Rappahannock River
Unsurpassed beach. Unsurpassed views east, south, and west. And unsurpassed privacy. Large home with large rooms and high ceilings. Walls of glass for those glorious views. Over 35± acres, including a second, recorded, prime waterfront site.

$1,665,000.

Carters Creek - Irvington - Reverie.
Unsurpassed views, unsurpassed location. 5.5’ MLW. Over 800’ shoreline. 60’ x 20’ boathouse. 3.8± acres. $1,250,000.

Betts Mill Creek
Outstanding views of this deep water creek and the Great Wicomico River looking south and west. Equally outstanding one-level brick home. Boathouse, pier, and two lifts. Fourteen ± pristine acres providing unsurpassed privacy.

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Dymer Creek
A truly life-embracing setting. Southern exposure. Panoramic views. 6.5’ MLW available. Minutes to Kilmarnock and Chesapeake Bay. The joys of togetherness. Restorative pace. Mint-condition home where space becomes atmosphere.

$870,000.

Little Wicomico River
Unsurpassed views. Protected dockage for your boats. And unsurpassed access to Chesapeake Bay. 4’ MLW at the pier. Hard sand shoreline completely bulkheaded. Most rooms take great advantage of those glorious views. Outstanding floor plan.

$675,000.

Irvington - Carters Creek.
An all-waterfront wonder with a 12,287± sq. ft. building envelope. 8.5’ MLW. Beautiful views. Southern exposure. $715,000.

Tappahannock.
Great development opportunity for a prime 8± acres in a great location. $700,000.

Indian Creek.
Unsurpassed views. 8’ MLW. Unsurpassed location. 1.0 ± acre. Four-bedroom perk approved. Protective covenants. Rip-rapped. $675,000.

Corrotoman River-W. Branch.
Unsurpassed views. 5’ MLW. Pretty views. 2.65± wooded acres. Rip-rapped shoreline. $585,000.

Carters Creek.
Fantastic views of a quiet cove and across the main part of the creek. 6’ MLW. 4-BD perk. Invaluable 20’ x 10’ shed at water’s edge. .99± ac. $550,000.

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Barrett Creek
Wonderful water views. Deep water for your boat. Pristine privacy. Ancient shade trees to cool the summer breezes. Most rooms with walls of glass for those glorious views. Large deck at the water’s edge. A broad 1.35± acres with gentle slope.

$575,000.

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**CARTERS CREEK**
Great views. 3’ MLW at the pier. Unsurpassed charm with this colonial style home in a colonial style gathering of homes. Fantastic Tartan golf. Tennis and pool swimming available. Gourmet kitchen. Slightly contemporary floor plan.

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**WHITE HOUSE CREEK**
Consummate second home/cottage to draw out those rigors of the week and to replenish your spirit and restore your enthusiasm. Great views. A great dock facility with a lift and a large over-the-water deck. Quietude galore.

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**INGLESIDE, circa 1840**
Village of Wicomico Church. Federal style farmer’s home on over an acre. Post and beam construction with mortise and tenon joints secured with trunnel pegs. Re-sided in 1993 with beaded redwood and cedar. 4 BDRS, 2 BA, 6 FRPLS. And much more.

$335,000.

**CORROTOMAN RIVER- E. BRANCH**
Tranquility is only the beginning. Serene solitude. Wonderful views. 3’ MLW. 4-BDRM perk. 337’ WF. 3.95± acres

$425,000.

**LAUREL POINT**
This lovely New England style home nestled serenely on this wonderfully wooded parcel is unsurpassed in its charm. Unsurpassed hardwoods and laurel. Ten minutes to Kilmarnock. The privilege of launching your boat nearby at the community facility.

$285,000.

**WHITE HOUSE CREEK**
Unsurpassed views of the Rappahannock River and the Corrotoman River. Even sunsets. Rip-rapped shoreline. 3.1± open acres

$495,000.

**CORROTOMAN RIVER- E. BRANCH**
An uncompromised parcel. Indeed, extraordinary, naturally. 3.69± wonderfully wooded ac. 4 ft’ MLW. 193’ WF

$465,000.

**INDIAN CREEK**
Charming views. 3’ MLW. 1.79± acres. 3-BDRM perk approved. 135’ waterfrontage. Protective covenants. Shoreline naturally protected ...

$395,000.

**BETTS MILL CREEK**
Long beautiful views. Deep protected water. 1.25± extraordinarily beautifully wooded acres. Pristine privacy

$300,000.

**WHITE CHAPEL/LANCAS TER COUNTY**

$95,000.
After a cold, snowy winter, it's time to thaw! Spring has officially arrived and residents of the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula are starting to enjoy the great outdoors once again. Windows on the Bay includes gardening and landscaping how-tos as well as home improvement tips. This year, we offer advice on starting a raised vegetable garden and turning your backyard into an escape. Spring also brings blooms, and flower lovers can plan a day trip to Gloucester, King William and Richmond counties for annual home and garden tours. As in the past, we feature two special homes, one a renovated Sears mail order house and another a modern masterpiece. We hope you enjoy this edition of Windows on the Bay, a supplement that last year received first place in a statewide contest for weekly newspapers.

Susan & Lisa
ssimmons@rrecord.com and lvaldrighi@rrecord.com
Chances are you don't live on the Northern Neck because you enjoy the great indoors.

Improve the view from your living room by simply moving it outdoors. Whether you do it yourself or have it professionally installed, retaining wall and raised planter systems from The Earth Store and GeoProducts turn backyards into beautiful outside rooms. We can also help complement those rooms with our collection of beautiful perennials, annuals and shrubs. Plus our seed mixture, designed specifically for this area, ensures you a lush, green lawn. Our professional-grade wall and planter systems, pavers for patios and walkways, natural stone, soil amendments and mulch – along with expert advice – add space, value and beauty to your home.

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Making your home attractive becomes even more important in a buyer’s market.

“Sellers need to consider their home from a buyer’s point of view,” said realtor Elizabeth Johnson, managing broker/owner of the Chesapeake Bay Office of Frank Hardy, Inc., Realtors in Deltaville.

A nice appearance is essential for several reasons. “It helps the house sail through the home inspection,” said Johnson. Sellers should put their house in tip-top shape for the appraisal.

Buyers expect the house to be in good condition, with all those minor repairs taken care of.

Moving in is hard enough, and buyers don’t want to spend time and more money on repairs. Those buying second homes or weekend retreats are buying a place to relax, not work, said Johnson.

It all starts with curb appeal, said Johnson, who offered these tips for making your home more appealing.

1. Clean up the yard. Remove toys, garden tools and hoses, and too many lawn gnomes. The prospective buyer may not appreciate your alma mater banner or political sign in the yard. Try to make the approach to your home as attractive and welcoming as possible.

2. Enhance landscaping. Fill in bare spots in the lawn. Weed flower beds, prune shrubs and put on a fresh layer of mulch. Repair sidewalks, broken fences. Block unpleasant views with fences or shrubs. Fill in pot holes. If you are selling a waterfront home consider the condition of your shoreline. Is there erosion? Do you need rip rap? Does your bulkhead or dock need repair?


4. Enhance the interior. Take care of interior maintenance. Clean out closets. Remove knickknacks and furniture you can live without to create more space. Don’t block doorways and water views with furniture and TVs. Paint dark rooms to brighten the space and make them appear larger. Clean the carpets. Clean light fixtures, mirrors, ceiling fans. Repair leaky faucets, toilets and appliances. Place new towels and fragrant soaps in bathrooms. Put away personal papers and photos. Keep pets outside.
Who is The James Company?
The James Company is an Irvington-based home builder that has been handcrafting homes for discerning clients for 23 years. With a team of highly skilled professionals, committed to providing exceptional service and value, they set the standard of excellence for homebuilding in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. At The James Company, building relationships is just as important as building homes...

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**Grounds to Go Garden**

A cup of coffee enjoyed in the garden can make for a relaxing morning. However, that java can also be a pick-me-up for your landscape.

Coffee and tea byproducts can be used in and around the garden to act as a slow-release fertilizer and a main component of compost.

Like leaves left to decompose in the garden, coffee grounds when dispersed thinly in the soil, can be an amendment and add nutrients back into the ground.

Consider these uses for grounds:

- Add to compost piles (filters and all) along with tea bags to make an all-natural, rich source of energy for plants.
- Dilute with water to make a fast-acting fertilizer.
- Some people believe that coffee grounds can help repel pests, such as snails and slugs.
- If your garden needs more nitrogen, definitely turn to coffee.

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Sears Mail Order Home Gets New Life

A 1926 Sears Hathaway mail order home built on Main Street in Reedville recently was renovated and remodeled to become a vacation home for a Colorado family.

After its remodeling, the Hathaway has more room and is more energy efficient.

The water side of the house has a deck and large bank of windows into the sun room.
The Dey cottage is a 1926 Sears mail order home on Main Street in Reedville.

It was restored in 2007 and remodeled the following year as a vacation home to accommodate a Colorado family who wanted more space and energy efficient qualities.

Ben and Kathy Watson of Colorado are sister and brother-in-law to Beth Altaffer and her husband, Blaine, who live on Main Street in a restored late 1800s Victorian house. The two couples bought the Sears home in 2006. They planned to restore it and then sell it.

A slow real estate market persuaded the Watsons to buy out the Altaffers and convert the cottage into a larger second home for their family. They hired local architect Rob Schindler to add a sun room, extra bedroom, deck and revamp the energy qualities of the home.

“The goal was to keep the integrity of the home, but with function over form,” said Ben Watson. “It was small for our family. We wanted to keep the original look but add space and make it energy efficient.”

The original cottage was sold as a kit by Sears and shipped by train, or in this case by steamboat, to the buyer’s location. The model sold to Russell Dey Sr. of Reedville was called the Hathaway and was styled after an English cottage.

The Hathaway was 18 feet by 26 feet with two stories and a small front porch. It had a kitchen and living room downstairs and two bedrooms and a bath upstairs. The kit was shipped complete except for bricks and cost less than $1,300. Sears sold over 100,000 kits of various models between 1901 through the 1930s.

Schindler added about 400 square feet in the downstairs sun room on the back of the house and the third bedroom above that. He remodeled the kitchen, built a deck facing Cockrell’s Creek and installed energy efficient systems and windows.

“I wanted to keep the distinctive roof line of the cottage,” said Schindler. “I think the additions turned out well and are true to its heritage.”

A sign in the front yard commemorates the year the house was built.

An upstairs bedroom overlooks Cockrell’s Creek.

The kitchen was extensively remodeled.

The dining room, sun room and kitchen flow from one to another with the new design.
Construction Quick Tip

Building a home includes dreams of a house that might last for centuries — or at the very least, a soaring return on the investment. So with a choice in materials when building from scratch, take note that the advanced technology starts with concrete walls. The inefficiency of wood framing is yesterday’s choice. Builders of homes and commercial buildings now champion the use of pre-assembled, interlocking concrete forms. Each panel consists of two layers of polystyrene, steel reinforced and filled with concrete. With this system, industry leader Nudura points to important energy savings — as well as significant environmental and human health benefits. Wood walls, for example, are subject to rot and mold irritation over time. The wood frame method is also subject to thermal bridging, where outside cold seeps in to cause uncomfortable cold spots, drafts, and mustiness. On the other hand, the Nudura concrete walls have shown to deliver energy savings of up to 70 percent and deliver a building envelope up to three times more sound resistant, four times more fire resistant, and nine times stronger. Floor and ceiling construction is now advanced too.
Guest Column
by William L. Smith

For most taxpayers, your home is or will be your largest investment. There are several significant tax changes that are now in place that can create tax deductions, and in some cases tax credits for home improvements. It will pay you to do some research to see what credits are available before you take on that next home project!

Did you know that for Home improvements:

■ Taxpayers can claim a tax credit for certain home improvements placed in service in 2009 and 2010 for qualified personal energy property. A 30% nonrefundable home improvement tax credit of the amount paid for a maximum tax credit of $1,500 is available on certain insulation, exterior windows, skylights, storm windows and doors, exterior doors, central air conditioning, air source heat pumps, natural gas, propane or oil furnaces, advanced main air circulating fan, water heaters, metal or asphalt roofs, and some heating stoves.

■ In order to qualify the improvements must be made to a taxpayer’s primary residence and the improvement must be new (not used). Therefore improvements to vacation homes or rental homes do not qualify for these credits.

■ In addition to these credits, a taxpayer can claim a tax credit for residential energy efficient property placed in service in 2006 – 2016. The credit is equal to 30% of the cost of property such as solar energy systems (water heating and electricity), fuel cells, small wind energy systems, and geothermal heat pumps.

Did you know that for Mortgages:

■ Loan points paid on a loan up to $1 million to purchase or improve your principal residence are fully deductible in the year paid.

■ In addition, mortgage late payment charges are deductible as mortgage interest if they are not for a specific service such as a collection fee.

■ A mobile home, boat, or manufactured home may qualify for a mortgage interest deduction. Sleeping, cooking, and toilet facilities are required for qualification of this deduction.

For more information on any of these potential deductions or credits, you can go to the IRS website at www.irs.gov or contact your local tax preparer.
Details define the Deltaville home of Violet and Wayne Barlow.

Finished in 2005, the house reflects the design of an owner who built the 4,400-square-foot waterfront house to personal tastes.

Artistry abounds in the carefully thought-out details, such as the curved brick walkway that flows gently to a sand beach on the Rappahannock River, or the brick steps that fan out like an invitation to enter.

The interior has the touch of a professional decorator. Attention to decorating details pulls everything together in a balance of colors, textures and light.

Three upstairs bedrooms are painted in complementary colors of blue, green and yellow to blend with a “watermelon” red bath and the golden beige hallway.

The 500-square-foot master bedroom doubles as a retreat with a sitting area in an octagonal alcove.

Simple but effective landscaping connects the house to its surroundings.

A kitchen window seat adds the finishing touch to a spacious kitchen.

A sea horse detail on curtain holdbacks complements the nautical theme.

Words won’t do when it comes to the Barlow house. The features of this special home are better shown through photography.
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‘Arc fault’ breakers protect against electrical fires

by Tom Chillemi

Electricity can “arc” when there is a faulty connection. It can be due to a loose screw or a wire that is not secure, explained master electrician Herb Wyatt of Warner, who owns Tri-Co Electric Inc.

Low amounts of heat will not trip a regular electrical breaker at the main panel, Wyatt said. However, an “arc fault protection breaker” will shut off electricity if arcing occurs. These special breakers were created to decrease the chance of electrical fires.

The building code requires that homes wired after 2006 be equipped with this life-saving device designed to detect circuits in sleeping areas that may have spikes (arcs) in power that is being consumed. Arc Fault Protection breakers can be installed in the main electrical panel in residences built before arc fault protectors were made.

Testing breakers

Many homes wired after 1972 are equipped with ground fault interrupter (GFI) breakers and receptacles. These devices are truly life-saving devices. These devices, however, have electronic components that can be affected by extended usage, surges, lightning strikes and physical abuse.

All GFI devices should be tested once a month and after every major electrical storm. The check can easily be done by homeowners using the manufacturer’s directions—pushing on the “test” button on the receptacle front. The power should go off immediately. Then the receptacle can be reset by pushing the reset button.

Five Easy Ways to Add a Touch of Spring to Your Home Decor

While spring is breathing new life into the outdoors, it’s also a perfect time to add a little seasonal oomph to your indoor environment. Here is an assortment of tips for brightening your home in celebration of spring.

* Change is in the air. Spring is a perfect time to bring the outdoors in. Spring flowers, arranged either in one large bunch or in several mini-bouquets placed in nooks throughout the house are not only a visual treat, but emit refreshing springtime scents.

* Brighten up. Adding seasonal touches to your home can be as easy as painting a piece of furniture, a single wall or the trim in the sunniest room in your home. The best colors for spring are light, clean, refreshing, and natural as opposed to either pale pastels or deep, color-drenched hues.

* Lighten up. It’s hard to imagine that spring has sprung in a room decked out in velvet or other heavy fabrics. Warm days and spring breezes call out for sheer or lightweight curtains, slipcovers in natural solid-colored or floral fabrics, and decorative pillows that bring splashes of color into the room. Sometimes simply changing out pillows and removing warm winter throws is enough.

* Floor it. Don’t forget to give your floors a spring facelift as well. Substitute lighter cotton, sisal, jute or seagrass rugs in natural shades for the heavy wool rugs that feel so right when the weather turns cold.

* Re-view. Shifting the arrangement of the furniture and decorative pieces in a room can have a major impact on its look and feel. Once the weather warms up and the flowers begin to bloom, the best view in the house might well be out the window. Invite spring into your home with a furniture arrangement that is oriented toward a window or other source of natural light. Then sit down and enjoy the view.

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

~Margaret Atwood
Top tips to make a home green

A well-planned, high performance home costs less to operate and, as importantly, high performance is the promise of premium resale value.

Sustainable components include energy-efficient heating, lighting, cooling and water systems, as well as the reduction of natural resources like wood. Clip this checklist as a preliminary guide for both you and your builder:

Location: Build for lifestyle convenience where you can walk, cycle, or take public transit.

Position: Consider north-south positioning to maximize use of the sun’s energy and heat.

Generate: Install solar panels and generator to offset public energy supply. Add a solar water heater.

Walls: Build with concrete. This wall system builds with pre-assembled forms, each one stacked, reinforced, and then filled with concrete. Once locked together (like Lego) the system creates a solid, monolithic concrete wall. This method has shown to deliver energy savings of up to 70 percent and delivers a building envelope up to three times more sound resistant, four times more fire resistant, and nine times stronger.

Materials: Premium green choices should include low- and zero-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints and sealants, plus high-performance windows, roofing and flooring.

Landscaping: Design your gardens for low use of water and pesticides. Plan with drought-resistant native plants, perennial groundcovers, plus flowers and shady canopy trees.
Bricks & Mortar

Commercial construction continues in the area. Pictured below and on the following pages are some of the projects under way or completed in recent months.

The Cryer Center
The Cryer Center opened in January, 2010. The 10,400-square-foot steel building is on Route 33 near Locust Hill in Middlesex County. The building houses several non-profit organizations, including Hands Across Middlesex and Habitat for Humanity.

Deltaville Maritime Museum Pavilion
The Deltaville Maritime Museum recently built a 1,700-square-foot extension on its events pavilion. The shelter is now 3,500 square feet. Most of the work was done by volunteers Chuck McGhinnis and Kyle Jenkins. Don Burnett, John McQueen and Fred Jones also assisted.

Dollar General
A new Dollar General store opened on Northumberland Highway in Burgess in August 2009. The 9,000-square-foot building was designed by David R. Barlew and built by Group One Construction, LLC., both of Tennessee.

Lower Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department
The front of the Lower Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department in Deltaville was recently extended to allow more room for parking fire trucks. Walden's Construction was the contractor for the 15 by 60 foot extension.

Lancaster Judicial Center
The $4-million Lancaster Judicial Center is expected to be completed in spring, 2011. The 24,000-square-foot structure was designed by the architectural firm of Wiley and Wilson of Lynchburg and is being constructed by David Nice Builders of Williamsburg. It will house the District and Circuit courts, judges chambers, jury rooms, Commonwealth's Attorney, juvenile probation/parole, clerks of the courts, holding rooms and security. The center is designed to complement the adjacent 150-year-old Lancaster County Courthouse.
Kilmarnock Entertainment Center

Kilmarnock Entertainment Center opened in early February between snowstorms. The 36,000-square-foot facility offers 16 bowling lanes with lane-side food service, a game/video room, 50-seat fine dining in the Fusions Coastal Grill, a variety of private party rooms, a 3,000-square-foot party loft, 40 flat screen televisions, facilities for guests to try their hand at being a radio DJ, and a pro shop for bowlers. Future plans for the $6 million structure include the addition of a micro-brewery. The center was designed and built by owner Shawn Donahue of Donahue Properties.

The Northern Neck Family Maternity Center

The Northern Neck Family Maternity Center will provide all routine women’s health care, education, counseling, pre-natal care, labor as well as delivery services and postpartum support. The $3 million outpatient facility is geared toward low risk patients with midwives delivering babies. It is on Route 3 at Devil’s Bottom Road in Lancaster County. The opening is expected May 29. Site work was done by River View Contractors and construction is by First Class Contractors. The 9,000 square-foot facility was designed by Randall Kipp of Randall J. Kipp Architecture, Inc.
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Christchurch School Science Building
Builders continue to make steady progress on the Lewis B. Puller Jr. ’63 Science Center at Christchurch School. The LEED-certified building is on schedule for spring completion. The 10,000-square-foot center, which overlooks the Rappahannock River, will include advanced laboratories for biology, physics, chemistry, marine and environmental sciences; aquarium and aquaculture tanks; research areas; flexible classroom space; and equipment for real-time data monitoring and research. The building was designed by BCWH Architects of Richmond and the contractor is KBS Inc. of Richmond.

The Northern Neck Boys and Girls Club
The Northern Neck Boys and Girls Club in Kilmarnock is completing a 1,700-square-foot teen center. It is the latest addition to the 9,000-square-foot facility that has also added a basketball court and skateboard ramps. The build-out is by Construction Management of Virginia in White Stone.

Camp Piankatank Cabins
Three new residential cabins are being built at Camp Piankatank at Hartfield. The cabins will house campers. Each cabin is 4,268 square feet. Beechwood Construction is the contractor. The camp recreation hall also is being renovated.
How have the mortgage rules changed?

J. Rawleigh Simmons is a Real Estate Attorney with Dunton, Simmons and Dunton in White Stone.

In response to the real estate mortgage meltdown over the last couple of years we now have Washington’s answer. As a result, effective January 1, 2010, the whole loan application and closing process has changed dramatically. I will attempt to highlight the changes that will most likely affect the average homeowner. Bearing in mind that this is pretty dry subject matter, I apologize up front for boring you if you happen to nod off halfway through!

1. Get your paperwork together: You will be required to document your income through tax returns, W-9’s, pay-check stubs, etc. Gone are the days of the “Stated Income” loans where you filled in the blank on what you made and the lender just took your word for it.

2. The Application: The Application is a 4+ page form which asks, among other things, for your name, monthly income, social security number, property address, an estimate of the value of the property, and the loan amount sought.

3. The new “Good Faith Estimate”?: After you fill out your Application, the Lender must now provide you with a Good Faith Estimate form (GFE) within three business days. The GFE has been around for a while, but in its pre-2010 form it was not very informative as to what the loan costs were, and those estimated costs often changed prior to closing.

   The “new” GFE is much more comprehensive and is supposed to fully inform the borrower of the costs of the loan. It includes the loan amount, interest rate of the loan, any fees charged by the lender, and fees charged by third parties for settlement costs, such as closing costs and title insurance. The net result is that, while containing much more information, it is an intimidating form which can create much confusion.

   The GFE lists three categories of fees: those loan charges that cannot be changed without the issuance of a new GFE; those settlement charges which can increase by up to 10% prior to settlement; and those settlement charges which can change up until the date of settlement. Any changes to the first two categories require the issuance of a new GFE (which can cause a delay in the settlement date if the change occurs within 3 days of settlement). The loan must be accepted by you within ten days of the issuance of the GFE or else a new GFE must be issued (they aren’t saving any forests with this one)!

   No GFE is required for a home equity line.

   The GFE form contains charts for you to fill out that are supposed to help you compare the terms of various loans. They are about as fun and informative as a tax return!!

4. The new Appraisal requirements: The GFE figures are based on the estimate of the value of the property which you supplied the lender on your application. The lender is required to have the property appraised to verify its value prior to closing. Lenders are now required to use a pool of regional appraisers rather than picking an appraiser they have a track record with. As a result your appraiser may not be very familiar with the market in your area and may not come up with good comparable sales. This can have a negative effect on the appraised value, and therefore on the amount of your loan! I have seen this happen in some of my closings, and it can be a nasty surprise.

5. The new HUD-1 Settlement Statement: The day before settlement you will receive the new HUD-1 form detailing the actual costs of closing and how much money you will either bring to or receive from closing, depending on whether you are buying or refinancing. Those of you who have had a real estate transaction involving a lender before will remember the “old” three page HUD-1 (it was bad enough)! The “new” HUD-1 has added at least two more pages which, among other things, parrot back the items detailed on the GFE. Again, the intent of this form was to more fully inform the borrower. Unfortunately I think it fails at this task miserably!

I hope that I have neither scared you out of applying for a loan nor put you to sleep. My point is to let you know that the rules have changed, and that you should expect things to be different when you next apply for a loan. While you can tell that I am not a fan of these changes, they are the law and once we have adjusted our expectations, they probably will not be so bad.
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The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula will sponsor a tour of King William County on Friday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The tour is titled “A Historic Tale of Two Rivers.”

Stops on the tour include Windsor Shades, Wakema, High Bank, Lester Manor Village and Chericoke.

The successful development of any community depends on its resources and its accessibility to transportation. The Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers, which form the boundaries of King William County, played a large part in the development of the county. These waterways provided food for consumption and income; the means for ships to transport people and goods up and down the rivers and eventually to the Atlantic Ocean; the necessity of ferries to transport people, animals and wagons across the rivers; and, most recently, recreation for fishermen and boaters.

Histories of the houses on this tour are all intricately woven with the rivers. While most properties no longer serve in their original capacity, all stand as reminders of times gone by and hope for times to come.

During the tour, visitors are invited to take their ease and picnic on the King William Courthouse green. Ample tables, facilities and parking are available. Complimentary refreshments will be served from 2 to 4 p.m.

The tour is in the eastern third of King William County between Route 629/Acquinton Church Rd. and Route 634/Sweet Hall Rd. along Route 30.

Advance tickets are available for $25 until April 15 by mail from Elizabeth “Randy” Brown, P.O. Box 2764, Tappahannock, VA 22560; (804) 443-2033; Randy455@verizon.net. Please send a self-addressed, legal-size stamped envelope with check payable to The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula. No refunds. Early tickets may also be purchased by accessing www.VaGardenweek.org. Tickets are $30 after April 15. Single-site admission is $12. Tickets with maps may be purchased at any of the locations open for the tour on the day of the event. Flat walking shoes are recommended. No interior photography permitted. No smoking. Children under the age of 17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Boxed lunches are available for $12.50 by reservation on a pre-paid basis. A vegetarian entree is available. Lunches will be served at Colosse Baptist Church from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., eat-in or carry out. Ample picnic tables, facilities and parking are available. The church is on Route 30, 5.1 mi. east of King William Court House. Reservation required by April 9. No refunds. Make checks payable to Faith Bears of Colosse, Attention: Gaynell Smith, 23394 King William Rd., West Point, VA 23181. For information, call Gaynell Smith at (804) 769-2685. Note: There are very few restaurants in the immediate area of the tour.

The houses are all off Route 30. Houses may be visited in any order, and directions are given accordingly.

Lester Manor

Lester Manor was established in the early 1700s. An extensive fish factory on the Pamunkey River was located there, and fish were shipped by steamboat throughout the Northeast. In 1859, the Richmond and York River rail line was built, positioning Lester Manor as a main transportation artery for the area. A hotel, tavern, store and post office greeted rail passengers at the site. The original club (not open for tour) had many members from prominent families associated with waterfowl hunting throughout the Northeast who came to Lester Manor by rail.

Lester Manor was bought in 2005 by the present owner who built a small-scale village to represent the old Lester Manor Railroad Station Village. The house and village are open for the first time by owners Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Lee Walker.

Wakema

Wakema was owned as early as 1662 by Captain Roger Mallorly. He sold 900 acres to William Frazer who by 1764 was running a ferry to King and Queen County and operating an ordinary. Later, he built a warehouse to inspect tobacco and a shipbuilding facility which furnished small ships for the Navy during the Revolutionary War.

After a succession of owners, Roger Gregory of Elsing Green purchased Frazer’s Ferry and his brother acquired Wakema in 1867. The original house had...
possibly been damaged in the defense of the Mattaponi River and the present home was built in the 1860s. In 1886, William Bray established a post office called “Wakema” on the property. Wakema became a stop for steamboat traffic along the Mattaponi River where warehouses and a pickle factory were built.

Today, Wakema is a private residence owned by Mr. and Mrs. Miles Baker overlooking a wide expanse of the Mattaponi River.

High Bank
Built in 2005, High Bank was designed to be a home that would serve as a destination place for visiting friends and family. Sitting high above the Mattaponi River, it offers scenic views of the river and the Mattaponi Indian Reservation. The Low Country style with front and back porches invites guests to sit a spell to enjoy the summer breeze. The house is open for the first time by owners Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Smith Jr.

Chericoke
Chericoke has been owned by the Braxton family and their descendants since 1757. Carter Braxton, one of the Virginia signers of the Declaration of Independence, built a manor house on this property around 1760, which burned in 1776. His grandson constructed the present Federal-style brick home in 1828. The main house overlooks the Pamunkey River and the family graveyard where Carter Braxton is buried. One of the two guesthouses was originally a tenant house (ca. 1880) for the freed slaves. There is also a smokehouse, a dairy barn which has been converted into play and office space, and a boathouse located on the river.

The main house was completely restored in 1987 by Mr. and Mrs. John Tyler Siegel. The houses are all furnished with a collection of American and English antiques. Chericoke is a Virginia Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The owner, Mrs. Alice Horsley Siegel, is a direct descendant of Carter Braxton.

Richmond County homes set for tour

Historic Garden Week in Virginia returns April 17 through 25 to benefit historic preservation.

The Garden Club of the Northern Neck will host “Architectural Diversity Along the Rappahannock” from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 21.

The tour will include Sabine Hall, c. 1738, Mount Airy, c. 1753, Menokin, c. 1769, Milden Hall, c. 1803, Woodford, c.1756, and Indian Banks, c. 1699, all in Richmond County. An information center will be established at Warsaw United Methodist Church.

Advance tickets are $25 through April 12 and $30 on tour day. Single-house admission is $15; children ages 6 to 12, half price; ages 5 and under, free. Tickets are available at each house, the Information Center and by advance purchase.

For group or advance tickets, send self-addressed and stamped envelope to: Linda Stansell, 5518 Ashton Park Way, Glen Allen, VA 23059; or call telephone 804-308-9846, or 804-314-3434. Make checks payable to The Garden Club of the Northern Neck.

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I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. ~ Ruth Stout
The Gloucester-Mathews Garden Tour, sponsored by The Garden Club of Gloucester, will be held Saturday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Four stops are on the tour—Cottage Point, Dunham Massie Farm, Belle Terre (gardens only), and Steamboat Landing. The headquarters is Long Bridge Ordinary, an 18th-century building with distinctive original woodwork, at the junction of Business Route 17 and Route 14.

A full ticket is $25 for adults and $10 for children age 6-12. Adult must accompany minors under 16. Tickets, map, and brochure are available on day of tour at headquarters and at each site. Advance tickets are $20 and available by accessing www.VAGardenweek.org or at Twice Told Tales Bookstore at Main St., Gloucester (804-693-9209) and Main St., Kilmarnock, (804-435-9201). Advance tickets can also be ordered by mail from Mrs. William DuPaul (Jaye), P.O. Box 42, Ware Neck, VA 23178; 804-693-6742; waresjaye@aol.com. Send check for $20 per ticket, plus $1.50 for postage and handling, payable to Garden Club of Gloucester by April 11.

Refreshments will be served at Nutall Country Store on Route 623 (Ware Neck Rd. Lunches must be ordered and pre-paid by April 16. Send check for $13.50 per lunch, payable to Nutall Country Store, P.O. Box 84, Ware Neck, VA 23178; (804) 693-3067.

Lunch will also be served at Ware River Yacht Club by reservation only. To reserve, send check payable to Garden Club of Gloucester to Mrs. Gilbert Birdsell (804-693-2927), P.O. Box 54, Ware Neck, VA 23178 by April 5.

Four stops on Gloucester-Mathews tour

Cottage Point

The home of Willard and Letitia Grant, Cottage Point was designed by Blackburn Architects of Washington, D.C. and built by Robert Ottarson of Ware Neck.
“The Studio” was constructed in 1998 and was used as a weekend retreat from Washington, D.C. until the main house followed in 2005.

The five-and-a-half-acre property was part of a 1642 land grant to Thomas Curtis and was known as the Lowland Cottage tract until 1972, when Mrs. Grant inherited it from her father. Lowland Cottage was owned by Dr. William Taliaferro of Churchill and his descendants for six generations.

With its setting on Cottage Point, the Grants sited the house to take full advantage of both upriver and downriver views of the Ware. A spacious riverside porch is the most noticeable feature.

Dunham Massie Farm

This warm and inviting home was built in 1845 on a picturesque peninsula on the North River.

The present owners, only the fifth family to have owned Dunham Massie, purchased the property in 1986 and completed its extensive restoration in 1990. Dunham Massie takes its origin from the historic home of the same name in Cheshire, England.

The 50-acre farm incorporates lawns running down to the river, a recent shoreline restoration and several colorful cottage gardens tucked around the house and its many outbuildings.

Dunham Massie’s gardens

Belle Terre parterre gardens

Cottage Point study

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March 25, 2010 • WINDOWS ON THE BAY • 29
Herbert Fowler of Heathsville supervises the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes in Lancaster and Northumberland counties.

As part of his job, he makes sure all the materials are on the job site at the proper time, ensures that permits are all up to date, and provides guidance and assistance to volunteers working on the job.

A retired fire and rescue employee of Northern Virginia, when Fowler moved to the Northern Neck he brought with him a great deal of experience in construction.

He grew up in his father’s business, an excavating firm in Northern Virginia. As a young man, he worked in the construction business.

“I had a knack for being able to watch someone do something one time and being able to do it myself,” said Fowler. “I had learned the basics of carpentry, plumbing and electrical work at a fairly young age.”

Fowler has a Virginia Class A Builders License and is responsible for making sure that all building permits are straight. “I have a good working relationship with the inspectors in the county. I understand the code and respect it.”

The foundation is in place on a new habitat home on Pond Park Road in Lancaster, and 20 volunteers from Canada will work on it for a week in March. Many are college students on spring break and they are sponsored by a church, said Fowler.

“When the Canadians leave here Friday at noon-time, weather permitting, this house will be under-roof, all framed, windows installed and just about finished,” he said. “I really enjoy this work because we are assisting people who really need help and providing them with a future.”

**Profile**

Assisting those who need help

by Larry S. Chowning

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**Name:** Herbert Fowler Sr.

**Age:** 67

**Village:** Heathsville

**Hobby:** Fishing and being outdoors

**Describe yourself in three words:** Hard-working, trusting and giving

**Idea of perfect happiness:** Finding someone who enjoys what I enjoy in life

**Most admired living person:** Sister Nancy

**Greatest extravagance:** None

**Greatest achievement:** Living up to what my parents taught me

**Greatest regret:** Didn’t get a better education.

**Most prized possession:** My home

**Motivation:** Pass on my knowledge to others

**Motto:** Treat others the way I want to be treated.
include shade and sun gardens, a kitchen herb garden, a meditation garden and a woodland path leading to a secret garden. Mr. and Mrs. Dean Williams are the owners.

**Belle Terre**

The gardens at Belle Terre were first established when the house was built in 1959. Only the trees and some mature camellias remained when the present owners began to restore and add to the gardens in 2000. The owner, a retired landscape designer, relies on low-maintenance flowering shrubs, trees and bulbs for color. The gardens are designed around a perambulation of the periphery of seven acres. Mr. and Mrs. William Perrin are the owners.

**Steamboat Landing**

As you approach the house, you can see what remains of the old Dixondale Wharf where steamboats once picked up Gloucester’s citizens heading north. Dick and Pat Zima, however, traveled south to find their retirement ideal, which was for 15 years in the historic home, Exchange. Inspired to downsize, they noticed this nearby home, designed in 1972 by Richmond architect Clarence Huff. The Zimas thought this house/guest house compound in classic country French style had “good bones, but lacked calcium.” Their extensive renovation merged the structure’s Old World charm with energy-efficient systems and modern amenities: geothermal heating/cooling, solar tubes, on-demand hot water and thermal windows.

Paving stones accented by an oyster-shell drip-line define the entry courtyard that connects the primary house with the facing guest house, which contains two bedrooms and two baths. Two stone terraces connected by a “green garden” command expansive views of the North River. Open for the first time by owners Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Zima.
Profile

Horticulture expert eager to answer public’s questions

by Larry S. Chowning

Dan Nortman of Williamsburg is the Virginia Cooperative Extension horticulture agent who covers six counties on the Middle Peninsula.

When Nortman graduated from Michigan State University, he applied for an extension agent job. He eventually ended up in Virginia.

“I work with homeowners who have problems with their vegetable gardens, pruning, taking care of their ornamentals and anything else that has to do with horticulture,” said Nortman.

“I also manage the Master Gardeners program,” he said. “We have three groups on the Middle Peninsula and they are in Middlesex, Mathews and Gloucester.”

“Another part of my job is to help commercial horticulture producers—people who grow vegetables and flowers in greenhouses,” he said.

“I do a lot of education programming to keep homeowners up to date on changes in the horticulture field and farm programs, which includes how to become more profitable and how to market farm goods.

“I also answer a lot of questions from the general public on the fly,” he said. “That’s an important part of my job.”

Nortman went to Michigan State to study entomology, which is the study of insects. In college he got involved in research projects as to how insects impact plants and this eventually led him into horticulture.

“I really enjoy working with people and helping them with their specific problem. I service hundreds of individuals every year,” he said.

Nortman said his favorite part of the job is working with kids.

“I enjoy teaching kids because most kids love bugs,” he said. “I can teach them about bugs and they get excited, and then I can relate it back to agriculture.”

Nortman can be reached at 804-758-4120.

Name: Dan Nortman
Age: 29
Village: Williamsburg
Hobby: Playing string instruments
Describe yourself in three words: Friendly, outgoing and helpful
Idea of perfect happiness: Being close to family and friends
Most admired living person: Grandmother
Greatest extravagance: Car
Greatest achievement: Bachelor’s degree from Michigan State
Greatest regret: Not going to graduate school
Most prized possession: Mandolin
Motivation: The people I serve
Motto: Strive to be better
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In no time at all we had a lush, green garden with nuclear-sized tomatoes. I’ll never go back to traditional gardening again.

by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

I had a classic case of garden envy.

About three years ago on a Saturday afternoon my neighbors started piling cinderblocks, two deep, in a rectangle in their backyard. Later, they filled the area in with dirt. They surrounded it with attractive white latticework.

My husband and I had no idea what they were up to until a few weeks later when noticeable green tips started to break through the soil. In a short time, the area was filled with thriving tomatoes, peppers and a variety of greens. I was jealous.

Growing up, my family always had a large garden, providing us with fresh...
vegetables from spring through fall. My mother canned, preserved and froze.

The first year my husband and I were married, we also had a sizeable garden but then we moved to a quiet little neighborhood. Our yard just didn’t lend itself to a quarter-acre spread.

So this raised vegetable garden of my neighbors intrigued me.

Last summer, my husband and I hauled blocks, mixed soil with composted horse manure and placed our latticework. It was a long and draining weekend’s worth of work but in no time at all we had a lush, green garden with nuclear-sized tomatoes.

I’ll never go back to traditional gardening again.

Benefits of raised gardens

Raised vegetable gardens are a growing trend among backyard farmers.

Elevated beds are easier to maintain since they are accessible on all sides. There is less need for bending or stooping when planting, weeding, watering and picking.

Raised beds save on space and allow crops to grow closer together, which results in less weed growth. The beds can also be as small or large as needed and gardeners can have as many as space allows.

Occasionally one bed grows into two then three then four and more.

John Lunsford of Edwardsville has 11 raised gardens, ranging from six feet long to 25 feet long.

A Northern Neck Master Gardener and caretaker of the community garden, an educational tool for students at the Northern Neck Farm Museum, Lunsford says designing and building a raised bed can be a simple weekend project.

How to build

Lunsford has five beds that are 25 feet by 8 feet, five others that are 6 feet by 6 feet and one that’s 12 feet by 8 feet. Most are 6 inches high. One, specifically for growing carrots and leeks, is 18 inches high. His beds are made of timbers.

“My timbers are pressure treated.

Now if you use pressure treated, you should line the sides with plastic or weed cloth to keep the soil away from the treated lumber. If you’ve got blocks handy and you’re going to have a small bed, by all means use the blocks. It all depends on how long you want to keep the bed and how high you want them,” said Lunsford.

Wood, concrete blocks, bricks and stones are all used in raised beds.

Wood is the most commonly used siding for the beds. Untreated lumber won’t last as long but treated lumber, according to Lunsford, needs to have some sort of barrier between it and the soil. Chemicals that are used to treat the wood can seep into the soil and harm plants.

Beds are typically laid in rectangular shapes.

For easier access, beds should be about three or four feet wide. That allows for easy access to all areas of the bed, including the center.

“For older people, the beds should be higher and narrower,” said Lunsford. “So you don’t want to go any wider than four feet.”

The beds should also be at least six to 12 inches deep for root growth. Carrots and leeks need to be buried much deeper and require at least 18 inches.

Keeping the bed height at six inches and making them wider allows for the use of a rototiller for weeding, according to Lunsford.

Picking a location

Soil is key when making a raised garden, said Lunsford.

His beds contain a mix of topsoil, peat moss and compost, which Lunsford makes in three compost bins.

The soil is really the most important part. It needs to be loose, friable soil,” he said.

Manure is a good fertilizer, according to Lunsford. But it should be composted, never fresh.

The proper location will offer adequate sunlight and water. The best spot is an area of the yard that gets between five to eight hours of full sun a day.

Raised beds dry out quickly.

“Because you have so much drainage, you need to water more often,” said Lunsford.

But water is not wasted. With raised beds versus traditional gardens, the area needing water is obviously smaller.

Soaker hoses are a better option than sprinklers.

Choosing plants

Just about any vegetable that can be grown in a traditional garden can be grown in a raised bed, with the exception of corn, said Lunsford.

“If you’re just going to have a few vegetables, [raised beds] are ideal,” he said.

The beds are perfect for lettuce, squash, leafy greens, beans, broccoli, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.

“I have a lot of stuff so I rotate my crops from one bed to another each year,” said Lunsford, who last year had 57 different varieties of vegetables in his gardens. “I had a whole bed of peppers and a whole bed of tomatoes.”

He grows all of his vegetables from seed in a green house on the back of his home.
Just Gardens 10th anniversary tour will be held May 14-15

May 14 and 15 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Just Gardens tour. Proceeds will benefit The Haven Shelter & Services. The Haven provides emergency shelter and services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

This year, the tour is dedicated to the memory of a founding member of the tour, Maria Laqueur.

“Maria created and edited our publications and always provided a practical insight,” said tour coordinator Anne Olsen. “We always appreciated the time she put towards making the Just Gardens tour successful.”

Six gardens will be open. Tickets are $12 in advance and $15 on tour days. Purchase by mail is possible until May 7. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope (#10 business size) and check, payable to The Haven, to: Just Gardens, P.O. Box 429, Irvington, VA 22480. Advance tickets will be available at The Haven Shelter & Services Inc. administrative office, Shoppe for Haven’s Sake Thrift Store in Warsaw, The Dandelion in Irvington, Greenpoint Nursery in Lively, Wildest Dreams in Burgess, The Pedestal in Kilmarnock, River Birch Gifts in White Stone, and tour sites on tour days.

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Finding bliss
in a backyard retreat
by Audrey Thomasson

Health care reform. Recession. Escalating fuel prices. And a fast approaching deadline for filing tax returns.

Life can be overwhelming. So maybe this would be a good time of year to vacation in the backyard. Finding a safe and relaxing retreat can be as easy as climbing into a worn hammock and sipping an iced drink under the shade of a tree.

But if you’re longing for something more—like a place filled with fragrance, harmony, and calming sounds, where you can prop your feet up at the end of a busy day—consider creating a little hideaway of your own. While the sky can be the limit, garden bliss can also be achieved with a little green and some imagination.
A walk down the garden path at the Groovers’ New Day Garden in Northumberland County is like following the white rabbit into the magical world of Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”. Lynn and Paul Groover took a plain, saltbox house and wrapped it in a maze of garden rooms. While they delivered all the essential ingredients for a homey retreat, it is considerably more. The outdoor rooms are cozy, yet filled with whimsy and drama. And when a garden is still enchanting in the closing days of a long, cold winter, it’s a sure sign the gardeners have created something special.

Enter the Groover garden through antique carriage house doors and discover second hand objects discarded by others but finding new life as garden accents. A teapot and cup set out on a plank welcomes pirates up to an adult-sized “playhouse” with porch and rockers and hidden in the woods overlooking the beach and landing. The path is guarded by... a crocodile fierce enough to scare the likes of Captain Hook—although the croc’s former life was as a log that washed up from Lowe’s Pond.

An assortment of weathered chairs is sprinkled among rooms of plantings. Some serve as rest spots with a little table and lamp. Some are decorative objects while others are for the birds, literally, featuring bird houses and feeders. Paul designed and built all the garden-path bridges in his workshop/game room, tucked on the other side of their private cul-de-sac.

Old ladders are used as props and a recycled door adds intrigue at the end of a winding path.

“Start with the foundation,” Lynn advises. “It gives you a defined area, definition. Boundaries.” She starts with clothesline to lay out borders and paths. “Stand back and look at it. Then start planting.” First add foundation plants as backdrops using evergreens, trees, shrubs. “And once you have the basics you can run amok with all your flowers. Let it evolve.”

Foundation trees in the Groover garden include a healthy dose of Crepe Myrtles. Lynn prefers the white variety because of their colorful red bark as a winter accent. There is also Cryptomeria for its lacy branches, Harland boxwood, Star Magnolia, curly leaf Ligustrum and Nellie Stevens Holly for its hardiness.

She takes her favorite plants and repeats them over and over again, creating rivers of phlox, violets, Knock-out roses, and daisies.

Five starter plants of tall, wood daisies in one garden room spread like wildfire, engulfing a decorative doll house, statues, and other garden art in a sea of wispy yellow and white color.

There are touches of Nandinas and butterfly bushes galore.

“Butterfly bushes are wonderful because the deer don’t eat them,” she added.

Each garden room is shaped to provide privacy on a small scale.

And as dusk ends and darkness descends, the gardens turn to romantic bliss under the moonlight, helped along with the soft glow of lanterns and path lighting. A few lights are strategically placed to add drama to plants with some lighting accents taking the shape of cat-tails and bluebells.

A stroll through Paul’s evergreen garden of yews, junipers, boxwoods and tall Cryptomeria trees ends in a flourish of red Peonies that appear to have propagated from the garden beds onto the guest beds in a garden room of another variety—the guest cottage.

It’s the ultimate repose for visiting sons and their wives who like to leave the kids back in the main house with grandma and grandpa.

The three acres border a picturesque spring-fed pond that mixes with salt water from the Potomac River. The main attraction has to be the gardens. It is a retreat for the weary and a wonderland of discovery and joy for children of any age. New Day is a place visitors remember and are still talking about years after making its public debut on the spring garden tour.

“It’s such a joy to walk out in the garden every morning and watch the sun come up and see all the plants come alive,” Lynn said.

**Hardscape Trends**

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- Outdoor kitchens: $5,000-$10,000
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It all began over five decades ago. In 1957, when Jim and Pat Carter opened a real estate firm in White Stone, the Chesapeake Bay was only a couple of dozen years removed from when steamboats came calling, moving people and cargo in the time-honored, centuries-old way – by water. The Carters moved into a landmark building on the main corner in town. Just a mile or two away, the Robert O. Norris Bridge, a two-mile span across the Rappahannock River, also opened, replacing the old ferry service.

Jim and Pat loved the charm and beauty of the area – its beaches and deep-water harbors, its broad rivers and meandering creeks, its forests, fields and fine homes. They respected the history of the region, the birthplace of George Washington, James Monroe and Robert E. Lee, and home to their own Robert “King” Carter. Together they explored every country road of the coastal towns and villages, which are dotted with finely preserved homes: grand estates to early cottages and bungalows.

Today, over fifty years later, Jim & Pat Carter Real Estate Inc. is still there, in the white building at White Stone’s only stoplight intersection, with other offices in Irvington and Kilmarnock. Long known as a premier real estate brokerage firm in the Chesapeake Bay region, Jim & Pat Carter Real Estate Inc. is deep on experience and well positioned to show the finest waterfront homes, estates and properties in this special region, and to help match them with your desires. Whether you’re seeking to acquire a waterfront retreat, early country farm, or your very own first home, you’ll receive the same quality, integrity and unrivaled experience that we deliver to all of our clients. When you choose Jim & Pat Carter Real Estate, Inc., you choose excellence. You choose quality. You choose tradition. Please visit and share our tradition.