

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
April 2007



Welcome Neighbor!

Well shucks and gee whiz! It just goes to show that the best laid plans of mice and men don't always work. Many thanks to Stanley Keys for pointing out the error in our nickname identifications from last month. Number 41. James Mifflin Keys should have been number 63 (Miff) and number 42. James W. Carter should have been 93 (Welby). In our answers we had both of them as number 93.

So, DID YOU KNOW that April is . . . International Guitar Month, Keep America Beautiful Month, National Anxiety Month, National Humor Month, National Welding Month, National Garden Month, and Uh-Huh Month. Uh-huh, uh-huh... (Who makes these things up anyhow?) Oh well, keep a smile on your face.

Mark your calendars – the Brentsville Courthouse Grand Opening will be held on Saturday, May 5th from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be music from various historic

periods; crafters and tradesmen such as blacksmiths, carpenters and others will demonstrate these traditional occupations; Civil War and Napoleonic military units; and a special group of men and women will be conducting a reproduction trial in the courthouse. We understand the Women of the Moose will be offering good food and the Prince William Art Society will have fantastic art for sale – much of it Brentsville related.

Also start thinking about being in Brentsville in September. The PWC Historic Preservation Division will host a school reunion. We would like to see all of the former students, their families and guests celebrate this wonderful opportunity. More information will follow and invitations will be sent to the students.

Very best wishes,
Nelson & Morgan

This month:

- Featured Brentsville Building -----pages 2 & 3
- Pictures from Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey ----- page 3
- Where Wild Things Live ----- pages 2, 4 & 7
- Brentsville Memories -----pages 5, 6 & 7
- Flashback! ----- page 7

Featured Brentsville Building

The home built for Homer Lee Pearson, Sr.

The featured Brentsville building for April is the home built for Homer Lee Pearson, Sr. While the address is now listed as 12313 Izaak Walton Drive, for many years it was simply identified as being located on Donovan Road. All of the homes located on the Eastern side of Donovan Road, or Izaak Walton Drive, as you wish, have been carved from the Richard Donovan / S. B. Spitzer tract which was one of the largest (if not the largest) tracts in the Brentsville proper. When the partnership dissolved (more on this at a later time), Spitzer held the land on the Northern end and Donovan on the Southern end. Ervin S. Spitzer (S. B. Spitzer's son) inherited the land and held it in joint ownership with his wife, Annie L. Spitzer.

On November 1, 1947, Ervin and Annie Spitzer sold a lot measuring 45 X 222 feet to Walter W. Keys (DB128/194). It seems Walter paid \$350.00 for this property (Trust – DB132/47 5 June 1948) and borrowed another \$2,000 (Trust – DB132/424 19 July

1948) to build the house as ordered by Homer L. Pearson. The property was then sold to Homer and Dorothy Pearson on August 11, 1948, for \$1,000 plus the amounts identified in the two previous trusts (DB133/155). In the process he reserved a four foot right of way along one side of the property which resulted in the final size being 45 X 200 feet. The Prince William County land record indicates the home is 864 square feet and was built in 1939 but we know this date is not accurate.

Homer, Dorothy and their four children lived here until 1962 when the home was sold to Virgil A. and Evelyn A. Tucker on October 8, 1962 (DB289/549) for an undisclosed amount. The Tuckers lived here for just under 18 months when they sold it to Herman and Mamie E. Monk on 1 May 1964 (DB318/480) for \$6,013.00 (Trust – DB318/482). The property was inherited by Herman's daughter, Diane, who still owns the property.

Where WILD Things Live

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), sometimes called white sassafras, is a medium-sized, moderately fast growing, aromatic tree with three distinctive leaf shapes: entire, mittenshaped, and threelobed which occurs in wood margins, fence rows, fields, thickets and roadsides. Shrubby in youth, but matures to a dense, pyramidal tree up to 60' tall. Spreads by root suckers to form

large colonies in the wild. All of the trees in a colony may rise from the same parent. Dioecious (separate male and female trees). Attractive, greenish-yellow flowers appear in clusters at the branch ends in spring. Flowers on female trees (if pollinated) give way to small pendant clusters of bluish-black berries (drupes) which are borne in scarlet cup-like receptacles on scarlet

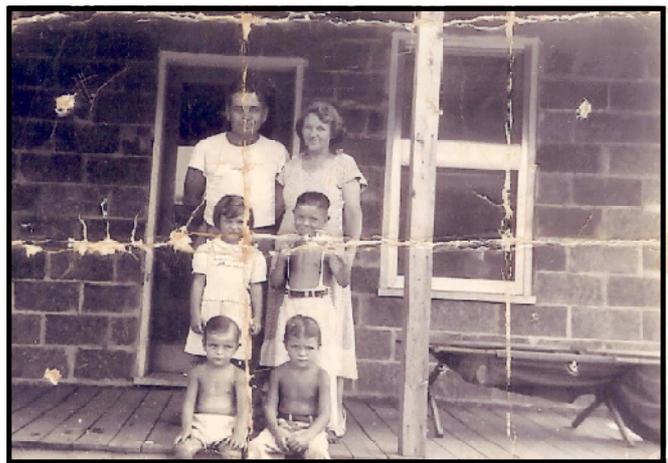
Home built by Walter Keys for Homer L. Pearson



Pictures below courtesy of Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey



Mrs. Dorothy Pearson, c 1953



The Pearson Family
soon after moving to Brentsville



Mary, Sam, Bud & H.L., 1958-1959.
(Note Spitzer's house in the background)



Sam, Mary, H.L. & Bud, late 80s.

Pictures below courtesy of
Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey



Mary and husband Dick



Mary with brother "Buddy"



Mary

Where WILD things live..

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*),
sometimes called
white sassafras



Bloom



Bark

Brentsville Memories

by

Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey

Hi, my name is Mary Pearson Pumphrey. I moved to Brentsville in August 1948 with my parents Homer Lee and Dorothy (Foster) Pearson and my three brothers Homer Lee Jr. (H.L.), Sam and Bud. We moved from Fort Belvoir, VA. Brentsville was quite a change for us - no sidewalks to skate on, no indoor plumbing and no playground. The whole of Brentsville was our playground; we just had to change our way of playing.

The first people I remember meeting (other than the person building our house - Walter Keys) was the Morgan Breeden family. My mom and Marye Breeden became very close friends. Since there were no girls my age close by, I either played cars/trucks or cowboys/Indians with the boys. Most of the summer we parked the shoes and went barefoot - how did we ever walk or run on those gravel roads! We also played a lot of baseball, bike riding (when we could find enough parts to put one together), swimming, fishing, sneaking off to smoke - all the things that we didn't allow our kids to do.

Lester and Alice Keys lived in a little green house behind us. Once when Alice was having a baby, the midwife asked Mom to help - of course she didn't have a clue what to do - when Miss Cockerell asked Mom to put the cloth with chloroform over Alice's mouth & nose, she put it there and left it. When the midwife realized this she started shouting "Take it off, I only want her to sleep, not die". Mom always said that was quite an experience, but one she never wanted to repeat.

The first two summers we lived on what is now called Izaak Walton Road, Dad rented a garden plot further down the road - almost to Donovan's farm. I recall the whole family trailing down the road with rakes and hoes to work the garden. Later we were able to rent the

lot right beside our house to plant a garden. There's nothing better than picking warm tomatoes off the vine and eating them right there.

One of the good things about growing up in Brentsville was the freedom we had to play everywhere without our parents being worried about all the things we read about in the news today. We walked to Broad Run on Lucasville Road to "the log". When we were older and said we were going to "the log" we really went to Cedar Run - the "deep water". H.L., at the encouragement of several of the older guys started jumping off the top of the bridge. One day someone told Mom that they had seen him there and she came after him. Somewhere along the way she found a willow switch and all the way back home he was trying to stay one step ahead of that switch. He always said that he never knew that Mom could walk so fast. We lost H.L. to cancer a couple weeks before his 50th birthday. Many times I would get bored and take a stick with a string on it (there always seemed to be a hook around the house), dig a few worms and head for the run to fish. H.L. would go hunting down the road and maybe bring home a rabbit, squirrel or birds and Mom would make a pot pie with the meat. Another memory is of how eagerly we looked forward to Halloween. We would plan for weeks on our costumes (always made up from things at home - never store bought). We never had to check the candy to be sure it was safe. I remember one year going to a Halloween party at the courthouse. The courthouse was always open. My brothers & I used to go into one of the rooms upstairs where there was an old windup record player - one with the big horn-shaped speaker - and listen to the records that were there. One in particular I remember was "When You and I Were Young Maggie". We enjoyed playing the records and respected it as property of

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

someone else; leaving everything as we found it. The courthouse was always quiet and so cool. As youngsters "Spitzer's Hill" was like a mountain when the snow fell and we could ride the sleds down almost to our house. Sure seemed like a long way back to the top.

Shortly after we moved in Mrs. Breeden ask Mom if she could take us to church with her family. She was very faithful to pick us up every Sunday for Sunday School and church at Hatcher's Memorial Baptist Church. She continued this until Mom was able to start taking us. I'll always be grateful to Mrs. Breeden for the prayers, support and friendship that she gave to my mother. Other than Mom, Mrs. Breeden probably had the biggest influence and was the only other role model I had growing up. She will always hold a special place in my heart. Her willingness to spend time (I'm sure her time was precious with raising four boys) helping me & my brothers get a good start in life when things at home were tough for us, and remaining a good friend to my mother even when it couldn't have been easy, will always be one of my fondest memories when I think of Brentsville.

The store in Brentsville was owned by Mr. & Mrs. Grady Shoemaker. Many times I've walked, barefooted always, to the store for bread or cigarettes for my parents. I went a lot for Mrs. Annie Spitzer when I was young. It was a treat when we found pop bottles that we could take back for 2 pennies; that meant at least 4 pieces of candy or gum. It seems that not long after we moved there Mr. Spitzer died at the store.

Some of the people that have stayed in my memory are Ms Lilly Keys & Ms Phinnie Molair, Lee Molair, Mrs. Hedrick (lived in the old jail). Wynnett Wolfe, Sidney Spitzer, Lester & Alice Keys.

Hatcher's Memorial was probably the most important place in Brentsville to me. I was always ready for Sunday school, church, training union, bible school - whatever was going on there, I wanted to be there. Once Mom started going with us it became a rule at our house that every Sunday, no matter the weather, we would all walk to church (this was one of Dad's rules that we had to obey but did not pertain to him). When we first started attending there, the heat was a large, round stove that sat in the middle of the church;

the stovepipe went all the way up to the high ceiling. Later, a furnace was installed. In the summer, we just opened the windows. I'll let one of my brothers tell the tale about building the rooms on the back. Most of the time we had "student pastors" who came on Sundays from wherever they attended seminary. The families in the church would take turns having the preacher to dinner; and most of the time we had chicken. Mom was always nervous about the dinner and I'm sure about how Dad would behave, if he was there. Once she was apologizing to the pastor about the lumps in the gravy; he said "I thought it was dumplings." We all teased Mom about her gravy and dumplings after that. One Sunday night after church I rode with Mrs. Payne to take some of the kids home; to my surprise she asked if I thought it would be alright with Mom if I went with her to get ice cream. We went "all the way to Lake Jackson" for Tastee Freeze. I felt so special! The training my brothers and I got at Hatcher's has always been a solid foundation for our lives. Although we haven't always lived "the golden rule" we always come back to that teaching we received. In August 1962 I married Victor Trammell at Hatcher's.

When I was a young teenager, again with no girls my age, I spent a lot of time with Bobbie Ratliff and her eight children. She became good friends with my mother when they moved into the house next door. She was another role model for me; I was amazed at how she always managed to have a smile and never complained. I never heard her raise her voice to her children. She let me help her sometimes with the laundry and babysitting. I still stay in contact with her and have visited her and her family in Council, VA.

We walked to the "big road" to catch the bus. I attended Brentsville District School thru the 10th grade (I was lucky to start 8th grade in the "new" high school addition). I can recall most of my teachers and classmates - classes were pretty small and most of us were there year after year. One of my best friends was Ann Dawson. We played softball, volleyball, and basketball for the school. I always enjoyed playing sports - guess it's from growing up with all the boys. When I was a teen, I played on a softball team with several teens and young adults from

(Continued from page 6)

Brentsville. Don't remember what teams we played against, but we played at Croushorn's farm (now Bristow Manor). As an adult I played on church teams until I had to give it up for medical reasons. Even now when I see a ball game going on I get the urge to grab a glove and join in. I finished my last two years of high school at Osbourn High in Manassas.

After I graduated from high school and married, Dad sold the house in Brentsville and the family moved to Triangle, VA. Sam graduated the following year and Bud joined the Army shortly thereafter. Dad died in an automobile accident in March 1965. Bud came home to take care of Mom, but shortly after that we discovered that she had advanced cancer; she died in October 1966. After mom and dad died, I divorced and remarried. I've been married to James (Dick) Pumphrey for 37 years.

The person who was the biggest role model in

my life was my mom. She taught me to be strong no matter what circumstances I find myself in; always trust in God; behave like a lady; and be able to laugh at myself.

I worked for 30 years for Department of Defense in Northern VA, San Antonio, TX, & Washington DC. After I retired, I had a small antique & collectibles shop for several years. We moved to San Antonio, TX in 2003 and returned to VA in 2005. I have 3 sons, 1 daughter, and "lots" of grandchildren - all here in VA.

Driving through Brentsville always brings back memories of childhood. When Brentsville Neighbors is delivered I'm always anxious to read all the interesting facts, memories, and see the pictures. Bud, Sam & I get on the phone and say - "Did you know that?" or "Do you remember him/her?" It leads to a lot of trips down Memory Lane.

(Wild Things -- Continued from page 2)

stalks (pedicils). Fruits mature in September. Variable, 4-7" long leaves in three shapes (ovate, mitten-shaped and three-lobed) are bright green above and glaucous (albidum meaning white) below. Excellent yellow, purple and red fall color. To Native Americans, sassafras oils were freely used in tonics as medical panaceas. Culinary uses have included: sassafras tea (bark), root beer flavoring (root oil) and a gumbo-thickening agent called filé (stem pith). More recently, Sassafras oils have been determined to contain a carcinogenic substance (safrole) and many of the former uses for the oils are now banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The bark, twigs, and leaves of sassafras are important foods for wildlife in some areas. Deer browse the twigs in the winter and the leaves and succulent growth during spring and summer.

Source: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/silvics_manual/volume_2/sassafras/albidum.htm and <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=1820>

Flashback

Deaths

PEARSON, DOROTHY FOSTER

On Monday, October 31, 1966, at Alexandria Hospital, DOROTHY FOSTER PEARSON of 52 Sharon rd., Triangle, Va., beloved wife of the late Homer Pearson and mother of Mrs. Patricia Nelson, Mrs. Mary Virginia Trammell, Robert Mason, David Samuel, Charles Howard, and Homer L. Pearson Jr. Friends may call at the Baker Funeral Home, 314 North West st., Manassas, Va. Funeral services will be held from the Hatcher's Memorial Baptist Church, in Brentsville, Va., on Wednesday, November 2, at 1 p.m. Interment Grace Methodist Church Cemetery, Sommerville, Va.

Source: The Washington Post, November 1, 1966, page C6

LICENSED TO MARRY

Rosier Woodyard, 24, of Brentsville, Va., and Hettie R. Simmers, 25, of Broadway, Va. The Rev. William Harris.

Source: The Washington Post, May 4, 1915, pg. 14

Brentsville Neighbors

Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
Contact us via e-mail on:
MorganBreedon@aol.com

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breedon
9721 Windy Hill Drive
Nokesville, VA 20181**

In GOD we Trust

