

Meet Jordy Howard

For the Love of Caumsett

cover story

By **Janet Barone**, Caumsett Foundation President

The Howard family has been residents of the North Shore since the early 1930s. Jordy grew up close to extended family and loved working with his Uncle Ott repairing older homes. His affection of historic buildings continued over the years, and he has been able to fulfill his life's passion of working on historic properties with his successful twenty-year-old business, Harbor Home Improvement. Jordy was thrilled when he and his wife, Stephanie, were able to move to their current home in Laurel Hollow, a restored barn where they now live with their two grown children, Henry and Charlotte.



L-R: Caumsett Foundation Board Members, Bob Gannon (Garden Chair), Jordy Howard (Buildings Chair), Janet Barone (Foundation President), Kate Singer (Showhouse Design Chair), and Volunteer David Almeida (History Committee Member) in front of the Summer Cottage

After attending East Woods School as a second-generation student (Jordy's grandparents helped to found the school in 1946), Jordy went on to attend Avon Old Farms boarding school in Connecticut. Stephanie attended Cold Spring Harbor High School then Hartwick College.

Their children, Henry and Charlotte graduated from Cold Spring Harbor High School. Henry is following in his father's footsteps working for his company and Charlotte is currently attending Indiana University in Bloomington. After leaving a corporate job at Lexis-Nexis, Stephanie started a personal bookkeeping business that she named Laurel Bookkeeping Services.

Over the years, Jordy and Stephanie have been involved members of the community. For years Stephanie was involved with Save the Children Long Island Council and the Cold Spring Harbor High School Booster Club. Jordy also lent his expertise to the Booster Club acting as their "jack of all trades" and has been a board member of the Caumsett Foundation since 2015.

The Caumsett Foundation is recognized throughout New York State as a model "friends group." The Foundation works closely with the New York State Parks Department with the common goal of supporting and enhancing Caumsett State Historic Park

Preserve. Formed by interested local citizens in 1997, every dollar donated goes directly towards ongoing restoration projects, educational, cultural, and environmental programs in the park. Jordy was thrilled to be a part of this worthwhile organization.

Caumsett is an incredibly special place to the Howards. "We have many happy family memories of time spent at Caumsett." Stephanie would take Henry and Charlotte there when they were young. Try as she might, Stephanie could never get the kids to sit in their red wagon. The kids would not tolerate "all of the sitting." They'd rather be out running and exploring the park. The children loved the open space and racing to the iconic beech tree or as they called it "gum drop tree." Once there, Henry and Charlotte would enjoy going inside the magical shape of the tree and spending time in the field surrounding it. They thought this was the best spot for a picnic! Once Henry and Charlotte were old enough, the whole family would run down to the beach and jog back up. Henry and Charlotte felt so happy at Caumsett. To them, it was and still is a space to run, roll down hills and see the horses.

As a board member, Jordy immediately began using his construction expertise to help with Foundation projects and joined the Building Committee. He is now overseeing all building projects and making necessary repairs on the buildings that the Founda-

tion currently leases from the State – the Winter Cottage, the Engineer's Cottage, and the Summer Cottage. Rental income funds maintenance on these and other projects. Previous projects he has been involved with in the park are the restoration of the Walled Garden, Polo and Dairy Barns, the adaptive reuse of the new classrooms, and the beach berm restoration which the Foundation secured a grant to rebuild after it was washed away during Superstorm Sandy.

Currently, Jordy is overseeing the restoration of the Summer Cottage. The Foundation hired contractor Alden Bailey, a firm located in Connecticut with experience in historic homes, to complete the work on this project, which includes the replacement of its slate roof and copper gutters, masonry, and carpentry repairs, and complete interior restoration. Private foundations, local donors, a New York State grant, and the Caumsett Foundation together are funding this large \$1 million+ project. The Cottage is in extreme disrepair and without the current extensive restoration, would fall to the wrecking ball. When construction is complete, it will be the home of a Designer Showhouse.

The Summer Cottage is a two-story brick 5,300 square foot residence designed in the Colonial Revival style containing both Georgian and Federal-era detailing. When it was built in 1939, the estate was faced with the increased need to house guests and the numerous staff they traveled with. Construction was started and completed just months later with a "two-fold" design. One section was built as a normal house for the guest family, and a connected structure provided housing for domestic workers featuring smaller bedrooms and common bathrooms. The renowned Olmsted Brothers were hired to create the new land-

scaping and drew inspiration from the traditional landscapes of an English Country Manor.

The Caumsett Designer Showhouse will be presented in the Summer Cottage beginning in early October. The Foundation is in negotiations with more than twenty top interior designers and decorative artists from the New York metropolitan area who will transform the structure into a decorating masterpiece. The Cottage will be opened to the public for a period of six weeks with an opening party scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd. The Summer Cottage remains one of the most architecturally significant historic buildings at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve.

It is the Howard family's hope that the North Shore community will join them in supporting the Caumsett Foundation's work in protecting and preserving what is no doubt one of the jewels in the vast New York State parks system.

To find out more about the Foundation and Showhouse, you can visit: www.caumsettfoundation.org.



Jordy picking out slate for the Summer Cottage roof



Jordy examining the wood paneling in the Summer Cottage dining room



Howard Family



The three George Howards!



New roof construction on Summer Cottage



Jordy walking horses



Howard's Christmas



Summer Cottage circa 1940



"Gum Drop Tree"