

WE ARE WINCHESTER

JUNE 2024

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

This letter is probably the hardest piece I write each month. Trying to gather my thoughts about the people we interviewed, and the personal stories they told us, succinctly and meaningfully is hard.

It's a stark reminder that everyone has a story, one that weaves hardships they faced, with the joy they found, typically in service of others. Connection is what drives success in all areas of our lives. While life twists and turns, the one thing we should be cultivating is our connections with others. Even as an introvert, connections have helped me move through grief, raised funds for dozens of non-profits and individuals in need, and even developed the idea for this magazine.

We'd love to connect with you! @oldtownist We'll see you in Old Town!



*Misty Weaver
& Katie Jordan*

**WE ARE
WINCHESTER**

WINCHESTER TALES - GREENWAY COURT



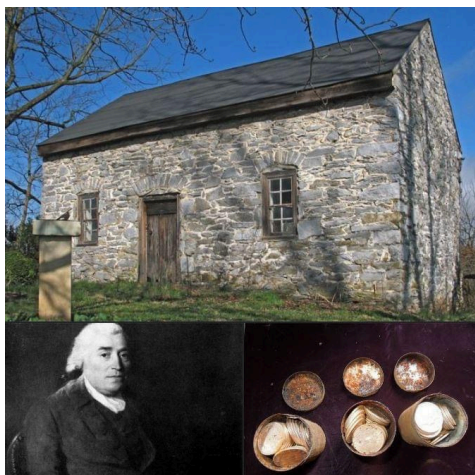
By Mike Robinson

Author of Winchester Tales book series

When Lord Fairfax built his country estate, "Greenway Court," in White Post in 1751, he often referred to it as his "hunting lodge" to friends and visitors. In reality, it was a place of serious business and revenue collection. Near the manor house, he built a stone office where he collected the quit rents owed from his vast land holdings. At Greenway Court, Fairfax and his beloved nephew, Thomas Bryan Martin, lived as bachelors, enjoying what one might call "a good ole' time."

Unlike typical British aristocrats of the day, Fairfax and Martin were well-liked by the colonists. Fairfax even befriended James Wood and a young George Washington. Dr. Baldwin of Winchester, Fairfax's physician, described him as "a very fair and honorable man." In 1781, 88-year-old Thomas Lord Fairfax died. He had amassed an estimated one million dollars or more from collecting rents and making land deals. Where this money went remains a mystery, as Fairfax was known to be a chronic hoarder.

In the 1820s, Reverend Thomas Kennerly bought the Greenway Court estate. One day in the 1830s, around six slaves were pulling stones away from the original Fairfax home when they discovered \$250 in gold coins in a stoneware container. The reverend exchanged the Fairfax gold for bills and divided the treasure among the slaves, not taking a penny for himself.



CRAFTING OUTDOOR SANCTUARIES

Hardscaping, a subset of landscaping, introduces structural elements such as pathways, patios, and retaining walls into outdoor spaces. These features not only enhance the visual appeal of a property but also serve practical purposes, creating functional areas for relaxation, entertainment, and contemplation. From the rustic charm of stone pathways to the contemporary elegance of concrete pavers, hardscaping offers a canvas for creativity and expression.

Chucky Grimes of 3rd Generation Landscaping sheds light on the transformative power of hardscaping, emphasizing its role in elevating outdoor spaces. With nearly two decades of experience, Chucky has witnessed firsthand the impact that well-executed hardscaping can have on a property. "Hardscaping is more than just adding structures; it's about creating a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor living," he remarks. "Whether it's a cozy fire pit or a tranquil water feature, hardscaping invites homeowners to immerse themselves in the beauty of their surroundings."

Landscaping, on the other hand, encompasses a broader spectrum of elements, including plants, trees, and shrubs. Unlike hardscaping, which focuses on structural features, landscaping emphasizes the soft, living components of outdoor design. From vibrant flower beds to lush greenery, landscaping adds color, texture, and life to outdoor spaces, creating havens of beauty and biodiversity.

Reflecting on his extensive experience in the industry, Chucky emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between landscaping and hardscaping. "When executed with skill and precision, these two disciplines complement each other, creating landscapes that are both visually stunning and environmentally sustainable," he explains. "From native plantings that attract pollinators to permeable paving materials that reduce runoff, landscaping and hardscaping offer myriad opportunities to enhance the ecological integrity of outdoor spaces."

Using native plants in landscaping provides a multitude of benefits that align perfectly with Chucky's philosophy. Native plants support biodiversity by providing habitat and food for local wildlife, including birds, bees, and butterflies. These plants are also adapted to the local climate and soil conditions, often requiring less water compared to non-native species, which conserves water and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Chucky underscores this point, stating, "Native plantings can significantly reduce maintenance costs and environmental impact, promoting a more sustainable landscape."

As trends in landscaping and hardscaping evolve, so too do the materials and techniques used to create them. Chucky notes the increasing popularity of innovative materials like recycled glass and composite decking for their sustainability and durability. "We're seeing a shift towards more environmentally friendly options that prioritize longevity and low maintenance," he observes. "It's an exciting time to be in the industry, with advancements in technology and design pushing the boundaries of what's possible."

In an age of rapid urbanization and environmental degradation, the importance of landscaping and hardscaping cannot be overstated. Not only do they beautify our surroundings and enhance our quality of life, but they also play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of climate change and habitat loss. By preserving green spaces, promoting biodiversity, and fostering a deeper connection to nature, landscaping and hardscaping offer a path towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

In the hands of skilled craftsmen like Chucky Grimes and countless others, landscaping and hardscaping transcend mere artistry; they become expressions of reverence for the natural world and the timeless beauty of the outdoor environment. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, let us not forget the transformative power of a well-crafted landscape—a sanctuary where beauty, harmony, and sustainability converge.



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THE SECRETS OF HANDLEY LIBRARY

The Handley Library is impossible to miss coming down Piccadilly St. Its inception, deeply entwined with the benevolence of Judge John Handley, has been a cornerstone for education and community in the city. We learned more about the rich history of the Handley Library, its architectural splendor, and its lasting impact on Winchester, through an insightful interview with volunteer Pat Ritchie and Deputy Director Ann White.

Judge John Handley, an Irish immigrant whose life journey brought him from Scranton to Winchester, left an indelible mark on the city. In 1890, without heirs and deeply in love with Winchester, despite not residing here full time, Handley bequeathed a substantial sum for the establishment of a library that would bear his name. This generosity extended beyond the library, providing for the education of Winchester's poor children and leading to the creation of Handley High School, Frederick Douglas School, and others. Even today, the Handley trust continues to support the city's educational institutions.

The Handley Library, is an architectural marvel. Completed in 1910, its design underwent modifications, including a taller dome that cost an extra \$842, making it a distinguished landmark in Winchester. Designed in the Beaux-Arts style, the library features a grand facade with Ionic columns and a stately entrance framed by a pediment and arched windows, with the crowning feature certainly being the copper covered dome. The exterior is constructed of Indiana limestone, giving it a robust yet elegant appearance. The interior boasts a spacious rotunda with a stained-glass dome, glass floors, and intricate woodwork. The design includes numerous classical elements such as pilasters, cornices, and a grand staircase, all contributing to the library's historical and aesthetic significance.

The hidden features make a guided tour of the library incredibly fascinating. From staircases that go nowhere, to a well under a stage in the lower level, the Handley Library has gone through many changes the average patron would overlook. We were entranced throughout our personal tour as we were shown bookcases with hidden storage, educated on the type of wood used and how they have matched it through remodels, compared before and after photos of installed artwork and details to bring building additions together as one, and imagined how the changes paralleled people lives as policies they themselves changed over the decades.

Pat Ritchie shared fascinating anecdotes about the library's history, from its initial three years without books or furniture to its role as Winchester's first public building equipped with electric lights and a metal framework, making it fireproof. The hiring of the first

librarian, C. Vernon Eddy, marked a pivotal moment, as he was tasked with populating the library with books and hiring staff, which included his sister-in-law as the assistant librarian. The library opened with 2,300 books, a tiny fraction of today's circulation of over 100,000 items.

The grand opening of the Handley Library was a significant event, drawing national attention. It highlighted Winchester's commitment to public education and the arts, a vision largely attributed to Judge Handley. The library was not just a place for books; it was a community hub, hosting meetings for various organizations and events that showcased its magnificent electric lighting.

Over the years, the library has undergone renovations, always with an eye toward preserving its historical integrity and adapting to the needs of its patrons. The introduction of racial integration in the library in 1953, a decade before the schools, is a notable chapter in its history. It reflects a broader societal shift towards inclusivity and the library's role in fostering community cohesion. An important role to this day.

See all of the items you can borrow from books to video games, backpacks to explore national parks with free admission, magazines, plus tours and more at HandleyRegional.org



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16 JUNETEENTH

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22 SHEN VALLEY WINE FEST

Enjoy an afternoon of Shenandoah Valley wine tasting, food trucks, live music, and craft vendors on the MSV grounds. [MSV](#)

28 MSV AT NIGHT

Experience the MSV after hours during this fun evening with live outdoor music from the Dan James Band, a demonstration of felt flower making by artist Katie Sebring, and nighttime access to the gardens and galleries. [MSV](#)

29 ARTS NETWORKING

Whether you work or volunteer in any area of the arts and entertainment industry, come join us for a night of networking with like-minded people. [Drum Orpheum](#)



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While many have heard of Special Love, an organization dedicated to supporting children with cancer and their families, most don't realize it's located in Winchester. Like most non-profits, Tom and Sheila Baker created Special Love to help kids going through cancer take a break and enjoy normal activities, after they felt the impact of their daughter Julie being treated for Lymphoma and eventually losing her battle. They understood the frustrations and what everyone in the same situation wanted: to feel normal.

Jan Bresch joined Special Love as Executive Director six years ago, after serving on its board for the prior six years. She recalls her time working at the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a non-profit providing free lodging to children undergoing treatment and their families. It was during her tenure at NIH that Bresch became familiar with Special Love. "I missed working with children and families," Bresch reflects. "When the executive director of Special Love decided to step down, I knew I wanted to be part of this incredible organization full-time."

Special Love, often known for its flagship event Camp Fantastic, provides comprehensive support to families facing pediatric cancer. Camp Fantastic, held at the 4-H Center in Front Royal, Virginia, is a week-long summer camp for children with cancer, aged 7 to 17. Thanks to Special Love's unique partnership with the National Cancer Institute at NIH, a full medical team is available on-site, ensuring that even the sickest children can attend and simply enjoy being kids. "The medical team allows us to take the sickest children out to camp for a week, where they can just be kids and not patients," Bresch says. "Even our infirmary is fun and decorated to feel like a NASCAR Pit Stop."

Another major summer camp, BRASS Camp (BRothers And SiSters), is held in July for siblings of children with cancer. Like Camp Fantastic, BRASS Camp allows siblings, often overlooked in the cancer journey, to connect and share experiences. The camps are staffed primarily by former campers who have come back to give back to the next generation.

While Camp Fantastic may be the most recognizable program, Special Love's work extends far beyond a single week in the summer. The organization offers programs and support 11 months of the year, providing financial aid, scholarships, and emotional support.

"We're much more than just Camp Fantastic," Bresch emphasizes. "We provide emergency financial aid, support programs for siblings, and educational scholarships for kids who have gone through our programs."



This financial support ranges from utility bills to insurance payments, ensuring families can focus on their child's treatment without the added burden of financial stress. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Special Love expanded its support to include funeral expenses, recognizing the heartbreaking reality that some families face. Special Love also runs weekend retreats and day programs for parents, offering a chance to connect and find solace. One of the most popular events is a ski weekend in Canaan Valley, which brings together over 300 participants for a weekend of fun and camaraderie.

Under Bresch's leadership, Special Love continues to evolve, exploring new ways to serve families. "Connection is one of the most important needs for families," Bresch says. "We're always asking ourselves, 'What more can we do to help?'" In June, Special Love will host its annual Golf Tournament at Rock Harbor Golf Course on June 28th, raising funds to support Camp Fantastic. As Bresch and her team look to the future, they remain steadfast in their mission: to provide children with cancer and their families with a special kind of love, one that transcends challenges and brings joy. For more information visit SpecialLove.org.

Winchester Book Gallery Recommends:



Real Americans begins on the precipice of Y2K in New York City, when twenty-two-year-old Lily Chen, an unpaid intern at a slick media company, meets Matthew. Matthew is everything Lily is not: easygoing and effortlessly attractive, a native East Coaster, and, most notably, heir to a vast pharmaceutical empire. Lily couldn't be more different: flat-broke, raised in Tampa, the only child of scientists who fled Mao's Cultural Revolution. Despite all this, Lily and Matthew fall in love.

WinchesterBookGallery.com

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SHEILA DAVIS

As Mr. Rogers once said, "The connections we make in the course of a lifetime, maybe that's what heaven is." This sentiment resonates deeply when reflecting on the life and impact of Sheila Davis. When faced with childhood trauma, individuals often find themselves at a crossroads: they can either become someone who treats others as if they are insignificant or become someone who strives to help others in any small way they can, until they have the ability to make a more significant impact. Sheila Davis chose the latter path.



I met Sheila at CCAP, where we volunteered together for her project, Mountain Falls Blessings. From the moment we began working together, it was evident that Sheila had a heart full of compassion and a genuine desire to care for others. Each month, we would find ourselves in different setups for packing supplies, with Sheila always figuring things out, ensuring everyone had a role, and lovingly preparing brownies or cookies to thank us for our time. Her joy in taking care of the people around her was unmistakable.

Mountain Falls Blessings is a lifeline for residents of Mountain Falls, Shawneeland, Star Tannery, and the surrounding areas, providing much-needed food supplies. What started as a small effort by Sheila, Maryann Austin, and Donna Chandler to support a few families grew significantly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, they serve 70-75 families each month, also collecting holiday meals to ensure these families can celebrate together. Kids bags with kid friendly foods, Sheila's personal favorite item she helps prepare are also given each month.

Sheila's commitment to volunteerism extends beyond Mountain Falls Blessings. Recently, she shared her involvement with the Evans Home for Children, her face lighting up with excitement as she described her plans to help them raise funds. The Evans Home offers a safe place for children whose parents are experiencing hardships, allowing them to maintain parental rights while their children are cared for in a stable home environment. This includes transportation to school and planned activities, enabling the children to focus on being children.

Sheila's connection to the Evans Home is deeply personal, as she spent time there herself during the 1980s. She credits the staff for providing her with the freedom to learn to care for herself and offering personalized support that was invaluable to her. Her first experience with volunteerism was organizing a yard sale for the Evans Home after someone donated their late wife's items. This sparked her passion for making a difference at a young age.



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Sheila's journey has not been without its challenges. She worked at Lowe's until a seizure ended her ability to work. During this difficult period, she learned of a man who had frozen to death and felt compelled to act. She began making homeless care kits each winter, starting with 75 kits. Today, she and her team distribute 350 kits annually, each containing hats, gloves, coats, and foot warmers

On June 29th, Sheila is helping organize a motorcycle fundraiser for the Evans Home, starting at Backseat Bar and Grill in celebration of the home's 75th anniversary.

Residents qualify for Mountain Falls Blessings through CCAP.



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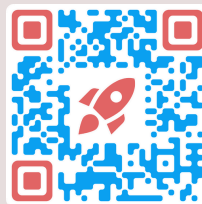


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