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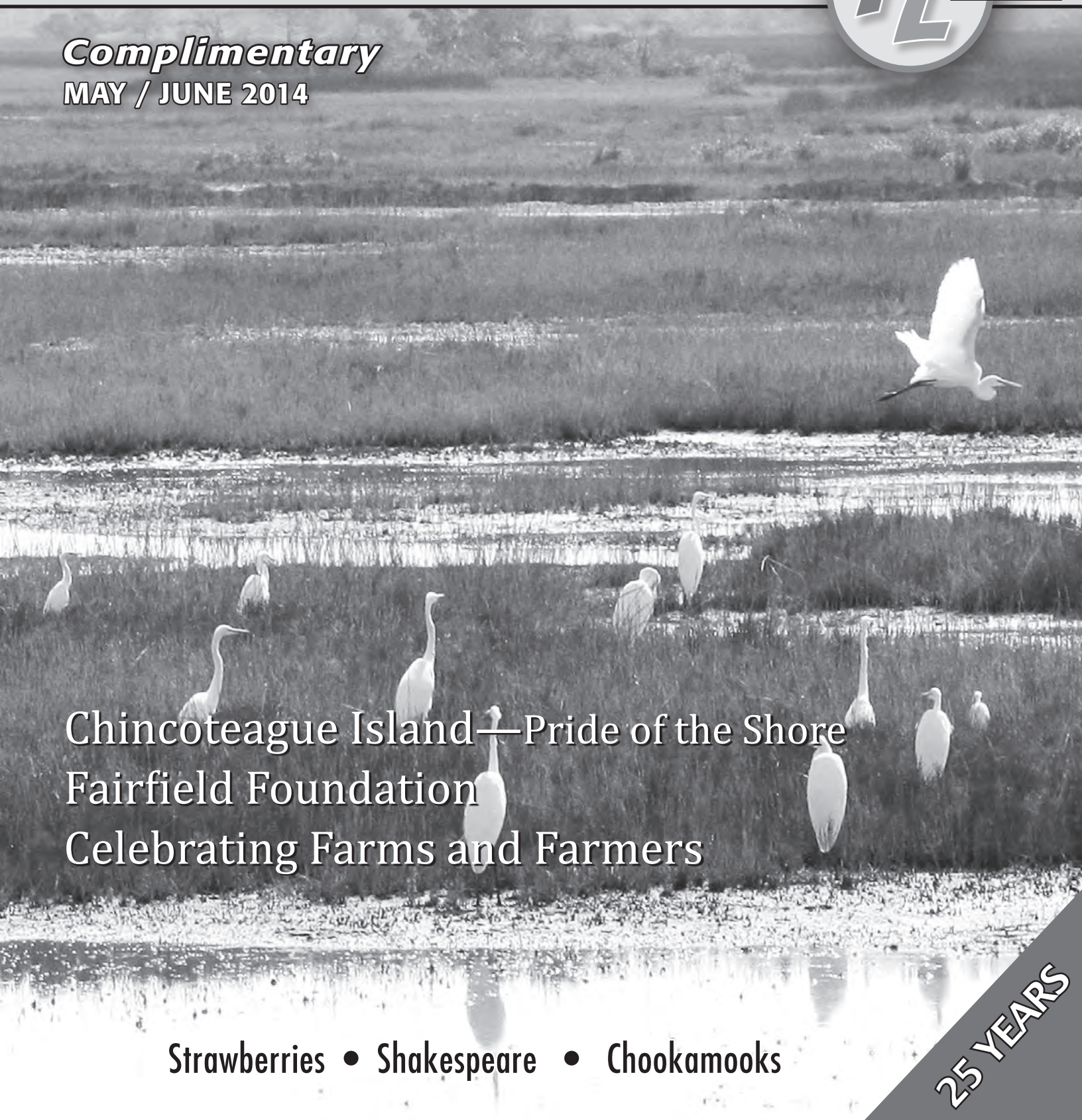

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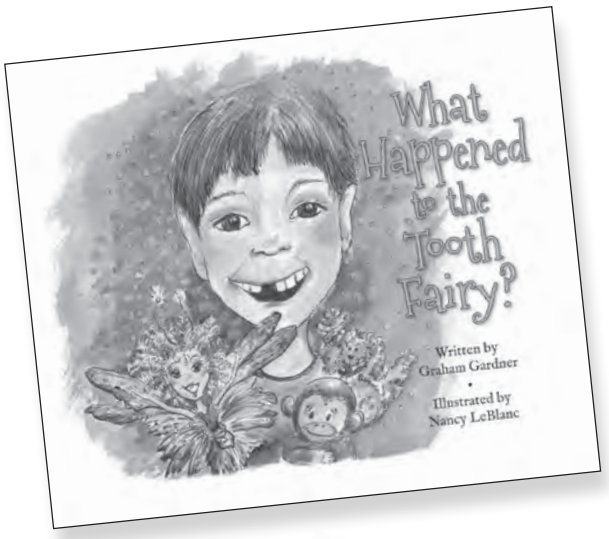

What Happened to the Tooth Fairy?

By Gram Gardner
Illustrated by Nancy Cecere LeBlanc

Oliver is excited to lose his big front tooth. It means a visit from the tooth fairy! But when Oliver wakes up, he discovers something awful: the tooth fairy never came! What could have happened to her? How could she forget to visit?

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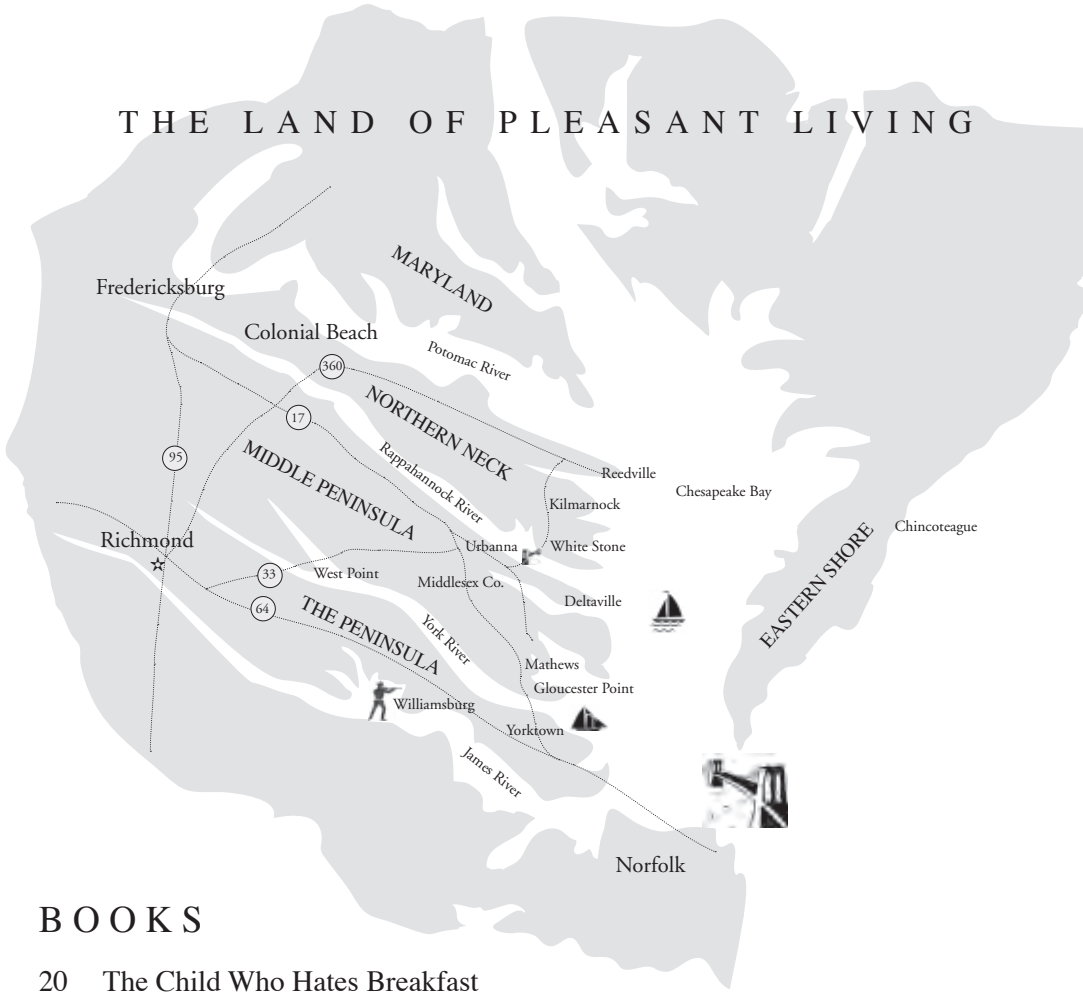

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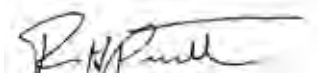
Natural City

My wife and I recently moved into a new home in Woodland Heights, a community not far from the James River in Richmond. We always liked this old neighborhood—its big evergreens and oaks, the scent of the river in the air, the well-kept modest homes, and the comfortable, homey side streets. Hearing the buzz of the city out our front door, Northern Neckers would laugh to hear me say that I feel a little like I'm living a bit of the country life. Compared to living downtown, where the only wildlife is an occasional feral cat darting through the night, there's a quiet, rural quality about our place that's new to me after almost ten years of pure city life.

Since moving here, I've watched the lazy possum that lurks around the house and heard the huge flock of starlings that shakes the bamboo grove in our backyard at night. The robins are everywhere I turn (they must have had a prolific mating season), bumblebees and yellow jackets are beginning to fly, albeit slowly, and inchworms are trying to find their way into my pockets. Yesterday, a squirrel was on the ground next to my back steps, flat on its back, its lower body frozen, legs splayed apart. I would have thought it dead, but its head was slightly raised off the ground at a bizarre angle, and its front paws were moving as if trying to grab an invisible acorn over and over again. I stood watching for a moment wondering what to do. Should I try to comfort it somehow? And then the thought: was it dying from rabies? Finally, I decided to call animal control; perhaps they would find that it simply got sick from something else—or maybe not.

I planned to bag and put it aside for the authorities, but next morning the squirrel had disappeared. There was nothing, not even bones—not a sign. I wondered—did it start feeling better, get up and walk way, or did an owl or dog happen by and smell death. And then I knew. Possums will eat almost anything. I'll wager that my lazy friend waited until dark and had a late night supper.

Living and working in the city, Tanya and I do our best to get back in touch with the natural world as often as we can. We head to the Neck or Goshen or to the river just a few blocks from the house, and take long walks so we can breathe. But over the years, I've discovered that if you have the right attitude and mindset, and if you really look for it, you can find country almost anywhere, even when the traffic is buzzing by. *pl*



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The Fairfield Foundation

"Archaeology puts all human societies on an equal footing."
~ Brian Fagan

By Nuala Galbari / Photos by David L. Justis

David Brown and Thane Harpole

The Fairfield Foundation has been an engaging force in Gloucester for many years. Archaeologists David Brown and Thane Harpole have given us an unmatched picture of everyday life at historic sites, such as Rosewell, Cappahosic, Fairfield, and surrounding areas, bringing history to the foreground in vital new ways. During the recent Daffodil Festival, Fairfield led an archaeological excavation within the Gloucester Courthouse circle, exploring the unturned ground for yet more traces of the county's rich past. Excavations to date, in this area, have helped uncover numerous unidentified buildings from the 18th century, some predating the standing 1766 courthouse. The public digs focused on uncovering more details about 18th century structures that were likely removed during the 1760s to make way for the new courthouse; yet artifacts recovered— including wine bottles, fragments of delicate drinking glasses, colorful punchbowls made of imported Delftware and Chinese Porcelain—suggest the original presence of a nearby tavern, and tell their own exciting

Thane Harpole and David Brown

story. The Fairfield Foundation offers a unique glimpse into Gloucester history during this spring festival.

Focusing on a newer project, Brown and Harpole recently gave a presentation to the Middle Peninsula African-American Geneological and Historical Society (MPAAGHS) and the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society, where they discussed methods of searching for and confirming locations of African-American cemeteries. Their work in locating, documenting and helping others register these sites will help prevent their destruction in the future, and aid families in searching for their ancestors or in seeking to preserve sacred spaces in their community.

In an innovative project, Fairfield Foundation recently teamed with Dominion Virginia Power in restoration of the Center for Archaeology, Preservation and Education (CAPE). The building located on Gloucester's Main Street will be powered by the sun. Dominion Power has funded the purchase and installation of a 5KW solar photovoltaic array on the roof of the structure, with installation by the Richmond-based Off Grid by Design. This installation will be the first of its kind in this area, and Dominion has accepted Fairfield Foundation into its Solar Purchase Program, whereby additional power generated from the roof solar panels will be resold to the company to provide energy to other sources. This symbiotic relationship between the two organizations presents an excellent opportunity to benefit others, while also setting an example of how new technology can be used in inventive ways—even on historic buildings.

Thane Harpole notes, "The help of these community partners allows us to set an example for sustainable design in our region, and highlight the opportunities for merging preservation with innovation."

When completed, CAPE will form the new headquarters for the Foundation, while including a regional preservation center and archaeology lab, and will serve to promote the history and cultural heritage of the Middle Peninsula. The

building, formerly Edge Hill Service Station, is being restored to its pristine 1930's appearance.

Brown and Harpole are archaeologists and visionaries who have acquired the services of many skilled local craftsmen and artisans. "This is a community project, and local citizens and businesses have stepped up to the plate to help make this vision a reality," said Harpole.

While much of Main Street has been undergoing renovation during the past few years and new businesses are moving in to the area, building design will now reflect a more classic look in keeping with the handsome brick construction of some of the older structures. Welcoming visitors on the northeast corner of Main Street, the Fairfield Foundation's restored building will be a shining light in the revitalized district. Come over and meet the archaeologists, their staff and volunteers and learn about Gloucester's history. You'll have plenty of fun!

The Fairfield Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to promote and involve the public in hands-on archaeology, preservation and education activities within Virginia's Middle Peninsula and surrounding areas.

For more information on these and other projects or to make a contribution to the CAPE project, please visit their website at www.fairfieldfoundation.org. *pl*

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VIRGINIA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

By Christopher Owens; Photos by Davis L. Justis

The Virginia Shakespeare Festival in Williamsburg announces its 36th Anniversary Season, opening on June 25 with a revival of their 2006 hit *Illyria - a musical 12th Night*, adapted from Shakespeare's comedy by John Briggs, with music by Briggs and Eric Frampton. "Crowds went wild for this show eight years ago," commented artistic director Christopher Owens, "and so it seemed time to bring it back as a kick off for this season. It appeals to both Shakespeare lovers and people who wouldn't think of coming to a Shakespeare piece. I daresay if Disney wanted to make a movie of *Twelfth Night* it would come out something like this." After the VSF production in 2006, the show went on to runs at Lake Tahoe Shakespeare and this last year at Georgia Shakespeare in Atlanta, where scenic designer J. David Blatt and costume designer Patricia Wesp re-created their initial designs from the VSF production. Both were nominated for Susie Bass Awards for their work (Atlanta's version of the Tony) and both will return to VSF for the revival of *Illyria* in June.

The title comes from Shakespeare's location for *Twelfth Night*, an exotic place somewhere near the Mediterranean Sea. For the VSF design this land has a distinctively Turkish feel with minarets and colorful gardens. Owens remarked that, "one feels like you've walked into some combination of Aladdin and Dr. Seuss—a 17th century fantasy world where amazing things can happen." The plot of *Illyria* is that of *Twelfth Night*, where a twin brother and sister are separated by a shipwreck (the opening scene of the show) and the sister Viola assumes the disguise of a boy to get a job serving the Count Orsino. As she delivers messages of his love to Lady Olivia, the object of his affections, her heartstrings are pulled toward the Count, while Olivia's affections start to turn toward the young servant (not

knowing he's a she). Needless to say, mistaken identities abound and comic mayhem ensues, aided by a drunken uncle, a pretentious butler, a foppish suitor, and of course, servants far smarter than their masters. VSF favorite Karl Kippola (*The Tempest, Macbeth, Complete Works of Wm. Shakespeare Abridged*) reprises his star turn as the butler Malvolio, with Ed Whitacre as the Uncle Toby, Lynette Rathnam as Olivia (a role she played for Maryland Shakespeare last season), and Gillian Wiggan (fresh off Aquila Theatre's National Tour of *As You Like It*) as our heroine Viola. John Ammerman, a veteran of two *Illyria* productions himself, will direct the show with musical direction by Anthony Smith and choreography by Denise Wade (who choreographed the 2006 production for VSF as well).

Following *Illyria's* run from June 25 – July 6 comes the epic tragedy *Julius Caesar*, not seen at Virginia Shakespeare since 1993. "I think for some people the sheer size of the play is daunting," Owens remarked. "The cast size is arguably the largest in the cannon, you've got multiple scenic locations both in Rome and on the battlefield at Philippi and costume challenges in both sheer number needed, as well as workable leather armor if you intend to do it in its historical period of 44 BCE, which we are indeed doing," he concluded. This is not a whitewashed Rome, but a diverse and colorful place where people from every corner of the empire have come to make their fortune. Caesar is their favorite, a man of the people who has spent much of his career outside of Rome's walls. This popularity worries the patrician circle, headed by Brutus, who fear Caesar means to become emperor, as his protégé Marc Antony seems to urging him to do. Their plot to save Rome from his likely despotism takes surprising and bloody turns in this, one of Shakespeare's acknowledged greatest plays. Owens remarked that, "it is probably required reading for most every 9th grade student in the country, but reading alone won't give you the cathartic experience that this tragedy does when given a live performance of real scope and magnitude." His sumptuous staging, with a cast of over thirty actors (featuring Karl Kippola as Brutus and Tré Cotton as Antony) utilizes every scenic mechanism of the PBK Hall stage and is made possible by the show sponsorship of the Sumner Rand Foundation. *Julius Caesar* will open on July 10 and play two weeks through July 20.

Over fifty actors, directors, designers, and technicians are hired each year to produce the VSF season. "They come from far and wide," Owens commented, "Tré Cotton, our Antony, may have the longest trek, as he lives in Seattle, but scenic designer David Blatt from Denver and five of our company members from Houston also have a considerable commute. It's this great combination of talented people from Williamsburg to Washington (the state) that makes the festival unique."

Tickets are on sale now for both productions. The prices for single tickets are $28 for adults; $18 for students (age 14 – college); and $12 for children. A season ticket (for both productions) is the best value for adults at $44 each. Discounts for groups of 15 or more are also available by contacting the PBK Hall Box Office at 757-221-2674. Tickets are always available online at www.wm.edu/vsf . Show times are Wednesday through Saturday evenings at 8pm, Sundays at 2pm and a special Saturday matinee of *Illyria* on July 5 at 2pm. Performances are all in the main auditorium of Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall on the campus of the College of William and Mary, located at 601 Jamestown Road in Williamsburg. For more information, consult the Virginia Shakespeare Festival website at www.wm.edu/vsf . Productions of the Virginia Shakespeare Festival are made possible by grant funds from the Williamsburg Area Arts Commission, the York County Arts Commission, and by hundreds of individual donors, who support the operations of this professional theatre company, now designated as the Official Shakespeare Festival of Virginia by the state legislature. *pl*

CELEBRATING THE FARMER AND THE FARM

The Northern Neck Farm Museum

Photo by Bryant Lampkin

By Bryant Lampkin

The Northern Neck Farm Museum reopened its doors on Saturday, May 3rd for the 2014 season, which will run until October 26th. To celebrate its opening, the museum held a day chock-full of activities and exhibits, including a children's bounce barn, an antique farm equipment and car display, corn-hole, and local food vendors, just to name a few.

The museum, which first opened in 2008, was the idea of the late Luther Welch, a man who was born and raised on a small farm near Heathsville and went on to become one of the most successful and well-known farmers in the area. To get the museum started, Luther gave the land for the museum himself and reached out to other farmers and members of the community for help and support. The museum is now a registered 501c3 non-profit and currently consists of about 200 members and volunteers.

Luther was passionate about farming and about the Northern Neck, where he spent his entire life. He not only wanted to share this passion with others, he also wanted to preserve the agricultural history that has played an important role in the culture and lifestyle of the Northern Neck for centuries.

Luther's wife, Margaret Welch, who is still very active in the museum, adds that "[Luther] also wanted to let people know why farming is important to our community—because it's how we get our food." Indeed, in an age where most people get their food from large supermarket chains, it can be easy to forget where our food comes from and the work that goes into its growth and harvesting. "He was especially concerned about the younger generation not knowing about where their food comes from," Margaret notes, which is why the museum has an emphasis on educating youth.

The newly appointed museum director, Frances Stoughton, explains that the museum hosts school groups from different schools around the area. "Our education coordinator, Heather Drinkwater, has developed special SOL-based program for the children when they visit. So the kids aren't just here for fun, they are also here to learn." Last year, the museum had over 500 school children visit, learning about the importance of agriculture and its history. Alan Welch, the son of Luther and Margaret, who is now a successful farmer himself, says that the museum also holds seed demonstrations and has a soil trailer for the kids, educating them about the more scientific side of farming. "We teach them about what happens underneath the ground, like how seeds swell and

Photo provided courtesy of NNFM

germinate."

Another way the museum reaches out to youth is with their annual Young Farmers Day. Margaret Welch says the event is sort of like a "play day" for the kids with all kinds of fun and engaging activities to expose them to agriculture and teach them about growing healthy foods. The event is always free to the public, indicating how much the museum wants to encourage young people to visit. It will take place August 9th this year.

Of course, the museum reaches out to the community in many other ways. Threshing Day, on June 28th this year, is an annual event that celebrates and pays tribute to the importance of threshing wheat and other grains throughout agricultural history. The museum brings in a 1930's-era stationary threshing machine and antique pull-type combines to put on display. As with all the events that the museum hosts, there will be plenty of food and activities for children, making it perfect for a family outing.

Another event, the Farm to Fork Dinner, is a special dinner hosted by the museum twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. The dates for the 2014 season are May 17th and October 18th. To put the dinner together, the museum gets help from local farms, chefs, wineries, and other contributors. The meals are always made with seasonal produce. This year, the spring Farm to Fork Dinner will feature beef from Monrovia Farm in Westmoreland County, wine from Ingleside Vineyards in Oak Grove, and locally grown fruits and vegetables; the chef will be from Ma Margaret's House Bed and Breakfast in Reedville. The dinners help to raise awareness of the local agricultural community and remind people of the great businesses and resources that are available locally. Tickets for the dinners are available for purchase through the museum.

Last, the museum holds a Fall Family Festival to close out the season. There are always lots of fall-themed activities: hay rides, a pumpkin patch, a corn maze, local food, and because it's so close to Halloween, a costume contest. This year there will also be corn picker demonstrations so guests can learn a little more about the work farmers have to do to harvest the fall crops.

Whether or not you can make it to any of the special events through the year, the museum is well worth a visit. Its permanent collection includes an impressive display of antique vintage farm equipment and memorabilia, everything from tractors and plows to an exhibit of a typical 1920's farmhouse kitchen, which reminds guests of how rural farm life once was in the Northern Neck and around America. There are information panels at each exhibit to let guests know what certain objects are and how they were used. "Walking through here is like walking through agricultural history," Alan Welch says. "It's kind of like taking a step back in time." However, the museum is also very much rooted in the present and is committed to promoting a future in which people care more about agriculture and know where their food comes from.

To learn more about The Northern Neck Farm Museum, check out their website at thefarmmuseum.org

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LATE TIDEWATER SPRING

Story and Photo by Steve Scala

During April, as the end of a long challenging period of snow, sleet, ice and cold rain began unfolding across Virginia, I pondered how long it had been since a real winter had visited the Commonwealth. By my recollection it had been more than fifteen years since I experienced anything close to the winter of 2013-14, which held on right through the middle of April. In addition to the many inches (*and sometimes feet*) of snow, there has been an almost unprecedented amount of rainfall across the late winter and spring of 2014. This means a higher amount of fresh-net water flow from rivers swollen with rain, and melted snow has found its way into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The result is a dilution of salinity levels that have been constantly higher over the past ten years or so. Some fish species could benefit from lower salinity levels while others may prefer to migrate or stay in waters with higher salinity. The 2014 summer fishing cycles across Virginia's Chesapeake Bay will determine which target species benefit from our long, cold, wet winter-spring.

Expect a change in the dynamics of early summer fishing this season. Species of fish that adapt well to lower salinity levels could be more abundant and expand their range. White perch could be one of these fish that anglers in the tidal tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay will be catching more of this summer. These tasty and popular fish can be found on shell bottoms and obstructions in open water and prefer cut bloodworms and clam baits. Some quiet tidal backwaters hold perch along shore side cover such as partially sunken trees and submerged aquatic vegetation. It's mostly bobber and single hook rigs baited with grass shrimp or peeler crab that catch white perch in these kinds of locales, but they will also respond to small jigs and spinners with grub tail soft baits.

Striped Bass are known to reproduce at higher success rates in brackish waters with lower salinities so the 2014 young of the year (YOY) striper surveys conducted later this summer in Virginia and Maryland tidal waters will be followed with great interest. Those stocks could use a reproductive boost given the lack of robust data and stock reproduction predictions striped bass have shown in recent years. If previous cycles and the monitoring throughout the years is a consistent indicator, chances are the striped bass

YOY could be enhanced by the increase in fresh-net water flow this spring and decreased salinities.

Meanwhile, the early summer season for striped bass is underway throughout the Chesapeake Bay and anglers this season got to enjoy some later than usual post-spawn pulses of big fish coming back down the tidal tributaries, feeding along the bay channel edges as they travel. By late May and through June, the 18 to 22 inch class of striped bass will start to become part of the catches anglers make and will be found along inshore waters as well as the open bay. These fish will respond well to hooks baited with menhaden in the chum slicks as well as live lined spot and artificials casted along areas that harbor baitfish schools. *pl*

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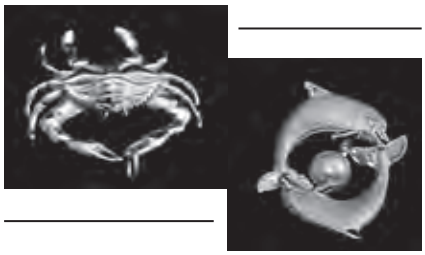

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The Yellow Rose

By Dan Gill, Ethno-Gastronomist /
Photos by Armynda Lilli Rainwater-Budd

At Something Different, we host an open mic night every Thursday from 7:00 to 9:00, instigated and moderated by our own Maggie Rainwater-Budd, orchestrator of the front room and a talented guitar picker and bluegrass/country music singer. Her sister, Armynda Rainwater-Budd (Mynda), the queen of the prep-room, is a talented young photographer who documents most of the performances. It is always a lot of fun. People are encouraged to sing songs, tell stories or recite poetry as they please. There is a wide range of talent from rank amateurs to polished professionals. Though most of the music is contemporary, there is usually some classical, bluegrass, country, old pop, gospel and folk music thrown in for variety.

I tell and sing at least one story-song each week—usually *a cappella* because nobody wants to play with me. As an historian of sorts, I research the origins of each song and tell the stories. I sing mostly old songs that are based on legend or real events, such as the *Wreck of the Old 97*. I have already written about that train wreck and the song that it inspired, and published the story in the September-October 2011 issue of *Pleasant Living*. I have also written about the last and greatest "distance" horserace, run at Churchill Downs in 1876 between Mollie McCarty of California and Ten Broeck of Kentucky (PL, May-June 2009). In order to tell the story of the race and the song, I had to relate the history of horse racing in America and how it all started in Virginia. The quarter race and quarter horse both evolved in Virginia in the early 1600s. *The Ghostship Morphy,* written and sung by the late Tom Wisner, the bard of the Chesapeake, is also based on real events, which I researched and published in the May-June 2012 issue of PL. Most of my writings are available on our webpage (pine3.info). Just scroll down to "Blurbs". If you get a "page not found" error, remove the %25 stuff that Microsoft inserts between words in the URL just leaving a space.

The Yellow Rose of Texas is a song that most people are familiar with, but few know that it was written about a real woman—a mulatto, woman of color—a yellow rose. The song was probably written shortly after Texas won its independence from Mexico following the battle of San Jacinto. On the surface, it appears to have been written by a love-smitten black man in search of his lost love, but it may have been written by or for Christies Minstrels, as it was sung by them in blackface during the 1850s. The original handwritten words are locked away in the archives of the University of Texas in Austin:

There's a yellow rose in Texas, that I am going to see,
No other darky knows her, no darky only me
She cried so when I left her, it like to broke my heart,
And if I ever find her, we nevermore will part.

She's the sweetest rose of color this darky ever knew,
Her eyes are bright as diamonds, they sparkle like the dew;
You may talk about your Dearest May, and sing of Rosa Lee,
But the Yellow Rose of Texas beats the belles of Tennessee. …

The woman was Emily D. West (or Morgan)—the "maid of Morgan's Point." She was attractive and intelligent. Though disputed by some historians, legend has it that she used her beauty, wit and charm to bring about the defeat and disgrace of Santa Anna and thus secure the freedom of Texas from Mexico. Recently some documents and facts have surfaced to support the legend.

It is thought that Emily was originally from Bermuda. Some say she was a slave brought down from New York to Texas by her master, James Morgan, a wealthy plantation owner and proponent of Texas independence. Mexican law did not allow slavery in Texas, so slave status was often converted to ninety-nine year indentures in order to circumvent the prohibition. A recently discovered employment contract suggests that she was actually "a free person of color" employed as Morgan's personal assistant and placed in charge of his affairs during his absence. She was overseeing the loading of barges with provisions from Morgan's plantation to supply Sam Houston and his small army of Texans when Santa Anna's forces attacked, plundering the plantation and capturing Emily and a young boy named Turner.

The Mexican army, and especially Santa Anna, was despised in Texas, especially after the horrendous massacres at the Alamo and Goliad. In their campaign to quell the uprising of rebellious Texans, Mexican soldiers were ordered by Santa Anna to give no quarter and take no prisoners. They raped, murdered and pillaged, but the prettiest young women were reserved and sent to Santa Anna for his pleasures. Santa Anna was the president of Mexico, but had abandoned his duties as head of state in order to personally conduct the Texas campaign—leaving his wife in Mexico City. In spite of his age, Santa Anna considered himself quite a ladies man and had been two weeks without a woman. In his haste to enjoy his "spoils of war," he quickly set up camp, against the advice of his military advisors, in an area along the river that was difficult to defend. Santa Anna had such confidence in his professional and seasoned soldiers and such contempt for the undisciplined, rag-tag Texas army that he even failed to post sentries. Emily fully understood what was about to happen to her and that she had no choice in the matter, so she decided to make the most of it. She was able to get Turner out of the camp to inform Sam Houston that Santa Anna would be "otherwise occupied" the next day and that the camp would be vulnerable.

In the morning, Houston moved his army into the woods about a mile from the Mexican camp. He climbed a tree and could see Emily preparing a champagne breakfast for Santa Anna and playing her role admirably. Houston reportedly remarked, "I hope that (slave) girl makes him [Santa Anna] neglect his business and keeps him in bed all day." The attack came at siesta time and sure enough, the Mexicans were caught completely by surprise. In only eighteen minutes, about 630 of the Mexican soldiers were killed and 730 captured, while only nine Texans died. Santa Anna was seen running from his tent clad in his silken drawers and night-shirt and was later found hiding in a swamp disguised as an ordinary soldier. He was captured, and shortly thereafter signed the documents of surrender granting Texas independence from Mexico. When Morgan heard of Emily's heroism, he paid her passage back to New York and she was never heard from again.

It is believed that the song was originally written to commemorate Emily and her heroism. Many changes were made to different versions over the years, mostly to disguise the racial origins, and in some whitewashed versions the yellow rose is actually a flower, but Emily remains ***The Yellow Rose.*** During the War Between the States, General Hood of Texas made it his marching song. The last stanza was added and sung with derision by Texans after Hood was soundly defeated in Tennessee. In that stanza Uncle Joe was General Joseph Johnson, whom Hood had replaced. This is the version sung by the late Hoyt Axton for the Ken Burns documentary series on the Civil War (see below). *pl*

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There's a yellow rose in Texas, that I am going to see,
No other soldier knows her, no soldier only me
She cried so when I left her it like to broke my heart,
And if I ever find her, we nevermore will part.

She's the sweetest rose of color this soldier ever knew,
Her eyes are bright as diamonds, they sparkle like the dew;
You may talk about your Dearest May, and sing of Rosa Lee,
But the Yellow Rose of Texas is the only one for me.

Well now I'm going to find her, for my heart is full of woe
And we'll sing the songs together, that we sung so long ago
We'll play the banjo gaily, and we'll sing the songs of yore
And the yellow rose of Texas, shall be mine forevermore.

Now I'm going southward, for my heart is full of woe
I'm going back to Georgia, to find my uncle Joe
You may talk about your Beauregard, and sing of General (or Bobby) Lee
But the gallant Hood of Texas, played hell in Tennessee
The gallant Hood of Texas, played hell in Tennessee

ONE SUMMER NIGHT

Story and Illustration by Phillip McKenney

One summer night when I was a kid, my father drove me to Little League practice. As the players took the field and began warm ups, some of the fathers stuck around to watch us work out, including mine, who took a seat in the stands.

After various drills, it was time for batting practice. Usually one of the coaches would pitch to us, but tonight something different was happening. A big, stocky guy about thirty-five to forty years old was on the mound warming up. Who was he? A friend of one of the coaches, somebody said, who used to play some local sandlot ball.

He wound up and threw a pitch to the boy who had stepped into the batter's box. The ball hissed into the catcher's mitt with a loud thud. The batter stood frozen. On the bench we looked at each other. That was a "man sized" fastball! We'd never seen a pitch so fast. More fastballs were delivered and the dejected batter came back to the bench never even having fouled one.

Several more of us went to the plate with similar results. Mostly, we were too scared to swing, and when we did the ball was past us by the time the bat came around. We were clearly overmatched. What was this all about? We guessed the coach was trying to raise our level of play by having us face an adult pitcher. One thing was certain: it was no fun.

I suddenly caught sight of someone moving near

"I didn't like it," he said. "So I thought I'd give him a try myself."

the end of our bench. It was my father. He picked up a bat, examined it and walked toward home plate. What?? What on earth was he doing? He stepped into the batter's box, put the bat on his shoulder and looked through his bifocals toward the mound. The pitcher shrugged, wound up and threw. My father swung and hit a line drive over the shortstop's head! Then he hit a hard grounder, then another, then another line drive. He continued to spray base hits to all fields, not power shots, just solid contact. In fact he never swung and missed. My mouth hung open in amazement.

After a few minutes of this he stepped away from the batter's box, handed the bat to the next batter and went back to his seat in the stands. He looked as though he hadn't even broken a sweat. On the bench, the guys couldn't get over how easily he had hit those fast pitches! I was suddenly filled with pride at their comments, like a proud father must feel when hearing compliments on his child.

You see, my father was sixty years old, a good twenty years older than most of the other fathers, slightly built and had been in bad health most of his adult life. I knew he had been a pretty good ballplayer as a youth but that was over forty years before! I was sure he hadn't swung a bat at all since then except to throw a ball into the air to himself and hit flies to me in the lot next to our house when he came home from work. Plus he was a very retiring sort of man, the last person to ever do anything to draw attention to himself. Yet there he was wearing his usual short sleeve sport shirt, dress pants and wrist watch, grey hair combed back, and hitting baseballs thrown by a man at least twenty years younger and in much better health. I was stunned.

After practice was over we got into the car and I asked him what had possessed him to do such a thing. He said the guy seemed like a big bully to him, a grown man throwing full speed to a bunch of boys, trying to intimidate them and also he seemed to be enjoying it a little too much.

"I didn't like it," he said. "So I thought I'd give him a try myself."

I was always proud of my father for many reasons, and still am to this day, nearly fifty years later, but never more so than on that steamy Montross night so many years ago. *pl*

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St. Stephens, Springtime, and Strawberries!

By Alyssa Pruett

Did you know that strawberries provide vitamin C, promote eye health, fight cancer, ward off wrinkles, keep bad cholesterol at bay, reduce inflammation, regulate blood pressure, boost fiber, aid in weight management, and promote prenatal health? Not only are they juicy, delicious and healthy for you, the season of spring marks their peak.

The River Country is brimming with hidden jewels, and the Annual Strawberry Festival at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Heathsville, Virginia is one of them. The St. Stephen's Strawberry Festival boasts 150 quality craft vendors and exhibitors, a Color Guard, historic church tours (at 11am and 1pm), free health screenings (provided by Mid County Rescue Squad), fresh local strawberries, homemade strawberry shortcake, food and drinks, live music (performed by Woodshed Conspiracy and Janie Withers and the Sierra Band), free face painting and kids activities, and a large plant and bake sale. The plant and bake sale plans to feature herbs, vegetables, annuals, hybrid daylilies, and St. Stephen's Famous Rum Cakes! New this year is a square dancing demonstration on the new bandstand. St. Stephen's thrift shop, Trifles and Treasures will also be open the day of the festivities.

Event coordinator of the festival, Ellen Kirby, says that the Strawberry Festival began in 1882, a year after the consecration of St. Stephens Episcopal Church, although not in its current form. At that time, strawberries and cakes were sold to raise money to pay for the building of the church. Over the years, the event began to incorporate crafters and vendors to participate, and much to the delight of its participants and organizers, it has grown tremendously.

Church members, friends, and volunteers from the community all work together to make this event a success. The dedication and involvement of everyone is very much appreciated, as it takes a lot of teamwork to pull it all together.

Did you know that strawberries fight cancer. . .?

In addition to the fun, community groups will be involved and represented, such as the Northern Neck Bee Keepers, Northern Neck Rose Society, Northern Neck Native Plant Society, the Northumberland YMCA, and the Northumberland Friends of the Library.

According to the folks in charge, more than 5,000 people turned out last year, and an even bigger and better event is planned for this year. So get your taste buds ready for this exciting (and sweet) Heathsville tradition!

The festival takes place this year on Saturday, May 24, 2014 from 9am-3pm on the grounds of St. Stephens Episcopal Church, located at 6807 Northumberland Highway, Heathsville, VA 22473. For additional information on the church, and for directions, parking, vendor information, and more, visit www.ststephensheathsville.org, or call (804) 724-4238.

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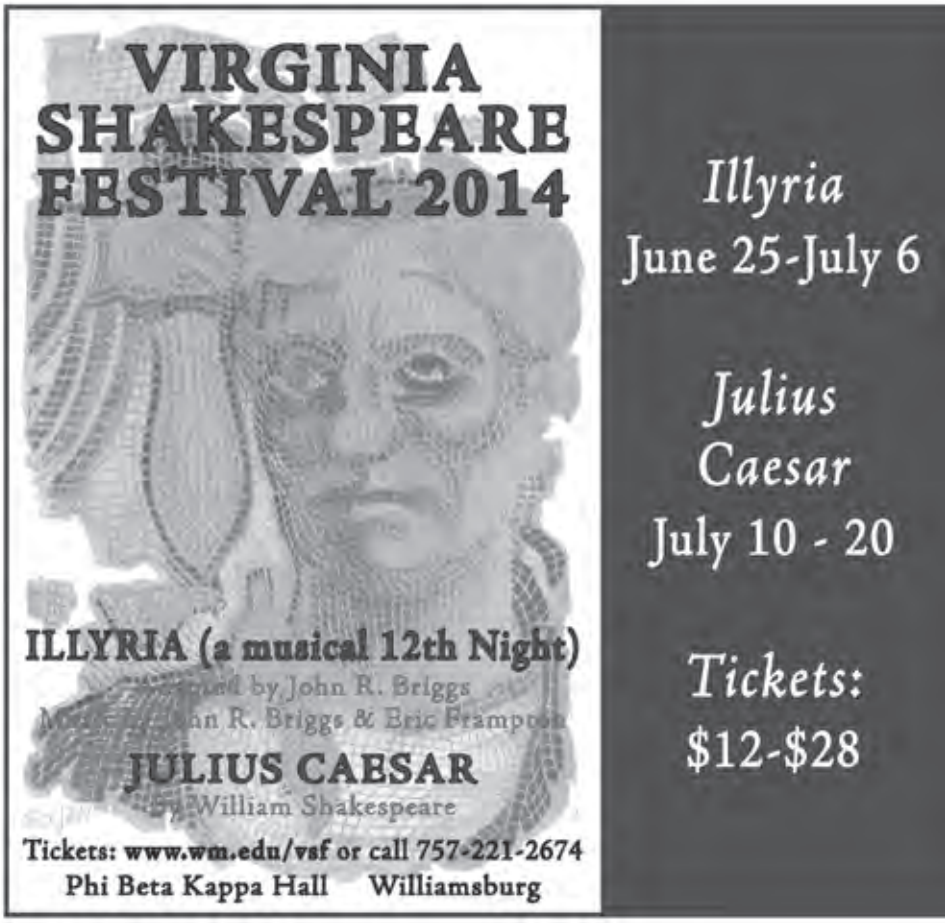

The Child Who Hates Breakfast

Cliff Davis's *A Chookamook Came Over for Breakfast* teaches important lessons

By Elise Patterson

Cliff Davis still remembers the first story he ever wrote: "I had a teacher in fourth grade who asked all of us to write a story and she laminated the pages and had us each write our own little book. I wrote about a horse who hated hay. And I still remember that and have been writing ever since. I still have that book."

Davis's debut children's chapter book, *A Chookamook Came Over for Breakfast*, published by Belle Isle Books in Richmond, shares at least one theme with his childhood story—its heroine, little Lizzie Lewis, hates breakfast. When Lizzie's mother brings home a new box of magic cereal for Lizzie to try, she finds herself shrunk down to a few inches high and entering the world of Breakfastland. There she meets the Chookamooks, tiny creatures who help make breakfasts for the entire world. But Lizzie finds the Chookamooks and Breakfastland are in danger, and with her quick wit and breakfast-hating ways, she's just the girl to help.

Within the fantasy world of *Chookamook*, Davis provides an anchor in his realistically engaging protagonist. While she isn't explicitly based on anyone in the author's life, Davis believes there's a little bit of every kid in Lizzie Lewis, and a little bit of Lizzie Lewis in every kid. Davis hopes children gain something from the lessons Lizzie herself has to learn; even though she's young, headstrong, and hasn't quite nailed down her manners, she still has the power to help others. "Every child is valuable and important and has something to offer to the world. You don't have to

"Every child is valuable and important and has something to offer to the world."

be perfect to be important," Davis says. Lizzie's unwavering sense of morality and empathy is important because she teaches readers that "every person can change. Bullies and villains have motivation, and given the chance to change, they can often end up not being villains anymore."

Though Davis's foray into children's literature has been enchanting, his dedication to writing encompasses many genres. He has written for numerous publications and previously served as the editor of *Reaching New Heights Magazine*. Davis claims that Lizzie's origin came about when his editor at Petersburg's *Progress Index* (he was working for the paper at the time) requested a serialized children's story: "I was raking leaves in my uncle-in-law's back yard, hungry, and thinking about breakfast." From there, Lizzie took on a life of her own and the ideas for Breakfastland and the Chookamooks soon followed.

Davis's greatest dream is to write books that make the ordinary seem fascinating, and readers can certainly see a realization of this goal in the world of Breakfastland. He also hints that this may not be the last we see of Lizzie Lewis: "My nephew read *A Chookamook Came Over for Breakfast* first and when he finished, he said 'You have to write a sequel.'" When it comes to continuing Lizzie's story, Davis has thought about exploring the consequences of Lizzie making friends and bringing them with her into Breakfastland. What would happen if she had to learn to share her special place and her special friends, the Chookamooks?

No matter what the future holds, Lizzie's first adventure is an enticing and endearing one. With *A Chookamook Came Over for Breakfast*, Cliff Davis and illustrator Heidi Gibson bring to life a fantasy world made of pancakes, bacon, and marshmallows, where Lizzie's bravery, compassion, and willingness to help anyone in need take center stage. Her headstrong goodwill and the fantastical world she discovers are enough to keep any young reader turning pages, and any parent reassured that Lizzie's story is one worth learning. *pl*

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Chincoteague Island: The Pride of the Shore

By Elise Patterson

Virginia's Eastern Shore boasts small towns with big opportunities for nature lovers and beach goers. The tiny peninsula is home to nature reserves and all manner of waterfront fun. Chincoteague Island is perhaps the Shore's most famous asset, due in large part to the popular children's book, *Misty of Chincoteague.* The island is also home to its very own breed of wild pony, and as a result, the populated portions of the island boast dozens of inns, bed and breakfasts, and historic houses with their very own Chincoteague pony grazing out front, often accompanied by signs boasting that the horse is descended from Misty herself.

The island's yearly Pony Penning draws thousands of visitors, and while officially this year marks the 89th annual Pony Swim, the event has actually been happening for hundreds of years. A well-known local myth holds that some four centuries ago, a Spanish galleon crashed just off the island's coast, forcing the herd of horses aboard to swim ashore. The ponies have lived in Chincoteague's marshes and beaches ever since, adapting over time to the harsh marshy environment and limited food supplies; in 1994, the ponies were officially recognized as a distinct breed. The island's most famous attraction, the Pony Penning, was first mentioned in 1835 and even then was described as an ancient tradition. In its current form, the event begins when the Island's "Saltwater Cowboys" round up the ponies. The two separate herds (150 ponies) are then combined and swim from Assateague Island to Chincoteague Island and parade down Main Street. The foals are then auctioned off to help control the herd size (which cannot rise above 150 ponies). Chincoteague Island is famous for the Pony Swim and Pony Penning, and few Eastern Shore traditions are as widely known and loved. Former Chincoteague local, Hazel Koltuk comments, "It's great seeing the cowboys herd the ponies into the water and seeing them all swim the channel, with all the boats lined up in a row watching and people swimming up to their necks." The parade, she mentions, can be a bit difficult to

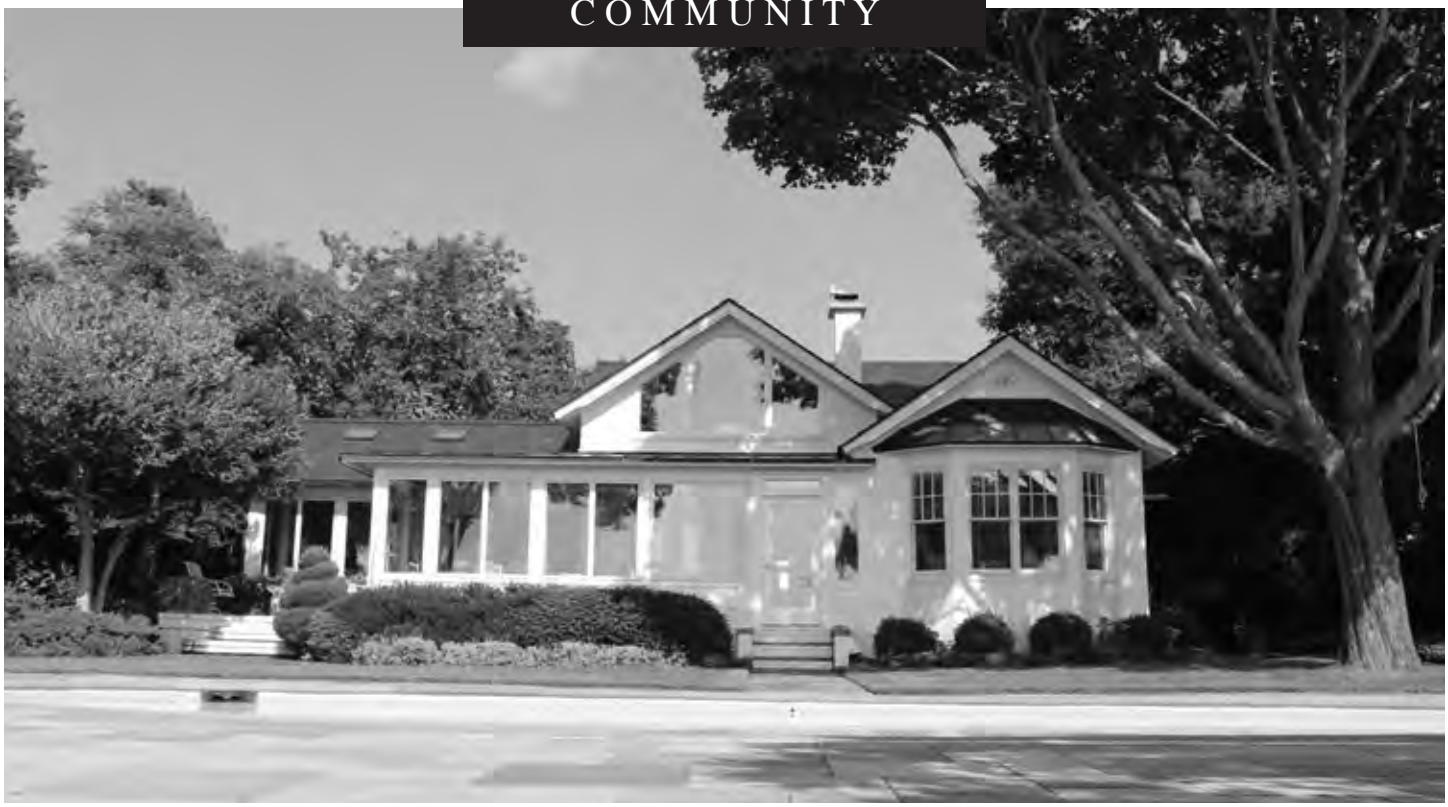
see, but once the horses reach the carnival grounds, the foals corralled for auction are fun to witness, particularly for children. "People come from all over the world to see it," she says. "It's a huge event." If crowds aren't your thing, however, you can always see the ponies in their natural habitat on one of the many nature trails throughout Chincoteague and Assateague Island. These trails are accessible by foot and by bike, and are wonderful places to experience the Eastern Shore's beautiful nature and wildlife. And if you want a truly unique view of the islands, a boat tour offers sights that are not accessible any other way. The island also boasts access to horseback riding and even hang gliding for the very adventurous.

One of the islands biggest draws, of course, is the beach. Assateague Island is a barrier island that shelters Chincoteague from the Atlantic Ocean (the two islands are connected by a bridge). All of Assateague Island is a protected and undeveloped wildlife sanctuary. It is here that Assateague Beach can be accessed. The beautiful beach regularly draws locals and tourists alike and provides a wonderful getaway for any family. Any number of beach activities are available, from camp fire building and grilling, horseback riding, and shell collecting, to surfing, skim boarding, and boogie boarding.

The island's multitude of activities doesn't just draw tourists. Locals often spend free days visiting the island with their families and never find a shortage of new activities to try. Closer to town, one can find mini golf and rock climbing walls, arcades and a movie theater, and delicious restaurants on every corner. The Shore is known for its seafood—oysters and crabs in particular—and there is no shortage of tasty fare to sate your hunger after a day spent on the beach.

No trip to Chincoteague is complete, however, without making a stop at one of the island's two ice cream parlors. Few local arguments are as hotly disputed as which shop is better—Mister Whippy's or Island Creamery. Mister Whippy's specializes in tasty soft serve ice cream, while Island Creamery regularly concocts new homemade ice creams to perfectly compliment their delicious waffle cones. Their specialty ice cream, Marsh Mud, is renowned to chocolate lovers everywhere.

Spending time on Chincoteague Island is a uniquely Eastern Shore experience. The locals are friendly and the seafood is supreme. The Chincoteague Ponies are the island's pride and joy (the local high school mascot is even named for them!) and they, along with Misty, permeate the island culture from locals who own one of the special horses, to paintings and murals. It's impossible to visit the island without seeing a few horses—and if the animal is locally owned and not a part of the wild herd (which can only be viewed from nature trails, roadways, and boat tours at a distance) they are often free to pet and hand feed. Whether you're a fan of horses, a fan of nature hikes, or beaches, or simply want to experience a bit of Eastern Shore life, few destinations offer the unique opportunities and activities of Chincoteague Island. *pl*



Shadow Hill

GLOUCESTER'S GARDEN WEEK

Featuring One of the Top Fifty Sites in the Struggle for Civil Rights

By Letitia Grant

After a long and cold winter, spring has begun to show her face, and garden tours are beginning. The annual statewide Historic Garden Week in Virginia is April 26 to May 3 this year, and the Gloucester Garden tour is Saturday, May 3, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. The three houses open in Gloucester will be White Hall, Shadow Hill and Holly Knoll, the retirement home of the pioneering African-American educator, Robert Russa Moton (1867-1940).

Holly Knoll is a Georgian mansion commanding a sweeping view of the York River at Cappahosic. The house was built for Robert Russa Moton when he retired to Gloucester County in 1935. Moton's invitation, "Come to Cappahosic!" was heard by many black educators and civil rights activists. Plans were hatched for the United Negro College Fund, and it is said, part of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech was written here. The home was listed *by USA Today* as one of the top fifty places to visit in the history of the Civil Rights Movement.

Moton, a son of slaves, worked and sent himself to Hampton Institute. While there, Booker T. Washington, the preeminent black educator of the time, became a mentor and friend. Dr. Moton became the second president of Tuskegee Normal School when Washington died in 1915.

In 2005, Kay Coles James, a distinguished veteran of state and federal government service, had a vision for use of the site for a "Gloucester Institute," a place for training young, highly accomplished minority college students in the skills needed for leadership, through conferences, seminars, and lectures.

White Hall has undergone many changes over its 300-year history. The current owners have overseen additions, restorations, and the latest amenity, a barn devoted to hospitality.

White Hall

Holly Knoll

The original land grant given to Sir Francis Willis dates to 1690. An exposed wall to the basement shows the Flemish bond brick foundation, as well as the original hand-hewn timbers. A fire in 1814 destroyed the original north wing, an architecturally balanced east wing was added in 1992, and the south wing rebuilt. Great care and attention were given to ensure that the new wings were made with bricks that match the original handmade ones, and that windows and doors replicate the old ones, as well as moldings, wood trim and even door locks. White Hall is a registered Virginia Landmark and is on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Shadow Hill, at 7236 Joseph Lewis Road**,** has one of the best vistas of the York River from the Gloucester County side, which is viewed over the bluestone deck of the pool. Over the bluff and the boathouse, there is an osprey nesting platform and views of the uninhabited Mumfort Islands. The garden includes a white-columned pergola, manicured borders and a live oak on the river side. On the entry side there is a circular drive and a shaded walkway to the back. The white brick cottage style home was originally built in 1929. The current owners have renovated it thoroughly since they bought it as a vacation cottage in 1992. The last transformation included a new stairway, opening up the attic to create a bedroom and large sitting area that overlooks the river, and a new master bedroom. The home is furnished with contemporary furnishings in shades of pink and blue and features a collection of nautical maps on the walls.

Tickets for the tour may be ordered in advance ($25) at www.vagardenweek.org, or send a check to Marianne Bowles, PO Box 2363, Gloucester, VA 23061. Also available at Arts on Main Smith's Florist, Green Gate Gifts, Brent & Becky's Bulbs in Gloucester and Mathews Visitor's Center in Mathews. Tickets and maps will be available at the tour headquarters, Edge Hill House, at 6805 Main Street in Gloucester on the day of the tour only, for $30 each. To see only one house, the price is $15.

Guidebooks will be available at all ticket venues. Consult the guide for other points of interest. Box lunches will be available (advance reservation only) at the Rosewell Plantation ruins, 5113 Old Rosewell Lane between 11 and 2. Reserve with Sandy Pait at spait01@gmail.com.

For more information, see the website www.vagardenweek.org, click on "Tours" then "Saturday, May 3" then "Gloucester." Or call Tish Grant at (804) 694-4653. *pl*

Helloo, Dolley

By Thea Marshall

She was called "presidentress" before Zachary Taylor created the term "First Lady" to describe her, and she was much more than the nineteenth century's "hostess with the mostest." She was Dolley Payne Madison, wife of one of the Northern Neck's favorite sons, James Madison. History reminds us of her courage, and happily we have her own words. The following is from a letter Dolley Madison wrote to her sister Anna in 1814, as the British forces were approaching Washington and the president's house. (The president's residence was not officially called the White House until, according to online encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, "President Theodore Roosevelt established the formal name by having the *de facto* name, 'White House—Washington' engraved on the stationery in 1901.)
Now, back to Dolley's letter.

> My husband left me yesterday morning to join General Winder. He inquired anxiously whether I had courage or firmness to remain in the President's house until his return on the morrow, or succeeding day, and on my assurance that I had no fear but for him, and the success of our army, he left, beseeching me to take care of myself, and of the Cabinet papers, public and private.

Take care of them she did, saving them from destruction.
There was something else she saved, besides the President's papers. She continues her letter:

> I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. This process was found too tedious for these perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken, and the canvas taken out. It is done! and the precious portrait placed in the hands of two gentlemen of New York, for safe keeping. And now,

"SHE MODELED A MODERN FORM OF POLITICS.... AT BOTTOM, SHE CREATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES TO SEE THEIR POLITICAL OPPONENTS AS FULL HUMAN BEINGS."

> dear sister, I must leave this house, or the retreating army will make me a prisoner in it by filling up the road I am directed to take. When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be to-morrow, I cannot tell!

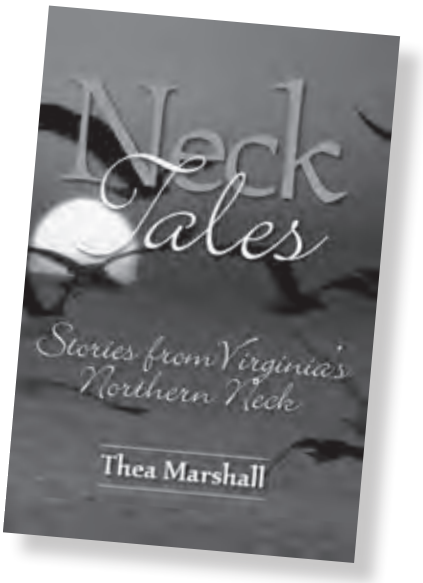
There is much more to Dolley Payne Madison than her bravery, or the desserts named after her. A recent book by historian and author Catherine Allgor points out the very real impact she had on the forming of our country. The book is *A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation*. Some reviewers have suggested that the book, in a not-so-subtle way, diminishes the accomplishments of husband James. I think it simply illuminates the real role of the first First Lady. Yes, she gave tea parties and grand dinners. This excerpt from another letter to sister Anna gives us an idea of those dinners and parties.

> Where will you celebrate the Fourth of July, my dear sister? We are to have grand doings here. Mr. Van Ness is to deliver an oration, Mr. L. says, in the woods, and the ladies are to be permitted to partake of the mirth. We have lately had a great treat in the company of a charming Prussian Baron. All the ladies say they are in love with him, notwithstanding his want of personal charms. He is the most polite, modest, well-informed, and interesting traveller we have ever met, and is much pleased with America. I hope one day you will become acquainted with our charming Baron Humboldt. He sails in a few days for France with his companions, and is going to publish an account of his travels in South America, where he lived five years, proposing to return here again. He had with him a train of philosophers, who, though clever and entertaining, did not compare to the Baron.

These grand affairs with sparkling guests weren't given, it appears, to crown herself as the queen bee of Washington. According to Allgor, "She modeled a modern form of politics…. At bottom, she created opportunities for the members of both parties to see their political opponents as full human beings." And, I would add, to give her guests the opportunity to meet somewhat exotic European nobility.

The Christian Science Monitor points out that Allgor easily captures the political landscape of early America. But even more, perhaps we can learn a bit from Mrs. Madison's tactics for bringing together people with differing views. Here's Allgor's assessment: "Mrs. Madison's style, emphasizing cooperation over coercion, building bridges instead of bunkers, could have played a useful role in today's polarized political climate…."

Dolley Payne Madison, wife of the Northern Neck's James Madison—if you have no objections, we claim you as our own. *pl*



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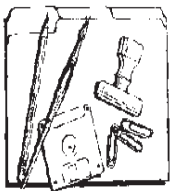

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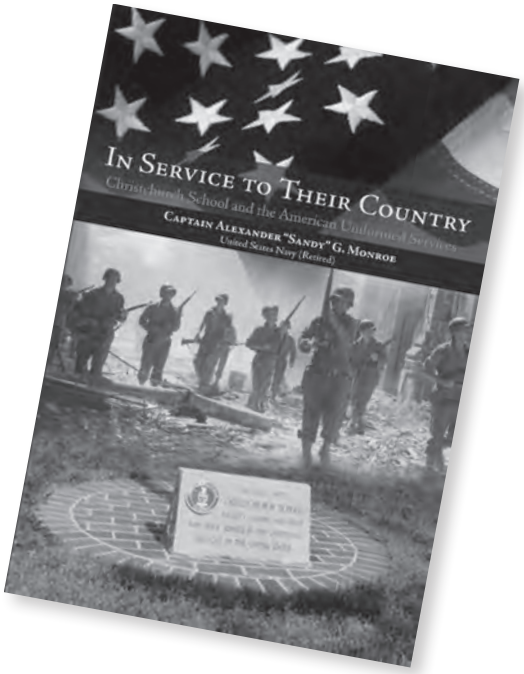

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Together with the hillside monument, this book exists in tribute to those members of the Christchurch family who have dedicated years of their lives—often their best years, and sometimes their last—to the protection of the United States of America.

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