

Virginia needs to guarantee access to innovative treatments

Advancements in innovative medical treatments are revolutionizing care for many Virginia patients and their families. As a Farmville resident living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), a genetic disorder characterized by progressive muscle degeneration and weakness, I know well the hope that these treatments offer to a broad range of patients, particularly those living with chronic, rare, or complex conditions.

However, investment in the development of new drugs will not have the intended impact unless lawmakers prioritize health system readiness and pathways to access for patients who need these treatments most. Virginia leg-

islators must support policies that ensure patients, especially those living with rare diseases, are able to access and afford lifesaving health care when new medications come to market.

About 1 in 10 Americans are living with a rare disease, or a disease or condition that affects fewer than 200,000 people. In 1998, when I was 3 years old, I was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. DMD is one of the most serious genetic diseases in children. It is one of the nine types of muscular dystrophy and affects almost exclusively males, with a birth prevalence of about 1 in every 3,500 male births. More than 90% of kids diagnosed with DMD end up in wheelchairs by

age 11.

Gene therapy is a type of medical treatment that involves adding, removing, or changing a person's DNA. The future of gene therapies is especially important for rare diseases, because these types of treatments focus on correcting the root cause of a disease, rather than just a solution to help patients manage symptoms. As a result, gene therapies can offer patients a better chance at long-term health improvements and quality of life.

I have dedicated years advocating for the support of Duchenne-related legislation to state and federal legislators. Now, I am urging Virginia lawmakers to ensure that when new gene therapy medications



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and treatments that address the world's toughest diseases come to market, Virginia's health systems are prepared to enable access for all eligible patients.

Increased investments in innovation, research, and development continue to push critical cell and gene therapies forward. In May 2021, there were 1,745 gene therapies in development, an over 30% increase than 2020. These treatments have the possibility to transform patients' lives and bring much-needed personalized health solutions

to the horizon.

The gene therapies that are being researched and developed to treat DMD could have changed my life when I was a child. Treatments like these enable patients to live healthier lives without the need for ongoing treatments or daily disease management.

As Virginia policymakers continue to explore avenues to improve health care, policies that foster a stronger statewide system to support the next generation of transformative medications for patients are crucial. Gene therapy holds promise for people like me, all adults living with Duchenne, but to realize its full potential, policymakers must take action now to ensure systemic preparedness and improved treatment access for those who need it most.

COLIN WERTH is a patient advocate living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy in Farmville. He can be reached at cjraistar@gmail.com.

Let the celebrations begin

Christmas is in the air. The holiday season is in full swing. For many of us, our calendars are filled with plans for merry get-togethers and other activities.

These holiday traditions are vital. They help focus our attention on the deeply felt meaning of the season. Festivities also help nourish and sustain relationships by strengthening our shared values. Through them we reconnect with our heritage, reinforce our sense of belonging, and reconnect with the understanding that we are working together for a greater purpose.

In addition, it's simply fun! We all need to take a break from the routine of our daily schedules. Celebrations let us take our minds off the task at hand for a few moments and recharge so that we're better prepared to move forward

with renewed energy.

Unfortunately, during the past two years of COVID-inspired limitations, many of us had to step back from some of our usual traditions. The pandemic forced us to limit personal contact in ways that made getting together a challenge. At Southside Virginia Community College, we found it necessary to rely on innovative technology and creative strategies to stay connected.

One tactic involved digital video conferencing technology. New tools enabled us to participate in Town Hall meetings where we sang Happy Birthday, admired pictures of new babies, and shared moments of silence with grieving coworkers. Social media platforms enabled us to connect through announcements, videos, and group interactions. Even regular email offered opportunities to



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welcome new faculty and staff members, distribute newsletter updates, and honor the achievements of our co-workers and students.

Although efforts such as these enabled us to share some meaningful moments, it wasn't enough. A computer interface lacks the face-to-face personal touch. As a result, the suspension of in-person events reinforced my belief in their importance.

For this reason, I am espe-

cially excited that SVCC will return to an in-person Holiday and Retirement Luncheon. A committee is working hard to plan a fun event for our faculty, staff and retirees. It will be hosted at our Daniel Campus in Keysville on Dec. 20, 2022.

The luncheon provides an opportunity for people who work in different departments and on different campuses an opportunity to get together and reconnect. For some, this will mean putting faces to new names, and for others it will bring a strengthening of personal bonds that have been built over years of camaraderie. The event gives us a chance to look back at where we've been and acknowledge the growth that has occurred. It also offers an opportunity to look ahead with reinvigorated motivation as we pursue the goals outlined in our new strategic plan, *Aspire 2027: Pathways*

to Opportunities.

One of our most important traditions is recognizing employees for their years of service. We do this for all who have reached five-year milestones. A full list of all honorees would take more space than I have here, so let me mention three who will be recognized for 25 years of service to the college and our students. They are faculty members Mike Stinson and James Wilkerson and our Buildings and Grounds Superintendent, Eddie Bennett.

The festivities of the season remind me that there is so much to celebrate. I wish you happy holidays and an opportunity to celebrate in ways that bring you joy.

DR. QUENTIN R. JOHNSON is president of Southside Virginia Community College, which covers 10 counties and the City of Emporia. He can be reached via email at quentin.johnson@southside.edu.

That red clay Christmas

What I remember most about the Christmas of 1961 was seeing natural ice for the first time (at least, the first time I can remember) in the form of a frozen puddle on a muddy red road, perhaps someone's driveway, in rural Georgia. Granddaddy was taking me up that drive and out of sight to relieve myself while my grandmother helped my little sisters with their little plastic potty closer to the car. Such stops were very common before the interstate highways were built. They had come to get us in Florida and take us to Jackson for the holidays, but we didn't know we would never go back.

We had moved to Ft. Lauderdale several years earlier when my dad was reassigned by Southern Bell to help tackle the infrastructure boom in South Florida. My mother was very young when I was born, and in 1961 she found herself with three children,

including a baby in diapers, at the age of 22. Today, we know much more about postpartum depression; back then the prognosis was a "breakdown." My grandparents wanted to have her committed, so she took off. We never lived with her again, but we did have some visits with her after a few years had gone by. I was glad that she later married a very kind man and had another son. She eventually made her way back to Tennessee and died in Parsons only a few years ago.

When I was 59, I sometimes thought about the situation my grandparents faced when we went to live with them. My father had to continue working in Florida until he could get a transfer back closer to Jackson, so they took care of us in every way for a year and a half. Once he relocated to northern Mississippi, my dad could visit every few weeks. My grandfather was 59 when we moved into their house, and I am certain that the



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sudden transformation from empty nest to full house must have been very challenging. They had a comfortable home (which, amazingly, Granddaddy had purchased and furnished with cash the year I was born), but it only had two bedrooms, so I slept with Granddaddy and my sisters slept with Grandmommy.

I still remember how she walked me to the pediatrician and then carried me back up the hill to her house after I had my ears lanced (I think they have since discontinued that practice). She also went along on school field trips.

She didn't huff and puff even a bit when our third grade class went once to the Pinson Mounds site, while most of the thirty-something mommies were definitely dragging from climbing those hills. Since Granddaddy worked a shift from 12 to 8 as a clerk at the Railway Express Agency, I could sometimes ride with him in his green van in the evening when he delivered the movies that had arrived on the train to the tv station.

It broke my heart to leave them when my dad remarried and the new couple settled on Memphis as a good location roughly halfway between their families in Jackson and Grenada, but we soon adjusted to life with our new mom, who interestingly was actually younger than our birth mother and thus found herself at the beginning of a new school year with three kids and no mothering experience at all. Think about that challenge! She brought to the mix a one-egg poacher from her bache-

lorette days as a long distance operator, and that little device certainly didn't get much use.

I have occasionally contemplated how my life might have turned out if I had grown up in Florida. I can't help but feel that going back to live in Tennessee was best. Church and Scouts or beach? Hmm... There is a beautiful song on one of Don Williams's last albums called "Healing Hands":

"My grandma and grandpa had wonderful hands/calluses and wedding bands/They taught me where there was love, there was always a way/A picture of the two of them/Has seen me through a lot of years/They were there when I reached up to them/And they're in my life today"

These lyrics encapsulate perfectly the enduring love of my grandparents: They are in my life today.

MIKE WILSON is a former Hampden-Sydney Spanish professor and 13-year resident of Prince Edward County, who now calls North Carolina home. He can be reached at jmwilson@catwba.edu.

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There are no good options here

The comments started pouring in almost as soon as we published the story. After failing to get the General Assembly's permission to increase sales tax last year, Prince Edward County's board of supervisors want to try again. Their goal is to use the money to repair and possibly replace Prince Edward County Elementary, which as we've documented before, is definitely in need of help.

But nobody likes hearing that sales tax might go up. And so, after reading that story, people posted comments on our social media pages and sent emails to *The Herald*. They didn't see why prices should go up for everyone, especially when many of them don't have children. And at a time like this, they argue, why should we have to worry about another price hike, this time possibly self-inflicted?

The problem is there are no villains here. The reality is there just aren't any good options. No matter what path gets chosen, there's going to be a problem.

SCHOOLS NEED REPAIRS

If there's one thing that affects everyone, it's the local economy. Before a company moves in, they look at the schools. I've had business owners tell me that multiple times over the years. They're not just looking at an area's

current workforce. They want to know what it'll look like in 10, 15 years down the road. And so they look at test scores. They research graduation rates. They check if children are learning with up to date tools. Now let's say you want a company to come into Prince Edward. Is a leaky roof, classrooms that can't be used due to poor conditions and ongoing traffic problems an attractive sell, when you're talking about the state of the school district?

There's also the issue of students leaving. No parent wants their child to learn in a run-down school building. They want to give the best opportunity possible, with the best available tools. If Prince Edward County can't offer that, you'd best believe some residents will take their children out of the public schools and send them elsewhere. Or they might just leave for another county. Neither of those options benefits this area.

And so, the supervisors want to find money to repair the buildings. It's not like there are pots of cash just sitting around, so it has to come from somewhere. The American Rescue Plan Act money is being used to fill in other construction-sized problems across the county, so that can't be used. The extra school repair funding from the state has also been allocated, to fix additional



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needs at the middle and high school. This was done because the needs at both schools are smaller and can be fully fixed with the state's extra allotment.

But that still leaves the problem of what to do about Prince Edward Elementary. Current estimates project a sales tax hike would bring in between \$3 million to \$3.5 million a year. That's enough to fix the elementary school and have some on hand, preparing for the next issue. I mean, let's be realistic here. Right now, it's the elementary school. How long before the middle school and high school face the same thing?

WHAT CAN RESIDENTS AFFORD?

But even knowing the needs, there's the flip side of the argument. At what point will people no longer pay? Let's say you have a choice between shopping locally at a Prince Edward County

store or buying the same item online. If the price is the same, you go local, right? But what if the exact same item costs less buying through Etsy or Amazon? That's the challenge when you raise sales tax. If you increase the cost, will that drive some shoppers, and potentially business owners away? Again, it goes back to the selling point. "Come shop here. Our prices are higher than the next county over" just doesn't have a good ring to it.

And then we come to the other question here. Can people afford a sales tax hike, even if it is just 1%? It's been a rough year, with inflation taking off and the global supply issues nowhere near being fixed. Prices have spiked as is, so it's understandable that local residents would be less than excited about possibly having sales tax go up. Especially when it comes right after they received a bit of sticker shock, from a much larger personal property tax bill than expected. Add all this up and you have families forced to scale back purchases in some cases. A portion of the population in Prince Edward live paycheck to paycheck as it is. I've been there myself in times past. You balance the budget down to the last dollar and in the best of times, it's a circus act. Make one wrong decision or see one thing change and suddenly

you're forced to make some uncomfortable decisions.

That's what residents are thinking about, when they hear the word tax hike.

NOTHING'S SET IN STONE

Now, to be clear, nothing's been decided. First off, even if the Assembly votes to approve a potential sales tax hike in Prince Edward County, that's not a guarantee it will happen. There are two steps to take before a hike can go into effect. First, the state has to say ok. Second, residents would have to approve it in an election referendum.

So we're all talking about a "what if" at this point. But even so, we need to start having this discussion, because the issue isn't going away. Prince Edward Elementary won't suddenly be brand new when you drive over tomorrow to pick up your children. Residents won't suddenly have a massive windfall in their bank accounts, to afford more.

Do we really want a sales tax increase? And if not, what are we willing to give up to fix the school and other issues to come? As I said before, there are no good options here. But we need to focus on the one causing the least amount of pain.

BRIAN CARLTON is the editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia, LLC. He can be reached at Brian.Carlton@FarmvilleHerald.com.

The high art of the low crawl

I killed my first duck, a hen mallard, while lying on my belly in soupy mud under buckbushes lining a creek that fed the Tennessee River. Turns out that over the years I have oddly become less accomplished at such feats, and not especially because I am girth-challenged.

My grandfather gave me a 20-gauge H&R Topper for Christmas when I had just turned 12. The Christmas before that, Santa had brought me an old bolt-action .410 that had once belonged to my other grandfather, and I had become a pretty good little wing shot. I could hit spent .410 cases thrown by my granddad and great uncle Johnny most of the time, and I must sadly say that I have never shot better. The .410 was fun for squirrels, but I needed heavier artillery to join in the duck hunts, and happily the Topper appeared.

The very next day after I had unwrapped it, we were off to the river. The plumbing at the cabin had been cut off and drained for the winter, so no running water. (Yes, the bathroom was outside, a bit of a problem when Granddaddy fed me frozen kernel corn he thought he only had to warm up a little.) We rode out in

the pre-dawn and set up in a creek a few miles upriver, and before long a Susie glided into the middle of a brushy point about 75 yards off to our right. Granddaddy said, "Well, go git'er!"

I knew perfectly well how to low-crawl thanks to Sgt. Alvin York (actually, Gary Cooper). I rested the gun across my forearms and slowly moved between the bushes. The water had receded from fall draw-down a while since, so the mud was sticky and pretty smelly. I would crawl about five yards and then stop and listen. Finally, there she was, waddling between two bushes, and I shot her with a load of lead 6's. (Let me pause to assure the reader that since then I have been better instructed in the more sportsmanlike approach of shooting them in the air. At the time, I did not care. At all.)

There is no picture of that signal moment in my life since it would have been impractical to haul the family Brownie around. As I mentally reconstruct the scene now, I see a grinning boy holding up a fat brown duck, perfectly eligible to be the "before" photo in a detergent ad. I will never forget that day nor the taste of that hen with my



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grandmother's delicious sage dressing.

Fast forward, please to when I was and teaching at Hampden-Sydney College. My buddy Ken and I were walking into Briery Creek WMA for a duck hunt when we spied at the end of a logging road ending at the lakeshore a small flock of geese! After a brief huddle, we determined that the only useful strategy was to leave our decoys behind and low-crawl 200 yards down the muddy road to sneak up on them. Trying to sneak through the woods would be much too noisy. Off we went. Whenever I looked up, I saw that they had absolutely no idea of the deadly menace approaching.

They just kept floating without moving a muscle. Closer we drew, trying to gauge the range of our lead 4's. Just as we finally reached the bank opening and nodded knowingly at each other that it was time to jump up and shoot, we heard, "Wilson! Townsend!" It's the president of the college, himself an inveterate outdoorsman, sitting there in his

neoprene waders in a brush blind about 20 yards away. We were just about to slaughter his brand new decoys.

It has taken a while to live that episode down. In fact, I am not sure we have fully done so. The last time I talked to the former president, now retired, he just had to bring it up.

Fast forward again, now 20 years more. I live in the North Carolina Piedmont, where the early resident goose season has opened with extremely liberal bag limits and regs. I have permission to shoot over a newly cut cornfield, and I have seen a nice big flock in the area — apparently headquartered in one of the now-controversial Duke ash ponds — several times. This is gold!

We — my former student Arkansas Dan and I — set up in a tree line in a spot lying right on their usual lazy flight path. They will fly right over our heads from behind us if we are favored by the gods and then drop into our decoys about 35 yards in front of us. Right on cue at 7:45 they announce their approach (this is before they adopted stealth mode, which is another story). We hold our breath as the honking grows closer and closer until there they are, their soft

bellies virtual beacons right above our heads. Of course, we have agreed to wait until they all sit down to inflict maximum casualties, so you can imagine our horror when they take a long glide past our spread and drop 100 yards away...

Yet again, it seems there is nothing to do but low-crawl. The geese have begun to feed just past a slight rise in the field, so we set out to sneak up on them. It was definitely easier to do this forty years ago! We finally crest the rise and see they have moved a bit further away. We can't wait all day to see if they happen to drift closer; my man has to get to his office by mid-morning. There is no remedy but to fire a couple of shots to speed them on their way. Even highly-touted tungsten — which is apparently also alloyed with platinum — fails to do the trick.

I am retired from low-crawling now — I hope — but you just never know what scenario you'll face next. Waterfowling wouldn't be nearly as much fun if everything went right all the time, would it?

MIKE WILSON is a former Hampden-Sydney Spanish professor and 13-year resident of Prince Edward County, who now calls North Carolina home. He can be reached at jwilson@catowba.edu.

To submit a letter to the editor please email Editor@FarmvilleHerald.com

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Bucking the trend

Our communities are what we make of them — they are a direct reflection of where we put our efforts, time and money. Our actions, or inactions, ultimately determine if this is a place we want to call home. When we shop at a local business we are doing more than supporting that business, we are supporting our community.

Did you know that the majority of dollars spent at a small business in our community stays in our community?

Studies have shown that for every \$100 spent at a locally owned small business, \$64 stays in the local economy, creating jobs and expanding the tax base. For every \$100 spent at a national chain or franchise store, only \$14 remains in the community. Shopping local is a domino effect that we should all get behind!

Small Business Saturday is officially a program of American Express. Started in 2010 the idea (a great one in my opinion) is to shop at a local, independently-owned



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NOTEBOOK**
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small businesses on Saturday during the holiday weekend. Shopping at local business-

es was down in 2020 and 2021 most likely due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Stay-at-home ordering, easy one-click buys, and free shipping deals stole the holiday shopping thunder in both 2020 and 2021, and unfortunately are now part of the new norm. As a result, sales to small businesses have decreased which has had a significant impact on their ability to remain open or be profitable.

Let's buck that trend this year and create our own domino effect by shopping at a small business in our

community — on Saturday and on a regular basis. Inside this edition you will find pages of local businesses that provide services and goods you are looking for. Shopping at home means you can take it home today, you can put your hands on it and you get what you see (no unwanted surprises)!

Best of all shopping at home is good for you, your neighbor and your community.

BETTY J. RAMSEY is the publisher of *The Farmville Herald*. Her email address is Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilleHerald.com.

Let's give thanks for our ambassador teachers

Topping my "thankful" list in our community this holiday season are Kerensa Smith, Raymond Tubojan and all of their fellow teachers from abroad, working incredibly hard for the children of Prince Edward County public schools.

Ms. Smith, from Jamaica, and Mr. Tubojan, from the Philippines, are among 41 PECPS teachers here via a pair of educational partnership programs which help U.S. schools fill vacancies by offering fully trained teachers visas for 3-5 years. Amidst the desperate post-Covid teacher shortage, they account for about half the vacancies that were filled in our district this year, according to PECPS.

Without these teachers, "we would have higher class sizes, because we wouldn't be able to fill all of our slots," assistant director for curriculum and instruction Dr. Michelle Wallace told me.

The Herald recently wrote a news story about the program. But I want to make sure our community knows these teach-

ers are doing much more than keeping classroom numbers manageable.

All have very strong teaching backgrounds, in countries, notably Jamaica and the Philippines, where education is revered and teaching jobs are highly competitive, sought out by the very best graduates. In the Philippines, for instance, there are 14 applicants for every teaching post.

I know this firsthand how strong they are. Smith taught my daughter Emilia last year in third grade, and Tubojan is her teacher this year in fourth. These are the teachers any parent would want for their child. They run a tight ship, with firm expectations, and know how to keep a classroom focused.

They are well-trained in important areas like phonics and math instruction. Last year, we knew of at least one student who came in several grade levels behind in reading but caught up by the end of the year. Finally (and essentially to academic success) their classrooms are filled with love and joy and singing and phys-



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ical movement. Emilia and my older daughter Aliza have had other teachers in this program, too, and all have been strong. An added bonus is students learn, and get excited about, other cultures.

Their path isn't easy. Imagine leaving family and friends, alone, to move to an unknown town, with a new climate, cuisine, and culture. Then imagine yourself at the front lines of schools where large numbers of students are confronting trauma, difficult home situations and pandemic-related learning loss. And I'm sorry to say they haven't always been treated by community members with the same

respect as other teachers, and the way any teacher deserves.

Smith, now in her fourth year in Prince Edward, told me she remembered those hard first few days. Arriving from Kingston having taught for nearly 10 years, knowing no one, she slept on the floor of an unfurnished apartment. She was frank about the shock of adjusting to a culture where education feels less valued, and teachers aren't always as respected as back home. "Some parents think that because we're from a small island we are lacking in pedagogy," she said, even though her teaching results clearly belie that. The school administration has been supportive. But she can't help but wish some in our community better understood "we're not here to take anyone's job. We're here because we want to educate children, and have children loving school and learning."

Still, like so many, Smith, who is also a published poet and rarely lacks for a smile, has come to love our community.

"Farmville is beautiful," she

said. "I'm a city girl at heart. It took Farmville to slow me down." As for the classroom, "the good thing is children are very receptive. Kids are kids wherever you go. That was an easier transition."

We are lucky Smith and her fellow teachers are here, and that PECPS had this pipeline in place when the teacher shortage hit nationwide. Now we need to keep it. We must make sure they feel supported, stay — and encourage friends and colleagues back home to consider coming here, too.

So if you're among those eager to help our schools, one place to start is to thank these teachers when you see them. Write them a thank-you note. Invite them into your home for a meal.

Maybe we can throw them a parade. That's something on the scale of how much good teaching matters, and how thankful we should be that these good people are part of our community.

JUSTIN POPE is Vice President and Chief of Staff at Longwood University. He can be contacted at popej@longwood.edu.

The christening of 'The Lucky 7'

When the Briery Creek Wildlife Management Area, featuring hundreds of acres of flooded timber for bass fishing and duck hunting, opened in Prince Edward County only three miles from my house, I could see that I would need a boat for both pursuits. I settled on a 14-foot Buddy jon boat that happened to be in stock at the nearby canoe dealer and gave it a rather amateurish camo paint job. This was 30 years ago. From the beginning, outboard motors were prohibited on that lake, so I usually paddled and/or used a small electric trolling motor to get around.

Now during that era, I made some great friends among the hunting students at Hampden-Sydney College, where I taught Spanish. One was from New Orleans, and he was at least a third generation duck hunter accustomed to somehow getting out almost every one of the 60 days of the season down there (we won't raise the specter of

"truancy"), so he had to make a tremendous sacrifice to get educated so far from home.

At least in those days, he didn't have to suffer the torture of receiving photos of his friends and kin showing off heavy straps of ducks every morning of the world on his cell phone. He was full of amazing stories of alligators, great Labs, and ingenious relatives, such as the one who baited a pond in the off season by driving up to the bank at top speed in an old VW Beetle with the trunk lid removed and then slamming on the brakes at the last second to let hundreds of pounds of corn slide into the water. Now that is efficiency!

We took the boat out scouting a couple of weeks before the December split and found a nice grass bed only a couple of feet deep. It was bordered by flooded hardwoods, along what must have been a fence line before the dam was built. This was it. We decided we would come back there for the opening day. Now this was a season in which USFWS had



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reduced the bag limit to three ducks daily, because of poor nesting conditions up north and the resultant low population.

When the day of our hunt finally arrived, we situated the boat among the trees and set out the decoys on the grass bed. Just after legal light, a big mixed flock came in and we both emptied our guns down to the plugs. When we surveyed the damage, we could see three greenwing teal and three mallard drakes floating dead and a fat hen mallard lying on her back and pedaling the air furiously. Uh-oh.

Within seconds, we heard a gas outboard rev up down the

lake, and that could only mean one thing: the game warden, Bill Powers, who of course was authorized to use a gas motor. I was really panicking because I have always adhered very strictly to regulations and was even a certified hunter safety instructor, and I couldn't imagine losing my license — or even my favorite shotgun — and getting fined. What could we do?

With perfect serenity, my Louisiana friend asked, "Got a pocketknife?" I handed him one and what followed is still etched in my memory as if it were yesterday. I promise that in under a minute he breasted out that hen, dropped the filets down the front of his waders, mashed the carcass into the soft mud bottom beneath

our feet, rinsed his hands and the knife, and handed it back to me. His own indelible memory of that moment is my immediate reaction: "Harrito, you've done this before..."

The warden went on up the lake, much to our relief. We decided that the boat should definitely be christened "The Lucky 7," and I have had a decal with that numeral on the bow ever since. I couldn't possibly count the number of times I have taken her out in these decades of hunting, but that time is by far the most memorable.

MIKE WILSON is a former Hampden-Sydney Spanish professor and 13-year resident of Prince Edward County, who now calls North Carolina home. He can be reached at jimwilson@catowba.edu.

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