

Making Technology a 'Breeze'

By Bill Massey

Given the folklore of high-tech companies being started in California garages by whiz-kid prodigies who then, through their interactive genius, created entire new American industries with previously unimagined production efficiencies, Robert Naylor, president of Bay Breeze Technology Center in Nassawadox, shouldn't be on the Eastern Shore. The "research triangle" of North Carolina, perhaps; maybe the silicon corridors of Boston or Washington, and definitely all the "silicon valleys" in California.

But, Nassawadox?

As Naylor explained, "Before I started Bay Breeze Technology Center, I'd often fly to the West Coast and see first-hand the fast way of living, with all the big salaries and stock options, but I wasn't impressed with either that lifestyle or the high cost of living that quickly followed. I knew that one day I would start my own company and it would be on the Eastern Shore."

(Continued From Previous Page)

ately understood the efficiencies they were creating. Consequently, by the time I was a senior I had become the company's purchasing manager: buying gold, casting rings, dental lab supplies, even plaster for the teeth. You name it, I bought it all on the computers. As I said earlier, it really made a big impact on me — how computers had the potential to, if not change the world, at least greatly increase business production."

After graduating from high school in 1983, Naylor attended Temple University while working a 40-hour week for the Keystone Water Company, parlaying his widening range of technical skills with his ever-growing business acumen. He rose to chief information officer for Keystone before embarking on a career which spanned several companies as a specialist in both design and installation of business hardware systems, as well as the appropriate software.

Because of the fluidity in his chosen field of computer systems design and installation, Naylor stayed on the move, though never forgetting the less complicated, endless days of pleasant living which he remembered on the Eastern Shore.

Consequently, in 1992, he purchased a 10-acre farm on Jacobus Creek near Bridgetown. However, because his technical skills remained

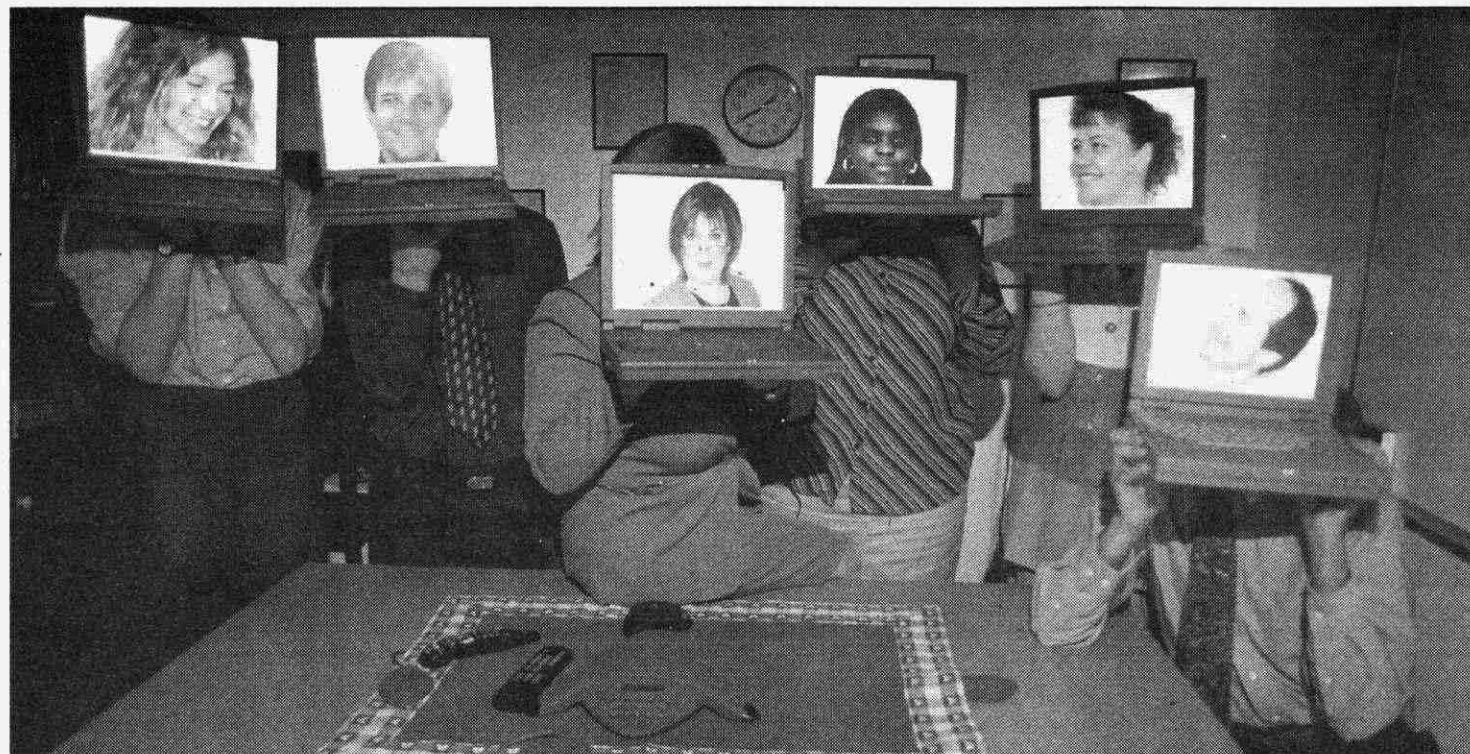


Photo by Erin Anderson

Using some of their computer know-how (from left), Lori Smith, Craig R. Howell, Amy Short, Tyquisha Summerville, Kelly Hewett, and Bruce Penland hold laptops with their images in front of their head in the conference room they use to go over training data for Bay Breeze.

Not that Naylor, 36, is exactly a country boy. Born and raised in the Philadelphia suburb of North Hills, he described his parents' financial status as lower middle class, family-oriented and loving.

"We didn't have a lot," he offered, "but still each year my father found a way to take us all on a small family va-

cation. That meant a lot to him and my mother, and us kids, too. One year we all came down to Tom's Cove Campground, and I never forgot it. I thought it was the greatest place in the world."

When Naylor was in high school in the early '80s the world of high tech was just beginning to bud. Microsoft hadn't even incubated, and Intel was

more or less still a computer chip in Andy Grove's eye.

"I got a job where my sister worked, in a dental lab, after school," he continued, "and the place was being integrated with IBM Series One Computers. Well, I couldn't get enough of them. I immedi-

(Continued on Next Page)

APRIL 25, 2001 • EASTERN SHORE POST • 5

constantly in demand, he could only, at best, spend select weekends there.

"Then, in March of '98," he said, "I was offered the position of director of technology and information for Personic Software in Brisbane, California; and this, though I didn't know it at the time, brought me to where I wanted to be full-time — on the Eastern Shore.

"Personic Software," he continued, "writes software for recruiting programs. Now, software," he emphasized, "is only as good as the person's ability to use it. With Personic, the creation and installation of their customized software is their core competency — not the training. So, at Bay Breeze Technology what we provide is the professional services to the staffing and recruitment industries with the emphasis on training. In other words, we are an outsourcing business partner of Personic, a private corporation which generates in excess of \$30 million a year in revenue."

In October '99, Naylor incorporated Bay Breeze Technology, and the following January opened for business in Nassawadox. He started with two employees, but now has eight full-time, and one consultant.

Among Bay Breeze Technology's



Photo by Erin Anderson

Robert Naylor is reflected from his TV by one of his video conference cameras in his office.

clients are Nortel Networks, Disney Studios, Eli Lilly, University of Maryland, Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters, Wells Fargo Bank, and Blue Cross.

"We've traveled to Argentina, Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombia, and England," he added, "plus we've worked with companies in 24 states, and Australia."

Of his employees, Naylor said, "It was always my intention to use local people in my business. Specifically, I wanted to provide jobs with upward mobility for college students who excelled and wanted to stay on the Shore. Laurie Ames Smith, who was born and raised in Hare Valley, for example, is my ideal profile for a candi-

date. She graduated top of her class at Longwood, has held leadership positions, and has excellent written and verbal skills as well as public speaking skills and a strong work ethic."

Other recent local additions to his company that fit this criteria are Kelly Hewett of New Church, Tyquisha Summerville of Parksley, and Bruce Penland and Craig Howell of Onancock.

By the end of this year Naylor hopes to have expanded enough to hire an additional four to six full-time employees. However, he's hesitant to say whether his company will remain in Nassawadox, or even Northampton County.

"Right now," he said, "we're at a point where, fortunately, we are growing, and I'd like to further invest in Nassawadox and Northampton County by purchasing an existing building and creating additional office space nearby, though we may have to consider relocating the business if we're unable to purchase the property due to a pending variance. But," he smiled, "we are very optimistic because of the strong support of the Nassawadox Business Association and town council, and that's one of the reasons I chose Nassawadox in the first place. It's got a hometown feel, and yet provides full services. And," Naylor concluded, "that's just how I want to fit in."