



# THE COVENANT

NEWS AND EVENTS FROM COVENANT WOODS, A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

## Trailblazer couple already enjoying life at Covenant Woods

The pond at Covenant Woods could become Virginia's next big crab and oyster fishery ... that is, if blue crabs were about pin-head size, and you could find a 7-inch tall fisherman. An authentic Chesapeake Bay "Deadrise" fishing boat recently plied the waters of the pond for the first time. The stunningly realistic boat, though, is only 42 inches long.

"Daisy" is the painstaking handiwork of Joe Verreault. Joe and his wife, Patsy, are Covenant Woods' Trailblazers, future residents of The Lodge, and they visited the community for the April 15<sup>th</sup> Nature Trail tour. Joe also took advantage of the beautiful spring day to launch the remote-controlled boat that has been his four-year project.

"I've always wanted to build a ship model," Joe said. "I chose a Deadrise because it's a V-bottom and it's easier to plank than a round bottom. Also, no two of them are alike, so I figured I couldn't go



"Daisy" makes her maiden voyage on the pond at Covenant Woods.

wrong." Joe has been building models since he was a boy, but had never tackled a project of this magnitude before.

After Joe drew up plans on shelf paper, the craft was constructed of wood and built with planks, just as a full-sized traditional Deadrise would be. Joe said, "Just out of curiosity, I counted the nails in the deck. It's over 660." The hull is held together with



Joe Verreault shows his wonderful handiwork creating a 42" long replica of a Chesapeake Bay "Deadrise" fishing boat named "Daisy".

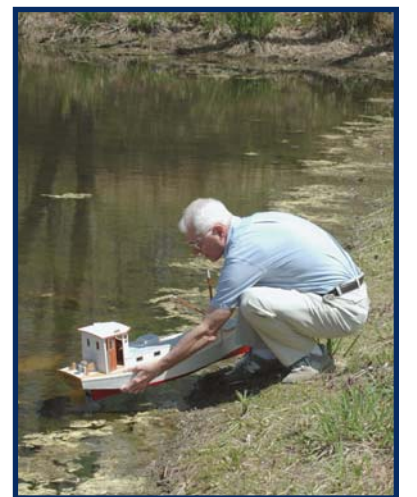
528 bamboo pegs. What's more, the doors open and hatches slide, just as they would on the real thing.

Joe admitted to some apprehension before the launch. He had tested the boat in a child's swimming pool, and was pleased and reassured that it floated "on its lines." He said, "The rudder works, and it goes in reverse, so it's just a question of how long it goes before it leaks or before it quits."

He shouldn't have fretted. "Daisy" maneuvered easily around the pond, navigating around vegetation, backing up, and leaving a nice wake when it was at full throttle. After the initial run, there was not a drop of water in the interior – quite a testament to Joe's skills.

Joe taught school in Hanover and Henrico Counties before retirement, and Patsy also taught

and was a reference librarian. They're both looking forward to becoming residents of Covenant Woods. After visiting and seeing plans, their minds were made up. "After that, we didn't explore any further. We were just so pleased with it." So when the community expands, other residents will get to see "Daisy" out on the water – and perhaps other miniature crafts, as well.



Joe Verreault, launching "Daisy".

## The Guild presents Health Care with two flat-screen televisions

Each year, The Guild finds a way to give back to Covenant Woods beyond the hours of service that its members donate to the community. They also accept donations, and raise funds from selling second hand women's clothing and accessories in the Ruth Shoppe. This year, some of those funds were given to equip two Temporary Stay rooms in Health Care with flat-screen televisions.

Goldie Craig has been co-President of The Guild for the past two years, and she was very excited about the gift. "It's a real pleasure to be able to do something not only for Covenant Woods' Manor East, but for Independent Living Residents, too," she said. "Our focus is on residents of Manor East, but we're happy we can do something for Independent Living residents, and make their temporary stay in Health Care as comfortable as possible."

Goldie also wanted to remind readers that there are wonderful volunteer opportunities with The Guild. "We're always looking for people to help us with our mission," she said. The group meets at 10:30 a.m. at Covenant Woods on the first Monday of every month from September to June.



Guild members Charlotte Forrester and Goldie Craig visit one of the rooms that received a television.

SUMMER 2011 EDITION

Look Inside...

- Resident's Corner
- Trailblazers Enjoy Covenant Woods' Nature Trail
- Donahoe Elementary School Field Trip
- Volunteers Honored
- Givens' Scholarship

Masthead photo of wild Azaleas along Covenant Woods' Nature Trail.



## Resident's Corner:



Bob Peace, Covenant Woods' "man behind the camera".

On a recent spring afternoon, Covenant Woods' resident, Bob Peace, was splitting his time between upgrading his computer system and putting the finishing touches on a photo display he was preparing for the community Spring Wine Tasting & Silent Auction. His computer system and back-up hard drives are the homes for the thousands of digital photographs that have made him Covenant Woods' "man behind the camera." And Bob had restored an old six-pane wooden window to serve as a unique display for six of his best photos.

His lovely images have captured life around the community, his past travels, and the subjects he enjoys shooting most – birds and flowers. He said with a smile, "Flowers are particularly nice when the light is right



Bird photo taken by Bob Peace.

early in the morning or late in the evening, because they don't fly away. If the breeze isn't blowing, you can get some nice photos."

Bob is very particular about his photographic work. "My wife says I'm a perfectionist, which is

## Bob Peace is Covenant Woods' talented shutterbug

probably true," he said. Before moving to Covenant Woods in 2009, he and his wife, Evelyn, lived in Williamsburg. "I had a big bay window on the side of the house. Right outside the window I had a feeder mounted on a pole. I refuse to take pictures of animals and birds around feeders — it's like shooting fish in a barrel. But we had a Japanese snowbell



Organ and Interior at Sacred Heart Cathedral, photo taken by Bob Peace.

tree about 15 to 18 feet off to one side, and I'd take pictures while they were in the tree," he said.

Some of the splendid results were showcased in the window-frame display he was working on. All six of the images were stunning, and three had previously won awards – one in an international competition, and two from Virginia Wildlife. All were skillfully matted, because he also cuts his own mats and does his own framing. "I estimate I spent 150 hours



Flowers, photo by Bob Peace.

on the window frame project, not counting the image time," he said. His advice, if you're thinking of a similar project? "Don't," he said with a smile. But the wonderful results surely drew attention at the silent auction.

Before retiring on his 65th birthday, Bob had a successful and varied career in engineering. He served in the Navy for 10 years in the Civil Engineering Corps. When his two daughters were school age, he left the service, and eventually became the managing director of the Jacksonville Port Authority. He later became a vice president with Florida Rock Industries, and managed up to 25 mines and quarries along the eastern seaboard. After a lifetime of hard work, he's enjoying his retirement.

"I'll be 80 on my next birthday," he said. "I pretty much do what the heck I want to do. I eat what I want, go fishing when I want to go fishing, and I take pictures." He makes friends, too. He shared another photography project he was particularly pleased with – a Christmas card he had prepared for the staff in Therapy, whom he works with and admires. "I try to please somebody every day," he said. "At least one person. I don't care whether it's smiling at them or knowing their name or tipping a hat or taking a photo. It's a philosophical thing with me. I like people." The residents and staff of Covenant Woods clearly like Bob right back, too.

## Trailblazers enjoy the community's woodsy offerings on a spring Nature Trail tour

Residents of Covenant Woods are fortunate to have lovely natural areas right on property. The Nature Trail through our woods was recently the drawing card for a group of more than 20 Trailblazers, who toured along with Jo Mitchell, the chair of the Pond and Trails Committee.

Jo has been leading formal tours of the trail since 2008. This year, she thought it might be a wonderful opportunity for residents and Trailblazers, future residents of The Lodge and new cottages to come out, get acquainted, and see the seasonal displays along the trail. All were rewarded with a perfect spring afternoon for the outing, timed when the wild azaleas were in bloom.

Jo, a nature enthusiast who majored in biology in college, gave some of the background of

the wild plants. "We had discovered this bunch of real tall things. They looked like sticks, but they had these pink blooms on them. We found out they were wild pink azaleas," she said. "And over the next three or four years, we discovered that we have 75 to 100 plants back there, and some of them are six or eight feet tall. They're not like cultivated azaleas."



Jo Mitchell leads the Nature Trail tour.

The plants have lovely, delicate pink blooms, which were on full display the day of the tour. As the group was led through the woods, Jo paused by additional trail markers and showed the group other wild plants that will be blooming or growing over the course of the season. She pointed out Jack-in-the-Pulpit, spotted wintergreen, a crane fly orchid, and many more – including a scary-looking plant with spiked trunk known as the "Devil's walking stick."

The trail is an ever-expanding asset for the community. Jo explained

that some non-native plants have been added to the woods. "We have planted trillium, May apple and some bloodroot and things like that, so next year, I hope they'll make a big show," she said. But for now, residents and Trailblazers are invited to enjoy the trail and everything it offers. Jo said, "If you like the woods, it's just a nice little place to go."



Jo Mitchell shows the beautiful wild azaleas along the nature trail.



Covenant Woods' residents and future residents hiked the trail.

# Donahoe Elementary School Field Trip

## Third graders learn lessons about nature and life at Covenant Woods



Donahoe Elementary School students enjoy a tour of the Covenant Woods' nature trail.

On a lovely morning early this spring, the Covenant Woods' nature trail was alive with the chatter of twenty-two third-grade students from Donahoe Elementary School. Assisted by Pond & Trails Committee members, the children experienced nature, fed the fish in our pond, and — most important — made friends with people different from them.

When their teacher, Whitney Beck, conceived the idea, her first motivation was to give her students a new and important life lesson. She said, "I wanted them to learn what it means to volunteer, and to care for others ... I wanted them to have a real-life experience."

Whitney knew of Covenant Woods because an aunt of hers had volunteered here. "She raved about how much she loved working there, and how wonderful the people were," she said. So she set her sights on this unusual field trip, which was sponsored by a grant from Target Stores. Whitney reached out to Community Relations Manager, Elizabeth Pace, who greeted the idea enthusiastically, and gave Whitney a tour of the com-



Resident Hosts and children enjoy a meal in the Covenant Woods' dining room.

munity in December. From there, the idea grew into a multi-part experience in education and relationship.

Covenant Woods' resident, Jo Mitchell, worked closely with Whitney in the months leading up to the visit, laying out plans for a hike on the nature trail, and making sure that there were educational benefits to the visit. While leading the group, Jo shared information about plants, birds and animals that live on the property. They seemed particularly interested in the evidence of beaver activity in the creek flowing onto the property. Afterward, Jo said, "The students from Donahoe were delightful. They were full of enthusiasm and energy."

The mile-and-a-half hike also included a stop at the pond, where students in small groups fed the fish. Resident, Virginia Bloch had volunteered to accompany the hike, and was prepared with bread cut up into small pieces. She said,

"They were excited about that, and they didn't want to leave ... they wanted more bread." Another resident volunteer, Ray Gifford, had armed Whitney with Internet

information about the fish that live in the pond, so that she could extend the experience back in the classroom.

Later in the morning, the students had a juice and water break and discussed what they had seen, aided by handouts with leaves, bark and nuts which Jo Mitchell had prepared. Then they went to Manor East for games and a potted gardening activity. Whitney said, "They sat around a table and planted spearmint and sweet peas with residents." Some of the plants were taken back to the classroom, and some were left with residents. Whitney added, "The kids not only get to see the plants grow, but are aware that the residents' plants are growing, too, to maintain a connection with Covenant Woods."

Finally came the "fancy meal" in the Covenant Woods' dining room. With additional resident volunteer hosts at each table, the children practiced the manners they had learned in advance, and enjoyed a meal that Whitney Beck said was considerably differ-



Ms. Beck, her students, chaperones and residents enjoy a morning on the Trail.

ent from lunch in the Donahoe cafeteria.

Tired, full, and packed with new experiences, Ms. Beck and her students headed back to school. Whitney reflected later that it was a complete success. She had told her students, "Your one job is to make a new friend. If you learn something about plants on the nature trail, that's a bonus." One of her students became particularly attached to Ray Gifford,

"The letters enclosed are paragraphs that we have been working on since our return to Donahoe. Please enjoy reading them and know they are the honest feelings of twenty-two students who shared a day quite different from most. I hope that this was the first of many meetings between students at Donahoe Elementary and your loving residents. Thank you on behalf of my students and myself for letting us share a day with you. Please know how you changed the lives of these young children for the better."

Donahoe Elementary School Teacher,  
Whitney A. Beck

whom the boy took to calling "Papa Ray."

And the relationship was certainly not one-sided. "It was a lot of one-on-one, and we just thoroughly enjoyed it. It was good for us, too," Ray said. He chuckled and added, "A couple of students said 'I'd like to live here myself.' I told them, 'You've got to get a little older to do that.'"



Virginia Bloch and students feed the ducks at the pond.

# Generous volunteers of time and commitment honored at annual Volunteer Dinner

In 2010, Covenant Woods' residents benefited from at least 8,500 hours donated by its dedicated group of volunteers ... and many more hours than that are uncounted. Four volunteers were honored recently at the annual Volunteer Dinner — Mrs. Carolyn Huntley, Rev. Don Richardson, Mrs. Margaret Tate, and Mrs. Libby Taylor.

Libby Taylor was the recipient of the Jim Love Award, named for a past resident who was devoted to residents of Manor East and shared his time with them. She was introduced by Lindsay King, Manor East Recreation Assistant who said, "She shares her talent faithfully with residents by sharing the joy of art." Libby has not only been teaching watercolor classes for Independent Living residents for 8 years, she has also taught classes in Manor East for 2 years. Lindsay said, "The residents of Manor

East look forward to Libby coming every other Monday to help them create a great work of art they can take home and share with family members. She is more than worthy of the Volunteer of the Year award." After Libby received the award, she modestly said, "It means a great deal to me ... I was sort of surprised and flattered. And I can't help but think there are people who deserve it more."

Lindsay King also introduced Margaret Tate, "who has spent her Mondays for the past 7 years calling bingo." Margaret was honored for "her love, compassion and generous spirit," according to Lindsay.

The Spirit Award was created to acknowledge volunteers who share their time with the whole community. Meghan Horan, Director of Recreation and Resident Services, introduced this year's winner, Carolyn Huntley, by saying,

"While time is not the most important part of volunteering, she spends on average about 600 hours a year coordinating programs for residents." Carolyn said, "Since the mid-60's, I've been planning programs for seniors, and the speakers have all been wonderful people, tops in their fields, and I just enjoy it." In addition to that activity, for years Carolyn entertained on piano twice a month for Assisted Living and Health Care.

Steve Scott, Director of Spiritual Care, honored Rev. Don Richardson by saying, "He has served as a volunteer chaplain with duties ranging from visiting with residents to serving on-call when I am on vacation." Steve added later, "Don provides a consistent, spiritual presence in the community. Residents have come to know him and deeply miss him when he is away."

## J. Edwin Givens Employee Scholarship

*Written by Jennifer Rudolph, Community Relations Intern*

This year, two employees were selected by the Board of Director's Development Committee to be honored with the J. Edwin Givens Employee Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 each. This prestigious scholarship was created in 2009 in honor of the more than 40 years of service given to Covenant Woods and the former Richmond Home for Ladies by, J. Edwin Givens.

One of the recipients, Brittany Pierre, began her career through the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Dual Enrollment Program at Hanover High School and has served as an LPN on the Covenant Woods staff since 2010.



*Brittany Pierre, LPN.* Brittany, who is currently

an LPN Charge Nurse, will continue her education at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College to pursue her degree as a Registered Nurse (RN). Brittany commented on how Covenant Woods has affected her career goals, "Working at Covenant Woods has helped me determine what I want to do when I complete my RN. When I first started in nursing I thought I wanted to work with babies but now I know I would like to work with hospice." Her supervisor, Lori Criswell, Director of Nurses, believes "she is deserving of the scholarship and that she will use it to the benefit of residents and the larger nursing community."

The other recipient, Lindsay King, has been at Covenant Woods since 2003, and currently serves as Recreation Specialist in Manor East. Timothy Johnson, President and CEO of Covenant Woods praised Lindsay's work ethic

"she exhibits patience, enthusiasm and respect, and has a natural understanding for the needs of residents she works with." Lindsay, however, commented, "I don't feel like I'm doing anything special it's just me doing what I do and it can be tough at times, but I love my job." She will now put these highly admirable qualities to work at Virginia Commonwealth University where she is completing her masters in Gerontology.

Since 2003, Covenant Woods has given over \$27,000 in tuition reimbursements and over \$16,000 in scholarships to those dedicated to pursuing the further education they need to reach their ultimate career goals.



*Lindsay King, Recreation Specialist.*



Non Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Richmond, VA  
Permit No. 1845

7090 Covenant Woods Drive  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111-7002  
www.covenantwoods.com

COVENANT WOODS