

January 2014

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors[®]

VOL. 8, ISSUE 1

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

Resolutions

Tammy Rojek

BUSINESS

Gina Ridgeway Bundy

SPORTS

Jerrold Hurr

A & E

Dr. Tim Barnard

HEALTH

Debbi Dunn

HOME

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The new year is often a time for resolutions. Many people take stock of their lives and find purpose in creating one or more resolutions that are meant to improve their lives in the year to come. The idea is that the "new year" can be a catalyst for a "new you".

Others, like the folks you will read about in this issue, made firm resolutions at different times in their lives, and their dedication to their purpose became a way of life for them.

We all know how hard it can be to make changes even when we want to and know it would be for the best. When change yields positive results where givers end up receiving as much as they give away, it no longer becomes a challenge but an opportunity ... to elevate the lives of others...and themselves.

This issue on resolutions tells a number of stories about people who have made life changing decisions and who have ended up in that arena of opportunity. As we think about what improvements we want to make in the New Year, let's do one better. Let's put our earnestness to work for more than ourselves and for more than one year. Imagine what all of that positive energy would do in the lives of our neighbors and in our community. NDN

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Meredith Collins, Publisher



lisa cumming
photography

www.lwcpphoto.com commercial
757-532-4037 industrial
lisa@lwcpphoto.com architectural
portrait

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

SHE'S A LEADER IN Living Green

By Cathy Welch

Williamsburg resident Tammy Rojek has the official title of Recycling Coordinator for the City of Williamsburg. Many people know her as the Green Expert.

Born in New Mexico, Tammy, her younger sister and mother, traveled along the east coast with her father who worked for a soil testing company. When she was six, her father's employer opened an office in Lanexa where she spent the remainder of her childhood.

Tammy met and married her husband, Fred, nine years ago. They have a blended family of five adult children and six grandchildren. The couple attends New Town United Methodist

Church and Fred is attending seminary to be a Christian counselor.

Tammy began working for the City of Williamsburg as an office assistant in 1996. Three years later, she was asked to represent them at an Earth Day event sponsored by James City County and York County.

"There was a roomful of elementary students and there were businesses being recognized for their recycling efforts," Tammy explains. "There was even a baby brown bear in a gated area that the forest service brought."

Tammy's interest in the Green Movement began that day. "I left there with this new per-

spective that this was local, not just global. I wanted to get involved."

"I pushed to be more involved in green opportunities with the city's support and my position with the city changed drastically after that event. My role is to increase the public's awareness of green issues and represent the city at green meetings and committees," Tammy says. Because the Public Works Department is small, she wears a lot of hats including working with water conservation, recycling and overseeing city-owned Cedar Grove cemetery.

The city created an Environmental Sustainability Policy. The mission is: "To build an ever



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more sustainable and healthy city pursuing multiple strategies for conservation and restoration, and providing essential environmental services related to drinking water, waste water, storm water and solid waste.'

A large part of Tammy's role is representing the city on green committees out in the community, including exhibiting at different events as the city's Green Expert.

Williamsburg is a member of AskHRGreen, an organization that covers 16 localities. Businesses and individual residents can go online at askHRGreen.org and work on the green challenge checklist.

"We have the AskHRGreen trailer that all the committees use," explains Tammy. "It travels to events such as home shows, Earth Day events, farmer's markets and the Neptune Festival. It's wonderful to be a part of an organization where the cities have pulled together their resources." She says this is her favorite activity as the city's Green Expert. "I enjoy the one-on-one of talking green."

Part of being a responsible citizen in the area of environmental improvement is doing your homework. The city has Ecograms which you can sign up for at www.williamsburgva.gov. This newsletter will remind subscribers of upcoming chemical collections, electronics collections and other future green events.

Tammy explains that people should use their kitchen disposals properly. "Don't put food and stuff down them, because it goes down the same pipe as [waste] water. So all that sludge goes through the pipes to the water filtration plant and can cause sewer backups. You should only put water down your disposal. Put the food in your compost pile." Also, she warns residents not to pour grease down their drain as it will coat their pipes and contribute to sewer backups.

Tammy advises homeowners to check their toilets for leaks. "You'd be amazed at how much water is being wasted by a small leak."

The city had leaf collection in the fall. "This was really important so the leaves didn't go down and block storm drains. We take those leaves, mulch and recycle those, too."

Residents can reuse old coffee grounds in their garden to keep bugs out. "It works as cat repellent, too," she explains. "Put some in your house plants to keep the kitty out."

To protect our environment, Tammy says to avoid heavy pesticides, support local businesses and buy fresh food. "Shop at your local farmer's market," she adds. "The Williamsburg Farmer's Market is awesome!"

Tammy doesn't just suggest these green tips. She uses them in her own home. "I definitely recycle and am really conscious of water usage," she explains. "We [the Rojeks] have a compost pile in the backyard that we've gotten some great soil from to put in our flower beds. We are careful about applying fertilizer and pesticides." The couple has also been working on "green" renovating their older home, replacing their old heating and air conditioning unit with an energy efficient system, installing a tankless hot water heater and planning to replace old equipment with energy saving options.

The city's green efforts have continually grown to serve the residents' needs. Last year the city, along with businesses and residents, recycled over 7,000 tons of materials.

"The city and I care about the quality of life here, now and for future generations," Tammy explains. "It's also important to our residents. City Council leads, but the residents lead also - it's a team effort. Residents should be excited and proud that they're a part of the green movement. They're the ones that make the phone calls and say why aren't we doing this and why aren't we doing that. We listen and see what we need to do." ^{NDN}

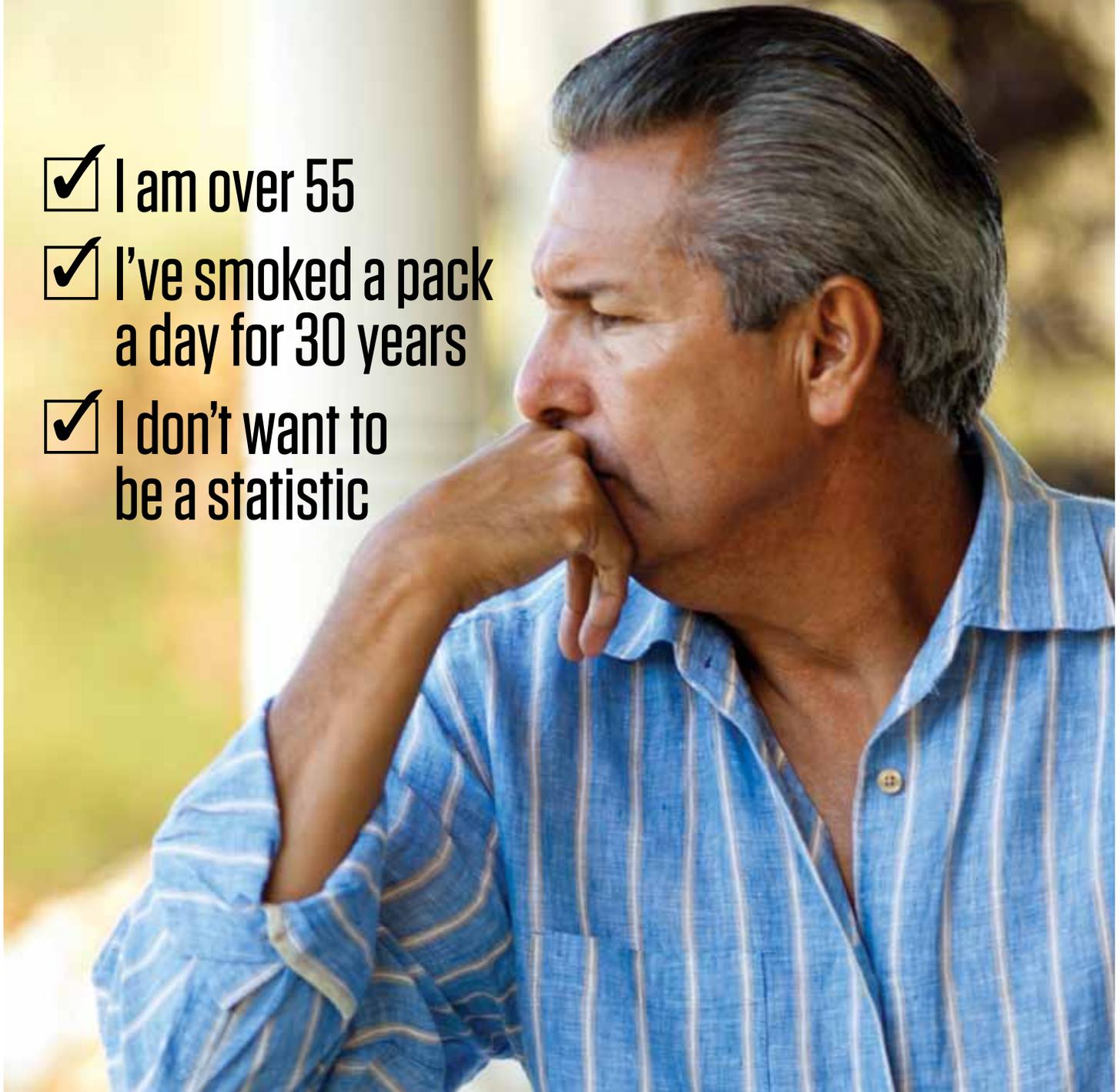
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Faith

In Action

By Susannah Livingston

If satisfying work is a key to contentment, Rita Smith may be one of the happiest people you'll ever meet.

As executive director of Williamsburg Faith in Action, which helps area seniors remain independent in their own homes, Rita gets to put what she calls her "servant mentality" to work every single day. And the winner is - well, everyone.

Rita was not always part of the area's social services safety net. Born and raised in Williamsburg, she worked for many years as a customer service supervisor for the Postal Service. "I was at a point there where I had to decide whether I wanted to do that for the rest of my life. If I'd stayed a couple years longer I would have had too much to lose," she says, smiling.

The decision proved surprisingly easy. "With the Postal Service, it was just a paycheck ... I wanted to do more good in the community."

Rita had helped care for her grandmother,

who had Alzheimer's for many years but stayed in the family home, so in her heart she was already committed to seniors' needs. Just as she was making the decision to leave the Postal Service, Williamsburg Faith in Action was being formed - something she saw as "confirmation that this was where I was supposed to be."

The national Faith in Action program began in 1984 as an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Those involved wanted

to find innovative ways to help seniors and people with physical ailments remain independent in their homes. Today, there are more than 600 Faith in Action programs nationwide.

Williamsburg Faith in Action began as an outgrowth of a men's Bible study group at Bruton Parish Church. "The group saw the problems that seniors were having in this community," Rita explains. Group member Harry Campbell was introduced to Ron Riffle, pastor



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- Clean or replace filters on furnaces and air conditioners once a month or as recommended.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
- Open the draperies and shades on your south-facing windows during winter days to allow the sunlight to enter your home. Close at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

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at Olive Branch Christian Church, who had been involved in Faith in Action in Pennsylvania. "That sparked it, and from that conversation, and that Bible study group, this Faith in Action was started."

Rita began as a Williamsburg Faith in Action volunteer, providing transportation, respite care and visiting seniors. In 2005, the agency needed some support in the office and by the end of that year Rita had joined the staff as program coordinator. In 2008 she became the full-time executive director. She still volunteers after work on a regular basis, grocery shopping for an elderly gentleman and taking the trash out once or twice a week for another care receiver. "It's nothing for me, but a big help to her," Rita says.

The agency now serves about 575 care receivers each year. All are over age 55 and most have physical or cognitive limitations that make it challenging to live alone.

"Some of our care receivers refer themselves to Faith in Action. Family members often call and we get quite a few other referrals from James City County Adult Social Workers, the Peninsula Agency on Aging, physicians' offices and discharge staff at local hospitals." Area churches also refer older members in need of help.

About 260 volunteers, most of them seniors themselves, deliver a wide range of services, from driving care receivers to medical appointments to changing light bulbs to simply staying and visiting for a while in a senior's home. Transportation is the main service, accounting for more than 60 percent of Faith in Action's service time. Volunteers use their own cars to take care receivers where they need to go.

"A care receiver may need to go to a pharmacy or need to get back to a doctor for follow-up but they don't have transportation," Rita explains. "We're also helping a son or daughter so they don't have to keep taking time off from work to take Mom or Dad to the doctor ... so they don't eventually have to make a choice between keeping Mom and Dad at home or keeping a job."

The agency runs on about \$360,000 annually, including volunteer in-kind services. Roughly \$155,000 has to be raised through grants, local church and civic groups, and "just great individuals in our community," Rita says. "Last year our community support surpassed our grant funding," she adds with pride.

Faith in Action's biggest ongoing challenge is recruiting enough volunteers to meet the growing need. "All we ask is that they have compassion," Rita explains. "If a volunteer

only has 30 minutes to give us, we won't ask for forty five. And volunteers say they get more out of serving than the people they're helping."

Word of mouth is often the best recruitment tool of all. "We had one volunteer who shared her story with the person next to her in a grocery line and that person became a volunteer for us!" Rita says.

Another major challenge is educating the community on what the organization is all about. "People often think we're a church, so that's a tough hurdle that we have to cross... we have a large number of volunteers who are affiliated with a local church but we have quite a few who aren't."

While there is no formal religious component to the program today, Rita says that the agency does "offer a vehicle for people of different faiths to live out their faith - to come together for one common good."

"What our volunteers do takes my breath away," Rita says. "An act may seem small to the volunteer, but it makes such a difference to the person you're helping." NDN

To find out more about volunteering with Williamsburg Faith in Action, or to sign up for one of the agency's two-hour training sessions, call 258-5890 or visit the website at www.wfia.org.



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Academic Librarianship

By Lillian Stevens

Albert Einstein was once quoted as saying, “the only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.”

Libraries have changed a lot in the years since the famed physicist made that assertion but one thing remains steadfast: the knowledge we can access at our local libraries is limitless.

“We give people a space where they can be

creative and curious,” says Lisa Nickel, associate dean of research and public services at William and Mary’s Swem Library. “The information we have here is boundless. You can create things here. You can be artistic here.”

In her position at William & Mary (W&M), Lisa is charged with integrating the library more fully into the research and instructional

programs of the university. On a specific level, she manages the public service areas for the library which includes the circulation desk, the research department, Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and the media center.

“We work with students, faculty and staff,” Lisa explains. “I believe that we have the ability to impact individuals in the community too.



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We are an open resource. Anyone in the community can come in here and utilize what we have. You can read the books that are on the shelves; you can get help from a librarian, you can do genealogical research; you can use our spaces. And we have really great programs that are open to the public.”

By their very definition, librarians in academia are intellectually curious and they are teachers at heart. From helping students brainstorm ideas in the critical thinking realm – to providing assistance as they produce their ideas via the library’s writing resources center – W&M’s librarians provide an invaluable service to some pretty valuable people.

“Students are not just consumers – and I’m passionate about this – they are creators of information,” Lisa says. “They have a point of view that is valid and they should be encouraged to evaluate information – not just ingest information that someone is giving them.”

Some of the work going on at Swem Library is more visible, and some less visible. There are staff members, for instance, who are helping a W&M employee who is writing an historical fiction – so they are guiding and assisting with research about history in a certain time, in a certain place. Other staff members are involved with teaching classes to the Christopher Wren Association, also housed at W&M.

The Christopher Wren Association (CWA) is dedicated to citizens seeking opportunities for learning in a collegial environment of sharing and fellowship. Through lectures, courses, field trips and other activities, the CWA offers a variety of learning opportunities for over 1,200 community members each semester.

“Last semester, we taught three classes for the Christopher Wren Association,” Lisa says. “And, in the spring, there will be a class in Special Collections which Amy Schindler (University Archivist) will teach.”

“At first, some of them were trepidatious about the library, in terms of where to go and who to talk to,” Lisa explains. “I think that our outreach through CWA has made them more comfortable here.”

Recently, Swem Library also hosted a special genealogy session because many residents are expressing interest in studying their ancestry.

“We do have a small genealogy collection here and we can help a little at a certain level, but half the fun is doing it yourself, right? The public library has a subscription to ancestry.com – we don’t. But we have a Virginia reference section and a lot of community users come in and take advantage of it.”

There are many examples of ways citizens can take advantage of the services that local libraries offer. “How many places are there like this?” asks Lisa. “If you don’t know where to start, we have people who can help you with your research – any kind of research you want. Some people in our community might not have computers; they need to know that they can visit the library and use the computers there.”

Even though she works in academia, Lisa is a proponent of libraries everywhere.

“I am a huge user of public libraries,” Lisa says. “The public library here in Williamsburg is amazing. The resources are easy to use and the staff is so friendly.”

It’s not just about the books. Lisa wants us to know that libraries are not museums for books. Nowadays, libraries are a 24/7 operation. In addition to normal hours of service, there are many outreach services to schools, day care centers, assisted living facilities and neighborhoods. There are downloadable databases, blogs and information on a variety of programs and services.

“We are a living space that changes with the times. I think a lot of people believe that as the times change, we need libraries less – and we really don’t,” Lisa says. “We need them more.”

Growing up in New Jersey, Lisa remembers thinking that she wanted to be an archeologist someday. It wasn’t until she was in college that she realized that she wanted to be a librarian. She did her undergraduate work at Rutgers University and then headed to graduate school in Florida. After earning her master’s degree in library and information science from the University of South Florida, Lisa went to work in a public library for about a year and a half. Pretty soon, she realized that she preferred an academic environment.

“I had a different calling,” she says. “And so I went back to the University of South Florida and worked as a librarian there for about four or five years. Then, I took a position as a distance education librarian at UNC Charlotte.”

It was an exciting job but the position at W&M is her dream job, both professionally and because her mother is close by – living on the Eastern Shore. Another bonus: the area’s rich history. Lisa knew about Williamsburg’s colonial past but says that she didn’t realize the extent of the accessible opportunities she’d find.

“I literally just took a walk on my lunch break, crossed the street and there I was in Colonial Williamsburg! The college is so historic and beautiful.”

Living in nearby New Town, Lisa also enjoys being able to walk around to the shops, the movies and the Farmers Market. She has found a real sense of community – both within the university community and in Williamsburg.

She encourages residents to think of Swem Library as a resource for the larger community, and to take advantage of the riches there – from books and collections to lectures and events.

For instance, earlier this fall Swem Library hosted a film festival featuring the award winning actress Glenn Close and her biotech entrepreneur husband, David Shaw, who were recognized with an award for their contributions to the arts. Swem Library also houses an exhibit, “Close Connections: Glenn Close’s ties to the William and Mary community.” The exhibit is located in Swem Library’s Special Collections Research Center and features the actress’ class notebooks, letters from fellow William and Mary production cast members and other items from Close’s personal papers.

More recently, during Homecoming weekend, Swem Library hosted two W&M alumni who are also authors of children’s books. “We had over 100 people here,” Lisa says. “People in the community came and brought their children, and the authors read their stories and talked with the kids about writing.”

There is always something going on!

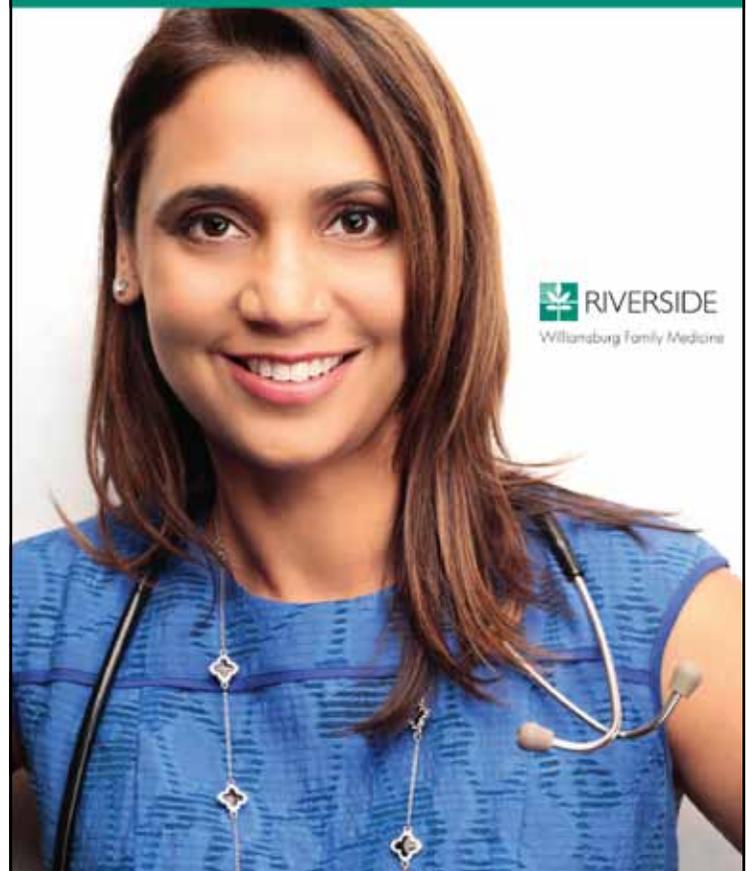
Libraries serve the community and the people living and working here by providing access. As citizens and consumers, we can serve our community too – by supporting our libraries.

“Everyone can do that,” Lisa says. “Support reading and support literacy. Get books into the hands of kids who need them – and kids who don’t have them.”

Research has shown that adults who love to read tend to come from homes where books were abundant – and where reading was encouraged.

“Bringing books to a daycare center, or donate books to a public library or to those less fortunate,” suggests Lisa Nickel. “Make an impact.” 

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Planning for the Future

By Susan Guthrie

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Elizabeth (Liz) Friel uses her land planning background to preserve the greatness of Williamsburg for future generations. She loved growing up in Virginia Beach, where her father, an enthusiastic naturalist, introduced her to the beauty of nature. They went canoeing and hiking and established the foundation for her career.

“I was most interested in historic preservation,” she says.

Liz followed her dreams to Eastern Carolina University where she earned her undergradu-

ate and graduate degrees in urban planning. “I think that urban planning is an optimistic profession; you work to make your community a better place, for your child and their children. I’m giving back something to the community.”

After college, she accepted a position as a land planner with James City County. “It was a time when the county was growing rapidly, so I was able to do a lot of historic preservation work, and I learned a lot about archeology. I was new and the county was just setting some parameters for development.”

She was so dedicated to the job that she won incentive awards for leadership roles in the comprehensive plan adoption, employee training plan implementation, library sites selection process, workload management and the zoning ordinance text amendment process.

Five years later, Liz accepted positions with Henrico County and then the City of Suffolk as a principal planner. In Suffolk, she proudly managed the Historical Landmarks Commission.

She and her husband moved to Falls Church

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where she continued to work in her field but they really wanted to return to Williamsburg to raise their daughter.

The family moved back to the Williamsburg area about five years ago.

"I care about this community so much that I moved back with the specific intent to make a difference as a volunteer and work in the environmental sector." Her husband still works in D.C.

"It's very gratifying to come back and see that the green belt road and the archeological districts are appreciated as part of our community." Liz started volunteering with the Williamsburg Land Conservancy (WLC), a private, non-profit land trust, as soon as she moved back to Williamsburg. She became the office manager and was on the Board of Directors.

"I always admired WLC; it was something a little bit different for me in terms of land conservation vs. land planning." She is now the assistant executive director and is focused on obtaining national accreditation for WLC. In addition, she works on grant writing, fund raising, outreach programs, preparing and organizing special events, baseline documents, property inspections and comprehensive plan reviews for conservation easements. "I really do anything that WLC needs."

In addition, she is an adjunct professor at Old Dominion University in the Masters of Public Administration program, and she operates Plan Friel, LLC, which is a planning consulting firm here in Williamsburg.

Liz finds that her land planning background is an asset that she uses every day. "Conservation is land planning, without it you don't have a full spectrum of development, especially here in the Historic Triangle. It's what makes us unique, what makes us special." She is currently working on a comprehensive plan with the City of Suffolk and enjoys work-



"When I walk out of a meeting with my learner, I always feel terrific because I have given something of myself and I always learn something valuable. I get to see my learner's desire and courage to improve himself. The experience is rewarding for both of us, and I like to think in some way we are making the world a better place." ~ **Pat Dugan**



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ing with some of her old coworkers.

As a board member for the American Planning Association - Virginia Chapter, she understands current issues that may affect her conservation efforts. She was president of the organization and currently serves as the professional development officer. She is also active in the American Institute of Certified Planners and Leadership Historic Triangle.

Liz is excited about working throughout the James River and York River watersheds. WLC conserved properties are concentrated in the Williamsburg area but are expanding toward Hampton and York County and up into King William County. She says, "We are an excellent facilitator for the conservation process and I really believe that we are the best local land trust in this region." Land preservation requires comprehensive planning and the participation of a variety of qualified specialties. Conservation easements vary, but can allow for public trails, agriculture, timbering, hunting and the use of the property in a positive way. The easements may even allow for reservation of a future home site and/or agricultural structures. Threatened and endangered species identified on a property add significant conservation value to the land, especially if colonies are located within a migration corridor. "It is really important to save these great places because it's difficult for them to stand the test of time against development pressures."

When it comes to land preservation "Size doesn't matter," she says. When looking at land for permanent preservation, she considers the property's environmental, natural, scenic, and historic value. Liz reviews each property individually as long as the land has a significant conservation value. Properties protected by WLC include a mix of large agricultural parcels and forested land, parcels with historic values, parcels that protect watersheds and smaller parcels in more densely developed areas that preserve open space and viewsheds.

The potential benefits of land conservation include federal income tax deduction, estate tax reduction and exclusion, Virginia state tax credit and local real estate tax reduction. However, land preservation can be a complicated process, so she assists landowners with the potential conservation value of the land and facilitates the necessary resources that make conservation beneficial for the landowner.

"Conservation is a very individualized and personal process, which is why landowners love working with us." To date, she has helped the WLC preserve nearly 6,000 acres from future development.

"My area of special interest is connecting our community, especially children and our older residents, with nature." She is proud of the new Jamestown High School Conservation Club, which she hopes will become a pilot project for high schools throughout Williamsburg and James City County. Two students, Sophie Harrow and Ally Johnson, initiated the club and asked WLC for their help. The Club helped with the Williamsburg's Got Talent event, which is one of WLC's largest annual fundraisers. Similarly, Walsingham's seventh graders and advanced placement biology and environmental students participated in the WLC Walk and Talk program on the Greensprings Trail.

"I love the connection between kids and nature. I think it is critical to this organization and future generations," she says.

Liz is also proud of their partnership with the Williamsburg Landing Retirement Community for their Earth Day and Arbor Day programs. She says, "Connecting back to our community, so that people appreciate the natural world and what a unique place we have, will keep our area an impressive place to live."

"Everyone can get involved in conservation. Just give us a call to volunteer or to discuss options for preserving property," Liz says. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The Heritage Tree Initiative

By Narielle Living

“He plants trees to benefit another generation.”
- Caecilius Statius

If the above quote is true, then Will Fidler, landscape superintendent for the city of Williamsburg, is benefitting many generations. He manages the planting of tulips, daffodils and annuals for 250,000 square feet of flower beds, maintains ninety acres of turf, and trims and removes trees within Williamsburg. While he doesn't actually plant the trees, he is one of three people that comprise the Heritage Tree Committee, a program that will benefit the residents for years to come.

The Heritage Tree Initiative was adopted in 2010 by the Williamsburg city council. At that time, they decided they wanted to acknowledge significant trees within the city. The program is structured so that if a tree is nominated to become a Heritage Tree, it must be within one of four categories: Heritage Tree, Memorial Tree, Specimen Tree or Street Tree.

The Heritage Tree will have some type of historical or cultural significance; the Memorial Tree honors a person, location or event; the Specimen Tree must be outstanding in size or quality for that species; and the Street Tree is a

notable tree that is located on either public or private property within a public right-of-way.

The committee meets twice a year to inspect any tree that has been nominated. “We usually do that in April and October,” Will says.

The nominating committee consists of Will, a Colonial Williamsburg arborist and a William & Mary arborist. The nominated tree must meet the specifications for the intent and spirit of the program. Sometimes trees that are nominated do not meet the criteria. “We have had people nominate a couple of trees that didn't make it, but I've noticed there are others out there on private property that would be great as

'tis the season!

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Heritage Trees. They just haven't been nominated yet, or maybe the homeowners don't know about the program."

When nominating a tree, people must provide information about the tree, including the species, size and justification for the nomination. Private property owners must also provide consent for the city to enter the property to view the tree.

There are some benefits to having a tree designated a Heritage Tree on private property. "We do a couple of things for the tree," Will says. "First, all the trees get a plaque recognizing what it is and the significance of the tree. Next, we do everything in our power, within reason, to protect these trees." Protecting the trees includes providing lightning protection via copper wire that is placed at the top of the tree and runs to the bottom. "This isn't fool-proof," Will says. "We do what we can to eliminate lightning strikes, but there's no real way to make sure it never happens."

The homeowner is also provided with recommendations for the proper care of the tree. "Of course, the homeowner is allowed to prune and care for the tree, but we can provide guidance when needed." These recommendations include information on how much to prune

from the tree and how to protect the tree from insects, disease and early mortality. "We do everything we can to assist the homeowner."

Trees that are designated as Heritage Trees on city property are cared for by city employees, and activities around the area that could harm those trees are generally not permitted.

According to Will, perhaps the most famous of the Heritage Trees is the Compton Oak, located on Nicholson Street in Colonial Williamsburg. "This is the largest of that species in the state," Will explains. "It's a massive tree, and it was only planted sometime between 1932 and 1936." People sometimes assume the tree is much older, but they have photographic proof of the age of the tree. "Rockefeller had aerial photographs done of this area back in the 1930s," Will says. "From those photos we can determine the general time period the tree was planted."

Will and his wife grew up in the Northern Neck area. "After I graduated from Virginia Tech I took a job in commercial landscaping up in Maryland," he says. "I was there for a while, but my wife and I missed our family. We really wanted to come back to Virginia." Perhaps it was fate or destiny that had Will looking online at available jobs in this area.

"When I saw that the City of Williamsburg was looking for a landscape superintendent, I told my wife it was meant to be." Soon after applying, they moved back to Virginia.

The one thing Will truly appreciates is the residents of Williamsburg. "The College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg do a phenomenal job of taking care of their grounds, and they have lots of help. But the residents of Williamsburg really put lots of emphasis on keeping things nice. Both the residents and the business owners do a great job of making everything look beautiful. Sometimes we get credit for what they do, but I want to say that everyone who lives and works here is really good about taking care of their grounds."

The Heritage Tree program is meant to identify unique trees within Williamsburg and take steps to protect and nurture those trees for generations to come. Another key aspect of this program is educating the public as to the benefit of these trees.

"There's a list on the city website of the Williamsburg Heritage Trees, and there's also a YouTube video of me explaining the program. People can check that out any time," Will says. "We'd love to get more nominations for these trees." NDN

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DOING MORE

By Linda Landreth Phelps

The needs of Victoria Canady's family and community have always powered the engine that is taking her on an interesting journey. She and her husband, Philip, Williamsburg residents for 14 years, acted as foster parents to a relative's children while their mother struggled with substance abuse. Victoria's young charges were assigned a volunteer who would look out for their best interest and shepherd them through the sometimes daunting and confusing court process. This volunteer was a member of a national nonprofit organization that supplies abused or neglected children with court-appointed special advocates, or CASAs.

"After being with us for awhile, these chil-

dren eventually returned home," Victoria says. "Later I ran into their CASA in Target and she said, 'You'd be a good volunteer for us!,' so I looked into it, went through the training, and became a CASA myself."

CASAs are assigned a case and will remain with that child in their passage through the judicial system. CASAs spend time with their child, interviewing them, their family members and anyone else involved in their care or education. If substance abuse or mental health counseling is recommended, they will speak with those parties as well. CASA volunteers assemble disparate bits of information and give this data the "big picture" perspective.

"My job as a CASA was then to write a report to the judge, saying, 'This is what is going on and here are my recommendations,'" she says. "The desired goal is to have a healthy, reunited family, with the child's best interests in place. That case wasn't over until the child was safe and cared for, whether within their own family or in an adoptive or foster home."

Colonial CASA, which serves the Greater Williamsburg area, was so impressed with Victoria's performance as a volunteer that when a position opened up in the office, they asked her to apply. Victoria's resume includes an undergraduate degree in finance and management and working at a bank in her home state

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of Illinois, before the Canadys moved here to be closer to Philip's large extended family. Victoria made a decision at that time to be more of a present mother than she had been to her two young sons, so she started an in-home child care business.

"It was pretty awesome," she says of those eight years that also included foster and respite care, but ultimately Victoria decided to go back to school for an advanced degree.

"I was teaching an adult Bible study class and one of the lessons was about forgiveness and how to apply it in our everyday lives," she remembers. "There were women who started sobbing as we discussed their past, and I felt inadequately equipped to deal with the raw emotions that were unleashed. That led me into Christian counseling."

During her practicum and internship Victoria found that 90% of the children she dealt with were in foster care. One day Victoria found herself praying, "God, I can make room in our home for another child who needs a home. I can do this."

Victoria and Philip made the decision to adopt. Their older boys, Kanaan and Kyle, were 16 and 12 and the couple didn't want to disrupt their birth order or introduce a new

feminine dynamic, so they were looking specifically for a child within those tight parameters.

"We attended an adoption conference here in Williamsburg," Victoria says. "From across the room, our eyes locked with a woman from Virginia Beach and we walked over to her table. She had come with exactly one profile, our child, Ricky, who was 7 and had been in foster care for years. It hasn't been easy," she says with conviction, "but it has been so worth it."

Victoria's education and training help make her an excellent mother and a well-qualified advocate and counselor. She is a certified specialist in depression counseling, so in addition to her CASA job, she works as a part-time psychotherapist in Newport News. From where she stands now, Victoria says, she can look back and see the divine plan that has led her, step by step, to be equipped to help others effectively.

"In counseling I work with a lot of women who are dealing with depression and anxiety. I love it, but I love my CASA career, too. In the years I spent providing foster and respite care I learned the struggles that come along with that. Through these experiences, I have a broad perspective as I deal with families. I think it makes me a better supervisor and case worker

here at CASA, and also a better counselor."

One of Victoria's favorite CASA success stories involves a young man in a distant county whose family appeared last year before a judge for a domestic matter. The judge observed apparent mental health issues and suspected that they were affecting the boy's education. A CASA volunteer discovered that the school considered him uncontrollable and his teachers were challenged by him. A study was done and a specialized Individual Education Plan (IEP) was put in place towards the end of the school year. The IEP continued through this summer and he showed improvement when he returned in the fall. Now, at midyear, the boy is motivated, engaged and demonstrating a complete turnaround in attitude. The educators are investing time and interest in him.

"This child is blossoming and becoming who he can be as a result of the CASA coming in and working with him," Victoria says. "He saw that the boy needed someone to believe in him, to throw a football with him, to care. Through this success, his family sees him differently, too, and is motivated to be diligent about medication management."

Who makes a good CASA? It can be a time-consuming commitment, and Victoria



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says that 95% of her volunteer pool is retired. Working people are advocates, too, but their jobs often take them to another area.

“We’re trying to change that dynamic,” she says. “Anyone over the age of 25 can be a volunteer. You can find a CASA in Kingsmill or you can find one on Centerville Road. Your socioeconomic status or education is irrelevant; it’s about heart and having an open mind. Are you teachable? We deal with people who have vast cultural differences. Our job is to help them without judging or trying to change them to be more like us.”

Volunteer hours are flexible and much of a CASA’s work can be accomplished through phone calls and email. The one requirement that’s not negotiable is that the volunteer must physically see their child once a month, preferably in diverse places and situations.

CASA training consists of 46 hours of learning, including six hours of courtroom observation. Part is done online and the rest is given in three hours of classroom teaching, twice weekly.

The depth of need is stunning. “The abuse and neglect that go on is unimaginable to the average person,” Victoria says. “There are times when being a CASA is frustrating, but I love

it. It has opened my eyes to the physical needs and emotional hurts of this area. It makes me want to do more.”

Soon she will be doing more. Victoria is currently enrolled in a five-year online doctoral program, Mental Health Practice and Policy.

“Mental health services in the upper county, such as Toano and Norge, are minimal and transportation is a problem. Beyond Anderson’s Corner there isn’t even any bus service. I’m a resident at Christian Psychotherapy, so as soon as I’ve completed 4,000 hours, I can sit for licensure and begin to implement my vision to provide counseling for that area.”

How does Victoria fit all this study into her work and family time? Her boys are heavily involved with football and track, and she doesn’t like to miss out on that activity.

“I pull lots of late nights until 2:00 a.m., and other than church at Liberty Worship Center, I’m pretty much always on lockdown every weekend, cranking out papers,” she says. “I say I’ve found favor with the Lord because He allows me to get it done.”

Getting it done and doing more...both are the driving forces in Victoria Canady’s life journey. **NDN**

Visit www.colonialcasa.org

Next Door Neighbors

Publisher.....Meredith Collins
 Editor.....Greg Lilly greglilly@ccn.net
 Copy Editors.....Al White, Ginger White
 Photographer.....Lisa Cumming
 Graphic Designer...Sue Etherton, Lara Eckerman
 Account Manager.....Anne Conkling

Writers

Linda Landreth Phelps, Rachel Sapin,
 Brandy Centolanza, Sandy Rotermund,
 Alison Johnson, Ryan Jones, Lillian Stevens,
 Erin Zagursky, Erin Kelly, Narielle Living,
 Natalie Miller-Moore, Morgan Barker,
 Susannah Livingston, Cathy Welch,
 Susan Guthrie

Advertising Information

Meredith Collins

(757) 560-3235

meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

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MATCHMAKER

By Alison Johnson

One recent August, less than five months before the annual First Night Williamsburg celebration, event organizers were still missing a volunteer treasurer. The post required a person skilled enough in budgeting to help plan a multifaceted New Year's Eve gathering that draws thousands of families.

Sound tough to fill? It didn't turn out to be. Just 45 minutes after posting the job listing

on the Web site VolunteerWilliamsburg.org, in fact, First Night had its treasurer. And the creators of VolunteerWilliamsburg.org, which matches local nonprofits with would-be volunteers, had another success story.

"That just proved how well it can work," says George Spalthoff, Webmaster and Founder of the online organization. "Williamsburg has a vast treasure trove of talented people, and so

many nonprofits need volunteers with those skills and talents. They just need a way to find each other."

Since launching in April of 2008, VolunteerWilliamsburg.org has matched more than 1,475 volunteers with nonprofits and municipal groups. That's a big source of pride for George, a retired engineer who is responsible for day-to-day monitoring of the site.

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“It is helping a lot of people find enjoyable volunteer ‘jobs,’” he says. “It’s so satisfying to see statistics each week that show more matches and more volunteers. There are MANY opportunities that are just waiting. So many nonprofits need people who sometimes downplay their skills and talents and don’t realize – especially in the case of retirees – how much they have to share.”

George came up with the idea for the free site along with four other 2006 graduates of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance’s Community Leadership Service Program. While visiting nonprofits as part of the program, the five realized the groups rarely had enough money to advertise positions that could better the community.

So for two years, they worked to raise \$8,000, mainly from the business community, to finance the site. A local company, Web Development Technology Partners, Inc., did all of the programming, and site founders maintain it with volunteer time and additional donations. This fall, they introduced updated software that, among other enhancements, allows nonprofits to recruit volunteers for one-time events in addition to ongoing commitments.

Basically, VolunteerWilliamsburg.org works much like a personal dating Web site – think Match.com or eHarmony.com.

Nonprofits create listings that describe what type of volunteer skills they need, such as literacy tutors, Spanish-speaking translators for a medical clinic or furniture movers for families in need, just to name a few. Organizations also include how many hours a day or month they need help and whether or not the work could be done from home.

Would-be volunteers, including adults, teenagers and children, also post profiles that cover their availability, interests and areas of expertise. They can choose from a list of 27 interest/skills areas; examples are arts, education, athletics, carpentry, medical services, sales and transportation.

The software then does a “matching run,” which generates potential pairings and sends email notifications to each side. Individuals can respond via secure email on the site before deciding to share their identifying information with any organization to, perhaps, “hook up.”

“A volunteer might list half a dozen areas of interest, and an organization might list two or three needed for a specific opportunity,” George explains. “The system’s algorithm then looks for the common availability and interest areas when they match based on the organization’s minimum requirements.”

As of November, the site had listings from 1,504 potential volunteers and 127 nonprofit and municipal groups, George reports. Site founders also have helped three other communities – in Newport News, Hampton and the Alleghany Highlands in western Virginia – adapt the software for their own use.

George typically spends four to six hours a week on the site, although that can climb to a few hours a day in busier periods. He gets an email notification whenever any volunteer or organization creates a new account.

Working from his big-screen Dell desktop or portable Apple tablet, he verifies that groups are nonprofit and checks that information for both types of accounts is complete and correct, including contact phone numbers, email addresses and Web sites. George also offers nonprofits advice on creating the most effective listing, such as narrowing desired skills down to no more than two or three per posting.

When not on the computer, George works with the Virginia Employ-

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ment Commission and the Senior Services Coalition of Greater Williamsburg to teach people how volunteer work can enhance their resumes. Sometimes he goes to job fairs to spread the word. "In some cases, it's a great way to 'get your foot in the door,'" he notes.

VolunteerWilliamsburg.org has only been hit by spam once. "We just had to delete a lot of stuff, and we haven't had a problem since," George says.

Community service has always been important to George, who moved to James City County in 2002. Born in Long Island – his New York accent is still noticeable – he earned undergraduate and master's degrees from Gannon University in Pennsylvania and Monmouth University in New Jersey and settled in New Jersey for 31 years. He and his wife, Helen, raised five children there.

Although George had to spend his entire work week in Washington, D.C., where he was Engineer & Project Manager for AT&T Bell Laboratories, he stayed active in his homeowners' association. In his current neighborhood, Ford's Colony, he's in his third elected term on the Homeowners Association's Board of Directors and his fourth term as Treasurer, handling a budget for nearly 3,000 owners.

"Homeowner associations need volunteers in order to be able to manage costs," he says. "Volunteers can provide many areas of expertise which would be very expensive to purchase via consultants. In Ford's Colony, for example, we utilize about 135 volunteers to staff all the advisory committees."

George discovered Ford's Colony in the fall of 2000, when his wife arranged a weekend getaway to Williamsburg for a few of his rare days off work. The couple planned to look at a Marriott timeshare but wound up in the wrong sales office. Liking what they saw, they bought a lot four months later.

George commuted to work in the opposite direction for three more years before retiring in 2005. His interests include golfing, bowling, boating and going on cruises. His favorite cruise to date: riding through the Panama Canal.

"I am an engineer at heart, who is amazed at machines and inventions," he says. "To realize that there are no pumps involved in the movement of millions of gallons of water every day is something I believe worthy of a 'wonder of the world.' You need to be remembered it was built in the early 1900s, before computers and such."

In addition to his work for VolunteerWilliamsburg.org, George also manages small Web sites for two local groups, the Colonial Area Republican Men's Association and the Historic Triangle Republican Women, and helps Saint Bede Catholic Church with its information technology needs as requested.

A grandfather of 12, George encourages parents to get their children involved in volunteering as early as possible. "Set an example, and talk up the personal satisfaction that comes with giving back," he says. "It has to be parents saying what a good time they're having. There are many things kids can do, even when they're fairly young."

In fact, anyone who wants to give back to his or her community can find a way, George Spalthoff adds: "Almost every organization will work around flexible hours, days, etc. Some work can be done from home, especially with Internet access."

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Making a Better Place for All of Us

By Lillian Stevens

James City County's Department of Parks and Recreation has a mission to partner with citizens in order to offer and ensure responsive programs, facilities and spaces that will promote growth, development and healthy lifestyles.

"It's a big organization to wrap your arms around," admits Vicki Sprigg, volunteer and resources coordinator. "It took me two to three years to fully comprehend all that we do and how effectively and efficiently we deliver services."

Vicki considers what her department provides as a core service.

"I know that what we do – and the quality of life that is made possible by what we do – is a key reason why people move here and why they stay here. Our parks and programs are fantastic."

Her role is overseeing a number of volunteers which includes individuals, families and groups. It is her job to recruit, coordinate, train, work with and evaluate these volunteers.

"We use volunteers extensively, especially with our special events," she says. "During the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, 3,100 volunteers donated a total of 89,315 hours of service. A large percentage of the numbers include our signed partner organizations, such as sports coaches and their board members."

The county advertises events and opportunities in a variety of places, from their brochure called "Destination Recreation" to the JCC website, The Virginia Gazette, WY Daily and

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An example of the kinds of activities Vicki's department spearheads includes the ever popular Family Fun Night – an event that has grown by over 100 more participants this past March than prior years. Family Fun Night is the official “break out of the winter blahs” family entertainment event which includes activities like swimming, racquetball and other activities at the Rec Center as well as craft projects and board games.

“It’s just great!” Vicki exclaims. “I love it and the families so enjoy it. It’s an affordable activity in a good environment.”

Then, in spring, there are Easter egg hunts at two locations: the Warhill Sports Complex and James River Community Center. When May rolls around, it’s time for the annual Family Fun Fest at Chickahominy Riverfront Park – also a well-attended event – with the only cost being a parking fee of about three dollars. “This is another fun-filled event in a rural setting. Children learn about animals at a petting zoo, and they learn about trucks too at the popular ‘Touch-a-Truck’ exhibit. There’s also

live family entertainment including storytellers, dancers, and music.”

Summer months bring seasonal activities which take place in various neighborhoods.

“Opportunities range from swimming lessons for kids who don’t know how to swim – to organizing a 5K,” Vicki says. The latter is run by JCC’s Health and Wellness Coordinator who works with the young children, helping them to train their little bodies for a road race. “Many youngsters have never experienced that kind of activity so it was very rewarding not only for the staff but those of us who are back here in the trenches.”

When the days grow shorter, the Harvest Festival is just around the corner. This event, at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, features scarecrow stuffing and also offers many other activities including arts and crafts, carnival games and a hayride. “This year families produced over 60 scarecrows,” Vicki says. “One staff person with a core of volunteers worked on that from 11:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon. They were slammed the whole time – in a good way – and so that is exciting.”

Then, there is an event called “Halloween Tales” held at Freedom Park. “This year we showed a *Winnie the Pooh (and Heffalumps!)* movie on a big inflatable screen,” Vicki says.

“That was also very well attended.” As the holidays pick up, the pace doesn’t let down. “As we move into December, things get a little crazy with our ‘Santa Calling’ initiative and, of course, ‘Breakfast with Santa’. I don’t know how we’d manage those events without our young volunteers.”

Vicki relies on volunteers of all ages, but she especially appreciates that so many of them are school-age. For “Halloween Tales,” she oversaw 13 volunteers who were primarily older middle school students or high school students.

“I learn about them through the schools’ guidance offices, various clubs like Key Club and also the athletic teams because they are encouraged to do community and volunteer service too.”

It can be a challenge because at this age, many of the young volunteers are also very involved in their other activities.

“Over the years, I’ve worked with high



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schoolers and I find that there's a level of maturity that comes each year that I interact with them, and that's very heartwarming to see. I do my best to draw my shy students into the activities and then I love watching them come out of their shells and take charge."

All of the volunteers – no matter what their age – are proud to be giving back to their community. Sometimes, it is necessary to bring paid staff in. If Vicki cannot line up volunteers, it then becomes necessary to supplement with county staff members. "The intention is to give us an opportunity to address the needs we have and offset taxpayer dollars."

Vicki has statistics that show that her volunteers and the time that they donate has brought the county an estimated value added of \$2,200,722 in fiscal year 2013. She is very proud of that.

"I enjoy working with the citizens and the residents of James City," she says. "I've worked for the county since 1983, in various capacities from the County Administrator's office to this office. I've enjoyed my career – and my service – but I believe that parks and recreation is best suited to my skills set."

Vicki and her husband, Robert, moved to Williamsburg and raised their family here because they fell in love with the community. The couple originally came from south central Pennsylvania but favored Williamsburg's moderate climate – and the abundance of opportunities for their family. Robert retired from the military in 2008 and opened "Bob's Sausage Company." He enjoys participating in several of the local farmers markets, including the Tano Farmers Market. Vicki is having too much fun to even think of retiring.

She says that having both the College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg here is wonderful because she finds that the people who live here are very keen on community service. Vicki also believes that education begins at home. Many of her young volunteers are coming from families and households where community service is being role modeled by parents.

"I think that it is absolutely learned at home," she says. "I come from a life of service too. My family was my role model - not only my parents – but my aunts and uncles, and my grandparents too. I was always active in Girl

Scouts, I was in the band and chorus, and we were active in our church."

What can we all do to make WJCC a better place in 2014?

"Commit to being involved in something that you know nothing about," Vicki suggests. "Be actively involved with the kids and the local schools. There are so many ways people can volunteer – so many opportunities locally."

Some volunteers assist with events like the ones described earlier, while others serve as "Pledge Leaders" for Board of Supervisors meetings. Then, there's "Adopt a Park" opportunities, like the recent shoreline restoration of Jamestown Beach which was done by a corps of volunteers. There is also an "Inclusion Companion" program which pairs volunteers with disabled children to help them enjoy a meaningful recreation experience.

"People get so much from donating their time. And it gives me so much to be able to help someone," Vicki Sprigg says. "Working with people who have a value and a passion for volunteering and making the community a better place for all of us – that feeds me. And it renews my faith in humanity." NDN

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A Hands on Approach to Caring

By Morgan Barker



Elizabeth Vestal moved to Williamsburg to pursue her education and then stayed to work and give back to the community. After working only a few months at the United Way, Elizabeth says she loves her new job and looks forward going to work each day.

After attending law school at the University of Tennessee, she had a professor suggest she

look into the Masters in Public Policy Program at the College of William and Mary. She applied, was accepted and moved to Williamsburg to continue her education. "I was very excited about staying a student for another few years," Elizabeth says.

After completing that degree, Elizabeth became a policy analyst for the Schroeder Center

for Health Policy at William and Mary. The Schroeder Center works to educate current and future decision makers on health care and public health.

"I assisted the director in completing contracted research and technical reports, mostly for the Williamsburg Health Foundation," she says. "One of my main tasks was conduct-

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ing evaluation activities for the local School Health Initiative Program.”

Moving to the United Way was a drastic move from law studies and research, but Elizabeth thrives at the United Way. She says her research and law skills are handy in her current work. “I believe that the skills I learned in law school are particularly useful in environments where precise writing and organization are needed. I use those skills planning events for the United Way and for grant writing and reporting,” she says.

As relationship manager for the United Way, Elizabeth goes to work every day with a sense of purpose. She finds her work fulfilling because she gets to work directly with the people in the community and make a difference in other people’s lives.

“I enjoy my work with the United Way because it is an extremely hands-on, interactive job that can be different from one day to the next,” she says. “I enjoy meeting people in all areas of our community and helping to realize the goal of the United Way, which is to mobilize the caring power of the community.”

She explains that the United Way “mobilizes the caring power” by advancing the common good, particularly in areas such as education, income and health. “We do this through community investment,” Elizabeth says. The idea is that promoting the common good changes systems that affect all residents. The community wins when children receive quality education, when families escape poverty and when everyone has access to quality health care.

Elizabeth works with some of the United Way’s community partners such as the Greater Williamsburg Housing Collaborative and CHX4CHNG Women’s Leadership Council. The combined effort of these partners with the United Way staff can promote the United Way’s goals and help improve people’s lives.

The Greater Williamsburg Housing Collaborative provides housing and housing related services to persons who are facing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, a surprisingly large and often invisible problem in the area. Elizabeth coordinates the United Way and the Collaborative to build a network of service providers to strategize, develop and support ef-

forts to reduce homelessness in the area.

“The main part of my job is supporting community initiatives. We work to strengthen ties between member organizations and to build a collaborative that is stronger than the sum of its parts. A robust network of providers is more able to address growing demand for services and is in a better position to take advantage of resources offered at higher levels of government looking for innovative methods and organizations to address homelessness.”

Elizabeth also works with the CHX4CHNG Women’s Leadership Council. The council seeks to empower, embrace and engage women in the community. The council fosters the growth and development of women and children in the community by promoting health and well-being. “My job is to help them realize their vision and plan for future Women’s Leadership Council efforts,” Elizabeth says.

“I recently assisted this motivated group of women plan a Women’s Wellness Symposium that featured approximately 30 local health professionals and renowned health advocate, Chris Crowley. The planning committee was



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also able to raise some money to benefit Olde Towne Medical Center and Lackey Free Clinic in their efforts to provide healthcare to women in the Greater Williamsburg community.”

Elizabeth looks forward to working with the Women’s Leadership Council more in the future. “This event was the first major event led by the Women’s Leadership Council and most likely is the first in a long line of successful events and initiatives promoted by these ladies,” she says.

When she is not working with community partners, Elizabeth ensures United Way events are successful. The United Way Day of Caring is one of the major events she assists. Held in the fall, the Day of Caring calls on local volunteers to come together to work on community projects.

“Teams of volunteers sign up to be matched with local non-profit or public service agencies. This year we had over 500 volunteers completing more than 40 projects,” Elizabeth says.

The large quantity of volunteers covers a variety of projects throughout the community. Some of the projects the volunteers worked on included maintaining trails at York River

State Park, landscaping the grounds at Child Development Resources, repairing buildings at Camp Skimino and helping out in Head Start classrooms.

Elizabeth says the Day of Caring is one of her favorite events because it gives her the opportunity to meet volunteers and community members. The Day of Caring is the United Way’s motto in action, with the mobilized caring power of the community out in full force for one day of volunteerism. “After spending hours upon hours helping to plan the annual Day of Caring, I was able to go out and visit volunteers at several of the project sites. The energy and excitement from these volunteers was incredible. That was a good day,” Elizabeth says.

She encourages others to pursue service work and volunteerism as a way to make the Williamsburg community a better place to live in the coming year. “If you’re interested in volunteering, Williamsburg has a number of great nonprofits. Pick one that you like and work with them. Volunteering a few hours each week is a great way to give back to the community.”

Elizabeth’s future is full of volunteer events and service work. Up next on Elizabeth’s plate is the volunteer appreciation day in the spring. “Details on that will be forthcoming and available on our website. Also, it’s not too early to start thinking about getting together a volunteer team for the next fall’s Day of Caring. I know that area nonprofits supported by the United Way host events throughout the year, so it’s always good to keep an eye out for anything from charity runs to food and clothing drives.”

When not busy with service work and volunteer events, Elizabeth enjoys reading, jogging and watching football. She takes time to experience Williamsburg’s natural beauty. “The landscape is so pretty, it’s one of the things I love most about Williamsburg,” Elizabeth says.

Her background in law and research are great assets for Elizabeth Vestal’s position at the United Way, but the new job clicks for her because she has the opportunity to interact face-to-face with her neighbors to make Williamsburg a great place to live. **NDN**

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One Word at a Time

By Alison Johnson



A first book read, a first sentence written, a first time using a computer, filling out a job application or having enough confidence to attend a child's parent-teacher conference. Those are just a few of the small, yet life-changing accomplishments Fiona Van Gheem has celebrated with adult learners at Literacy for Life. As program manager for the nonprofit organization, Fiona also has watched people finally get driving licenses, pass high school equivalency exams, enroll in college, land dream jobs or be-

come United States citizens.

They do it all – often despite tough obstacles – with the reading, writing, math and computer skills taught through Literacy for Life. The program also offers health and civics classes and English instruction for students who speak other languages.

“To be a part of this is extremely rewarding,” Fiona, a former volunteer tutor who has held the staff position for 18 months, says. “It is very emotional, [and] very moving for ev-

erybody. I have so much admiration for our learners who have the courage to seek help in improving their literacy skills – and then show up, week after week, dedicated to learning.”

People who ask for help have a wide range of stories. Many live in or near poverty and work at minimum-wage jobs. Some have dropped out of high school or are struggling with a learning disability. Some are highly educated in their native countries but are stuck in low-paying positions due to poor English skills. Some

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lack transportation or have to juggle work with raising young children.

Literacy for Life, based at the William and Mary School of Education, provides one-on-one and small group tutoring to adults who live or work in Williamsburg, James City County or upper York County. Learners must commit to at least 1½ hours of instruction a week.

Last year, the program served 500 people, ages 18 to 81. Students in its English language classes represented 50 countries and spoke 30 different languages.

Fiona, a former elementary school teacher in her native England, has hundreds of inspiring stories she could tell. One 40-something man was thrilled when he mastered signing his name in cursive. Another man earned a high school degree after plugging away at its requirements for 18 months. Still another took the bus by himself for the first time, no longer terrified that he'd get lost.

"They are able to participate fully in their community and be more self-sufficient, and they're so appreciative," she says. "Helping one individual with literacy goals affects not just one person, but also their family and community. That keeps us all motivated."

Although Literacy for Life had about 300 volunteers last year, it maintains a waiting list of about 40 would-be learners. Fiona emphasizes that volunteer tutors don't need a teaching background or foreign language skills, as all classes are taught in English. Basic requirements are a high school diploma or equivalency degree, a native-like command of English and an email address to communicate regularly with staff. Like learners, tutors agree to work at least 90 minutes a week. Personality-wise, the best volunteers are reliable, flexible and patient.

All tutors attend a nine-hour training program before they begin working. They also have access to educational workshops, tutoring tips, day-to-day support and books and computer software at Literacy for Life headquarters, which includes classroom space, a computer-assisted learning laboratory and a lending library.

"We don't just throw people in, or leave them on their own," Fiona notes. "We offer a lot of resources and training."

Literacy for Life was originally founded in 1975 to help William and Mary employees develop better reading and writing skills. The program became a United Way agency four years later and opened its doors to adults in the surrounding community. In 2008, it expanded again to offer off-site classes in partnership with area businesses and other non-profit agencies.

As for Fiona, her passion for education dates back to her childhood. She was born in Manchester, England and as a youngster she enjoyed helping her mother, an elementary school teacher, in the classroom. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology and a post-graduate certificate in Education at two English universities, she began teaching at the upper elementary level. A book lover, she also set up a reference library at one school.

Fiona was teaching in East London when she met her husband, Ed, an Air Force pilot stationed at a nearby base. The couple first came to America in 1993, and lived in Texas. Since then, they have lived in seven states and completed two overseas assignments, one back in England and the other in the Azores, a small group of islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Ed, now a Colonel, is stationed at Langley Air Force Base, which

brought Fiona to the Williamsburg area in 2009. Their two daughters, Jess, 16, and Lorna, 14, both attend Jamestown High School.

During her family's travels, Fiona worked or volunteered in a variety of school settings, teaching students who ranged in age from 4 to 81. One of her favorite jobs was being the lead teacher at an adult education program in Texas. "I had never experienced adult education before, and I loved it," she remembers. "The learners were so motivated. They didn't have to be there – they wanted to be there. It was so important to make all of our lessons relevant to their lives."

Fiona became a volunteer with Literacy for Life in early 2012. She was matched with a young woman from China who could read and write English much better than she could speak it. The woman wanted to learn some "survival English" for practical errands such as going to stores and the bank.

Over the course of three months, Fiona watched the woman's self-confidence soar as her vocabulary and pronunciation improved. "It had a huge impact on her day-to-day life, when it came to her independence," she says. "That is so satisfying for a volunteer to see."

When the program manager position opened up, Fiona leaped at the opportunity to oversee and coordinate different aspects of the programs. "I felt like it was such a perfect fit for me," she says. "I am grateful for my job every single day."

Living in Virginia has been a perfect fit, too. Fiona and her family love spending time outdoors, including walking and canoeing at Waller Mill Park, biking around Jamestown Island, visiting Busch Gardens and hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains. "People travel from all over the country and all over the world to visit Williamsburg," she notes. "We are so happy to call it our home."

Three years ago, Fiona became an American citizen at a ceremony in Norfolk. She reflects on that special day whenever learners at Literacy for Life celebrate their own swearing-in ceremonies, sometimes with red, white and blue cupcakes provided by their tutors.

As Literacy for Life continues to extend its services, Fiona stresses that none of its work could happen without volunteers. Last year, the in-kind value of volunteer hours topped \$490,000. The organization also leans on volunteers to help with administrative duties, special events and fundraising.

Fiona encourages people who might be interested to visit the program's Web site – literacyforlife.org – and watch a short overview video. Applicants can sign up online and select the type of learner they'd be most interested in helping. Once people are paired up, they can set goals together.

"You want your targets to be small, specific and attainable," Fiona Van Gheem says. "Something like, 'By Christmas, I will have taken the practice math portion of the GED.' Then you've got to plan how to use your time in the best way, especially when you only have 1½ hours a week."

Tutors often learn a great deal from the experience, she adds: "I've always got people telling me, 'Fiona, I get more out of tutoring here than I think I give.' That's what I felt as a volunteer, too."

Just as the Literacy for Life slogan says, lives can change – one word at a time. NDN

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The Inventor's Journey

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Kim Kiely Photography

"I didn't see myself as an inventor," Gina Ridgeway Bundy says. "I didn't see myself as creative and definitely not an entrepreneur. I guess the lesson for me is to have an open mind for my future. All my life experience has led me to this point."

Gina is an inventor. She and her husband,

Richard (Rich), have two products on the market: Worm Watcher and Tape Genie.

While living in Washington D.C., Gina worked on environmental policy. "Actually, my first job was, as an intern, answering the public's phone calls concerning pesticides. It was a good education on the need of continually

keeping up with science," she says.

"Once I had children, I moved toward the Hampton Roads area. I love science, and I love teaching kids with hands-on experiences in science." She switched careers and began teaching in Newport News and then moved to Williamsburg.

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For more information contact Bill Bean at 757-221-7825 or email webean@wm.edu.

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Wednesday, February 12th Speaker:



DAVID HUNT
LANDON, IP, INC

David Hunt is an entrepreneur, owner and Chief Executive Officer of Landon IP, Inc., a professional patent search, analytics, translation and patent education company in Alexandria, Virginia.

Landon IP employs 200 people with offices in Washington DC, Tokyo, Japan, London, England, Shanghai, China, and Southfield, Michigan. The leading patent legal support company has customers in 39 states and 44 countries.

Under his leadership, Landon IP has grown from \$1 million to \$30 million in revenues since 1998 with minimal external financing. During that time he has directed the integration of four acquired companies into Landon IP, Inc., representing \$6 million in revenues.

Mr. Hunt holds a B.A. and M.B.A. from the College of William & Mary. Prior to Landon IP, he worked as a project manager and senior business analyst in the areas of corporate strategy, market research, and competitive intelligence at Freddie Mac in McLean, VA.

Mr. Hunt lives with his wife, Amy, and their two teenage children in McLean. Prior to living in McLean, the Hunt family were long time residents of Great Falls, where the children attended Forestville Elementary School.

He is the editor of the book, *Patent Searching: Tools and Techniques*, published by John Wiley & Sons.

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~ Greg Lilly, Editor



"That's when I first came into the idea of worms. I had habitats all over my classroom. My students would bring in moss, butterflies and caterpillars... things like that. We'd set up habitats." She explains that she was surprised to see the number of students tentative about touching the live insects and worms.

"These days, I've noticed several trends with children. They are getting more germ-phobic, and they are very afraid to touch things."

Over time, she coaxed the students to become more comfortable getting their hands in the dirt. "When I surveyed students, I found only about three out of 30 have made mud pies. That's a big change from when I was growing up. We were outside playing in the mud. That's one thing that made me more passionate about doing something to make a difference."

Along with bringing a soil habitat to the classroom, Gina wondered how teachers could have living habitats with less maintenance issues. As a teacher, she knew the value of time and wanted to discover a way to make the hands-on experience easier.

"When the economy shifted, I found myself trying to decide my next step," she describes. "At that point, no one was hiring teachers. I happen to come from a line of inventors."

Gina explains that her grandfather was an inventor and worked on a Navy diving bell and a home exercise machine. "He had a dirigible that came out before the Hindenburg. He was a constant inventor. He invented a tunneling machine that bored the tunnel and laid tiles at the same time. He won many awards. He had the patents, but couldn't take it to market with the Depression going on. He leased the patents to larger companies."

Gina's father had the innovative gene, too. He created his first business while still in college. "My dad had the eyes to see opportunity. My dad had eight patents. My grandfather had about ten patents."

With her inventor family tree, Gina pondered how to make hands-on science learning easier. "I wondered if there was a way to create a habitat that would empower teachers and allow them to have animals in the classroom. I started on that."

She and her husband were supported by the people in the Williamsburg community. "There is a unique collection of people here. They really encourage each other and are conscientious about the environment and the future. That is something I've really enjoyed about the area," she says.

"We came across an inventors group and started attending. I was evaluating if I wanted to take a risk of trying to create something new and unique. Williamsburg is a great area for spawning innovation."

The Williamsburg inventors' community helped get Gina on the right track. "Everyone has ideas," she says of what it takes to be an inventor. "It's if they have the courage to follow through with the idea, that makes the success. Four years ago, there were about 40 of us in the group working through ideas and in that decision making process whether to move forward with the idea."

Her advice for inventors/entrepreneurs: "Get connected to people who have gone through the process before. The amount of mentorship available in Williamsburg, because it is a retirement community, has been helpful. SCORE has been great. They give us perspective and things to think about." The counsel of experience and a fresh set of eyes saved Gina time, money and frustration.

The first product, Worm Watcher, went through many design prototypes and updates. "One of Rich's favorite sayings is 'There are infinite possibilities for a positive solution.' We kept embracing that idea. Rich

had bought worms from a local worm farmer. We showed the farmer our idea for the composter.” Gina explains that through feedback from people like the worm farmer and science teachers, they came up with a worm composter where children could experience how worms turn debris into vibrant soil.

“We take food scraps and feed the worms. We realized that our red wiggler (compost worm) will eat half his weight in garbage each day. Our kits come with a half pound of worms. Soon they process two and a half pounds of garbage a week into rich soil. It’s odorless. The worms do the work. It doesn’t attract flies because the food is buried. The result is this soil called ‘Black Gold’ by gardeners, and you make around 15-20 pounds of it per month.”

Gina says two ideas made the product more successful. “One, the fact we made kits. We have thirteen kits: pre-school, elementary, science, district school, home school, and other configurations.” Some kits come with the compost container while others let you build one yourself. She says the range of price helped them reach more of the educational market.

“The other thing we learned,” she describes, “was that teachers had so much information coming at them, it could get overwhelming. So our number two successful idea was to use e-mails to lead them through the process.” The kits include e-mails every couple of weeks to remind the teachers what needs to be done. The just-in-time delivery of instructions guides the teacher and students from the set-up of Worm Watcher through harvesting the compost.

“We learned so many lessons taking Worm Watcher to market, like how to find a manufacturer, whether to go to China or U.S. for production, how to make that decision, how do you increase sales, how do you market it and brand it – there are hundreds of things to consider.”

Worm Watcher is in the educational market and growing.

“We were working with the inventors groups, and we tried another idea – Tape Genie. Tape Genie took a back seat while we worked on Worm Watcher.”

Rich came up with the Tape Genie idea. “Tape Genie was a good idea because it wasn’t as expensive to manufacture as Worm Watcher. Plus, it’s for a general market and has different profit margins,” she explains. “We could apply the same ideas of how to get [it] to market, but we knew how to do it smarter.”

She and Rich looked at the problems with a tape gun: it’s messy and it sticks to itself. “Men love Tape Genie,” she adds. The device allows you to snap a tape gun into it so you can pull off just enough of the tape you need – like a big tape dispenser.

“You can pull off small pieces easily. For decorator tapes, this works well. Craft people like it. Plus you can mount the holder to a workbench or to a wall so it doesn’t move when you use it.” Gina and Rich spent a lot of time tweaking the design. Today, they are waiting to hear from some major distribution channels.

“Distribution channels are one of the hardest parts of getting the product to customers,” Gina admits. “It takes a long time to get into the large channels.”

She values the help of the people who have travelled this inventors’ path before her. “The inventors group taught us how to fail cheaply. It’s always two steps forward and one step back. Failure is part of the process.”

Gina Ridgeway Bundy says she celebrates every small success on her journey. “If you don’t, you get discouraged. Celebrate each small step and before you know it the big ones have happened.” NDN

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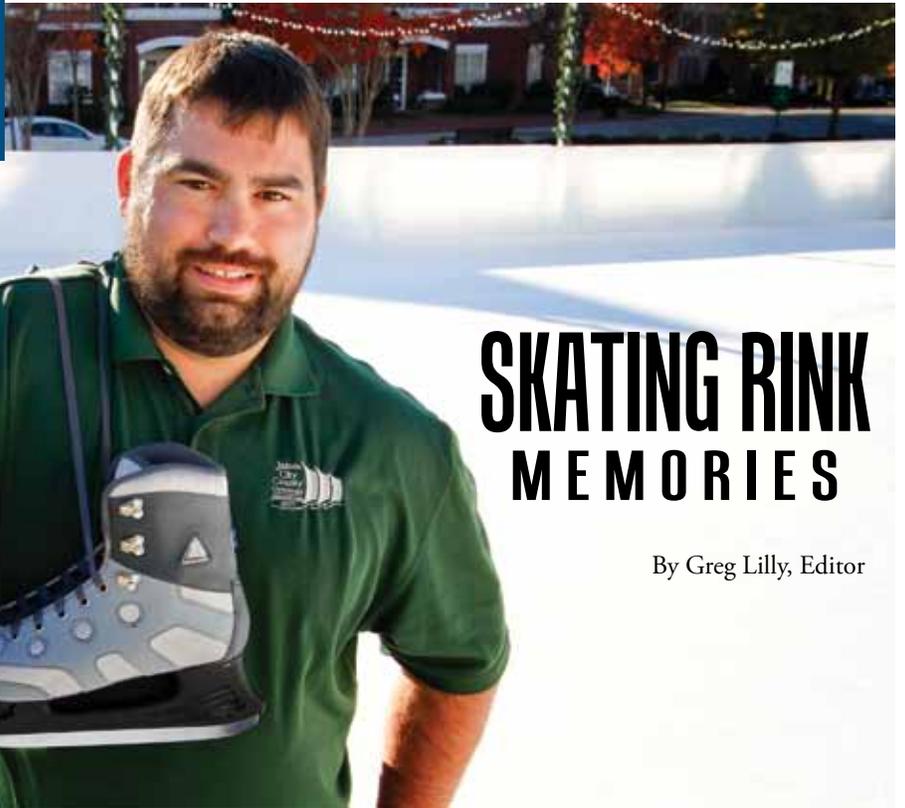
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Corey Miller Photography

SKATING RINK MEMORIES

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“I’ve enjoyed the programs that Parks and Recreation offers, really all my life, so this was a great fit for me. I get to give back as an adult for all the things I got to do as a kid,” Jerrod Hurr says. He is a park operations coordinator with James City County and also the manager of the New Town Skate Rink.

Jerrod was raised in Newport News and graduated from high school in Poquoson. “I was an athlete since I was five years old, and I loved being around parks,” Jerrod says of his decision to major in recreation at Christopher Newport University. “My dad was always the youth football and baseball coach, so I grew up around recreation.” Jerrod worked at the shipyard for a couple of years before he decided to go back to college. “I knew from that experience that my work was going to be about enjoying my job and not so much about the money.”

While at college, he took a job at Water Country, USA as an operations supervisor. “That drew me toward the water safety field and a recreation major.”

He received his degree and then an aquatics coordinator position opened up at the recreation center in James City County. “I was lucky enough to get the position,” he says. “I spent three years running the swim lessons for the county.”

Over the years, he worked in other areas, at one point managing the county’s youth soccer program. “All the while, I wanted to get more into the park operations side. The opportunity came a couple of years ago when I became a park coordinator.”

In this position, he oversees areas such as playground inspections, outdoor pools and park volunteer programs. “Many of these are

seasonal, so I’m always doing something different. When the skate rink project came up, I volunteered to do it. It was a little outside my normal duties, but I thought it would be a cool thing to be involved in.”

For several years, the idea of an ice skating rink had been considered as an attraction and recreational activity for New Town. “We have a couple of partners in this,” Jerrod says. “We work with Randy Casey-Rutland of New Town management and Scott Grafton of Iron-Bound Gym to make the rink happen.”

The idea of a solid ice rink was cost-prohibitive. “That takes a lot of infrastructure just to put down the ice. With Virginia’s relatively mild winter weather, it would have been difficult to keep it going, and it was out of our budget. After some research, we came up with a synthetic ice proposal for the rink.” Synthetic ice is low

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maintenance and fairly portable. "There is an investment involved, but it lasts a long time. In 2011, the Board of Supervisors funded the project, and I became involved."

Last year (winter 2012-2013) was the first season. The rink measured approximately 2400 square feet. "It was installed on the road and had to conform to the road's barriers," Jerrod explains. "That limited the size. It would have been cost-prohibitive to build a platform for the rink." Since the rink was installed on a street, Jerrod worked within the road's boundaries.

"We had over 5,000 in attendance during that first year. We were very busy and happy about that," Jarrod says.

This season, the rink has moved onto the grass lawn of Sullivan Square. "We've expanded [it] to 3,200 square feet. The rink is a lot bigger now, more spacious. We're excited about it."

The rink opened on November 29 for week-end skating. On December 20th, skating starts every day during the winter break (except Christmas Day) through January 1. After New Year's Day, the schedule goes back to only Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until the season's closing day, January 26.

"The capacity of this bigger rink is close to 100 people at a time," Jerrod says. "So people have room for a pleasant experience."

Jerrod says he enjoys watching people step out on the rink for the first time. "Synthetic ice does not act 100 percent like real ice. There is a small learning curve. For the most part, synthetic ice is not as fast as real ice. The manufacturer says it's about 75 percent the speed of real ice."

The synthetic surface is fairly easy to maintain. "Actually, we don't need anything like a zamboni. The 'ice' is really large sheets of technologically-advanced plastic with a long [around 50 years] warrantee," Jerrod explains. "Our product clicks tightly together and a biodegradable glide enhancer is applied to help with the friction of the skates. It's a simple daily process to maintain it. The hardest part of the project is keeping the skates sharp."

On synthetic ice, a skater can perform all the same maneuvers he or she would do on real ice. "Like the hockey-style stops and the figure skating moves," Jerrod describes. "In fact, 'Disney on Ice' uses the same product we do."

Jerrod and his team make sure the skaters enjoy a quality experience. Music plays at the rink, and the Sullivan Square trees are decorated. "This year we don't have the tent covering; we're open-air. That will add to the atmosphere. People really enjoy being there."

A few operational changes from last year also enhance the experience. With the larger rink,

open skating is available. "So you can skate for 20 minutes or all day. We're comfortable that we can accommodate the skaters without having defined sessions like last year."

Jerrod and his wife, Phyllis, who also works for Parks and Recreation, have a two year-old daughter and another child due in April. "Our family revolves around what happens at Parks and Recreation. We bring our daughter to the rink to watch the skating."

When Jerrod considers the best part of his work, he explains, "This job's rewards aren't apparent until you are on-site and see the smiles and laughter of the people enjoying all the hard work that has gone into the project. That's what makes this job worthwhile. Seeing families come out and try skating for the first time – the laughs, the smiles. The end-product is what makes this job rewarding."

Jerrod and his team have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the New Town Skate Rink. It's a safe, family-oriented experience for all area residents and visitors to enjoy.

"I remember back to my childhood and all the things we did as a family," Jerrod Hurr says. "To be in a position where I can help provide a place for people to make those kinds of memories with their families...that's the enjoyable part of my job." NDN

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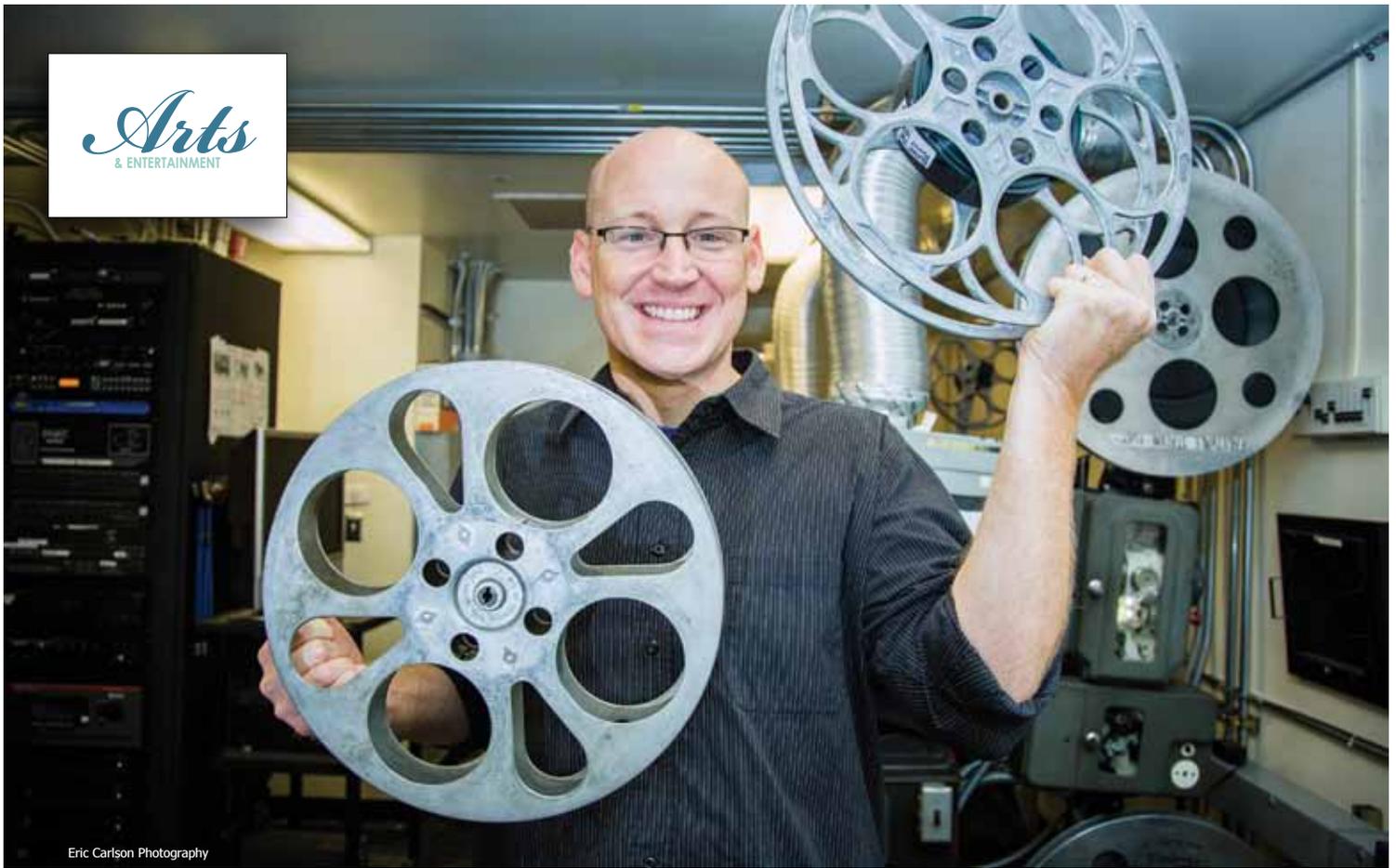
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Eric Carlson Photography

Encouraging Global Communication via Film

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Film festival, youth filmmaking project and student short film competitions are just a few of the events that Dr. Timothy Barnard has brought to Williamsburg in the annual William and Mary Global Film Festival.

“This is a lot of work and it’s taken over my identity as an academic,” Tim explains. “I started as primarily a literature scholar, and

now I’m a full-blown film scholar. I consider myself lucky because I love film.”

Tim Barnard came to Williamsburg as a graduate student. “I received my PhD in American Studies,” he says. “My dissertation was on Ernest Hemingway. I was interested in the parallel trajectory of 20th century modern American literature and how people like

Hemingway had their rise of celebrity and influence paralleled by the rise of the Hollywood film industry. I was a literature scholar interested in the interaction between literature and film as a cultural event.”

His focus in American Studies usually had a film slant to it. While in school, he worked with the Reves Center for International Stud-

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ies at the college. He would host international students and show them American culture, which could be a walk down Duke of Gloucester Street, a trip to the outlets, a baseball game or a visit to a movie theater.

“That was really a hands-on way of getting overseas students out into the area to experience American culture. It became part of my training and experience in American Studies – that interaction of the global with local.”

When Tim finished his degree, his wife was offered a tenure-track position at the college. “We decided to stay in Williamsburg, and I’ve been able to continue with the college and build those experiences with American Studies along with the international view.”

His interest has evolved into a position with Film & Media Studies. “I do all my teaching in film studies,” he says.

“The Reves Center for International Studies sponsored ‘Global Inquiry’ groups. It was a program designed to bring faculty together to think about global issues. We gathered to think about film as a global medium and how to internationalize the things we taught in the Film Studies program.”

The film festival was launched in 2008 as an initiative from the Reves Center to create an

international component to the film studies program.

“We wanted to develop an annual event where we show films. We integrated it into the curriculum, in that students take classes with content related to the four-day event. And, as a film festival, we wanted to make it something for the public to enjoy.”

The festival gives the students a broad spectrum of experiences, from event management to filmmaking. “When it began in 2008, it coincided with the 75th anniversary of the Williamsburg Theatre (now the Kimball Theatre),” Tim describes. “The first festival had a local focus (‘When the Movies Come to Town’) to celebrate the theatre’s 75th anniversary.” Tim worked with some of his students to interview long-time local residents about their memories of going to the movies. The students received American Studies research experience and the film festival began.

“Moving forward from that first year, we integrated the festival into the curriculum, and I taught – and continue to teach – a course called ‘Film Festival History and Production,’” he says.

Film festivals, Tim says, play an important role of creating a network of distribution and

exhibition for independent films. “This gives audiences the opportunity to see films that they may not have had the chance to see without a film festival network. It’s an alternative to the Hollywood distribution system. This is how independent film and global films can be seen throughout the country.”

The William and Mary Global Film Festival has a unique flavor each year in terms of its theme. “Two different philosophies came about when we discussed themes,” Tim says. “One side said each year we should focus on a different national cinema like an Irish film festival, a German film festival, maybe a Bollywood film festival.”

Tim resisted that model of festival. His background in American and international film studies gave him a different perspective. “When you put film in national boxes, it prevents understanding its development as an international medium across national boundaries. We take a broad theme that allows us to program Irish, German, Indian films, old silent films, children’s animated films...and put a mix of different things around a theme with broad appeal.”

The second year of the festival, the theme was “Global Film and Migration.” Tim says



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the theme was a great overarching premise for any number of national cinemas. "And it could include documentary projects," he adds. The William and Mary students investigated the various immigrant communities that make up our area, and then selected a series of films that illustrated those communities.

"This year, the theme is 'Journeys & Passages' – we want something broad and open for multiple interpretations," he says. "That lets us do dynamic programs."

Last year's theme of "Film & Youth" sprouted the DIY/FIY Youth Filmmaking Project. "We wanted to think of ways to include films made by youth and not just about youth. With our long-standing mission of community outreach, we started this do-it-yourself/film-it-yourself project in conjunction with the public library." The William and Mary film students were matched with local youth to help them create their own films.

"Last year was so successful that we've made it an annual event. We cue the young filmmakers with our theme 'Journeys & Passages' to start them with the workshops." The production workshops were conducted at the Williamsburg Regional Library and at the Swem Library during November. "We take the young people through the filmmaking processes including screening the films once they have finished." The local kids and the William and Mary students love the experience.

"Now they can make their own films and submit them to the festival," Tim says. The festival hosts a Student Short Film competition where students at any age level compete. "The DIY/FIY project gets local youth participation and prepares them to have a film to submit. The Student Short Film competition reaches out to students from all over the local area and state to submit entries."

The Student Short Film competition is international, too. It is promoted to universities around the globe for international students to submit entries. Competitions like this bring together students from around the world with a common interest in film. Crossing language and political barriers, the art of film becomes a global language. "That goes back to the very beginning of cinema for the hopes of this medium in the silent era: Global communications that flows across cultural lines."

Tim contemplates the future of the festival, "Our initial mission was to present something of value, promote the global medium of film and engage the local community. Over the past seven years, the festival has drawn residents and students, but now it also draws people from out of town." The pull of the William and Mary Global Film Festival has grown from regionally to nationally to internationally.

"The city of Williamsburg has been very supportive and encourages the festival to grow into being part of the community's commitment to the arts," Tim says. "Williamsburg is a town about history, but there's a surge rising to be a town about the arts as well. I hope the film festival continues to grow and be a part of that."

With all of the hard work to present the festival, Tim does steal a few seconds to appreciate what the festival team has produced. "My favorite moments are seeing the conversations that a shared film experience ignites. To look across the lobby at a William and Mary student engaged in discussion with a local resident about the film they've just seen, that makes it worthwhile. Seeing the Kimball Theatre full of a really diverse crowd watching these films, that's what keeps me excited about this project." NDN

The festival runs from February 13 – 16 with the main events at the Kimball Theatre.



Corey Miller Photography

Causes of **FOOD CRAVINGS**

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Debbi Dunn has studied holistic health since the 1980s. She's noticed that as the Baby Boomers age, they're searching for the full spectrum view of body, mind and spirit. The "take one pill for this and another pill for that" method of health isn't the choice for aging Boomers. She describes that the body shows it's out of balance when cravings drive us toward certain foods.

"The majority of my clientele are 50 plus

years old," Debbi says of her holistic health consulting. "They have taken care of their parents. They don't want to see all those pills on their kitchen counter that they've seen on their parents' counter. They are looking for ways to reduce their blood pressure, cholesterol and fat intake so they no longer have to take the medications. They want to eat better. They are smart and educated. They know they want to live longer and better."

With self-help books and television doctors touting the latest craze for fast health, the public, Debbi believes, is in a constant state of confusion. "So many fads and diets push one thing for all people. I teach nutrition, but I don't believe in diets. I believe in a new way of life." She explains that a person doesn't get, say borderline diabetic, overnight. So the change has to be a modification in long-term behavior.

Debbi's change in her views on health began in the early 1980s. "In 1982, I moved to the Bay area of California: San Francisco, San Mateo, Napa Valley," she lists. "I moved west with my son and his dog. I was working in hospitality and customer service."

The parents of a friend of hers were an acupuncturist and an herbalist. "I found that fascinating."

When Debbi was growing up in Philadelphia, both of her parents worked full-time, so she learned to cook at an early age. "After school, I would come home and start cooking and doing the chores. I always had a love for nutrition and its effects on the body." She also had an innate understanding of people and a concern for their well-being. She talked with the herbalist to discover the medicinal properties of plants and to the acupuncturist about the interrelatedness of the body's systems.

"Being a single mom and being in California, I had a couple of jobs and was putting myself through school. In the mid-1980s, I went to culinary school in San Francisco. I started with a large hotel corporation and worked my way up to the management level." In 2000, she

moved from San Francisco to Calgary, Alberta (Canada) as a food and beverage executive. That career relocated her to many different cities. "I moved from San Francisco to Calgary, then to Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and then to Maui. From Maui, I came here."

Debbi moved to Williamsburg to be close to her son and his family. "He's married and they have four children. His wife works at Langley, so I know they'll be here for a while. It was hard going from Maui to Williamsburg a couple of times a year. I broke free of all the corporate executive responsibility in 2007 and went back to school for a health and nutrition degree." Today, Debbi is a certified holistic health consultant from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition and licensed with the AADP (American Association of Drugless Practitioners).

She creates specific teas from herbs that are individually mixed for each person. "Bio-individuality is something I stress to people because we are not all the same. I focus on body, mind and spirit. That's holistically looking at the person."

One aspect is the choice of foods we put into our bodies. Debbi says that food cravings usually illustrate an imbalance. She lists eight reasons for cravings:

1. Lack of primary food

Here, Debbi refers to "food" as both physical food that we eat and as spiritual or emotional nourishment. "Primary food deals with our mental and emotional well-being. Example: Are we happy in our life? Do we receive enough love and support? Family, career, financial...so many things can disrupt the balance and therefore we use food as a crutch to cope with daily life."

2. Water starved

"85% of people are dehydrated and reach for food when all we need is to drink a glass of water. Instead, we reach for the bag of chips. Research states that we should drink a ratio of 1/2 our weight in pounds to ounces of water. Example: if you weigh 150 pounds, then you should drink 75 ounces of water per day. Most people will say, 'Then I have to go to the bathroom all day long.' Of course you do because



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the water is releasing the toxins in your body. Drink up.”

3. Yin/Yang balance

“Our bodies like balance, example sweet and salty, meat is sweet and potatoes are salty. Just keep it all in moderation.”

4. Inside coming out

Craving our own personal comfort foods. “These are great foods from our childhood and families, but try to make the foods of those memories healthier. Instead of a sloppy Joe with greasy ground beef, make a lentil stew and serve it up in a bun.”

5. Seasons

“Our bodies were made to eat foods within the seasons. Example: in the summertime we want cooling foods like watermelon and fresh fruits. Winter is the time when we need warmth, like a hearty soup or stew. Utilize the foods of each season.”

6. Lack of Nutrients

“A great rule of thumb: eat more whole

foods like grains and vegetables from the earth. They have a much higher nutrition value with fewer calories. Cookies, ice cream and processed foods contain high calories and low nutrient value.”

7. Hormones

“Stress creates havoc on our adrenal glands; this is where we have the fight-or-flight response. This creates cortisol to be released in our bodies and can contribute to weight gain. Take better care to reduce stress through daily exercise, yoga and meditation. Find what works best for your body and take control of your daily stressors.”

8. De-evolution

You get to a place you’re feeling great and you do something unhealthy to celebrate. “We celebrate with food and drink. Yes, it’s tradition and that’s okay. The caution here is moderation and to not overload your senses. Think of de-evolution as the ‘yo-yo’ dieting, all is going well, then one falls off the wagon, so to speak.”

From Debbi’s list of craving causes, emo-

tional and spiritual reasons factor in as much as the physical ones.

Changes, she says, should be implemented a little at a time. “It’s all in moderation. I don’t believe in restriction. I teach people how to incorporate better options little by little, like new ways to cook, how to shop smarter, how to add daily physical activity to your routine.”

She thinks that most people resist change because they think it’s all or nothing. To combat cravings, try to counteract just one of the reasons listed above – drink water with your meals instead of soft drinks or take a walk down Duke of Gloucester Street instead eating a pint of ice cream when you’re feeling depressed. Small changes can add up to big results.

“I want to reverse physical and mental decline and get stronger as I grow older,” Debbi says. “It’s a pure health thing. By that I mean that we’re not being vain; we want to maintain our health into later years.”

Debbi Dunn says the holistic view of health can make us stronger and healthier as we age, and she stresses that no change is too small to start. “Small steps lead to big changes.” NDN



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A Cross Stitch in Time

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Kim Kiely Photography

Lydia Veditz has done handwork her whole life. “I can’t remember a time that I didn’t,” she says. She describes handwork as things made by hand instead of by machine, which includes such crafts as cross-stitch, embroidery, needlepoint, knitting, sewing and quilting.

In her homeland of Austria, part of the school’s curriculum included teaching the girls these crafts. “I learned handwork from the nuns at our Catholic school. That is traditional in Austria.”

She was raised near Innsbruck, Austria. “I’m a mountain girl,” she adds with a laugh. “Vi-

enna is the sophistication of Austria, and Innsbruck was the farmers.”

Lydia met a young United States Army soldier from Baltimore, they married and she accompanied him to the United States. Her husband attended Tulane University, so the young family lived in New Orleans. “That’s where our daughter, Paula, was born,” Lydia says.

“My first introduction to Williamsburg was when my husband was stationed at Fort Eustis. Since Williamsburg looks the most like Europe, I fell in love with Williamsburg. We’ve been here many, many years.”

Lydia continued to cross-stitch, embroider and sew. “Handwork was a normal part of life for me. I made all of Paula’s clothes when she was young.”

“On a vacation trip to Europe, I decided I wanted to import some handwork into the United States. That’s exactly what I did.”

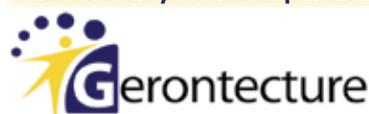
In 1979, there was very little available in the crafts of counted cross-stitch, embroidery and needlepoint. Lydia’s idea was to open a shop to make the fine linen and needlepoint canvases from Europe available here. She and Paula opened Haus Tirol in the Village Shops

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"The shopping center opened in 1980. I was [the owner of] one of the first stores." She named her shop Haus Tirol after her homeland of Austria. "Haus is like your house, except I spell it the German way. Tirol is a state in Austria – my home. That's the state Innsbruck is in."

Originally, the shop stocked many imported European gifts like Swarovski crystal and Hummel figurines. She still has imported wood carvings collectibles, but her main focus is the handwork she loves: counted cross-stitch and embroidery. Embroidery incorporates a different set of stitches than cross-stitch and is usually done with cottons or silks.

"You can do tablecloths, pillowcases, clothing, pictures, blankets," Lydia lists. "Embroidery has the design on the fabric."

Counted cross-stitch has no image or design on the fabric. "You work from a chart, counting the stitches from the chart onto blank fabrics," Lydia describes. "It's not so hard. We wouldn't still be here if it was hard to do." Each square in the fabric is a square on the chart. "Out of a blank piece of fabric, something comes forth as you stitch."

That's the part that she enjoys: the steady, silent reveal of an image as she stitches. "It's addictive. There's something peaceful about creating." It's cheaper than therapy, her daughter Paula likes to say.

"You can sit quietly and create something," Lydia explains. "When you take your needle and thread and start, an image develops as you stitch. It continues. You want to see more coming forth. It is soothing and makes you happy inside to see something beautiful materializing in front of your eyes."

Counted cross-stitch and embroidery can be meditative. "In today's world where everything is so topsy-turvy, it's wonderful to sit and stitch. You forget about the world. You are creating with your needle. You bring the design forth. It is soothing and permits you to forget what we're facing every day."

A beautiful byproduct of the actual act of stitching is the finished piece. Lydia and Paula have their shop filled with skilled pieces covering subjects from angels to Williamsburg scenes. "You can create art for your home, create gifts for people, there is no end to what you can do with cross-stitch. It can be framed, made into ornaments, or into utilitarian things like kitchen towels, blankets and pillows."

For someone who has never cross-stitched or for a person who hasn't attempted the craft in years, Lydia says the basics can be taught in about 15 minutes. The chart shows the design as squares for the threads. "Each symbol on the chart's squares is a color of thread and shows where it goes." The designs can be simple or complex. People in Williamsburg like the reproduction sampler designs, and those can be more complex charts. "The reproduction samplers have many different types of stitches. It can span the whole horizon of counted thread work. You could reproduce a 300 year old sampler if you know the stitches that were used. We have some amazingly talented ladies in Williamsburg."

Many people think that Lydia and Paula have plenty of time during their days at the shop to create counted cross-stitch pieces. "The store operations don't allow us that opportunity," she says. "Inventory is coming, and we have a lot of buttons, threads and fabric to count." Lydia admits that she always has a handwork project going, but works on it at night after the shop closes.

Lydia Veditz invites her Williamsburg neighbors to try counted cross-stitch again – or for the first time. "It's soothing and calms the mind, plus you have a beautiful piece of artwork when you finish." NDN

provided by the Williamsburg
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what's up in real estate



I would like to introduce myself as the new President of the Williamsburg Area Association of Realtors. We are in a very fluid situation with the current housing market and as Realtors®, we are dedicated to the concept of home ownership and the rights of home owners. During the next year I will try, through this column, to keep you up to date with developments in the market and also address local concerns as they arise.



By
Andrew Nelson
President
Williamsburg
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of REALTORS®

Q: I just heard that the real estate market is down for the month of October. Is that true of the local market as well?

In Virginia home sales continue to exhibit seasonal decline, but remain relatively steady after a significant drop in sales from August to September. Over the past few years, Virginia has experienced inconsistent trends between September and December, making the next few months somewhat unpredictable. Nonetheless, sales remain strong compared to previous years with a 6% year-over-year increase in October. The market in Williamsburg has been mixed this year. Some months have been up and some months down. We are still experiencing a correction in the market and it will take some time yet to stabilize. We are currently in the situation where the inventory is down and there are still signs of multiple offers, but typically, at this time of year the market tends to be historically slow.

Q: Has there been any progress on the Flood Insurance situation?

The National Association of Realtors sent a letter to Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Representative Michael Grimm (R-NY) and Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) thanking them for introducing the "Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act," which delays further implementation of some rate increases in the Biggert-Waters flood

insurance law. Hopefully, this will have the effect of a more phased approach to the changes so that people affected will not have a major increase in premiums all at once.

Q: How are things with regard to mortgages?

There is still a general change in what is required to support an application, that is the amount of paperwork required has increased but this is no more than being prudent in the lending process. No longer are banks just taking verbal confirmation of income. Each aspect has to be verified. This means keeping detailed records of transactions appearing on bank statements. It still remains an excellent time to buy a home and although rates are starting to creep up, they currently remain low. One of the imponderables is the introduction of certain aspects of the Dodd-Frank Act. Beginning in January 2014 banks will be required to tighten up even more on their lending criteria and to carry some of the risk, where, in the past, this has been part of the role of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Q: What is the outlook for 2014?

There is still a lot of uncertainty in the market and it remains somewhat unpredictable for the next few months. This means that expectations of what a property is worth have to be more realistic. The active area of the market still resides in the \$200-\$300K range. However, we are seeing movement in some of the higher priced properties which has been slow over the past four years.

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Hey Neighbor! **PROPER PRUNING TECHNIQUES**

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The Virginia Cooperative Extension, James City County Williamsburg Master Gardeners, are offering a free visit to homeowners to demonstrate proper pruning techniques and use of appropriate tools. Registration will be by online application at our website www.jccwmg.org from December 12 to January 12, 2014. Home visits will be in February and early March. The goal of this program is to teach research-based pruning practices that help homeowners maintain an attractive landscape of healthy plants. These pruning practices will promote less diseases and less need of pesticides.

Hey Neighbor! **TOYS FOR TOTS**

Warhill High School Wrestling is proud to be sponsoring our second annual holiday toy drive. Please support Toys for Tots. New, unwrapped toys may be brought to the front office at Warhill High School at 4615 Opportunity Way, Williamsburg, VA 23188. If you would like to make a donation and need it picked up, please email Kim Lish at kimlish@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor! **HERITAGE HUMANE SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

December 14, 2013

The annual Christmas Bazaar, kicks off from 9 am – 3 pm at Bruton Parish Hall (Duke of Gloucester Street). Enjoy the most unique holiday gifts with proceeds benefiting the pets at Heritage Humane Society. Don't miss our famous Gourmet Soup Kitchen with offerings from outstanding Williamsburg restaurants and chefs. Arrive early for the best

selection.

Hey Neighbor! **“THE NUTCRACKER” BY VIRGINIA REGIONAL BALLET**

December 14-15, 2013

With special guest artist from the Pennsylvania Ballet, at 2:30 and 7 pm on December 14, and at 2:30 pm on December 15. Performances are held at Phi Beta Kappa Hall at the College of William & Mary. Reserved Seating. To purchase tickets online, go to www.danceVRB.com or call the PBK box office at 757-221-2674.

Hey Neighbor! **AT CHRISTMAS BE MERRY**

December 14 and 21, 2013

Sir George Yeardley, Virginia's Governor in 1620 invites you to a very special evening program in the church at Historic Jamestowne. Departing from Colonial Williamsburg's Visitor Center, you will travel along the Colonial Parkway with your guide who will offer insights into early English Christmas traditions and what Jamestown settlers expected during their Christmastide. Upon arriving on Jamestown Island, you will be escorted along a cresset lit path to an early Virginia Christmas celebration. After a welcome by Governor Yeardley and singing carols in the historic church, you will herald in the season by the bonfire as you witness the firing of the Christmas guns in the shadow of the old fort. Tickets are required and go on sale in November 2013. FMI: 757-229-4997. Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown, VA. For more information call: 757-229-4997 or visit www.historicjamestowne.org.

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG CHORUS WINTER CONCERT**

December 17, 2013

At 7:30 pm at Walnut Hills Baptist Church on Jamestown Road, a featured work is Michael Haydn's setting of Psalm 112 accompanied by string quartet. The guitar, flute, strings, and the piano artistry of Christine Niehaus will add to the festivity. The Williamsburg Youth Chorale and the Berkeley Middle School Treble Choir will perform several pieces and combine with the Chorus singing the exuberant Look to this Day! by Bob Chilcott. For ticket information contact Dianne, 757-903-4602, Mdianne510@yahoo.com or visit www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org.

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB 50th ANNIVERSARY**

December 18, 2013

“A Holiday Concert Survival Guide” presentation by Dru Stowe. This is the 4th event of the Williamsburg Music Club's 50th Anniversary year monthly celebrations. The program, which is free and open to the public, begins at 11 am in Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish in downtown Colonial Williamsburg, preceded by coffee & conversation at 10 am. For more information contact Sylvia Lynn 757-741-0006 or www.williamsburgmusicclub.org.

Hey Neighbor! **LORNA LUFT AT THE KIMBALL THEATRE**

December 21, 2013

ShowStoppers Productions presents Lorna Luft on at 2 pm and 7:30 pm at the Kimball Theatre in Williamsburg; all seats are \$40. Come and celebrate the Christmas season with Broadway, film and television actress Lorna Luft singing her favorite Christmas songs with a mix of all the “Songs My Mother Taught Me.” A celebrated live performer, stage, film and

television actress, best-selling author, recording artist and Emmy nominated producer, Lorna Luft continues to triumph in every medium with critics labeling her one of the most vibrant, versatile and exciting artists on stage today.

Hey Neighbor! **CHRISTMAS OUTDOORS NATIVITY**

December 24, 2013

Pastor Richard Cline invites you to an OUTDOOR NATIVITY, with live animals, at Olive Branch Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), commencing at 5 pm and concluding with Holy Communion at 8 pm in its 1835 sanctuary. The church is located at 7643 Richmond Road in James City County (halfway between Norge and Toano). Visit their website at www.ob-cc.org or contact them at (757) 566-8077 or at obcc1833@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor! **FIRST NIGHT WILLIAMSBURG**

December 31, 2013

New Year's Eve would not be the same without a good party, and we have it. First Night Williamsburg offers family-fun through live entertainment and fireworks. Buttons are \$15 per person, kids under 5 free. Kids Show at Matthew Whaley School from 3 - 7 pm. Main stages light up at 7 pm and food is available for sale. Fireworks at Zable Stadium at midnight. For information, www.firstnightwilliamsburg.org for button sales locations and entertainers.

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December 2013
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4 BR, 3.5 BA beauty with spectacular views of the 5th green of the Plantation Course. Tasteful, neutral & recently updated interior include hardwoods, new carpet, ceramic tile, quartz and solid surface countertops, appliances, freshly painted interior and so much more. One Year Home Warranty. \$545,000.



(757) 291-9201

dianebeal@lizmoore.com



3320 TIMBER RIDGE

Heritage Landing • \$450,000

Impeccable, all brick Colonial with updated kitchen, corian countertops, gas range & island opens up to the family room, great for entertaining. Gleaming hardwood floors. Separate 4th bedroom/bonus/media room. Large laundry room. Walk up attic for possible office. Beautifully landscaped level lawn, fenced backyard. NEW ROOF! Easy to show. 3 bedrooms, 3 full baths, 2,900 sq. ft.



757-784-4317

charlotteturner@lizmoore.com • www.homesbycharlotte.com



105 SOUTH TURNBERRY

Ford's Colony

2002 Lakefront custom home thoughtfully designed to blend stunning water views & masterful architecture on 3 finished levels. Open floorplan gracefully transitions from elegant to inviting casual spaces. Relaxing 1st floor master suite, sunroom and finished lower level. 4-6 BRs, 3 full BAs, 2 half BAs, 5,300 sqft. \$899,000.



Lorraine Funk

lorrainefunk@lizmoore.com

757-903-7627

www.lizmoore.com/lorrainefunk

5350 Discovery Park Blvd., Williamsburg, VA



NEW LISTING

4715 WINTERBERRY COURT

Colonial Heritage

Built in 2005, this rare Mimosa floor plan in popular Colonial Heritage is the perfect setting for an active 55+ lifestyle. Easy 1st flr living w/ natural light. Guest BRs, loft and private BA on the second level. Lower level is beautifully finished with storage and full BA. Gas generator to convey. Pre-inspected and appraised. \$368,000.



Grace Lacey, ABR
(757) 876-4634

www.lizmoore.com/gracelacey



Gracious Cape Cod with beautiful detail and millwork. Redwood siding. Cedar shake roof. Deep crown, chair and hardwood throughout. Spacious DR, Study with built-ins, open Kitchen/FR with gas FP and access to screen porch & deck. Large first floor master suite. Brick paths to formal gardens. One year Home Warranty for purchaser. This is a very special home. MLS #30039161. \$438,000.



757-876-3838

susansmith@lizmoore.com

www.lizmoore.com/susansmith



803 WESTGATE CIRCLE

Spacious 2 BR, 2 BA, 1,480 sqft. condo in the city. Fabulous floor plan with lots of natural light includes a soaring living room with FP and entertainment alcove. Dining room opens to kitchen w/ breakfast bar. Sunroom opens to fenced patio area. First floor master bedroom with en suite bath offering a garden tub & separate shower. \$169,000.



Tim Parker
(757) 879-1781

Cyril Petrop
(757) 879-8811

www.timparkerrealestate.com



**Merry Christmas
&
Happy
New Year!**



Denise Fleischmann
Cell: 757-846-0202

Denise@LizMoore.com

www.WilliamsburgHomesandFarms.com