Smiley’s Heating & Cooling

Bringing a smile to customers throughout Hampton Roads

Page 16
If you're like most people, you have put off cleaning your carpet until it's so dirty and embarrassing you think there's no hope for saving it.

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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! It’s true that real relationships pick up as if together yesterday, no matter how long a separation.

The Shopper is a monthly, direct-mail, magazine serving 8 community editions in Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Southfield, Carrollton, and Virginia Beach in Virginia and communities in northeastern North Carolina. The Shopper has a circulation of at least 10,000 direct mailed in each zone, totaling over 80,000. Additional issues are placed in our advertisers’ stores and in professional offices in our circulation area.

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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 stoked

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?

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.

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.

“I see you still drink too much coffee.” She said, “Yes,” he said, “he was good to me. And we had the church.” She paused, and asked shyly, “Do you miss your wife?”

“No,” she said, “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.

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 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.
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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 her earlier years working for the Hampton Roads Realtors® Association.

“In search of more space, they bought SinneWier Farm in 2015, Connie began volunteering at Alpacawaka Vineyard—the 10-acre farm that Connie and her husband, Steve, now own.

That day arrived in October of 2018, when Connie and Steve opened their Moyock-based firm—which they christened RealVisions Realty 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 where 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—with 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.”
“Adult Children With Problems – Discover How To Avoid Making Things Worse”

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Yes, We Do Windows! by Angie Lowry, Allied Member A.S.I.D.

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We would love to help with your window treatment challenges, and any other projects you may have planned this spring. Gorgeous new fabric samples are arriving daily, providing choices for upholstery, slipcovers, and bedding, too. Wallpaper is back big for those painted walls within the home while coordinating beautifully with all your window treatments! Call today to schedule your appointment as we embrace summer!

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Web Works

Managing Your Own Website

By Terry Young, CEO

How difficult is it?

I’ve had prospective clients voice concerns about their abilities to update their own websites using a content management system. They are afraid that it will be too time consuming and difficult, especially for those who are not tech savvy.

This is a complete reversal from years ago when clients didn’t want to have to depend on a web designer every time they wanted some text, a photo, or a special offer changed on their site.

This is why we created our WebUpdate system, which has been used with ease for over 17 years by our clients, regardless of their technical abilities. We have had clients who could barely turn on a computer to being a total techie, and all of them use our WebUpdate system with complete confidence.

Most of them are beyond surprised at how easy it is to use. Our WebUpdate system really is as simple as copy, paste, and upload to add or change content. Clients love the control they have, and they don’t have to wait, or pay, to have changes made.

Our WebUpdate system really is as simple as copy, paste, and upload to add or change content. Clients love the control they have, and they don't have to wait, or pay, to have changes made.

Website owners today are concerned about updating their own sites because they think it will be too complicated. This is notably the case with people who are using WordPress or similar programs to manage their site. Because WordPress was created to be everything to everyone, it can contain features which the owner will never use. This leads to a much more confusing interface.

However, our WebUpdate sites are custom created for each client, and when the site goes live, it contains only the features needed by that client. This lack of bloat makes the site control panel much simpler and more intuitive to use. Our clients literally make changes, additions or corrections to their sites in seconds from anywhere.

This update ability is a great time saver, especially for a fast changing business; rather than having to call or send an email requesting a change, the client can just log in and make the change.

Another advantage to our WebUpdate system is that clients can see their visitor traffic, including where visitors came from, who came from a search engine, and even which search words they used. The clients can also keep an eye on the performance of their own keywords, and even compare their keywords to those on their competitor sites. Having this information really puts full control in their hands.

If you have concerns with your web presence reaching your widest customer base, now is the time to look into our WebUpdate system sites. Not Original Source, they take advantage of advanced SEO, social, and responsive features to give your business the best competitive edge online.

Terry Young is the founder and CEO of Internet Marketing and Design. Since 1997, his computer programming and graphic design knowledge have kept his company at the forefront of the latest technology in web development.

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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.

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

For years life had seemed to have too few hours to get everything done that needed doing. Now, life seemed to have endless hours. I wondered how I could fill even a small portion of those hours. Each moment felt like forever.

The house seemed so large during those first weeks alone. Much too large for just one person. I wondered how two people could seem like a crowd, compared to just one person.

Additional text from this excerpt is available on TheShopper.com

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Chesapeake Sports Club
8th Annual Jamboree

There was a packed house for Chesapeake Sports Club’s 8th Annual Jamboree at the Chesapeake Conference Center. WTKR’s Barbara Ciara served as the mistress of ceremonies and the keynote speaker was Baseball Hall of Fame member, “Goose” Gossage. Great Bridge High School’s Katie Duke was honored as Coach of the Year, while Grassfield High School’s Morgan Murphy and Oscar Smith High School’s Cam’Ron Kelly were honored as the outstanding female and male athletes respectively. Glenn Hampton was recognized as the Robert G. “Buddy” Bagley Chesapeake Sports Club member of the year.

Cam’Ron Kelly’s father accepting his award as Chesapeake High School Male Athlete of the Year.

Katie Duke, Great Bridge High School’s field hockey coach, was honored as Chesapeake High School Coach of the Year.

Morgan Murphy, softball player from Grassfield High School, was named Chesapeake High School Female Athlete of the Year.

Jackie and Al Davenport

Glenn Hampton, with his daughter Jaclyn and wife Becky

Dick Wright and Charlie Taylor

“Goose” Gossage with 2019 Jamboree presenting sponsor, Nathan Beck

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A business’s name can make a big first impression on potential customers. As a case in point, consider Smiley’s Heating & Cooling. Many would assume that the company’s name and smiley-face logo have something to do with the way customers feel about the service it provides. While employees insist that this impression is 100 percent accurate, this company is actually named after its owner.

Larry Smiley started his company 33 years ago in Portsmouth. In February, he opened a second location in Virginia Beach. The new location in the Lynnhaven area will have six HVAC specialist technicians to compliment the 14 already at the Portsmouth location. When thinking about the company’s growth, Larry and his dedicated staff can’t help but...well...smile.

“Our business philosophy is based on a strong belief in being fair, providing quality work, making our customers happy and putting smiles on their faces,” Larry insists. “We accomplish these goals by hiring quality people who do quality work.”

“One of the ways that we access our performance is to take multiple photographs of projects before the work begins and after it ends,” Larry continues “These pictures are sent to the office and reviewed by the entire team at our morning staff meetings. The team knows what management expects and they deliver!”

The company’s commitment to excellence is evident in the feedback that it receives from customers.

“We are proud of our high customer service ratings,” Larry declares. “Smiley’s received a 4.9 score from Google, a 4.8 rating from Facebook, an A+ grade from the Better Business Bureau, and a five-star ranking from Trane Comfort Specialist. In 2016, Smiley’s Heating & Cooling was the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year. According to Consumer Reports, Trane is consistently the industry leader in manufacturing HVAC units. In the very rare instance that we receive a low score from a customer, we make every effort to find out why we didn’t meet their expectations.

Our commitment to customer satisfaction is underscored by offering a money-back guarantee. “Our customers are happy because our employees are happy,” Larry believes. “We have a great group of experienced technicians and other staff members who enjoy what they do. Having a positive work environment is essential to the success of this company. Our newly constructed Portsmouth headquarters has a well-appointed, professionally designed kitchen, which is where we frequently have our staff meetings and relax during our downtimes. The upstairs recreation room has comfortable furniture facing a 72-inch flat-screen TV (a great venue for the team to watch sporting events such as the Super Bowl), a ping-pong table, two stepper machines and space for weight lifting.”

“We have a great group of experienced technicians and other staff members who enjoy what they do. Having a positive work environment is essential to the success of this company.”

—Larry Smiley

Larry’s team is committed to helping their clients save money through routine maintenance checks on HVAC units.

“Homeowners should get their furnaces checked at the beginning of each heating and cooling season,” Larry points out.

“New heating and cooling systems are much more energy efficient than they used to be. Newer units provide energy efficiency that exceeds 96 percent. In other words, less than four percent of the energy generated goes unused. HVAC units 10 years or older could be candidates for replacement. Gas furnaces, particularly the heat exchangers, are more susceptible to the effects of wear and tear. Depending on their age, the efficiency of older units is 80 percent or less. Homeowners should not be paying for energy they don’t use. With a new energy-efficient unit, average monthly savings could be in the $100 to $200 range. If a customer is financing a more modern system, those monthly savings could be used to pay off the loan. Fewer carbon-dioxide emissions is another advantage found in newer HVAC units.”

“Replacing your ductwork is another way to reduce energy costs,” Larry adds. “Ductwork components expand and contract as they transport hot and cold air. Eventually, these movements cause the seams in the ductwork to leak air.”

Taylor Smiley, Larry’s daughter and Vice President of Operations, dispels one myth that is commonly accepted by many homeowners.

“Customers come first at Smiley’s Heating & Cooling,” Larry concludes, “and we look forward to bringing this strong spirit of customer satisfaction to Virginia Beach area residents.”

“An old of people believe that they save energy by drastically adjusting the thermostat when they leave the house to go to work and then switching it back again when they return home. Actually, this practice increases energy bills, as the HVAC system works harder to achieve the desired temperature. It’s more cost-effective to leave the thermostat alone when leaving the house.”

“Smiley’s Heating & Cooling is passionate about providing great customer service experiences,” Larry insists. “In a way, we’re arrogant and humble at the same time. Our team is very proud of the high-quality service we provide our customers. On the other hand, our customer satisfaction guarantee keep us humble. When it comes to serving our clients, we know who’s the boss. We offer flexible hours and recognize that our clients may not be available to come home during a regular workday. Therefore, we plan service calls around their busy schedules.”

Larry recalls a bittersweet moment when someone called late on a sweltering, summer evening: “The husband said that their household air-conditioner stopped working and his wife was extremely ill. He contacted several other heating and air conditioning repair businesses, but no one had the time or technicians available to respond.”

As Larry continues, his eyes glisten and his voice quivers with emotion: “The next day, this loving husband called to inform the Smiley’s team that his wife died that night. He wanted to thank them for coming over when no one else would. He was grateful that Smiley’s made the waning moments of his spouse’s life cool and comfortable.”

Larry Smiley founded Smiley’s Heating & Cooling 33 years ago.

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Children First

Why Support Educators

Teacher Appreciation Week takes place each May. This is a time when parents and community members can show their thanks for the importance of the people who help raise their children. While the gift cards and homemade pastries are certainly appreciated, we need to think about the long-term answers to the questions facing our current education system.

According to recent news reports, there have been strikes in West Virginia, South Carolina, Colorado, and California. Why would teachers and support personnel take to the streets on a school day? Perhaps they wanted to point out that this is a demanding job with low wages, and that many teachers are burdened with student debt from their own undergraduate education. It often requires securing a second job to pay that debt.

How a government or any other group spends its money sends a strong message about what they believe is important.

The budgets for public education are funded primarily from state and local taxes. A very small percentage comes from the federal government. When legislators annually vote on those budgets, education has to compete with many other necessities such as public safety, infrastructure, libraries, health and welfare, ever-changing technology, and economic development—services that citizens have grown to expect. Budgets are always very challenging. How a government or any other group spends its money sends a strong message about what they believe is important. A recent article about the Oklahoma state budget indicated that they spent five times more on incarceration than on education.

What about the student debt incurred by prospective teachers? Advertisements support the plan of completing the first two years of college at a local community college for about one-third of the cost of the last two years at a four-year state institution.

The present Virginia Teaching Scholarship Program is limited to those who are studying in the top five critical shortage disciplines; who are nominated by their institution, and agree to teach in school districts where a minimum of 50 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Some years ago, the state of Virginia had a loan forgiveness program that encouraged students in state universities and colleges to become teachers. A tuition scholarship was given to students who agreed to teach in a Virginia public school upon graduation. For each year they received such a scholarship, the student had to teach a year for loan forgiveness to take place. Such a program would certainly encourage students to enter the profession and not incur heavy debt.

Support for beginning teachers is critical. Short retention rates are typical throughout the country. An overwhelming number of demotivated teachers leave the profession in the first five years. All school systems should have a mentorship program, pairing a specially selected experienced teacher with each new teacher for the first three years.

Assistance is needed from legislators, school systems, and parents to provide answers to the challenges of our schools. By the year 2053, it is expected that 52 million students will be in United States schools. They are counting on excellent teachers to provide their education.

A career educator, Dr. Rebecca Adams has served as a teacher in grades two through graduate school, reading specialist, principal, and an educational foundation administrator. She was selected as Chesapeake’s First Citizen of 2016 for her community service.

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Relationships

Need a Spot?

“And there are those who have the truth within them, but they tell it not in words.” — The Prophet, Gibran

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.

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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.

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New Image Lawn and Scapes
Creating and maintaining beautiful lawns through every season of the year

By Cristi Sanchez

Spring is in the air. Flowers in bloom and tender green leaves on trees herald its arrival. Its presence is also evident in the new and rapid growth of grass and weeds, reminding people that it’s time to dust off the lawnmower and lawn tools. Many dread the thought of yard work, especially once spring departs and the humid summer heat sets in. For those people, and for those who are simply short on time, Rich Linehan, owner of New Image Lawn and Scapes, is ready to come to the rescue with his lawn and landscaping services and friendly, down-to-earth demeanor.

Established by Rich in 2007, New Image, a full-service lawn and landscape company, provides a wide range of year-round services, including lawn and landscape management, landscape design and installation, mulch installation, and turf management with weed and pest control to residential and commercial customers.

“New Image Lawn and Scapes is the only lawn maintenance company for us... We needed a maintenance company that we could build a relationship with and trust. That personal service and integrity are the hallmark of their business.”

—Lee Brinn

Trained in landscape and turf management, Rich uses his commitment to excellence and his 27 years of experience to deliver high-quality results to all of his customers. “My job is about quality, not quantity,” Rich says. “It’s about individual customers and their lawns, not how many lawns in a neighborhood I can service. My job is to meet the customer’s lawn and landscaping needs with quality materials and workmanship so they can have nice, green, manicured lawns that they can take pride in.”

Rich likes to refer to New Image as “a one-stop-shop” for quality lawn services. “A lot of homeowners actually have multiple people maintain their yard and landscape, which can actually cost more; whereas, with a full-service landscape company, you get one price for everything.”

In providing quality services to his clients, Rich tries to make things easy and convenient through three different full-service packages, each providing a little more than the one before it: All-Star, MVP, and Hall of Fame. “Both of my boys, Dylan and Landyn, are heavily involved in sports, hence the package names,” Rich adds with a chuckle.

The Hall of Fame package, New Image’s most popular, provides everything in the first two packages plus one mulch application per year. “The purchase and application of mulch alone can be very expensive and this package covers that, plus lawn and turf management,” Rich points out. “People like it because it’s convenient and cost-effective.”

A broad range of full-service packages distinguishes New Image from many other companies.

“Many are very specialized,” Rich explains. “Some companies may treat one’s lawn but not cut the grass, while some will cut the grass but do nothing else. Others may handle lawns, but not mulching or landscaping. We’re a full-service lawn maintenance company. We do it all and then some.”

Just this year, in fact, Rich has added a new service to New Image’s line-up by offering a turf-only package, where New Image will spray customers’ lawns five to six times a year without mowing services. “With some customers, that’s all they want and need, and we’re happy to offer them this package,” Rich states.

With so many lawn care options available, Rich likes to educate homeowners on the benefits of having a weekly lawn service. “If we’re maintaining a lawn year-round, we’re there weekly to oversee the condition of the turf,” Rich asserts. “That allows us to know what it needs and be proactive in keeping it healthy and in good shape all year long.”

In keeping lawns healthy year-round, Rich stresses that it has the potential to save customers money in the long run. He compares the maintenance of a lawn to the maintenance of a car, where waiting too long to address basic maintenance issues, like clearing lawns and beds of debris, can add up to a higher bill in the spring.

“Waiting to change the oil in your car can wind up costing a lot more down the line,” he points out. “It’s the same with waiting to maintain your lawn. If one lets the yard go after the summer, the cost of spring cleanup, treatment, and mulching can potentially run into the thousands.”

And now that spring is here, Rich is advising customers that now is the time to take action for that lush, green summer lawn. “Going into spring it’s crucial to be putting down the proper nutrients, fertilizers, and pre-emergents. Timing is everything,” he describes. “And the timing and application of the spring lawn treatments is something my technicians and I are very well trained on.”

For those on the fence as to whether or not to call a lawn service company for spring lawn treatments or do-it-themselves, Rich helps to break it down on his Facebook page so they can make an informed decision. “Doing it yourself is fine, but sometimes it may actually be cheaper to have a company apply the necessary treatments,” he surmises.

“It could cost a homeowner as much or more just to buy the applicator and fertilizer as it would cost to have it done as part of a package, not to mention the time it takes them to buy the materials and do the job. If it were me, I’d spend the money on the service just to save myself the hassle!” he adds with a chuckle.

Lee and Beth Brinn are two long-time clients who are very glad to have saved themselves the hassle. “New Image Lawn and Scapes is the only lawn maintenance company for us!” Lee enthuses. “We switched to them over ten years ago and have been thankful for that decision ever since. Their team of professionals cuts and edges our lawn, maintains our hedges, provides annual weed control, seeds, and fertilizes. They are friendly, on time, proactive (If it needs fixing, they fix it), and very knowledgeable. We needed a maintenance company that we could build a relationship with and trust. That personal service and integrity are the hallmark of their business.”

With spring in obvious full swing, the need for lawn maintenance is unavoidable. Whether servicing a Hall of Fame package or a turf-only package, Rich Linehan and New Image Lawn and Scapes are prepared to provide customers with excellent service and results not just for spring and summer, but year-round.
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.

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 girl campers 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 Colombia.

The purchase of the hammocks was quite interesting. They had to be bought with coconuts, which were worth a nickel each. Of the money that was raised for the camp, $98 was used to purchase coconuts which, in turn, were traded for hammocks.

The Shopper is pleased to announce that Dr. Bill Austin’s new book, Coconuts for Hammocks, 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.

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A Gem of a Business

We stopped by to see what Boulevard Jewelers were up to and the brilliant new designs they’ve come up with.

Use the Bricks

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 waiting for when it’s easy? 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.

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.

By Breonna Loxley

The Write Sense

By Betsy Patterson

CREATIVE 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.

The creative nature itself hangs on a few important qualities —

Openness: An open-spired 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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- **FACE** Does the person’s face look uneven?
- **ARM** Is one arm hanging down?
- **SPEECH** Is the person’s speech slurred? Does he/she have trouble speaking or seem confused?
- **TIME** Call 911.

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July 25  Reebuck - Americano, Rock
August 1  The Tiki Bar Band - Island, Classic Rock
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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.

See these and other photos at TheShopper.com
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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See these and other photos at TheShopper.com
Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics, LLC
Providing hope and help for patients of all ages

By Cristi Sanchez

It’s amazing how often people take the little things in life for granted. Like breathing, some actions are simply second nature. They take no conscious effort, or thought; they just seem to happen. To be able to get out of bed and walk to the kitchen for a morning cup of coffee is just expected. However, for those who suffer a motor deficiency due to injury, illness, or limb loss, that walk for coffee is more complicated. Their mobility requires orthotic bracing or prosthetic limbs, and that’s where Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics comes in.

From their new, recently relocated headquarters in the Oakbrooke Business and Technology Center in Greenbrier, Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics provides hope and help to patients through their unique services of custom fitting and manufacturing of orthotic braces and prosthetic limbs. Serving patients who have been referred, Coastal’s dedicated team of practitioners and technicians work hand-in-hand with physicians and therapists to provide the devices people need to assist them and ease their mobility deficits.

Coastal co-owner Bobby Siverd is passionate about his family-owned company and the work that they do. “I love what we do!” he smiles. “There’s no other company in this area that does what we do to provide local, in-house quality prosthetics and orthotics. This is a great family business.”

“My uncle, Steve, has been doing this for over 30 years,” Bobby continues. “He came to Virginia straight out of technical school in Pittsburgh, and was hired by Ron Hopkins at another company as an orthotic and prosthetic technician to manufacture braces and limbs.”

Over the years, Steve worked in the field working his way up to becoming a Certified prosthetist/orthotist—a healthcare worker who helps to fit patients with prosthetic limbs and orthotic braces. In 2001, Ron and Steve became business partners along with another colleague, Harry Bright, and branched out on their own to form Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics. “Eventually, the other two owners retired and Steve took over the reins at the company,” Bobby explains.

Coastal began on the road to becoming a family business in 2005 when Bobby came on board as an ODU undergraduate who needed a summer job. “As it happened, my uncle needed summer help at Coastal. We’ve always had a really close, tight-knit relationship, and I thought it would be fun to help him out even though I had no idea at the time what any of the braces were that I was working on!” Bobby recalls laughing.

Following in his uncle’s footsteps, Bobby also started out as a technician, learned the business, and obtained all the required certifications to work his way up to a certified orthotic practitioner.

Now a co-owner in the business with his uncle, Bobby is very excited about the new location and the building that houses Coastal’s home base. “We worked very closely with designers in the creation of our new building and we’re exceptionally happy with how it turned out,” Bobby says with pride.

Designed with patients in mind, Coastal’s new entry and waiting area have clean, crisp, and bright décor with modern fixtures, high ceilings, and sea blue and green walls, providing a tranquil yet bright and cheerful environment.

But the design goes beyond the aesthetics. The building houses six spacious exam rooms and two gait rooms. “Patients need space and privacy when being fitted with and trying out their new braces or limbs,” Bobby explains. Spanning the length of three exam rooms are the large gait rooms, accessed by doors that are off from the exam rooms. “Patients try walking—or running—with their new limbs in here,” he continues. “The little kids often run. It’s a great moment to see patients so hopeful and happy as they try out their devices.”

The entire back of the building houses the fabrication lab, cordoned off into different, dedicated areas where the custom devices are manufactured. “We’ve always had our own on-site fabrication. This is where we make everything for our patients,” Bobby explains.

“We have areas where technicians do plaster molding, plaster mold modifications, and sculpting. These are all done for both braces and prosthetic limbs.” They also have a sewing room for braces and a clean room where robotic limbs are cleaned and tested.

Sometimes they wouldn’t be able to walk or stand properly without our medical devices. So, to be a part of the team, along with their doctors and therapists, that makes that happen is extremely rewarding. To see someone walking on their own because of the braces we make is amazing!”

—Bobby Siverd

Despite all of the extensive cosmetic, technology, and architectural improvements in the new facility, what pleases Bobby most is how much more functional the building is in providing services to their patients.

“Our business has grown over time and the technology in this field is ever-changing,” Bobby explains. “We simply outgrew our old building and didn’t have the space to function efficiently. We have to function efficiently if we’re going to serve our patients well.”

Adults come to Coastal for different reasons, such as custom inserts for diabetic neuropathy, or lower extremity bracing for neuromuscular conditions due to stroke, MS, ALS or spinal injury. While the conditions requiring bracing or prosthetics are different, every patient, young, old, or in-between, receives the same attention to detail and quality care and products.

“As a pediatric specialist, working with children is very rewarding,” Bobby says smiling. “Sometimes they wouldn’t be able to walk or stand properly without our medical devices. So, to be a part of the team, along with their doctors and therapists, that make that happen is extremely rewarding. To see someone walking on their own because of the braces we make is amazing!”

Everyone at Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics has a heart for helping individuals with motor deficits, and they work diligently to see patients’ lives improved. Their patient-focused mission is to provide the highest quality care, and to provide not just medical devices for mobility, but to provide help and hope to make the little things in life less complicated.

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Office Manager Karen Vaughn and Co-owner Bobby Siverd
Photo by Michele Thompson
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