



RICHARD L. DUNTON/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Thomas R. Farley

Teacher, musician and computer whiz

Tom Farley knew he wanted to become a teacher from his sophomore year on at Virginia Tech. He also started honing his musical skills in college. In more recent years, he delved into computer software design.

"I've always loved history and English and they go together so well," said Farley, a social studies teacher and department chair at Hickory High School. "I've also always loved music and started playing guitar and writing songs in college. The computer interest came from the technology bug that came from being in recording studios and mixing and working with the electronics."

Farley, 49, and a resident of the Thoroughgood section of Virginia Beach, has been teaching in the Chesapeake school system for 27 years, first in Indian River section schools and most recently at Hickory. He also is an adjunct professor at Virginia Wesleyan College.

"I teach all year long, at night and in the summer," Farley said. "I just love it, both with the kids and teaching other teachers."

Farley has had his own band and recorded several CDs, mostly of the acoustic, rock 'n' roll and blues genre. His wife, Tania, has always been his musical partner. The two play weekends throughout the year at the Anchor Inn in Virginia Beach and at Alexander's On the Bay in the summer.

Farley's computer enterprise began about seven years ago, when he and his brother, Woody, started Soft Pubs, a software company that designed software for teachers and administrators in special education. They sold the program to a company in North Carolina, which his brother now works for.

Birthdate: Sept. 15, 1951

Occupation: Teacher for Chesapeake public schools

Hometown: Virginia Beach

What brought you to Chesapeake? My teaching career has always been in the city

Marital status: Married 24 years to Tania I. Farley

Children/pets: None

Hobbies: Golf, movies and computer design

Perfect day off: Fall season; a good round of golf, live music with my wife and friends on the back porch and then dinner at a really nice restaurant

Favorite restaurant and food: Alexander's, Anchor Inn and Centanni's/seafood and Italian

Favorite book and author: "The Norton Anthology of Poetry"

Favorite movie: There's no way; I have sooooo many!

Favorite TV show: I don't watch much programmed TV; "Who's Line Is It Anyway" is a lot of fun; the Olympics are great.

Favorite sport: NASCAR

Favorite game: Poker with the guys

Favorite vacation retreat: Any place with a mountain or ocean view and great room service

Biggest irritant: Rude people

Last smart thing you did: Got out of the software business

Last dumb thing you did: Putting friends, family music on the back burner because of business

The thing you can't resist: Finding time to have some laughs with my students

Achievement you're most proud of: My marriage, my music and my teaching