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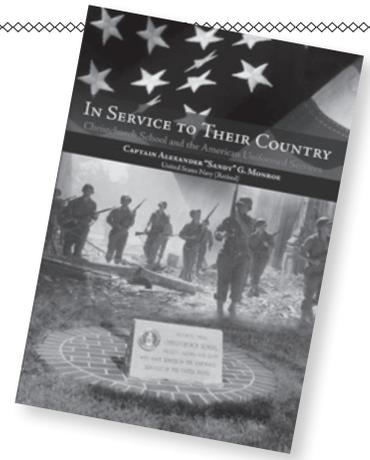
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SINCE 1989

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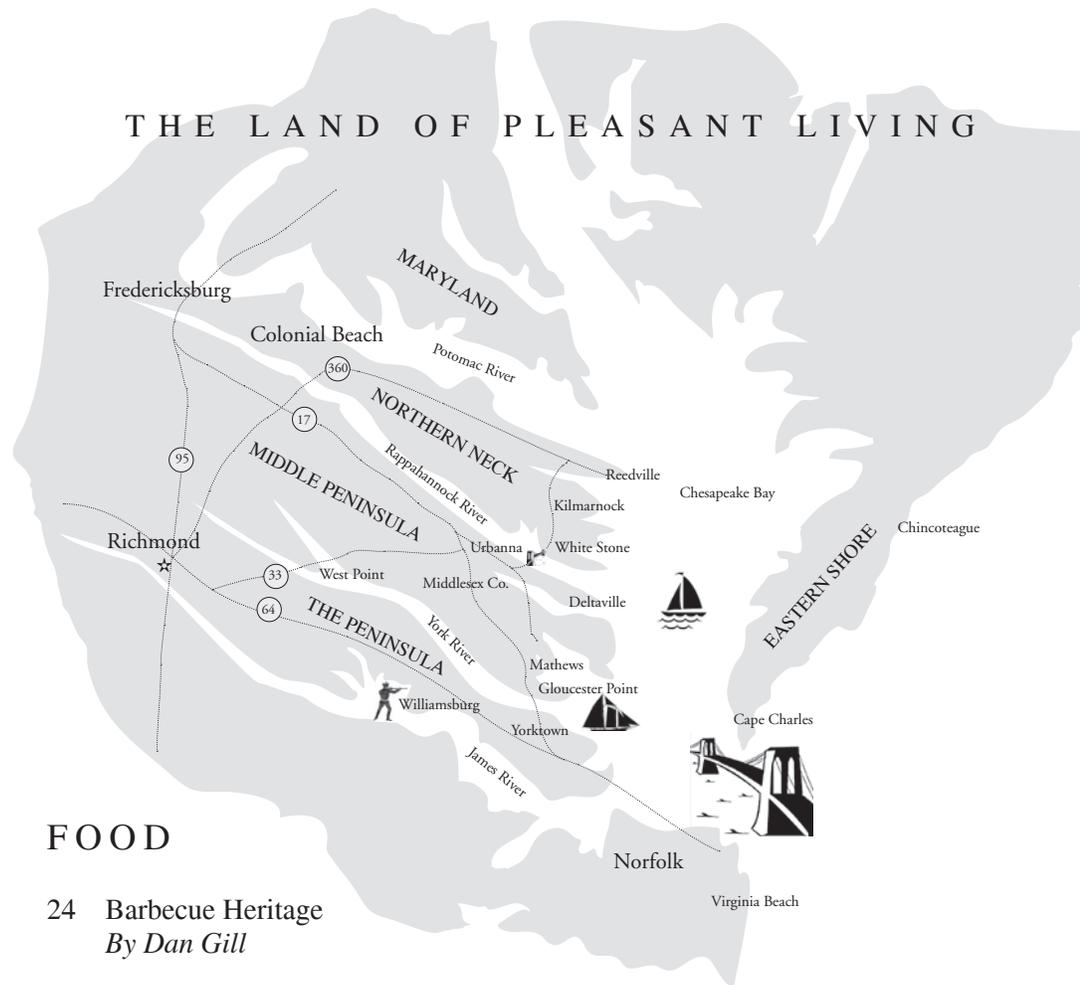
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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

A PERFECT WORLD—REVISITED

Editor's Note—A slightly different version of this journal appeared in March/April 2006.

During the early eighties, when I taught English literature and composition to gifted high school students, I asked them to write an essay on their personal utopia. They could create their own fictional, microcosmic community anywhere in the world, and give it any characteristics or qualities they chose. They could adopt an existing political system or religious belief or create new ones, and establish the values, laws, technology, economy and culture of this miniature world, without limits. The assignment allowed the ultimate creative freedom and allowed them to conceive a society over which they had total control—a place where they could create a new—and perhaps even flawless—civilization.

These students revealed a surprising interest in the future of mankind. The societies they imagined focused on high ideals of justice, equality and freedom. Of course, some also envisioned a world of extreme comfort and wealth for everyone (a Mercedes Benz in every garage) that required little or no work. Overall, however, their hearts and minds were in the right place, and they reached for high moral ground.

Envisioning a utopian society is not a new idea. In the 16th century, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* conceptualized his near-perfect world, and the possibilities of utopian communities have been explored in depth in dozens of literary works since then. For centuries we've been fascinated by what makes the ideal community, and each of us searches for it in our own personal way. Circumstances often dictate our choices, but to the extent that we can, we choose where, how and with whom we want to live. We ask ourselves: what and where is the most pleasant life? How can I get there? It can be a daunting question because it confronts our most fundamental beliefs, values, and fears.

For twenty-five years at *PL*, we've been documenting what we believe to be the most pleasant life. We've published diverse points of view—both personal and historical; we've profiled a myriad collection of colorful characters and entrepreneurs; we've reviewed dozens of books by regional authors; and published commentary, poetry and articles by regional writers. Altogether, it has been a patchwork quilt of what life is like here—in a sense, an artifact of our utopian vision, captured on these pages.

Of course, no world is perfect, certainly not ours and not even utopias, which actually means “no place.” But we continue to pursue happiness and contentment regardless of how illusive it may be. Right here in the River Country, people have been seeking and many have found their own personal paradise, living the life they've always dreamed. At *PL*, we've told many of these stories—of men and women who have left the hum of the city and exchanged it for the hum of cicadas and the watery sounds of the Bay—but we want more. We want you to help us answer the age-old question that has plagued the sages for centuries—

What is the most pleasant life?

If you have a personal answer to this question, we'd like to read it. Tell us in 400 words or less what the most pleasant life means to you. These should be written in first person and submitted to the editor, preferably via e-mail (pleasantlivingmag@yahoo.com), but we will also accept it handwritten or typed, mailed to our Richmond office at 5 South First Street, Richmond 23219. We of course reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.

As written by Marie Louise Berneri in *Journey Through Utopia* (1950), “Utopias have often been plans of societies functioning mechanically, dead structures conceived by economists, politicians and moralists; but they have also been the living dream of poets.” This is a chance for you to reveal the poet in you. Tell us about how you're living your dream. *pl*



Editor/Publisher

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CONTRIBUTORS

PRESIDENT / FOUNDER / EDITOR

Robert H. Pruett

editorpleasantliving@gmail.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Tom Trezz

brandylanedesign@gmail.com

ADVERTISING DESIGN

Tom Trezz, Tim Thompson

PUBLISHER'S ASSISTANT

Alyssa Brew

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Alyssa Brew, Dan Gill, Olivia Levering, Susan Maples-Luellen, Thea Marshall, Elise Patterson, Robert Pruett, Steve Scala, Steven Southall

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

David L. Justis, John Henley

ADVERTISING SALES

Nuala Galbari, Stephanie Harding, Paul Kelley
Robert Pruett, Tim Thompson

*For print and online
advertising information*

804.644.3090

pleasantlivingmag@gmail.com

EDITORIAL OFFICES

5 South First Street

Richmond, VA 23219

804.644.3090 • Fax: 804.644.3092

pleasantlivingmag@gmail.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

P.O. Box 583 Kilmarnock, VA 22482

804.435.6900 • Fax: 804.435.9812

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Alyssa Brew is assistant to the editor at PL. She is currently a student at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Dan Gill owned and operated Something Different in Urbanna, until his death in October 2014. In addition to being a master of barbecue and many other culinary arts, he was a writer and food historian.

John Henley has been a professional photographer since 1985 and has received worldwide acclaim. His book, *Richmond, Virginia: A Photographic Portrait*, is releasing this spring. His studio is located at Plant Zero in Richmond's Old Manchester.

David L. Justis, M.D., an avid photographer and emergency physician at Riverside Walter Reed Hospital, has written articles for various medical journals, Time, QST and World Radio and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He lives in Wicomico, Virginia.

Olivia Levering hails from Chesapeake, Virginia. She holds a masters in arts administration from Florida State University and is excited to begin her first year with the Virginia Shakespeare Festival as promotions & box office manager.

Susan Maples-Luellen is with the Office of Communications for The Virginia Institute for Marine Science/College of William and Mary.

Thea Marshall is a professional writer, broadcaster, actor, and producer. She writes and broadcasts original commentaries on and about the people, places, history, culture and current issues relating to the Northern Neck for National Public Radio's Richmond/Northern Neck stations, WCVE/WCNV.

Elise Patterson is a former intern at Brandylane Publishers, Inc. She recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a B. A. in English.

Steve Scala has spent his entire life in Southern Maryland and the Northern Neck, where his family roots go back to the 1600s. Along with his family, Steve spends much of his time on the waters, and in the fields and woods of the lower Northern Neck.

Stephen Southall graduated from the University of Virginia with a Ph.D. in Psychology and has taught at Lynchburg College since 1974. He is past-president of the American Boxwood Society. When not teaching or working with his English boxwood, he and his wife Diane enjoy traveling in their fifth wheel RV with their black lab, "River".



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Thea Marshall

Voice of the Northern Neck

By Robert H. Pruett / Photo above by John Henley

Listening to National Public Radio (NPR) is one of my pleasures, and for the last two decades, I've had the honor to know a woman whose voice has graced NPR and hundreds of other stations around the country. This spring, on the porch of her home overlooking beautiful Taylor's Creek, I had the opportunity to hear Thea Marshall's stories across a table instead of across the airwaves. The birds sang and a light breeze came across the water as we thumbed through her scrapbook, rummaging through the past and talking about what's ahead for her.

For decades, Thea has distinguished herself in a range of media fields as producer, broadcaster, writer, actor, director, and woman of many voices.

Most recently, listeners could hear her on NPR/WCVE radio, where she writes and broadcasts her commentaries on Northern Neck life and history—commentaries that took root more than thirty years ago.

The small towns, villages, rivers and byways of the Northern Neck have a way of capturing hearts, and that's exactly what happened with Thea and her late husband, Alex. Not long after they visited the area in 1985, the die was cast. Alex retired from IBM, and along with granddaughter Eva, they moved to Taylor's Creek. Thea disassembled her broadcast-quality audio studio on K Street in DC, reconstructed it in Ice House Field in White Stone, and began producing radio and television spots for banks and other clients in the region.

When they arrived at the Taylor's

Creek house, "Eva climbed up on the counter in the kitchen and said 'I'm not leaving,'" Thea laughed. "For a little kid to look out here, and be so close to the water was special. The water was what did it. Alex and I were looking for a place like this. Being a part of the water was terribly important to both of us."

It wasn't long after that that I met Thea, and we quickly realized we had a parallel idea. The idea for this magazine had been incubating for several years and was just beginning to germinate, and she wanted to produce and broadcast a series of radio commentaries about Northern Neck life. We both wanted to document and preserve a way of life that we felt was disappearing. Her goal was to create an oral history; mine was to create a physical archive in print. She began writing the commentaries, and we



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Photos above provided by Thea Marshall

started exploring potential funding for her radio program.

The radio concept was the primary project we worked on together, but there was another. Thea had the idea to produce looped audiotapes, a marketing idea for businesses we called “Information On Hold.” We planned to produce two-three minute tapes about the company’s product or service that could be heard by a caller when they were placed on hold at that business. The idea didn’t go anywhere for us in 1988, but it became a commonplace tool for businesses around the country to advertise their services to callers while they waited. Someone out there was ultimately successful with this concept; it just wasn’t us. “That’s one of the terrible things about being before your time,” Thea said—and we laughed.

In those early years, the radio program couldn’t find funding either, but the universe had a plan up its sleeve. This program was meant to become a reality, and it was to reemerge years later in three different forms.

Long before she discovered the Northern Neck, Thea had established Thea Marshall Communications in Washington, where she began a long career in the world of media and broadcasting. The company that began in her bedroom in McLean got bigger and bigger and ultimately moved to K St.

It’s interesting to me how people land in particular careers, so I asked

Thea how she got started. “It started with a lie,” she said. “I was incredibly young. I tried to impress somebody, and I told them I was in radio. I decided I had to make it come true. I really didn’t want to be a liar.” Surely kicking off a new career in broadcasting had more to do with her professional broadcast voice and her skill than it did with avoiding a lie, but it might be said that necessity is the mother of invention.

One of her major assignments was as executive producer of PRIME TIME, the only nationally broadcast public affairs radio program exploring aging. The program aired on 400 stations across the country, and she produced more than 250 shows. She brought microphones to major congressional hearings, press conferences and meetings that concerned older persons. The topics explored on PRIME TIME—from social security to sexuality, retirement to hospice—helped heighten the awareness of concerns facing older Americans.

Thea’s interest in and development of public affairs programs related to the elderly has been a recurring theme in her work. She developed “Tune into Life,” another weekly program, which was sponsored by AARP, and which aired on Associated Press, National Public Radio, and 350 radio stations nationwide. Again, this program provided information on topics of special interest

to midlife and older persons, including a focused program targeted to women.

“The idea of these programs was to interview people who were older, that you can live a rich, meaningful life in your later years, and do something important for yourself and for the country, the world. Years ago, that ‘certain age’ was a moveable feast. What is that certain age now?” she said.

She brightened when I asked if she had some memorable moments as producer of these programs. “The exciting part was the people I interviewed,” she said. “Do you remember who Jacob Javits was? Incredibly smart man. When I came into his office to interview him, they thought I was his wife—but that wasn’t the best part. He was sitting behind a great big mahogany desk. I was sitting kind of near him, and he just felt it was important to pat my knee constantly throughout the interview, and I thought that was adorable. I suppose today’s woman would have slapped his hand, but I rather enjoyed it,” she smiled.

Interviewing is a craft that must be practiced, and clearly Thea has perfected the art over decades. I wanted to know if she has any craft secrets. “I do my homework, and I try to find a secret,” she explained. “Ethel Merman, I think she was just divorced from Ernest Borgnine, who she said abused her. I don’t know if that’s true. She was the loneliest person I ever interviewed. At the Madison

Hotel, I interviewed Margaret Mead, anthropologist. The most interesting thing she said to me? She blamed parents for moving away from their children to Florida. For her, that was a real dissolution of the family.”

When I think of Thea, I think of her radio art—interviews and public affairs, commentaries and broadcast journalism—but before that, she was an actor—on stage and on-air. St. Louis isn’t what you’d call a haven for actors, but that’s where she got bitten by the theatre bug and performed at the Gateway Theatre, along with doing commercials on local radio. As she said in an article published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* back in the 70s, “Theatre feeds my soul and commercials feed my belly. . . I really consider commercials 60-second theatre.” Her acting spanned radio drama in New York, the Drama Studio, Shakespeare in Central Park, and performances around the country with Patricia Ball, the other half of the two-woman theatrical team they created while in St. Louis.

Acting followed Thea to the Northern Neck and has continued to feed her soul. She produced and has performed her one-woman production of late poet Edna St. Vincent Millay and another on Dorothy Parker throughout the region since the 90s. “Millay. I got to know her so wonderfully well. There’s a very interesting Unitarian Universalist group down here. Clever, bright, interesting people. They asked me to do a service, and I said I can do my presentation on Edna St. Vincent Millay, and they said yes, and I said, ‘I’ll join.’ And Dorothy Parker. I’ve known some women very much like Dorothy Parker. She’s easy to write about. So multi-faceted, funny and tragic.”

There was St. Louis, New York City, Washington, D.C., and then the Northern Neck, the place where hearts are captured. Sitting there on the porch listening to Thea’s stories, with the birds punctuating our conversation, you could feel the presence of the region’s history on the water and in the trees. This is the place where Thea truly began writing and telling the tales of the Neck she started back in 1985. When WCVE, an NPR affiliate station, established a station in Heathsville,

Thea thought they might be interested in airing her stories about Northern Neck life, and they were. These were the stories for the radio program that were meant to be broadcast years earlier.

Ultimately, she and I came full circle, and I published her book, *Neck Tales—Stories from Virginia’s Northern Neck*, in 2008. Shortly after the book was published, she recorded these and newer stories for production of a CD. Life sometimes has a surprising way of bringing us back to where we started.

Looking forward, Thea says the most exciting event to happen soon is the birth of her grandchild—a little girl to be named Eden—expected three months from the writing of this article. Eva, the little girl who climbed up on the kitchen counter at Taylor’s Creek and didn’t want to leave is now Dr. Eva Able, a practicing psychologist in the Gloucester area, married to Chef Adam Ginsberg.

“Being a grandparent is incredibly important,” Thea says. “It’s a historical link inside the family. I will be a great-grandmother!”

As for broadcasting and producing and interviews, she says she doesn’t want to do anything that has a deadline. “I’ve decided that ‘deadline’ is a dirty word. I’m doing some writing. I’m trying to put together something called ‘Necessary Women.’ Doing brief biographies on women who I think have been necessary to the history of this country. I’ve done one on Abigail Adams. I want to do one on Eleanor Roosevelt. There have been so many women who have been kind of forgotten. If you say something like Eleanor Roosevelt right now, people say, who are you talking about? These people shouldn’t be forgotten. I don’t want to be pushed into a corner to do something, and then I’ll do it.”

Speaking of history, Thea has established her place in the world, and it’s clear that she is in the Northern Neck and in Taylor’s Creek to stay.

“I don’t think anyone could think of me as a Washingtonian or a McLeanite... anymore. I feel like I’m part of the ground of this place. I’m part of it. This house—it grew out of the NN.” *pl*

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Coming Home

A Love for the Land. . .and Boxwood

By Stephen Southall

My experience with English boxwood began with baby chickens on a farm three miles west of Deltaville on Route 33. My grandparents owned a baby chick hatchery in Petersburg, and when their supply of eggs from North Carolina dried up, they bought a 220-acre farm that my parents managed and called Chick Cove Farm. The farm then supplied the eggs for the hatchery. Around the main house there were many rectangular beds of English boxwood, and my father, Joseph, decided to get them transplanted and placed around the main yard. Unfortunately, it was done in late spring and all 800 plants died from the heat and drought of that summer. That was my first lesson as a teenager on what NOT to do with boxwood—move them in the late spring.

I loved Chick Cove and the experiences that I took from life there. I have wonderful memories of driving an Allis-Chalmers WD-45 that my father called “MY tractor.” I tilled the land on that tractor and worked the soil with various pieces of equipment that would be antique today but that in the late 50s and early 60s were totally up to date. Those experiences stayed with me, and I knew I wanted to come back some day. In those days, people didn’t talk too much about environmental issues, but Chick Cove is where I learned my love for the land, the value of the land and plants, and many of the conservation lessons, which I continue to practice today.

An unforgettable experience that will always be part of the farm was driving #12 school bus for Middlesex County. I remember mom saying that she always knew when I was home because she could hear me coming down the lane with the bus back-firing. Back then, students could qualify for a bus license at age sixteen—only one year after they got their permit at age fifteen. Also of note is that student drivers got \$55 a month to drive, while adult drivers got \$110. I have sometimes thought about writing the county and asking for equity and getting that back pay!! While driving the bus and parking it at Chick Cove, I encouraged my sister, Helen Harvie, to sweep it out weekly for a grand total of fifty cents a cleaning. She still reminds me of that and also feels that her pay didn’t match her strenuous efforts.

One Sunday afternoon, one of farm workers didn’t have any help to spread grain for the chickens, so he asked me to steer the jeep in 4-wheel drive low range, so it went real slow. At five years old, I was more interested in what he was doing than looking ahead, so I drove the jeep right through a six-foot chicken wire fence. Then I was scared, so went up to the barn loft. My dad came looking for me and asked me what I was doing up there, and I still remember saying, “Just looking around.” At that point, he decided it was time to teach me how to drive the jeep.

From Middlesex High, I went on to the University of Richmond and then to the University of Virginia, where I received my Ph.D. in psychology. I have often commented to my students



Photos courtesy of Stephen Southall

at Lynchburg College that, if I had to make a choice, I would give up my degree before having to give up my experiences on the farm and all that I learned there.

Fast forward to 1985. My friend, neighbor, and colleague at Lynchburg College, Ken Shumaker and I were sitting in his family room one night with Arvin, his father-in-law, talking about various avocations. Arvin said to us, “You boys, (he always referred to us with that term even though we were middle-aged men) ought to raise some boxwood.” Ken and I looked at each other and immediately knew that we would begin a journey with boxwood.

After leaving the farm, my parents had built a home on the Piankatank River, and in 1990, twenty-five years later, they began the slow decline in their ability to take care of the ten acres. When I realized that it would be my responsibility to take care of it in the not too distant future, I thought, “I am going to have to have some reason to drive to Hartfield from Lynchburg, (a four-hour trip,) other than to cut the grass.” It was that realization that led me to begin putting in English boxwood on their property. In doing those first plantings I knew that I was truly coming back to my roots in working with the soil and plants. As I am completing my forty-first year of teaching at Lynchburg College I absolutely love my life and my profession, but I wouldn’t be fulfilled if I were not working outdoors with the land, on my tractor, and in the boxwood. I often say that after the May graduations at the college, I am ready

to put on my work clothes for the summer. However, by the end of August, I am ready to put my coat and tie back on and return to the classroom—truly the best of both worlds.

It is amazing to me how a hardship in one area of life can become total fulfillment in another. Leaving Chick Cove was very hard. I was in college at the time, but I felt a loss since I had been there from age three. As I ride by there now and visit friends, I never fail to look at the fields, remembering the names that we called each one, and recalling the times spent on them getting a farmer’s tan on my WD-45. We were at Chick Cove for approximately eighteen years, which felt like an eternity to the family then, and for me it had been 86% of my life. Now my sister, Helen Harvie and I have been enjoying the “new” house for forty-eight years. Helen Harvie and her husband, Warren Jones, moved from Richmond and into our parents’ home a few years ago, and in doing so, the entire family is now at home on the property. They take a very instrumental role in supporting my business, English Boxwoods of VA, by keeping me apprised in Lynchburg of various changes in moisture levels, weed control, and putting out irrigation on any newly planted boxwood. Of course, they also answer many questions, hand out brochures and direct clients to me.

Over the years since that beginning on my parents land, overlooking the Piankatank River, I have continued to plant boxwood, and as this article goes to press, I am in the process of planting beds, which

are designed to give them room to grow and enable them to be easily maintained. I have been fortunate to be able to integrate the various stages of growth of the plants to the two locations—my home in Lynchburg and my home place in Hartfield.

We are indeed very fortunate to have been given this property by our parents, Joseph and Helen Southall. When we knew we had to leave the farm, dad was leaving one Sunday morning and mom asked him where he was going. He said, “I am going to find a piece of property.” He had no idea at the time what he would do that day. He actually began by going to see Brownie Wood who told him of this property, which he later purchased. From 1967 when they first moved there until 2005 when mom was not able to stay at home any longer, she would sit in a swing on the deck and say to anyone who was near, “I am so fortunate to be here in this beautiful house on this beautiful river.” When the four of us are at the river together, it is always in our blessing at each meal to thank both of them for their vision and foresight in attaining what we call our home place.

So, it is to you, mom and dad, that I dedicate this article, knowing that it is because of your total love and belief in both Harv and me that we are who we are today. *pl*

Watch our July/August issue for part 2 of Dr. Southall’s journey with boxwood.



VIRGINIA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

A Williamsburg Tradition for 37 Years!

By Olivia Levering; Photos by David L. Justis

For its second year as the official Shakespeare Festival of the Commonwealth (and its 37th season on the whole), The Virginia Shakespeare Festival continues the tradition of bringing two of the Bard's classic works to life with *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Over fifty actors, directors, designers, technicians, and administrators will descend upon Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall on the campus of William and Mary beginning in early June to prepare for what is sure to be another crowd-pleasing season. Priding itself on the blending of local and national (and even some international) talent, this year's festival will bring some new faces to Williamsburg, including off-Broadway, film and television stars Kathleen Huber, Robert Meksin, Mia Hutchinson-Shaw, Aleisha Force and Edward Stanley. With shows Wednesday through Sunday running from July 8-August 2, this year's festival hopes to draw audiences from all over the state of Virginia to

experience all the laughs and drama that these two productions are sure to provide.

All's Well That Ends Well

Once upon a time, in a land we'll call...France, there lived a beautiful servant girl, in love with a young nobleman that she hardly dared dream of gaining. Welcome to the fairy tale that is one of Shakespeare's most delicate comedies, *All's Well That Ends Well*. Enter a swashbuckling society (think *Three Musketeers*) where to go to war is the greatest honorable adventure. And of course, where we have nobility we also have the pretenders, the blowhards, and servants much smarter than their masters.

Director Steven Breese, whose stagings of *Romeo & Juliet*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Much Ado About Nothing* have delighted audiences, returns to Williamsburg to impart his deft



comic hand to *All's Well That Ends Well*. His stellar cast includes Kathleen Huber (*Law & Order*, numerous Off-Broadway and regional credits) as the Countess, Robert Meksin as the King of France, and Mia Hutchinson-Shaw (traveling all the way from Scotland's Royal Conservatory) as Helena, one of Shakespeare's greatest heroines overcoming the odds in pursuit of her dream.

Antony and Cleopatra

Following on the heels of last season's hit production of *Julius Caesar*, artistic director Christopher Owens continues down the Nile to its "sequel" and two of Shakespeare's most passionate title characters. It's more than a decade since the downfall of Brutus and Cassius and the triumvirate of Octavius Caesar,

Lepidus, and Marc Antony are the "three pillars" that now hold up the empire. This empire, however, proves not large enough for the egos of these three and the world that is Rome (and Egypt) is about to be torn apart. Ambition, love, and lust collide as titanic figures try to grab more than just their share. A tragedy that includes huge elements of humor, the show has one surprising twist of mood after another on the way to its fateful end.

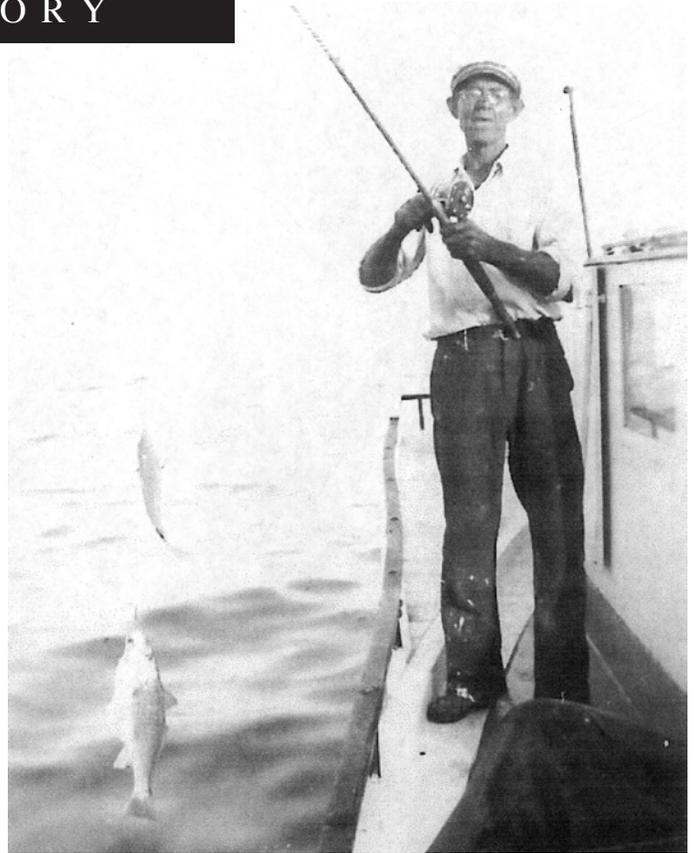
Owens' production will feature two mighty actors in Edward Stanley (*Desperate Housewives*, *Modern Family*, and *Sleep No More*) and Aleisha Force (*Prison Break*, *Pick Your Poison*, *Lady Frederick*, and the just recently released feature *Suspicion*) playing the title roles in a show that will rest in 30 BC but have an operatic feel to the size of its design

(think *Aida*, but without the elephant).

The 2015 Virginia Shakespeare Festival runs July 8–August 2, with performances at 7:30pm (a new, earlier curtain time this year) on Wednesdays–Saturdays; and at 2pm on Sundays in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall on the campus of the College of William and Mary. Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$18 for students, \$12 for children (under 14), \$24 for groups of 15 or more, and discounted rates for season tickets. Tickets can be purchased in person at PBK Hall, 601 Jamestown Road, by calling 757-221-2674 and are available 24/7 online at www.wm.edu/boxoffice. For box office hours please visit us online at www.wm.edu/vsf. *pl*

Remembering Miss Lily and Capt. "Wash"

By John "Sonny" Robinson



Remember him well, lean and tough as nails. "Wash" was a Chesapeake Bay waterman all his life. Captain Washington Tilden Robinson was born in Annapolis, Maryland and moved to Solomons Island around 1900. He raised nine children. Captain Wash was my grandfather.

During those times, making a living working on the water was tough. Even though seafood was plentiful, prices were low. Oysters, fish and crabs were his livelihood. A bushel of oysters netted twenty-six cents, soft shell crabs sold for one cent each, and fresh fish was two cents per pound. With so many mouths to feed, they ate almost as much as he sold.

The waterfront property he rented had a small whitewash house on it, along with an attached woodshed and a small wooden pier, most important for his prized possession, his boat, *Miss Lily*. The house was void of essentials, including running water. A pitcher pump was attached to the small kitchen sink, and had to be primed before each use. The "johnny house" was situated in a prudent spot twenty yards behind the main house. Women used a slop jar at night, most appreciated during cold winter nights. A wood burning stove was located in the center of the lone gathering room or parlor, surrounded by chairs of all makes and sizes. The stove had to be tended all night, limiting a good night's sleep to whichever boy's turn it was to keep the embers lit. During windy cold winter days, it was not unusual to see the curtains at the windows blowing out from the window sills. Two small bedrooms upstairs had no heat. Homemade quilts were prized for looks and warmth.

Next door to the little house was a small railway which could haul one or two work boats at a time out of the salt water for their yearly maintenance. This ritual was necessary each year to clear barnacles, check for rotten wood and apply a fresh coat of copper paint. Wash was a master at these tasks and supplemented his income handily. There were four boys in the family to help with chores around the house. As in most families of the day, the boys followed in their father's footsteps in learning how to make a living. This fact was never as true as in a waterman's family, where long hours and hard work often took its toll on the family. Formal schooling was considered non-essential, as Wash instilled his considerable survivor's knowledge as to the best way to take advantage of all the Chesapeake Bay had to offer. The four boys, including my father Ellis Washington Robinson, followed their father to the sea. My father, however, was lucky to also attend a one-room schoolhouse for four years. During this short period of schooling, my father developed a fine ability for writing cursive, as well as for reading and spelling. This was something Wash never learned to do. As a teenager, it was my job to take my grandfather's seventeen dollar Social Security check, marked by his X, to the store each month and return with a six-pack, followed by a visit to the property owner to pay his seven dollar a month rental payment. This was an important learning experience for me as I learned the handling of money.

The first time I remember seeing my grandfather, I was about five years old. At the time, my family lived in Baltimore, but we were visiting Solomons Island for the weekend. My father took me to the shoreline where my grandfather was in the process



Above left: Capt Wash and Miss Lily with Baby Grace, their firstborn. She was born January 1901. Photo is dated 1903. Right: Capt Wash onboard. Photos courtesy of John Robinson.

of building his own workboat, modeled after a log canoe. It didn't look like a log or a canoe, but it got its name from the rounded hull and pointed bow and stern. The boat looked huge to my young eyes, about thirty feet in length and six-

feet wide, with twelve-inch gunnels forward to aft for use as a platform for tonging oysters and a small cabin to ward off cold winter winds. Any shipwright would have been proud of the workmanship my grandfather put into his work of

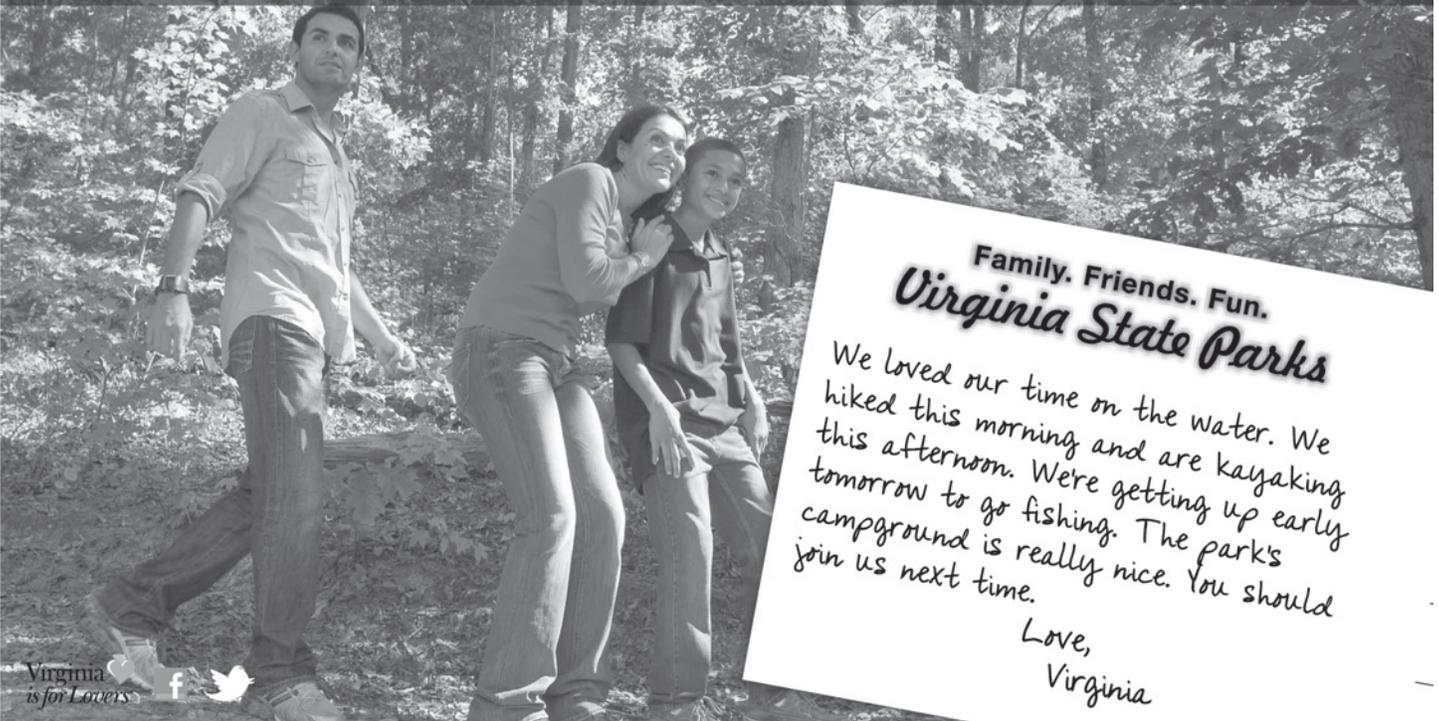
love. The next time I saw the boat, it was floating at his small pier all painted and proudly sporting the name *Miss Lily* after my grandmother Lillian Graves Robinson.

My family and I were able to spend many hours on the boat, working and playing, sometimes just cruising the beautiful blue Patuxent River. Wash labored as did all watermen, in all types of weather on his homemade boat for forty years. He catered to his children and grandchildren whenever a request was made.

It was a sad day, when at the age of seventy-seven, his four boys united to persuade him to retire from working on the water for fear of the dangers inherent while working alone at his age. The last time I saw *Miss Lily*, she was at the end of a hemp rope, being towed to a new home like a proud workhorse that had served its master well and earned the right to retire with her builder, Captain Wash. *pl*

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Fun in the Wacky Science Photo Booth

VIMS Marine Science Day

By Susan Maples-Luellen,
Office of Communications, VIMS

Marine Science Day, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's annual open house, will take place on Saturday, May 30th from 10am-3pm on the VIMS waterfront campus in Gloucester Point (just north of the Coleman Bridge). This popular event is offered free of charge and proceeds rain or shine.

This special day gives the public a behind-the-scenes look at how VIMS' research in Chesapeake Bay and around the world helps protect and restore marine ecosystems. Visitors can tour the Institute's Oyster Hatchery to see how oysters are selectively bred for aquaculture; the Seagrass Greenhouse for an up-close look at seagrasses and the animals they harbor; and the Teaching Marsh to learn about wetlands and waterfront gardens. A tour of a laboratory that monitors fish populations will show attendees how scientists learn about fish diets and determine age. Tours of the Preserved Fisheries Collection are also a hit, as participants will see preserved fish from the mountain

streams of Virginia to the deep seafloor.

Marine Science Day 2015 will celebrate VIMS' 75th anniversary with a look at the Institute's past, present, and future. This will be the theme of 10-minute "fast talks" offered at various times throughout the day, and the theme of the Wacky Science Photo Booth, where participants pose for photos in a surprise scene, revealed after the sessions. A special stamp cancellation will also be available on-site through the United States Postal Service to commemorate this special anniversary.

Exhibits showcasing research on jellyfish, sharks, crabs, eels, and tiny critters that live in the mud, will give visitors a chance to speak with scientists about their work. In addition, visitors can learn about sea level rise, shellfish health, microplastics, and other topics of concern from experts in the field. Seeing the tools and equipment used—from marine instrument platforms to drones—will inform and inspire.

The youngest visitors will have fun in the educational Kids' Pavilion where they'll learn through



1. *Visitors investigate microscopic animals*
2. *Fish printing in the Kids' Pavilion*
3. *Octopus enters the costume contest parade*
4. *Seining participants collect marine animals for observation*

games, activities, and crafts. The activities and crafts change each year, exploring the theme, but popular demand brings back “fish printing” year after year.

The young and young-at-heart will learn about estuaries while collecting and observing animals from the York River (weather permitting), and may plan to join in the Marine Life Costume Contest to compete for ribbons and the grand prize—a \$50 gift certificate to VIMS’ Gift Shop—by wearing an original costume of a marine animal or plant. Groups are also welcome to enter.

An awards ceremony will recognize the Marine Science Day Art Contest winners for 2015, as well as the Marine Life Costume Contest winners. Those with a greater interest in the culinary arts will enjoy the seafood cooking demonstration offered at noon.

There is no fee for admission or parking, but registration is required. Registration is available online now, and is strongly recommended, as it gives access to the Welcome Booth “fast lane” at check-in. Those not utilizing the advanced registration can register upon arrival. For more

information, visit www.vims.edu/msd or call 804-684-7061.

VIMS, one of the leading marine centers in the U.S., provides research, education, and advisory service to help protect and restore Chesapeake Bay and coastal waters. The Institute offers Master’s and Ph.D. degrees through its School of Marine Science, part of the College of William and Mary.

For more information, contact Susan Maples-Luellen, Office of Communications, VIMS, at susan@vims.edu. *pl*

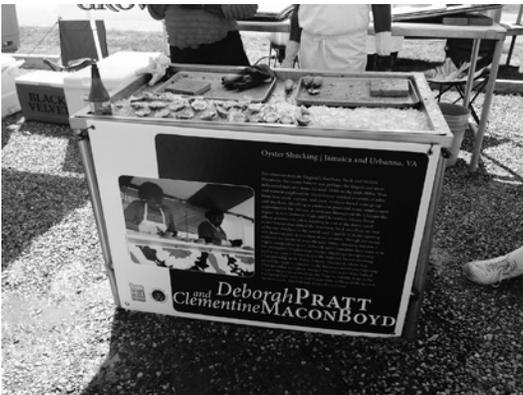
Life on the Waterfront

Deltaville Seafood Festival
Saturday May 23, 2015 Memorial Weekend 9am to 9pm



Story and Photos by Deltaville Community Center

Deltaville's Memorial Day Seafood Festival is truly a celebration of "life on the waterfront." Experience a wide variety of outstanding fresh local seafood from participating "mini-restaurants." Shop and browse exceptional distinctive artisans & fine crafters vendors, and take advantage of the one of a kind works from Deltaville's quaint village.



Here's what's happening in the village: there will be a raw bar featuring National Oyster Shucking Champion Deborah Pratt and her sister, Clementine Macon Boyd, sponsored by Deltaville Oyster Company and www.vaoystercountry.com. The Rappahannock Railroaders will have their wonderful locomotive and train display on Ballpark Rd. The Deltas Baseball Game starts at 2:00 pm, also on Ballpark Rd. The kids will find a wonderfully entertaining Scavenger Hunt to explore. Marvel at the antique boats. Swim free all day at the Deltaville pool, and enjoy snow cones for sale from the Deltaville Sharks Swim Team. Also check out the free Child ID Program at the Masonic Lodge.

Want even more... Enjoy a spring daylong and evening fest filled with family fun and entertainment. Waterfront activities at the Deltaville Maritime Museum waterfront include "Paddlefest 2015" with fun races for all skill levels of paddle boarders and kayakers. Some "loaners" are available. Rides and cruises will be offered for free aboard the "Explorer" and the museum's restored deadrise *Cooper Hill*. Tour the beautifully restored *FD Crockett* nationally registered buyboat from the Chesapeake Bay's glory days. Deltaville's Mariner's Museum offers exhibits, boat builder Willard Norris, and activities for the whole family from 9am-4pm. pm.

And of course there will be live music to entertain while you eat and shop. That evening performing in the Waterfront Park at the Deltaville Maritime Museum, 19 time Grammy-nominated and Blues Hall of Famer, Bobby Messano. Gates open at 4:00 pm with David Moran at 5:00, Ray Pittman at 6:00 pm, and Bobby Messano at 7:00. Check out Billz Bistro, Beer & Wine Garden. All proceeds go to the Deltaville Community Association, which maintains the recreational area and the Deltaville Community Center. For more information go to www.deltavilleseafoodfestival.com or check us out on Facebook. *pl*



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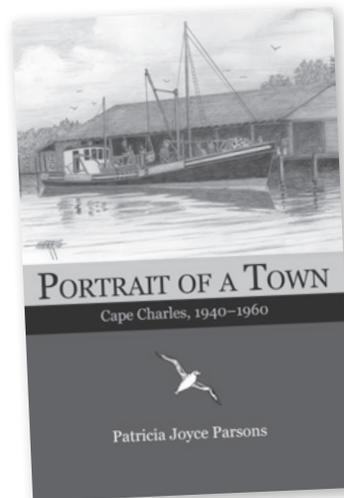
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Portrait of a Town takes the reader on a nostalgic, invigorating journey through Cape Charles from a child's-eye-view—from playing in a swamp, to jumping off the railroad's coal chute, to fishing the barrier islands that line Virginia's oceanfront. In this collection of vignettes, Patricia Parsons portrays life in Cape Charles during World War II and beyond, from the 1940s to the 1950s.

"In *Portrait of a Town*, Pat Parsons reflects with warm nostalgia on her experiences growing up in a lovely and proud Victorian bayside village on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Her delightful portrayal of daily life during WWII, and of Cape Charles's struggle to survive the changing times, provide valuable insight into the history of the area."

— John M. Barber, Fellow, American Society of Marine Artists

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Redeemed by the Light

Author Keith Rustin Shares his Turbulent Journey
to Help Others Find Faith

By Elise Patterson

For Keith Rustin, author of *Redeemed by the Light: With the Faith of a Mustard Seed*, writing his first story was more necessity than choice. When asked how the memoir came to fruition, Rustin claims it developed “as a need to get all of that information out of my head. The more [of my story] I could get on paper, the less of a burden it could be.” Unfortunately for many, a story like Rustin’s is an all-too-common burden.

Struggling with alcoholism, drug addiction, a broken marriage, unemployment, and depression, Rustin realized he had hit rock bottom. But in

his darkest time, Rustin found within himself a kernel of faith that spurred his journey to personal redemption. “There is a verse in the Bible that says it only takes a small amount of faith to move mountains. The measurement they use in the Bible—the amount of faith needed to move mountains—is a mustard seed. A mustard seed is only the size of a grain of sand, but the tree that grows from a mustard seed is immense, huge.” With his mustard seed of belief, Rustin was able to find the strength to right many of the wrongs in his life and begin the process of mending those he couldn’t.

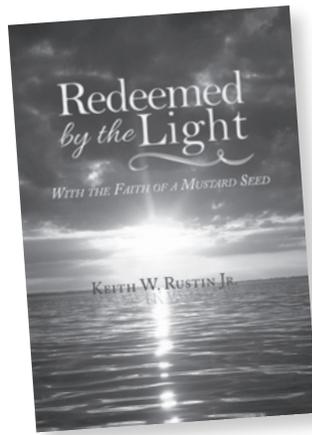
By putting his story on paper, Rustin also hopes to reach out to others who may be struggling with their own difficulties. One of the most important pieces of advice the author wants his book to impart to readers is to “never think that you’re alone.” Rustin believes it’s crucial to remember that no matter how dire one’s personal situation seems, the issues faced are universal. His true passion, he says, is public speaking, and he hopes his memoir will open a doorway for him to speak about his path with others. “I would love to be able to sit down and talk to people about this. You can’t see

faith. You see the action of faith, the result of faith. And I want to be there so people can see the result of faith.”

In *Redeemed by the Light*, Rustin paints a frank and open portrait of what his life was like before his revelation. However, it was important to him that the book serve as mostly an outline for his story. He asserts that without more intimate details, readers will be able to see their own struggles and path to possible redemption in his journey. Even so, Rustin admits parts of his memoir were not easy to compose. The hardest part of writing, he says, concerned his family. “My parents, my father and mother. Those things did happen and it took a lot of searching. I was concerned with how [writing this] would affect them. I said I’d never write it while they were alive. But the greater good outweighed [my personal fears].”

Ultimately, he admits, he would not have been able to write the book on his own. “My biggest strength is my wife. The book wouldn’t have happened without her, and I wouldn’t have had the strength or reason to stop drinking without knowing her strength was there. When she showed up it was like God threw me a lifeline and I could either grab it or not, and that’s the choice. You can grab it when it comes or say ‘woe is me’ and suffer the consequences.”

Rustin hopes his memoir can help serve as a beacon to anyone struggling the way he did. “When you realize you can’t go any farther down—and that place is different for everybody—God will always have a place for you to go and a way out, and it’s whether or not you choose to take it.” *pl*



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ROCK WITH THE CHANGES

Big Brother is Watching

Story and Photo by Steve Scala



Chesapeake Bay's most popular fish, the striped bass, continues to be the focus of attention from anglers, the business community and fisheries managers alike. The level of interest this species gets is often a catalyst for competing interests, socio-economic relationships and trickledown economies. And while the Chesapeake Bay watershed shares a significant majority of the eastern seaboard's striped bass biomass, there are people from North Carolina to Maine who believe that stripers are also a significant part of their local economies. The anadromous nature of striped bass and their seasonal transit of interstate waters mean they have their own federal "big brother" watching over them. Effective for the 2015 season, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has determined that striped bass harvests along the Eastern Seaboard must be reduced. This includes the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries in Maryland and Virginia. Reductions in this regard apply to both the commercial and recreational fisheries. Of particular concern to the ASMFC are indications of reduced recruitment of young striped bass and a lower biomass of striper spawning stocks. While the ASMFC did not indicate that striped bass are experiencing overfishing, they have determined the need to reduce harvest pressure to prevent such an occurrence from taking place.

There is good news for the 2015 recreational striped bass seasons in that the Chesapeake Bay region fishing

opportunities are still available and include similar creel *possession* limits as in recent previous years. What has changed significantly, are the *minimum-maximum lengths and the addition of slot sizes* for striped bass during the Chesapeake Bay Tidewater seasons. These changes were made in order to reduce the overall harvest poundage of mature striped bass and to protect the more successful brood reproduction stock of fish.

The 2015 trophy striped bass season in Virginia Chesapeake Bay waters runs from May 1-15, with a minimum size of 36 inches and a one fish per person, per-day possession limit. During this time, a Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) catch report must be completed for each striped bass kept in Virginia Chesapeake Bay waters. Instructions on how to register for and complete a catch report for trophy striped bass in Virginia waters can be found at the VMRC website, <https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/permits>.

On May 16, an additional recreational striped bass season opportunity begins in Virginia waters and continues through June 15. During that time, anglers can keep two striped bass per person, per day from 20 to 28 inches in length. One of these may be 36 inches or longer. No fish can be kept during this time that is between 28 and 36 inches in length. Those 36 inches and larger require completion of a VMRC catch report.

During the May 1—June 15 recreational seasons, the

possession of any striped bass longer than 28 inches is prohibited in the designated spawning reaches of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay tributaries. To find out where the restricted striped bass spawning waters are, visit the VMRC website at <http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/regulations/spawningreaches.shtm>. For more information on Virginia's Chesapeake Bay striper seasons, visit <http://mrc.virginia.gov/index.shtm> or call 757-247-2200.

Information about the 2015 Potomac River striped bass seasons can be found at www.prfc.us or by calling 804-224-7148 or 800-266-3904. For information about the 2015 Maryland recreational striped bass seasons visit www.eregulations.com/maryland/fishing/striped-bass or call 1-877-620-8367. *pl*

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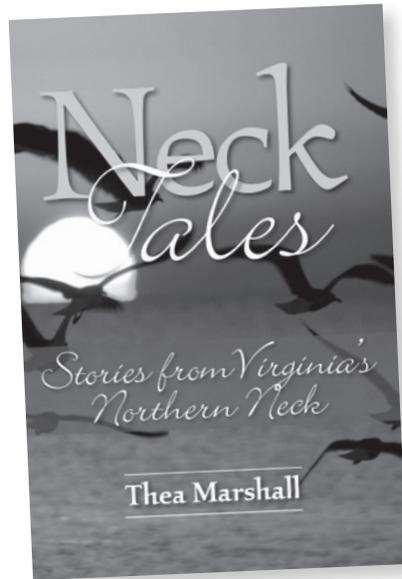
By Thea Marshall

It's over. . .that day in May called Mother's Day. I have featured Mary Ball Washington in many Mother's Day stories, particularly about her relationship with son, George. I've just discovered that I knew only the tip of the. . .well, "iceberg" could be a loose emotional description of Mom. On the other hand, that could be an icy, even slippery two-way street. While it is said she never congratulated her son on attaining the presidency, he didn't attend her funeral! Ron Chernow's monster (at least 800 pages) and masterful biography of George (its title, *Washington, a Life*) paints Mother Mary as a greedy, bickering, demanding shrew, and perhaps in her later years, a woman suffering from dementia. Could she be called "the mother from history's hell?" . . .(though Lafayette and many others considered her a great and noble woman). According to Chernow, during her life she was a demanding, irascible mother. Those demands included everything from butter (this, smack in the middle of the Revolutionary war) to money. This is particularly odd,

since she lived next door to daughter Betty in Fredericksburg. Then there was the heckling of George to get her some kind of pension, though we learn from her will that she was both a large slave and landholder. But I am still wondering what really set off their mutual animosity. Did it go all the way back to George's youthful runaway scheme to join the navy (the British navy, of course). One historical saga tells us that mother humiliated him by going onboard the ship where he had stored his gear, and dragged both gear and George off and away. But another historian tells us his older half brother merely suggested that big brother could place fourteen-year-old George on a British ship, but mom said no.

Perhaps it goes back further than that. Most things do, but we will probably never know the facts.

I am a mother and grandmother. My great good luck was to have had a mother for many, many years. She died in 2003 at the age of ninety-four, and among her things, I found wondrous memories. In one of her closets was a kind of hanging closet, narrow, with many shelves, and in that narrow fake closet were handbags, most in their virginal state. By that I mean. . .they still had store tags on them, and every one of them had been Mother's Day gifts I had hoped to please her with, and the sight brought back the memories of my days of terror, those days just preceding Mother's Day. What to buy. . .what to do. . .? Dinner was easy, the gift part tough. It was less tough in the days of her love affair with Tweed, a perfume she adored. One more thing about handbags: on one of the shelves was a small box. In it was a lovely evening purse, the very one my husband had brought back from India, especially for my mother, eons ago. I opened the purse, and in it was a tiny handkerchief. It had been infused with the scent of Tweed, and oh, how I wished for more Mother's Days. *pl*



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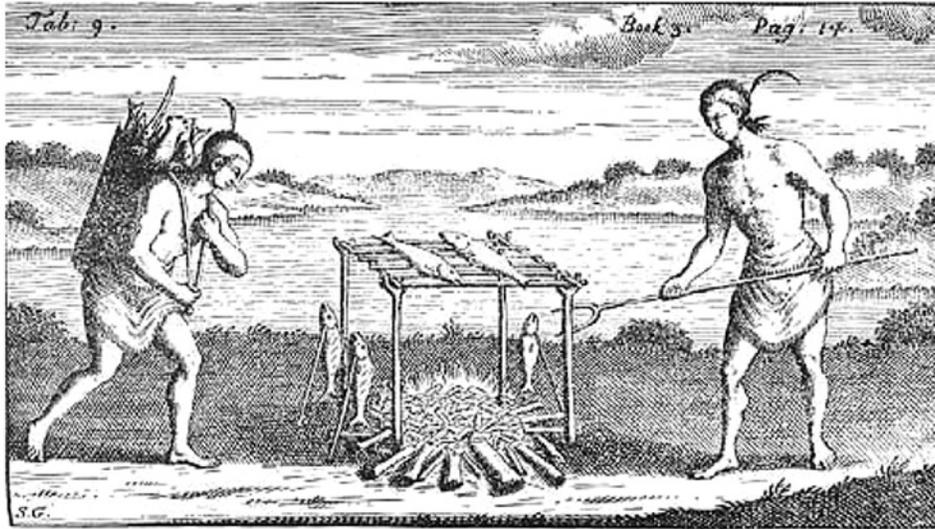
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Methods of Broiling Fish

BARBECUE HERITAGE

By Dan Gill

This article appeared in the November/December 2005 issue of PL. Dan Gill, renaissance farmer and owner of Something Different in Urbanna, wrote his column for PL for ten years, contributing his homespun, knowledgeable commentary on food, history and life. He passed away in October 2014.

Barbecue is uniquely American. Not only did Columbus discover America, he also discovered the culture and traditions of barbecue, which continue today. On the island of Hispaniola, now Haiti and Santo Domingo, Taino Indians spent days hunting and fishing, then spent a similar amount of time cooking. The meat was seasoned and elevated on a platform of sticks about two feet above a small fire of allspice wood.

Man has cooked and preserved meat with fire and smoke ever since he climbed down from the trees. Why is barbecue different? First, barbecue is seasoned and usually served with a spicy sauce. In

the Caribbean, the sauce was composed of peppers called aji (ancestor of today's habanero), fruit juice, land crabs, and whatever else was handy. Columbus wrote, "In those islands, where there are lofty mountains, the cold was very keen there, this winter, but they endured it by being accustomed thereto, and by the help of meats which they eat with many and inordinately hot spices...."

Barbecue is cooked slowly over the flame, embers, and smoke of specific woods. This method flavors the meat throughout as it cooks. Smoke and seasonings also retard spoilage, an important property in tropical climates. Being elevated and open to the air, the

meat is cooked primarily by radiant heat and does not get over-smoked. Slow cooking requires monitoring, so the Taino Indians of Hispaniola reclined on their hammocks, smoked "sikars," drank beer made from palm sap, and discussed the upcoming inter-village ball game. Therefore, barbecue was always as much of a social event as a cooking method. This all made quite an impression on the Spanish, but the natives were cooking turtles, lizards, fish and monkeys: Spaniards figured pigs would make much better barbecue. Therefore, on his second voyage, Columbus brought eight hand-picked hogs to Hispaniola. Descendants of these same pigs were later brought into

Man has cooked and preserved meat with fire and smoke ever since he climbed down from the trees

North America by De Soto and founded the herds of razorbacks still found from Georgia to Texas.

The Tainos called the platform where they put the meat a “babracot,” or something similar. In Spanish, the word became *barbacoa* and referred to the platform, the cooked meat and the party. Spanish explorers spread the word around the world and English speakers changed it to *barbecue*.

It took the Spanish less than 100 years to find all of the gold on Hispaniola, exterminate the Taino Indians and move on to conquer the mainland. In the meantime, the Caribbean Islands attracted a lot of ruffians and malcontents from France and Holland. Mostly political, social and/or religious refugees, these hardy adventurers survived by hunting and planting. They also learned the art of barbecue from natives on Cuba and other islands. On Hispaniola, they found wild horses, cattle and hogs left by the Spanish. They set up camps and started hunting, tanning hides and cooking meat in the native style. Since they had to keep the meat until it could be sold, they cut it into strips and dried it over smoky fires to make *charqui* (dried meat, later called jerked meat or jerky). The French name for the platform of sticks, the cooked or dried meat and the inevitable party was *boucan* and the men who made boucan became known as “Boucaniers.” Typically, two men would partner and spend as much as two years hunting

and making boucan on Hispaniola. Then they would paddle their canoes over to Tortuga, a neighboring island, and sell to passing ships. Sailors liked boucan better than their salt pork and readily bought it from the boucaniers. The boucaniers then spent some of their money on powder and shot and the rest on rum and brandy. When they finally sobered up, they paddled back over to Hispaniola for another year or so of hunting and cooking. As Tortuga was developing into a French trading center, the Spanish became alarmed and attacked and burned settlements and hunting camps. In retaliation, boucaniers started taking Spanish treasure ships. They decided that there was more profit in robbing ships than in smoking meat. Soon they formed a federation known as the “Brethren of the Coast” and became “Buccaneers.”

As the Buccaneers were getting their act together, England decided that maybe she should lay claim to some of the new land before Spain and France took it all. Queen Elizabeth I sent Sir Walter Raleigh to found Virginia (he actually found North Carolina). On one trip inland, they encountered natives cooking seasoned meat on a platform of sticks over a small fire.

Historian Robert Beverley was raised in what’s now Middlesex County. As a young man, he spent as much time as he could with the few remaining Indians. In 1705, he published *The History and Present State of Virginia* and described

the culture and customs of Indians in Virginia. He wrote:

They have two ways of Broyling, vis. one by laying the Meat itself upon the Coals, the other by laying it upon Sticks rais’d upon Forks at some distance above the live Coals, which heats more gently, and dries up the Gravy; this they, and we also from them, call Barbacueing.

English settlers often used Indian words in naming places. Early land patents reference Barbicue Swamp in Nansemond County and Barbicue Creek (most likely Sturgeon Creek) in Middlesex County. It is not really surprising that natives throughout the Americas employed similar cooking methods, but if the word “barbecue” was in general use among native Virginians prior to English settlement, then it was either brought by earlier Spanish explorers or spread up the East Coast through inter-tribal trading.

At Something Different we no longer use a platform of sticks (although I have smoked bluefish on one), but we *do* make traditional barbecue using methods that were adopted straight from Native Americans. And that’s the truth, as far as I know. *pl*



SPRING on over to the Williamsburg Farmer's Market!

Supporting local farmers and craftsmen

By Alyssa Brew; Photo courtesy of Williamsburg Farmer's Market

The town of Williamsburg, Virginia has always been known for its history, quaintness, and homey inviting vibe that continue to lure in many visitors, college students, and folks who decide to call it home. One of the main attractions is on Duke of Gloucester Street: the Williamsburg Farmers Market. The market was originally the idea of two restaurant owners in Merchant's Square, Tom Austin and Tom Power. The two met with the city about beginning a market to make produce available to area businesses, restaurants, residents, and tourists. Once the idea caught on, a committee was formed and Libbey Oliver, their first market manager, was hired. Tracy Herner is now the market manager.

Tracy explains that Merchants Square is the ideal location for the Williamsburg Farmers Market due to the convenient

central location and easy access to Colonial Williamsburg and the College of William and Mary. Its enclosed location and high amount of foot traffic also create an ideal setting for consumers all throughout the year. There are vendors who are present every week, and the number and type of vendors changes with the season. The average is forty, but right now there are sixty-three approved vendors. According to Tracy, the Williamsburg Farmers Market is a producer-only market, meaning that every item sold there is grown, raised, caught, baked or created by the seller. And better yet, they are all Virginians! (mostly Eastern Virginia)

I questioned why this market in particular has seemed to flourish in the past years, and Tracey said it's because of the wonderful support of farmers, community, volunteers and sponsors. It's clear that this tight-knit Virginia town works as a team to create

With the changing of the seasons, comes the changing of the produce available at the market.

this well-oiled machine. Also helpful in the success of this farmers market and others nationwide, is what Tracy calls the “good food movement.” Not only are people more informed about keeping a healthy lifestyle, they are also more aware of the importance of supporting local farmers, businesses, and craftsmen.

With the changing of the seasons, comes the changing of the produce available at the market. Spring makes way for asparagus, spring onions, strawberries, and produce. Summer brings items such as tomatoes, zucchini and cucumbers. And winter squash, sweet potatoes and dark greens fill the baskets in the fall. But not only is this farmer’s market where you can purchase fresh produce and crafts; other attractions also make it ideal for the entire family. There is a Chef’s Tent, which is

always demonstrating something delicious, at least two days devoted to children, as well as live music and other events depending on the season—all of which are announced on their calendar.

The importance of volunteers can’t be mentioned too often. In 2014 there were over 850 volunteer hours donated to the market and the office! Of course, more volunteers are always needed, so there is a link provided on their website where one can apply to help out. Another unique way that the Williamsburg Farmer’s Market receives aide, is through their “Friends of the Market” program, where donations help support operating expenses. In order to become a Friend of the Market, you can either mail your membership information or drop it off in person.

To add to the appeal, Tracy explains that

in 2013 the Williamsburg Farmer’s Market began a token program. This program allows the use of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) for those who need it. In addition, they offer a match of up to \$20 per week! That means that every customer that spends \$20 in SNAP Photos courtesy of Stephen Southall receives \$40 in tokens. In order to find out more about this program and others, as well as a calendar of upcoming events, recipes, sponsors, vendor applications, volunteer applications, and more, visit the Williamsburg Farmers Market website at www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com, call their office (757) 259-3768, or just show up on a market day at 402 W. Duke of Gloucester Street in Merchant’s Square! Spring is upon us, and this is an experience you won’t want to miss! *pl*

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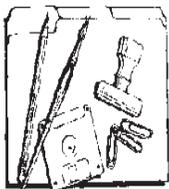
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