solutions and ways to meet the needs of all children."

One incentive is her understanding of how much damage an uncaring teacher can cause. Each child brings in unique gifts and baggage that teachers must understand, Barbara says. For example, kids written off as troublemakers may need a caring ear about a tough family situation – or may be so smart that they're bored at school and need more challenges.

"Kids need their teachers to look for what's special inside them," she says. "If they feel better about themselves, they're going to want to do positive things, which you hope will become a lifelong habit. They're also not going to feel the need to tear other kids down."

Given how fast academics move today, teachers have to take action when a child needs extra help or an alternative approach, Barbara says. "We've got all these benchmarks of when kids are supposed to know what, but the world doesn't work that way," she says. "No two children learn the same way."

Teachers also have to work harder to keep kids' attention than they did years ago, she believes. "Kids can make things happen with a click of a button," she notes. "Things move fast in their world. You couldn't just sit them in a row like it was in my old school. You'd have a problem."

Barbara still has plenty of energy for the classroom. Now a grandmother of nine, she stays healthy with daily vitamins and hour-long walks with a neighbor at 6 a.m. Whenever she sees something exciting – like a recent space shuttle launch on television – she always thinks about telling her students.

"To see their eyes light up and the wonder kick in," she says, "is just remarkable." NDN

ALEX ROTTER

MUSIC TEACHER

By Brandy Centolanza

Four times a week for the past year and a half, Alex Rotter has helped adults, including many senior citizens, gain a better appreciation for music as a piano teacher. Teaching piano is not new to him. Alex began his career as a piano teacher more than a dozen years ago at the Center of Music, a full-service music store in Newport News that also emphasized music education. Though his main instrument is trombone, Alex was required to provide digital piano lessons as part of his employee training with the Center of Music.

“After I saw the incredible joy the adults had with this, it just grew,” shares Alex.

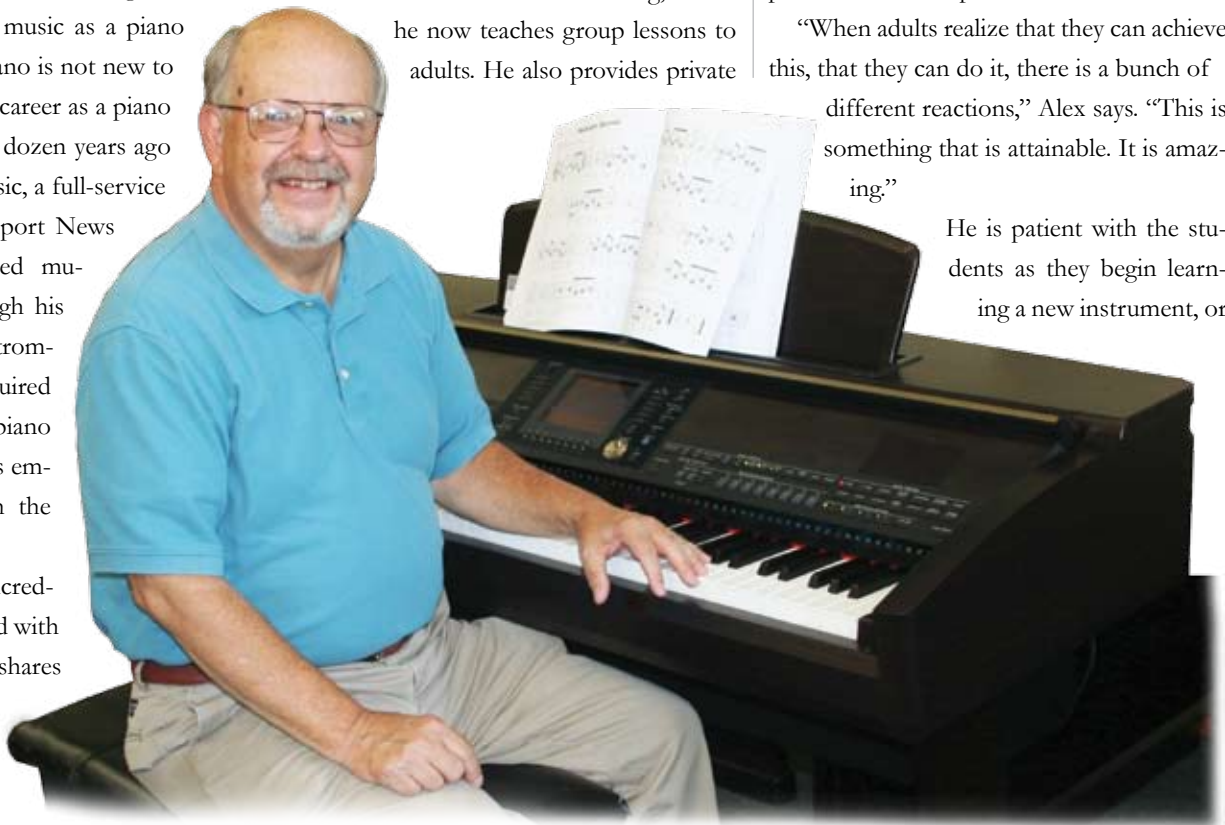
He bounced from Newport

News to a store in Chesapeake and back before settling into his current groove at Parker Piano Outlet in Williamsburg, where he now teaches group lessons to adults. He also provides private

trombone lessons to children, though he particularly enjoys the breakthroughs he experiences with his piano students.

“When adults realize that they can achieve this, that they can do it, there is a bunch of different reactions,” Alex says. “This is something that is attainable. It is amazing.”

He is patient with the students as they begin learning a new instrument, or



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attempt to play for the very first time.

"This is all done at their speed on their time table with no pushing so they can really enjoy it," he says. "They learn to have a lot of fun and enjoy the music incredibly."

ability, I was reluctant to take on something in which I didn't already have some measure of accomplishment," says Dwayne Hinton, who took lessons from Alex last year. "My fears were allayed at the first session when

Carol Hargrove also appreciates Alex as a teacher. "As a former educator, I know how important it is to establish rapport with your students," adds Carol. "Alex did this with his jokes, his patience, his encouragement and individualized instruction when it was needed. He understood that these lessons were taken primarily for self-fulfillment, so he never made them stressful."

Alex credits his high school band director, Don Paulson, in Schenectady, NY, for getting him started in music with the trombone 50 years ago. "He

was a great, great influence on me," Alex says. "He was a good role model. He would pick me up in the mornings before school and we would do duets."

Alex went on to study music at the Navy School of Music (in the Army element) at the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base in Norfolk. He returned to New York, where he met his wife, Sherry, and later came back to Virginia to live.

"My wife and I just liked the weather and the area, and decided to stay," Alex says.

Eventually, Alex would like to expand his group adult classes, as well as continue to work in partnership with James City Parks and Recreation to provide affordable piano lessons to children. After all, it's his students who make what he does worthwhile. NDN

I learned that each novice musician had individual keyboards and headphones, thus providing a private environment for making mistakes without an audience. I also discovered that Mr. Rotter is a very low-pressure instructor. He does not lurk around the students during the lessons, thus providing a relaxed setting for an anxious senior."

Gail Shepherd-Vaughan, a student from Alex's days in Chesapeake, agrees. "Who would have thought taking adult piano/keyboard lessons could have so many benefits," she says. "Not only have I learned where notes are located on the piano, but I have learned how to play familiar and fun songs. Playing has forced my brain to master the task of having my right and left hands complete different movements at the same time. This is great stimulation for my mature brain."

The program Alex uses with his students is called EZ Play Today®, which enables students to easily learn the basics of music, including rhythms and notes, on the keyboard. Participants can learn to play a song solo or with a band accompaniment in the background by the push of a button. They can also choose any song from any genre. "We've done everything from Michael Jackson to Lawrence Welk," Alex says.

While Alex appreciates all varieties of music, there are some specific kinds that he enjoys more. "I love music in general, but I am a folk singer, so I love folk music," he says. "I love to play jazz, so I love jazz. I also love classical. I listen to it all the time. I would say those are my three favorites."

Students have nothing but praise for Alex. "As a sixty-seven year old with no musical

Merci, Madame Carlson!

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Joie de vivre is a French phrase used to describe a cheerful enjoyment of life, an exultation of spirit. Holly Carlson brings those words to life.

"I can't believe they pay me to do my job," Holly, attired in her signature hot pink tee shirt, says with a big smile. "I can't wait to get my key in the door every morning!" That kind of enthusiasm creates energy, an energy that her French students at Berkeley Middle School absorb and utilize.

Holly is the teacher we all wish we had been lucky enough to have had, the teacher who made us work really hard, but made it so much fun that we barely noticed. Holly's teaching mission doesn't stop with the usual curriculum. In addition to the French skills her classes learn, Holly wants to guide her students, build their character and instill morals. She teaches

them the finer points of both table etiquette and ethics.

"We are not jellyfish - we are strong!" is one of her favorite sayings, delivered with a regal

straightening of the spine, tilt of the chin, and an assumed British accent. "We don't let others do the heavy lifting for us," Holly says. "We stand on our own two feet and set long term goals."

Holly says, "I'm interested in empowering my kids, so I tell them, 'Take a good look at your life every few months and examine it to see if you're headed in the right direction, be it a job, a relationship, or whatever. If you're not happy, change it. Envision success. School is the easiest time in your life because your teachers will tell you exactly what to do to be successful. The world does not owe you anything. Go out and create a life, a job, a future!'"

Holly's friend, Donna Davis, is a frequent substitute teacher at Berkeley and mother of two of Holly's former standout students.

"Holly has inspired my



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daughter, Brittany, to attend the Governor's School and work towards a career in language," Donna says. "Holly always made her class enjoyable, but also stressed the fact that as an accelerated course it would be on their college transcripts and used as a high school credit."

Holly's classroom décor reflects her joyful spirit; everywhere you look, something delightful catches the eye. A large collection of games fill the shelves and a pot of artificial flowers can be coaxed to sway to the strains of Glenn Miller's, *In the Mood*. Postcards thickly paper the walls, competing for space with posters and illustrations from all the different regions of France.

"I used to work in customer service for Air France and would collect all the magazines from the planes and cut out the pictures because I knew I was going back into teaching and would use them for my bulletin boards," she says. Holly has visited most of these places personally. In her perfect world she would spend her life in the shadow of a medieval castle. "France is where I really feel at home," Holly says with a nostalgic sigh. "When I'm there walking the cobblestone streets, in every picture taken I'm always smiling. My own long term goal is to own a chateau in France and run a Bed and Breakfast with my sisters."

**"We are not
jellyfish - we
are strong!"**

- Holly Carlson

In the course of 12 years of teaching the four aspects of the language - reading, writing, listening, and speaking - Holly has learned to incorporate the use of many different teaching tools; she plays word games, requires poetry memorization and leads classroom cooking lessons.

Then there is the colorfully decorated 'Birthday Beret'. Holly keeps track of all of her students' birthdays and when their special day arrives, they have the honor of donning the 'Birthday Beret' for the duration of the class. "There's an Eiffel Tower charm, a pineapple, feathers, jewels and beads - just a hodgepodge of nuttiness," Holly says with enthusiasm. "If I happen to be absent when it's a student's birthday, they are quick to speak up and ask the sub for it!"

Holly has also sponsored the French Club in the past. "We usually have about 30 members," Holly explains. "During a meeting I'll serve a typical French snack, and among other things we'll talk about fundraisers. Every year the kids try to raise enough money to pay for a meal at Le Yaca, the gourmet French restaurant in the Village Shops at Kingsmill."

At Berkeley Middle School's annual Block Party, the French Club's booth usually does a brisk business in some traditionally French cuisine, some exclusively for the gastronomically adventurous. The biggest success to date has been with their escargot. "You should see the kids lining up to eat snails!" Holly laughs. "It's like taking a dare. Of

course, I tell them it tastes like chicken, but just in case, we do have a trash can standing by.”

Middle school aged children are Holly’s favorite age group to teach. “They are still relatively innocent and enjoy coming to school,” she says. She loves her students and they respond to her teaching style. Holly teaches them far more than vocabulary and the conjugation of French verbs.

Some important lessons are best taught

without words, and this year her favorite motivational reminder, ‘We are not jellyfish - we are strong!’, will be a motto which she will have opportunity to exemplify in a very personal way.

“I was recently diagnosed with breast cancer,” Holly shares. “Fortunately, it was caught early and is very treatable. I started chemotherapy in July and expect a good outcome. I’m usually not a very good patient. I just get annoyed that something is holding me back

from living my life to the fullest.”

For a time during treatment Holly might have to let others do some of that heavy lifting, and rather than always standing independently on her own two feet, occasionally allow friends and students to show their love by offering her a shoulder to lean on. Meanwhile, Madame Carlson will be both learning and teaching her most important lesson - that sometimes our greatest strength can be shown during a time of weakness. NDN

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Dr. Armand Galfo and his wife, Mary, have lived in Williamsburg for over 50 years and have spent most of their lives devoted to students and to the love of teaching. As a retired professor in the School of Education at the College of William and Mary, Armand even donated their family home to the College before moving to Chambrel Williamsburg with his wife.

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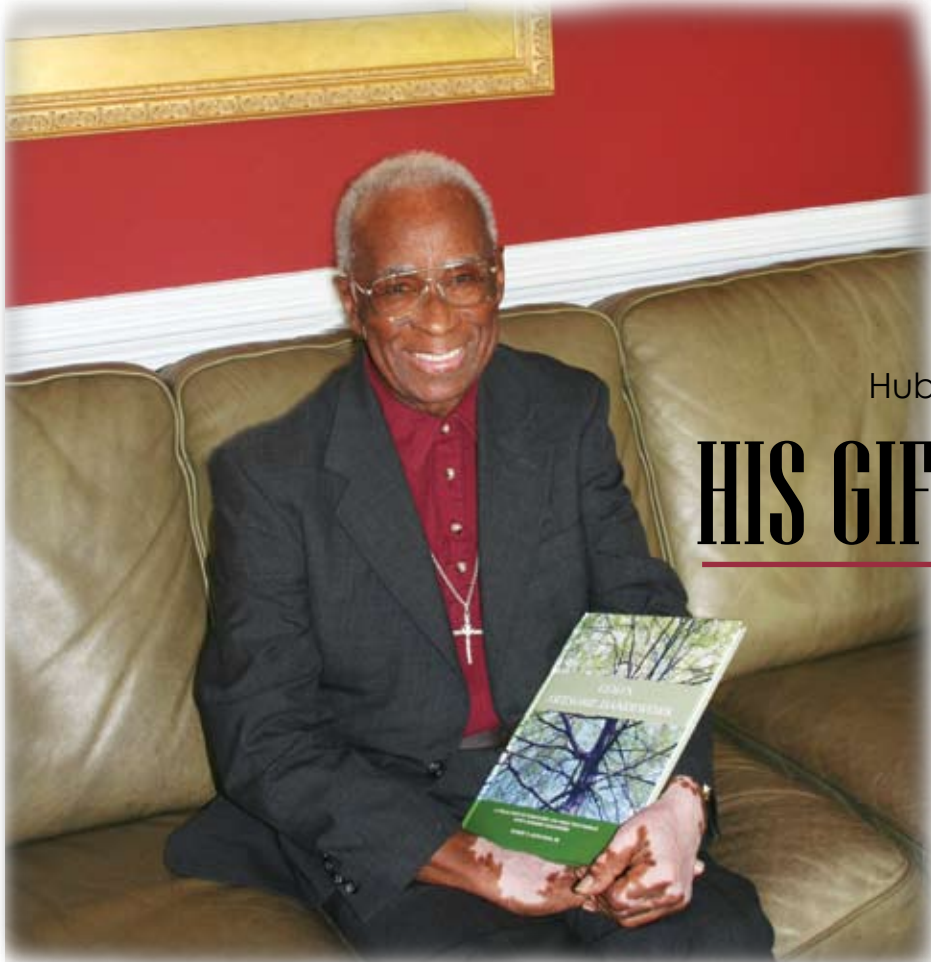
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Hubert T. Alexander, Sr.

HIS GIFT IS TEACHING

By Linda Landreth Phelps

“When God’s work for you is over, then your lights go out.” Hubert T. Alexander’s simple philosophy of life is the reason he’s still working at very close to the age of 85. “I’ve retired several times,” he smiles. “They keep giving me plaques and dinners, and then I get a call to ask if I’ll come back to work. I retired again last May...but I start class next

week!” he says with a hearty laugh. “Teaching has always been my passion and...” he pauses, visibly reluctant to appear immodest, “I guess my gift, because I’m pretty good at it.”

Academic life is precious to Hubert. Only those who feel it is a privilege can truly appreciate it. He never knew his father, and

his mother worked hard as the postmistress of Eatonville, a small Florida town which is now the oldest ongoing African American community in the country. Hubert and his seven sisters and brothers didn’t believe that higher learning was a possibility for them.

“I never expected to be able to go to college,” Hubert says. “I graduated from high

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school in 1942 and got a job just like the one in the movie, *Driving Miss Daisy*. I even drove the same kind of car. I went to Maine with this family and then they made it possible for me to go to Tuskegee Institute. I earned my degree in Commercial Dietetics, what's now known as Hospitality Management. Back then, the only two schools offering that were Cornell and Tuskegee."

The year he finished at Tuskegee, 1946, was the year his sister graduated from high school. From the meager \$165.00 a week salary that he earned at his first professional job, Hubert financed her college education, and then she in turn helped the next sibling in line. All eight eventually graduated, and between them they hold a total of 14 college degrees, including Hubert's Master's Degree in Hospitality Administration.

Hubert was personally recruited by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1957. He recalls, "Mr. Rockefeller's policy was total integration even though the rest of the

south sure wasn't integrated, and there were some people who just weren't ready to accept that. One day I arrived at the Motor House Cafeteria to inspect it and was bodily thrown out by the manager, who said I wasn't ever going to come in his kitchen and tell him what to do. Well, I called George Fauerbach, who was my mentor, and reported what happened, and before the sun went down that man was on a bus leaving town. Because Mr. Fauerbach supported me, there was very little trouble after that about my authority. Just three months after I arrived, my first big assignment was supervising the banquet for Queen Elizabeth's visit to Williamsburg. At one point I was responsible for feeding 7,000 people a day. Over the course of 32 years I had a lot of careers at CW (Colonial Williamsburg) - first as staff, then as the first

black man in management. When I left, I was the Director of Recruiting Activities."

Hubert went to Norfolk State University after his first retirement and started the

Hospitality Management program for them. "I commuted to Norfolk from here in Highland Park where my wife Bobbye and I made

our home 52 years ago, and where we raised our children," Hubert says. "After 10 years I 'retired' again, but not really, because soon I went to Virginia State University where I've been serving as Adjunct Professor for the last ten years. This past semester I was Acting Department Chair, but that was a little too much work for me. It was supposed to be part time, but as it turned out, I had to fight my way through that Hampton Roads Tunnel every day!"

Hubert's teaching gift has been utilized

"I've retired several times."

- Hubert T. Alexander

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in more than one venue. "I was raised in church and was even superintendent of my Sunday school when I was 17. In 1981, I started a Bible class at my church here, First Baptist. I like to dwell in the Word, so just my lessons on the book of Job lasted two years!" he says with a chuckle. "I taught that class until I had some health problems in 1995; someone else took over and did such a good job at it that I never went back. Now I'm just the substitute teacher."

Looking back, Hubert says, "I've been a deacon for 30 years, but there was a period of time when I turned away from the Lord. In 1979, my 75 year old mother, the sweetest lady in the world, was kidnapped from the post office that she founded and where she still insisted on working and was murdered. Then my only son, Hubert Jr., a brilliant man, died of AIDS." He paused for reflection. "I just didn't think I could serve a God who would allow things like that to happen. But I had several good friends who talked me through it and helped me realize that I didn't have to understand everything to serve Him." Every day of his life since his ordination Hubert has proudly worn around his neck an unusual silver cross that his three children gave him as a way to proclaim his profoundly tested faith.

One of the things Hubert enjoys when he's not teaching is photography. "I had a box camera in 11th grade and have been taking pictures ever since. My mother was a big influence on my fascination with trees," he says. "Everywhere she went, she planted a tree." He's collected some of his photos of the trees he's encountered in all places and seasons and chosen favorite Bible verses that echo the emotion they stir in his soul. His book, *God's Awesome Handiwork*, illustrates his deep love for the beauty of the natural world. "My big regret is I never got a picture of the ancient oak tree behind Bassett Hall." That tree may have been a seedling when Capt. John Smith set sail for Virginia in 1607. "I well remember Mr. John D, Rockefeller, Jr. sitting under that tree," Hubert says.

As an author, it appears that Hubert Alexander is branching out (so to speak) into yet another career at an age when most are winding down their activity and becoming more intimately acquainted with their recliner. Does Hubert ever intend to become a man of total leisure and, instead of just three times a week, spend every day fishing on his graceful 34 ft. boat, the Ladybug III? He smiles at the thought, but says, "I never read in the Bible that it says anything about retiring."

The Ladybug III and the recliner will have to wait a while. It seems that Hubert's work is not over and his light is still shining brightly. As a fellow nature lover, the poet Robert Frost, said:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep. NDN



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Bill Hansell
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by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor



Smooth and fluid, the movements of Tai Chi (pronounced TIE chee) flow from one position to the next in a graceful choreography based on Chinese martial arts. Bill Hansell has practiced Tai Chi for many years and teaches the system of low-impact exercise around the Williamsburg area.

Bill worked for the Army Corps of Engineers for many years before retiring and moving to Williamsburg. "Thanks to

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the Army I got to see a lot of the world - much of it in Asia,” he says. During his travels, Bill began to learn Korean and made Korean friends who introduced him to Tai Chi and martial arts. “I didn’t take it very seriously,” he explains. “I just played around with it here and there.”

Bill and his wife retired in 1995. He had some time and his wife’s honey-do lists didn’t excite him. “Christopher Wren offered a Tai Chi class, so I went there and learned a more complete set of Tai Chi than I had known,” Bill says. “I got enthralled by it.”

Since then, Bill has been learning the full gamut of Tai Chi and now does nine different types, some with bare hands or fans, others that use weapons like a spear or sword. “The reason weapons are used in Tai Chi is the philosophy of metal weapons attracting Chi energy - which is electromagnetic energy,” he explains. “Metal objects draw it, so it’s a way to get that energy into your body again and traditional Chinese medicine believes that’s good for our health.”

**“Soft is powerful;
hard is weak.”**

- Bill Hansell

Tai Chi is based on the belief of channels in the physical body, conduits that deliver energy to all internal organs and physical systems. “Chi energy maintains health,” says Bill. The movements in Tai Chi assist in this flow of energy. According to Bill, most people are ‘show me’ type people, skeptical of things like energy flows and unseen Tai Chi benefits, but as he began teaching, his doubtful students reported health improvements.

One of the first health gains his students describe to him is a better sense of balance. The Tai Chi form requires maintaining balance and incorporating awareness of weight distribution from one side to the other. The students need to concentrate on how that affects their hands, arms, hips, knees, ankles, and feet. “I’m in my late 60’s and my balance is very good,” Bill says. “I run into a lot of men and women whose balance is shot because they don’t use it.”

Along with balance comes concentration and focus. Students learn the choreography of the movements along with the purposes and intentions of each movement, all of which contribute to the introspective facet of Tai Chi. “It’s very meditative,” Bill says.

He also teaches a breathing rhythm with the moves. “I teach deep breathing because as we age,” Bill explains, “we don’t do aerobic exercise much anymore. The deep breathing reinvigorates the lungs and gets more oxygen into the blood.” Not only does the breathing increase your blood’s oxygen supply, it helps calm you. “That’s one

of the huge benefits of Tai Chi - doing the meditative breathing, your blood pressure drops,” Bill adds.

Bill is constantly learning new techniques. He prefers the Yang style of Tai Chi for its smooth, relaxed, and flowing movements. “I have studied with the direct descendents of the Yang family,” Bill says. “I’m teaching a Tai Chi fan form created by a man from the Chinese government,” he adds. “This man created it for the Olympic Committee. It’s a fan form that combines Tai Chi and Kung Fu.”

The classical image of a Tai Chi group is individuals moving in unison spread across a grassy park with long shadows cast by a rising sun. “The sun rise brings energy,” Bill says. “The early morning classes have to do with Chi energy. If you’re doing Tai Chi in the morning, in the Northern Hemisphere, face south because that’s where the sun predominates. Chi energy comes to you from the sun. The



sun has an enormous amount of electromagnetic energy that it throws at us. To aid your collection of Chi before you do Tai Chi, you can do this associated art called Qigong, which means energy work.” Bill admits that some folks just aren’t ‘morning people’

and afternoon classes are held too.

The two main draws for people coming to his Tai Chi classes are curiosity and balance according to Bill. People have seen Tai Chi on television or in movies and want to see what it’s all about or they need to redevelop their balance. “I get several referrals from medical doctors sending their patients to improve balance,” Bill says.

“Initially, learning it is very difficult,” Bill warns. “Choreography is not easy to learn, and some people get frustrated trying to remember the moves. People think Tai Chi is about our memories. Tai Chi doesn’t have anything to do with our memories. I tell them to stick in there and they’ll remember it. They just have to focus.”

The philosophy Bill subscribes to is the difference between being powerful and being forceful. “One of the first things I teach my students,” he says, “is the mantra: Soft is powerful; hard is weak.” This pulls together the Tai Chi aspects of energy and focus. Is your energy focused on being resistant (hard) to an outside force or is it a

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concentrated flow (soft) to achieve a specific task?

“Even in our personal lives when we deal with others,” Bill explains, “remember to be soft. Soft is more powerful. The ‘ah ha moment’ in people’s eyes is when I use the phrase ‘Now you know the difference between being powerful and being forceful.’ I’d rather be powerful any day than being forceful.”

Bill conducts Tai Chi classes at various locations around the area, including the City of Williamsburg’s Quarterpath Park Recreation Center, the Senior Center of York County, and Riverside’s Wellness and Fitness Center.

“The variety of it keeps my interest,” Bill says of the classes. “The people I teach are so nice. I see them improve their balance and I get this feedback from them about the positive things going on in their lives.” Even his skeptical students find benefits: energy flows, bodies move, balance and concentration improve. “It’s a very calming exchange,” Bill says. NDN

For more information regarding Tai Chi classes, contact the Williamsburg Parks & Recreation Department at (757) 259-3760 or email them at parksandrecreation@williamsburgva.gov.

Bill’s students practicing Tai Chi.



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211) Let $f(x) = g(x)$ be two functions that $\rightarrow 0$ as $x \rightarrow \infty$

$$\int_a^{\infty} (af)'g dx = \int_a^{\infty} \left(\frac{1}{12m} \left(-\frac{1}{x} \frac{df}{dx} + \cos x f' \right) g dx \right)$$

$$= \frac{1}{12m} \left[-\frac{1}{x} \frac{df}{dx} g dx + \cos x \int x f' g dx \right]$$

use integration by parts on 2nd integral

$$= \frac{1}{12m} \left[-\frac{1}{x} f g + \int \frac{1}{x} f' g dx + \cos x \int x f' g dx \right]$$

function approaches 0 as $x \rightarrow \infty$

$$= \frac{1}{12m} \left[\int_a^{\infty} \frac{1}{x} f' g dx + \int_a^{\infty} \cos x g dx \right]$$

$$= \int_a^{\infty} f' \frac{1}{12m} \left(\frac{1}{x} \frac{dg}{dx} + \cos x g \right) dx = \int_a^{\infty} f' a_1 g dx$$

so $\int_a^{\infty} (af)'g dx = \int_a^{\infty} f' a_1 g dx$

then $\int_a^{\infty} (af)'(a_1) dx = \int_a^{\infty} f'(a_1 a_1) dx$

$$= \int_a^{\infty} f' (E \frac{1}{2} \pi i) dx =$$

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Hurricane-Ready Trees

Master Arborist
Andrew Koenig
Shares Advice on Saving
Your Trees

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor

Hurricane Isabel plowed through Williamsburg on Thursday, September 18, 2003 leaving toppled trees across homes, businesses, roads, power lines, and well, basically trees fell on everything. Andrew Koenig, Board Certified Master Arborist with Bartlett Tree Experts, explains it was a disheartening time for tree care professionals.

“We had such a saturated soil before Hurricane Isabel, it was just a ‘liquidy’ soil,” he says. “That coupled with a lot of force being put on the trees by the high winds, well, the trees just fell over. That was one of the more disappointing times in my career. We’re about tree care, not picking a tree up off a

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house.”

Andrew began his tree care career in Chicago. “I grew up on the Southside of Chicago,” Andrew explains, “and went to

probably the only one to specialize in caring for urban trees.”

This urban tree focus helped him grow into his current career. “My wife and I moved

Andrew is a specialized arborist. Only about 300 arborists in the world are classified as a Board Certified Master Arborist. That designation is awarded to someone who has an extensive amount of education and many years of field experience in the different domains of tree care study. “Not only in the care of trees,” he adds, “but

“It has been proven that a 40 mph and up wind is when we start to have tree problems.”
- Andrew Koenig

the University of Illinois. I had no idea what I wanted to study.” The high school career interest surveys he had taken always pointed toward outdoor specialties like forest management, recreation, careers that centered on the outdoors and wildlife. But for a kid from Chicago, this suggestion seemed off the mark. “I took a Forestry 101 class in college,” Andrew says, “and I just fell in love with the forestry industry. I specialized in Urban and Community Tree Care. I was

to Williamsburg in 1995,” he says. “She had family in Richmond, so we looked at Richmond and at Norfolk. She’s a school teacher and was doing a curriculum on Colonists. We decided to visit Colonial Williamsburg. I remember thinking: ‘This place is excellent; this is the place we want to call home.’ Richmond and Norfolk were okay, but Williamsburg just lit us up. The Williamsburg area fit perfectly with my education and what I wanted to do in the community.”

in the science of tree care and its practice, plus workplace safety.” There are approximately 20,000 certified arborists world-wide, Andrew estimates, so his level of experience as one of 300 Master Arborists confirms a great deal of expertise in his field.

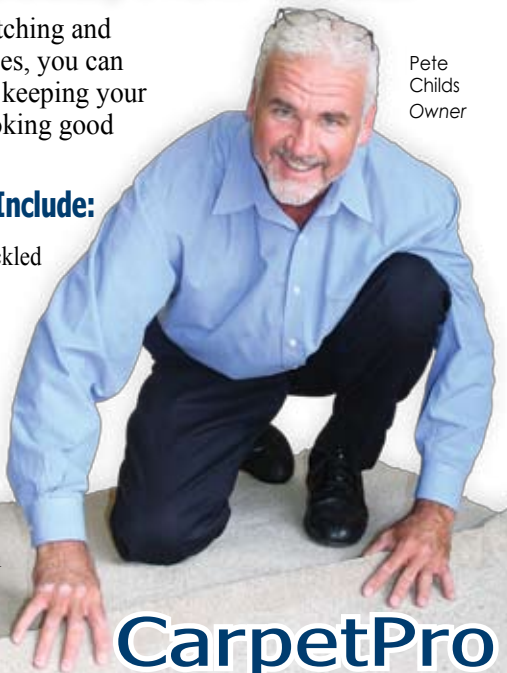
That expertise is evident when he talks about Williamsburg’s tree population and characteristics. “We have a pretty good mix of native trees,” Andrew says. “Unfortunately, some of those trees are a little more

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weaker-wooded than others.” He says those are the trees that lose branches during thunderstorms. “One of the problem trees is the Tulip Poplar,” he adds. “It’s one of our tallest trees, getting to about 120 feet tall. Because they grow so fast, the fibers within the wood really don’t entangle well with each other and they’re prone to breakage. We get a lot of storm damage calls with Tulip Poplars.”

One of his favorite trees is the Black Tupelo. “A great native tree, tremendous red fall color, really few pest and disease problems,” he says. “I planted one for the Williamsburg Botanical Garden with a Boy Scout troop several years ago for Arbor Day. I got to plant a Black Tupelo,” he says with a grin, “my favorite tree.”

As hurricane season heats up, people worry about another Isabel. “With a catastrophic loss like we saw in Isabel, everything started falling,” Andrew says. Poplars and pines were expected, but other, stronger trees fell. “That was a very disappointing to see these gorgeous trees fall. White oaks, a lot of red oaks, and the ‘mighty oaks’ couldn’t withstand all that Isabel threw at them.”

The conditions that made Hurricane Isabel so destructive might not converge again for some time, but then again who can predict nature? Andrew says there are some things landowners can do to minimize the risk. “Property owners who have maintained their trees will have



Q & A

An Interview with Frank Hughes

PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMSBURG AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Email Frank at info@waarealtor.com

Frank, previously in this column we’ve discussed sales trends and the prognosis for the local housing market. I know that Realtors® are also concerned with property rights and related issues. Can you elaborate on this?

HUGHES:

In our first issue I mentioned that Realtors® as local residents have a vested interest in our community. To that point, a number of our members working in conjunction with the Williamsburg Association of Realtors® have been participating in local and state real estate issues that affect all home owners. For example, we are currently working with James City County on the Green Energy Roundtable designed to promote green energy awareness, conservation, plus green building design and construction. Also, together with representatives from the College of William and Mary,

we’ve met with county officials to devise a working plan to further advance residential weatherization and energy studies. Our Public Policy Committee has been a member of the citizens’ participation team that provides input to and later a review of the Comprehensive Plan where we support a smart growth philosophy.

On a state level, we have recommended to the Virginia Association of Realtors® a legislative package to be introduced which among other issues addresses the growing concern that both buyers and sellers have been experiencing with appraisals. It is our belief that appraisers should have an in depth working knowledge of the locale in which they are requested to complete an appraisal. In fact, we recommend that they be a local resident in the area of the homes they are appraising and furthermore, that the data used to support the market value be extracted, in a

large part, from the local multiple listing service. We also feel strongly that appraisers should not be prohibited from seeking current market information from the listing real estate agent as it applies to the subject property. Our concern is based on the use of foreclosed and/or distressed properties when determining an appraised/market value. We believe that use of this information should be minimal so as not to depress local property values. A home owner should not be penalized as the result of an appraiser who gives equal weight to a foreclosure as he does to a normal sales transaction.

Protecting property rights is an important role for the Realtor® and the Williamsburg Area Association of Realtors®. We will continue to monitor real estate related issues as well as proposed legislation which we feel could adversely impact those rights. It remains our goal to communicate our views and address issues in a positive and constructive manner.

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significantly less problems than those who haven't when the next storm hits," he says.

"It has been proven that a 40 mph and up wind is when we start to have tree problems," Andrew says. "In a 40 mph and less wind, most trees – cared for or not – can tolerate it." With proper care, land owners can reduce and minimize some of the high wind related problems. Without care, trees will start to topple or break.

Andrew takes a three pronged approach to tree care. First, he conducts a visual inspection for the types of defects common for a particular type of tree, looking at the architecture of the tree and for any apparent damage. This helps him decide the kind of care needed.

Second, he decides the amount of pruning required. "It's probably the task we do most," he says. "Pruning allows the density of the tree to be reduced so there is a better movement of air through the canopy. This lessens the drag against the canopy, so when

the wind is blowing we have less of a sail effect." When air passes through the tree top, the entire tree moves less. That's good because the more a tree moves, the more likely it could fail. "The inspection gives us the analysis of how to protect the customer's property from failure of the limbs, trunk, or the entire tree," he adds.

The third aspect of tree care is monitoring the health of the tree in areas like soil management and pest and disease management. "The healthier the tree, the less likely it is to fail especially with a healthy root system," Andrew says. An on-going care program is important for a tree's longevity, making the tree an asset for the property owner.

Preventative care is the key. "Get to know the professionals protecting your landscape's largest assets," he says. "Ask questions, check credentials, references, licenses and insurance coverage." The healthiness of your trees impacts how they and your home will weather the next storm. NDN

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Hey Neighbor!

There are more community announcements for this issue that did not fit on this page.

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Hey Neighbor!

THERE'S MAGIC IN THE AIR

August 26, 2009

Williamsburg Assembly of the Society of American Magicians. Meeting is at 7 PM at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, 215 Richmond Rd. Enter the church from the parking lot behind the church and take the elevator to the basement. Then come to Room 009 for an evening of magical fun with some friendly magicians and magic enthusiasts

Hey Neighbor!

DREAM CATCHERS ANNUAL HORSE SHOW & OPEN HOUSE

August 29, 2009

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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS - AN OCCASION FOR THE ARTS (AOFTA)

Williamsburg's longest running juried art show will celebrate its 41st year on Sunday, October 4, 2009 from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm on Duke of Gloucester and Boundary Streets, including the Community Center and the Library Green in Williamsburg. This is a day-long event offering a diverse collection of art and activities for everyone to enjoy. For the second year, we are again offering The Art of Food and, for the first time this year we will celebrate The Art of Flowers. The entire operation is staffed ONLY with volunteers and we need YOU.

This is a chance to have fun with energetic and involved neighbors from the various communities of the greater Williamsburg area. Volunteer opportunities mainly occur in 2 hour segments, beginning at 5:00 am and running until 7:00 pm. For job descriptions and volunteer applications send your request to Barbara Hood, Volunteer Coordinator at banhood@cox.net or call and leave your e-mail address at (757) 345-3544.

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CAREGIVER'S SUPPORT GROUP - ALZHEIMER'S

Meets at Colonial Heritage, (Club House) 6500 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg. 3rd Thursday of the month from 2:30-4:00 P.M. Support groups provide an opportunity to meet regularly for mutual emotional support and to exchange ideas about coping skills in matters relating to Alzheimer's disease. For more information call Joan Bender at 345-6974, Carrol Bailey at 259-6878 or Mary L. Brett Wright at 253-1774.

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KIWANIS 30TH ANNUAL SHRIMP FEAST



September 19, 2009 - The Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg is sponsoring its 30th Annual "All You Can Eat" Shrimp Feast on Saturday, September 19th at the Jamestown 4-H Center on Greensprings Road. Shrimp, hot dogs, baked beans, cole slaw, hush puppies and complimentary beverages are included in price. Cost is \$25 for adults and \$12 for children. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information visit www.williamsburgkiwanis.org or call 757-810-3123.

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Watch for the premier of *Arts & Entertainment* in the October issue of *Next Door Neighbors*!

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