RealVisions Realty Team

Moyock couple invest care and time in their relationships with clients

Page 10
Premier Preschool Brings Families Together to Give Back to the Community

By Tonya Gill & Claudia Macon, Franchise Owners
Primrose School at Cahoon Commons

Preschool is often associated with teaching children ABCs and 123s to prepare them for elementary school. What preschool doesn't typically bring to mind is nurturing traits like compassion and kindness in children and bringing families together to give back to their communities — but that's exactly what happens at Primrose schools.

At Primrose School at Cahoon Commons, values like giving without expecting are reinforced every day and through annual events that are part of Primrose Promise® — the corporate social responsibility program that represents the commitment made by every Primrose school to make a difference in the lives of all children, especially those at greatest risk. Every year, the entire Primrose Family — including Franchise Owners, teachers, staff, students and families — gives back to their communities in many ways, all of which benefit children in need.

“At Primrose®, giving without expecting is ingrained in everything we do, including the lessons we teach in our classrooms,” said Tonya Gill, Franchise Owner of Primrose School at Cahoon Commons. “Through our Primrose Promise Giving Events, we are able to engage our entire community in giving back and together experience the joy of generosity.”

One way Primrose School at Cahoon Commons brings together the community to give back is through its annual Spring Fling event. Each year, Spring Fling features fun activities, live entertainment, and snacks for families to enjoy, with all proceeds going to local and national charities. Last year, Primrose School at Cahoon Commons raised $4,714 for Ronald McDonald House — Norfolk.

This year’s Spring Fling will be held on May 17th. Activities will include a silent auction, pony rides, food, music, soccer shots, fun bus, and face painting. Proceeds will benefit Susan G. Komen Foundation, Tidewater.

Each year, Primrose School at Cahoon Commons also donates a percentage of the funds raised to the Primrose Schools Children’s Foundation®, the not-for-profit arm of Primrose Schools® that supports national charitable partners like Save the Children®. Through Save the Children, Primrose supports emergency preparedness programs and U.S. child sponsorship initiatives that provide children living in poverty with the skills and resources they need to succeed in school and in life.

“Spring Fling is one of our favorite events of the year because it allows us to bring our students, families, and others together so they can be a part of our efforts to make a difference in a really fun way,” said Gill. “We hope more local families will join us this year to give back to our wonderful community.”

Primrose School at Cahoon Commons will celebrate its 10 year anniversary at this year’s Spring Fling. Over the past 10 years, Primrose School at Cahoon Commons has donated more than $34,000 to local charities and the Primrose Schools Children’s Foundation through Spring Fling.

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Publisher’s Point

Family and Friends

With both Mother’s and Father’s Days, plus all the weddings, graduations, and celebrations that touch so many of us throughout May and June, we are reminded of family at every turn. I came from ‘clans’ on both sides and always had relatives around me as I grew up in New England. I did not know that my environment was not the norm until I was in college.

Having grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins galore was something I took for granted. Now I realize what that loving childhood did for me. I never thought of myself as poor, although I was aware we were not rich. Wrong! We were rich beyond belief in caring families, looking out for one another. We had Sunday dinners with my mother’s clan, full of wit and laughter. Holidays with my father’s clan centered around endless food and games of cards and croquet. Cousins were plentiful enough to have our own softball team.

My dad loved to cook and made Boston baked beans every Saturday night and delivered servings to family and friends. It was a Happy Days kind of world.

Keeping people in our lives was ingrained and I retained both high school and college friends, probably filling some of the empty places left when I moved to the south, leaving all those Yankee relatives I still love, but see now mostly at funerals. I still visit with old school friends, vacationing with some when traveling. It’s true that real relationships pick up as if together yesterday, no matter how long a separation.

One such relationship that I have treasured since freshman days at George Washington University is with one of my first roommates, Nathalie Dupree. I had never known anyone like her. She was as energetic, interesting, fun and kind a person as I’d ever known; still is. We have adventures we still remember and happy memories, such as her buying my kid sister rings for every finger. My daughter’s name is Natalie, and Nathalie forgives me for leaving out the H.

Nathalie became a famous chef and is known now as the Grand Dame of Charleston! She has authored 13 cookbooks, which made her world famous and brought her accolades galore. And she is getting ready to release her newest book. Stay tuned!

Years ago, I read some of her columns. I was struck by how poignant they were, and she has given me permission to share this avocation of hers with our readers. A Matter of Taste is my favorite, and is included on the next page.

If you are not familiar with Nathalie Dupree, Google her before you tell anyone. You’ll never again admit that you have not known her forever.
A Matter of Taste

By Nathalie Dupree

A special breakfast helps bring shattered family together again

They'd been divorced nearly 40 years when he telephoned their daughter, asking her to help him see his former wife together with their children. His second wife and her second husband were dead, and they were each alone.

Surprisingly, the mother agreed to the meeting, “for the sake of your children.” Her rancor at being left with three demanding children had cooled in the slow oven of time, and now it rarely flared, only sizzled.

He had suggested they have breakfast—his favorite meal—at his local diner. At age 82, he rises before dawn and eats before the sun is up. When he waits until 7 or 8 in the morning, it is a grave concession.

The mother, 75, still works three days a week in the church library. In her heart of hearts, the world would be a better place if everyone slept a bit later (at least until dawn), ate breakfast after the sunrise, and came gently into the world only after reading and praying.

The daughter knew that diner only too well, for that is where she met her father at barbaric hours of the morning for grits and eggs and bacon. They served cheap margarine and the waitresses parceled out the sugar and Sweet’N Low packets from their apron pockets, only upon request. There was always a crowd there, salesmen calling to each other across the red vinyl booths, always a din.

What kind of a meal, what kind of a place for them all to meet 40 years later? A place where they wouldn’t have to shout. Because if they started to shout only to be heard, would it continue, voices spiraling above them all with stifled anger of bygone years?

No, it had to be a place where the atmosphere would temper those feelings if that pot was uncovered, with no room for unspoken passions. And they had to serve butter, the bread had to be warm. The children, grown, terrified of the event, had to be able to leave without bolting, if the pain was too great.

It was agreed. They would meet at 9 at a small, elegant hotel. Mercifully, they were greeted expeditiously and seated in the rear of the room.

He ordered the same breakfast he always had. The mother was swept up by the occasion, the splendor of the room, the length of the menu. She vacillated, unsure of what would be the best, wanting to remember the best. The children ordered the safest. No crumbled croissants or unmanageable eggs for them.

Breakfast came. The bread was hot, the butter was real. It melted easily, as uncertain hands barely grasped knives to spread it. It was terrifying to them all to find that they were civilized, polite, that they liked each other.

“No, he didn’t know me for some time.”

She smiled and nodded her head as he took her arm, the children only moments behind them, dazed with the wonder of it all. They were a family. Maybe they always had been.

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Nathalie Dupree is the author of fourteen cookbooks and syndicated columnist who, since 1986, has hosted hundreds of cooking shows on PBS, The Food Network, and the Learning Channel. Honored as the 2013 Woman of the Year from the French Master Chefs of America she is known for her understanding of Southern cooking and started the New Southern Cooking movement. Two of her books New Southern Cooking and Mastering the Art of Southern Cooking are on the 2017 Southern Living 100 best cookbooks of all time list.
Celebrating the Grand Opening of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of their newest location in Chesapeake. Guests were treated to a tour of the brand new building, as well as delicious refreshments catered by Traditions Revolutionary Catering and Events.

Bobby Siverd, Vice President of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics; Steve Siverd, President of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics; Rick West, Mayor of the City of Chesapeake, and Karen Vaughn, Office Administrator for Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics cutting the ribbon.

Steve Siverd, President of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics

Melia Trost speaks on the help that her late daughter, Samantha, received from Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics.

Bobby Siverd, Vice President of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics

See these and other photos at TheShopper.com

From left: Larry Rumsey of Riddle and Associates, Mayor Rick West of Chesapeake, Jean Loxley – Barnard Publisher of The Shopper, Rob Riddle, President of Riddle Associates, and Vicky West

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While real estate was one of the first fields to embrace aerial photography to capture a property from the air, there are many other ways that drones can be useful in the day-to-day world of business.

One of the fastest growing industries using drone photography is in the field of construction. Drones are used to monitor buildings during the construction process. This type of monitoring is becoming more common, growing by about 250 percent annually.

Using a drone to capture weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly photos and/or video is a great way to show progress over time.

If the construction time line is long, and photos are taken every day or two from similar positions, drone footage can also be used to create time lapse videos of the project, from an empty lot to the finished building.

If the building is a large, multi-storey project, drones can be an excellent way of safely checking each floor from the outside as they are completed, rather than suspending a worker in a crane.

Using this approach is also much faster: as the drone moves around the building, it can shoot 4K hi-resolution video, which can then be played back and inspected from the comfort of an office.

The appeal of using drones is simple. They are small and light, and in the right hands, safer than other methods previously used.

A drone can also get into places that an aerial photographer in a helicopter would have trouble reaching. If the construction site is surrounded by obstructions like tall buildings or cranes, a helicopter may not be able to get to it at all.

Using drones for this service has proven very useful and time-saving. It is a great way to keep investors, board members, and project managers up-to-date on the progress of the project.

Several things have to be considered when using aerial photos and video to promote a construction project. This is where an experienced, licensed and insured photographer can really make your construction projects stand out from the crowd.

Terry Young is an FAA licensed drone pilot and professional photographer and videographer. His 30 plus years of experience in pre- and post-production of both still photography and video, coupled with the latest equipment, enable him to create amazing high quality images.

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RealVisions Realty Team

Moyock couple invest care and time in their relationships with clients

By Allison Williams

“Just look at those faces,” Connie Hedrick coos with an affectionate laugh. “How can anyone look at those faces and not want to know them better?”

The faces to which the Moyock Realtor® refers belong to those she loving calls The Boys—and no, they are not her children or even her grandchildren. The Boys are the herd of seven male alpaca (think llamas, only smaller, fluffier and cuter) that make their home at SinneWier Farm and Vineyard—the 10-acre farm that Connie and her husband, Steve, now own.

“They each have a different personality, Brutus and Finnegan are my love bugs,” she says, pointing out two members of the herd. “The others are pleasantly distant.”

Connie’s dream of owning a herd of alpaca was born rather recently. A Chesapeake native and graduate of Great Bridge High School, Connie spent several years working in marketing and advertising sales for the Hampton Roads Realtors® Association. Steve is a retired U.S. Navy chief who currently works as an instructional designer, creating curriculum and providing classroom training at the U.S. Coast Guard’s facility in Elizabeth City. But in 2014, the couple tired of the hectic pace of life in Kempsville. In search of more space, they bought SinneWier Farm and moved to Moyock.

In 2015, Connie began volunteering at Alpacawaka Barns, a Moyock alpaca farm. After several months of mucking stalls, feeding and playing with the alpacas, Connie says she went home one day and told Steve that she wanted them to own a herd of their own. So it was that The Boys ended up at SinneWier Farm in the spring of 2016. The alpacas, which are raised for their cozy fleece, are sheared every spring. Now Connie and Steve are learning how to clean and process the black, white, gray, fawn and rust fleece into yarn skeins.

While Connie’s plan to own an alpaca herd is of recent vintage, another plan was born during her days of working in marketing and advertising for the Hampton Roads Realtors Association—to one day open her own real estate firm.

That day arrived in October of 2018, when Connie and Steven opened their Moyock-based firm—which they christened RealVisions RealEstate Team.

“We hadn’t planned on things progressing this quickly,” Connie explains. “We’re reaching goals sooner than I ever imagined. The doors of opportunity just opened in front of us.”

A licensed agent in both Virginia and North Carolina for the past three years, Connie wants to recruit a team of 12 licensed real estate agents, including one who is fluent in Spanish. Steve expects to earn his Virginia real estate license by summer and will eventually serve as corporate trainer for RealVisions’ team.

Connie and Steve say the decision to open RealVisions in Moyock, a rural but growing community just over the North Carolina border, was simple.

“It’s our home and we wanted to help it grow,” Steve says, with a friendly smile. “That’s why we set up shop here. We are embedded in this community. We live and work here—and I think people respect that.”

“Connie took one piece of our very stressful life—selling our home—and made it smooth for us…we received an offer on the house just one day after it hit the market.”

—Josh Lewis

Clients describe Connie as friendly and professional, with an upbeat personality and a willingness to invest extra time and effort into helping them.

“She makes you feel like you are the only customer she has,” says Ray Neal, a retired central office technician for Verizon Wireless. “It’s a big deal to sell a house and it’s nice to have someone you can trust working for you.”

During the past three years, Ray and his wife, June Adams, inherited two houses: one in Portsmouth, one in Norfolk. The couple was concerned about one of the houses because it was located in a neighborhood with other properties up for sale had sat on the market for a year or more with no takers. Thanks to Connie, Ray and June’s home sold relatively quickly—within just a couple of months. As for the other house, the couple had an offer on it within 48 hours of putting it on the market.

“Not only did it sell quickly, but it also sold for more than June and I had expected,” Ray says. “We have to give Connie the credit for it all. She made suggestions that I believed helped us sell both houses so fast. She suggested that we change paint colors in some of the room and do some very minor bits of remodeling.”

When these small easy changes were completed, Connie brought in some furniture and a few simple decorative pieces and then had some professional photos taken of the interiors that showed off the houses to their best advantage. With Connie’s careful attention to details that others often overlook, buyers quickly snatched up both homes.

“Connie really has a good handle on the market and seems to know what clients are looking for,” Ray concludes. “I would definitely refer her to any friends and family. If and when I sell again, she will definitely be involved.”

Navy family Dulce and Josh Lewis say Connie alleviated the stress of selling their Knotts Island, NC home after receiving transfer orders to California.

“Connie took one piece of our very stressful life—selling our home—and made it smooth for us,” Josh says. “She invested her time in us and it gave us a sense of security—the feeling that this one thing in our lives was locked down and taken care of. It was nice knowing we had someone in our corner, looking out for our best interests. Best of all, we received an offer on the house just one day after it hit the market.”

Connie said she thrives on the challenge of helping home-buyers find the perfect home.

“Real estate is about so much more than buying and selling houses,” Connie concludes. “It’s about forging relationships with clients that last long after keys have exchanged hands. Even after the sale is done, we’ll still check in with our clients. We want to make sure they are happy in their new homes.”
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Lost in the Kitchen

For what seemed like an eternity after Rob was gone, each evening I would go through the same experience. I'd go home shortly after five and stand in the middle of the kitchen floor. I turned around slowly, looking for something. I didn’t know quite what it was that I was looking for. Everything felt different, and I kept looking for something that would feel the same.

The kitchen was the same, the sunroom hadn’t moved. But they felt empty. It seemed that I did not belong there any more. But I didn’t belong anywhere else, either. It was as if I had died and was visiting the place where I had lived.

I would try to think what to do next, or, rather, what to do in that very moment. Standing and turning slowly seemed ridiculous. I just didn’t know what else to do.

There is something comforting about the familiar, even the familiar that one does not like. Knowing what we are experiencing and what will likely follow has an advantage over not knowing what to do next, let alone what to expect.

It was not the same as having free time to use any way I wished. It was having the rest of my life free. That was what was dismaying.

The thought of freedom can be exhilarating. The actuality of freedom can be frightening.

I thought of the countries that had revolutions followed by years of hardship. I remembered newscasts reporting on how the average citizen soon wished for a return to the old, known system, however dreadful it had been. I understood how that could happen.

Additional text from this excerpt is available on TheShopper.com
Dr. Geoff Campbell, Dr. Rachel Mapes, Dr. Shane Mulderrig and Dr. Heather Price

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We all have a story to tell. Do you need help telling yours?

The Shopper is pleased to announce that Dr. Bill Austin’s new book will be published this year by Press Pass Agency. This fascinating memoir recounts his experiences in the mid-1960s among the Kuna—a people living on an isolated island in the Caribbean whose culture is one of the most ancient on earth. Please enjoy the following extract from Coconuts for Hammocks.

Here’s an excerpt from Dr. Bill Austin’s forthcoming book, Coconuts for Hammocks.

Imagine how your story might read...

Coconuts for Hammocks

One night while visiting Dean Flora and his family, we started talking about the San Blas Indians. He told me that on the island of Carti Tupile there was a need for a building that could serve as a school for 177 children, a church for 60 adults, and a medical clinic where teams of visiting doctors could see their patients. This was his dream. We started brainstorming and our excitement grew as we explored possibilities for constructing the building. I suggested having a youth work camp build it. It would be good for them to feel they were doing something important for others.

The purchase of the hammocks was quite interesting. They had to be bought with coconuts...

Sixteen youth would be chosen from the Atlantic Youth Fellowship—an area youth group I had formed that year. When word of the project got out, an Army Engineer from Fort Gulick volunteered to serve as Work Director, supervising the construction of the building. A registered nurse, also from Fort Gulick, volunteered to serve and was able to obtain medical supplies from the United States Army. The other staff members came from the other churches. I served as Camp Director. A thousand dollars was raised for the project, and other things, such as transportation to the islands by boat, were donated. The Commander of the Army provided the transportation as well as the men to operate the launch to and from the islands.

The question of where the youth would sleep while on the island was answered by Eladio Gracia. He arranged for the girls to sleep in the chief’s home and for the boys to sleep in the medicine man’s home. The campers would sleep in handmade hammocks from Columbia.

We started making tentative plans for the building’s construction. It would be 18 by 32 feet, with a thatched roof and walls of concrete blocks from Columbia and Panama. We also decided that it would be better to build the building as a cooperative effort with the San Blas Indians: they would construct the thatched roof while we erected the walls.

For more information on commissioning your book, call 757-547-0520 and ask to speak to Editor Rob Lauer.
One of life’s lessons I have learned at the gym has to do with spotting. Spotting is defined as the act of supporting someone during a particular exercise, with an emphasis on allowing them to lift or push more than they could normally do safely. There are times when we are lifting a barbell, get stuck, and need more than just a presence. In those cases, the spotter keeps their hand beneath the barbell and lightly touches the bar. Just that touch encourages us to continue lifting. The spotter will keep their hand beneath the barbell in case we run out of energy—or, more importantly, if we cannot lift any more.

In life when we find ourselves facing a difficult situation that we feel is beyond our strength, it is wise to ask someone to be our spotter. Often the spotter’s presence and encouragement is all we need to get through a difficult and taxing time. We may not remember what was said, but we remember they were there. Their presence is beyond words. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness—rather it is knowing our limitations. The people who make a difference in our lives when we are trying to deal with a difficult situation are the ones who believe in us and help us use our own strength. They don’t take the weight away from us, but they touch it in a way that empowers us to lift. They help us use the strength and abilities that are within us.

We have all experienced times when what we are trying to lift is too heavy for us. It is then that the spotter grabs the barbell and we lift it together. We need more than encouragement and presence in those situations. We need to rely on the spotter’s strength as well as our own. There are times in life when the weight of our problems is too heavy to carry alone. Those times might be when we lose a loved one or experience some other traumatic event. We need someone who will help us carry the load.

There are times in life when the weight of our problems are too heavy to carry alone. Those times might be when we lose a loved one or experience some other traumatic event. We need someone who will help us carry the load.

There is a great analogy of a significant relationship in Hebrew Scripture. It compares a relationship with three strands of a rope. A strand by itself can easily be broken but when we wrap another strand around it, it is almost impossible to break. It is during times of trouble that we must use each other’s strength to face our hardships and challenges.

Dr. Austin has decades of experience dealing with relationships. He charges clients on a sliding scale according to their ability to pay. His first book, Creating Our Safe Place: Articles on Healthy Relationships, published in 2004, and his second book, Keeping It Safe, published in 2009, can be purchased through Amazon, publishamerica.com, and at the Parrish Book Store at Eastern Shore Chapel in Virginia Beach—call (757) 425-0114 for book availability. Dr. Austin is also a sought-after speaker.
Fantastic Lunch at Your Pie!

The Shopper team had a fantastic lunch at Your Pie’s newest location in Greenbrier.

From left: The smiling team from Your Pie – Mercedes, Nicole, and Ciara – are preparing our orders.

General Manager
Holly Vesey

From left: Office Manager Julie Burley, Senior Account Executive Martha Frugard, Account Executive Laura Seawell, Shopper Publisher Jean Lesley-Barnard, Editor Rob Lauer, Production Manager Karah Angeli, and Graphic Designer Jennifer Tolarchyk. The Shopper team thoroughly enjoying their lunch.

See these and other photos at TheShopper.com

FREE WEEKLY SUMMER CONCERTS

Every Thursday 5:30-8:00 PM
June 13 - August 29

June 13 The Deloreans - 80’s Show Band
June 20 Nature’s Child - Reggae
June 27 The Fuzz Band - R&B, Funk, Soul, Rock
July 4 BJ Griffin & Galaxy Groove - Pop, Funk, Soul, R&B
July 11 Tumbao Salsoro - Latin, Salsa
July 18 WOAH! - All 90’s Hits
July 25 Reebuck - Americana, Rock
August 1 The Tiki Bar Band - Island, Classic Rock
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August 15 Good Shot Judy - Swing, Big Band
August 22 Little Country - Country, Rock
August 29 Vinyl Headlights - Pop, Rock

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Alvene Buckley Celebrates Birthday at Town Point Club

An intimate gathering was held at the Town Point Club in Norfolk for Alvene Buckley. Close friends and family helped celebrate her birthday.

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—— Jeff Jechura & Tony Johnson
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CREATIVITY DISCOVERED IN HANDWRITING

What makes a person more creative than the general public? Creativity — the ability to produce something new and original — can be seen as early as a toddler's scribbling.

Creativity makes reality

The creative nature itself hangs on a few important qualities —

Openness: An open-spirited nature is shown by "loose" writing. Note that the strokes in the letters and the spaces between them are not close together. Circle letters (a, d, g, o, q) are well-rounded and the open e shows broad-mindedness.

Intuition allows the expression of the "little voice within." Look for breaks between letters where they would not usually be found.

Imagination (both theoretical and practical): Upper loops bring inception to the thinking processes, while the lower loops set the cogs in motion to bring creativity to life

Imagination is the spice of life.

Other creative traits (above) include the following:

Depth of feeling: Note the "heaviness" of the writing. This trait expresses itself in terms of color, tone, and diction.

Rhythm: Look at the even returning of the strokes to the baseline. Rhythm renders balance and order to creativity.

Thinking Processes: Creative persons employ various thinking methods, but cumulative thinking (rounded m, n, h) lends method to the creative process.

Fluidity: This trait enables the writer to express his talents with grace and accuracy. It enhances the verbal eloquence of artistic skills. Look at the "figure 8" g's and t-bars flowing into the next letter.

Manual Dexterity: This trait enhances the desire to use one's hands and feet in creative expression. Find the flat-topped r's.

A creative person does not do things by accident; he or she is a directed person on a path down the road of life.

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A truth commonly accepted by writers is that you can’t wait for inspiration to come. You must, as said by novelist Jack London, “go after it with a club.” When a writer can’t think of anything to write about, it can be tempting to say, “I’ll try again tomorrow.” But if writers gave up whenever they felt daunted by a blinking cursor or a blank page, they’d spend considerably more time waiting than they would writing. The alternative is to write anyway, to force oneself to put words on the page. This doesn’t always result in quality work. So what makes poor writing better than no writing? Why should writers write when it’s hard, instead of waiting for when it’s easy?

There has to be a building block. Writing only in perfect circumstances is like building a house but refusing to use bricks because you’d rather use bars of gold. The average person does not find it easy to exercise, yet they push themselves to do so because of what they get in return. And the more often they do exercise—the more used to exercise their body becomes—the easier it becomes. Writing when it is hard to write makes it easier to write the next time and the next. It becomes a habit.

The goal is not to get it all perfect right away—it’s to keep moving.

Those dedicated to their craft learn to push through writer’s block, laziness, or outside distractions and write anyway. By doing this they find it is still possible to put words on the page. The goal is not to get it all perfect right away—it’s to keep moving. Not to wait, but to work. To go forward so it’s possible to come back and renovate, instead of having nothing to build on at all. Whether it’s a hobby you want to start, a project you need to finish, or a change that needs to be made, waiting for inspiration could be the dirt on the coffin of that goal. The most difficult things are often the most worthwhile; don’t let difficulty be the death of your goals. Grab your club, your bricks, and whatever else you need to excel, not only when it’s easy, but even when obstacles are standing in the way.

Breonna Loxley is an animal care technician at an animal shelter. She is an avid artist, writer, and animal-lover. She lives with her parents, a younger brother, two cats, and one dog.

Chesapeake Sports Club

At its latest meeting, The Chesapeake Sports Club recognized four local high school athletes for their outstanding achievements during the past season. An award was also presented to the newest Legend of Honor, Jim Dunlo. Brian Mitchell, former running back for the Washington Redskins, was the guest speaker.

Oscar Smith High School's Karl Chavis was the boys basketball award recipient
Deep Creek High School's Mya Thomas received the award for girls basketball
Western Branch High School's Shadajah Ballard was honored as outstanding indoor track athlete
Oscar Smith High School's Aaron Shirley--outstanding indoor track athlete

See these and other photos at TheShopper.com

By Breonna Loxley
Nauticus Salutes Battleship Wisconsin
Year-long celebration honors historic ship’s 75th anniversary

By Candance Moore

It’s been called the last great battleship. Born of hard-fought lessons learned in bloody Pacific conflicts, it integrated emergent technology to fight a new enemy in the Cold War. It was resurrected for modern service in the Middle East. From the jungles of Luzon to the deserts of Kuwait, Battleship Wisconsin witnessed America’s transition to a military superpower, forging a unique atmosphere.

The story of the Wisconsin is the story of how America learned to win wars. So, when Nauticus on Norfolk’s downtown waterfront planned to celebrate its 75th anniversary, a simple slogan seemed most appropriate: “Their Stories, Our History.” Those who served on this vessel are now sharing their stories with the public.

To honor this battleship’s 75th birthday, Nauticus is hosting a year-long celebration with a series of diverse events and attractions that has something for everyone. Spaces of the ship which were previously restricted are opening, replete with all the trappings and equipment. Most amazingly of all, veterans who served on the ship during combat are coming forward to connect with future generations.

“This ship really belongs to all Americans,” Battleship Operations Manager Clayton Allen remarks. “It’s the history of us, and we ought to know the story.”

Battleship Wisconsin’s journey began at the height of World War II. Naval technology was improving by the day, forcing engineers to make quicker, more accurate vessels. Air superiority drove up the value of aircraft carriers as traditional battleships lost their prominence. Along came the Wisconsin, a new Naval vessel fresh off production that reflected the transitional feel of the moment. The U.S. Navy had cut off production of new battleships while the Wisconsin was finishing up. She barely survived the cut, making her the last battleship ever produced by America.

Ships were ravaged in battle so often that no one could predict how long a vessel would last. As dozens of ships met their doom in the waters around Okinawa, the Wisconsin valiantly held her own against a kamikaze onslaught. She left the Pacific with a collection of stars and medals.

After serving in Korea, the Wisconsin retired from combat and carried out training programs. Ronald Reagan’s famous 600-ship Navy to oppose the Soviet Union brought her back into action. Then came Desert Shield, thrusting the Wisconsin into battle once more.

She was a hodgepodge of old and new. Guns that pounded Japan immovably dominated her deck, so obsolete by the time of Desert Shield that retired veterans were called upon to explain them. Down below in mission control, computers were hurriedly installed alongside antique equipment. Paintings, sketches, and hidden gems of the past waited to be discovered by inquisitive young sailors. The result was a battleship with an identity all its own.

“This ship really belongs to all Americans. It’s the history of us, and we ought to know the story.”

—Clayton Allen

By the mid-1990s, the Wisconsin was simply too old for effective use. She floundered in a Naval shipyard; her fate uncertain until the City of Norfolk offered to host her. In the early days, she was still technically U.S. Naval property, which meant no civilians inside. She was fully bequeathed to Nauticus at last in 2009. Since then, administrators have made impressive gains in allowing the public to see more and more.

On May 18 and 19, Battleship Wisconsin will unveil several new sections including the hospital, the barbershop, the library, and other spaces. Festivities will include recruit-style haircuts, musical entertainment, and a flag ceremony. Wisconsin veterans will be present to talk about combat operations. It’s an excellent opportunity for young people to encounter American history in a fun, upbeat atmosphere.

“If you’ve never seen the Wisconsin, this is the perfect time to visit,” PR Specialist Beth Bilderback notes. “So many great resources will be on hand to share information. If you saw her several years ago, it’s time for another visit to see how much the tour has grown. We’ve doubled the explorable space.”

General admission grants access to all public space (discounted on unveiling weekend to $7.50), with optional guided tours for an additional fee that illuminate an incredible wealth of knowledge. There’s even a room for limited mobility visitors to enjoy virtual tours. Guests who enjoy a challenge can book an escape room adventure in the Admiral’s cabin.

In July, Hampton Roads’ own Hurrah Players will perform the 1930s-themed musical production Dames at Sea on the fantail. September brings an innovative BBQ tasting event on the deck with refreshments, live music, and entertainment. For visitors who might enjoy a more low-key outing, the Wisconsin is currently open for general admission six days a week. Beginning May 27, it will be open seven days a week.

Battleship Wisconsin is operated by Nauticus, Norfolk’s maritime science museum. Visitors enjoy a wealth of educational exhibits, interactive programs, touchable marine life, and special events. Children relish the thrill of a scavenger hunt that takes them in every direction.

Nauticus and Sail Nauticus have become prominent advocates for helping underserved children gain access to STEM knowledge and participate in maritime activities. Summer sailing camps for children and adult sail outings provide funds to serve the underprivileged. Then there’s the annual bash known as Frisky on the Wisky, a sellout event that benefits the Sailing Center. July 22 will be special this year as Nauticus celebrates its 25th anniversary with a birthday party. Much like the Wisconsin, Nauticus has grown in recent years to include a broader spectrum of activities. First-time visitors to Nauticus are encouraged to relax and take their time.

“They often tell me they’ve been to Nauticus,” Clayton says with a smile. “Then I mention some of the amazing programs here, and they say they had no idea.”

Beth explains that this is why the anniversary events are so valuable. “If you wonder what’s so special about the Wisconsin, come visit this year and find out!”

The Chief’s Mess aboard the Wisconsin

Battleship Operations Manager Clayton Allen in front of the Wisconsin

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FROM BATTLING A STROKE TO BACK ON THE WATER
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Saluting personal heroes

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