

## **“Wenham Straw Babies” by Susan Doughty**

We moved to Wenham 24 years ago and were delighted to be near a park and a tree farm.

Always loving animals and nature, I abandoned the unpacking process and walked our then dog, Daniel in the Tree Farm. I met an older gentleman tending to a grapevine. Moments later, it was abundantly clear that he was extremely informed and experienced with flora and fauna.

After explaining we had just moved in that day, he was kind enough to offer a brief history of the Wenham Swamp walk and invite my family to join the next one scheduled. It was a beautiful day on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1994 and the conversation flowed. He was fascinating to talk to and I could have stayed there all day. Besides, I was away from the moving boxes. I just couldn't figure out why he kept looking at my feet at intervals during the conversation. I chalked it up to the goofy looking, funky colored flip flops I was wearing. Not being very enthusiastic about computers, I was thrilled with my new acquaintance, a walking encyclopedia named Albie who answered all my gardening questions with ease.

Finally I looked at my feet to explore what might be eliciting his attention. With that, Albie stated, "Excuse me, but you are standing on my baby asparagus plants. MYSTERY SOLVED, but in my defense, they were under a layer of straw. Over the years, Albie Dodge would visit us in our yard, sit a spell and share great stories. Can't imagine talking about Wenham history without his name coming up.

Susan Doughty/Contented Wenham Resident.