

# Blawenburg Beacon

*Blawenburg Reformed Church*

*Serving God and the Community Since 1832*



July 3, 2026

Dear friends,

For those who haven't met me, I am Rev. Dr. Donald Price. I've been asked to serve as Blawenburg Reformed Church's part-time Transitional Pastor. You may wonder: 1) Who am I? 2) What does a Transitional Pastor do? and 3) How does this differ from what an Interim Pastor does?

I am an ordained PCUSA Minister of the Word and Sacrament who served as a missionary in Brazil for 20 years, where I taught Missions in a seminary and supported Brazilian missionaries. You will likely hear me talk about Brazil from time to time!

When I returned to the States from Brazil, I served FPC Ambler as a Parish Associate and four nonprofits in senior leadership roles where I both led strategic planning initiatives and executed those plans. I also received Transitional Pastor training so that I can apply those skills to the church setting.

Since the PCUSA and the RCA freely exchange clergy as sister denominations, I was admitted to Classis as a temporary member so I can connect with Classis as your pastor and also serve as BRC's Supervisor after a short period of acclimation to Classis and the RCA.

What does a Transitional Pastor do? How is a Transitional Pastor different from an Interim Pastor?

## Core Differences

	<b>Interim Pastor</b>	<b>Transitional Pastor</b>
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Hold down the fort and keep church operations running.	Guide the church through transformation and prepare it for a new era.
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Avoids "rocking the boat" or tackling deep-seated issues.	Confronts past wounds, relational conflict, and systemic issues head-on.
<b>Vision</b>	Maintains the previous pastor's vision until a new one arrives.	Assesses the church's identity and helps clarify a new vision for the future.
<b>Tenure</b>	Usually shorter (2–10 months).	Longer and structured (12–24 months) depending on the church's needs.

## Spring 2026

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Simply put, a Transitional Pastor continues to do all the things a Pastor does, like congregational care, leading worship, and church administration while also helping the church envision its desired future and how it will get there from here. When I met with the Search Committee, I told them there were four questions I would work with the church to answer as your transitional pastor: 1) Where are we? 2) How did we get here? 3) Where do we want to go? 4) How do we get there from here?

Let's prayerfully seek the answers to these questions together.

Sincerely,

Pastor Don



Following is a picture of a snow sculpture done this past winter by an architect on his street in Brooklyn. This architect has no affiliation with our church. Does this sculpture remind you of anyone you know??? Email the church office with your thoughts.



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## Blawenburg Beacon

A publication of

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#### Administrator

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#### Beacon Editors

Barbara Pavlicek

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#### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - 8am - 1pm

Tuesday - 8am - 1pm

Wednesday - 8:00- 1pm

Thursday - 8:am- 1pm

Friday - 8am - 12pm

## Local Online Magazine Interviews Dave Cochran

*The New Jersey Voyager, an online magazine featuring inspiring stories about local individuals and small businesses recently interviewed Dave Cochran. Following is the interview in its entirety.*

Today we'd like to introduce you to David Cochran.

**Hi David, we're thrilled to have a chance to learn your story today. So, before we get into specifics, maybe you can briefly walk us through how you got to where you are today?**

I grew up in a small town called Linwood on the mainland near Atlantic City, NJ. A residential town, it was a great place to work and play. After graduating from Ocean City High School, I ventured off to Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) to become a teacher. I stayed in the Mercer/Somerset County area, teaching in Hopewell and Lawrence Township before taking the first of several administrative positions in the Montgomery Township School District. My wife, Evelyn, and I have lived in the Village of Blawenburg for over 50 years. We have two daughters and five grandchildren.

When I was young, I loved to write, and I wanted to be a teacher. After much thought, I selected education as my career. This was a good choice for me, and I became a teacher, school administrator, curriculum leader, adult school director, and college professor. All the while, I never lost sight of the other goal in my life—writing. In high school and college, I was the sports editor of each school's newspaper. Later, I spent three years in graduate school, culminating in the writing of a dissertation for my Doctorate in Education.

For several years, I wrote articles for youth publications, and then my adult education work led me to form a company, Fruition Publications, to prepare courses presented on cassette tapes and workbooks. Following this, I worked with a partner to publish a newsletter to support multimedia software called *HyperStudio*. Next came a science magazine for middle school students called *Spigot Science*.

Once I retired from educational work, I wanted to do more writing. I have lived in an old house in an old village, which is on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, for over 50 years. I have also been an active participant in Blawenburg Reformed Church all that time. When I was the new "kid" in town, I heard the "oldtimers" tell their stories about living in the historic village of Blawenburg. In 2018, I realized that the oldtimers were gone, and now I was the oldtimer. I now write a blog called *Tales of Blawenburg* to capture stories of the village. Little did I know how well this would take root. Soon I will publish Blog 122. I've learned more about this one-square-mile village than I could ever have imagined. Its history is now in writing online ([www.blawenburgtales.com](http://www.blawenburgtales.com)), and it will become a book in the future.

Blawenburg Reformed Church ([www.blawenburgchurch.org](http://www.blawenburgchurch.org)) is an important part of my life. Its members are my second family. I have served as Deacon, Elder, and Vice President of Consistory (the church board). I have written two versions of the church history and currently lead its Communications Team. The church has been the centerpiece of the village since 1832 and of my life since I moved to Blawenburg.

Most of my writing has been non-fiction. I believe you CAN teach old dogs new tricks, and I wanted to try my hand at writing fiction. In 2023, I published *Where Are They? The Missing Men from Marlowe Mansion*, a comedy/mystery about a mismatched pair who try to solve a 20-year-old cold case to get the big reward. The second edition is available on Amazon and IngramSpark. A sequel is in the works.

Recently, I began another blog, *The Daze of Our Lives*, about how we deal with the many events that affect our lives. Links to it and *Tales of Blawenburg* are on my website: [dcochran.net](http://dcochran.net).

## Special Interest—continued

**So let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?**

My life has been filled with teaching and writing, and like most lives, it has taken unpredictable twists and turns. I didn't get every position I sought, nor did I expect to live in one place for so long. Once I read a poster that said, "Bloom where you're planted." I feel blessed that I have bloomed in a place that means everything to me and has helped me produce in so many ways for so long.

**Thanks for sharing that. So, maybe next you can tell us a bit more about your work?**

While I have retired from professional work as an educator, I write books, blogs, and articles for other publications. Within this writing, I still consider myself a teacher.

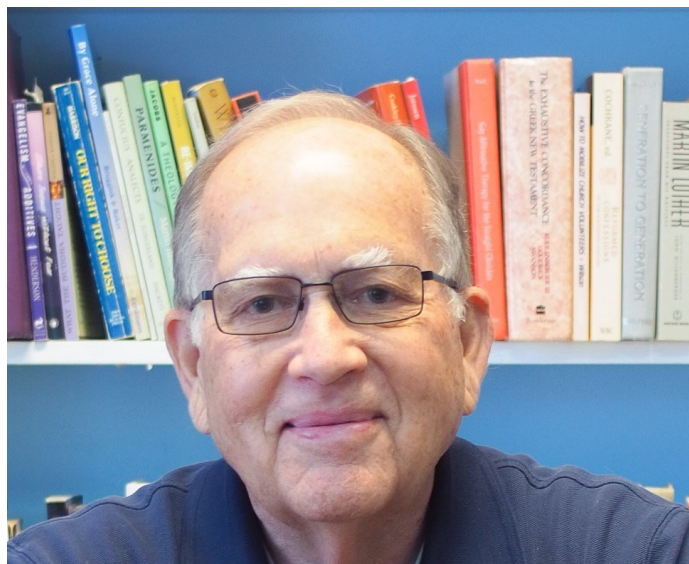
I also volunteer my talents maintaining the Blawenburg Reformed Church website and serving the church in other ways. A complete resume of my writing experience is on my website: [dcochran.net](http://dcochran.net).

**Networking and finding a mentor can have such a positive impact on one's life and career. Any advice?**

I have had many mentors over the years, especially in my formative years. My mother was a piano teacher, and listening to how she related to children over the years led me to a career in education.

Several other teachers throughout my schooling also influenced my choice. I credit Mr. Walters, my high school newspaper advisor, with helping me meet with success in writing. This was my first publishing experience. Several college professors, undergraduate and graduate, helped me add clarity to my writing. Perhaps my greatest mentors were the various people who were my editors. Whether they were peers, teachers, or professional editors, they showed me a better way to write things.

My best advice for others, no matter what their vocation or avocation, is to listen to the advice you receive, especially from those with years of experience. You may not agree with all of it, but much of it will help you improve. I am grateful to the many people who have led me to where I am today in life's journey.





Nancy's friend and colleague, Andrew Smith, preached on March 22.

## Anika Prince Confirmation - April 19



Anika and her family. (Preetham was on his way!)



VP of Consistory, Mark Smith, posed questions to Anika concerning her profession of faith.



Anika professed her faith before the congregation.



Laying on the Hands by the Elders - Sam Prince (proud dad), Nancy Curtis, Mark Smith, Sonya Hunt

## Maundy Thursday Service - March 26



Chaplain Nancy Curtis led the informal service in fellowship hall.



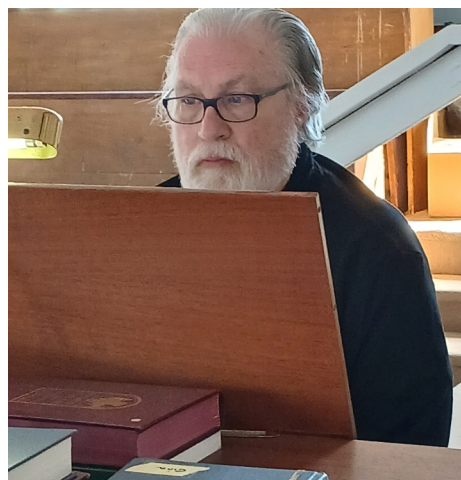
Listening to the service are David Curtis, Bernice Van Nostrand, Peggy Querec, and Sonya Hunt.

## Palm Sunday - March 29

Using the words of Matthew, chapters 26 & 27, the Passion of Christ was told on Palm Sunday. Members of our congregation shared in the readings.



Nancy led us in worship.  
The paraments are red on Palm Sunday.



Kevin is rather intent at the organ. We are so privileged to have him in our midst.

# Worship—continued

## Palm Sunday, continued

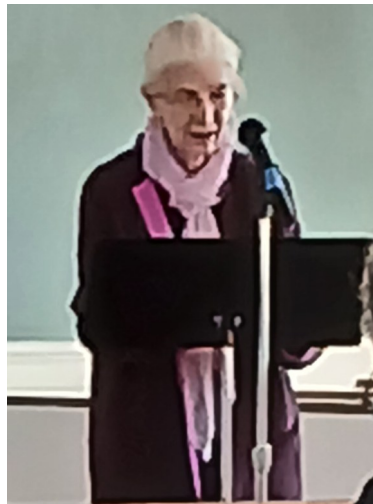
### The Readers



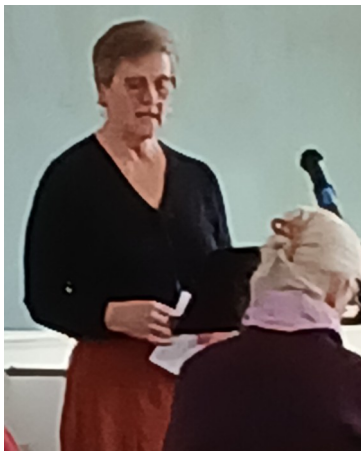
Lee Bekir



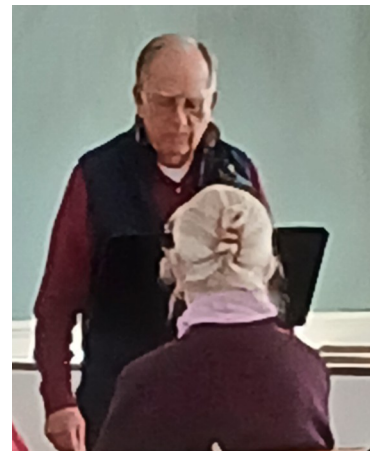
Evelyn Cochran



Gina Williams



Nancy Curtis



Dave Cochran

# Worship—continued

## Easter - April 5



The flowers were given in honor and in memory of loved ones. Jean Beachell's handiwork is ever apparent.



Nancy delivered the Easter message.

## Pentecost - May 24



Nancy read from scripture on Pentecost Sunday



Angie Rebert spoke about the workings of the Holy Spirit.



Alan Taback gave testimony.



Lee Bekir's composition entitled, *Come, Lord Jesus*, was sung by Laura Warren, with Kevin Daly on the keyboard and Lee playing guitar.

## Worship—continued



Barb Antoniewicz sang *The Lord's Prayer*.



Rev. Don Price, our Transitional Pastor, led us in worship on his first Sunday, June 7.



We celebrated Bernice's 90th birthday on June 7. Seated with her are her cousin, Phyllis, and friend, Lisa Hunt.



The sanctuary is looking good these days. In addition to the new carpet (see pages 19 & 20), two old chairs have been re-upholstered and they look brand new!

# Fellowship

April 19



We celebrated Anika after her confirmation ceremony. Left: Sonya presented her with a gift from the church.

## Maundy Thursday



Nancy not only led the service, she also made soup!  
Laura Warren and Alan Taback are about to enjoy!



More hungry friends: Sonya Hunt, Barb Antoniewicz, and Angie Rebert

# Fellowship— continued

## Easter



Rita Das and her grandson Karanveer



From left: Hilda Cavanaugh,  
Catherine Murphy, Elmi Hill,  
Evelyn Cochran

## May 31

With both sadness and love, we said goodbye to Yuri Pugliese and Ben and Maria (Carvalho) Van Haitisma on May 31. Our gift to them was a framed photo collage of the church. Yuri is moving to Sarasota, Florida, and Ben and Marie are headed to Costa Rica to do mission work.



Sonya, Yuri, Maria, Ben



Sonya presents Ben and Maria  
with our gift.

## Birthdays

### July

- 2 Kevin Clancy
- 12 Lisa Hunt
- 16 Adelaide Blodgett  
Mark Smith
- 20 Cheryl Miller
- 24 Ronell Lewis
- 25 Preetham Prince
- 27 Pete Weiland

### August

- 6 Anna Bekir  
Sue Perkins
- 11 Nancy Meyer
- 18 Barbara VanLiew
- 19 Tom Hunt
- 22 Bala Krishnan
- 24 Andrea Eberly  
Ophelia Lewis
- 26 Akemi Pugliese
- 31 Rick White

### September

- 1 Don Price
- 8 Peggy Querec
- 15 Ginny Doremus
- 17 Sandy Morales Price  
Rita Das
- 28 Jean Beachell  
Meg Osander

### October

- 2 Maxwell Blodgett
- 3 Flora Blodgett
- 4 Karanveer Das
- 23 Evelyn Cochran

# Fellowship—continued

## May 31, continued



This church never celebrates without cake!

We also took the opportunity to thank Mark Smith and Nancy Curtis for their tireless work over the past year and a half when we were without a minister.



From left: Mark, Nancy, Sam Prince (who spoke eloquently)

## June 7



We continued to celebrate Bernice's 90th birthday with delicious cake made by Nancy Curtis.

## We Honor and Celebrate Bernice Van Nostrand on Her 90th Birthday



*During the service on June 7 (Bernice's actual birthday), Barb Reid paid tribute to her. Following are Barb's words in their entirety.*

Today we celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of a woman filled with grace and beauty both inside and out, a lady in the truest sense of the word.

I have known Bernice Van Nostrand for all of my adult life and most of my childhood. She was my Sunday school teacher. Just thinking about how long ago that was is painful, isn't it Bernice? For both of us!

Bernice did an amazing job of successfully raising three lovely daughters. *Although*, mischievousness seemed to follow the middle one and me whenever Bernice and Mait went out of town. Don't ask, Bernice. You don't want to know. For those who don't know who the middle one is, picture the person who spent a great deal of time in the pulpit this past year and a half. Besides Ginny, Nancy, and Barbara, there are others who think of her as "mom". And I consider myself one of them. Bernice...you are an inspiration to me in countless ways, and I would like to touch on three of them.

First. The Teacher. Bernice taught fifth grade in Orchard Road School, here in Montgomery Township for I'm guessing around 35 years. Right out of college in 1980 and armed with a teaching certificate myself, I began my career by subbing in Montgomery. On the rare occasions when Bernice was out, I found myself in her classroom, an environment filled with comfort and safety and love. When my niece was getting ready to enter the fifth grade, my sister requested and got Bernice as her daughter's teacher. To this day, Kelli reminds me of her good experience and lasting impression of the fifth grade. Three years later her son was going into fifth grade and again my sister requested Bernice, only to be told that Bernice had retired. That was a sad day for Karen Zimmerman! And an unfortunate day for her son, Chris.

continued

In the role of teacher, I know Bernice best as the Children and Worship teacher here at the Blawenburg Village School. She has been teaching Bible to our little ones for much longer than I can remember. Seeing her dedication and love inspired me to join her one-person team and now I have the privilege of teaching with her. I can only hope that I have half of the gifts and the patience that she has to demonstrate the love of Christ to these children, both by teaching and by example. Every year at this time we look at each other and say, “Are we doing this another year?” And this year, just like every other, Bernice said, “I think I have another year in me.”

Next. The Quilter. I can’t think about Bernice without thinking about her quilting. The exquisiteness of her work is incredible and her patience is not to be believed. Here is an example of her handiwork. And remember that fifth grade kid I was just talking about? Five years ago I asked Bernice to make her a quilt so that I could give it to her at her baby shower. Many an afternoon I rocked my great nephew and that quilt was wrapped around both of us. What truly inspires me about Bernice and her quilts is what she does with her work once it is complete. Many years ago Bernice envisioned the “comfort quilt”, a quilt given in love to someone who most needs it. Usually the person is quite ill. This is one of Bernice’s comfort quilts. Don Terhune found comfort in this quilt until the day that he died. This lady, filled with kindness and compassion, made that happen.

And finally. Servant of God. Faithful Believer. Nancy refers to her mother as a faithful prayer warrior. When Nancy was quite young and still living at home, she was facing the possible diagnosis of Hodgkin’s Disease. I say possible because I understand that even her doctor wasn’t comfortable with the diagnosis. But it was scary to be sure. And Bernice prayed. And prayed. And she never lost faith. And the outcome was positive. Remember the mischievousness.

When her youngest daughter was a senior in high school, she was involved in a horrific car accident. Barbara was in a coma and it was unknown if she would survive. Bernice and Mait spent days and nights right next to her, talking to her and praying for her. Many days later Barbara came out of the coma, but she had months of recovery and rehabilitation ahead of her. And Bernice continued to pray. And pray. She never lost faith.

Most of us here know that Bernice’s husband, Mait, had an irreparable stroke in 2012 and was cared for at the Foothill Acres Nursing Center until he passed away three years later in March of 2015. In all those years, Bernice rarely left his side, being both his advocate and prayer warrior. During Hurricane Sandy she slept on a cot in his room. And she prayed. And prayed. With him and for him. She never lost faith.

This Saturday Bernice and her family will attend a memorial service for her grandson who passed away this past December. Alan faced challenges for a good part of his life. Not long after graduating from college he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Thankfully his life was saved, but he was left permanently blind. He moved with his parents to Georgia, but the rest of his family and his friends were here. So he began to spend summers here in New Jersey, living with his grandmother. They watched many movies together. And attended church and Bible Study together. In recent years Alan’s health declined and he was no longer able to come north. And Bernice wept for him. And she prayed. When he died in December she wept a lot. But she also continued to pray. And she never lost faith.

And so today we celebrate. We celebrate this beautiful woman who is filled with grace. A lady who has enriched the lives of each and every one of us. Happy birthday, Bernice.

# Blawenburg Village School

## Blawenburg Village School

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Most preschool teachers of pre-K students have their children journal. Mrs. Garhart is no exception. One day this spring she asked her children to draw their favorite Bible story. Marshall (left) drew a cross. Ella (right) drew a picture of a tree whose branches contained nests where the birds found homes so that they could be safe. The story, of course was *The Mustard Seed*. Anna, (in the middle) drew an interesting picture. She entitled it *The Muddy Road*. Can anyone guess what story Barb Reid told that day?

## Graduation 2026





Update from

## DENISE KINGDOM



**May 2026**

Dear Friends,

I pray these spring days are bringing you joy. I'm grateful to share another reflection from someone who traveled with me to South Africa earlier this year.

Vanessa Greene, a Grand Rapids native and former Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Hope College, now serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute. Below is her reflection, originally shared with her board and partners.



### ***Rooted in Heritage, Rising in Purpose***

*By Vanessa Greene*

*In February 2026, I traveled with our Program Manager, Denise Kingdom, and one of our midwifery students to Botshabelo, South Africa. We returned not just to a place, but to a deeper connection with community, care, and heritage.*

*continued*

## Missions—continued

*Botshabelo is home to more than 30,000 orphans and 15,500 vulnerable children—many living with the lasting impacts of apartheid and the disruption of family and community systems. In the midst of these challenges, Setshabelo Family and Child Services (SFCS) stands as a powerful example of love in action—placing children not in orphanages, but in nurturing homes within their own communities.*

*One of the most moving moments of our journey was an intergenerational womb circle, where women ages 13 to 70 gathered across continents and generations. We came as learners, sitting at the feet of Bantu traditions in maternal, prenatal, and postpartum care. Our team also shared evidence-based practices that support bonding, affirmation, and movement for birthing people.*

*This experience was more than a visit—it was an exchange of wisdom, a reclaiming of connection, and a reminder of who we are. By learning, sharing, and building together across the diaspora, we strengthen our commitment to health equity—both globally and here at home in Grand Rapids.*

Your prayers and generosity made this possible. Through her presence, Vanessa has become a powerful voice and advocate for the South Africa Orphan Project.



## What a Storm!

During a heavy windstorm on March 16, a tree near the BVS playground came down across the parking lot, went through a window, and damaged the siding and railing on Cook Hall. Power was out for two days, forcing BVS to cancel school. Many thanks to Jean Beachell, who handled the insurance claim and arranged for all the repairs.



Not what we expected to see upon arrival to work.



Clem's Ornamental Ironworks replaced the railings.



A beautiful job on the railings



Pujols Roofing and Siding resided the front of Cook Hall.



And just like that, Cook Hall has a new façade.

# Campus Life—continued

## The Sanctuary Gets New Carpeting

With a generous gift from the family of Rita Das, the interior of the church looks marvelous! Installed by Flemington Commercial Flooring, it looks much the same as the old carpet with one notable exception. There are no moth holes! Many thanks to the Das family, as well as to Evelyn Cochran, who spearheaded the project.



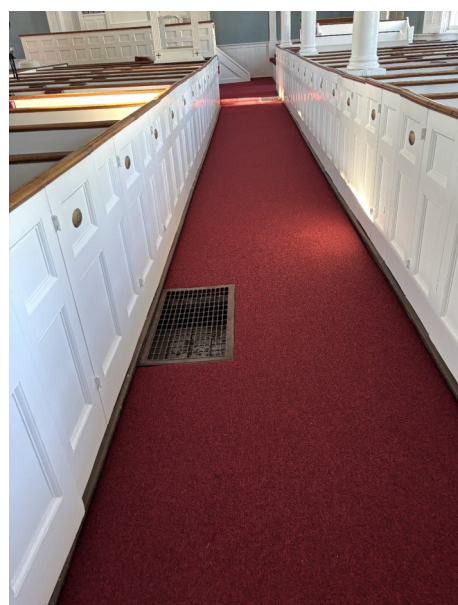
Bob Lewis helps to take the pulpit down.  
Alan Taback and Ben Van Haitisma get ready to move the table.



Sam Prince stored a bench in one of the pews.



Sam and Ben move a very large, heavy table to safety.



How beautiful!

# Campus Life—continued



The stairs behind the pulpit  
Perfect!



Steve “Books” Boynton, Dave Cochran,  
Alan Taback, and Joe Pavlicek restored the  
furniture to their rightful places.



Dave and Alan



Books, Jim Beachell, Dave, and Alan

## The Hard Work of the Cemetery Team

Through your donations, they have:

- ◆ trimmed shrubs around tombstones;
- ◆ trimmed tree branches along the upper driveway;
- ◆ sprayed the poison ivy;
- ◆ placed over 70 flags provided by the Hillsborough VFW on the military graves with the help of the boy scouts;
- ◆ received new emblem markers for the veterans' graves thanks to the Hillsborough VFW;
- ◆ hired a tree service to take down some trees;
- ◆ removed the old rusted fence.

This team will continue to work throughout the summer to complete more projects. Special thanks to Jean Beachell, Evelyn Cochran, Elmi Hill, Sonya Hunt, and Eric Perkins.



The Scouts placed flags on the graves of veterans in observance of Memorial Day. Elmi Hill and Jean Beachell were in attendance.