

## Richard Good

## bio

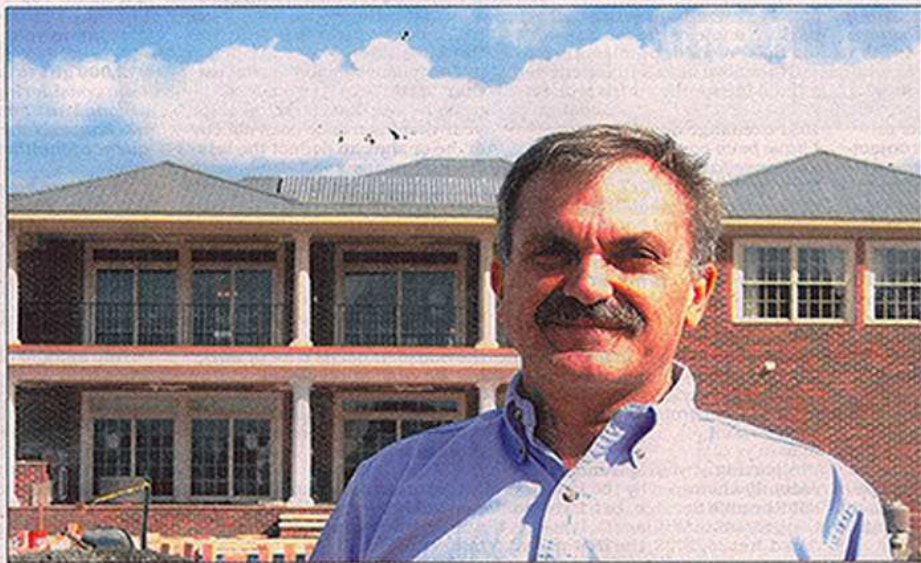
**Name of business**  
Solar Services Inc.

**Hometown**  
Longfield,  
Kent,  
England

**Age** 54

**Profession**  
Marine  
engineer  
by training;  
solar-  
engineering  
business  
since 1985.

**Hobbies**  
Flying  
planes and  
helicopters,  
travel,  
reading,  
gardening



VICTORIA HECHT | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

By Victoria Hecht  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

**RICHARD GOOD** wishes more people thought like one of his forward-thinking clients, a Norfolk grandmother who installed a solar hot water and solar electric system, plus other energy-saving features, in a role-modeling move for her grandchildren.

Harnessing the sun's energy is more than a business for Good, president and owner of Virginia Beach-based Solar Services Inc. (solarservices.com). It's a passion that drives the Chesapeake resident.

In the mid-1980s, when Reagan's administration ended solar-energy tax incentives launched in response to the '70s oil crunch, Good went against the grain and launched his own solar-industry business.

He'd already worked for a year as production manager of the now-defunct Solar One before starting his company in his garage. When times



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were tight, he delivered pizzas to keep the dream alive.

Today, Solar Services Inc. employs 17 people and has offices in Front Royal, Va., as well as Alberta, Canada, and on Seahawk Circle at the Beach.

This year, the English-born former marine engineer is bringing sun power to The Mothership, Homearama 2008's "green home."

Twenty-two photovoltaic cells generate energy for the 6,571-square-foot Miller Custom Homes house at Ashville Park. Builder Chuck Miller promises that it will cost no more than \$115 a month to power the home.

Homearama runs through Oct. 19 at the Beach.

**What attracted you to the solar industry?**

I took solar-engineering classes at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, back in 1977 while working

for the Canadian Coast Guard. I was intrigued by the idea of harnessing all that free energy, particularly in a climate where the temperature was often minus 30 to minus 40 degrees.

**What are the benefits of solar energy for a homeowner?**

Solar energy can be utilized to generate most of the hot water we consume, accounting for about 25 percent of our household energy consumption. The Appraisal Institute and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage claim a solar water heater adds about 200 percent of its value to a home, making it the No. 1 home improvement. Solar electric systems can be used to generate electricity to reduce utility bills, and homeowners may soon be able to sell renewable energy credits.

There is a federal tax credit of up to \$2,000 for installing a solar system, which is set to expire this year. Solar pool

heating is a great use of solar energy. A swimming pool is a big investment used for about three months a year, but with a solar pool heater we can extend that to five to seven months.

**Is Hampton Roads turning on to solar?**

Although the use of solar energy is mainstream in many parts of the world, it is still very much an oddity here, and many of the existing systems in Hampton Roads were installed back in the '70s and '80s. The use of solar energy in Germany is so widespread you cannot turn around without seeing multiple systems on commercial and residential buildings, yet Germany receives less solar radiation than all the states except Alaska.

**How did you get involved in Homearama?**

We have had a booth in the entry tent for many years. I

jumped at the opportunity to install a system on one of the Homearama houses.

**What's your best advice for someone considering solar for their home?**

If you have a home and use hot water, install a solar water heater. You will get a better return on your investment than investing with Warren Buffet. If you want to go further, invest in a solar electric system. Many people ask what the payback is. It can be as low as three years or as high as 20, depending on the type of system.

**What energy-saving methods do you use in your own home?**

I have used all fluorescent lamps for 14 years. I have a solar electric, solar hot water and solar pool-heating system on my home. We also use a whole-house fan, ceiling fans set-back thermostats and a front-load washing machine.

coming  
up

**Next week**  
Ellen  
Whitehurst,  
feng shui  
expert

**Oct. 18**  
Allison  
Palmer,  
Custom  
Maid

**Want to  
nominate  
someone to  
be profiled?**  
Contact  
Victoria  
Hecht at  
(757) 446-  
2614 or  
victoria.  
hecht@pilot  
online.com.