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Independently owned and operated.

editor/publisher

CHARLES G. MCGUIGAN

art director

DOUG DOBEY at Dobby Design

contributing writers

**BRIAN BURNS,
ORION HUGHES,
ANNE JOHNSON,
ANNE JONES,
CATHERINE MCGUIGAN
JUDD PROCTOR**

contributing photographers

**REBECCA D'ANGELO
CATHERINE MCGUIGAN**

account executive

TIM MCCAFFREY

editorial: charlesmcguigan@gmail.com

advertising: charlesmcguigan@gmail.com

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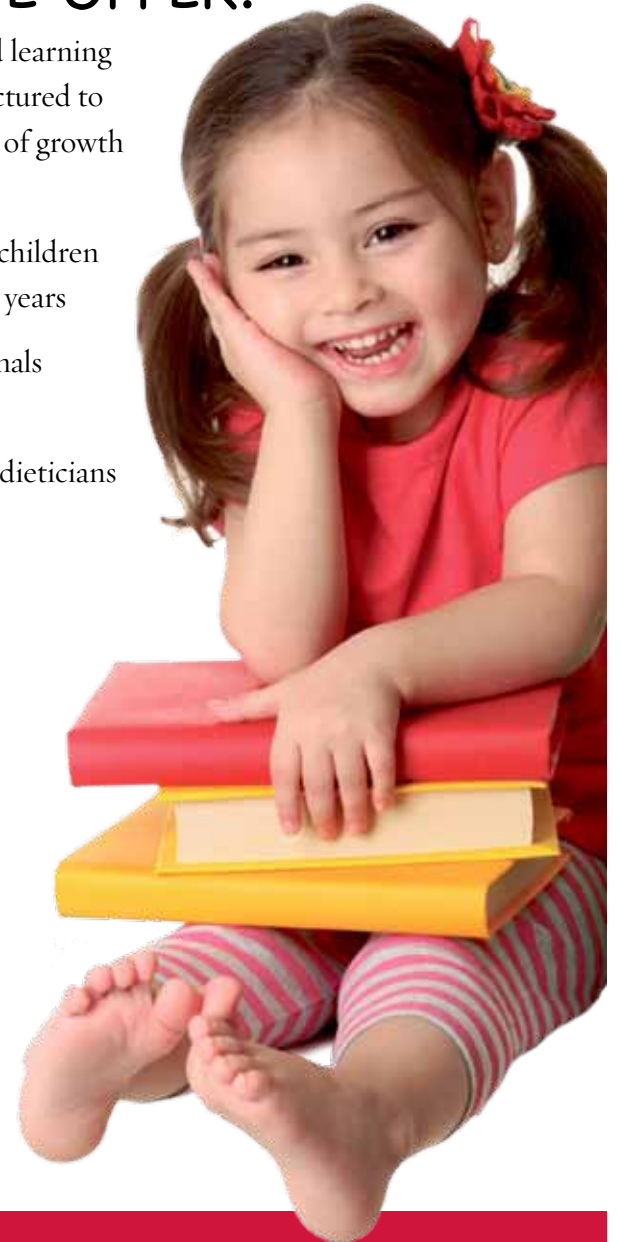
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Movie Night At Once Upon A Vine

With EmCee Bob Kocher

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

SUMMER IS A TIME of rituals. Grilling out. Camping trips. Beach excursions. A day at the pool.

In Richmond's North Side a wine and beer shop owner has created another summer tradition that attracts women, children and men every Friday night. They come like night moths just after the sun sets.

Tonight about fifty people set up lawn chairs and lay out sleeping bags on the parking lot at Once Upon A Vine in the heart of Bellevue. Parents open coolers, handing out drinks, and the kids find their seats or simply sprawl out on sleeping bags and blankets, the asphalt beneath them radiating ripples of warmth. Every eye is trained on the vast stucco wall that flanks the northern perimeter of the parking lot as Bob Kocher stands by a round folding table, making adjustments to the DVD player. A couple of false starts. Wires are checked to the speakers, a crackling of static, then the sound comes on and it all begins with a couple of shorts, just the way Bob remembers the movies from when he was a kid years ago in Baltimore. There are black and white projections on the stucco wall, dated, but still appealing and some of the kids love these preambles as much as the feature itself.

A little girl named Helen tells me this: "What I like about it is that they show these videos before and it's like there's this old timey show and they have kids in it and it's funny."

"And do you know what it's called?"

"No," she says

"Little Rascals or Our Gang comedies."

"Well, I like them."

If it's not Our Gang, it's The Three Stooges. When the short ends the feature film will begin. Tonight it's "How To Train Your Dragon" and Bob Kocher, the unofficial mayor of MacArthur Avenue, makes this all possible by shelling out a couple dollars each week to RedBox or Netflix, and he does it, as he does so many other things, for the community at large.

"Basically," he says. "It's for the neigh-



Friday night at the movies.

borhood and the neighborhood kids. When I was a kid, every Saturday we went to a matinee at the Rex Theatre and it cost a quarter and you spent all day there and watched all kinds of things. Little Rascals, Three Stooges, Lone Ranger, Hop Along Cassidy, and on and on and on. It kind of kept us out of getting in trouble and it kept us from doing things we weren't supposed to be doing. I'll put it that way."

For Bob Kocher this Friday night ritual resurrects another cultural icon of his youth.

"You grew up in an age when drive-ins were very, very popular."

Bob pauses, remembering. "Very much so," he says, naming several drive-theaters from his youth. "And this is a lot like that, you know. You don't have a car, but you can sit on the parking lot and watch a movie. It's just like a drive-in."

As was the case with drive-in theaters many years ago, sometimes the kids here, particularly the younger ones, don't make it through the entire movie.

"It's a great babysitting method for those children who are two or three," Bob says. "They'll watch half the movie, fall asleep and Mom'll roll them home in the stroller."

Charles and I roll out our sleeping bag and toss two pillows on it. He then arranges half a dozen stuffed animals on his side and we go into Once Upon A Vine where I buy him his customary package of Gummy Bears. Back outside, Charles steps cautiously among the movie goers handing them candy. It's part of his ritual, sharing what he has with others, kids and adults alike.

As the movie starts night has fallen and overhead a smattering of stars and a rising moon watch over

this encampment of neighbors and friends whose eyes drift from sky to stucco screen and back again.

When the movie ends, after the applause, people gather up their things. A teenager named Isabelle, here with her parents, has been coming to these Friday night movies since she was just a little girl. "I like the fact that there's a drive-in movie down the alley from our house," she says.

Men, women and children, leave the parking lot in an exodus, some climbing into cars, others walking up the alleyways or along the sidewalks, under this moon which lights the way like a silver sun. Bob Kocher starts packing up the DVD projector and tells me this idea is catching on elsewhere.

"I've gotten a lot of calls from different people that have lived here or visited here and saw the movies and have tried to implement it in the areas



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FEATURE



Bob Kocher looks on.


where they live," Bob says. "Virginia Beach. They're doing it down there in a couple of locations now. They called and asked me what equipment I used. Even as far as Crisfield, Maryland. They're doing it out on the dock there."

You can see this happening everywhere across the country. All that's required is a wall and a machine and two dollars a week. Not much of an investment really, but the outcome is remarkable. Memories of summer are formed that you can hold through a lifetime of winters.

In the past ten years, my son Charles has seen over a hundred movies here. We come almost every week from late spring to early fall and it has become as much a part of summer as flip flops and sun screen.

"I like movie night because everybody gets together from the whole neighborhood," Charles tells me. "We come here

every single Friday and it's fun because the movies that Bob gets are really great for kids. And I like bringing my stuffed animals and the sleeping bag cause it's comfortable and cozy. I like to snuggle and watch the movie."

When we first started coming here almost a decade ago, I used to carry my son home draped across my shoulder, while I held my daughter's hand, and we moved home-ward along the darkened alleys, and Charles would be asleep before we entered the front door, dreaming of summer nights. 

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The Eclectic Cottage

The Art of Tea

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

YOU CAN SMELL the tea the moment you enter The Eclectic Cottage. Not overpowering, it's more like a subtle fragrance, almost the polar opposite of the rich and heady aroma of fresh-brewed coffee.

Mesha Mott is preparing to serve high tea to a table of two. She delivers the tea and then brings out a pair of plates and a two-tiered serving tray brimming with mouth-sized morsels. The two women she serves raise their cups and sip then begin filling their plates.

"The nature of the shop is to bring a relaxing tea house in an atmosphere of antiques and collectibles to the community," says Mesha, who opened her tea room in late June. "I wanted to create a relaxing and peaceful place here where you can come and shop and have desert and tea and if you love high tea, which is a huge event, you can come in on Saturdays and Sundays." Reservations for high tea are encouraged.

It wouldn't high tea without the edibles. "I use the best bakers in the city of Richmond," Mesha says. "We serve miniature scones, lavender shortbread, lemon basil cookies, all made with fresh herbs. We have vegan and gluten-free choices, as well. We have cucumber sandwiches and salmon with capers. And all of it's locally made."

We sit at one of the half dozen or so tables. These aren't standard restaurant tables but pieces of furniture that might have once graced a dining room or a kitchen, and the chairs that accompany them are as unique as the tables they ring.

"I am a tea connoisseur," Mesha says. "I love the way coffee smells but don't necessarily like the way it tastes. I just love tea because it has some calming principles."

She then mentions what she calls the art of tea. "It is really looking at the different tastes of teas and how you can blend them," Mesha explains. "So I do a lot of custom blending with lavender and chamomile and hibiscus and cocoa and vanilla." In this regard it's almost like a culinary art.

"You have the ability to choose the



Mesha serving high tea at her new MacArthur Avenue shop, The Eclectic Cottage.

aroma and the flavor that you like," says Mesha. "So, for instance, I make a chocolate mint truffle tea where I take mint leaves and black pekoe tea and mix in the cocoa chips."

Mesha's love of tea harkens back to a Mother's Day when she was just thirteen years old. "My mom introduced me to high tea at the Four Seasons in Georgetown," she remembers. "I fell in love with it. Since then I've been going to high tea in every city I've ever visited."

And she's visited and lived in her share of cities across the United States. For most of her adult life, Mesha worked in marketing and later human

resources for mega-corporations. "I worked for General Motors in their sales and marketing division in Detroit," she says. "I went to work for Dupont in Wilmington, Delaware. I went to New York with TimeWarner around the time they bought AOL and Turner Broadcasting. And I worked for Verizon"

A few years back, Mesha left the corporate grind and began working as a consultant, which has given her the time to realize the dream of opening a teahouse of her own design.

Scattered throughout the shop are collectibles and at least six pieces of furniture that are for sale. "I love art

in general," she says. "I love decor, I love visual arts in terms of gallery pieces. One of the things we sell are mini-gardens that a local artist makes and I consider those plants visual arts as well. I will have a lot of things for sale that have an artistic feel."

So much of this shop embraces the spirit of Mesha's mom. "She loved everything about art which is probably why I love art also," says Mesha. "Many of the furnishing here belonged to my mother who was an avid antique collector."

Mesha ushers me to an altar of sorts near the back of the teahouse. It's set up on a vanity table that belonged to



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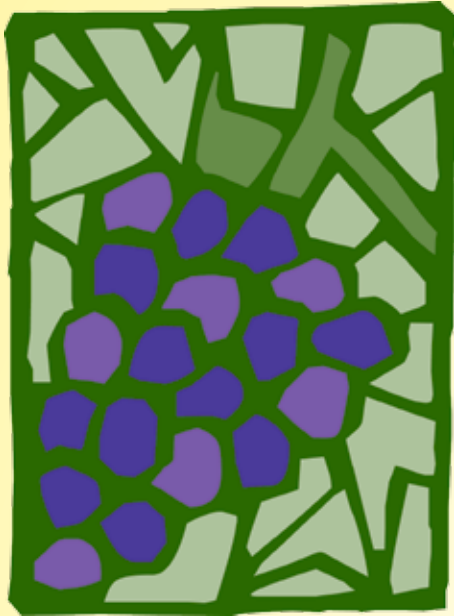
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her mother. Her mother was a teacher for almost four decades in Columbia, Maryland where Mesha and her sister grew up, so among the many knick-knacks on the table is a Waterford crystal apple. There's a stained glass candle holder her mother made along with another of her creations—a decoupage egg. It features a woman dressed in a kimono serving tea.

"I don't know how she could have the vision that I'd be doing this today so that's a real treasure to me," Mesha says. "She gave that to me when I was 13 years old and she gave my sister (Angela Pope, who recently opened one that has a person sitting at a vanity looking in a mirror. I don't know how my mom could have known back then that my sister would be styling hair and I'd be serving tea."

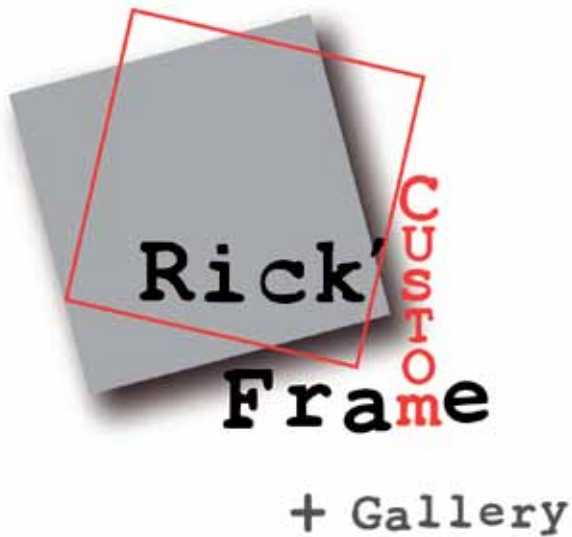
Her mother fancied turtles and there are scores of them made of a variety of media adorning the shop. "She loved turtles because her motto was the race isn't always given to the swift," says Mesha of her mother. "She taught us that those that have a soft and quiet spirit can still be successful."

That philosophy resonates through the teahouse. "When I decided to create The Cottage I really wanted to go back to basics at a time when people would converse and connect so I tried to create an atmosphere that's like your own living room," Mesha says. "So, I put books from Shakespeare to Maya Angelou on a bookcase. I don't have Wi Fi, because I really don't want folks to be high-stressed. I don't want people to be disappointed that there's no Wi Fi. I want them to understand that it was very intentional so that we can talk to each other, read a book, enjoy a piece of cake, have a cup of tea and just relax instead of coming in high-stressed, trying to make the conference call, or text that last message."

Mesha remembers her paternal grandmother's house in Orangeburg, South Carolina in the summer, after supper when the sun was beginning to set. She'd bring out a homemade cake and tea. "That's when I was five, six, seven, eight," she says. "What I remember is that I loved ending the night with that."

Mesha Mott brings me a large tumbler of iced tea, one of her specialty blends, a mixture of black tea with vanilla beans and lavender. It both relaxes and refreshes, the perfect elixir for the dog days of summer. 

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Paul's Place Tangible History

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

PAUL FERRAMOSCA loves old things, things that are made with a craftsman's eye for detail out of materials that simply aren't available today. It all started when he was just a boy. For hours he would marvel at the four chairs with roses carved on their backs that his mother had in the dining room of the family home out in Sleepy Hollow. They were made of a rich wood, walnut, probably, and it was the workmanship and the age of these chairs that struck Paul. One morning Paul hiked from his home at Tarrytown and Doverland all the way out to Gayton and Gaskins. Near that juncture was a house that had recently burned, and within it Paul found a bedstead—vintage 1930s—that had pinecone finials on the footboard. Paul took the bed apart and carried it back to his family's home.

"But my mother looked at it and she said, 'What are you crazy, whered' you get that piece of junk,'" Paul remembers. "I told her where I found it and she said, 'Well you get yourself together and get it and walk it all the way back and put it back in that damned house.' And that was probably my beginnings."

While attending college at VCU, where he studied business administration and management, he began exploring the hidden recesses of the city and unearthed things from her past. "Instead of being all hung over on Saturday morning I'd get up and go bottle hunting down at Old Mansion Coffee on 5th Street," he says. He found a rare beer bottle there which still had a cork jammed in its mouth, a wire cage ringing its lip and neck. "I've still got that bottle," Paul tells me. "And that's what really got me started on all this."

We're standing in the middle of Paul's Place, a meandering one-story building on Overbrook Road. It is packed to the seams with antiques of every description and period, along with architectural accoutrement and antique hardware, floor lamps and chandeliers, pieces of artwork, masks, inkwells, doorknobs, just about anything you can imagine, and each item distinctive as a human fingerprint. You

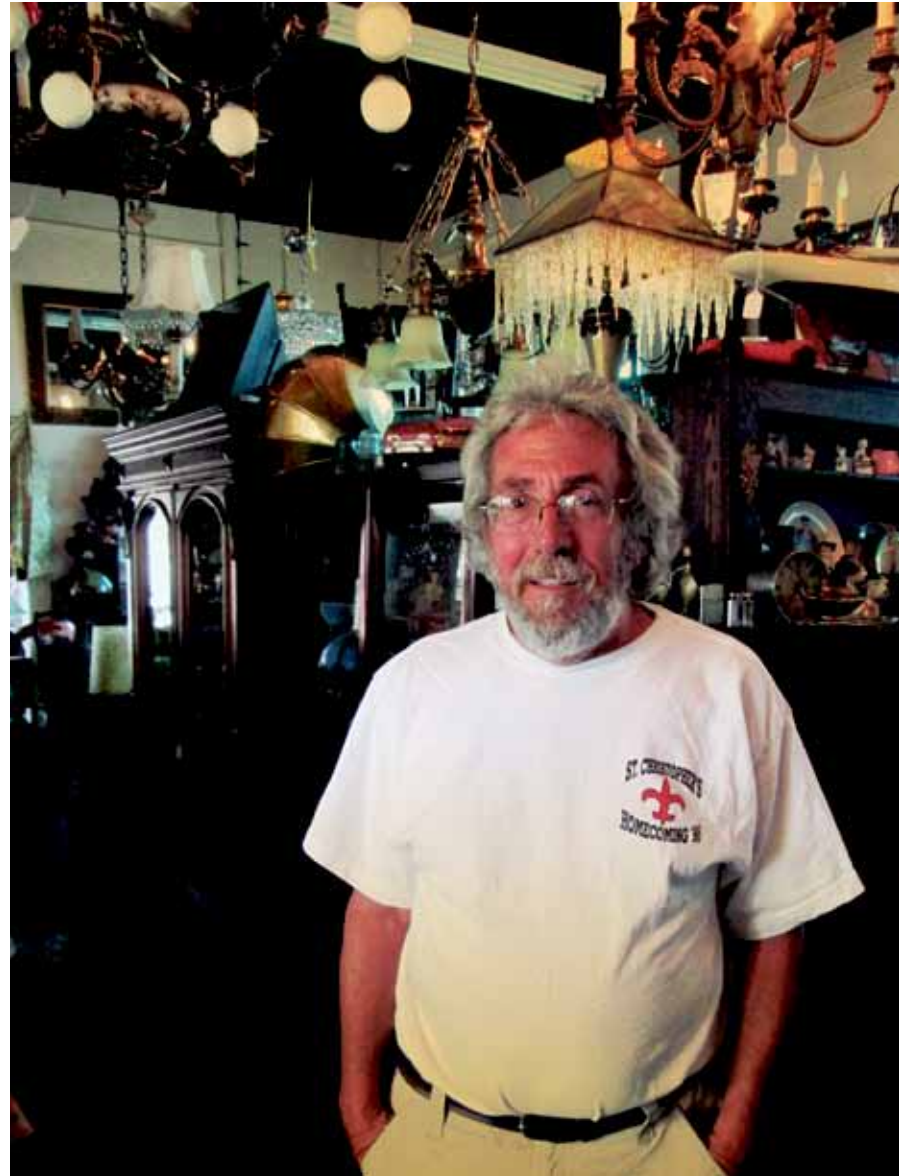
could get lost in this place for hours finding exactly what it is you never knew you needed. Outside this building there's architectural salvage pieces galore—everything from claw-footed bathtubs to real wrought iron fences, some of which are well over hundred years old. It has the feel of Governor's Antiques or Caravati's but it's a much more manageable space and the prices are much more reasonable.

Paul tells me about a number of mansions dating from the mid-nineteenth century that were razed, during the expansion of the Richmond Coliseum. These homes had 14-foot ceilings and custom woodwork, and Paul, ever the salvager and scavenger, carted away heart pine beams that were six inches thick, 17 inches wide and 27 feet long. It took four men to load one beam on his Toyota pickup, but he was able to save these pieces of Richmond history that would otherwise have ended up in landfill.

"Richmond has done its best to get rid of its history," says Paul. "And I've done my best to preserve it. I appreciate old stuff, I want to save it. I don't want it thrown in a dumpster because if that happens it's gone forever."

A few years back, Tim McCaffrey, who owns The Cottage Gardener, was looking for some distinctive cast iron fencing for a home on Laburnum Avenue. After a lot of searching, he finally found it at Paul's Place.

Paul remembers that fencing well. "It was a good fence because it came from down at Linden Row," he says. Cast at Tredegar Iron Works, each



Owner Paul Ferramosca.

upright member was capped with a representation of a Minie ball, the same sort of munition that was forged at Tredegar during the Civil War. "When I got that fence it probably hadn't been painted in over a hundred years and there was nothing at all wrong with it," Paul says. "You take these new so-called cast iron fences, and in six months they need touching up, in two years they need redoing and in five years they're gone."

Over the years, Paul has filled two houses with things he has collected and saved from demolition. Four years back he decided to open Paul's Place and two years ago he hired Janet Grimmert as a bookkeeper for his painting business, which has been operating for 44 years now, and his rental properties. Last year, Janet began managing Paul's Place full-time and has rapidly expanded the business. She has beefed up social media and advertising and has noticed buying trends among younger first-time homeowners.

"What I'm seeing lately are a lot of young people moving into Battery Park and other North Side neighborhoods and they're moving into these older houses and wanting to put period pieces in their places," says Janet. "They're also upcycling pieces. So they might make old French doors into picture frames."

Paul continues to bring new pieces into the shop and the surrounding lot, as well as a three-acre holding area a few blocks away just off Chamberlayne Avenue. "We're packed to the gills," Janet says. "But people are always buying."

SUMMER 2014

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BUSINESS PROFILE

Last year, one of Paul's finds was featured on Antiques Roadshow. It was an odd find he picked up at Bellwood Flea Market about 25 years ago—a cat's face, layered with fur, its eyes carved of walnut, sporting a bowtie of chiseled cherry. From its head protruded two horns tipped with brass. "It was a really weird duck," says Paul.

Janet says Paul was convinced it was from New Orleans—a piece of voodoo art, but the expert on the roadshow thought differently. "It ended


up being American folk art and it was not Louisiana voodoo," says Janet. "It happened to be a coat rack a hat rack, something you'd mount on your wall and you would hang your coats and hats on the horns. It did end up appraising for between \$3,000 and \$4,000." Janet laughs, remembering Paul on the roadshow. "They pick unique items and I think unique people, as well," she says. "And they saw Paul coming."

"I got it for under ten dollars," says Paul.

"He always buys cheap," Janet says.

As Paul and I make our way into another section of the shop he points out a secretary made of poplar. There's a honeycomb array of pigeonholes, many of which are stuffed with letters. "They can't make this kind of stuff today," he says, pulling out a piece of folded paper from one of the pigeonholes. "It's a military telegram, not a real one. A prop. They used this piece when they filmed Spielberg's 'Lincoln.' They left the paperwork behind."

We walk outside and make our way over to wrought iron fences and a flotilla of claw-footed bathtubs. There's even a small boat.

"The thrill of the chase is what really does it for me," Paul tells me. "It's not just the stuff, it's finding it." 

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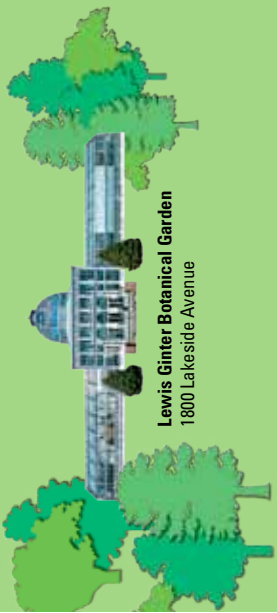
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ORIGINAL GRAVITY, LOCATED
at the Lakeside Towne Center, is
planning to move into a new loca-
tion, less than a block away, and
once settled there, will expand its
operation to include a microbrewery.
Tony Ammendollia, who opened
OG at 6920-D Lakeside Avenue in
November 2011, plans to move into
the new location before the holidays
; the brewery will open after the hol-
idays. At 5,000 square feet, the new
space is five times as large as the
existing OG.

“My vision for it is, first and fore-
most, is to expand this shop so
I can offer more things to home
brewers,” Tony says. “And then I
want to have a very small brew-
ery in there, too, because before I
wanted to open a home-brew shop
I wanted to open a brewery.”

He plans to sell his home-brewed
beer on the premises. If zoning per-
mits, he will have food trucks adja-
cent the new space which will be



housed in the old Feathernesters site
at 6918 Lakeside Avenue. He plans
on keeping it a micro, microbrew-
ery, brewing one barrel at a time—
about 30 gallons. By comparison
Hardywood is a 20 barrel brewery.

“It will only be sold at my shop,” he
says. “Growler fills or you can get
a glass of beer when you’re there.
I’m thinking about having six taps
so there should be some good vari-
ety.” At this point the new shop is
nameless, but it may well be called
Final Gravity.



**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
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National Night Out has become
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Out also encourages everyone to
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Jeff McGee, director of Maggie L.
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Lena Walker and this facility are
integral to the history of Richmond
and of the United States.

Maggie Lena Walker was the first
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become president of a chartered
bank. As an entrepreneur, Walker
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Rosedale

HIDDEN GEM

AS WITH EVERY OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD in Richmond's North Side, from Overbrook Road to Upham Brook, the seed of Rosedale was planted by nineteenth century visionary industrialist and Confederate veteran—Major Lewis Ginter. It all started with a brick farmhouse and the adjacent 127 acres, which would, many years later, be subdivided into small plats, gridded like the nearby communities of Bellevue and Ginter Park.

That original farmhouse was built in 1815, and called Rosedale Lodge, but soon after Ginter purchased it in the early 1890s, he enlarged it considerably and transformed the interior with parquet floors, six sets of French doors, a massive veranda, and architectural detailing that reflected the Arts and Crafts movement of the time. It then became the original home of the Deep Run Hunt Club.

It was a quite a place, too, hailed as one of the finest hunt clubs in the country. In those days, Deep Run had stalls to house 40 horses, a bicycle shed, kennels for hounds, one of the Commonwealth's first golf courses, a mile-long racetrack and a steeplechase course that ran right in front of the lodge. It was a precursor to the "country club" where the belles and beaux of the era would come to see and to be seen.

Over the years, the old Lodge fell into decline and all but two acres of the land was sold off to make way for the development of what is now called Rosedale.

Fortunately, Joan and Tom Phipps are in the process of doing a full architectural renovation of the Lodge and she invited me into the house and gave me a quick tour. Tom is outside fitting beams into the exterior brick walls and out to brick piers that will support the massive wraparound porch when this project is completed in late December.

"We're trying to keep everything that we can, original," says Joan. It is a massive structure with three towering brick chimneys that can be seen from the entrance ramp onto I-64 off Laburnum Avenue. At a future point, once the renovation is completed, Joan has invited

me to return to do a complete profile on the house. Outside we tour the two-acres that are open for the most part. There's an old concrete swimming pool, remnants of a garden and always the steady hum of traffic, sometimes a loud roar, from the interstates that wrap the west side of Rosedale.

From Lanvale west, on the south side of Laburnum Avenue, all the way down to Westwood, that sound is ever-present, sometimes an innocuous white noise as reassuring as the surf, but at other times almost deafening and unmistakably the grind and grunt of interstate traffic.

Just this past May the Department of Transportation completed what was supposed to have been a sound barrier and although this wall of faux stone reduces some of the highway noise, it is a minimal thwart to the sound, at best. Whenever my son Charles and I ride our bikes through the protected streets of Rosedale we can hear that traffic increasing in volume the closer we get to the western perimeter of the neighborhood.

Long-time resident of Rosedale, and former president of its civic association, Judy Melchiorre remembers that as early as 1986, when she and her husband moved into the neighborhood, there was a move to get DOT to build a sound barrier here, something it was supposed to have done when it first constructed I-95 more than half a century ago.

"It's a constant low-level roar," she says. "I wish it was as soothing as the ocean, but it's not. It's not like we live on a busy street and at a certain times of the day traffic is moving so it's loud



Above: A post card view of the Deep Run Hunt Club, currently being restored. Opposite, left: Kimberly Roberts on her front porch. Opposite, right: Mail carrier and resident, Tom Houff on his rounds.

and later at night it just peters out. Here the noise is constant."

Of the new barrier, which is not the sound barrier DOT had promised, Judy says this: "To a miniscule percentage it does block sound, but it's not really appreciable. We do have a barrier now that is a bit more pleasing to look at than the chicken wire fence and bushes and trees that used to be there."

And you do grow accustomed to the inconvenience of the noise and Judy and her husband wouldn't live anywhere else. They live in a home to the west of Lanvale on one of those streets that is lined by the towering willow oaks Rosedale is known for. They arch the street like the ceiling of a gothic cathedral.

"I think the first thing we saw when we drove up to our house, many, many years ago, was the beautiful canopy of the trees," says Judy who is a poet. "It's like being enveloped by them during the summer when the foliage is full; and in the winter they glisten with ice and snow. They are beautiful, though not as well maintained as they used to be. We wish that the tree people would come a little more often and take care of them because we

want those trees to stay as long as they can because they are so beautiful and they have been there for so long. They deserve a little TLC."

When the Melchiorres moved in, they were the youngest residents of their block and would listen to stories their neighbors would tell them about Rosedale. "A friend of mine who used to live in the neighborhood shared with me a kind of title for the neighborhood, which was this: Rosedale is for the newly wed and the nearly dead," says Judy, stifling a sweet laugh. "And when we moved in we were among the new-lweds for years."

One thing that has always attracted Judy to Rosedale is the diversity of its neighbors. "It's not the kind of neighborhood where everybody's the same age and we all have common interests," she says. "It's the kind of neighborhood where we welcome all different kinds of people. We have couples, we have single people, we have people with roommates, we have partners. We have a variety of folks that live here."

But they are united by a common sense of place and they extend themselves to one another in a way you might not see in a development of

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN

McMansions. "I was reflecting about this recently," Judy tells me, "And I remember that when we had one of the big storms, somehow our side of the 1900 block of Elmsmere had electricity and the other side did not. So we ran these huge orange extension cords all the way across the street so that our neighbors could have their light and their refrigerators on. It was a literal and figurative connection with our neighbors. It was really reaching out."

For some reasons no resident I spoke can figure out, Rosedale, which has very distinctive boundaries—Imperial Plaza to the north, Westwood Avenue to the south, Hermitage Road to the east, and the interstates to the west—is often not recognized as a community by folks who don't live there.

"I think that Rosedale does not get its due," says Judy. "You know people talk about Bellevue and Ginter Park and all the other neighbors and every time somebody asks me where I live and I say Rosedale, they look at me quizzically. I always have to give them a reference point like, 'It's the neighborhood across Hermitage from Ginter Park.' It's not across from and it's not down

the street from. It's Rosedale."

The desirability of a neighborhood is ultimately measured by the allegiance of its inhabitants and every Rosedale resident I speak with absolutely adores the area.

Kimberly Roberts, who lives on Oakdale Avenue in one of the oldest houses in all of Rosedale, holds court on her front porch whenever the weather cooperates. She has



lived in her home for just over a decade, was married on her front porch to her husband, David, who has since died.

"My house is my best friend," she says. "This was the first house I was shown and I knew I had to have it. It turns out this house was built in 1915 and this house and the house about six doors down were the farmer's house and the farmer's daughters house. I would rather be here than probably just about anywhere. I call it Oakdale."

For Kimberly, Rosedale is as much the neighbors themselves as it is the houses and tree-lined streets. "Ever since I got here this is the first time I've ever felt that I am at home," she says. "And the people that fit in here stay; and the people who don't, don't last very long. It's hard to explain, it is a very neat slice of Americana and everybody here cares for each other."

She mentions the couple who live across the street—Jeff and Rodney—who have become two of her closest friend. "We call one another Mrs.(Gladys) Kravitz the nosey neighbor from 'Bewitched'," says Kimberly. "If I see something



going on I'll call one of them at work and say, 'Hey Kravitz here, somebody was walking around surveying your property.' We're always tattling on everybody and I have no problem with everybody knowing my business. It's comforting. So we look out for each other."

Kimberly's next door neighbor, Mildred, has lived in Rosedale her entire life. "Whenever the power goes out or it snows we're all over there asking her if she needs any-

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thing,” Kimberly says. When Kimberly’s husband was declining, neighbors would frequently leave flowers and food on her porch. And when he died, men in the neighborhood would offer her assistance in maintaining her house. “I get choked up talking about it,” she says. “My neighbors are remarkable and I probably would walk right through somebody if I saw them trying to get into somebody’s house or hurting somebody here. I mean it’s that strong. Every once in a while I’ll see a teenager flicking a car handle to see if they can find loose change and it unnerves me. I will fly over the fence and be like, ‘What the hell are you doing?’ You get very, very territorial living in Rosedale.”

Crime here, though, is virtually non-existent, and that may have something to do with both Rosedale’s location and the diligence of its inhabitants.

I catch up with Tom Houff who’s been the mail carrier here for the past eight years and a resident for just about as long. He knows virtually everyone in Rosedale and looks after them, in a way, almost like a beat cop. “The biggest problem we have is stupid theft and some minor graffiti,” he says. “Transients from the bus sta-



A classic bungalow, one of the many styles of homes that give Rosedale its character.

tion sometimes cut through Rosedale to the interstate. You can tell when they’re shopping and I watch them. But that’s very rare.”

In the main Rosedale has a somewhat insular quality which makes it all but immune to crime. “One of the things I like about this neighborhood is that it’s kind of tucked away,” Tom says as we walk along Seddon on his appointed rounds. “It’s kind of off to the side a little bit and you really can’t go through

Rosedale to go somewhere else. It’s a cul-de-sac kind of community and that keeps things secure.”

And though the noise of the interstate bothers some residents, it doesn’t faze Tom in the least and he lives in proximity to the interstate. “One of the things I like about Rosedale is that it’s so close to both interstates,” he says. “I love the fact that it’s in the middle of everywhere.”

Tom loves to watch the young fami-

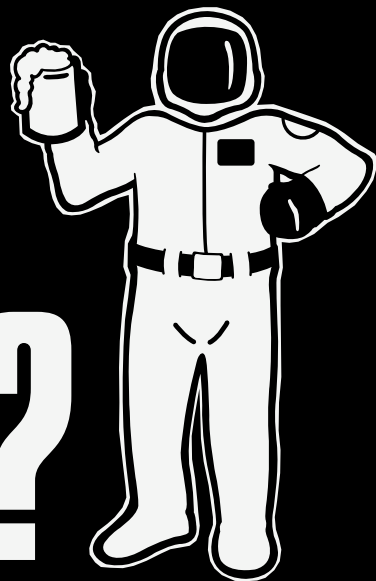
lies moving in to the neighborhood. “I’m watching a whole new generation who call Rosedale home,” says Tom Houff. “I’m watching a lot of kids grow up and I’m the only mailman they’ve ever known.”

Everyone I’ve spoken with so far has mentioned Liz Turner, acting president of the Rosedale Civic Association, so I make my way over to her house over on Laburnum. We are joined by Amy Magee, a resident of the neighborhood, and Elaine Wittel, who chairs the association’s beautification committee.

A couple years ago Elaine spearheaded a program to replace the existing plantings of purple plums on Hermitage Road and Bradford pears on Laburnum Avenue with Yoshino cherry trees, the same cultivars that ring the Tidal Basin in our nation’s capitol. As seed money to fund this project the association used the \$1,000 gift left by long-time Rosedale resident Mrs. Reynolds who owned the sprawling green house on Teakwood, which has, by far, the most extensive gardens in the entire neighborhood.

“So far we’ve planted 31 trees,” Elaine says. “I’m just astounded by the response we’ve had from people

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when I went knocking on doors, saying 'Would you donate \$50 to adopt a tree?' And on these terribly hot days neighbors are going out with gallon jugs and watering the trees." She pauses for a moment and then says, "Rosedale is like a big family. You could go to anyone living here and they would help you out."

Amy nods. "Rosedale really is a hidden little jewel in the city that nobody a lot about. It's a charming little area, but at the same time it's beautiful, you'll see the most beautiful backyard gardens that will rival anything in the city. In this neighborhood there really is no privacy. You can't go into your backyard without having two or three conversations."

"That's right," says Elaine. "We know everybody and their dog and if you can't remember the person's name you remember the name of the dog"

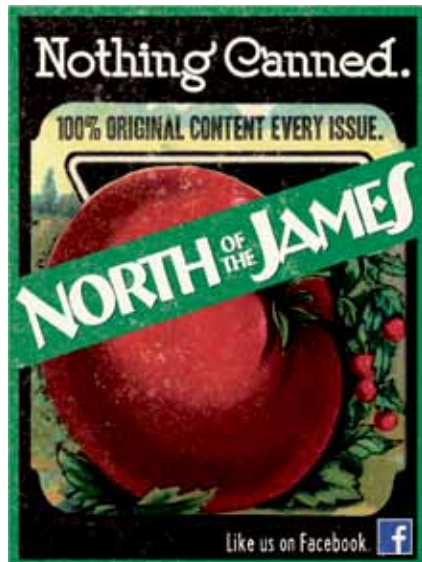
When I ask about the barrier installed this past May which does little to stifle the noise of the interstate highways, Liz Turner says, matter-of-factly: "This fight is not over by any means. I would like to think that one day we will have something made of sound barrier material out there. We're going to work on this till we drop." 

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Omega Grecian Restaurant

My Big Fat Greek Supper

by ANNE JONES

AUTHENTIC GREEK cuisine has arrived in Bellevue, and it's been worth the wait. Ever since Shenanigans closed its doors over two years ago, we've all been watching the slow and mysterious goings-on at 4017 MacArthur Avenue. When Omega Grecian Restaurant welcomed its first diners in mid-March, we were ready. And there is nary a trace of the old honky-tonk to be found there.

Omega is quiet and calm, clean and comfortable, with a pleasant vibe defined by varying shades of wood and a neutral palette, decidedly welcoming. Service is over-the-top friendly and attentive. Most importantly, the fare is real Greek food, not the Americanized stuff that passes for Greek at so many local places.

T and I started our meal with a classic Greek appetizer of dolmades. They were surprisingly tart, and we happily puckered our way through them, inspired by the creamy tzatzikia accompaniment. Next up was the spanakopitakia, always one of my favorites. This was as it should be – flaky, buttery phyllo dough nicely browned and filled with spinach and feta, perfectly seasoned. We shared a delicious order of pikilia – crisp pita chips with an unusual roasted eggplant spread and tangy, garlicky hummus of the perfect consistency.

But the real stand-out of the evening was M's souvlaki. The pork was downright succulent and melt-in-your-mouth tender, more like a tenderloin than any souvlaki I had ever eaten, marinated and grilled with onions and sweet peppers and served over rice. A neighbor we ran into there joined in with more praise of the quality of Omega's cuts of meat



and their marinade preparation, proclaiming he could eat their fresh and tender lamb shank six nights a week. Still sticking to my semi-vegetarian leanings, I ordered one of the specials, a vegetarian pastichio. A mound of grilled vegetables (zucchini and cherry tomatoes for starters) on a bed of rice with a red sauce and bread crumbs, it was tasty, but slightly underwhelming in its sticky texture.

A great finish will define a meal, though, and our dessert did the trick. The lemon crème cake was a scrumptious adventure, with various layers of perfectly sweet sensations. The cake itself was moist and spongy, filled with a cold, firm lemon crème and browned on top. A dusting of powdered sugar topped it off, and it arrived with fresh strawberries and a dollop of whipped cream. Really, what's not to love?

If your quest is for good neighborhood Greek food, your odyssey ends at Omega. **Ω**

Omega Grecian Restaurant...

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BOOK REVIEW

Scalawag

A Study In Racism And Liberation

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN



“S CALAWAG” records in exacting detail how Edward Peeples became the most despicable kind of human being imaginable—a white supremacist. But through a series of events, and the insight of a college instructor, Peeples began questioning everything he had been taught from infancy, and he emerged as what white folk in his world would call “a traitor to the race”. Like the first autobiography ever written—“Confessions” by Saint Augustine of Hippo, which also describes a mispent youth—this book is ultimately about transformation.

Edward Harden Peeples was one of the least likely candidates for civil rights activist. His forebears owned slaves; his father was an avowed racist, who was abusive to his son. Peeples tells a chilling tale of how he and his teenage friends would ride their bikes in front of row homes occupied by African-Americans and harass them by shooting at them with .22 rifles and BB guns.

There are equally alarming stories

that Peeples brings to life in a brutally honest fashion which gives this book a stark muscularity. By the time Peeples was nineteen he made a decision that would change his life utterly—he would stand up for what is right, and begin a life-long commitment to activism in one form or another.

He worked tirelessly, often behind the scenes, in the black freedom struggle, challenged racism while serving in the United States Navy and later, as a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, worked for women’s rights, LGBT issues and prison reform.

Peeples writes in an informed narrative style and his comic asides often provoke laughter. What is most striking about this book is its rawness and honesty. He tells everything on himself, even things he’s not proud of. **NP**

Scalawag:
A White Southerner’s Journey through Segregation to Human Rights Activism
by Edward H. Peeples with Nancy MacLean.
University of Virginia Press
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RAINBOW MINUTES



A Lush Life

THE COLLABORATION between bandleader Duke Ellington and musician Billy Strayhorn lasted nearly 30 years. It was such a perfect fit that Ellington said Strayhorn was, “My right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brainwaves in his head, and his in mine.”

At the age of 21, Strayhorn penned the song, “Lush Life,” expressing his dream of urban sophistication

and elegance. He made the big time, although his collaborative works were all copyrighted by Ellington.

In 1964, Strayhorn was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, attributed to heavy use of alcohol and tobacco. He succumbed to the disease in the early morning hours of May 31, 1967, at age 51, with his partner Bill Grove by his side.

Hearing the news, Duke Ellington was devastated, and remained bed-ridden for several days.

Money, Saxefras, Furs and Love

In 1607, three ships arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, to establish the first permanent English settlement in the New World. All of the colonists were men.

A detailed account of the new colony, in a book titled, “A Map of Virginia,” was recorded by a group of settlers including Captain John Smith. Chapter two reported that shortly after arriving, the sailors stole food to trade with the colonists for


“money, saxefras, furs or love.” After the sailors headed back to England, a shortage of food weakened the remaining Virginia colonists.

The book’s reference to love seemingly refers to sexual favors that these American settlers would exchange for food. That love apparently referred to homosexual contact, since women had not yet arrived in the colony.

A Rainbow From Sea to Sea

In 2003, Gilbert Baker, the creator of the original rainbow flag back in 1978, was commissioned to produce a giant rainbow flag for the 25th anniversary of the flag itself. Because hot pink was finally available for flag production again, the flag was restored to its original eight colors for its Silver Anniversary unfurling. Those colors included hot pink, red, orange, yellow, green, turquoise, indigo and violet.

Dubbed “Rainbow 25 Sea to Sea” and measuring 16 feet by a mile and a quarter long, the flag was displayed in Key West, Florida, on June 15, 2003. Over 3,000 volunteers held the flag, which ran the length of Duval Street from the Atlantic Ocean at one end to the Gulf of Mexico on the other.

At the time, it was deemed the world’s longest flag. 

GAY AND LESBIAN HEROES HISTORY AND CULTURE

the **Rainbow** minute

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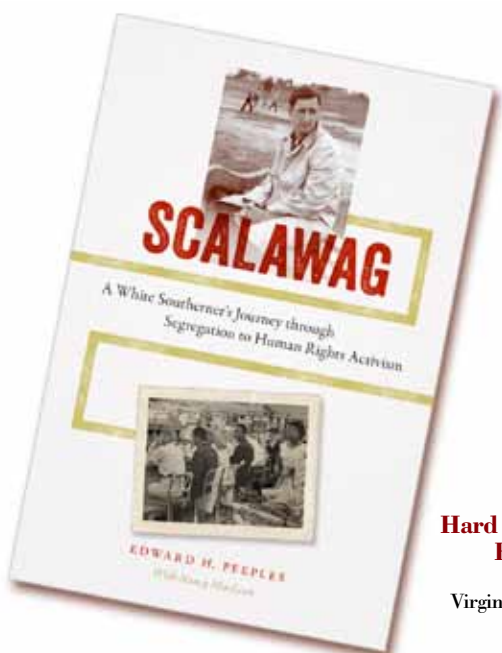
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“Peeples gives us... an arresting personal and political account of the transformative power of freedom movements.”

David Roediger, University of Illinois, coauthor of The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History

“Scalawag tells the surprising story of a white working-class boy who became an unlikely civil rights activist. Ed Peeples was taught the ethos and lore of white supremacy by every adult in his young life... but by age nineteen Peeples became what the whites in his world called a ‘traitor to the race.’”

Editors, University of Virginia Press

Edward H. Peeples is a retired professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. Nancy MacLean is professor of history at Duke University.

For more information visit www.edpeeples.com

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LETTERS to the EDITOR



on a flame nozzle. We have long ceased to understand the detailed descriptions of his work, but remain fascinated nonetheless. He is now the doting father of a four month old baby boy, and already wondering when would be the best time to introduce imaginary numbers to him. (I probably shouldn't have taught him algebra in the fourth grade.) With a PhD in Mechanical Engineering, he remains an achiever like Catherine.

ON "PORTRAIT of an ARTIST as a YOUNG WOMAN"

Charles,


I just had to send you praise for the lovely article on your daughter, Catherine. Often we are proud of our children, but fail to share it with the world at large. Catherine is obviously a motivated achiever with the kind of deep convictions and compassion we all wish for our children. You have done a great job at parenting, obviously. Our congratulations to her and to you as well. You have seen her suddenly as a young woman, blooming with the promise of a full and challenging life as an adult, but I know when you look into her eyes you will always see the little girl who needed your encouragement, comfort, advice, and the Band-Aid for the scratched knee. May that special bond be renewed each time you share that welcoming hug of father and daughter.

We are both blessed with children who enrich our lives and fill our hearts with the joy of both tears and laughter. Just last night Teddy and I spent an hour chatting with Chris via the speakerphone while relaxing on the patio. He was not sitting next to us, but our hearts were as close as ever. May your next years of adjusting to a new relationship with your grown "baby" bring you as much fulfillment as ours.

Regards,
Brenda C. Martin

Editor's Note:

Chris Martin began delivering North of the James with its inaugural issue in November of 1994 and he carried papers for the next four years. His work was always exemplary. My kids now deliver his old route.

We encourage all letters to the editor. Letters should be no more than 400 words and must contain the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification and authentication. The publisher reserves the right to edit or withhold from publication any letter for any reason. Letters to the editor become the possession of North of the James. Published letters reflect the opinion of their writers and not North of the James or its staff. 

In that light, I must share that just seeing "North of the James" each month always brings back memories of Chris delivering his two routes so long ago. Like you, it is difficult to believe that was about 20 years ago. His experience with that job helped make him the responsible, caring individual he is today. He is still a plasma torch engineer in South Carolina, with a patent pending

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