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*continued on page 18*

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## TABLE of CONTENTS

- 4 BUSINESS PROFILE Pete Rose**  
Located on Staples Mill Road this business started out almost four decades ago by selling dirt. In the past 15 years Pete Rose Landscape has become one of the foremost suppliers of hardscape material in the Richmond area.
- 6 BUSINESS PROFILE Glen Allen Nursery**  
On the same parcel as Pete Rose is Glen Allen Nursery which covers four acres and contains thousands of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals. They have every kind of plant material you can imagine and it's all good stock.
- 8 FEATURE The Hardscape Art Of Victor Ayala**  
Victor has worked steadily at his trade since he was not much more than a boy and he has an uncanny natural aptitude for design and engineering. He came to this country from his native Guadalajara, Mexico when he was just sixteen years old.
- 12 BRIEFS**  
Join Abbie's Peeps For ASK Walk and Brenda Stankus's Paintings For Henrico CASA
- 14 SEASONAL OFFERINGS Garden Tour And Events**  
From the Museum District and Bellevue, Ginter Park and Ashland, homeowners open their garden gates to spectators through mid-May.
- 18 COVER Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**  
The emerald gem of Richmond's Northside emerged from a seed planted by Grace Arents about one hundred years ago. Since that time it has blossomed as riotously as a Sonoran Desert spring and is consistently rated as one of the top-ten botanical gardens in America.
- 24 BOOK REVIEW The Brown Family Cookbook**  
There are no better recipes than those tried and true, prepared countless times and handed down generation to generation. And you will not find a greater cornucopia of such recipes in any other cookbook I can think of.
- 26 MUSIC REVIEW Dennis Elliott**  
With the release of his latest CD, "Fiddler's Dream", Dennis proves his skill and flexibility as a performer. In all 17 instrumentals on this album, Dennis plays the fiddle, banjo, mandolin and guitar parts, while Brian Sulser plays the bass fiddle accompaniments.
- 28 RAINBOW MINUTES**  
Oscar Wilde's Lecture in Richmond, Loving For All, and Frank DeCaro
- 30 CALENDAR**  
Firehouse Theatre Presents A Streetcar Named Desire, Brenda Stankus Art Classes, Henley Street And Richmond Shakespeare Present Wittenburg, ACCA Shiners Pork & Music Festival

# NORTH OF THE JAMES

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# Pete Rose Landscape Products

## Fields Of Stone

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**T**HE SUCCESS OF Pete Rose will make you question one of the most widely used idioms in the language that defines extreme poverty—"dirt poor".

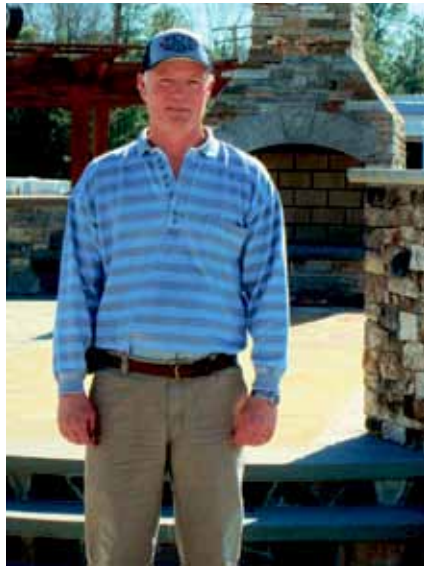
On the flip side, again in idiomatic English, this tale of local success will clarify the notion of "pay dirt".

Because this story is about dirt.

Some 35 years ago, Pete Rose, Sr., who made his living grading and clearing tracts for developments and roadways, as did his father before him, had an idea one day. Pete and his father were clearing land down at Chippenham and Hull Street to make way for a Haynes Furniture building. He considered a large hill of black topsoil that had just been scraped off the site so that development could begin. He turned to his father and said: "I'm going to try to sell this dirt." His father nodded assent and Pete, Sr. put up a sign that read: Topsoil For Sale. By the time he returned home that evening he had more than a dozen calls on his answering machine inquiring about the topsoil.

Pete Rose, Jr. who runs the family business on Old Staples Mill Road remembers the oft-told story in detail. "So my father started selling topsoil and my granddad said, 'You know I think I want a little bit of this action, too,'" Pete tells me. "So, that's how it initially got going and then in the late seventies when the road business went bad my dad, the original Pete Rose, got out of that and started doing the topsoil. He bought a screener to get the impurities out of the topsoil and then he found him a shredder that would shoot the dirt that was clean into the back of a truck or a pickup and he progressed from there."

For years developers would call Pete Rose, Sr. and either sell him the topsoil or simply give it to him. "We'd travel around town where they were clearing a building site and when they stripped the topsoil off we'd set up our little screener and screen away," says Pete. "And we had a dump truck and my mom



*Above: Owner Pete Rose.*

*Bottom: Mounds of multi-hued mulch.*

*Right: Fields of stone.*

would take the calls at home and then my dad would come home in the evening and call people back and line up and schedule deliveries. That's the way it was for probably twenty years.

Then, fifteen years ago, his father set up a permanent business on this tract right next to the railroad tracks near Laurel. We're sitting in Pete's office, warm against the chill of this confounded spring, in an old two-story, Sears-made farmhouse.

"This used to be a lumber yard," says Pete. "My dad started renting this property from the Liesfelds, the same people we rent it from today. We just put a pile of mulch out and started selling that. I used to think, 'What are we going to do all of this land (there's about twelve acres, four of which are rented by business neighbor Glen Allen Nursery)?' As you can see, we've pretty much filled it up."

In short order, the Roses started selling gravel, sand and river rock. "We progressed from there and then decided you've got to change or you'll get left in the dust," Pete says. They hired a former employee of Luck Stone and began selling every kind of hardscape available. This was just about the time that homeowners began installing some

fairly elaborate hardscape in their yards. "It caught on quicker than we'd ever imagined," says Pete. "And the economy was good during the whole time we started and that helped a lot."

One of the reasons hardscape became popular was that the public began to understand the shortcomings of wooden decks. "Before all this hardscaping really got popular all you saw were decks," says Pete. "But decks eventually rot and they're salt-treated and that leaches into the soil. And I'm not a grass cutter so if you can take up any bit of yard it cuts down on mowing. And hardscape is permanent; it lasts. It's going to add value to your house and stone will be there forever."

The variety of stone available at Pete Rose is unparalleled in Richmond. "We started with natural stones and that's anything from flagstone to a thin stone what they use for dry stack walls and veneers on houses," Pete says. "We've also got cobblestones and boulders so you've got a wide variety of natural stones that you can use for different applications."

Today, Pete Rose also carries a manufactured stone. "Some of it really looks like natural stone and is used in the same manner, but it's fake," he says. "It's a concrete product." Pete and his staff took their time selecting just the right manufactured products (and there are many of them on the market, some more realistic looking than others) and ultimately selected three makers one of which, NewLine Hardscapes, is up in Doswell.


Later in the afternoon, I stroll around the grounds and make my way over to an outdoor kitchen made



of stone, so many different varieties that dovetail to perfection. There is bluestone from Pennsylvania which is extremely popular in Richmond and a number of river stones, in all sizes and shapes, but they all work well together.

I walk by several large cinderblock-lined bins that contain mounds of sand, from beige to sugar-white. In adjacent bins are various gravels and smaller stones, graded by size from one-half inch to half a foot across. One is sea-green and called Mountain Green Gravel. There is a black gravel striated with white called Valley Black and there is Brown Crusher Run and Maryland White and Sherando Buff. The list goes on and on.

And as expansive as this palette of color is, the great slabs of building stones are even more varied in their hues. One bursts with fire from the sun so flecked with mica is it. There's a Tennessee stone variegated red and brown, in stratified layers. There is Golden Sunset and Huntington Gold Quartzite that glint like the innards of an Egyptian tomb. And another which looks so much like ocean ripples, with stripes of blue and green and silver that I could have sworn I saw a fish swim by, clearly, through the layers of stone.

At the northern edge of this property there are mounds of mulch and topsoil, thirty feet tall, and from the top of the darkest one, I look out on this remarkable Field of Stone. 

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# Glen Allen Nursery Oasis On Old Staples Mill

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**W**HEN YOU come up on Glen Allen Nursery, if you happen to be coming along the railroad tracks, particularly in the depths of summer, it's as if you've come upon an oasis along this primarily industrial corridor just off Staples Mill Road.

Today, mid-March, there is sunlight, a rare commodity this month, but in the shadows a crust of rime covers the earth just outside the offices of Glen Allen Nursery. I walk through the grounds with



Joe Meyers, one of the owners of this garden center and nursery that opened thirteen years ago.

We step into the first of twelve cold-frame greenhouses and as we enter the air temperature rises a full thirty degrees. It's like walking into summer through a portal from winter; across that threshold the air is balmy.

"There's no heat involved, but the plastic definitely keeps the colder air off the plants," says Joe. "It's just the heat generated by the plants."

"The greenhouse effect," I ask and Joe nods.

The first greenhouse is packed with lustrous green Japanese hollies. "We keep it all fairly well-stocked pretty much year round because we do a lot of business with the landscapers," Joe says as we make our way to the greenhouse next door. "This is House Two

and it's all traditional azaleas."

As we step inside the third greenhouse there's a fragrance as strong as perfume, thought little appears to be in bloom. "I think it's this daphne odora right here," says Joe touching the dark waxy leaves of a small bush that bears tight cluster of pink flowers. "This is where we keep most of our camellias, acubas and rhododendrons."

We move next to the flowering shrub house which contains oak leaf hydrangeas and another early bloomer with mustard yellow blossoms strung from the branches like confetti. "That grows in the wild in Virginia," Joe tells me. "It's witch hazel."

I touch small white blooms with yellow centers. "That's a paper bush," says my guide. "It's a little bit different looking but people really seem to like it around here. It's a late winter to early spring bloomer."

For the next hour or so we visit the rest of the greenhouse, cold-frames all. One is filled with more varieties of nandinas than I ever imagined existed; another contains laurels and barberries. Several a filled with perennials, Lenten roses already blooming, alongside holly ferns, astilbes and a dozen different types of sedum.

Lastly, outdoors, in a veritable forest, we visit the trees and large shrubs which are all on drip irrigation, among them river birch and



*Joe, Laurie and John Meyers.*


red bud, both natives, along with Chinese elms, cryptomeria, green-leaved Japanese maples and scores, if not hundreds, of other varieties.

"We have a pretty wide range from small items like perennials and annuals up to four-inch caliper trees, which are twenty feet tall," Joe says as we move into the shelter of his office. "We try to make this a one-stop shop for different sizes and different varieties of stuff. We have a more than a hundred perennials in season."

Glen Allen Nursery also offers a wide range of native species. "More and more people each year are going for the natives," says Joe. "And it make sense, too. They're less maintenance and many of them are drought toler-

ant. We're trying to push the natives because there are a lot of good natives that do well in this area." Along with a dozen perennials and shrubs he mentions several trees—black gum, tulip poplar and red maple. "You can't beat their fall foliage," he says.

One of the great things about this garden center where I've bought many of my perennials is that the employees here are knowledgeable about everything they sell. They can tell which plants can sustain drought, which can become invasive, which do well in shade or in sunlight. "We have certified horticulturists on staff," says Joe. "And we can all certainly guide our customers in the right direction."

Despite several economic downturns since its inception, Glen Allen Nursery has thrived as well as any native plant. "We've been fortunate that we have good customers coming in and a lot of repeat business," says Joe Meyers. "We try and look out for all our customers as best we can. The combination of working with landscapers and homeowner has helped us a lot. But we're really pushing the retail side of the business now and we have everything any homeowner could want. And, we have customer service." 

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# The Hardscape Art Of Victor Ayala

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**O**VER THE past six years The Cottage Gardener has become synonymous with everything that has to do with landscaping. From mowing and annual lawn maintenance to landscape design and installation of plants, shrubs and trees. And, of course, hardscape, including walkways, borders, retaining walls, stairs and patios.

“I think one of the keys to our success is we think outside of the box,” says owner Tim McCaffrey. “We bring value to the table and we try to spend your money like it’s our money. We’ve had great success and book a lot of return business. No job is too big or too small.” We’re sitting in the living room of Tim’s Bellevue home and he gestures toward Victor Ayala, who has become his right hand man. “And Victor over here can do anything with hardscape,” he says. “And just about anything else.” Victor smiles.

Hardscape defines a yard, front or back. It is like a frame around a fine oil painting. It can be anything from a brick walkway to a field stone retaining wall, a border of cobblestones to a patio of flagstones. Without these accents of bricks and natural stone or manufactured stone products, your yard, though planted well with grasses and perennials, bushes and trees, can become a hodgepodge lacking in design.

After Tim meets with a client to get an idea of what they’re looking for, Victor visits the job site. “I just walk around the house and start taking note of the windows, the roof, the color of the paint,” Victor says. “And I start working in my mind. Then everything comes together.”

But not everyone is looking for a complete makeover. “A lot of times we might be replacing something that’s already there like a walkway, a stoop or whatever, and I’ll tell the homeowner the different types of materials available,” says Tim. “We’ve done everything from relaying an existing slate patio to putting in a new bluestone walkway. If it’s a really complex job I’ll bring Victor in and let him tell me

what I don’t see because sometimes I’m looking at one thing and he’s looking at something else. And then Victor kind of does his thing getting his levels, getting his design so it’s a fairly fluid thing.”

Sometimes, homeowners in their enthusiasm, select stone and mortar work that simply don’t reflect the architecture of their home. Tim mentions a Cape Cod in Richmond’s Northside that features a contemporary mosaic walkway without a border made of stone that would be more appropriate in Albuquerque, New Mexico than in central Virginia. “It all looks wrong and I know the stone was very expensive,” he says.

Pete Rose carries hundreds of varieties of stone, several of which are very popular in this area. “We use primarily Winchester blend and Virginia fieldstone,” says Tim. “They’re very pretty stones and we’ve blended them together. We also use a fair amount of variegated bluestone.” Victor often takes clients to Pete Rose so they can choose the stone. “So it’s a very interactive process from the initial sale to Victor making it come to life,” Tim says. “He’s the guy who makes it speak at the end of the day.”

Giving hardscape a voice is no easy task. The first step in any hardscape project is the foundation. “If you walk up to a patio and you see humps in it and depressions the underlayment wasn’t done properly and if you don’t get the base right I don’t care what you do on the top you’re going to have problems,” says Tim.

Victor describes in detail a project The Cottage Gardener completed last year on Laburnum Avenue. The focal point was a circular patio about sixteen feet in diameter and the job took about three weeks to complete because of uncooperative weather. It all began with leveling the site for the patio, shaving off layers of dirt with the flat blade of a spade and then tamping the dirt down, compacting it with a tool Tim bought from RentalWorks—a mechanical tamper. “It’s probably one of the most valuable pieces of equipment we have because it’s critical to what we do,” says Tim.



Master mason Victor Ayala.

But the most valuable piece of equipment The Cottage Gardener possesses is the sight of Victor Ayala. “I use my eyes for everything,” he says. “I get all the levels just right by eye and I piece it all together looking for an exact piece to fit just right.” After the tamping was completed they brought in crush-and-ground, the same milled gravel used to create the base of roadways, and laid a base for what was to come. Then Victor created a concrete footing with rebar on which he laid a circular wall of concrete block about 20 inches tall. On this he pieced together a mosaic veneer of Virginia fieldstone with uniform gaps of between one-half and one-inch thick, striking the seams as he worked. Then, using a piping bag, which looks and works

just like a pastry bag, he filled the gaps and pointed the mortar. He then filled the sixteen-foot cavity with crushed stone, poured in concrete, laid flagstones in mortar and pointed them. He finished the entire project with a manufactured stone from E. P. Henry that you see bordering a lot of in ground pools, a bullnose coping product that rounds the rough edges.

“It is a real showpiece,” says Tim of the Laburnum Avenue job.

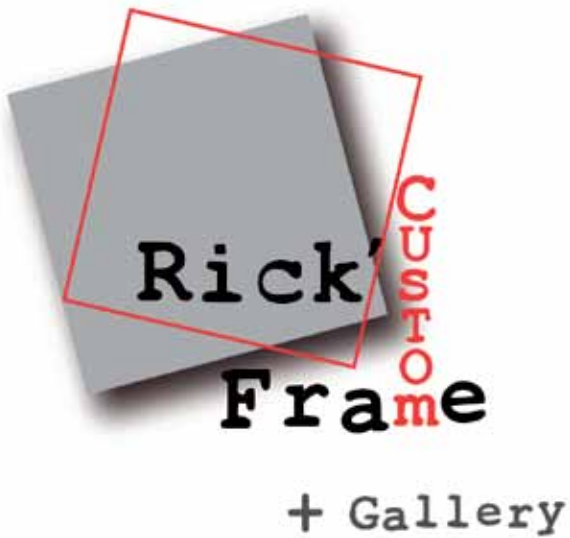
Victor has worked steadily at his trade since he was not much more than a boy and he has an uncanny natural aptitude for design and engineering. He came to this country from his native Guadalajara, Mexico when he was just sixteen years old. He crossed the Rio Bravo





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*“Everything is blooming most recklessly!”*

Rainer Maria Rilke



## FEATURE

in an inner tube, spent two days and two nights crossing a desert only to be picked up by immigration authorities and returned to his native land. But Victor was persistent. He crossed the river again later that same day and this time made it into the heart of Texas where he dined on the finest fare from the Golden Arches and slept for a solid twelve hours. He then boarded a Greyhound Bus and spent the next three days en route to Richmond where he had a job as a landscaper waiting. Within the year he went to work for a local mason, starting on the lowest rung of the ladder, doing grunt work, and learning every aspect of the trade. The man who took Victor under his wing liked him immediately because of his work ethic and his ability to learn, and learn quickly. Victor spent the next four years at this man's side, moving from apprentice to journeyman to master mason.

When the economy tanked, Victor went to work in the restaurant business for about a year and then



*Victor Ayala and Tim McCaffrey scoping out a new job.*

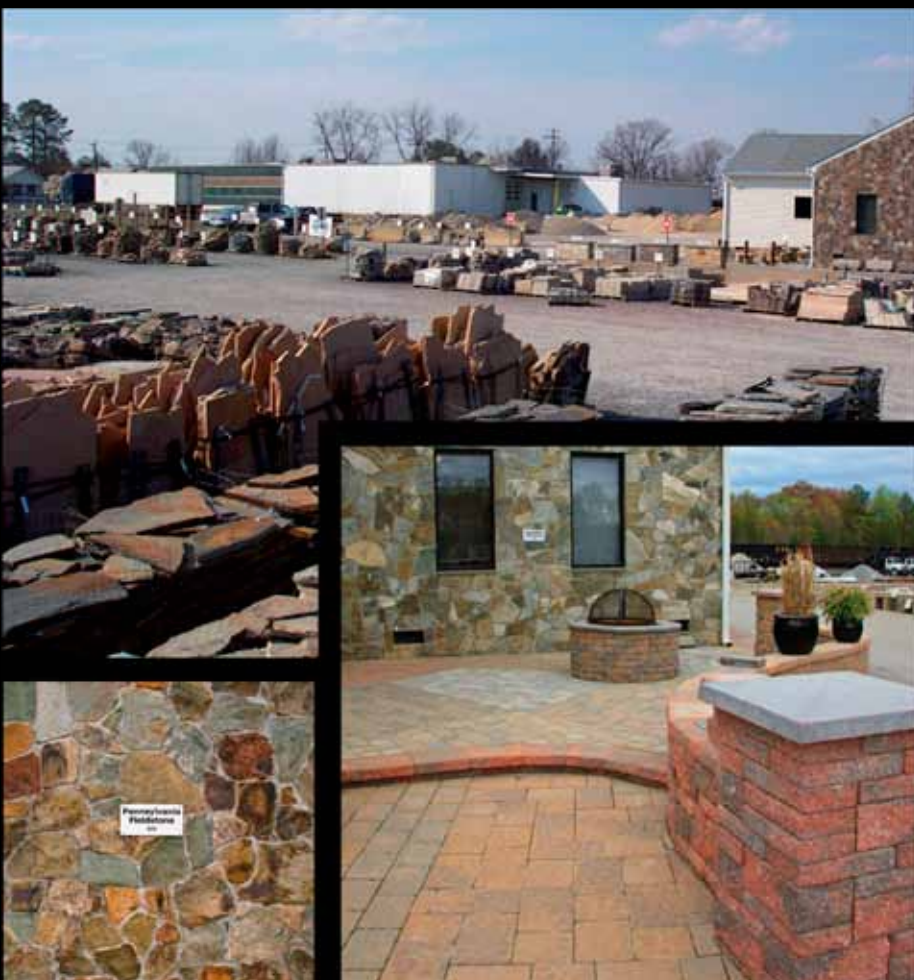
a friend of his got him on with The Cottage Gardener. Since then, Victor has become Tim's number one man and is now married and has a three-year old daughter, the joys of his life. His story is like the story of countless immigrants who needed only a chance in a nation that is made up of immigrants, regardless what members of the current No Nothing Party may say.

Tim looks at Victor with a paternal fondness and says, "Victor's like a son to me. One day I hope Victor takes this all over and runs with it. Victor has a natural affinity for working men and that's not a quality that a lot of people possess. He's good at getting our crew to perform at their highest level and when I come on a jobsite I rarely ever say anything to the guys. I trust Victor. We think along the same lines. We have a lot of simpatico, I guess. Victor's like family to me and I hope I'm like family to him."

Victor Ayala smiles and nods.

"Family," he says. **NJ**

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# March/April 2014

## JOIN ABBIE'S PEEPS FOR ASK WALK



**J** OIN ABBIE'S PEEPS for the ASK Walk which will be held April 26. Sponsored this year by the Flying Squirrels, the 9th Annual ASK Fun Walk & 5K will be held at the Diamond where the course will take runners and walkers around the historic stadium and end in the infield, crossing home base.

After the race, there will be a festival featuring live music with the Jangling Reinharts, fantastic food, inflatables and activities for the kids. There will also be a ceremony for the fastest runners, most successful fundraisers, and our awe-inspiring Kourageous Kids.

Mary Anne Waters, who, with her husband Jeff, are in Hungary to pick up their recently adopted six year-old daughter, urges all of Abbie's Peeps to take part in the ASK Walk. "All of the money goes to the ASK clinic at MCV (the clinic that took care of our daughter Abbie), which takes care of about 500 kids (most of them have cancer) in the Central Virginia," says Mary Anne. "This event occurs right around the time of Abbie's birthday and the day she went to heaven. Please join us to celebrate her life and have fun raising money for kids with cancer."

To sign up for Abbie's Peeps, go to the following website, [www.askwalk.org/asksweet/register.asp](http://www.askwalk.org/asksweet/register.asp), click on JOIN A TEAM and then select Abbie's Peeps.


## BRENDA STANKUS'S PAINTINGS FOR HENRICO CASA



Like her husband Joe, Brenda Stankus is a philanthropist at heart and recently she put her artistic skills to work, benefiting children. She painted twelve separate portraits of children that were recently shown at a fundraiser for Henrico CASA at the Crossroads Art Center.

Painted in acrylic, each portrait is one-foot square and captures the essence of each child, their inner beauty radiating from their faces. "I did not try to make these children pretty in the conventional sense," says Brenda. "But rather I was looking for twelve normal children looking out at us as we view them on the wall, each clearly having a story of their own."

Fifty percent of the proceeds from the sale of the paintings will benefit Henrico Court-Appointed Special Advocates CASA, which is made up of trained community volunteers appointed by a Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judge to advocate in court for children who are abused, neglected and otherwise in need of services. CASA volunteers offer children encouragement, stability, and hope during a complex and critical time in their lives.

Of the stories Brenda's paintings tell, she says, "It doesn't have to be a bad story, although it might be. These portraits focus on the fact that there's a wealth of living and loving that goes on behind and inside of every child, rich or poor, of any race, and that we need to be aware of that in a responsible way" 



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## SEASONAL OFFERINGS

# Garden Tours And Events

by REBECCA MOON

### ASHLAND - WESTERN HANOVER GARDEN TOUR

**H**OSTED BY The Ashland Garden Club. Saturday April 26, 2014, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This home and garden tour

of Western Hanover and the Rockville area offers something for everyone: a horse farm built in 1890 with new additions; a log cabin built in the 1700s; and a working farm with a brick manor built in 1974 that includes a classic car collection.

Hanover Master Gardeners will be available in designated gardens to answer questions. The Cochrane Rockville Branch of the Pamunkey Regional Library is offering a "Parents Morning Out In The Garden" program complimentary to Historic Garden Week ticket holders during this tour. The garden themed children's program will include games, stories, crafts, lunch and a movie. It runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Advance tickets, \$25; day of event tickets, \$30. For more information please visit: [vagardenweek.org/tours-details.cfm?TourID=104](http://vagardenweek.org/tours-details.cfm?TourID=104)

### MUSEUM DISTRICT MOTHER'S DAY HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

Now in its 20th year, this garden tour provides a rare opportunity for guests to go inside the private houses and gardens of some of Richmond's most beautiful and historic residences. Sunday May 11.

Each year, proceeds from this annual event are reinvested in our neighborhood to address environmental and safety issues. Additionally, donations are made to local nonprofits. Previous recipients have included Albert Hill Middle School, Byrd Theatre Foundation, Fan Free Clinic and the FRIENDS Association for Children.

Tickets may be purchased on-line



*Alpacas in the garden at last year's Bellevue Garden Walk.*


or in person at select ticket outlets. The ticket price before the close of business on Saturday, May 10, 2014 is \$20. Tickets purchased on-line may be picked up at the Hospitality Center Will Call, located at Albert Hill Middle School, on Sunday, May 11. For more information please visit: [EventBrite.com](http://EventBrite.com)

### GINTER PARK HOME AND GARDEN TOUR

Featuring nine gardens and five homes, this year's theme is Music in the Garden. Saturday May 17, 11a.m.-4 p.m. Musicians will play as attendees tour the gardens and homes. Proceeds from this year's event will benefit the Music Therapy Department of the Children's Hospital on Brook Road.

Volunteer tour guides and musicians are being sought. For more information, please contact Paige Schiavone at [homeandgarden@historiccginterpark.org](mailto:homeandgarden@historiccginterpark.org) or 804.512.0246. Learn more at: [ginterpark.org/tour.php](http://ginterpark.org/tour.php)

### BELLEVUE GARDEN WALK

The 25th annual Bellevue Garden Walk will be held 2-6 p.m. Sunday May 18 and will feature 13 delightful gardens on Chevy Chase, Claremont, Hermitage, Laburnum, Pope and Windsor. This is among the most intimate of garden tours in the region and illustrates the true beauty and individuality of Bellevue homeowners. Several artists' studios will be open just before the garden walk. Garden Walk brochures detailing the event will soon be delivered to every household in Bellevue. 

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Map not to scale.

**95**



## LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN

# Gardens of learning



**I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF** Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden as our personal garden. My kids and I have frequented it often enough over the years as if it were right in our own backyard, and it's only about two and a half miles from our back door, over to Hermitage and out Lakeside, a short bike ride that we've taken on countless occasions. In some very essential ways my kids grew up at Lewis Ginter, from the field trips at Westminster Canterbury Child Development Center and later Holton Elementary School, to our own numerous excursions there, and they both learned about the beauty and diversity of our environment there. When my daughter was eight we were crossing one of the bridges below the Asian Valley when we came upon an outcropping of lotus plants in full bloom, rocking gently back and forth with the current of the stream that empties into the lake. We watched blue gills and large-mouth bass below the giant, nearly circular leaves of the lotus and then I showed my daughter some magic. We spit on the leaves and the saliva balled up immediately and rolled off the leaves like droplets of quicksilver. Six years later, my son Charles and I were among the same series of bridges, but we had moved to the area that is swamplier where the big koi lived and we fed them by hand. But what aroused my son's attention most of all were the strange orchid-like flowers that grew in great colonies along the shoreline there. They were indigenous and could do this marvelous thing: They could eat insects. For a full hour we collected bugs and fed them into the cilia-lined mouths of the pitcher plants.

Lewis Ginter, visionary industrialist and philanthropist who helped rebuild Richmond after the Civil War, owned all 82 acres that comprise the Botanical Garden that now bears his name. (He also owned almost all the land from that point south to the Richmond city line, which was then around

Lombardy and Brook Roads.) In 1894 he founded Lakeside Wheel Club for bicycling enthusiasts at the time which included Bloemendaal House that his niece would occupy some years later. She

would bequeath the property to the city of Richmond and ultimately in the 1980s a not-for-profit organization would be formed to create a botanical garden on the site.

I'm seated across the desk from Frank Robinson in his office on the second floor of Bloemendaal House. Like Major Ginter, Frank is something of a visionary himself. When he was hired as executive director of the Garden 22 years ago all that was here was the three-acre Flagler Garden, Bloemendaal House and a field of mud connecting the two features with a sidewalk that was half brick and half asphalt. The man who developed Flagler Garden was a nationally recognized expert in perennials but there were no drawings of the garden. "It was all in his head," Frank remembers. "And so the major donors at the time were pretty panicked because there was nothing to work from so my first task was to get that garden under control and bring it into fulfillment." Which is exactly what Frank did.

On about that same time there

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN

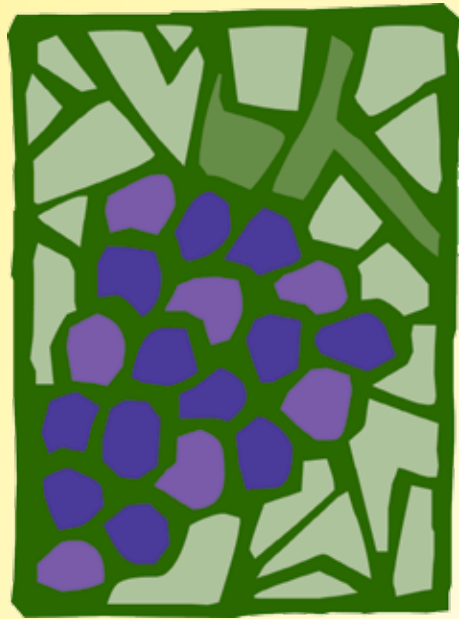


was an extremely ambitious master plan for the Garden. "It was very, very complex and elaborate, some would say over the top, but maybe not realistic," Frank says. I remember having seen a model of that master plan under a box of plexiglass. It included a series of three gigantic conservatories done in a contemporary architecture emulating an imaginary Moon Base or the Biosphere. The thing that struck me was that almost everything would be indoors, under glass. More than anything else it looked like a model of Disneyland, About the only thing missing from it was a monorail.

"Publically, people said to me, 'We're going to build this world class garden in Richmond,'" says Frank. "And then privately, they would say, 'This is Richmond.' People thought it was overly ambitious and even if it could be achieved, it couldn't be sustained."

So Frank, along with members of the board and the planning committee, began traveling around the country to visit other botanical gardens. "We did that for about 18 months," Frank recalls. "And at the end of the day we'd sit around the table during dinner and say, 'What would you replicate and what would you delete?' And so we came up with a modified plan."

This was the impetus that would eventually lead to donations. "We were very lucky because the economic times were good and we had the momentum of the Flagler Garden," says Frank. "There were a lot of folks who had been interested in the Garden and engaged to some degree but who hadn't quite gotten to the point of making a commitment to support it in a significant way, who were just kind of primed." He mentions Lora



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Robins, Anne Massey and Nancy Gottwald. “They were in place, they were committed,” Frank says. “But they needed a spark, I guess.”

Which turned out to be the revised master plan and once this plan was in place the donors lined up to make their contributions. “Lora Robins was the first one to say, ‘I like what I see,’” says Frank. “There was more emphasis on gardens, less emphasis on monumental buildings, and she immediately committed to the Visitors’ Center. Within 48 hours, Anne Massey committed to the Greenhouse Complex which we needed desperately. And then within a relatively few months the Gottwald family committed to the Conservatory.”

Things began to move at an accelerated pace. The Visitors’ Center was completed in 1997, and two years later the greenhouses were finished. Next came the Education Building and finally in 2002 the Conservatory. When Frank had first arrived at the garden there



*The Conservatory.*

were only about 3,000 visitors a year. As these additions to the garden were completed, visitor traffic increased exponentially. “By 1998 we had 60,000 visitors annually, and in 1999 we had 180,000 visitors,” Frank says. “Completing the

Visitors’ Center put us on the map.” Despite this growth the Garden has remained an intimate space. “We have intentionally tried to keep an intimacy about the Garden which goes all the way back to

1993 when we started those revisions of the master plan and the designer asked all of the staff and the board members who were present to name the gardens they most admired in the world,” says Frank. “And we all named gardens that had been private gardens, later converted to public gardens, but not designed as public gardens. It’s always served us very well. Our gardeners here are assigned to specific areas. Those are their gardens, so to speak, so when you’re in one of those areas it’s almost like it’s your own.”

Organic by its very nature, the Garden has grown in ways that no one could have imagined. In recent years, the Community Kitchen Garden was added behind the array of greenhouses. So each year this garden produces fresh vegetables and fruit for the Central Virginia FoodBank.

“We’re putting in a small edible landscape garden in collaboration

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# CHAPTER & VERSE BOOKSTORE



Frank Robinson, president and CEO of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

with Virginia Tech this spring,” Frank says. “This shows how to introduce edibles into your home landscape.”

So much of what the Garden is about is education and the setting of examples. As part of a new project the vast green space facing

the Conservatory will be changed. “We’re questioning how responsible some of these very, very old traditional design references are in today’s world particularly around surface water and ecological preservation,” says Frank. “So the turf is going to be removed and will be replaced by big waves of native ornamental grasses to show people how beautiful those can be, particularly in large statements.”

Another project in the works—an extremely ambitious project—is one that will have a palpable impact on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It will ultimately include the planting of native species along the entire perimeter of the Garden. “It’s really talking about the importance of natives to the ecology,” Frank says. “It’s about surface water and the management of surface water and the conservation of surface water and about native species and their role in the whole ecological balance.”

The Honorable

**Chris A. Hilbert**

Councilman, Richmond City Council  
Northside 3rd Voter District



## Northside 3rd Voter District 2013 MEETINGS

All Northside 3rd Voter District Residents invited to attend!

**TIME**  
6:00-8:00 p.m.

**PLACE**  
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4901 Old Brook Road  
Richmond, Virginia

**CONTACT**  
804.646.6055 (tel) or email  
chris.hilbert@richmondgov.com

**DATES**  
Wed., April 23, 2014  
Wed., May 28, 2014  
Wed., June 25, 2014  
Wed., July 23, 2014  
Wed., August 27, 2014  
Wed., September 24  
Wed., October 22, 2014

Goals, Updates & Accomplishments



## The McShin Foundation Golf Classic

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# McShin



# Foundation

[www.mcshin.org](http://www.mcshin.org)

The focus of what will be called Streams of Stewardship will be urban water issues. "It's stuff like rain gardens and the restoration of stream beds and building better riparian buffers," says Frank. The creek that flows through the Garden is the recipient of urban water pollution from Belmont Country Club, Lakeside Avenue, and residential neighborhoods that flank the Garden. "The truth is Charles that we cannot make a huge impact, we're just not big enough to make a huge impact, but what we're hoping ultimately is to build enough awareness among the gardening community that we change other people's behavior," Frank says. "We take this water from this parking lot and won't put it in the storm sewer anymore. It will flow naturally into a riparian area. And we'll have a series of small dams downstream that slows that water down, and there will be dense plantings and we will monitor the pollution levels and we



*The Teabouse.*

can show that nature works. We'll take hundreds of thousands of gallons of water that fall on this parking lot annually and go directly into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We will retain it in our local water table and we will clean it."

Along with cleaning the water, these riparian areas planted in native species will be instructive to homeowners and developers alike. "This project is also meant to demonstrate how beautiful this kind of landscape management can be,"

says Frank. "We have people coming to us all the time saying, 'Well I'd love to do it but I think it would be ugly, or I'm not sure it would work?' Or developers who say, 'If I did this around my new residential development would any of the people who want to buy these houses find it acceptable?' We need to set that standard. We need to prove that you can do a landscape with natives that allow all the rest of nature to thrive in the environment. We think we've got to put our stake in the ground and really prove that it works so that other people will replicate it throughout the community."

I ask Frank, if he can, in a nutshell, tell me what Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is all about?

He pauses for one brief moment. "I'll tell you what a friend of mine said the other day about the Garden," says Frank. "He said, 'It's an inspiration.' And isn't that what we really want to do. We want to inspire you,



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*View of the Treehouse.*

we want to inspire your kids, we want to inspire the community and we want to inspire developers. We want to inspire you to care for the Earth in ways that benefit all of us and that can be everything from the food we eat to the beauty of what we look upon every day. I hate to sound so philosophical, and sort of naïve,

but I do think ultimately that's what we're about."

And then Frank Robinson tells me about special places in the Garden, little niches carved out by people as sacred areas, hallowed ground that has helped them endure and prevail. "People have their favorite spots and we hear that so often anecdotally," he says. "And it will be because someone has passed and they name us for memorial gifts and we'll talk to the family and say 'Why?', and they'll say of a deceased spouse, 'Well she went through breast cancer and chemo and radiation and the only place she found peace during that entire year was on this bench in this part of the garden and we wanted to honor that. And we hear that all the time from people.'" 

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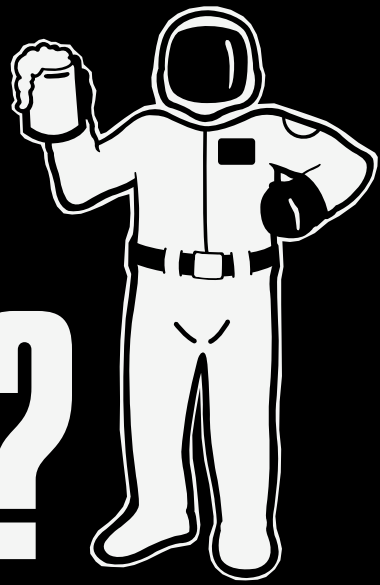
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## BOOK REVIEW

# The Brown Family Cookbook

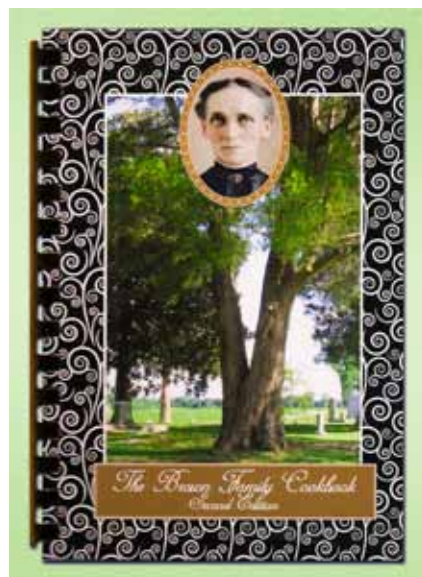
by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**T**HERE ARE NO better recipes than those tried and true, prepared countless times and handed down generation to generation. And you will not find a greater cornucopia of such recipes in any cookbook I can think of than those that appear in *The Brown Family Cookbook*, chock full of sumptuous dishes of the comfort kind the South is known for. This is the same food that shows up annually each August on tables up to forty feet long at the Brown Family Reunion down in eastern North Carolina, a tradition that started more than eighty years ago. Lena Kay McLemore Scarborough, with the help of Clarence Cary Brown, lovingly compiled the recipes in this book from a wide assortment of family members, seasoning it liberally with family histories and anecdotes.

During his recent Christmas gathering held at Linden Row, Cary brought along a tin filled with his cheese biscuits—quarter-sized morsels tangy with cheese and spicy with Cayenne with the crunch of a single pecan half topping each one. Contents of the tin vanished as quickly as coins at a tollgate.

There are more than 500 recipes in this cookbook, enough to feed a family without repeat for a full year, with three squares a day. The recipes include soups and sandwiches, vegetable and salads, main dishes and desserts, pickles and condiments, bread and rolls, and appetizers and beverages.


One of my personal favorites is a Southern specialty that can be eaten anytime of the day or any season of the year. It's called coffee jelly—more of a jell-o really—and is simple to make with double strength coffee, sugar, gelatin and salt. It sets up in a few hours and is served best in jelly jars with a topping of whipped cream



and a sprinkling of cinnamon. It's light, tasty and charged with caffeine.

There's also the best recipe I've ever seen for baked country ham. The secret, of course, is in removing a lot of the excess salt and trimming away the rind, but it's also this slow baking method that brings out all the hidden flavors of this Tidewater specialty.

And what Tarheel cookbook would complete without a recipe for real North Carolina barbecue, the right stuff, to the east of Interstate 95, with an apple cider vinegar base. There are outstanding recipes for Brunswick stew, hush puppies and slaw to accompany the mouthwatering pork. The dishes are varied and will please the palates of carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.

The cookbook costs \$20 along with \$3 for shipping and handling. It's a great investment, something you can hand down from generation to generation, and in a sense become part of that indomitable Carolina family—the Browns of Bertie County. To order, simply send a check for \$23 along with your address to: Kay Scarborough, 723 Greensboro Avenue, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451. 

*The Brown Family Cookbook*  
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## MUSIC REVIEW

# Dennis Elliott Fiddler's Dream

by ORION HUGHES

**O**F ALL THE tribes that England tried to subdue, the Scots and Irish—Celts to the core—were impossible to crush. As indomitable as heather and shamrocks these neighbors of Britain would spring back to life whenever John Bull trampled them. And the music of these people, which was their voice, persisted when they settled mountain hollows from Virginia to Georgia and out to Kentucky, and has since crept into every form of music that has erupted in the fecund soil of America. The purest of it all, distilled as mountain dew, is bluegrass or old-time music.

Dennis Elliott is a master of this form in all its variety. He also possesses extreme versatility, moving easily from fiddle to mandolin to banjo and guitar. He's won the 2002 Virginia State Fiddling Championship, the 2004 Virginia State Fiddling Championship, the 2007 Virginia State Fiddling Championship, the 2009 Virginia State Mandolin and Banjo Championships, the 2010 Virginia State Mandolin Championship, the 2012 Virginia State Mandolin and Banjo Championships and other competitions.

With the release of his latest CD, "Fiddler's Dream", Dennis proves his skill and flexibility as a performer. In all 17 instrumentals on this album, Dennis plays the fiddle, banjo, mandolin and guitar parts, while Brian Sulser plays the bass fiddle accompaniments.

Included in this mix are three original pieces including "New South Breakdown", "Rhapsody in Gm" and "Marynell's Waltz", a heartfelt, three-count piece written for the composer's wife. There's also one Cajun number on this CD, "Jolie Blon", a traditional waltz, often called the Cajun national anthem, which makes sense because Dennis hales from Louisiana where he was influenced at an early age by Cajun fiddlers. He was also influenced by



Chet Atkins, Jerry Reed and, of course, bluegrass and old-time fiddlers—and it all comes through on this release.

Through his long musical career, Dennis has played with or been in warm-up bands for Bill Monroe, Brenda Lee, David Allen Coe, Earl Scruggs, Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, Jr., Mac Wiseman, Merle Haggard, Patty Loveless, Ricky Skaggs Tammy Wynette, Vassar Clements and many others.

Dennis currently plays with a variety of local bands, including Dixie Ridge Bluegrass, The Atkinsons, Gypsy Roots, Chris Adams Band, Hazeltone and The Slack Family. **NR**

"Fiddler's Dream" can be purchased for \$15 at [www.dennis-elliott.com/FiddlersDream.asp](http://www.dennis-elliott.com/FiddlersDream.asp)

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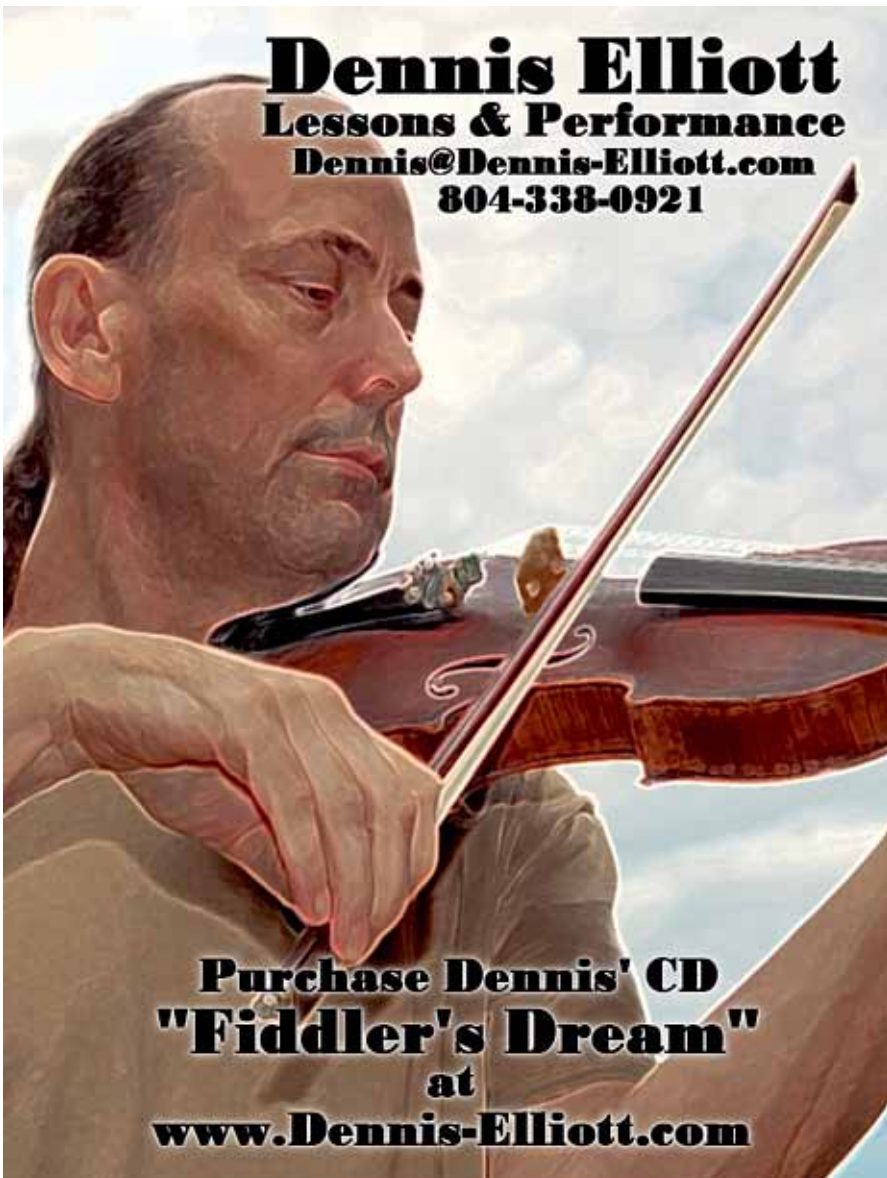
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## RAINBOW MINUTES

### Oscar Wilde's Lecture in Richmond

**A**S PART OF OSCAR Wilde's American tour of 1882, he arrived in Richmond, Virginia on July 11. The State reported he had arrived from Norfolk. While touring the former Capital of the Confederacy, Wilde said, "This is indeed a city worth dying for." He also visited the sculpture studios of Edward V. Valentine, and signed his guest book.

That evening, he delivered an hour-long lecture at the Richmond Theatre on the topic, "Decorative Arts." About 200 people were in attendance, many of them curiosity-seekers wishing to catch a glimpse of the famous, flamboyant poet in person. Some found him of "more massive



propositions" than they expected.

Wilde continued his American tour into October, which helped establish his expertise in "matters of art and taste."

### Loving

On February 13, 2014, Judge Arenda Wright Allen found Virginia's ban on gay marriage unconstitutional. In her written ruling, she included a quote from African-American Virginian, Mildred Loving, who decades earlier faced a legal battle by marrying a white man. In part, it read:

*Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and*

*our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the "wrong kind of person" for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry.*

It was signed, Mildred Loving, "Loving for All."


### Writer and Entertainer, Frank DeCaro

Frank DeCaro realized he was gay even in kindergarten, so he knew the schoolyard bullies on a first-name basis.

But in his career, his gay perspective made him a king of comedy.

From 1996 to 2003, he appeared on The Daily Show with John Stewart, playing a film critic who found a gay subtext in every film. DeCaro's material was called one of the funniest things on television.

In 2004, he entered radio with The Frank DeCaro Show. In one zany segment, callers chat with entertainers like Carol Channing and his childhood favorite, Butch Patrick, who played Eddie on The Munsters.

DeCaro met his sweetie, Jim Colucci, in the mid-1990s. They moved in together, sharing a home with their Boston Terrier, named Pee-wee Herman Munster Merman. 

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and so on. The remainder of the time is spent with individual painting and one-on-one instruction. All classes are open to all interested students. For more information contact Brenda at [thepaintingclass@gmail.com](mailto:thepaintingclass@gmail.com) or call her at 262-6979.



### Henley Steet And Richmond Shakespeare Present WITTENBURG

Henley Street Theatre and Richmond Shakespeare are proud to present the hilarious, thought-provoking comedy, Wittenberg by David Davalos and directed by J. Paul Nicholas. This play, part of the Richmond Acts of Faith Festival, runs through April 19 at Richmond Triangle Players. Starring, Dixon Cashwell, Jeffrey Cole, Stacie Rearden Hall and Andrew Hamm. For more information please visit [www.HenleyStreetTheatre.org](http://www.HenleyStreetTheatre.org)




### BRENDA STANKUS ART CLASSES

Local artist Brenda Stankus announces her schedule for spring, summer and fall art classes which will be held in her studio on Bellevue Avenue. Spring sessions run from April to June; summer sessions from July to August and fall sessions from September to November. Classes begin with a 20 -30 minute talk on timely art issues, materials,



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