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See page 18

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- BBQ Pork & Chicken
- Fried Fish
- Clam Chowder
- Hush Puppies
- Corn on the Cob
- And many more foods!
- Domestic Beer
- Mixed Drinks
- Soda

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Publisher’s Point

How to Eat an Elephant!

One of the most helpful pieces of advice I heard in recent years took me by surprise. Eat an elephant one bite at a time. What?

It certainly grabbed my attention; then made me smile. How else could anyone eat an elephant?

This odd offering of advice turned out to serve me well.

So many situations, tasks, and difficulties seem overwhelming at first. It is only when we consume something “one bite at a time” that we realize almost everything benefits from a paced, purposeful perusal.

When a toddler takes the first step, parents are thrilled – even when it is followed by a fall. They know that first step leads to success! If we can adopt that outlook with almost everything, what could be debilitating stress can be replaced by optimism.

The one-step-at-a-time philosophy makes life so much simpler. It encompasses almost everything. Why we ever think we can accomplish the impossible in short order, I do not know. But, once we recognize the value of a steady approach, it becomes a saving grace.

When a toddler takes the first step, parents are thrilled – even when it is followed by a fall. They know that first step leads to success in walking! My only trait that remotely relates to an organized, step-by-step approach to life has been my optimism. Believing that everything would, let alone could, turn out well, saved me. At the same time, it allowed me to procrastinate.

Finally, I have realized that I can apply the one bite at a time approach to any task, even if it is just that very first step. Every single step makes a big difference. It has begun! It is progressing! It can be finished!

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Any progress delights me. Not only does it signal a process has begun; it is a victory over procrastination, no matter how small.

For those who feel their work never ends, the image of eating an elephant one bite at a time has a very positive advantage. The outcome, after all, is that it ends. When we look at each task or problem as finite, it becomes manageable. When we realize it will end, we can do it.
“Here Are Examples of How Your Life Can Change in Minutes”

How much time do you have to prevent a crisis, stress, or a family meltdown by putting an estate plan in place? The truth is that life doesn’t give us warnings for mental incapacity and death.

Bill and Sue came to see me for an estate plan. Sue noticed that Bill wasn’t feeling well. So, they decided to come back and finish our meeting when he was feeling better. That night she took him to the emergency room. Bill was admitted to the hospital. Two days later, he was in a coma, and a week later, he died from West Nile disease (right here in Chesapeake). In only a few hours, Sue’s life changed.

The truth is that life doesn’t give us warnings for mental incapacity and death.

Ed was finally retiring. Ed and his wife, Jane, were going to hit the road in their motorhome. One day, Jane wasn’t feeling well, and she fainted. Unfortunately, Jane was standing on a ceramic tile floor and hit her head hard enough to cause brain damage. Her symptoms are just like dementia. Jane can’t be left alone. In an instant, both of their lives changed.

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638 Independence Parkway, Chesapeake—near Battlefield & Volvo Pkwy
(Last one this year at this location!)
Refreshments will be provided.
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Quality Music and Dance
Teaching kids performing arts... and the art of being a good person

By Rob Lauer

To walk into Quality Music and Dance is to be greeted by the sound of music drifting in from the dance rooms, rehearsal studios, and classrooms. Within minutes of meeting owners Wayne and Muffy Hoover, it is obvious they are dedicated to teaching others how to become high-quality dancers and musicians. But just as important to this dedicated couple is that their students become high-quality human beings.

“When parents are deciding to let their sons or daughters study music or dance, they’re probably not thinking about how the experience will help their child develop skills that will benefit them in all other aspects of life,” Muffy concedes. “But the performing arts are unique in that respect.”

“The performing arts teach us how to stay focused, how to prioritize, how to practice and work as a unit,” Wayne adds. “These are life lessons that all of us need to know in all aspects of our lives.”

Among the variety of music lessons offered at Quality Music and Dance, piano, guitar and voice lessons are the most in-demand. “We also teach a lot of drums, violin, viola, and cello,” Wayne adds. “There’s been a growing demand for lessons in brass and wind instruments—including trumpet, trombone, clarinet, flute, and sax. Recently, even banjo and ukulele lessons have become popular.”

“Many think that they can learn how to play an instrument by watching online videos,” Wayne observes. “But one can’t ask YouTube a question if one doesn’t understand something or can’t see the video clearly; nor can it correct the student when they’re playing something wrong. YouTube and other online videos are great tools if you have an understanding of music theory and how to use it. If not, that’s the teacher’s job—to explain why this chord or riff was used here and how the student could use it in another song the same way.”

“To be a well-rounded musician, one has to learn music theory,” Muffy points out, “and that requires personal interaction with teachers.”

“There’s the old truism about music: one has to know the rules to break the rules.” Wayne maintains. “Understanding music theory allows a student to be innovative from a place of knowing. That builds the kind of confidence that a musician—that any artist—needs to be truly creative.”

“In dance, we offer jazz, ballet, tap, hip hop, lyrical, contemporary, musical theatre and acro/tumbling.” Muffy adds. “We even have classes for children as young as two years old. Ballet helps develop incredible lower body strength—as much as any athlete develops from playing a sport. Studying dance can help kids who are interested in gymnastics develop the grace, flexibility, and strength needed for that sport. If students are only interested in gymnastics, our acro/tumbling classes help them build the strength to execute cartwheels, tumbles and other ‘big moves.’

“With this training, Wayne and Muffy also make sure that all students are given plenty of opportunities to perform before audiences. ‘Sharing one’s talent with others is part of the training,’ Muffy explains. ‘QMD students have performed all over Hampton Roads and beyond. Community involvement is one of our core values. We’ve shared our love of music and dance at such places as the Chesapeake Jubilee, Kings Dominion, and Walt Disney World, as well as at charity events with CHKD (Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters), FACT (Families of Autistic Children in Tidewater) and local retirement homes.’

“Sharing one’s talent with others is part of the training... Community involvement is one of our core values.”

—Muffy Hoover

“Unfortunately, many people in retirement communities may only have a visitor once a week,” Wayne adds. “We think it’s important for young people to connect with older generations; to interact with people who are dealing with the challenges of aging, and to learn from them how things were in the past so that they can truly appreciate the advances that have been made in society and the advantages they enjoy.”

The appreciation goes both ways. “Wherever our students perform, they put smiles on people’s faces,” Muffy remarks. “Recently, after performing at a retirement home, one gentleman—Ed, a veteran who parachuted with the 101st Airborne Division—stood up and said how important it is to support the arts and arts education. He said that having the kids come there and perform had touched him deeply.”

“Another program we are involved with is Camp Gonnawamagagon— which serves the autism community,” Wayne adds. “We believe these sorts of experiences are important for helping our students develop empathy for others.”

Wayne and Muffy are particularly excited about a new program that Quality Music and Dance will implement in September. Called Wingman for Dance, it was launched in 2016 by professional dancer and teacher, Jessica Michael of Newtown, Connecticut—the site of the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. One of the shooting’s young victims was Dylan Hockley, a six-year-old with autism. Dylan’s Dad, Ian, recognized that Dylan had experienced more happiness, peace, and joy when those around him accepted him, protected him and included him in their activities and daily lives—when others were his Wingman. In his son’s memory, Ian founded Dylan’s Wings of Change—a foundation dedicated to sharing the dream of acceptance and inclusion for all.

“Joining forces with the foundation, Jessica created the Wingman for Dance program as a way to bring those same values into dance studios around the world. ‘We’re the first dance studio in Virginia to adopt this program,’ Wayne says with a smile. ‘We decided to join the organization because their values are what we’re all about. Yes, we teach music and dance, but at the end of the day, we want to make this world a better place. Some people might think that sounds hokey, but our goal is to produce well-rounded kids who have developed their talents; who are self-motivated and disciplined; who know how to work well with others, and who have a genuine interest in the welfare of people in their community.’

“The great thing about this program is that it’s designed to be run by youth leaders,” Wayne adds. “It won’t be adults coming in and telling the students what to do.”

“We will choose a team of four to six school students to lead the program,” Muffy explains. Adult Mentor Champions will meet with this Teen Leader Team once a month to prepare them for presenting the next month’s activities. The Teen Leader Team will then lead the younger students in Wingman experiential activities which are designed to teach and promote understanding of and empathy for others, as well as compassion, inclusion, positive communication and respect for others despite differences.

“In the end, we want to empower kids,” Muffy concludes. “Our students are learning an art, but they’re also learning the art of being good people.”

A Quality Music and Dance student performs for residents of Lighthouse Point Senior Living Community.

717 S. Battlefield Boulevard, Chesapeake
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Cooking for a person and a cat can be Beautiful experience

Beautiful came as a kitten to the house after the divorce, brought by concerned friends trying to give solace. He became her cat immediately and named himself by running up and purring in response to, “You’re beautiful.”

The cat has stayed through the teenagers’ comings and goings. He knows when every member of the household gets home, sensing their presence before anyone else does. Even when they arrive in a taxi and slip quietly up the steps, he is there at the door, mewing to announce them before they enter. He is like a guard at his mistress’s feet, slipping off the bed before a key turns in the lock.

Even when the eyes of his mistress are closed and she doesn’t stir, Beautiful knows when she is awake and, just to play cat and mouse with her, he pads up to her and kneads the covers. They open to him, and Beautiful slides down, purring. They rest a few minutes.

Normally, he sets the time for breakfast, demanding his food by bounding up and rattling any papers or loose objects he can find. He returns to bed after eating, prancing on the coverlet, begging to be brushed.

When Sunday comes and life is slower, Beautiful behaves quite differently. Knowing there is a treat in the offering, he doesn’t nag to get fed dried food. His mistress brings in the paper and comes back to bed. Then, with Beautiful curled beside her or quietly at her feet, she sips tea or Coke and reads until hungry.

There was a time when the mistress dreaded a late breakfast alone. She ate mundane meals and lost weight. Now she plans her breakfast with the cat. They debate each dish seriously. Sausage? Beautiful’s ears go back. How about sausage and apples or ham with pepper jelly? Or Coca-Cola sauce? He props himself up on his mistress’s foot, savoring her voice, translating her desires, anticipating his pleasure. How about Toad in the Hole? Or scrambled eggs? Or poached?

Finally, his mistress gets up. She opts for sausage and apples. The sausage is frying while she cuts the apple into wedges and adds it. She slips the eggs into the bread, in which she’s made a hole. By then, the sausage and apples are done.

Our comes a favorite tray, a crystal glass with juice, tea or Coke, depending on the day, perhaps a flower, china plates and napkins. Beautiful watches in silence, smacking his whiskered lips once or twice.

He jumps back in bed, nestling just below the food. He is sliced a bit of egg (good for his fur) and some sausage (no medical justification)—all put onto his own china plate on the floor. They both eat.

Satisfied, the mistress moves the tray down next to his plate on the floor, and finishes the paper as Beautiful delicately cleans his paws, one by one, and then his whole body in grave self-satisfaction.

The timing is just right. As his mistress leaves for church, he jumps to the window to supervise the birds.

Fried Sausage and Apple

1/3 Pound bulk sausage
1 Sliced cooking apple, cut in wedges

Fry the sausage in a skillet. In the link form, prick first. When nearly done, add the apples and saute in sausage fat until nearly soft, but not mushy. Remove and drain on paper towels.

Feeds 1 person and 1 cat.

Toad in the Hole

4 Tablespoons butter
2 Slices bread
2 Large eggs

Melt the butter in a heavy skillet large enough to hold both slices of bread. With a biscuit cutter, cut a hole in the center of each bread slice. Place the bread in the butter and fry until browned on one side. Turn. Crack the eggs separately and drop into the holes. Cook slowly until the eggs are fried and the bread browned, three or four minutes. If the bread browns before the eggs cook, cover and let sit for about a minute until done.

Your Pets Are Like Family To Us!

— Nathalie Dupree

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.
Some things are more important than maximizing profit," Tony Johnson, co-owner of Family Flooring, a long-time fixture in Great Bridge, says. “It’s not enough for our customers to buy flooring from us. We want them to be genuinely pleased with our service, from the moment they walk through the doors of our showroom until the moment the flooring has been installed and the last worker is leaving their house.”

“We really enjoy helping our customers,” co-owner Jeff Jechura adds. “They’re like family to us. In fact, I’d say that’s what sets us apart from big-box stores.”

After 15 years in business, Tony and Jeff are still committed to providing their customers with high-quality products, high-quality craftsmanship, and personalized service.

The duo met when working together at a now-defunct flooring business in Virginia Beach. One evening during their regular Monday Night Football get-together, their discussion turned to the possibility of one day owning and operating their own flooring business. The co-workers-turned-friends decided to make their dream a reality. In April 2004, Family Flooring opened its doors on North Battlefield Boulevard in Great Bridge. During the economic roller coaster ride of the ensuing 15 years, Family Flooring weathered ups and downs, but it has remained successful and viable because of Tony and Jeff’s honesty and integrity in serving their customers.

“People often ask if we ever have big sales or offer fake discounts. We don’t do that. That’s not what we’re about at Family Flooring. Do we need to make enough money to keep the doors open, pay our people, and make a living? Of course, we do. But we’re not going to sacrifice our integrity just to maximize our profits.”

Tony and Jeff’s sense of integrity is also evident in the quality of the flooring that they sell.

“We offer people high-quality products,” Tony states firmly. “We don’t sell discontinued flooring or seconds because we know there will be issues with them. We don’t have anything to do with products that will cause problems for our customers.”

By not selling low-cost, highly-discounted products, Tony acknowledges that he could potentially lose a sale. “I understand that people have budgets that they have to stick to,” he says good-naturedly. “So, I don’t take it personally if they choose to go with someone who can provide them with low-cost products, but I firmly believe that you get what you pay for.”

He goes on to describe a common problem experienced when customers have the budget for better flooring but try to cut corners with lower priced products. “In this industry, lower priced products are often low-quality products; that type of flooring will look bad within six months. Unfortunately, at that point customers are stuck with it because they’ve already spent all their money in their flooring budget.”

The high-quality products offered at Family Flooring also need to have high-quality installation. Since day one, Tony and Jeff have assembled a team of some of the best, most experienced installers in the region. “Every single one of our installers comes to us with at least a decade or more of experience,” Tony says, smiling. “All of them are experts in the field.”

“Frequently, I honestly believe that our flooring installers represent some of the best craftsmen in the area,” Jeff adds with pride. “All of them share our basic business philosophy: ‘Don’t stop until the customer is completely satisfied.’ They wouldn’t be working for us if they thought otherwise.”

Without the expertise of Family Flooring’s knowledgeable sales team, the top-notch installers would have nothing to do. The five-person sales team has years of experience and knowledge regarding which products work best in particular homes and areas and specific conditions.

“People think that they’re not limited as to what products they can use in their homes, but that’s not always the case,” Tony explains. “For instance, certain types of solid wood floors won’t do well in high-moisture conditions; certain products can’t be used on slab foundations, and laminate flooring can be problematic with pets and water. So, we work closely with our customers and educate them so that they can make the best choice for their homes and their lifestyles.”

While Family Flooring’s high-quality work, commitment to excellence, and exceptional customer service have remained the same over the last 15 years, there have been a few notable changes beginning with the business itself. Though Family Flooring opened with a staff of only four installers working from a smaller facility, it has grown into a thriving business with 11 installers and five sales representatives working in a showroom that is double the size of the original.

The products on display in the showroom have also changed over the last 15 years. “ Carpets have changed a lot,” Tony states. “There are new multicolored carpets that have better stain protectants and look more casual and not as formal. But even more than that, the carpet market has really dropped. It used to be the largest percentage of flooring sales, but now it’s only 35-40 percent of the market.”

These days more people are flocking to the popular new interlocking vinyl products: Luxury Vinyl Planks (LVP) and Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT).

“LVP and LVT are the newest products on the market and have taken over,” Tony explains. “People like them because they look like wood or tile, and are durable and waterproof. LVP and LVT are quality products.”

At Family Flooring, commitment to quality is foundational. Having just celebrated their 15th anniversary, Tony Johnson, Jeff Jechura, and their entire staff continue to deliver high-quality products and craftsmanship, and personalized service with honesty and integrity. “That will never change,” Tony promises.
Focus On Kitty

I received a call from Dr. Joy Renfrow, Kitty’s psychologist. She asked if I would consider coming to the private psychiatric hospital to visit Kitty, who had asked for me.

“Of course,” I replied without hesitation.

I was somewhat nervous on the drive out. With me was Matthew, the teddy bear I had purchased in Arizona during my week of family therapy, part of Rob’s month long rehab. I brought the bear to share with Kitty.

The feeling in the building was one of both hospital and jail. It was, after all, primarily for adolescents, most of whom, if not all, did not think they belonged there.

The doctor’s renowned husband was also Kitty’s psychiatrist. His wife was a dignified, attractive woman who spoke calmly, yet rapidly, as we took an elevator. Perhaps, I thought, she wants to tell me a great deal in a short space of time. I felt comfortable in her presence.

“Kitty is doing quite well for being here just five days,” the doctor told me quietly. “But she is very nervous about seeing you this morning.”

“I can understand that,” I replied, asking, “Is there anything you want me to say or do?”

“Just that you be honest with Kitty,” Dr. Renfrow counseled, “and let her say whatever she needs to say. This is very important for her.”

The doctor opened the door to a small room, just a few yards from the elevator, and I took a seat, assured the wait would be short. It wasn’t long enough! Dr. Renfrow ushered Kitty in before a minute had passed.

Kitty’s eyes were very large as she glanced at me furtively. She looked like a deer suddenly looking into headlights. And how young she looked! I had met Kitty before, even spent time in her company, not knowing that she was involved with my husband. I knew she was young; that fact impressed itself on me each time I had seen her after discovering the affair. Now, she seemed involved with my husband. I knew she was young; that fact impressed itself on me each time I had seen her after discovering the affair. Now, she seemed involved with my husband.

Kitty took the bear eagerly. “Thank you,” she cooed, hugging it, “he’s soooo cute.”

“You need not apologize anymore, Kitty,” I reassured. “I’m not angry with you. This is not fair to you.”

I took the teddy bear across the room. “I bought this bear during my week of family therapy when Rob had his month of rehab in Arizona. I’d be happy to let him visit here with you if you want.”

“Thank you,” she said, continuing, “Rob told me you and him were having trouble, and you didn’t care about him anymore. Sometimes I felt guilty, like the times we saw you driving your car when we were together. I felt kinda embarrassed them times. But Rob said never mind. He thought it was kinda funny.”

I told Kitty about our marriage, about the affairs, careful to add, “that I knew about” over the years. I knew about five during our 30 years.

I took the teddy bear across the room. “I bought this bear during my week of family therapy when Rob had his month of rehab in Arizona. I’d be happy to let him visit here with you if you want.”

“I’m so sorry for what you’ve been through,” Kitty said softly, sincerely. “I’m so sorry to be the one to cause you more pain.” Tears welled up in her eyes again.

“Thank you for coming, Mrs. Hood,” Kitty said in a clear voice.

“Thank you for asking me to come,” I answered quickly, hoping to put the girl at ease.

“I want to tell you I am sorry,” she began again, “and hope that sometime you will be able to forgive me.”

“I forgive you now, Kitty,” I said.

The girl continued, looking straight at me. “I should have known better. I knew, even though I didn’t want to know. Rob,” Kitty began, suddenly hesitant, then said quickly, “Dr. Hood, I mean...”

“It’s all right,” I interrupted. “It is natural for you to call him Rob at this point. It doesn’t hurt me.”

“Thank you,” she said, continuing, “Rob told me you and him were having trouble, and you didn’t care about him anymore. Sometimes I felt guilty, like the times we saw you driving your car when we were together. I felt kinda embarrassed them times. But Rob said never mind. He thought it was kinda funny.”

I told Kitty about our marriage, about the affairs, careful to add, “that I knew about” over the years. I knew about five during our 30 years.

As I talked to Kitty, without anger, just with the sadness and awareness that time brings, I watched her eyes fill from time to time. In her face, I saw the compassion one female has for another. Strange, I thought, to feel a sisterhood time brings, I watched her eyes fill from time to time. In her face, I saw the compassion one female has for another. Strange, I thought, to feel a sisterhood

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I told Kitty about our marriage, about the affairs, careful to add, “that I knew about” over the years. I knew about five during our 30 years.

As I talked to Kitty, without anger, just with the sadness and awareness that time brings, I watched her eyes fill from time to time. In her face, I saw the compassion one female has for another. Strange, I thought, to feel a sisterhood

“I want to tell you I am sorry,” she began again, “and hope that sometime you will be able to forgive me.”

“I forgive you now, Kitty,” I said.

“I want to tell you I am sorry,” she began again, “and hope that sometime you will be able to forgive me.”

“I forgive you now, Kitty,” I said.

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Warren Buffett and the Circle of Competence

Warren Buffett is America’s most successful living investor. Known as “The Oracle of Omaha,” he is the third richest man in America, and he made it all by buying shares in companies. In other words, by buying stocks. He explains his success in a 1996 shareholder letter:

“What an investor needs is the ability to correctly evaluate selected businesses. Note that word ‘selected’: You don’t have to be an expert on every company, or even many. You only have to be able to evaluate companies within your Circle of Competence. The size of that circle is not very important; knowing its boundaries, however, is vital.”

He recently used the phrase Circle of Competence to explain why he didn’t buy stock in Amazon—despite having known the founder, Jeff Bezos for 20 years. Evaluating the Amazon business model—it started as an online bookstore—was outside his circle of competence.

What does this legendary investor do when he realizes that there are investment opportunities outside of his area of expertise? He does what other smart people do. He hires people whose competence supplements his own. Buffett’s partner, Charlie Munger, explains it this way:

“You have to figure out what your own aptitudes are. If you play games where other people have the aptitudes and you don’t, you’re going to lose. And that’s as close to certain as any prediction that you can make. You have to figure out where you’ve got an edge. And you’ve got to play within your own Circle of Competence.”

Weekend golfers, amateur tennis players are playing for fun. They know better than to play for money against professionals. But when it comes to investing, too many people venture outside their Circle of Competence when there’s real money at stake.

It’s a problem that gets very smart people into trouble. They believe that subscribing to a newsletter or reading the Wall Street Journal gives them an edge. They react to headline news or swings in the price of commodities. These are all distractions, and it’s one reason why the typical investor makes serious mistakes.

Focus like a laser beam on your circle of competence. Supplement your competence by consulting with Registered Investment Advisors (RIAs) when it comes to financial planning and investment strategy. Have you checked in with your financial advisor recently? If you don’t have one, call us for our free guide: Eight Steps to Choosing the Right Financial Advisor.
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Premier Roofing and Siding
Making and keeping promises for 30 years

When Jeff and Pam Standish started a home exterior business in 1989, they chose the name Premier to signify a heartfelt pursuit of perfection. They wanted it all: a local family business with personal, attentive service; industry-leading access to innovative products; in-house craftsmen who consistently deliver spectacular results; and to make this level of quality available to ordinary homeowners at a fair cost. They were indeed shooting for the moon. The journey took a few unexpected turns, but as Premier Roofing and Siding celebrates its 30th anniversary, Pam is proud to say they hit their target.

It’s still a family business with trusted long-term employees who were there during Premier’s early years. Along the way, they became a Platinum Preferred Contractor for Owens Corning, with access to the latest products and the most robust warranties. They also became an exclusive provider for Cedar Ridge’s ground-breaking insulated siding in Hampton Roads. As if that weren’t enough, they also pioneered custom-shape trim that never needs painting, to give their customers the best of style and durability.

Premier is a full-service Class A contractor that offers roofs, siding, stone accents, windows, trim, gutters, and porch rails. The business is known for creating new construction looks at remodeling costs, overseen by a leadership team that genuinely connects with their customers. It specializes in giving homeowners a dream exterior that increases property value while often lowering the maintenance workload.

Jeff got Premier off to a great start, but Pam, along with General Manager Ann Strader, has beaten the odds to elevate this business since Jeff passed away. When Pam suddenly assumed sole responsibility for the couple’s commercial and personal property, she focused on better understanding Premier’s customers.

“I learned some hard lessons on my own property,” Pam recalls. “Undersized gutters that stay chronically clogged, wet leaves making a weak spot on the roof, wood trim that has to be repainted and repainted—these things are exhausting! At least I had a business through which I could solve these problems.”

Bringing on Ann as General Manager, Pam sought to make Premier a problem-solving company. She personally visited house after house to see what challenges her workers faced. Old siding and shingles were often removed to reveal deteriorated wood hidden beneath, giving Premier’s installers an extra task before the job could even begin. Meanwhile, elderly homeowners with no means of doing labor-intensive maintenance work themselves often had to pay for repairing damages that could have been avoided. Dissatisfied with merely offering standard options, Pam and Ann sought solutions.

“If people honor us with a chance to work on their home, we make specific promises, and we keep them. That’s our business in a nutshell.”

—Pam Standish

“We use the Cedar Ridge Insulated product,” Ann explains. “It is innovative, and now has built-in water drainage channels, radiant heat reflection properties, and it is infused with a pest repellent in the insulation that is fully adhered to the back of the siding panel. The siding is warranted to withstand up to 160 mph winds to cover materials and labor to repair or replace if necessary.”

“Standard siding is great for keeping the elements out—as long as nothing goes wrong,” Pam explains with a smile. “If undesirable elements find a way to get back there, standard products have no Plan B. We wanted to offer our customers something better. We are definitely excited and honored to still offer this great product as the exclusive contractor in Hampton Roads for 20 plus years.”

Next came the issue of conventional trims. While the initial low cost of wood trim may be appealing, carpenter bees and the need for constant repainting eventually drive homeowners to search for a better product. There are bendable aluminum options that look good but may still require routine painting.

Premier Roofing and Siding uses a pvc coated aluminum metal that we custom bend to form around the exterior trim of your home,” Ann says. “Our installers create stunning crown mold designs that we bend on-site during installation to ensure a custom fit.” Creating custom trim is a highly advanced skill that Premier’s in-house craftsmen train for years to master before being put to work on a customer’s property.

“Our guys light up when they see the fruits of their labor,” Ann relays with a chuckle. “This isn’t just a job to them: it’s a badge of honor. We send them to a customer’s home in full confidence that they’ll stay until the work is perfect.”

Perfection is one word that homeowner Nancy Murphy could use to describe Premier’s recent renovation her Colonial-style home’s front porch.

“Our front porch turned out beautifully!” Nancy says, enthusiastically. “With new railing, posts, porch ceiling, and guttering, Premier made the entire front of our house look brand new! The crew’s attention to detail made all the difference. All of our neighbors were so impressed. When they asked who did the work, I was happy and proud to tell them it was Premier Roofing and Siding!”

General Manager, Ann is something of a perfectionist herself. Her impact on the company has been so profound that Pam is in the process of making her a partner.

Teamwork is an essential concept at Premier and is responsible for everything from the smooth communication between departments to timely completion of tasks. Customers are kept updated every step of the way with detailed, easy-to-understand documents outlining what needs to be done.

Premier’s product lines come in a variety of textures, styles, and colors to create a fresh look that will last. If there’s a way to alleviate common homeowner hassles, Pam’s team offers it. Homeowners often call first for the basics such as roofing, unaware that affordable solutions exist for other maintenance issues. Premier meets with customers for casual, no-pressure conversations in which homeowners’ needs are discussed, and service options are explored. Clients are often so impressed by the first project that they call again with new requests.

“As a busy woman, I lead my company to treat people the way I like to be treated,” Pam notes. “No hard sales tactics. No wasting people’s time. We offer information as clearly and efficiently as possible, then we let customers make their own decisions. If people honor us with a chance to work on their home, we make specific promises, and we keep them. That’s our business in a nutshell!”

The remodeled front porch of Nancy Murphy’s Virginia Beach home is an example of Premier’s craftsmanship and attention to detail.

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By Candance Moore
Growing up in Tennessee, I heard my share of far-fetched fishing and hunting stories. One of my favorites was about two colorful characters, Clyde and Rufus. Both men would argue about who had the best hunting dog.

One day, Clyde invited Rufus to go duck hunting, announcing that he had a new hunting dog and wanted to try him out.

As they sat in their boat with the new dog, a flock of ducks flew over. Rufus shot a duck that fell into the water about 100 yards away. Rufus offered to steer the boat over to the fallen duck, but Clyde said, “No! My dog will get the duck.” The dog sprang from the boat, ran on top of the water, picked up the duck, and ran back to the boat on top of the water.

Clyde looked to see if Rufus was impressed with the dog. Rufus appeared unimpressed. Another duck was shot and retrieved in the same way. After several times of the dog fetching ducks and walking on water, Clyde couldn’t stand it any longer. “Rufus, haven’t you noticed anything different about my dog?” he asked.

Yeah,” Rufus replied. “Your dog can’t swim.”

Some people are like Rufus. They’d never acknowledge our accomplishments or gifts even if we walked on water. These people often make statements such as, “You should know that I appreciate what you do. You know I love you; I should not have to tell you.” We all know people who brag about never complimenting others as if not doing so is a virtue. Others resist giving praise because they see it as a tool of manipulation.
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Web Works
By Terry Young, CEO

Website Content
Writing your own is best

In last month's column I addressed cases in which business owners would rather pay a web designer to make changes to their website, even though they could easily make them themselves for free.

Additionally, I have also met with people who want a website, but want the web designer to write all of the copy for them. For a business that wants good search engine results, this can be a very bad move.

Because the web designers are just that, web designers, they are not able to write content based on first-hand knowledge of the business. Instead, the only option is for the designer to use Google to find websites of similar businesses and simply try to cobble together content found on those other sites.

I have seen some cases where the designer has, almost verbatim, used the content from other sites, simply changing the business name, location and area covered.

From a search engine standpoint, the content is nothing more than generic, or even an almost direct clone of other websites, some of which may have been created in the same way themselves.

I have met with people who want the web designer to write all of the copy for them. This can be a very bad move.

This closeness is picked up by the search engines, and results in a small drop-down arrow next to the search result, saying 'Similar.' Having such highly generic or cloned content can prevent a site reaching a high position on Google. It is being ranked below websites with content that was written by the companies themselves, and then tweaked by their designer for search engine compatibility.

Whenever I meet with clients, I always advise them to write their own content. They are the ones who best know what they do and how they do it. During the writing process, they are likely to bring up things that they do differently from other companies, or word things in other, less generic, terms.

Individuality and uniqueness are appreciated by the searches and can help single a site out in the search results, not only because they show that the company made an effort, but because they also bring up unique things that the more generic sites don't mention.

If you didn't write your site's content, and it is doing badly in the search results, it can pay to simply search for similar business websites and see if you have the Similar arrow.

Another thing you can do is to find a few generic sentences in your site and search for them inside quotes on Google. See if other sites show up because they are using the same copy.

If you have concerns with your website, now is the time to look into our WebUpdate system sites. Not Open Source, they take advantage of advanced security, 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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Midgette Family Dentistry
Where every patient is a welcomed neighbor

It is a beautiful summer day in the neighborhood of Western Branch, the type that inspires a spring in one’s step and smiles to passers-by. That sunny disposition doesn’t fade even as one strolls toward shaded front doors of Midgette Family Dentistry on Taylor Road. Stepping inside, one is greeted with a smile from the receptionist that is so warm one might conclude the atmosphere inside this dental office is sunny regardless of the weather outside.

“There is a special air to this office,” Dr. Kelly Paxton concedes. “It hit me when I first walked through the door. The atmosphere is relaxed, friendly, and welcoming. It feels like home. When I moved to Hampton Roads from Michigan, I interviewed with several dental offices. What made Midgette Family Dentistry stand out was the community feeling here. I was also impressed by the fact that the practice embraces the latest technology and innovations.”

Dr. Paxton has been with the practice for 13 years and is committed to building upon its outstanding reputation. As she shares her first impressions of the practice with a number of her colleagues, her remarks draw nods from all present.

“It’s been a little over a year since I joined the practice,” Dr. Ryan Shuck adds, “but the sense of being part of a community—a family—is very powerful here. Everyone is so friendly; we all get along so well. And yes, the technology that we use here is top-notch.”

“The sense of being part of a community—a family—is very powerful here. Everyone is so friendly; we all get along so well. And yes, the technology that we use here is top-notch.”

—Dr. Ryan Shuck

“Let’s go back to the very beginning. I was a year behind him,” Karen explains. “I remember him as being quiet, studious, and very conscientious. Even as a kid, he carried himself very much as he does today.

“Years later, when I heard that he had opened a practice here, I thought it would be awesome to work there,” she continues. “I applied to work as a dental assistant, and during my first three years here, that is what I did. That was 17 years ago. Now, having worked here that long, I tend to know what needs to be done before others do. So, I’ve moved from being a dental assistant to being known as the Office Guru,” she says with a laugh. “I do whatever needs to be done.”

Hygienist and Western Branch native, Cathy Gray, has also enjoyed a long association with Dr. Midgette.

“When I was growing up, Dr. Midgette was my family’s dentist,” Cathy shares. “I thought he was the most wonderful dentist in the world, so I always enjoyed coming here for checkups. When I was in high school, I decided to become a dental hygienist. Once I was certified, I found out that there was an opening in this office. I wanted to work in Western Branch, so I applied and was hired. That was 20 years ago.”

Like other members of the staff, Cathy loves the fact that Midgette Family Dentistry enjoys such visibility in the local community. “Western Branch is my neighborhood, so I know most of our patients,” she says. “When I go to the grocery store, I usually run into some of them. It’s wonderful to work somewhere that enforces such a strong connection with my neighbors.”

Given the deep connection the doctors and staff feel toward one another and the local community, it’s hard to imagine anyone being afraid of visiting this particular dental office. But the doctors are quick to say that they completely understand why so many people dread visiting a dentist.

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“A lot of anxieties stem from experiences during childhood,” Dr. Midgette explains. “Patients of a certain age might recall having cavities filled when they were children, years before most dentists began using Novocain to prevent pain. Economics may also have something to do with it. If, when growing up, the cost kept one from going to the dentist except when having a toothache, it only stands to reason that going to the dentist would be associated with pain.”

Dr. James W. Baker, who recently began his forty-third year in dentistry, agrees: “We work well together. It’s so good to have colleagues who can evaluate my work and offer constructive criticism. We truly work together as a team, and our patients come here because of the services that we provide—not just implants and crowns, but also Invisalign and dentures. And we treat sleep apnea—a condition that many general dentists do not treat. We truly are a comprehensive dental practice.”

Dr. Brian P. Midgette, the founder of the practice, listens to his colleagues with a warm, satisfied smile. “I definitely feel we have the most loyal patients imaginable,” he says. “Many have been with us since we first opened nearly thirty years ago. A large number of our new patients come to us because they have been recommended by people we’ve been treating for years. When our patients say so many nice things about us, we feel that we must be doing something right.”
“Environment is also a factor,” Dr. Shuck offers. “We’re in a patient’s personal space. That can be very intimidating for some people, even when just cleaning their teeth. Some people have a fear of choking. Others get nervous about dentists coming at them with drills. A lot of people assume that a procedure is going to hurt—before, during, and after. But honestly, nowadays, almost any dental procedure is relatively pain-free. We work to make a visit to our office as enjoyable as possible.”

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—Dr. Brian P. Midgette

“We take time to talk to our patients and explain what we’re going to do each step of the way,” Dr. Paxton adds. “We encourage them to ask questions—and we ask them questions as well. Do they have any fears? Are there things that make them nervous? The sound of a dental drill scares a lot of people. If the sounds of a dental office bother a patient, they can wear earphones and listen to music. Some people worry about getting a shot of Novocain, so we reassure them that we will make that shot as quick and painless as possible.”

“When it comes to easing a patient’s concerns, I have to praise Dr. Midgette,” Karen interjects. “Based on the stories that some patients have shared with us, many of their fears are completely understandable. But he always assures them that he’ll take good care of them. They know that he’ll always try to make them comfortable. And he is such a good educator. It is a real pleasure to listen to him talk with his patients on their level—using terminology they understand to explain complex dental concepts.”

“Personally, one meaningful aspect of dentistry is the way cosmetic dentistry can change someone’s life. When we’re able to give someone a smile that they can be proud of, their entire outlook on life can change.”

—Dr. James W. Baker

Cathy nods in agreement, adding, “I really admire all of the doctors here. When they explain things to patients, they make it all sound so easy. I can see the patients relax as they begin to understand whatever procedure they are having done.”

When asked how patients can avoid the kinds of dental emergencies that cause fear and panic, the doctors are quick to give answers.

“First, off, brush and floss daily,” Dr. Shuck says, adding with a laugh: “Whenever patients ask if they should floss, I always say, ‘You only need to floss the teeth you want to keep.’”

“Have regular dental exams every six months,” Dr. Midgette says. “And allow us to take x-rays so that we can see what is happening in your teeth and under the gum line. Some people worry about the cost, but regular checkups and x-rays can save people thousands of dollars in the long run.”

“People often think that if they’re not feeling any dental pain, they don’t need to see a dentist,” Dr. Paxton explains. “The fact is most cavities don’t cause pain until it’s time for a root canal. We work to prevent cavities from happening in the first place.”

“Eliminating sugar from one’s diet—especially in sodas—is the most obvious way to prevent cavities,” Dr. Baker interjects. “Everyone knows that. But people also need to be careful with coffee and tea—even if they just add cream or milk, both of which contain complex sugars. When we put those in coffee and tea, we need to wash out our mouths with water as soon as we’re finished drinking them.”

“Diet soft drinks are sugar-free, but they’re also acidic,” Dr. Paxton notes. “So are certain nutritional foods, such as citrus fruits. Some people drink a shot of apple cider vinegar each day for their health, but vinegar coats the mouth in acid. People should always drink some water after consuming acidic foods and drink; that washes the acid off of the teeth. People don’t realize that tooth decay is much more about what they are putting in their mouth than it is genetics.”

“People should also avoid internet fads regarding dental care,” Dr. Shuck says. “My rule of thumb is this: if you’ve read it online, don’t do it. You can’t Google search your way to dental health.”

“Nothing can replace a dental exam,” Dr. Baker insists. “The only way to know what is going on in one’s mouth is to have a dentist perform an exam.”

“That personal connection with our patients is what makes our work so rewarding,” he continues. “During my 43 years in dentistry, I’ve seen some astounding advancements. It’s been a great career, but I’m still practicing because I love interacting with my patients. As long as it’s fun and I can serve others, I’m going to keep going.”

When asked what he considers the most meaningful aspect of dentistry, Dr. Baker pauses for a moment. “Personally, one meaningful aspect of dentistry is the way cosmetic dentistry can change someone’s life,” he replies. “When we’re able to give someone a smile that they can be proud of, their entire outlook on life can change.”

“Dr. Shuck agrees: “A lot of people have had missing teeth for so long that they don’t realize how it has affected them socially. I recently had a patient crying in my chair because she realized how her self-consciousness regarding teeth had negatively affected her self-esteem and her interactions with others. But aside from the social aspect, missing teeth affect our health. For every tooth that is lost, a person’s ability to chew and digest food is compromised.”

When it comes to their patient’s dental health, compromise is never an option for Midgette Family Dentistry’s dedicated team.

“Dr. Midgette founded this practice on very high standards,” Karen insists. “He always maintains his standards. He doesn’t let anyone sway him. Growing up in this neighborhood, he knows a lot of people, but he treats his friends the same way he treats a patient who he’s meeting for the first time.”

“We treat our patients like family,” Dr. Paxton says. “I never recommend a procedure or treatment for anyone without first asking myself, ‘If this was my child or my mother, would I do this?’ We perform the dental procedures that our patients need and nothing more. There are plenty of cavities out there. We don’t need to make up problems to treat.”

Such good-natured, forthright honesty and concern have made Midgette Family Dentistry a trusted presence in Western Branch for over thirty years. If these doctors and their dedicated staff have their way, this Chesapeake neighborhood will be filled with beautiful, healthy smiles for years to come.
What Is Your Time Zone?

People who travel for business or pleasure become very much aware of time zones and the impact they have on life. Traveling due west from the Hampton Roads area to California will bring changes of one to three hours difference as you cross into a different time zone. Twenty years ago, a person would manually turn a watch back to the new time or move forward when moving east. Now our digital phones make that adjustment while still on the individual’s wrist.

Children start off their journey in life in different time zones. Some are born into loving families that can provide many resources to enhance their learning. Others are born into situations with many challenges.

Children start off their journey in life in different time zones. Some are born into loving families that can provide many resources to enhance their learning. Others are born into situations with many challenges whether economic, educational, or emotional. Other children face medical challenges that impact the early time zones during their development.

Each September teachers face their new classrooms filled with a wide variety of students, each in a personal time zone. This is one of the multiple challenges in teaching. The teacher must meet the needs of all students while challenging each child to develop to their personal capacity. Nobody (including all the “experts” you hear) can predict with certainty what the capacity of a child will be.

Teachers provide learning opportunities in the early years of elementary school that will impact the time zones through which a student will pass. One of the critical activities teachers should incorporate into every year’s curriculum is for a student to stand before a group to speak. The earlier in life this is done, the sooner the child will develop self-confidence in those situations. It was such a pleasure to watch a very poised seventeen-year-old student stand before the Chesapeake City Council and advocate for policies regarding solar and wind energy as well as rising sea levels. Having witnessed her speak in front of her third grade class and later participate in church youth groups, I knew how far her time zones had moved over the years.

A few weeks later the parent of one of my former school’s fifth graders stopped to tell me that her son was defending his dissertation in polymer science—the last step before receiving his doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts. I had watched him in earlier years become an Eagle Scout. Each of these students had countless opportunities over the years in their schools, churches, communities, and families to move through their time zones of life. Adults have the responsibility to provide those opportunities to reach as many time zones as possible.

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 2016 for her community service.

The Voice of Medical Professionals to Medical Professionals

See these and other photos in the Making the ROUNDS section of the upcoming issue of Doctor to Doctor Magazine.

The photos I take are then delivered for viewing by the sites’ project managers and construction company owners. This process saves a lot of time because the photos can be sent to any other relevant people for analysis.

Because the photographs are high resolution, the viewers can zoom in and examine items in detail, which is convenient, especially for higher up elements that wouldn’t usually be easily visible without a ladder, or lift cradle.

The project has been fascinating, as I had never observed the construction process very closely before. It was as if buildings suddenly appeared.

I look forward to the next shoot just to see what has been added in the last week or so, watching as the building moves closer to the picture on the ‘Coming Soon’ board.

Several things have to be considered when using aerial photos and video for self-promotion. This is where an experienced, licensed and insured photographer can really make you stand out from the crowd.

Storm Damage Survey

Aerial photos and video are an invaluable tool for home owners and businesses to assess and document property damage and aid in insurance claims.

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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A vision of youth

Meant To Be

By Breonna Loxley

As an animal shelter care technician, my favorite role is that of adoption counselor. I love nothing more than pairing families with the animals in my care. I recently had the pleasure of participating in a special adoption involving our dog Amethyst. Amethyst was an older girl who was found as a stray. Though we’ll never know why her owners never came for her, what we did know was that despite the humans who had failed her, Amethyst still loved people. She adored attention and had a vivacious personality for her age. When a couple came to meet Amethyst, I was surprised to hear they weren’t looking for themselves, but were helping their parents with the adoption process. “We’re just trying to make sure Amethyst seems like a good fit,” they said. When I learned that the family who might take Amethyst home was a retired couple with a 42 acre property, I couldn’t wait to meet them, and neither could Amethyst!

The couple quickly discovered Amethyst’s sweet nature, and soon returned with their parents to proceed with the meet and greet. The potential adopters spent time with Amethyst in the interaction room as well as outside to walk her on a leash. Afterwards, they decided to think about Amethyst overnight. Already convinced they were a great fit, I was a little disappointed. As I put Amethyst in her kennel, I prayed the family would return.

The rest of the day passed quickly as I stayed busy assisting visitors. Towards the end of the afternoon, I stopped by the front desk and noticed Amethyst’s visitors standing in the lobby. “Did you decide about Amethyst?” I asked. “We couldn’t stop thinking about her,” they said. They had come back for her!

Shelter staff want nothing more than to see their animals get a second chance.

A few weeks after Amethyst’s adoption, I was elated to discover a follow-up letter about Amethyst posted in my workspace. The letter described how wonderfully Amethyst was settling into her new home and how happy they were to have her in the family. She had, as they put it, “fallen in love with retirement.” Shelter staff want nothing more than to see their animals get a second chance. With all the exhaustion and heartache that comes with animal rescue, adoptions are the reason we keep going—the reason we push through fatigue and sadness. It’s why we greet every adopter with a bright smile, despite the heartbreaking things we witness every day. Our dogs sit by our sides, walk where we walk, sleep where we sleep. They inspire us to go on adventures, whether that means a walk in the sun or a trip out for ice cream cones. They remind us to watch the birds and enjoy long drives, to grieve less and celebrate more. We think of adopting an animal as rescuing that animal... yet in so many ways, it is they who end up rescuing us.

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’s National Night Out

Chesapeake Sheriff’s Office deputies and civilian staff joined police officers, firefighters, EMTs and the residents they serve to celebrate the National Night Out. The deputies had a great time providing Digital ID Kid booths at events in Deep Creek and Macdonald Manor, cooking out in Ahoy Acres, and leading bike parades in Cheshire Forest and at the Hampshires at Greenbrier. Deputies also spent an enjoyable evening hanging out with citizens at community events in neighborhoods across the city.

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Picture a butterfly flitting from flower to flower, not staying long to gather nectar from just a few flowers.

A person may get into the habit of glossing over topics that cause anxiety. More often than not, people indulge in superficial thinking when they are so well-versed in a topic that they reach a conclusion by using mental shortcuts. Surprised?

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Rise of the Front Yard People

Recently, it dawned on me that my neighborhood resembles a sort of ghost town. Obviously, people live here—lawns are mowed, shrubs manicured and houses are well-kept—but they’re rarely seen.

On weekdays, I sometimes drive past my next-door neighbor and her friend on their morning walk. My drive home often coincides with a neighborhood boy playing in his parent’s front yard. A woman from four doors down walks her large dog by our house some evenings. An older gentleman from several blocks away walks by with his tiny dog some mornings. But my neighbors and I only seem to meet in passing; our connections consist of half-hearted little waves and quick smiles. Because front porches are things of the past, neighbors aren’t visible in the way they once were.

I’m not alone in feeling that I live among people I don’t really know. A 2017 Pew Poll found that only about four in ten Americans know some or all of their neighbors, while fewer than five in ten say that they trust them.

Four years ago, Houston mother-of-four, Kristin Schell, suddenly realized that she didn’t know her neighbors by name; she identified them by their clothing. There was the neighbor who always wore red, and the woman who went for daily walks in yoga pants. “We would wave and give a friendly ‘Hi,’ but garage doors would go up, garage doors would go down, and people would disappear inside,” she recalls.

Attempts to connect with neighbors through dinner parties, picnics and book clubs fell through: preparations required too much time, and scheduling was a nightmare. What was needed was something that could fit effortlessly into the fabric of daily life. Kristin asked herself: “What if we were to take ordinary activities—things we’re already doing inside—and move them into the front yard? Just live in a more visible way?”

Moving her patio picnic table into her front yard, Kristin painted it an eye-catching shade of turquoise. She and her kids brought much of their daily routine outside to the table: meals, homework, reading, playing games, and simply relaxing together. Neighbors out for a walk or jog initially waved in passing; then slowed down to speak; then stopped to sit and talk for a few minutes. Names were learned; common interests were discovered; friendships were born.

Soon turquoise picnic tables began appearing throughout the neighborhood, and spending time with neighbors became a part of daily life. These folks started identifying themselves by a new name: Front Yard People. In 2017, Kristin published an account of her experiences. Entitled, The Turquoise Table: Finding Community and Connection in Your Own Front Yard, the book sparked a nationwide movement of Front Yard People. These folks are transforming their neighborhoods into energetic communities where people genuinely connect with one another.

If our neighborhoods seem like empty ghost towns, a turquoise table in the front yard just might be the answer. Or if we’re lucky enough to have a front porch, maybe we could do a bit more of our living there. Perhaps we could all benefit by becoming Front Yard People.

Rob Lauer is an award-winning, nationally-produced and published playwright with over 35 years of experience in the entertainment industry. His national credits include production work for MGA Films, Time-Warner TV, The Learning Channel and The History Channel. Locally, Rob has been producing, directing and hosting three TV series for PCTV (the City of Portsmouth’s official channel) since 2011.
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