

December 2015

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors

VOL. 9, ISSUE 12

PRICELESS

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Williamsburg Holidays

Jonah Fishel



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We're all aware that the Williamsburg area is a very special place to live and visit year round. But during the holidays our little town becomes especially magnetic and magical. It is magnetic in the way it draws and captivates young and old from near and far with its abundance of decorations, remembrances, and unique celebrations. It is magical in the way that it enthalls the children and ignites the enthusiasm and wonder of a child in so many adults. The people at every level who contribute to the decorating and event planning, and even those who have spent 10, 20, or 30 years at it, still brim with excitement and anticipation like young children on Christmas Eve.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

In this issue, we are fortunate to be able to introduce you to several of the dedicated people who invest so much time and energy and creativity into make the holidays special. We have partnered with the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance to bring you as much information as we can about the parades, demonstrations, musical affairs, and other festivities. The stories here provide a peek behind the scenes of many of those activities and a little insight into the people working so hard behind those scenes.

You can start planning how you can make the most of all the historic area has to offer this holiday season by looking over the holiday calendar starting on page 36 and the Hey Neighbor! listings starting on page 56. Whatever you plan to do and however you plan to celebrate this special season, we wish you a safe and happy holiday! NDN

Next Door Neighbors



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photography

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Harmony *for the* Holidays

By Lillian Stevens

Ask anyone on the campus of William and Mary and they will say that the all male cappella Gentlemen of the College is more than a singing group. These guys, in navy blue blazers, khaki pants and crazy ties, truly live up to their name. They are gentlemen in every sense of the word, and they are multi-faceted performers too.

It's not that the gentlemen aren't serious about the music. They just don't take them-

selves too seriously.

"If you've ever seen a barbershop quartet perform, you know that they always wear suits," explains Jonah Fishel, the group's business manager. "And a lot of time, it's the goofy, tacky suit. So, that's our tradition. We aren't a serious group and we don't want to be a serious group."

Having celebrated 25 years this past January, the Gentlemen of the College is older than

its oldest member. The group was founded in 1990 by a couple of freshmen who were interested in a fun, casual singing style, and barbershop music. It was the first all male cappella group on campus. Now they are one of eleven all male groups and even though they originally focused on barbershop music, they have since expanded their repertoire to include more modern music. They perform selections ranging from Sinatra to Simon and Garfunkel,

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sider the IRA Charitable Rollover to avoid income taxation if you are in the required minimum distribution period and receiving RMD’s. If you would like to receive more information on Charitable Giving, please call our office at **(757) 220-8114** and speak with Terry to set up a consultation with one of our estate and trust attorneys.

Often times clients want to pass along their faith and personal values to the next generation. In fact, passing along your “legacy” of beliefs is many times more important that your financial wealth and tangible assets.

Having a completed estate plan — one that includes your will or revocable living trust; financial power of attorney; and advance medical directive is another way to express your holiday spirit, to each other if married, and to your children and grandchildren. Having completed your own estate plan is a wonderful Christmas gift to your family and loved ones. And, it will give you “a peace of mind” knowing you have provided for your family or favorite charity in this very important way.

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even Imagine Dragons.

They are also known for their dynamic stage presence, from lively antics during songs to comedy sketches performed between numbers.

“There are a lot of fun, terrible skits,” Jonah says with a laugh. “We write and perform them ourselves, and they are just awful skits. There aren’t as many skits as there were a decade or so ago because we are more focused on the music now.”

With the holidays on the horizon, rehearsals are solidly underway for local performances, including a free Christmas caroling performance on Saturday, December 12 in Colonial Williamsburg and a ticketed one on Sunday, December 13 in Smithfield.

“You won’t want to miss our caroling with the Accidentals (an all-female a cappella group) in Merchants Square. That will be at 10:30 a.m. at the Farmers Market.”

For the Smithfield concert, the group will perform as part of a larger set at the Smithfield Little Theatre. Jonah expects tickets to go on sale very soon. The Smithfield concert is actually a tradition that he counts among his favorite holiday memories from year to year.

“We road trip down there, sing every holiday song we know, get fed really amazing ham and other tasty food and then sing all the songs again,” he says. “It is the perfect end to the fall semester.”

Even as winter turns to spring and one year slips into the next, these young men will remain in touch. Many of them tend to return to campus at Homecoming. A common thread of friendship and a love of singing holds them together as they are rooted in the strong tradition that the original members sought to create.

“Last year we had about 100 alumni come back to campus for our 25th anniversary as a group,” Jonah says.

As business manager for the Gentlemen, Jonah books performances, reminds his friends and colleagues where to be and what to wear. On average the group is booked for anywhere between 12 to 20 performances each semester. Jonah also handles all financials. Singers are not paid but the group receives proceeds from ticket and CD sales, so there is a bank account.

“We sing entirely for fun,” Jonah explains. “But the funds we receive help defray the costs of traveling. For instance, this weekend we are going up to the University of Delaware to participate in ‘Acappellooza!’”

It also costs money for studio time when they produce their popular CDs. Indeed, there are Gentlemen of the College CDs available for purchase both on their website (www.gentlemenofthecollege.com) and on iTunes. “We have two holiday CDs: one is from 1996-97 and the other is more recent from a couple years ago. Both would make great stocking stuffers.”

The funds raised through ticket and CD sales also help defray travel costs associated with the groups’ final tour each spring.

“We don’t know where we are going on tour this year. Last year we toured down to Nashville where we sang on a morning radio show, stopped at a few high schools and colleges, and visited the Barbershop Harmony Society. Then, we returned home by way of Roanoke and Northern Virginia where we did some gigs along the way.”

In addition to their many local and regional performances, the Gen-

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tlemen have appeared over the years on TV shows (The Price Is Right) and at a variety of venues including the White House, the United States Capitol, the National Constitution Center and West Virginia's iconic Greenbrier Hotel.

Listening to their music, it is hard to believe that most members of the Gentlemen of the College are not professionally trained. They are all, however, very musical.

"Some haven't even sung until they came to college. Most of the guys are music or government majors. Some have musical background, but not always. Some people don't even know how to read music at first, so we teach them."

Twenty-five years ago, there were no auditions and no set practice schedules. At present, auditions are held each semester. Competition is fierce, with 30-50 potential Gentlemen auditioning.

"We'll typically take two or three singers in the fall and one or two in the spring, depending on how strong the pool is. We don't always take new members. We've been as small as eight or nine singers and as large as 17. We

average around a dozen and right now there are 15 of us, which is a good number."

In terms of their hometowns, a majority come from Virginia.

"Northern Virginia is home for me and home to about a third of our group. Another third is from the Richmond area and the rest are mostly from up north from places like Massachusetts and New York."

Not surprisingly, between rehearsals and performances, there is a pretty significant time investment, although it differs from year to year.

"It's a lot," Jonah admits. "But, because these guys are my best friends, we spend a lot of time together anyway, even beyond practices and performances. We rehearse for two hours on Tuesday and Thursday nights and sometimes there are extra rehearsals. Once the year gets underway, there are one or two gigs a week. Then, when the sororities are going through their informal rush time, there are always informal serenades for that."

Once they return from the holiday break, the Gentlemen will be turning their attention

toward the final concert in the spring which is held in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall (PBK).

"That concert is a treasure trove. We gather at PBK around 1 p.m. on the last day of classes and start preparing for a 7 p.m. concert that is really the culmination of everything we've worked on throughout the year. It's really a big deal."

It will be particularly poignant for Jonah as he will graduate from William and Mary in May.

"What I will miss most about college is the group. And what I'll miss most about the group is knowing that every Tuesday and Thursday night, I had somewhere to be and was really excited to be there. Rehearsals always brighten my mood. If I arrive in a bad mood, I'm always in a better mood after rehearsal is over."

The bottom line is that Jonah Fishel and his fellow performers are in this group to have fun and sing music that they like.

"It makes us happy when people come out and enjoy the concerts. At the end of the day, we are a bunch of guys getting together, singing songs and wearing silly ties." NDN



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Start the Parade!

By Brandy Centolanza



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

When Naomi Flythe was hired five years ago as service representative for the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, part of the job description was overseeing plans for Williamsburg’s annual Christmas Parade. Naomi has taken that aspect of the job quite seriously.

Naomi works in partnership with the parade’s co-chairperson, Mariellynn Maurer, nine months out of the year to ensure the pa-

rade runs without a hitch.

Williamsburg’s Christmas Parade has been a holiday fixture since 1965. The parade is celebrating its golden anniversary this year, and Naomi has been working tirelessly to make the event extra special. She’s been working to bring back nearly 20 former grand marshals from previous parades to march in this year’s parade, which kicks off the holiday season in Williamsburg on December 5th.

The parade will feature participants from 100 units, among them civic groups, businesses, local high school bands, government officials, boys and girls scout troops, and other interest groups and organizations, including the non-human kind such as dogs, horses and pigs. Llamas have also marched in the parade in the past.

Though this year’s theme is “Our Golden Christmas,” participants have been asked to

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decorate their floats incorporating themes from previous years. Among the most popular themes: “Christmas Carols” (1970), “Through the Eyes of a Child” (1971), “Babes in Toyland” (1974), “A Patriotic Christmas” (1987), “The Gift of Giving” (1997) and “Trains, Teddy Bears and Tinsels” (2004).

“This year’s participants have really embraced this idea, and have really gone above and beyond my expectations,” says Naomi with pride.

Naomi starts prepping for the parade in March. Part of her responsibilities includes reviewing participant applications and connecting with those interested in marching in the parade. She meets frequently with those involved and has developed personal relationships with them through the years. Participants are required to meet with her in order to be in the parade, and numerous preparation meetings are held throughout the summer.

“The purpose of our meetings is to create a dialogue, to come together, and to make it a joint effort,” she says. “It’s not just about the Chamber organizing the parade, but the par-

ticipants who make a special effort. They’ve really taken ownership of this. They come back to me with feedback from the previous year, and make suggestions for the next year, and that helps us with our preparations.”

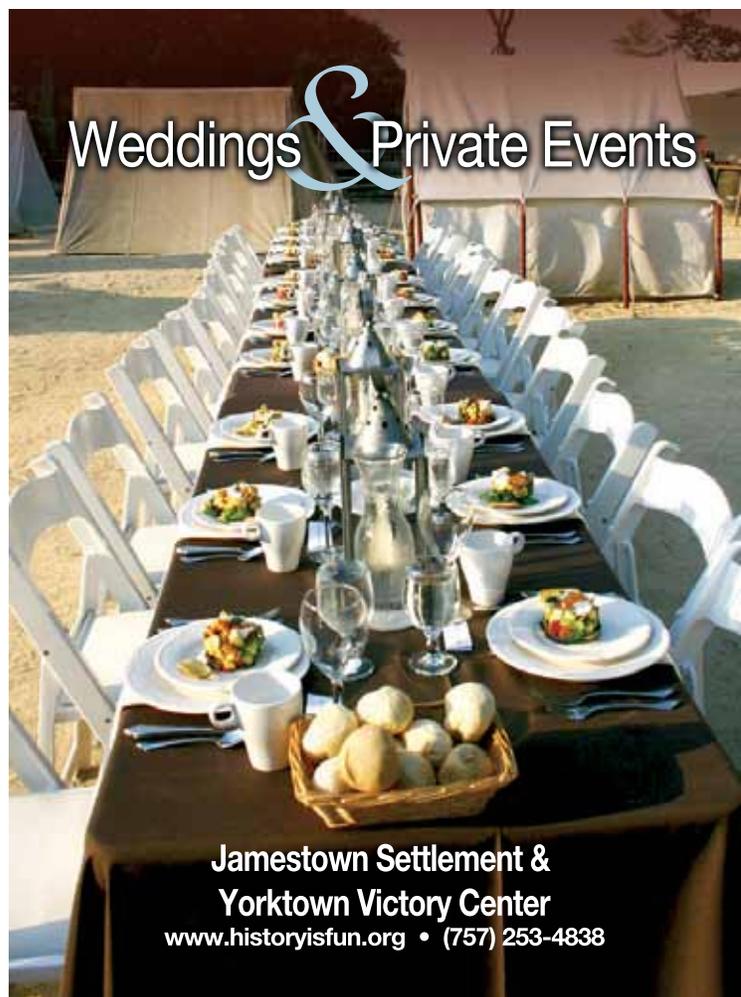
Naomi also lines up sponsors for the parade as well as the volunteers. Roughly 150 volunteers, mostly from civic groups like the local Ruritan club, whose members have been helping out the past three decades, turn out the day of the parade to assist in various capacities. Volunteers assist with the parade lineup, help with crowd control along Richmond Road, close any gaps along the parade route and help with dispersal at the end of the event. Each volunteer wears an authentic Christmas parade scarf to be identified.

Ordering those scarves for the volunteers as well as the signage for the parade, working with local artist, Bob Oller to come up with a design for the parade logo and gathering government officials from the city as well as Colonial Williamsburg to be parade judges also fall under Naomi’s duties. She wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I like it because I think organizing has always been one of my strengths,” she says. “I consider things not just from my perspective but also from other people’s perspectives. I love that I get to pull it all together. On the day of the parade, I love to watch everyone line up, to watch it all unfold, and to see all aspects of the community coming together, the businesses, the families, the schools. To know that it all started from a meeting is very rewarding.”

This past October, Naomi had to reconnect with all of the participants regarding a sudden parade route reversal due to the installation of a new outdoor ice skating rink in Colonial Williamsburg. The hiccup proposed some challenges, but nothing that Naomi couldn’t handle.

“We’ve been working closely with the participants on all the details, and everyone’s adjusted accordingly,” Naomi says. “Everyone’s been so understanding and supportive and committed, and are really coming together with this last minute adjustment to make this our best parade ever.”



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This year, instead of starting in the Historic Area, the parade will end there, allowing for those who march in the parade and their families to spend time in Colonial Williamsburg, either ice skating, having lunch, shopping, or taking in the scenery.

“That is one advantage to changing the route,” says Naomi. “It makes you wonder why we haven’t done it before. It makes sense.”

On the morning of the parade, Naomi’s day starts at 4:30 a.m. as she busies herself finalizing all of the floats and units, and working on last minute details before the arrival of everyone else around 6 a.m.

“I love all the excitement of the day, all the excitement of the parents and the children,” Naomi says. “I love the spirit in the air even at six in the morning. I love how the Christmas Parade gets to open the season here in Williamsburg. I love how people come year after year after year. I love the holiday experience here. There is always something to do.”

Though Naomi has been working behind the scenes of the parade for the past five years, she’s been a part of the holiday experience here in Williamsburg her whole life. She grew up

in town, and graduated from what was then James Blair High School. She moved on to study history at West Virginia State University, but returned to Williamsburg to marry her husband, Matthew Flythe.

Naomi spent the next three decades working at Colonial Williamsburg in various capacities while raising two daughters, Antoinette and Tahitia. She worked with Colonial Williamsburg’s reservations, dining and conference sales departments before spending some time with the Virginia Employment Commission. Now, with her current role with the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, she works to promote the Williamsburg area.

Matthew, who passed away in 2009, was an associate minister at New Zion Baptist Church on Longhill Road. Naomi has also spent much of her life devoted to church. A dozen years ago, Matthew helped Naomi found the non-profit organization Time Out! Outreach, a women’s ministry involving 13 churches from Williamsburg, Newport News and Charles City County. The organization recently expanded to other churches in Maryland, where Naomi also has family. Any woman can join

regardless of denomination.

“The purpose is to be a support group for all women,” she says.

Outside of church, Naomi enjoys spending time with her daughters and two grandchildren, Jordan and Ryan. She is also an avid bowler, having bowled in a league for more than 30 years in Williamsburg and York County. Her team this year is called One Queen and Three Kings. “I love to bowl because of the camaraderie,” she says.

Christmas every year for Naomi includes a trip to Maryland to visit her family as well as a trip to West Virginia to see a dear friend from her college days, shopping with her children and grandchildren, and soaking in all that Christmas in Williamsburg has to offer.

Whether she is organizing meetings and events through her Time Out! Outreach or organizing to make Williamsburg’s Christmas parade magical and memorable for participants and spectators alike, Naomi is simply happy to be involved.

“I love people, and I love making a difference,” Naomi says. “It is my goal wherever I go.” NDN

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Passion for Painting

By Susannah Livingston



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Making her surroundings beautiful has always mattered to Annie Cacioppo, so it's almost surprising that she took up painting only last year. In that short time it's become a passionate avocation and a source of joy. During the holidays she will even be able to show her work at the Williamsburg Public Library.

Annie grew up in Newport News in a family that had a bent for acting and singing. The

Cacioppo lived across the street from nationally known painter and arts advocate, Barclay Sheaks. In fact, Annie inherited one of his rare oil paintings. "My mother had bought it from him for \$35!" she says with a laugh. But in general, the visual arts were not a big part of her early life.

That all changed after Annie took her first trip to Europe, when she was in her twenties.

She traveled to Italy, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and spent much of the trip marveling at the exquisite art that seemed to fill every museum and church. "I thought, wow, this stuff's gorgeous," she says, eyes wide open. The experience gave her a hunger for art that has only kept growing.

"I've had an interest in art for a long time, but for all my life I've directed that love of

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color and texture into interior design and gardening,” Annie explains. She’s also an expert seamstress, crafting just the right curtains and other textile pieces for each space. Her artistic eye is evident in every room of her serenely pretty house.

Somehow, until recently, creating a work of art on canvas still seemed out of reach. “I’d always looked at painting and thought, ‘That would be a fun thing to do.’ But I was intimidated by it.”

Intimidated, that is, until the day she saw an announcement for a class with an intriguing name: *Never Before Had an Art Class* class. “That’s about the least intimidating thing I’ve ever heard of,” Annie says, laughing. Her fears slipping away, she signed up with the Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center (WCAC). The center offers a variety of classes taught by professional artists and experienced teachers skilled in their medium.

What followed was one of the most joyful experiences of Annie’s adult life. Along with about half a dozen other novices, she worked

hard for 12 weeks as veteran instructor Joanne Limric showed them the basics of creating an original acrylic painting. At first, Annie says, it was hard to relax into the work. “Joanne just encourages you so much. But she wanted me to just let it flow—‘be more painterly.’ That was hard for me at first.”

For Annie, as for many other novices, learning to paint is something of a struggle between the left brain and the right. “In interior design, the beauty comes first, then the execution. You start with the right brain and move on to the left,” Annie explains. “That was my mindset going into this class. But when you look at a vase of flowers, you think, ‘How am I going to paint it?’ You think of the technique, so you start out more with the left brain.”

Annie says she loves the subjectivity of painting: the way a dozen artists can look at the same object and come up with a dozen widely varied interpretations. She adds that although the classroom is fairly quiet, students do discuss their work and get ideas from each other.

Annie credits Joanne, the instructor, with

creating a friendly atmosphere in which every student feels safe to take artistic risks and push themselves to grow as painters. Joanne also gives the students choices of subject matter, sometimes with comical results. Annie recalls, laughing, how one day when Joanne brought in two objects, “The only man in the class chose to paint the horse and all the women chose to paint the vase of flowers.”

Thanks to Joanne’s gentle but expert tutelage and an intensity of inspiration that has taken even Annie by surprise, she says she’s already reached a level of comfort at the easel. “The more I do it, the more I’m able to go there and relax. It’s just a very Zen type experience,” she says. “I become totally focused, playing with the colors.”

Today, Annie is taking an additional class in acrylics with WCAC and hopes to soon try watercolor. Acrylics is, she says, a forgiving medium, because if you make a mistake in acrylics you can simply paint over it. She laughs as she tells how she painted a bird on a stump “but I messed up the bird’s tail so the stump kept get-

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Annie is also currently taking a class in drawing with the Williamsburg Area Learning Tree (WALT), an education program offered as a public service by the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists. "I don't care what you want to do in art, drawing is the basis," she explains. "The first time I tried drawing, I found it very difficult. We were copying very detailed drawings." But Annie says the WALT class she is currently taking is very relaxed. "This class moves from coffee house to coffee house and we're drawing people, for goodness sake! So you have to quickly capture the basics of the person before they have a chance to move. The drawings begin as very quick sketches, basically circles and squares, and then you fill in more detail. I'm still a novice, but I enjoy the process."

Though art is her new-found love and her favorite activity, it's by no means the only demand on Annie's time. For years she worked for the City of Newport News, first for the mayor and city council. It was a fast-paced

environment. She says, "I sure knew what was going on around town. I had the pulse of what was happening." Then she joined the office of the Commonwealth's Attorney. "It was really interesting work. When you work in criminal law, it can be really intense." When an election brought in new leadership, Annie moved over to the city's department of libraries and experienced, as she says, "A total change of pace."

Today Annie works three days a week for an attorneys' office in Newport News, does interior design, and performs occasional dramatic roles. Comedic parts are her favorite in local productions. She's even acted in training films for the National Center for State Courts. "I've played battered women, I've played lawyers," Annie says. "The National Center was glad to use me because I could actually act, and I knew other actors who could play roles they needed to fill."

The fruits of Annie's work, and that of her fellow students from the WCAC, will be featured in December on the walls of the gallery at the Williamsburg Regional Library on Scot-

land Street. Each student-artist will display three or four works, including one produced at the very beginning of their artistic journey—"so we can see the progression." The show will be open to the public daily free of charge.

Given that her career as a painter is still in its infancy, Annie Cacioppo is thrilled that some of her work will be on public view in the coming weeks. She's busy creating a studio space in an airy, south-facing room in her house. And if she's sure of one thing, it's this: that painting will be a part of her life forevermore. "I'll continue taking classes as long as they offer them," she vows, adding with a twinkle, "My classmates and I are considered sophomores, and as long as Joanne keeps teaching classes, I'll keep taking them!" NDN

The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center's "Never Before Had an Art Class -- Sophomores" art show at the Williamsburg Public Library's gallery runs throughout December. Meet Annie and her classmates at the opening reception, Thursday, December 3 from 5 - 7 p.m.

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Deck the Halls

By Erin Fryer



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Colonial Williamsburg (CW) is a popular travel destination for families across the globe. Though the area boasts unique sights, smells, tastes and decorations throughout the year, few seasons are more magical in the colonial capitol than the holidays.

Williamsburg locals and tourists flock to Duke of Gloucester and its surrounding streets to see the glow of candles in the colonial windows, holly and evergreen garlands

donning window and door frames, and most of all, gorgeous holiday wreaths and swags gracing every front door.

No one in Williamsburg knows more about the process and execution of bringing Colonial Williamsburg's holiday display to life than Albert Morris, a journeyman carpenter for the Revolutionary City.

A native of New Kent County, Al has been a carpenter at CW for more than 36 years.

Throughout his tenure at CW, Al has played an intricate role in the annual set-up and breakdown of the city's holiday decorations.

With nearly four decades at Colonial Williamsburg, Al knows the traditional colonial holiday look like the back of his hand. The flickering candles in the windows, brightly colored fruits circling an evergreen wreath, and apple fans with a pineapple in the center. Al is familiar with them all, and he knows

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where they need to go and how the job needs to get done.

Depending on the amount of team members Al has helping out, that process usually takes about four days to get all of the decorations ready for their big reveal. It's a responsibility Al doesn't take lightly, since visitors travel from all over the world to take notes, make sketches and snap photographs in hopes of being able to recreate the beauty of a Colonial Williamsburg holiday in their own home.

Throughout the year, Al keeps busy on a variety of projects, from roof work to tiling floors and repairing door locks. While he says he loves being able to work on a little bit of everything, the holiday season is by far his favorite time of year.

His favorite part about holiday decorations are the festive wreaths. The wreaths, an intricate part of CW's holiday display, feature everything from apples and pineapples to pomegranates and dried flowers. While the decorations differ from building to building, Al says the one thing that stays the same is

the use of fresh materials from nature to create these festive works of art.

While the style didn't originate in Williamsburg, the city's decorations are easily identified as "Colonial Williamsburg decorations" anyway, and visitors travel to the area during the Christmas season for the sole purpose of admiring them.

Fruit beckoned wreaths and swags were also not originated during colonial times. The custom of securing fruit, herbs and other plant life to basic Christmas decorations like wreaths and swags started as Christmas was slowly growing in significance during the twentieth century.

Each year during the holidays, CW guests can enjoy a guided look at the picturesque colonial buildings decked in their holiday splendor. This year's tour, on November 28th and 29th, introduces residents and visitors to the materials, construction techniques and traditions used by Al and the CW staff to bring the holiday season to life.

Conservation concerns have led to the

elimination of some of the classic elements of the decorations, like running cedar and mountain laurel. Ribbons, bows, fake fruit and any material not available to eighteenth-century Williamsburg residents, like poinsettias and eucalyptus, were banned.

Al, who has a long-time familiarity with the decorations, says by far the most impressive and beautiful aspect of CW's holiday display is the wreath that decorates the Governor's Palace and he encourages visitors and locals alike to catch a glimpse of the historic Williamsburg building in its entire holiday splendor.

"It take two of us to hang it," he says. "It's about 3-4 feet in diameter and just beautiful."

Unbeknownst to many, Colonial Williamsburg did not start decorating for Christmas until 1936, and the decorations were confined to a few sparse wreaths hung on the palace and the Raleigh Tavern. A few years later, in 1939, fruited wreaths started appearing and the unique Williamsburg Christmas look began.

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Thirty years later, in 1969, the Christmas Decorations Tour was launched and is a tradition still alive and well today. The decorations, all handmade by professionals and never purchased, are always made with natural materials.

Al's beloved wreaths often feature holly berries clipped from a tree, seed pods collected from a nearby field, pine cones, magnolia leaves, and oyster shells collected from the beach. You won't find a plastic reindeer or light-up Santa Claus on the streets of Colonial Williamsburg.

While the decorations remain traditional, they have also evolved throughout his nearly four decades on the decorating team. Through the years, other elements have been added to the decorations like peanut shells, dried flowers, dried peppers and cotton balls.

After 37 years of decorating Colonial Williamsburg, Al says it doesn't stop him from being festive in his personal life. "I always decorate my house, yard and bushes for Christmas," he says. But don't expect him to

follow the traditional look he is so used to at work. "I do a different theme every year."

The holiday season means many things to many people, but one thing that is for sure is once the holiday season draws to a close, a new year is on the horizon. For Al, 2016 is a time of change, as after all of these years he prepares to head into retirement.

"I am looking forward to traveling when I retire," he says. "However, after all of these years at CW, I will be coming back a lot to volunteer."

He has worked with some of his coworkers for more than 20 years. They are like family. He also says that he can't imagine a holiday season without being a part of the decorating process in CW and plans to spend time helping the crew well into his retirement.

The Governor's Palace and the courthouse are his favorite buildings to decorate each year. He also enjoys decorating the exterior of the Williamsburg Inn.

"The big beautiful wreaths are by far the most challenging to hang," Al says. "They are

gigantic, with lots of different types of fruit, holly leaves and greens collected from trees."

A lover of the holiday season, it's hard for him to pinpoint a favorite holiday memory. Throughout the years, the weather has become milder, and Al remembers battling snow, sleet and rain while hanging decorations in his early years. He doesn't have to deal with the elements as often now.

Al has been married for more than 30 years, and enjoys celebrating the holidays with his wife, two children and six grandchildren. He is looking forward to getting more time to spend with his family once he retires.

With retirement slowly creeping up, Al says it's an odd feeling knowing this will be his last holiday season working with Colonial Williamsburg. A lover of the outdoors, he is excited to do more fishing and working in his garden.

"I have really enjoyed working here for so many years and have enjoyed the way the job changes from day to day and is always different," Al says. NDN

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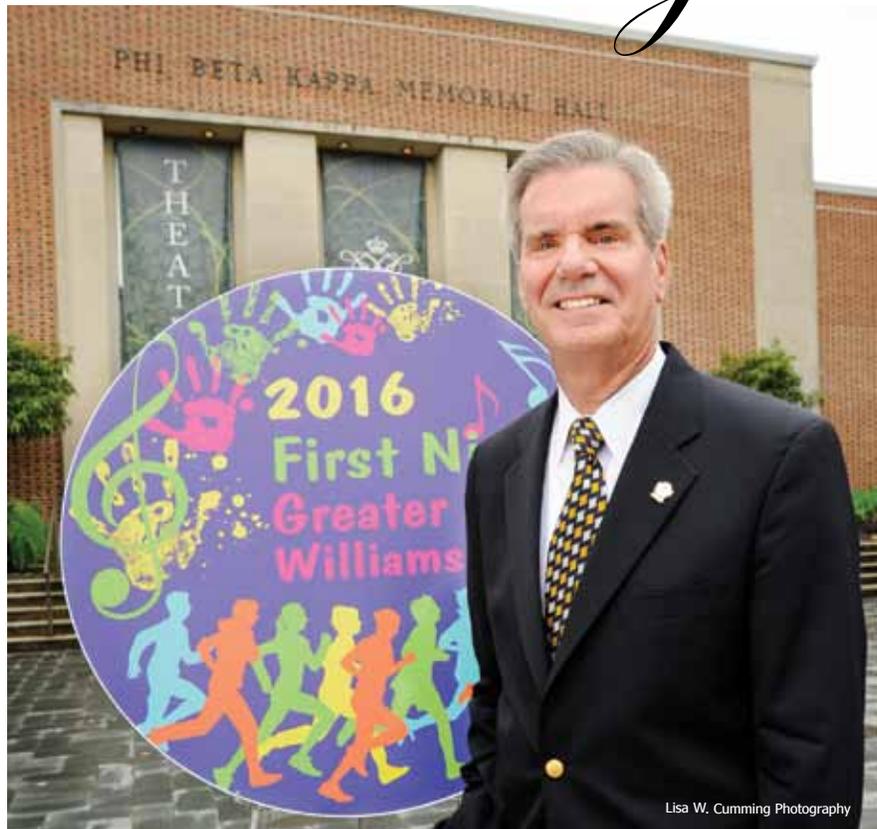
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First Night



By Naomi Tene' Austin

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

A strong sense of community, keen business acumen and personal drive are just a few of the characteristics that make Grover Lewis an ideal fit as Vice President of Development for First Night Williamsburg.

"I'm probably what you would call a Type A personality," he says. "When I get involved in something, I want it to be successful." This assertiveness has no doubt been cultivated by a

fascinating career in telecommunications that requires a great deal of flexibility, confidence and resilience. Grover and his family have lived in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, London and Tokyo. They were in Iran in the 1970s during the unrest to overthrow the Shah.

"We had to leave very quickly and abandon everything we owned there, including an ag-

ing family cat," recalls the retiree.

While his experiences living and working abroad offered no shortage of adventure, they also provided exposure to several different cultures and unique experiences. Grover has many pleasant recollections associated with his world travels. One treasured memory is the Christmas that he and his wife, Elizabeth, spent in London with their adult children

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and young grandchildren. "London is such a pretty place at Christmas," he says. "My wife bought our granddaughter, who was three years old at the time, a plaid, long coat from Harrods with a little hat to match. An English woman stopped us on the street to compliment her on being such a proper little English girl."

Of all of the places in the world they could have chosen, he and his wife decided to move to Williamsburg five years ago. "My mother and two brothers live in Newport News so it made sense to come back and be closer to family," he says. "Williamsburg has been a great place to settle. There are quite a few retirees here, and with the college in town, this small community has an awful lot to offer."

Once established, he began to look for opportunities to serve in the place he now calls home. "I met Bobby Braxton (President of First Night) and asked if he could use some help. The rest, I suppose, is history."

Grover is no stranger to service. During a previous stint in Virginia, he volunteered as business advisor to the Boy Scouts of Ameri-

ca, in Norfolk. He has also worked with The Junior Achievement organization to coach youth on business development. "I was head of a program some years ago where we put together a big Halloween party for the inner city areas of Norfolk." He places great value on lending high caliber work to his volunteer endeavors, and First Night is no exception.

"It has been a tremendous experience being part of an event that people come from around the country to participate in," he says of his two years with the organization.

Tourists are a key component to the success of First Night, making up 35% of the festival's attendees. Last year Grover met a family of five who had traveled from Pennsylvania to attend First Night. "They had come with their young children, who were really enjoying the Kids Show at the Matthew Whaley School. I learned that they had driven into town for the weekend to enjoy First Night and explore Williamsburg."

While tourists give a nice boost to the local economy and add to the diversity of the event, at its core, First Night is a community

service organized to provide our neighbors in the Greater Williamsburg area, with a family-friendly environment to celebrate the New Year. Grover explains that there is work to be done to attract more people from the community. "We're surprised sometimes to find that there are still some residents that aren't familiar with the event. Hopefully our efforts in getting the name out there and promoting on a broader scale will drive up local attendance."

In an effort to more widely publicize the event, Grover is working on several new initiatives including cross promotion with other local holiday festivities where mutually beneficial. First Night will be teaming up with Mettle Events this year to jointly advertise their New Year's "Hair of the DoG 5K & Kids Race" in Merchants Square with First Night.

"The idea is that people who are participating in the New Year's race will come into town early to enjoy the First Night celebration." In addition, First Night is now listed with the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance as part of their initiative to promote the area as a holiday destination. "We are also

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exploring partnership opportunities with The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation,” Grover says.

The focus on driving up attendance is necessary in order to sustain the event for years to come. First Night celebrations across the country have faced recent difficulty gaining the necessary funding needed to finance the annual celebration. At its peak, the themed festival which began in Boston, Massachusetts in 1975, was active in 250 cities across the United States. Around 2007, many First Night celebrations were canceled or scaled back due to financial difficulty. Williamsburg is host to one of the 46 remaining celebrations that still continue in this New Year’s Eve tradition, and Grover has been hard at work, behind the scenes, raising funds to ensure the continuation of this rich local custom.

“We are fortunate to be a community that is still able to put this festival on, and we are committed to continuing it without raising the cost of attendance,” he explains.

While the event is funded by the sale of admissions buttons, donations from local sponsors and businesses, and some support from

the city, fundraising has taken a considerable dip over the past few years making increased attendance a key focus. “In the past we have had as many as 7,000 people, last year hovering right around 4,500. If we can get attendance around 6,000, the event can almost be self-sustaining.”

The event, organized on a lean budget, is made possible thanks to the nearly 200 volunteers who help manage it. “The entire operation runs on volunteers,” Grover explains. “Half of the budget goes toward hiring the performers and many of the venues are donated. I can’t say enough about the college and all that they do for us.”

Each year, for the past 22 years, the Greater Williamsburg community has welcomed visitors from near and far to enjoy this family-friendly celebration centered on the performing arts. With over 30 live acts spread across the William and Mary campus, the Historic Area, local places of worship, the Williamsburg Regional Library, Matthew Whaley School, the Community Center and other venues in town, the festival has something to accommodate every age group, cultural appe-

tite and musical preference. Purchase of the \$15 admissions button grants entrance into all events culminating at midnight with a dazzling fireworks show at Zable Stadium.

This community festival is a wonderful way to enjoy the New Year. Fireworks, food and fun are just a few of the staples that First Night Williamsburg offers. “Last year I had the opportunity to step in as site manager for the swing dance event featuring the live performance of The Williamsburg Classic Swing Orchestra,” Grover says. “We ended up having to clear out two rows of seating to expand the dance floor. People really had a great time.”

New Year’s Eve is all about sharing good times while honoring the old and ushering in the new. This theme rings particularly true as the First Night organization ramps up to revitalize a long-standing local tradition.

“I am really looking forward to the event,” Grover Lewis says flashing a confident smile, “As long as the community supports it, First Night is here to stay.” NDN

More information on First Night can be found at: www.FirstNightWilliamsburg.org

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1607 Christmas in the New World



By Cathy Welch

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“This was the beginning of English culture in North America.” Jamie Helmick, interpretive site supervisor at Jamestown Settlement says. “Our Christmas traditions today started at Jamestown.”

Born in Leesburg, Virginia, Jamie was one of three children in a Navy family. They spent time in the Philippines and around the United States. She spent most of her childhood in Hampton Roads to be near the Norfolk Naval Base. Her parents, Dave and Linda Helmick, are from West Virginia, but now live in Wil-

liamsburg to be near their daughter and family. Jamie is married to Coy Mzingo. They have a 17 year-old daughter, Maya, and a 10 year-old son, James.

Jamie earned a Bachelor of Arts in History at Christopher Newport University in 2000 and her Masters Degree in History from Old Dominion University. As a Master’s Degree candidate, she specialized in early-modern Europe and Colonial America. When she was in graduate school, she worked part-time at Jamestown Settlement.

“I was looking for other jobs and realized this was probably the job for me,” she explains. “Jamestown was a good fit.”

Jamie has worked there fulltime since 2001. Jamestown Settlement presents the Colonial Christmas event from December 1 to January 3. It is Jamie’s turn on the rotation of site supervisors and managers to be in charge of the event.

Jamestown’s original settlers big Christmas celebration would have happened during the Twelve Days of Christmas which ran from

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Christmas Day until January 6, so most of the activities focus on the end of the month.

“For me, Christmas has always been about spending time with family,” Jamie says. “Because we moved around a lot when I was growing up, we made a point of going back to visit the grandparents in West Virginia at Christmas.”

Jamie has always been interested in the history of Christmas. “I used to research it and try to get the family involved in doing traditional things like the yule log,” she says. “Jamestown Colonial Christmas event is all about the history of Christmas.”

The settlement is adding new programming this year.

“We’ve contacted area schools to provide choirs to do caroling,” she says. “We also have outside people come in who play period music from the early 17th century.” Groups or individuals will play from December 24 through the 31, mostly in the fort’s church

Among the performers are: Barry and Lynn Trott on violin and fiddle; David Gardner, a local German teacher who plays fiddle; and Rebecca Suerdieck who does period dancing. The Colonial Christmas event immedi-

ately follows the settlement’s Foods and Feasts event that takes place during Thanksgiving weekend. Employees who conduct orientation tours incorporate Christmas information into their teaching.

“Most of what we do is have visitors walk around and talk to people in costume,” she explains. “But we also offer the tours three times a day.”

At Jamestown Settlement, Jamie wants to show how Christmas may have been observed in the three main areas of the settlement: the fort, the Powhatan village and the ships.

“At the fort, we start off by decorating with the most common decoration in the time period which was cut evergreens,” Jamie says.

Early settlers probably brought the cuttings inside and decorated much as we do today except they were not doing Christmas trees and wreaths back then. They used garlands and kissing boughs which were forerunners of mistletoe.

“Our big Christmas program is something that would have taken place in England. It may or may not have happened here,” Jamie explains. “It’s an English tradition that all the people in the fort would have been familiar

with called The Lord of Misrule.” On All Hallows’ Eve commoners would elect someone to be The Lord of Misrule. This person portrayed a Lord in a satirical way.

“It would be a way for them to have fun for Christmas and pretend to be upper class,” Jamie says. “The Lord’s entourage followed him around and made jokes and puns that were popular in that time period.”

The Lord and his retinue traveled from house to house carrying a wassailing bowl, looking for alcohol and singing. They would stay and make a nuisance of themselves if the homeowner did not give them what they wanted. This activity took place during The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Jamestown site interpreters wear their nicer costumes from their allotment of historic clothing during the Colonial Christmas event. “We have extra clothing that represents characters in The Lord of Misrule’s retinue,” Jamie says. “We have a fool who wears a hat with donkey ears.” Employees switch gears from their daily roles to get ready for this event. Everyone rotates activities to avoid burn out. Sometimes Jamie is part of the The Lord of Misrule’s entourage. Sometimes she does the Christmas tours or cooks, in

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addition to running the event.

“We do a lot of upper class, fancy cooking in December which would have been a big way to celebrate the holiday,” Jamie explains. “Most of the year our cooking is illustrative of what a common settler would probably eat every day: things like a loaf of bread and some pottage, basically stew.”

If they could get the fancier ingredients from England, they would take their time with this. “At least the governor and some upper classmen would have been able to do that.”

They make a lot of desserts such as pastries and pies. Beside dessert, their feasting would include roasts and meats. “They brought domestic animals with them, but do not record which ones or how many,” she explains. “We know they brought some so they would have meat available.”

Settlers brought pigs and freed them on Hogs Island in the James River. They captured and butchered them as needed. “Roasting an entire pig’s head was a feasting tradition on Christmas Eve,” Jamie says. “It’s hard to get ahold of one now.”

“In the Powhatan village it’s a little harder to incorporate Christmas,” Jamie explains. “The

Powhatan weren’t Christians so they didn’t celebrate the holiday. We talk about the first two Christmases the English were here.”

The first Christmas, Captain John Smith and a group of settlers ended up in a Powhatan village. “Smith was a captive in one of the villages which may not have been a pleasant experience,” she says.

The second winter he was trading for food and was trapped in a snowstorm. He spent that Christmas in Powhatan villages. “They did a lot of feasting and he said it was a merry time.”

On the three ships they sailed on, Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery, the staff incorporates what Christmas would have been like on the voyage from England.

“On December 19, 1606 they get stuck just outside of England for six weeks, waiting for wind to take them to America,” Jamie explains. “They don’t write what the experience was like but we imagine a lot of anticipation.”

Tour guides talk about activities passengers may have participated in to pass the time and celebrate Christmas, such as playing cards, gambling, caroling and playing music.

“We don’t decorate the ships, because we’re not sure they would have,” she says. “They

wouldn’t have been able to do any feasting and the reverend onboard was sick. He may or may not have been able to give a sermon.”

In Jamie’s free time, she likes to read and take a break from historical research and reports by writing fiction when she has free time.

“Unfortunately, there is not a lot of time for hobbies with work and kids,” she explains. “My job keeps me busy, and I try to keep the kids involved in things like soccer.”

When she can, Jamie also likes to read about different parts of history she finds interesting. She values the historic value of the Williamsburg area. “This is the best place for history,” she says. “We’ve got the Historic Triangle, so we can tell the entire colonial story which I think is wonderful. Our Colonial Christmas event represents the basis of English culture which a lot of American traditions were built off of. It’s a good way to illustrate that our Christmas traditions today started out at Jamestown.” NDN

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JIM RICE

Squeeze to Please



By Rachel Sapin

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

It wasn't Jim Rice's first choice to play the accordion when he was growing up in Northern Virginia in the 1950s.

"At that time, the electric guitar was just coming on the scene, and that was really the nemesis of the accordion. All the boys wanted to play it," Jim remembers. "I did not want to play the accordion because all I knew about it was not cool."

When a man came around the neighbor-

hood selling an accordion kit to area youth, Jim's father immediately said yes. "My father looked at me, he said, 'Son you're going to learn to play it and like it,'" Jim remembers. "I came up in a generation that when your father spoke, you just moved your head north and south. While the other boys were out playing their guitars and getting in bands, here I was learning to play songs on the accordion."

Today, Jim is ever grateful to his father for

making him stick with it.

"The accordion taught me to do things I did not want to do. It taught me a lot about time management, self-discipline and self-esteem," he says.

Jim keenly remembers when he was younger and learning the instrument that his father would make him play the accordion in Pennsylvania bars. "My father would say, 'Alright boy, play.' My knees would knock and I would

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just play that darn accordion. All I could see out there was a sea of people. I'll never forget it," Jim says.

It was that introductory experience, Jim says, that later gave him the confidence as an Army lieutenant colonel to stand in front of 700 men and comfortably give a speech.

That courage did not come easily though, Jim says. "Johnny Cash did a song called 'A Boy Named Sue.' My accordion was my Sue, because everybody would tease me about it," he recalls.

Jim is not afraid to admit that while growing up he got his fair share of bruised ribs and busted lips defending his "uncool" instrument.

"They'd say, 'Hey Rice-a-Roni, play us 'Lady of Spain.' I put my accordion down, rolled up my sleeves and we'd go at it," he remembers.

The adversity he experienced when playing the instrument in public only motivated Jim to study harder. His accordion went with him to college at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech) and after his commissioning in 1971 when he traveled the world with it in the Army.

"I was stationed in Germany from 1977-1980 where I gained a new appreciation for the song, 'Roll out the Barrel," he says. "The Germans would keep their beer cool in cellars), and they would roll out a barrel when ready to drink it. They would tap the keg or barrel, and then it would flow freely. Our U.S. money was no good. My soldiers and I enjoyed all the beer we could drink and bratwursts we could eat. I began to think this instrument isn't so 'uncool' after all," he says.

After serving in the active military for 21 years, Jim moved to South Carolina in 1993 where he became a Senior Army Instructor of a new high school junior ROTC program. He met his future wife, Donna, at Fort Monroe, when he attended initial instructor training. They married in 1994 and lived in Hampton the first two years. In 1996 the Rices moved to Williamsburg and have lived here for 20 years. From 1996 to 2004, Jim was the Senior Army instructor of another JROTC program in Hopewell, Virginia. He completed his last five years in public education in 2004 as the WJCC Alternative Ed guidance counselor.

Since 2003, Jim has volunteered his military training and experience annually in teaching leadership, communications and financial literacy to rising high school juniors and seniors who attend a four day youth leadership conference at the Jamestown 4H Club.

Jim formed the nonprofit corporation Accordion Renaissance in 2013, which promotes

the accordion through performances, education and training. The program is geared for people age seven to 25, who want to learn the accordion.

Jim says one of the key components of Accordion Renaissance is a program called Accordion For Kids, USA, that lends students an accordion with a music book, DVD, training materials and six introductory lessons without charge.

"We're bringing this instrument back," Jim says of the nonprofit's purpose.

He says it's been even easier to convince younger generations of the "retro coolness" of the instrument thanks to the instrument's resurgence in popular music culture, especially jazz and folk music and because young people today do not have any preconceived notions or stereotypes about the accordion.

"You will see and hear the accordion played in contemporary bands and by performers, and artists like Of Monsters and Men, Mumford and Sons, Jason Mraz, Kongos, Counting Crows, They Might be Giants, Yann Tiersen and Bruce Hornsby.

"Young people now are finding their way with it. I always tell my students I'm going to teach you how to play, but I'm not going to teach you what to play because I want you to

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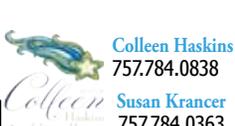
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find your path with this instrument and discover what you can do with it," he says.

Jim says the accordion is a unique instrument to play because it's literally "a band in a box." Most people do not know that the left, or bass button side of the instrument is a fixed pattern of counter bass, fundamental bass, major, minor, seventh and diminished chords. One finger on the accordion button can play what requires four fingers on a keyboard to play on a piano.

"This is an instrument that does not require batteries or electricity. You can play melody, harmony, bass, and also keep rhythm to it. One hundred and fifty years ago, this was the iPod," he says.

The accordion was invented in the early 1800s in Europe, taking its design from older Chinese instruments. Accordions were brought to the United State's attention via European immigrants, and the instrument later found its way into a variety of American genres.

"The Zydeco sound from New Orleans is music that really kicks," he says of American genre that includes the instrument. "I really enjoy that style of upbeat, fast-moving music with different instruments taking the lead."

His favorite style of music to play on the

accordion is Italian. For Jim, Italian music expresses the full range of the human condition: from joy to sadness, love, betrayal, beauty, food and wine. He has continuously played at Sal's by Victor Italian Restaurant Friday nights for 14 years and has supported the Colonial Italian American Organization (CIAO) with the "Wise Guys," a Dean Martin, Louie Prima duo for the past 13 years.

Jim plays in Clan MacCool, a Celtic/Irish band, which doubles as a pirate band under the banner of Hysterically Correct Productions. The band performs at the Annual Blackbeard Festival in Hampton the end of May and at First Night on New Year's Eve. Jim has gained an appreciation for Russian music. To him, it is Slavic soul music and is extremely dynamic.

He loves the instrument so much; he says he will often find himself with numerous accordions in his possession.

Teaching the accordion is important to Jim because he believes it's not only a beautiful instrument, but also a truly healing instrument. In 2009, he had a stroke where he experienced short-term memory loss and difficulty finishing his sentences. "It scared me to death. I've been an educator and an Army officer. I've had to use my mind, mouth and brain. Everything wasn't engaging when it should have."

He turned to his accordion and as a result of playing and relearning songs, his memory and speech returned.

"I've got about 99 percent of that beat," he says of his health now. "I said, 'If this can help me, let me help other people.' I had a good career in the Army. The Army took care of my family and me. I want to pass this on and that's what I do now."

Jim has even formed a band called "Stroke of Luck" with two former soldiers and a sailor who together play patriotic, military and American standards at festivals, retirement and assisted living facilities in the area. Their goal is to perform at the WW II Memorial in Washington, D.C. in support of Honor Flight.

Accordion Renaissance will host a second concert at the Williamsburg Regional Library on the afternoon of December 5th. "You'll see and hear our 10-piece intergenerational accordion ensemble. We will feature bands, duos and solos playing diverse genres of music including Christmas selections."

Jim Rice says Williamsburg is a wonderful place to live and grow creatively. We're surrounded by history, culture, education and entertainment. His neighbors are welcoming and curious about the accordion, and Jim is always ready to "Squeeze to Please." NDN

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Music for the Season

By Alison Johnson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

At age 9, Robert Spaeth picked a tough but rewarding musical companion: the trumpet. This wasn't an instrument for a person who wanted to fade into the background, or who was looking to produce sound without much physical effort.

Trumpets, after all, were once the star of instruments in an Olympic event in ancient Greece. In 396 BC, a trumpeting competition

debuted to reward the musician who could issue the loudest and highest notes. That strong-lipped winner, in turn, got to announce other victors on the final day of the Games.

"When you play the trumpet, everyone can hear you," Robert says. "I guess I had more of a show-off personality as a child than I do now. But I've always loved it because you can play so many types of music on the trumpet: classical,

jazz and big band."

And holiday tunes. For 15 years, Robert, a member of the Williamsburg Symphonia, has played in the professional chamber orchestra's popular Holiday Pops concert at the Kimball Theatre. This year, the festive, family-friendly event is scheduled for Dec. 5 and 6, with two afternoon shows each day.

"It's always nice to see kids in the audience

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too, enjoying the music," Robert says. "They tend to be more outwardly enthusiastic than a formal concert crowd. What's also great is there is such a wide variety of music written for holidays to choose from, some of it popular, but also a great deal that people may not have heard before."

While not a big fan of ubiquitous holiday Muzak tunes, Robert loves hearing songs from collections he discovered as a child. "When you listen to something that has meaning to you, something that ties into old memories, it is a sentimental thing," he says. "Music has a lot of power."

Growing up outside of Syracuse, New York, Robert discovered that power early. His parents weren't particularly musical, but he had a great uncle who worked for a New York City record company and exposed him to legendary performers such as pop and jazz trumpeter, Doc Severinsen, and the group Enoch Light and the Light Brigade. "I've always been drawn to the big band sound," Robert recalls.

When he was just 5, Robert began playing a bugle that his older brother, a member of a Cub Scout Bugle Corps, left lying around the house. Trumpet, a more complex brass instrument, was the next step and a much bigger test for his lip muscles.

"Brass instrumentalists actually use their lips to produce a range of sounds, not an inanimate object like a string or reed," he explains. "It's similar to singing in that it's a part of your body that's vibrating. So, maintaining your lips both by practicing strength and sensitivity and not getting chapped or sunburned is a challenge. It really takes a lot of physical stamina."

Robert nurtured his natural talent in his high school's strong music program and went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Northwestern University, which offered a highly competitive environment for trumpet players. "It could be intimidating," he admits. "For a while, I wasn't sure I'd be able to make a living at playing music. I thought I might teach."

His doubt faded in the summer between his junior and senior year, when he auditioned his way to one of four trumpet spots in the 22-member All-American College Marching Band at Walt Disney World in Florida. It was 1976, America's Bicentennial, and the band played up to 12 jazzy shows a day at the park. Its members earned paychecks, free park admission and rent-free living in double-wide trailers.

"It was a lot of fun," Robert recollects. "Guests were always around us, dancing, and since we'd memorized all our music we could interact with them. It solidified the fact that I wanted to be a musician and perform."

After graduation, Robert played for a short time at Kings Island, an amusement park outside of Cincinnati. In 1977, he joined the Army on the promise that he could play trumpet in military bands, although he had to survive eight weeks of basic training first.

"It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be," he reports. "I was old enough and mature enough to realize that I just needed to do what I had to do to get through it. I knew they just wanted to weed out people who didn't work hard or couldn't behave."

The effort paid off. Robert spent the next 22 years traveling all over the United States and the world, including 15 years with the premier U.S. Army Field Band. His favorite venue was the Berliner Philharmonie concert hall in Berlin, Germany. "It's such a big, beautiful wood-

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en hall, and the sounds are phenomenal,” he says. “It’s like playing in Yankee Stadium. Just to be there was incredible for me.”

In 2000, Robert retired to New Orleans with his wife, Barbette, a fellow Northwestern graduate who was teaching classical studies at Tulane University (where Robert studied for a post-baccalaureate certification in information technology). The couple moved to James City County in 2001 when Barbette was offered a professor’s position at the College of William and Mary.

Robert, who has a day job as Revenue Information Analyst at Colonial Behavioral Health, joined the Symphonia that same year and is now its second trumpeter. The group of about 40 to 65 musicians, the total varies by music selection, performs six major concerts and a number of smaller shows a year.

No matter what the show, a little trumpet goes a long way. “Part of my job is to be careful to balance my instrument with the others,” Robert says. “It can be hard to play softly enough to not overpower an instrument such as a violin. I like that because this is a smaller orchestra, it’s more intimate and we can listen to each other and respond to each other.”

Another part of Robert’s job is to keep his lips in shape. He plays his trumpet for at least an hour a day, working in breathing, flexibility and tongue and finger coordination exercises, listening to recordings and rehearsing difficult sections of music to prepare for performances.

“If you don’t do it regularly, your lips become less responsive and lose strength,” he notes. “The goal is to be as relaxed as possible even if you’re expending a lot of energy like a runner who has trained well and can look relaxed and strong even in a marathon.” Nutrition can count, too: eating too many salty foods, for example, can dry his lips and affect their feel.

In addition to the Symphonia, Robert has performed with several other local musical ensembles and at churches. He also served as Executive Director of Bay Youth Orchestras of Virginia, a nonprofit based in Norfolk, from 2001 to 2011.

The holiday season is often busy for musicians. “I played holiday concerts most of my life,” Robert says. “In fact it was often hard on my family because I was playing a concert on the weekends before Christmas or a church service Christmas Eve. I’ve cut back on my performance schedule, but I still look forward to playing Handel’s ‘Messiah’ at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church.”

This year’s Holiday Pops will feature familiar tunes such as “White Christmas” and “The Christmas Song”, better known as “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire”, and selections from “Frozen” and “Babes in Toyland.” The Symphonia also will play an arrangement by conductor Silas Huff, an Army Music Officer, and feature solos by soprano Sarah Kate Walston, a Richmond native.

As for Robert Spaeth’s favorite holiday tunes, he cites collections by Julie Andrews, Frank Sinatra and Burl Ives. “It was always nice to hear how they each personalized their selections without losing the spirit of the song,” he says. He especially loves Andrews’ 1965 song “The Bells of Christmas,” which he recently downloaded off Amazon. “She’s such a great singer, and it has a wonderful old feel to it. It just makes me happy.”

Music always has. [NDN](#)

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AN ARTFUL LIFE

by Linda Landreth Phelps

Like most Alzheimer's patients, Beverly Shearer functions best in an unchanging environment with a predictable routine. Even so, with Alzheimer's Disease (AD) there are always good days and bad.

Today is a good day.

Janice Petty, Beverly's daughter, introduces me to her mother, a lovely woman crowned with snowy white curls, who gives the impression she'd like to rise politely from her wheelchair in greeting. "So nice to meet you!" Beverly says with a charming smile as we shake hands. When I say that I'm here to talk about art, her smile widens.

Beverly, 85, has been an artist all of her life. For the last 70 years she's explored many disciplines, from her first oil painting, a landscape of the family's Southern California dairy farm when she was just 16, to her current watercol-



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ors of birds, bears, and beaches.

Along the way, she's also done tactile works in sculpting and pottery, examples of which are displayed in her cozy, bright room at Spring Arbor of Williamsburg. Resting on her dresser top is a two-piece clay sculpture of Beverly's young children in full cowboy costume, a cap gun pointed at a nearby whimsical pottery pig.

Janice, one of the children once captured in clay, is now her mother's daily visitor and last surviving nuclear family member. "My brother, who lived with Mom and Dad, died, and I realized that they couldn't stay alone in their house in Madera, California, any longer," she said. "Mom was in the earlier stages of Alzheimer's Disease and Dad had health issues, too. I moved them near us to an assisted living place in Williamsburg six years ago, and my father passed away three and a half years later." Beverly's condition progressed and she wandered off one day, so Janice knew her mother needed the additional safety provisions found in the Cottage wing of Spring Arbor.

Moving them east was a hard decision Janice was forced to make. She knew her parents would particularly miss their mountain cabin near Yosemite, a beloved vacation spot which inspired most of the prolific artwork Beverly

produced. Beverly always found the natural world compellingly beautiful, and her talented fingers itched to capture what she saw. Waterfowl was a particular fascination for her. "I'd go up to Bass Lake with some brown rice and the wood ducks would come right up and pose for me," she would recall of some plein air sessions.

She was active in both the Society of Western Artists and the Yosemite Art Guild, and sold many pieces through a Madera County gallery. "It was good to have extra money coming in," she remembers of those days.

The doorway of each individual room at the Cottage is decorated with a collage of the resident's memorabilia and photos, visual cues that help them personalize and locate their own space. Janice points out these vintage pictures of her parents to illustrate the passing decades. The brown-haired young bride who eloped to Las Vegas with her handsome groom in 1950 segued into a slender blonde sporting a classic '60s bubble style. "Mom even had red hair for a while," Janice says, "and she never weighed more than a hundred pounds."

Janice shows me examples of her mother's greatest interest and passion, intaglio aquatints, a printmaking process which attracted

the young artist's eye in a class at Fresno City College in 1982. Beverly learned through observing other students at work, then added her own signature improvements.

"It's a very precise art, especially the way Mom did it," Janice says. "She would scribe the matrix (a thin sheet of either copper or zinc) and use acid to define the grooves, then ink the plates with either brown or blue and wipe them with a cloth. Next she would use a heavy roller press to transfer the inked image to another surface, usually paper or canvas, but it could be linoleum, fabric, or even wood."

After the initial step dried, Beverly would fill in the empty outlines with watercolor, let that dry, then re-ink with black and line up the plate exactly with the paper. This had to be done very carefully or the image would turn out blurry. "That second impression, after drying, would then be painted again," Janice explains. This painstaking, multistep process produced an uncommon richness and depth that make Beverly's intaglio prints stand out from the crowd.

Fortunately, you don't have to visit Beverly to appreciate her artwork up close and in person. Several of her pieces are hung and offered for sale in the recently launched Williamsburg

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Art Gallery at 440 Duke of Gloucester Street, owned and operated by local artist Gulay Berberman.

"I first saw Beverly Shearer's work at 'Memories on Display,' an art show sponsored by the Peninsula Alzheimer's Leadership Council," Gulay says. "I was struck by the quality of her work and her attention to detail. I believe her breadth of experience contributes to the very fine and finished quality of the work she achieved in aquatint printing." Three of Beverly's favorite naturalistic themes can be seen at the gallery's website: wmbgartgallery.com.

Another excellent example of artwork done in Beverly's prime hangs on the wall of the common area in the Cottage. It's a bold, almost masculine depiction of El Capitan, an iconic, vertical rock formation in Yosemite National Park. Another standout is a print of a pheasant, with its russet feathers set off by a single, piercing, golden eye.

Unlike some other art forms, intaglio printmaking ensures that if you like the image, you can use it more than once. The artist can make multiple impressions, but at the same time, each finished work is unique because the watercolor is always hand-applied.

Being an artist has always made Beverly

Shearer happy, and it's important to Janice that she nurture that joy. "Every evening I drop by after work to spend time with Mom. After she finishes eating an early dinner, we'll set up her supplies. She can look at any picture and do a faithful sketch, then break out her watercolors and paint it. She produces some lovely work," Janice says with justifiable pride. "Even now, Mom has a keen eye for color." Beverly looks shyly pleased at the compliment.

Music and art are two areas of pleasure that seem to persist for people in the grip of dementia. That journey started for Beverly ten years ago and brought gradual changes. She eventually had to give up printmaking, donating her heavy, custom-built roller press (designed and built for her by an engineer friend) to a California college's art department.

Although no longer able to manage the intricacies of intaglio aquatinting, Beverly returned successfully to a simpler way of expressing herself as an artist. She recently finished personal paintings for her five great-grandchildren. One, for the nursery of twin boys, features cute, cartoonish monkeys, with a big heart that says, "I love you!"

"Lately I've noticed the need for some adjustments in how we do things," Janice says.

"I now know that I have to remove a painting when it looks finished, or Mom may keep trying to perfect it, to the point where it will be ruined. The other night I left her with a sketch of a beach scene to paint, and later I saw that instead, she'd penciled in the name of the color she would have used in that area."

Changes or not, Beverly still loves creating. Simple projects, such as a hummingbird hovering at a feeder or a vivid bluebird perched on a lilac branch, continue to bring her joy.

Our visit finished, Beverly is a gracious host. "Come again!" she calls as she waves goodbye and Janice and I make our way through the Cottage's securely locked doors. "Anytime!"

Alzheimer's Disease has been dubbed "The Long Goodbye." I found the hard truth of that in my own mother's illness, when she lost track of who I was. One day, after we had held hands and sang hymns together, she paid me the greatest compliment. "You make me..." she struggled to express her thought, and finally, triumphantly, found the right word. "...ME!"

After a lifetime of creating art, what makes Beverly Shearer feel most whole and herself is to sit with her daughter, paintbrush busy on paper, working with familiar nuances of composition and color. NDN

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GLENN & SHERRI LAVENDER

Dream by the Fire

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“Wine is all about grapes; beer is about grain; but mead is all about the honey,” Glenn Lavender says. Mead: for many, the word may conjure up a mental image of bearded Vikings guzzling it from goblets in a torch-lit banquet hall. Ancient Greeks referred to mead as ambrosia, the nectar of the gods. The term “honeymoon” originated in a Celtic wedding tradition that a bride and groom must drink honey and water for a full month.

The modern reality is found at Williams-

burg’s own Silver Hand Meadery, a new business tucked away in a cozy corner of a strip mall on Monticello Avenue. Glenn and his wife, Sherri’s, ambrosia comes in more prosaic wine glasses, not goblets. You’ll find no Greek gods or rowdy Norsemen here.

The owners’ tour of the facility features complimentary samples of a venerable art, with a little free history thrown in as well. Mead is the oldest strong drink known to man, since honey’s natural sugars readily produce alcohol by

fermentation. “Two of our meads have already won awards this spring at the Mazer Cup, the largest competition in the world,” Glenn says. “It was in the home brew category, since we were still making it at home at the time,” Sherri adds. Silver Hand Meadery seems to be off to a flying start.

When he was growing up, Glenn never imagined himself as a purveyor of spirits. He and his family were members of a Christian denomination as famous for its temperance

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heritage as it is for their Salvation Army brass bands, which is where Glenn picked up his strong faith and musical prowess. "My folks had a little band, and we were going on weekend gigs to other churches, so I was wrapping light cables when I was eight years old," Glenn remembers. His first instrument was the trumpet, but he soon picked up a guitar and learned to play it, which might be considered borderline rebellious by Salvationist standards of the day.

The native Canadian grew up to play bass guitar for a successful Christian band, Downhere. On the road constantly, Glenn had many empty travel hours to fill as the band toured North America and Europe. He was mesmerized by long, descriptive passages he read in a historical fiction book by Stephen Lawhead.

"I was deep into the second volume of his Celtic trilogy, and the characters were not only drinking mead, but Lawhead went into its long history and how mead looked, tasted and smelled. It sounded amazing, but when I wanted to try some myself, I couldn't find any."

Glenn was already captivated by the subject of bees. "I'd be somewhat of a hippie if I could get away with it," he says with a chuckle. "Ide-

ally, I'd have some land with a garden, some goats and sheep, and my own hives."

Every book Glenn read about beekeeping and honey always included a chapter about mead. "I became convinced I could make it myself," he remembers. He took over a closet at home in 2009, acquired some honey from a friend's dad, and eventually produced some mead he and Sherri found delicious. Meads can vary from sweet to dry, still to sparkling, and with the addition of various fruits, spices and herbs, the flavor will change dramatically. "We went with the 'Joe's Ancient Orange' recipe, which is considered a classic," Glenn says.

He shared his mead with their friends and got a favorable reaction. "I remember thinking it would be something fun to do more seriously, but I knew getting into the alcohol industry with all of its rules and regulations wouldn't be easy."

After twelve long years, Glenn and his bandmates decided it was time to come off of the road. They were family men, and it was getting harder to leave knowing they'd miss important milestones in their children's lives. In 2012, Williamsburg Community Chapel offered Glenn a position as their Director of Worship

Arts. "That was a whole new challenge, and I really enjoyed it," he says. After two and a half years, Glenn had modernized and energized the music program at the Chapel, bringing top name contemporary Christian bands to Williamsburg, including his own, which features lead singer and close friend, Marc Martel. As much as he liked his job, however, he began to feel the tug back towards independence and creativity, the life he'd been used to. "If I can't see myself doing this forever, I asked myself at the time, then what can I do?"

The couple could have moved back home to Ontario, but they decided to stay in Williamsburg and explore entrepreneurship. Glenn stepped back from his paid position at church, but remained as a regular member of the Chapel praise band. He also launched The Williamsburg School of Music, where he's been passing along his skill and knowledge of trumpet, guitar, banjo, and music theory to local students. Teaching left him time to pursue his dream of making mead commercially.

The road from Salvation Army to Silver Hand was a journey of trust. Glenn is still amazed to find himself where he is. "It's the craziest thing," he says with a laugh. "Sherri and I

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have to pinch ourselves to make sure we're not dreaming. In our faith there is freedom. We don't have to stay within artificial boundaries, but it's about moderation, and being obedient to God, and what we know is right."

The dream was born, but not without effort. "I didn't know the first thing about starting this business, but I learned the same way I did guitar. I saw somebody else doing it and said, 'If he can do it, so can I!' I just picked away at it." With the help of a mentor and some friends, Glenn drew up a business plan and gathered investors. The Department of Agriculture; Alcoholic Beverage Control; and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Trade Bureau all have regulations which must be closely followed. He found space for his business, but the former doctor's office had many small rooms. He began by having it gutted to the walls. What next?

"You know what you want, and I know how to get you there," Elizabeth Kennis of Elizabeth Interiors told the Lavenders. Thanks to her vision of using reclaimed and refurbished materials, the meadery's tasting bar is topped with wood that was once part of an 1800s North

Carolina tobacco barn. Glenn points out that some of Silver Hand's walls are covered with shiplap siding made from pine lumber cut on the property of a farm in Norge and discovered in the barn loft. Other walls are clad in old brick taken from demolished buildings in Richmond. "We had a sixth-generation professional mason installing it who recognized it as brick his grandfather had laid many years before," Glenn says. "His son was working with him, so that makes seven generations in the same business. That's cool."

Readying their own business for its November opening was a family affair, too. The Lavenders put their three boys, Jonah, age 11, Bram, 7, and youngest, Thad, who is 4, to work, helping to unwrap the padding from bar stools and sweeping the floors. The large vats were carefully sterilized and prepared for their first batches of honeyed goodness.

Honey may or may not be the perfect food, but it's certainly the most durable. Due to its natural antibacterial properties, honey recently liberated from an ancient shipwreck was still as fresh and flavorful as the day it was sealed in its jar.

"There's a big difference in how various honeys taste," Glenn says. The contrast between an avocado blossom honey and Meadowfoam, a wildflower honey so rare it isn't available in bulk, is truly remarkable. Each honey has its own individual bouquet and finish, which Silver Hand illustrates during the honey tasting portion of the tour. You can buy exotic honeys in their retail section, along with bee-themed merchandise and, of course, bottles of various meads.

A seasonal standout is a Christmas-themed mead, "Dream by the Fire" (a nod to the 1934 song, "Winter Wonderland"), that captures the essence of the holidays in its spicy-sweet liquid. Glenn and Sherri are hoping to educate the public about the myriad pleasures of mead and are exploring chances to cooperate with local businesses and restaurants. The goal is to familiarize people with their product. They're convinced that the market is there, ready and waiting to be tapped.

With some shared aspects of both fine wine and craft beer, Glenn Lavender says with a smile, "We like to say that what we make 'meads' in the middle!" NDN



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HOLIDAY CALENDAR



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Please visit the website above for specific information on admission, times and location.

Williamsburg Area Events

Iceburg Skate Rink Opens

Nov 20, 2015

Grab the entire family and join us at the coolest place in town... Iceburg! James City County's skate rink is open weekends Nov. 20 through Jan. 31. Operation hours are Fridays 5 -9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays noon - 9 p.m. The Iceburg Skate Rink, located in Mid County Park next to Kidsburg, is the peninsula's only synthetic ice rink. Skating on synthetic ice is similar to skating on real ice, but no ice or water is required. Skaters are issued real ice skates or bring your own. Special winter break hours and themed nights featured plus party packages available! Daily admission fees apply; season passes available. Info: 757-259-5360.

Ken Kolodner

Nov. 20, 2015

Ken Kolodner is widely recognized as "one of today's most accomplished, musical hammered dulcimer artists". Focusing largely on traditional music, Kolodner has often been called one of the most influential players in the U.S. His music has been featured on national broadcasts on NPR, The Thistle and the Shamrock, All Things Considered, the CBC, the Voice of America, German National Radio, Performance Today, and countless radio shows. Williamsburg Regional Library.

Busch Gardens Christmas Town

Nov. 27, 2015 to January 3, 2016

Celebrate the spirit of the season at Busch Garden's Christmas Town where holiday traditions

come to life with heartwarming shows and more than 8 million lights.

Joan Pierce: "An Honest and Industrious Woman"

Nov. 21, 2015

Meet Joan Pierce, a dauntless Englishwoman of early Jamestown as she recounts the challenges of being one of the earliest colonial women in Virginia. Historic Jamestown.

Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

Nov. 22, 2015

The Auxiliary of Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center invites our community friends to the Annual Tree Lighting in the Main Lobby of the Hospital. A "grove" of trees in the lobby will be lit "IN MEMORY OF and/or IN HONOR of friends, family and

staff. Entertainment, a visit from Santa and refreshments.

Thanksgiving Floral Arranging Class at Schmidts Flowers & Accessories

Nov. 23, 2015

Come and join us for a class to create your own Thanksgiving centerpiece. The fee of \$25 get you all the supplies you will need and Patti DeBlass, the owner of Schmidt's Flowers & Accessories, will guide you through the steps to make your own unique arrangement.

Turkey Pardoning at the Virginia Living Museum

Nov. 25, 2015

The VLM's annual Wild Turkey Pardoning Ceremony. Turkey exhibits and crafts, and a turkey pardoning ceremony at 11 a.m.

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on the museum's outdoor trail. Included in museum admission.

Foods and Feasts of Colonial Virginia

Nov. 26 to Nov. 28, 2015

Colonial Virginia foodways are featured during this three-day event beginning on Thanksgiving Day. At Jamestown Settlement, learn how food was gathered, preserved and prepared on land and at sea by Virginia's English colonists and Powhatan Indians. At the Yorktown Victory Center, learn about typical soldiers' fare during the American Revolution, and trace the bounty of a Revolution-period farm from field to kitchen.

Rescue 3D

Nov. 28 to May 1, 2016, 2015

Experience the hard, inspiring work of saving lives in the face of a natural disaster. Take a look behind the scenes and follow a Canadian naval commander, two pilots, and a volunteer res-

cue technician as they train for action. Join in on the massive effort that brings military and civilian responders together from all around the world when an earthquake strikes Haiti, creating one of the biggest humanitarian disasters of the century. Journey to understand real-world disaster and emergency response. Run time is approximately 40 minutes. Mariner's Museum.

Holiday Evening in the VLM Planetarium

Nov. 28, 2015

Two unique holiday planetarium shows: "Star of Wonder: Mystery of the Christmas Star" at 6:30 p.m.; "Holiday Magic," holiday songs set to laser lights, at 7:30 p.m.

A Colonial Christmas at Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center

Dec. 1 to Jan. 3, 2016

Holiday traditions of 17th- and

18th-century Virginia are recalled through special interpretive programs and, December 26-31, period musical entertainment. Jamestown Rd.

Christmas Tree Lighting

Dec. 4, 2015

A tradition that began in 1945 continues with the Yorktown Christmas Tree Lighting. Evening highlights include a 7 pm performance by The Fifes and Drums of York Town at the Victory Monument, festive music at Riverwalk Landing, the procession of lights through the historic village, and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Free. 757.890.3500.

"Clayton & Catesby: Botanical Virginia" exhibit at Jamestown Settlement

Dec. 5, 2015 to Feb. 28, 2016

Documentation of native Virginia plants by naturalist Mark Catesby and botanist John Clayton in the 18th century and the "Flora of Virginia Project" in the 21st

century is explored in this three-month exhibit. Sixteen period prints of Catesby's watercolor drawings of flora and fauna, on loan from the Garden Club of Virginia, will be exhibited alongside a 1762 edition of "Flora Virginica." The exhibit also will include replicas of tools for collecting plants, biographies of Catesby and Clayton, and a short film on the Flora of Virginia Project.

Christmas Market on Main

Dec. 5, 2015

Whether you are searching for a holiday gift for family, friends, or as a treat to yourself, you're sure to find it at the Christmas Market on Main. The market features arts and crafts vendors, strolling musical entertainment, and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Historic Main Street. Free. 757.890.3500.

Yorktown Lighted Boat Parade

Dec. 5, 2015



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James River Plantation's presents: A Candlelight Christmas

Dec. 5, 10, 19 & 26, 2015

Break away from the hustle and bustle of the holidays and let your imagination travel back to a by-gone era. Partake in a progressive candlelight tour of Edgewood, Shirley and Berkeley Plantations. Enjoy the famous hospitality at these three historic homes with Christmas celebrations through four centuries of history. The tour begins at 2:30 & 3:30 p.m. at Shirley Plantation, and then, continues to Berkeley and ends

at Edgewood. Reservations are required. To make reservations or for additional information call Edgewood 804. 829.2962.

50th Anniversary of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance Parade

Dec. 5, 2015

This year we are celebrating 50 years of a much loved community parade with more floats, a variety of Christmas theme's and kicking off the Christmas Season in the Greater Williamsburg area. Over the past four years we added more bands, more floats, more everything and we are expecting nothing less this year for "Our Golden Christmas" 1965-2015. This year's parade will begin on the campus of the College of W&M and end in Merchant's Square. Come and join us in making this the best Christmas Parade ever!!

Berkeley Plantation Christ-

mas Wreath Workshop & Tour

Dec. 5, 2015

Begin your afternoon touring the 1726 manor house, beautifully decorated with fresh arrangements and wreaths cut from Berkeley's boxwood, cedar and holly trees. Following the tour gather for a wreath-making workshop creating your own Berkeley wreath. Refreshments served. Reservations required.

The Williamsburg Symphonia Holiday Pops

Dec. 5 & 6, 2015

Held at the Kimball Theatre The annual Holiday Pops Concert will feature soprano Sarah Kate Walston and under the direction of Silas Nathaniel Huff, U. S. Army Music Officer is sure to put you in the holiday mood.

Cookies with Santa at York Hall

Dec. 5, 2015

Christmas is alive at York Hall

where children and parents can visit with Santa Claus, enjoy some tasty treats, and shop for holiday gifts in the Gallery at York Hall. Cameras are encouraged. 301 Main Street. Free. 757.890.4490

Grand Illumination at Colonial Williamsburg

Dec. 6, 2015

5 pm. Fireworks at 7pm. Colonial Williamsburg's Holiday Season officially begins with the Grand Illumination. The Revolutionary City lights up with fireworks, bonfires, and candles twinkling in the windows of buildings.

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 12, 2015

Join Santa and Mrs. Claus, our special guests from the North Pole, for a kid-friendly breakfast. Experience the enchantment on the children's faces as they relay their Christmas wish list to Santa. Special treats for the kids. Riverwalk Restaurant. Seating is limited. Tickets Required.

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Yorktown Market Days

Dec. 12, 2015

The market will operate with extended hours and offer items unique to the holiday season, in addition to the usual array of fresh produce, meat and seafood, baked goods, quality art, and more. This week's live entertainment is by "Ron Herick". Riverwalk Landing. Free. 757.890.3500.

Colonial Christmas at Berkeley

Dec. 12, 2015

Come to Historic Berkeley Plantation and learn how the Harrison family celebrated Christmas during the 18th century with caroling, Christmas stories and decorations of fresh greenery and natural arrangements. Refreshments served. Reservations required.

Toyland Parade in

Historic Yorktown

Dec. 12, 2015

Decorate a stroller, wagon, yourself, or even a pet and join in the 1:30 pm parade. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand to greet the guests. The Fifes and Drums of York Town will lead the parade, and as an added treat, the Polar Express will be chugging along through Riverwalk Landing. All aboard! Riverwalk Landing. Free. 757.890.3500.

Christmas Bazaar – Bruton Parish Church

Dec. 12, 2015

In the Spirit of caring, a fundraiser for Heritage Human Society. Bakes Goods, gifts of all types for pets and people. Silent Auctions, raffle and so much more! Featuring The Gourmet Soup Kitchen, Panera and Music by DJ Wade Timberlake. All proceeds will benefit Heritage Human Society!

2nd Sundays Williamsburg

Dec. 13, 2015

Monthly Art & Music Festival in Downtown Williamsburg from March – December, featuring 4 blocks of Live entertainment, including many styles of Live music and dance, Living History, over 75 varied Artisans, opportunities for kids and adults to do art projects, Henna, Hair Weaving, Balloon Artist, Face Painting. Presented by The Blue Talon Bistro.

Holiday Brass

Dec. 17, 2015

The Virginia Symphony brass section brings in the holidays with a blast! Experience the festive sounds of the season in a concert filled with wit, virtuosity, and the glorious music of the holidays. Held at Phi Beta Kappa Hall at W&M. This is one concert delight you won't want to miss.

The Washington's Peaceful Christmas

Dec. 23, 2015

Held at the Kimball Theatre. It

is 1797 and George Washington has retired from public life and the presidency to live the peaceful life under his vine and fig tree. However, Adams' calling for a posture of defense against France, an unruly dog, and a grandson's news from Princeton may ruin the President and first lady's peaceful Christmas.

First Night Williamsburg

Dec. 31, 2015

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Discovering the Next Chapter

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Corey MillerPhotography

Donna Jackson says the catalysts for charting a new path in her business life were her mother dying at the age of 56 and her own diagnosis of cancer.

"I thought I'd be the person who left Alabama and make it. 'Making it' meant the track I took," Donna says. "It was wonderful. I love the college, but it wasn't fulfilling in the way I had hoped. I was trying to do all the should-

I should do this and should do that. I'm giving myself permission to remove the shoulds in my life." For Donna, the "making it" in her career took her to Senior Assistant Dean of Students at the College of William and Mary.

Donna grew up in Florence, Alabama and headed to the University of Alabama in the era of Coach Bear Bryant. Donna was a cheerleader at Alabama, and took on, what she thought

would be, the alluring life of business management. "My family wasn't wealthy. I thought I needed to do something glamorous to get out of Alabama," she says. "I did fine in the business classes, but found it really wasn't me. I started taking some psychology classes, and I had an interest in criminology."

As an undergraduate, Donna held some internships at the police department's homicide



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unit. "I was interested in sexual trauma. At that time it was called rape, there really wasn't another term, so all the cases went to the homicide unit. I was the only young female there, and I was hazed a lot by the men. Looking back, I see it as their way of testing me to see if I was tough enough for the homicide unit."

She helped out with Big Brothers Big Sisters and was soon asked to act as their coordinator. She realized that human services were more suited for her than business and she changed her major. "I had thought I would go into forensics psychology because I'd taken a lot of criminology classes, but I became more interested in sexual violence related issues. I earned my Master's Degree in Psychology. I received a grant from the state of Alabama to do my master's thesis on marital rape. At that time there were no laws on assault by your partner," she says.

"I came to this fork in the road. I was accepted into the criminology program. I was dating a PhD candidate at Alabama. His family lived in Williamsburg, and he had gone to William and Mary for his undergraduate degree. He invited me up for homecoming. He was in meetings for the homecoming committees he was on, so I walked around campus. I walked into the School of Education, where the counseling program is. A professor was in his office. I talked to him about their program. I really liked what I heard. I applied once I got back to Alabama, and I got a full ride to William and Mary to earn my PhD."

In Florence, Alabama, most people didn't leave home. If they did, they came back after a few years. At graduation, Donna was presented with two offers. One was to return to Alabama to work in a hospital setting as a psychologist, and the other was working at the William and Mary Counseling Center. "I thought if I went back to Alabama, I'd never leave."

She started working at the counseling center and loved it. "I climbed the career ladder, became assistant director and did some adjunct teaching in the Women's Studies department." After the school shootings at Virginia Tech and around the country, the college realized they needed more case managers to help manage high-risk students. "I had the opportunity to become a dean. All my life, I thought: This is what I'm supposed to do. I never thought: Is this what I want to do?"

Thankful and honored by the opportunity, Donna accepted the position. "I was challenged. I worked with students administratively. I could use my counseling skills, but I wasn't a therapist. In so many ways, it was a great next step because I was ready for my next step, but it wasn't the best next step for me. I missed doing therapy and being on that side of helping people."

A lot of things happened along the way to the top of the ladder. "About four years ago, I was diagnosed with a very rare cancer. It's so rare there are no treatment protocols. My husband, Rick, was my angel through my many surgeries and treatments. Things are good right now. But, the cancer made me stop and think. My mom died at 56. I was in my early 50s. I did some soul searching."

Once she returned to work, the pace moved back up, and she lost her time for contemplation. Yet, the questions of what she really wanted out of her life stayed in the back of her mind.

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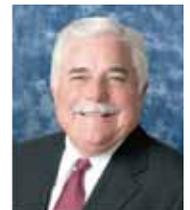
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“I kept thinking: Is this all there is to me? I felt like I had gone into a box. I knew I had more to offer, but in that position it wouldn’t happen because the job was so demanding. I knew that if I didn’t leave, and I have nothing but good things to say about the college, but if I didn’t take early retirement when I had the courage to, I’d find myself still there in five years. That would be closer to the real retirement age instead of a time when I could start a new career.”

On July 1, 2015, she left her career with the college.

“It was time for me to make a change and to learn to be true to myself, career-wise, and to sort out what those next passions are.”

Donna knew she wanted to work with a diverse population. “I’ve had training working with oncology patients and their families, as well as working with underserved and marginalized populations. I’ve worked in the past with the LGBT community. Really, my passion now is life transitions and what that means for each person. Life transitions are everything from losing someone you love, or your partner/spouse divorcing you or you divorcing them – all the things that are life transitions, whether you are 18 or 85. That’s where I want to be.”

She’s joined a private practice because she wants to continue helping people with therapy, a skill she enjoys and feels is valuable to the community. She is also in the mode of reflection about her true passions. “I’m looking around to see what sparks me.”

She had defined herself by her career and moving up the chain of command. When that went away, she felt unsettled.

“It’s scary. It’s disconcerting,” she says. She used some of the same logic on herself and her career as she had used in therapy for couples. “I say in couple’s therapy: Sometimes people stay not because they are happy, but because they’re comfortable. They know what they have. The biggest hurdle is the fear of the unknown.” For her, she knew that the job was comfortable. “Is comfort okay? If it is, that’s where you should be. For me, I knew that wasn’t okay, I felt I needed a new direction.”

In her mid-50s, she didn’t want to continue and end her career feeling she could have had something more fulfilling.

“Barriers that I came across were fear of the unknown and allowing fear to be my guiding point, then there was fear that I may be in a job, but not a career. I had to come to grips with my ego. The position and title didn’t mean as much anymore.”

She says the job she would love didn’t have to be a career. Maybe a job would still help pay the bills, but allow her the time to do other things that held more meaning for her. “I had to stop and think about that.

What was I willing to give up? The title? The prestige?” The time Donna has taken to explore her next chapter allows her to think about who she is and what she truly values. “And, what I value versus how I perceive myself in titles. I gave myself until the first of the year to be open to possibilities,” she adds.

Today, Donna Jackson has joined a private practice, but that’s not her focus. “My focus is exploring all these other parts of myself that I’ve never taken the time or given myself permission to do. Most of us are our worst critic. I want to remove that critical voice from my head. I wanted to take the next step and start a new chapter.” NDN

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A United Team

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Corey Miller Photography

“The beauty of high school swimming,” Coach Molly Sandling explains, “is that an individual sport becomes a team sport. In club swimming, it’s about an individual performance. In high school, it’s also about the group working together to achieve the goal. They understand and are out there cheering and encouraging one another.” Molly is the coach for the Jamestown High School swim team.

The swim team realizes that each performance counts toward winning the meet. “This

group is a very united team. They like each other and like doing things together, hanging out. They know the community they’ve created gets them to success. It’s not a superstar goal; it’s about all participating to make the group a success.”

The community aspect of a swim team is what brought Molly to the sport when she was in high school. “I’m a Navy Brat, so I moved around the country a lot when I was young,” she says. “Swimming was a way for me to con-

nect with people in a new location.” Just as she was heading into high school, her family had moved to a new town. “I started in a new school in ninth grade, and the high school swim team is where I made my friends. They were my friends all through high school.”

Her father was stationed in D.C. when it was time for Molly to choose a university, so she decided on the College of William and Mary. “I liked that it was close to home. I didn’t think I was going to be a teacher at that time. I had

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intended to get into a PhD program in History to become a historian." She soon realized that a History major wasn't the path for her. "I tried some other things and ended up in the Education school, earning my teaching degree."

She went to Jamestown High School as a student teacher in the spring of 2000. "My mentor stressed going beyond teaching and becoming involved in the life of the school," she says. "He encouraged me to find a sport I was familiar with and to help coach while I was student teaching. That would give me other experiences of interacting with the students." She volunteered to help with the swim team while student teaching and later come on board as the assistant coach.

"I was a high school swimmer. I swam all year round and swimming was always important to me."

This is Molly's twelfth year as the head coach. In 2014, she was named the state of Virginia's Coach of the Year and then the Mideast Regional Coach of the Year by the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations). For 2015, she was again recognized as the State Coach of the Year. The Regional and National awards are still in process.

"I got into teaching to make a difference for kids," she explains. "Being a coach, you get to see them for four whole years. In class, we see them for the semester, and they move on. But, coaching a sport, I see these kids grow up. They come in as freshmen. I watch them grow through their senior year. The coach is their adult constant throughout their years in high school. They come to us when they're having a good day or a bad day or they need something. The coach is the person they turn to. It's a deeper connection, and I feel like I'm making an impact on the kids."

The important years of 14 through 18 can be crucial for young people. "These are the years when they grow up. They're testing the limits and exploring their own independence and forming their own identity. It's a transformative four years for them. To see them grow and change, that is rewarding."

The swim season is just getting underway for the high schools. Molly wants everyone who wants to have the swim team experience to have it. But she can't always accomplish that. "I try not to make cuts. But, I'm limited by pool space to practice in," she says.

"High school sports are how the students get

connected to this school, this building. They can form an identity. They can have a community within this very large place. By being part of the team, wearing the team jersey around school, identifying as part of the team and having friends from practice, that really helps kids find their place and security. I try not to make cuts. "

Her goal is to take the students and help build them into a successful team of athletes. In addition to building the team, she focuses on the individual and what he or she might need to accomplish. "I remember one guy who walked on the team as a freshman who wasn't very fast. He worked hard and by his junior and senior years, he was scoring points for us at state meets and was team captain. Now, he's swimming at college. If I can take that kid that might not be a serious swimmer in ninth grade and really get them developed as a strong swimmer, that's an amazing journey to see them go through."

The traits she looks for aren't really physical traits. It's really their commitment.

"Physically, the kids change so much in their high school years. From freshman year to senior years, these children are physically very different beings. Going through that physical devel-

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opment process, the kids can grow all different ways, and the coach can't predict what a freshman will become in four years. Long distance swimmers are built differently than the short distance swimmers. Endurance benefits from different builds than a sprinter."

The trait that is needed most is the mentality of the boy or girl. "Are they willing to do the work, training hard, staying in shape year-round? Are they committed and willing to push themselves? That's the attitude that makes a great swimmer and swim team member."

She talks with them about setting goals as individuals and thinking about the team's goals. "Right now, the girls have a goal on my classroom board to make a certain time on their relay. Setting goals and focusing on those and deciding what will make those goals a reality. Hard work and determination and attitude makes it happen."

The team and the strong community that the Jamestown students have built show how Molly's guidance has them working together and the benefits of teamwork. "They know that the team may need someone to work really hard to get better in one event that isn't their best. Teamwork shows them the rewards

of their community."

The new season has her energized, and as she thinks of the new team members coming in as freshmen, she has plans for them. "We have a strong group of leaders who will graduate this year. They have been very influential to the team even before becoming seniors. Hopefully, this freshman class will have individuals emerge as leaders and continue to lead the team to success, maintaining the values of community on this team and continuing to enjoy the sport."

Surprises and change happen in every season, and Molly hopes her team at Jamestown continues to be a place where the kids feel accepted and gain confidence. "I hope the team provides comfort to each other to face the challenges of high school. Swimming helps you get through the tough times. The team is a positive out there for the kids."

Coach Sandling is still having fun with the team. "I get so attached to the kids and love watching them grow. What will they remember about high school when they're my age? Swimming. Those will be the memories they take with them. I want to make high school memorable for them. I hope they make great memories." **NDN**

Next Door Neighbors

Publisher.....Meredith Collins
 Editor.....Greg Lilly greglilly@cox.net
 Copy Editors.....Al White, Ginger White
 Photographer.....Lisa Cumming, Corey Miller
 Graphic Designers...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, Cindy Laraway, Erin Fryer,
 Wynne Bowman, Nicole Puskar, Elinor Warren,
 Michael Heslink, Carrie Eriks, Naomi Tene' Austin

Advertising Information

Meredith Collins

(757) 560-3235

meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com

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Next Door Neighbors is a monthly, direct-mailed magazine serving the residents of the Williamsburg area.

Circulation: 39,911



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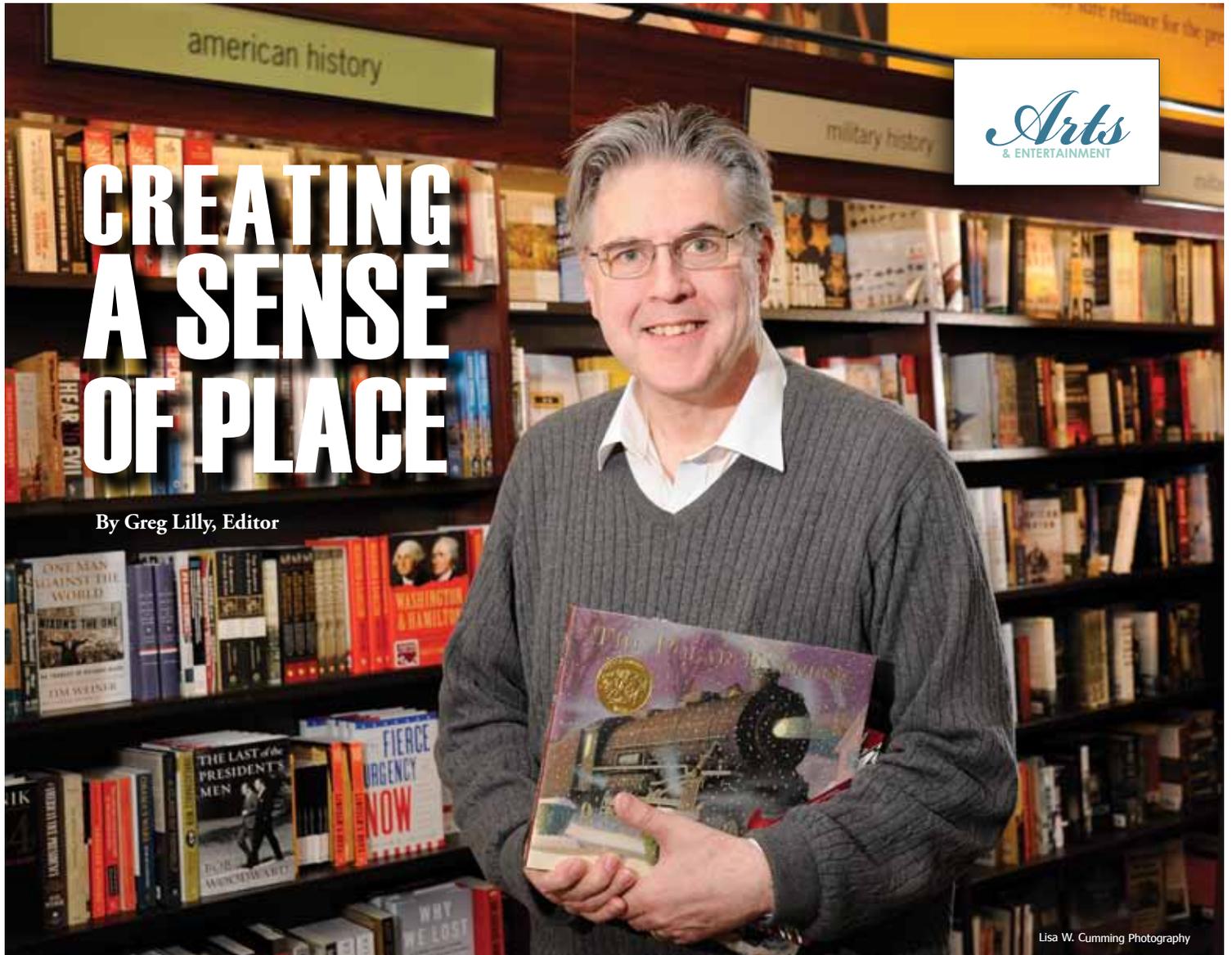
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CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“We have William and Mary Night in Merchants Square. That’s particularly important to us because we’re not just a bookstore, but we’re the college’s bookstore,” explains Bill Mulrone. Bill organizes events for the College of William and Mary Bookstore in Merchants Square.

“During William and Mary Night, we collect between 800 and 1,000 pounds of non-

perishable food, which is extraordinary to help others during the holidays. It’s co-hosted by the Merchants Square Association, The Trellis, DOG Street Pub and Wythe Candy. There are tastings and freebies. It’s a sense of event and a great way for people to come together.”

Bill is a William and Mary alumnus, who was born in New York City and grew up on Long Island. “I came to Williamsburg to go to

the College of William and Mary in the spring of 1974. I went to a Catholic school where everyone was college bound. A lot of people who had come from that school also attended William and Mary.”

His degree is in philosophy. “With a lot of English literature, psychology, religion,” he says. “Subjects in the same intellectual territory that overlapped. These subjects are all about

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life. Particularly at that age, we're all trying to figure out who we are and what we're supposed to do. We look to different models for that. A lot of people in high school and college look to literature as a source of information about interior life and how people relate to each other. Studying philosophy, religion, psychology is about trying to make sense of your existence and finding a way to relate meaningfully to community and other individuals."

In Bill's junior and senior years, he was an active musician around town. "I ran a coffee house and would play at events for the president of the college, board of visitors, fraternities and sororities. I was a guitar player and singer. That was back when the singer/songwriter model was supreme," he says with a laugh.

"When I graduated, I stayed in Williamsburg and worked as a full-time musician. Although I really enjoyed my college experience, it was living in Williamsburg as a citizen that sold me on the town. I just loved Williamsburg. It's changed a lot in the last 40 years. It was a little smaller then and a little looser. A lot of my friends were musicians, writers, actors or people who worked for Colonial Williamsburg. It may be stretching things to say it was bohemian, but it was more bohemian than

it seems now. It was great. I lived about three blocks from Merchants Square and lived without a car for years. Walking into Merchants Square was like walking into a village. I had a sense of warmth for the community. I felt a sense of place that I had never felt before."

He left the area only twice for short periods of time before returning for good in 1997. "Even when I was living back on Long Island, I was thinking about coming back. It was those first few years after college in Williamsburg that I felt like I was part of the community, had something to contribute and I bonded. I still feel that way."

The bookstores of Williamsburg have been a large part of his life. Bill had worked at Scribner's bookstore that turned into Rizzoli's bookstore. "Those bookstores were in the building currently occupied by The Precious Gem. Rizzoli's closed down and the bookstore moved to this location, which used to be Casey's department store," he says. "I bonded with this store because I like the personality of the store and the people I work with. I've been working here for 15 years. I like it more now than when I started. It's a very comfortable place for me, and it feels like home."

Merchants Square, Bill explains, is not the average holiday shopping destination.

"Merchant Square is the kind of place that people will drive long distances to shop during the holidays. It's unusually beautiful. It's unusually civilized. Even in the busiest time, the people on the street create a celebratory atmosphere that we warm to. Holidays are special to a lot of people in different ways. For most, the holidays relate to traditions, families, nostalgia and a certain aesthetic. When you walk through Williamsburg, those things are here in spades. The holiday spirit is here. Living and working in Williamsburg, we are unusually lucky in that we get to absorb this atmosphere all the time."

He explains that a bookstore customer is a special type of shopper. "When you walk into a bookstore, yes, you're shopping, but it's not like shopping for socks. I have nothing against socks. Here, you are in a room full of ideas, a room full of language, a room full of pictures, a room full of traditions, speaking to you from those shelves. And, you're talking to people who love those same things you do. It's not a hard-sell atmosphere. No one is trying to talk you into anything. They're sharing things with you. Connecting people, who we like, to books, that we like, is what a bookstore is about. Being able to do that with the excitement of the holidays makes it even better."

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Some of the events that Bill has organized for the holidays include the popular visits with Santa. Starting on Thanksgiving weekend, every Saturday and Sunday children will have the opportunity to meet Santa. "The space is beautifully decorated and intimate," Bill describes. "Santa gets to spend time with each child, and sometimes he does story time. There is a photographer, but he's discrete and it doesn't look like the child has been plugged into a background."

Again this year, Newt and Callista Gingrich are visiting the bookstore. "Those events have gone well with a good number of people attending. Newt and Callista have been very gracious and easy to work with. They enjoy being here during the holidays." Bill has seen how impressed the Gingrichs are with the holiday atmosphere of Williamsburg, the music, the decorations, the spirit.

"I can never talk about the holidays without mentioning Grand Illumination. It involves a lot of people and is always a celebration. The flaming cressets, the fife and drum corps, strolling carolers, steaming hot cider surround you as you walk through the streets and run into people you may not have seen for the rest of the year. The event climaxes in the evening with three locations of fireworks going off at

the same time. The night is dark and the air is clear and crisp; the fireworks are spectacular. That's special to me."

Over the years, Bill has spent many holiday seasons at the bookstore and in Merchants Square. One of his favorite events on the streets is the Virginia Theatre Machine's production of "A Christmas Carol." "That has a nice sense of event and spontaneity," he says. "You don't expect to see street theater, unless you are in New York City."

Sherrilyn Kenyon, the New York Times bestselling author, signed her books recently at the store. "That's fun to have the big names here. But, it's also cool to walk through the bookstore and see someone who lives in our town and went to the trouble of writing a book and wants to talk to you about it. It's a bridge between the readers and the famous writers to talk to the not-so-famous writers about how they do it. It's a nice way to remind people that the store is about books and that people wrote these books. The books didn't just pop out of a machine. These authors have labored over the books for years, and here they are presenting it to you."

Local authors who will be offering book signings during the holidays include Wilford Kale and his book Hark Upon the Gale. "Wil-

ford is a very charming and well-read man who knows a lot about history and particularly about William and Mary. His book about the college is very special. We have Henrietta Ford, Feather Foster and Mac Laird, who are charming authors, and in the holidays I like that they get to interact with a lot of people."

Bill and the events he schedules remind us that the William and Mary Bookstore isn't just the college's bookstore, but a community bookstore. "That is everything we're trying to do. Our first obligation is to the college; however we always look at where we are. Being on the corner of Duke of Gloucester Street and Henry Street, we have a world of people passing through. We represent the college to a lot of visitors. We have to make sure people have a positive impression of the bookstore, professional, gracious and welcoming, that reflects on the college and on Williamsburg."

Williamsburg is an expression and symbol of the traditional aesthetic, Bill Mulrone explains. "Bonfires and cressets and carolers, the decorations and feel of Williamsburg draw people. What can get you into the holiday mood quicker than walking through that atmosphere, into the store and seeing a very natively dressed Santa talking with the excited kids? To me that is the focus of everything." NDN

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HEALTHY HOLIDAYS FOR PETS

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Holiday treats may add a few extra pounds for people over the holidays. That's not tragic. But holiday treats can be disastrous for pets. Amanda Wilbourne, the owner of Nautical Dog, says that smart choices need to be made in treats and gifts for our animal companions.

"Nothing processed," she says of food items slipped to the family pet from the dinner table. "If human food comes in a package, stay away from it."

We may think a bone is a dog's best friend, but Amanda cautions against it. "Around the

holidays, people are tempted to give cooked bones, like soup bones, to their dogs. Cooked bones are the worst thing to give a dog. Those will easily splinter and could cut the dog's intestinal tract. No ribs, soup bones, turkey legs: those are dangerous for the dogs."

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Amanda is becoming certified in Clinical Pet Nutrition because nutrition has become a passion for her. “Apples, carrots, other vegetables are fine to give to a pet. Anything not processed, I give to my pets. Of course there is a list of things you want to stay away from like onions, garlic, chocolate and grapes.” Local veterinarians can supply a complete list of foods harmful to animals.

When buying treats specifically for pets, Amanda recommends reading the ingredients list. “Typically, a pet bakery treat is going to be made of safe ingredients. From my store, I don’t sell any treats with wheat, corn or soy in them. Those tend to be high on the allergen list for dogs. We sell a lot of treats without grain in them. Grain allergies are common.”

If buying a gift of treats for someone else’s pet, the suggestion is to scan the ingredients to ensure it doesn’t have any of those allergen items in the treat. “Allergies are so prominent these days,” she adds.

“Also, be wary of things made in China. I don’t carry any treats that are made or sourced in China. There has been a lot of recalls and some deaths related back to those. One thing to beware of on a package – it might say ‘Packaged in the USA’ with an American flag. That just means it is packaged here, not made here. That’s a big thing to notice.”

Amanda and her husband, Kyle, have seven pets. “Schwartzky is the store cat,” she says. “We have two dogs and four cats that live at our house. It’s kind of a zoo. But, that’s okay. I rescue senior animals. I’ve had a hard year with my dogs. I had a Lab who lived to be 15. I lost him in March. He started me focusing on nutrition. He lived as long as he did because of his diet. I adopted another dog a month after my Lab died. He died three months later. He was a senior. About a month ago, I rescued another senior dog. He’s nine years old.”

She has seen how a focus on diet helps animals, especially senior and allergy-troubled pets. The store’s inventory has changed to show her concern for healthy food, treats and toys for pets.

“Pets are my passion, and I always wanted to open a dog store. I have my Welsh corgi named Roxie. She’s ten years old. I would always go around to pet stores and pet boutiques to find things for her. Roxie is the rea-

son I wanted to do the store. My senior Lab that I lost last March is the reason I’ve focused on nutrition and healthy treats.”

She originally opened Nautical Dog in Mattaponi, where her parents live. “It was a small store there in 2006. Once I realized I could do it, I moved to New Town in June of 2008. Williamsburg was the closest place to come for dinner or anything like that. Kyle and I would come to New Town to have dinner and go to the movies. I always thought it was a cool place to have the store.”

Once she moved the store to New Town, she admits it was a struggle. Kyle was in the Marines and deployed overseas in Iraq. The economy had bottomed out and had yet to begin a recovery. “The inventory used to be a lot of gifts and a little food. Now, it’s mostly food and select gifts,” she explains of the changes she made based on the retail climate and her own experiences with her pets.

“I realized there were not a lot of places for pets’ healthy food – the vets, the big box stores, but none of them sell the food that I do.” She buys based on her current training courses in pet nutrition.

Pets are as different as people in what they may like in food and treats. “There are some fool-proof things that dogs like,” she says.

“Meat-based treats like a freeze-dried meat treat that has only the one ingredient. Cookies, on the other hand, can depend on the dog. Usually, a bigger dog will like just about any treat. It’s the smaller guys who are pickier in their treats.”

Besides treats as gifts, some dogs enjoy a chew wrapped up under the Christmas tree. “We don’t sell any rawhide. Rawhide is hard for dogs to digest. Keep in mind the size of the dog. You don’t want to buy a small, short Bully Stick (a beef tendon chew) for a Lab. That size could be a choking hazard for the larger dog.”

The popular Kong toy allows the center to be filled with a treat. Most pet owners use peanut butter for their Kongs. “I like all natural peanut butter,” Amanda says. “You have to be careful about the sugar content in store-bought peanut butter. For a Kong, try pumpkin, sweet potatoes, oatmeal or smashed banana. You are not limited to peanut butter.”

For a pudgy pet or a pet that just likes to

have fun, toys make great holiday gifts. “For us, West Paw toys are guaranteed, so if the dog destroys it, you can get it replaced. The toys are made in the USA with recycled materials. Those are good for tough chewers, although there is no such thing as an indestructible dog toy. If the dog wants to rip it up, he will. Some things are harder to destroy than others.”

For plush toys, Amanda recommends looking for durability. “Hugglehounds are durable plush toys made out of corduroy.”

Cats are entitled to holiday fun, too. Schwartzky, Amanda’s shop cat, tests the newest cat toys. “Cats are very picky,” Amanda states, “in both treats and toys. Interactive toys, toys that cats can play with on their own, are good choices.” With an interactive toy, a cat hones her predator skills.

To entice a cat to play, catnip toys will capture her interest. “Yeoww brand catnip is certified organic catnip,” Amanda says. “It’s very strong. About 85 percent of cats are affected by catnip. Those are good toys for lazy cats.”

Holiday decorations can be a hazard to pets, so Amanda says to keep them out of reach of cats and dogs, or better yet, don’t have the hazards in the house. “Poinsettia plants are poisonous to animals. Ribbons and gift wrap can cause choking risks. Tinsel is attractive to cats, but could cause choking or intestinal harm to the cat if swallowed.”

Amanda’s work centers on keeping pets happy and healthy. “Knowing the animals that I have helped over the past nine years rewards me. Nutrition is my passion. When you look at what is in pet foods these days, you would be shocked.”

She’s had customers come to her saying their pet isn’t feeling well, from a variety of conditions, and she looks at the pets’ food.

“I think a lot of pets’ issues are from the food they’ve been eating over the years. It’s not from a lack of love. If I can help a person find a better food choice for their pet, to make the pet feel better and change its quality of life and to have a longer time with their owner, then my goal is achieved,” Amanda says.

“To hear the person tell you how much better their pet does after changing the food, well that keeps me going. Just to see things like allergies that they overcome with a change of diet, that’s rewarding for me.” NDN

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Reading is Fun

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“I was a book worm growing up because I couldn’t run and play like other children. I fell in love with books. It’s important for all children to have that, something to hold on to. For me, it was books in the library,” explains Eletha Davis, the Mobile Library Services Manager for Youth and Family Outreach at the Williamsburg Regional Library.

Many people around town know Eletha. She was born and raised here. “Books were always important to me as a child. I was always sickly.”

Eletha arrived in this world with challenges. Her mother delivered her in a medical center built specifically for African Americans, located at the Triangle on Scotland Street. “I was born in the age when African Americans couldn’t go

to certain hospitals. Dr. Blayton delivered me. He said I was the first child that he thought he was going to lose. He went to Dr. Fletcher, a pediatrician, to see if he would see me. At that time, it was very real that we couldn’t go to certain places for medical services. He didn’t think I would last through the night. It was very serious.” Luckily for all of Williamsburg, Eletha’s

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LOCAL SERVICES FOR HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Literacy For Life Helps Propel Katy Thompson Forward in Life.

At age 26, Katy Thompson decided to go to college. She wanted an associate's degree to become an interpreter for the deaf in American Sign Language. In high school, Katy's struggles with severe anxiety had prevented her from succeeding in academic classes. She had a special education high school diploma. She was told that to go to college, she would need a GED.

She started working towards the GED, advocated for herself, and worked hard to get approved for the testing accommodations she needed. Despite all of her hard work, she scored a heartbreaking six points below the minimum passing score of 2250. She was devastated and almost gave up.

But, instead of giving up, Katy discovered and studied for the National External Diploma Program (NEDP).

An alternative to the GED, the NEDP requires learners to demonstrate mastery on 70 different competencies including Cultural Literacy, Health Literacy, Civic Literacy, 21st Century Workplace Skills, Consumer Skills, Geography and Science.

Katy came to Literacy for Life while working on her NEDP. She took advantage of the computer lab and was matched with tutor Gary Harvey. Katy worked with Gary for six months. He helped Katy navigate each competency. Gary stuck with Katy with an unyielding patience despite sometimes having to repeat topics multiple times.

Ten months after beginning the NEDP, Katy fulfilled its requirements and earned her diploma—the first step towards earning her Associate's Degree in American Sign



Language English Interpretation. Katy is determined to support others who have been challenged in reaching their goals. With help from Literacy for Life and others, Katy is well on her way.

"Katy can do anything she wants to. She has learned to step back, think, collect her wits and move forward," shared proud tutor Gary Har-

vey.

"I was told that going to college was not an option. Now, because of help from Literacy for Life, my boss, co-workers, friends, and my church, I know --- although it may take me a little longer --I can accomplish whatever I set my mind to."

Literacy for Life provides one-to-one and small group

tutoring for adults in reading, writing, math, English for speakers of other languages, and health literacy. In 2014, Literacy for Life served approximately 750 adults with the help of 350 volunteers. If you know anyone who could benefit from our services or would like to volunteer, please visit literacyforlife.com or call 757-221-3325.



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colonialbh.org

family and Dr. Blayton and Dr. Fletcher saved her.

She grew up around the new library. “They tore down my grandparent’s home and church to build the Williamsburg Library,” she says. “My grandma’s house was where the police station is. And, at the corner of the Williamsburg Library, facing Armistead Avenue, that’s where Union Mission Church [was], I believe it was called. That was my granddaddy’s church. This was back in the 1960s. A lot of work was being done in Williamsburg.”

Her parents were relocated from the community of Magruder when Camp Peary developed. “Many families were moved to where William and Mary’s Zable Stadium is today and where the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Camp was in the Depression. Some were moved to Grove and others to Highland Park. I have a lot of roots here.”

She graduated from Lafayette High School and went to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond. “Originally, I wanted to be a famous social worker. I like to get involved with people, help them.” She received her Master’s Degree in Social Services at VCU. “I landed my dream job and was able to stay there exactly one day,” she says with a laugh. Her new job with Virginia’s Department of Social Services lasted just that one day. “They didn’t want to tell me that my position had been discontinued. I packed up my stuff and called my mother to come get me from Richmond.”

Back in Williamsburg, Eletha read that the library was looking for someone to do non-traditional library work, which included taking services out to neighborhoods. “It was called the Library Express. I applied, and 30 years later, I’m still here.”

Today, the library has two arms of mobile library services: youth and family outreach, and then adult and homebound outreach. Eletha is with the youth and family outreach, which means she drives the mobile services vehicle to neighborhoods around the area so children and their families have access to the resources of the library when they can’t get to either library branch.

“We can make a difference and can help children with their homework, with their reading,” she explains. “We have fun on wheels. For some kids, reading is a challenge. Some kids really feel they aren’t good readers and say they don’t like reading. That makes them feel bad.”

Eletha helps the children find materials on

their reading level and shows them that reading is fun. “When the children get into middle school, that’s a hard sell,” she adds with a laugh. “The only way to prove that is to read.”

Some of the children may not have encouragement to read, but Eletha drives to their neighborhood every week with a smile and a book that she knows they will enjoy if they give it a chance. Books aren’t the only items on board the mobile services vehicles. “We also have computers on-board. We have music, audiobooks, magazines and movies. There are different things they can do and have fun at the mobile library. We try to pull them in and let them discover what the library has.”

She recounts two elementary age girls she met several years ago. At first the girls didn’t care much for the books and services, but little by little Eletha found things that interested them. “Keisha and her sister would come into the mobile library for years,” Eletha says. “Well, her sister got a full scholarship to William and Mary. She’s teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) students in New Kent County now. Keisha just graduated from Hampton University as a math major. Her research was in nuclear fusion. A lot of these children are so bright and have so much potential. I try to encourage them to continue in their education. That’s what we do.”

With the limited space on the mobile services vans, Eletha has to predict the items that will interest her guests. “We look to see what the schools are doing, so we can have the materials to help the students with their projects. We also have requests from people on what they’d like to check out. We review the most popular books from sources like Library Journal so we have those available. We have limited space, so we want to know what the people want.”

As she goes from neighborhood to neighborhood, Eletha sees the requests change with the seasons. In the summer, she has more demand for recreational reading materials and entertainment DVDs. “We do get requests for instructional DVDs on how to build or fix things.” The fall and winter seasons bring requests for craft and career instruction. “We see more how-to books and videos on things like cooking for the holidays or building Web pages.”

In years past, the on-board computers were extremely popular – they still are – but the vehicles now come to the neighborhoods with Wi-Fi. “Now, people can use the Wi-Fi to tap into the Internet with their own devices. Our

visitors love media like DVDs. We can’t keep it on the shelves. A lot of people depend on that because they don’t have cable television.”

Books continue to be the gateway to knowledge, according to Eletha. “I see myself as a door to preschool learning and reading. I want to get kids ready for school. I want parents to know the importance of reading for their children. It’s important to read to the kids. Discovering that books have information inside is part of early literacy for preschoolers.”

She says her goal is to produce readers. “Reading affects everything you do in life. It’s hard to convince middle schoolers that what they’re doing on Facebook is reading, but it is. They’re sharing stories with other people. They are readers!”

The library has a program called “Read the Book, See the Movie.” It uses books like *The Hunger Games* to help introduce people to both the book and the movie. “You’d be surprised at the number of children who come in looking for the book when a movie comes out,” she says.

“The most rewarding thing is to see people who are successful, people who can use information to improve their lives. That is very important to me.”

Besides her work at the library, Eletha is a 4-H’er. “I do the 4-H Club. Ours does civic engagement. I’m into working in the community. I’m on the Community Action Agency Board. I’m into a lot of things. I was just nominated by Virginia Union University as the Christian Educator of the Year. I’m really into people being successful in whatever they do. Reading is very important in that.”

To be successful, Eletha stresses to all people she meets that reading is the foundation. “With the amount of information available, reading skills help you decide what information is factual and not, that’s important.”

She loves doing crafts and uses craft books to introduce reluctant readers to non-fiction. “The books teach them how to make things. I find that fun. We make musical instruments from straws. We make quilts. We do little projects on the vehicle. I want everyone to love reading.”

Eletha can’t imagine doing anything else. “I remember being young and wanting to be a social worker. I was going to save the world. Then they cut all the social service programs and I ended up here. It’s been a good ride. I’ve met a lot of people from many different places. I wouldn’t have it any other way.” NDN

Next Door Neighbors

2016 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

JANUARY ISSUE

Lend A Hand

Volunteer for a better community

- In Home Date: December 31, 2015
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Dec. 15

JULY ISSUE

Patriotism

Service and devotion to town, state and nation

- In Home Date: June 30, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, June 14th

FEBRUARY ISSUE

Extracurricular Activities

How our students expand their horizons

- In Home Date: January 28, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Jan. 12th

AUGUST ISSUE

Law & Order

Those who uphold the law

- In Home Date: July 28, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, July 12th

MARCH ISSUE

Our Elected Leaders

Get to know City Council/ Board of Supervisors

- In Home Date: February 25, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Feb. 9th

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Williamsburg Fall Arts

The season of expression and inspiration

- In Home Date: August 25, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Aug. 9th

APRIL ISSUE

Hometown Musicians

Music for everyone

- In Home Date: March 31, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Mar. 15th

OCTOBER ISSUE

Healthy and Wise

Annual health issue

- In Home Date: September 29, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Sept. 13th

MAY ISSUE

Diversity

What makes Williamsburg so special

- In Home Date: April 28, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Apr. 12th

NOVEMBER ISSUE

Campus Connection

Meet our college communities

- In Home Date: October 27, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Oct. 11th

JUNE ISSUE

Education For All

Discover people who value learning at all ages

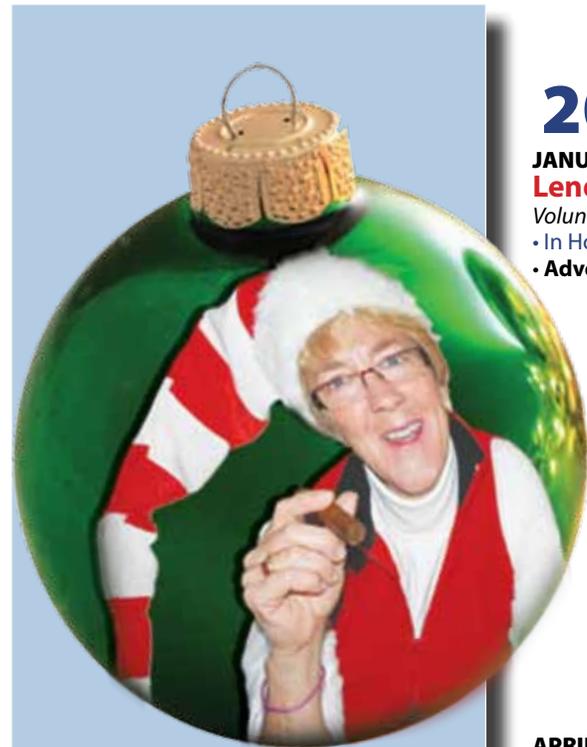
- In Home Date: May 26, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, May 10th

DECEMBER ISSUE

Williamsburg Holidays

Neighbors making the holiday special

- In Home Date: November 24, 2016
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Nov. 8th



Season's Greetings!

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and the meaning of Christmas, I can't help be reminded of my own blessings. The publishing of this issue culminates the end of 9 years we have been serving the Williamsburg community. It is hard to believe. There are many talented folks who create Next Door Neighbors each month - from my editor, Greg Lilly, to writers, photographers, couriers, proofers, a sales executive, a graphic designer, an administrator and proofers. I wish I had room here to name them all.

I have to give props to my husband, Joe, who reads and edits each issue expertly each month, and my sister, Ginger, who lives in Fort Worth, TX. My dad, Al, has brilliantly made edits and proof changes to the magazine over these past 9 years. What makes this especially remarkable is that my dad is 92 years old!

2016 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

The information to the right should help guide you through 2016. At the top of the page, you will find our themes and deadlines for each issue. Please email Greg Lilly (GregLilly@cox.net) with any story ideas you may have. He works two months out, so please remember to share your ideas early.

HEY NEIGHBOR!

This information is followed by the basics you need to know to submit your free listing. This feature is designed for non-profit organizations, civic groups and churches only.

Hey Neighbor!

Hey Neighbor! is a service provided to non-profit organizations, civic groups and churches. It is intended to inform Next Door Neighbors readers about community events they may want to attend, volunteer for or make a donation to.

Hey Neighbor! submissions should be typed in this sample format:

Hey Neighbor!

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Email your submission to:

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Deadlines for Submission

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>DEADLINE</u>
JAN.....	Dec 15, 2015
FEB.....	Jan 12, 2016
MAR.....	Feb 9, 2016
APR.....	Mar 15, 2016
MAY.....	Apr 12, 2016
JUN.....	May 10, 2016
JUL.....	Jun 14, 2016
AUG.....	Jul 12, 2016
SEPT.....	Aug 9, 2016
OCT.....	Sep 13, 2016
NOV.....	Oct 11, 2016
DEC.....	Nov 8, 2016

Hey Neighbor!

Please visit

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com,

go to the magazine site and click on

Hey Neighbor! for a complete list of current community announcements.

To submit your non-profit event to Hey Neighbor! send a paragraph with your information to:

heyneighbor@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

ICEBURG SKATE RINK OPENS

November 20, 2015

James city county Parks and Recreation opens the skate rink at Mid County Park (next to Kidsburg). The rink is open weekends through Jan. 31. Fridays, 5-9 pm and Saturday and Sundays noon-9 pm. Grab the whole family and join us at the coolest place in town. The Iceburg Skate Rink is the peninsula's only synthetic ice rink. Synthetic ice rinks are composed of plastic panels that fit together to create a surface perfect for ice skating. Skating on synthetic ice is similar to skating on real ice, but no ice or water is required. Skaters are issued real ice skates or you can bring your own. Daily admission fees apply; season passes available. Special Winter

Break hours, themed nights plus party packages available. For details, call (757) 259-5360.

Hey Neighbor!

9TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS BAZAAR: QUEENS LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL PTA

November 21, 2015

Please join us 10 am - 4 pm for the Holiday Arts & Crafts Bazaar hosted by the Queens Lake Middle School PTA, located at 124 West Queens Drive, Williamsburg. We will have over 60 exhibitors offering handmade crafts and unique holiday gifts for all ages! There will be food, music, raffle prizes, animals, a Kid's Hall full of activities, Santa's Workshop, and so much more! Rain or Shine... doesn't matter, as the event will be inside, so join us for a delicious coffee, pick up some holiday gifts, pet a Greyhound, and

help support the QLMS-PTA who use this fundraiser to help students and teachers throughout the year! Parking is available in the field next to the school and for those who need extra assistance, we will have a few parking spaces allocated at the front entrance. For more information, please visit our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/QLMSholidaybazaar. You can also visit the QLMS website at www.queenslakemiddle.my-pta.org

Hey Neighbor!

GROWING HERBACEOUS PEONIES

November 21, 2015

At Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10am, open to the public, a \$5 donation is appreciated to help the garden grow. This presentation is part of the Learn and Grow Educa-

tional Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. This program will offer tips and sound cultural practices for successfully growing herbaceous peonies in suburban gardens. Speaker Mike Lockatell, the owner of Roots and Blooms LLC, will recommend the best early and mid-season single Japanese double varieties for peonies for Virginia. Mike was a seasonal vendor at the Williamsburg Farmers Market for many years. For more information contact Mike at www.rootsandblooms.us or call (804) 330-2916.

Hey Neighbor!

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EMPLOYEES ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW

November 21 – 22, 2015

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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NEXT UP!

JANUARY ISSUE
LEND A HAND

VOLUNTEER FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

PUBLISHES DEC. 31, 2015

ADVERTISING DEADLINE
TUES., DEC. 15th

Next Door Neighbors

FREE

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www.free-foundation.org

employees, volunteers and retirees will once again combine their time and talents for their annual Fall Arts and Crafts Show from 10 am – 5 pm each day. This year the show and sale will be at the Historic Triangle Community Services Building, located at 312 Waller Mill Road. Admission and parking are free and open to the public. Each crafter uses his or her spare time and talents to create unique handmade gifts. Several media are represented during the show and sale, from jewelry and textiles to woodcrafts and photography. Fabulous jams and handmade textiles are only a portion of the treasures available for personal enjoyment or as a special gift for that certain someone.

Hey Neighbor!
WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

November 21 and 28, 2015
Enjoy the heart of Williamsburg in Merchants Square while shopping in this producer-only market for eggs, fish, artisan cheeses, meats, pasta, cut flowers, and handmade soaps.. The market includes live music and exhibits along with local shops and restaurants. The market now accepts SNAP/EBT, credit cards and W&M Express. The market is open from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. Call (757) 259-3768 or visit our web site: www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com. Entertainment on November 21 is Timothy

Seaman from 9:30 - 11:30 am and on November 28 is The LCV Project from 9:30 - 11:30 am.

Hey Neighbor!
“SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY: HOW YOU CAN BETTER THE WORLD!”

November 22, 2015
Interested in knowing more about your God-given spiritual identity and how that can help change the world? Join us at 2 pm in the Williamsburg Public Library Theatre at 515 Scotland Street, to hear Tom McElroy, an international speaker and Christian Science Practitioner from Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. This event is co-sponsored by First Church of Christ, Scientist, Williamsburg and the Christian Science Student Organization at William and Mary. For more information, call (757) 229-3805 or drop by the Christian Science Reading Room at 626 Jamestown Rd. (across the street from Muscarelle Museum of Art).

Hey Neighbor!
THANKSGIVING SERVICES

November 26, 2015
Celebrate! Be grateful! At 11 am, gather with us in the presence of the our common Father-Mother God, the Almighty God, for our annual Thanksgiving service at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Williamsburg, 620 Jamestown Rd. Short readings and testimonies of healing and gratitude are given by

attendees. We'd love you to be part of it this year. For more information, call (757) 229-3805 or drop by the Christian Science Reading Room at 626 Jamestown Rd. (across the street from the Muscarelle Museum of Art).

Hey Neighbor!
ADVENT FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 2, 2015
Please join with all the music ensembles of the Saint Bede Music Ministry in this beautiful candlelit service of choral music, Scripture readings, and traditional congregational hymns of the season. Bring a friend to this annual tradition at 7 pm at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road in Williamsburg. For more information, call (757) 229-3631, or visit www.bede.org/concerts.

Hey Neighbor!
U.S. ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND (TRADOC) BAND HOLIDAY CONCERT

December 4, 2015
All are invited to attend this entertainment extravaganza. The concert is free and open to the public. Time: 7 pm at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road. Parking is limited, please consider carpooling. For more information, call (757) 229-3631 or visit www.bede.org/concerts.

Hey Neighbor!
CANTORI CHORAL ENSEMBLE CHRISTMAS CONCERT “WHAT SWEETER MUSIC”
December 5, 2015

At 5 pm in the sanctuary of Walnut Hills Baptist Church, 1014 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg. In celebration of its 10th anniversary, Cantori will sing some of its favorite Christmas music from the past 10 seasons. Included will be Still, Still arranged by Norman Luboff, A Welsh Lullaby arranged by Scott, Sure on This Shining Night by Morten Lauridsen, Silent Night arranged by John Rutter, and the title piece, What Sweeter Music by John Rutter. Cantori is a 16-voice auditioned ensemble under the direction of Agnes French. Accompanists for this concert will be Rebecca Davy, piano and organ, and Stephen Custer, cello. There is no admission charge for the concert, but an offering will be received in support of Cantori. Information about Cantori is available on our web site: www.cantoriwilliamsburg.org Information about the concert can be had by calling the Director, Agnes French, at (757) 345-6355, or Walnut Hills Baptist Church, at (757) 220-5900.

Hey Neighbor!
WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONIA HOLIDAY POPS
December 5 - 6, 2015

The Williamsburg Symphonia, under the direction of guest conduc-

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tor Maestro/Captain Silas N. Huff, will present its 2015 Holiday Pops concert at the Kimball Theatre in Merchants Square during Grand Illumination weekend, at 1:30 and 3 pm daily. This family-friendly musical event sets a festive tone for the holiday season. Soprano Sarah Kate Walston will be the featured guest soloist with the Symphonia's orchestra. General admission tickets cost \$27 and can be purchased at any of the Colonial Williamsburg ticket outlets. For more information, visit www.williamsburgsymphonia.org or call (757) 229-9857.

Hey Neighbor! **BOSTON PIANO TRIO**

December 8, 2015

At the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre, 8 pm - "Whenever this trio plays, drop everything and go hear them!" hailed the Boston Globe on the occasion of The Boston Trio's Tanglewood debut at Ozawa Hall. Since their formation in 1997, the trio has quickly become one of today's most exciting chamber ensembles. Acclaimed for their superb sense of ensemble and wondrous balance, these virtuosic and profound musicians are committed to creating exceptional and daring performances of standard and contemporary repertoire. For ticket information, contact: 229-0385 Dave Stanford or <http://www.chambermusicwilliamsburg.org/tickets.html>

Hey Neighbor! **FLUTE FRENZY HOLIDAY CONCERT**

December 11, 2015

Flute Frenzy presents a holiday concert from 7:30-8:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Road, Williamsburg (Norge). Both Flute Frenzy's youth flute choirs and the adult Fantasia flute choir will fill the evening with a variety of holiday music. Enjoy an eve-

ning of seasonal favorites written for ensembles of flute, piccolo, alto and bass flutes, with an occasional piano, drum, and hand bell. Take an up-close look at the more unusual members of the flute family. Freewill offering. A reception will follow the concert. For more information, call (757) 253-0850, or see www.flutefrenzy.org

Hey Neighbor! **BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

December 12, 2015

You and your family are invited to attend James City County's annual "Breakfast with Santa." Enjoy a pancake breakfast buffet and a morning of "holly-day" cheer with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Photo opportunities available. Time 9-11 am. \$12/person; ages 2 years and younger free. Location: James City County Recreation Center. Register by December 4 to ensure a seat; please register everyone who is attending! Max 100 people. Information: jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation or call (757) 259-5353.

Hey Neighbor! **ANNUAL BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

December 12, 2015

The Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg will host its 7th Annual Breakfast with Santa at Waypoint Grill. Seating times are from 7:30-10:30 am. Select your seating time and purchase tickets at williamsburgjuniors.org. Tickets are \$20 for Ages 13 & over, \$10 for Ages 3-12, and Free for Ages 2 & Under. Ticket price includes a breakfast buffet, hot chocolate bar, raffles, entertainment, children's crafts, and a photo with Santa. Proceeds benefit local nonprofit organizations.

Hey Neighbor! **5TH ANNUAL FEEDING THE HOMELESS EVENT BY THE BUFFALO BOYZ**

December 12, 2015

We ask for winter clothing and food such as canned goods. Boxed or bagged items. We need socks, hats, scarves, underclothes, coats, sweaters, shirts, pants- all sizes. We need children's clothes too. Shoes, blankets, boots, mittens and gloves and other items people need in winter. Lotions, soap, tissues, etc. All items can be dropped off at 103 Luther Drive in Carver Gardens (Williamsburg). Bins will be on the porch. We would like to thank each person who gives us these items to distribute to our homeless. Call (757) 903-2523 for details. BUFFALO Boys, P.O.Box 1552, Williamsburg, Va. 23185

Hey Neighbor! **ANNUAL BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

December 12, 2015

The Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg will host its 7th Annual Breakfast with Santa at Waypoint Grill. Seating times are from 7:30-10:30 am. Select your seating time and purchase tickets at williamsburgjuniors.org. Tickets are \$20 for Ages 13 & over, \$10 for Ages 3-12, and Free for Ages 2 & Under. Ticket price includes a breakfast buffet, hot chocolate bar, raffles, entertainment, children's crafts, and a photo with Santa. Proceeds benefit local nonprofit organizations.

Hey Neighbor! **VIRGINIA REGIONAL BALLET PRESENTS "THE NUT-CRACKER"**

December 12 - 13, 2015

At 2 pm and 7:30 pm on December 12 and at 2 pm on December 13 at Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall at the College of William & Mary. This holiday classical, directed by Heidi Robitshek, has been a Williamsburg tradition for over 35 years. Guest Artists from the Boston Ballet will dance the roles of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her dashing Cavalier and dance alongside

VRB Academy's most promising students. Reserved Seating. Box Office: (757) 221-2674 or www.danceVRB.com

Hey Neighbor! **CHRISTMAS DREAMS**

December 12 - 13, 2015

It's Christmas in Williamsburg and Janie Sparkle wants just one thing this Christmas and that's for all her wishes to come true! But an unexpected event stands between her and Christmas morning. Janie finds herself in an enchanted world where nothing is as it seems. Come join Janie on her tremendous journey home presented exclusively by Institute for Dance, Inc., a non-profit organization. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors and students and are available at the Kimball Theatre box office or 1-800-HISTORY. Shows are December 12, 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm and Sunday, December 13 at 2:30 pm.

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET**

December 12 and 19, 2015

The Holidays are alive in the heart of Williamsburg in Merchants Square! Enjoy shopping in this producer-only market for eggs, fish, artisan cheeses, meats, pasta, cut flowers, handmade soaps as well as Christmas trees, wreaths and other market treats. The market includes live music and exhibits along with local shops and restaurants. The market now accepts SNAP/EBT, credit cards and W&M Express. The market is open from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. Call (757) 259-3768 or visit our web site: www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com.

Hey Neighbor! **CHRISTMAS WITH THE WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD**

December 13, 2015

At King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Rd., Williamsburg, 2 pm and 5 pm.

In its 40th anniversary season, the Guild is pleased to bring back its family-friendly concert of holiday favorites and a community sing-along of beloved carols. No tickets will be required. In lieu of admission, audience members are invited to bring a nonperishable food item to benefit Fish and Grove Christian Outreach; a free-will offering will be received to help defray the expense of the concert space. For information: Visit www.williamsburgchoralguild.org or call (757) 220-1808.

Hey Neighbor!

STEVE TURNER AND HIS BRASS ENSEMBLE

December 16, 2015

The Williamsburg Music Club proudly presents returning guest performer Steve Turner, this time with his brass ensemble performing fun, seasonal, toe-tapping enjoyment. Take time from your busy December schedule to truly enjoy music of the season. "Coffee & Conversation" at 10 am with the program beginning at 11 am in Bruton Parish Church Hall, 222 Duke of Gloucester Street. For more information, contact (757) 229-4429 or www.williamsburgmusicclub.org.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CHORUS WINTER CONCERT

December 18, 2015

The Williamsburg Women's Chorus present their Winter Concert at 7:30 pm at Walnut Hills Baptist Church on Jamestown Road. The chorus will be joined by the Williamsburg Youth Chorale and the Williamsburg Treble Singers. Bob Chilcott's "This Day" and Gwyneth Walker's "I Thank You God" are among the featured works, along with music of the season. After ten

years as Artistic Director, this will be Ann Porter's last concert with the WWC. For ticket information contact Hilary, (757) 2503547 or email at williamsburgwomenschorus@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor!

"FIRST NIGHT 2016"

December 31, 2015

For 22 years, First Night Williamsburg has been a family-friendly, alcohol-free environment in which to celebrate New Year's Eve. The William & Mary campus and historic area come alive with a variety of performances at over 30 locations and more than 160 performers. The entertainment includes Celtic, Rock, Bluegrass, Folk, Storytelling, Classical, Gospel, Blues, Jazz, Shag, Big Band Swing and more. First Night is great fun for children, teens, seniors and families alike. Food and beverages are available throughout the venue. Performances begin at 11 pm and include from 1 - 11:45 pm main performances around Williamsburg; from 3-7 pm, programs for children at Matthew Whaley School; from 7 - 11 pm, "Rockin in the New Year" for teens and a midnight grand finale and fireworks at Zable Stadium on the William & Mary Campus. Purchase of a \$15 button provides admission to any and all performances. Children 5 and under are free. For more information on schedules, performers, button sales locations and more, visit our website at www.firstnightwilliamsburg.org. First night is a 501(c)3 non-profit responsible for producing the event.

Hey Neighbor!

SEEKING SUPPORT FROM THE WILLIAMSBURG COMMUNITY

Ongoing

The EEE Resource Center is a non-profit center dedicated to serving adults with special needs through

Education, Empowerment, and Engagement. In our day program, Associates spend time working on continuing education skills, life skills, and vocational skills. We rely on gifts, grants, donations, and income from our Laundry Service. Our facility has commercial grade washers and dryers and we can meet most laundry needs. We specialize in large, bulky items such as comforters, quilts, and mattress pads. Please contact us by email at lsteel@e3serves.org, by phone at (757) 345-2299, on the web at www.e3serves.org, or on Facebook at EEE Resource Center, Inc. We appreciate the support of our Williamsburg neighbors!

Hey Neighbor!

CALL FOR THEATRICAL VOLUNTEERS

Ongoing

Williamsburg Players Theater is looking for volunteers to help in all areas of the theater. There are so many ways to get involved! No experience necessary. Please go to williamsburgplayers.org/volunteers/ for more details. Come have some fun!

Hey Neighbor!

SEEKING VOLUNTEER TAX PREPARERS

Ongoing

Williamsburg AARP Tax-Aide is looking for volunteers to assist seniors and low/moderate-income taxpayers in completing their 2015 Federal and Virginia tax returns. IRS certification training is provided during classes in early January. Basic knowledge of tax return preparation, as well as the ability to do returns on a computer, are needed. We help over 2,500 local taxpayers each year take advantage of tax credits and tax law changes, resulting in refunds of over \$3 million. The service is offered at the Williamsburg and James City County Libraries in 2016 from

February 1 to April 15. We also need facilitators for each session to register and do an initial screening of our clients. Please email District Coordinator George Richmond at ggrichmond4@live.com if you are interested in becoming a Tax-Aide volunteer.

Hey Neighbor!

F.R.E.E. OF WILLIAMSBURG

Ongoing

F.R.E.E. is a non-profit that gifts mobility related equipment to adults who are uninsured or under insured and have no other means of obtaining needed mobility equipment such as canes, walkers, bed rails, hoist lifts, wheelchairs and power scooters. Equipment gifted also includes bathroom transfer aids such as shower chairs, tub transfer benches and bedside commodes. If you or someone you know is in need of equipment or would like to make a donation, call (757) 707-4741, visit our website www.free-foundation.org, or find us on Facebook.

Hey Neighbor!

ABUNDANT LIFE GROUPS MEETINGS

Ongoing

Are you a vegetarian, vegan, raw food or just curious? Join us to taste new recipes and foods, get educated and share ideas around plant based living for a healthier you! You don't have to be plant based to join the fun. 1st Sunday of each month at 7 pm. Email AbundantLifeGroups@gmail.com for more information.

Hey Neighbor!

COLONIAL HERITAGE INVESTMENT CLUB

Ongoing

Meets at Colonial Heritage Clubhouse, 6500 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg. Open to anyone with an interest in investing, from beginners to seasoned traders, including people who work with

an investment advisor. Meetings held on third Thursday of each month from 9:30 - 11:30 am. A wide range of investment topics are covered through presentations, discussions, and question-answer sessions, all with a common goal of helping people learn more about the markets, investment alternatives, and managing their portfolios. The club does not invest money, buy securities, or permit sales presentations. Guests admitted free.

Hey Neighbor!

JAMES CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Ongoing

"A Door of Hope" James City Community Church is located at 4550 Old News Rd., Williamsburg. Services: 9 am (Nursery provided) and 10:30 am (Nursery and Children Classes). Visit our website at www.jccchurch.com. Come join us and make yourself at home, and feel free to participate as much or as little as you feel comfortable. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, we're glad you're here.

Hey Neighbor!

MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING REGISTRATION

Ongoing

The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists is accepting applications for its annual six-month Basic Training session. The session starts September 1, 2015 and ends March 9, 2016. The group meets about twice a month on Tuesday evenings and participates in six weekend classes/field trips over the six-month period. People who are curious about nature, enjoy the outdoors, and want to be part of natural resource management and conservation in Virginia are perfect candidates. Topics include: Biology of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, insects; Native trees and plant biology; Geology

of Virginia; Meteorology and climate; Winter Botany; Wetlands and Freshwater Ecology; Citizen Science, field methods & scientific naming. Enrollment is limited to 25 people. The fee is \$150, which includes all materials and instruction. Completion of Basic Training is the first step to becoming a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist. An additional eight hours of Continuing Education plus 40 hours of Volunteer Service within a year will qualify the member for certification by the State Virginia Master Naturalist Program. The application for Basic Training can be downloaded from the Historic Rivers Chapter website: www.historicrivers.org/ or contact the Basic Training Committee at sedevan52@cox.net Additional information about the statewide program is at: www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/

Hey Neighbor!

MULTI-FUNDED NON-PROFIT AGENCY SEEKING TO FILL DIRECTOR OF FINANCE POSITION

Ongoing

Applicant must have financial experience working in a non-profit multi-grant environment and meet the following requirements: (1) Supervise financial and human resources staff. (2) Strong experience in developing and managing budgets annually. (3) Proficiency in the use of QuickBooks (QB) for Non-Profit Organizations. (4) Ability to explain how transactions would be distributed among different grants. (5) Proficient use of Microsoft Word and Excel to produce financial reports utilizing downloads from QB. (6) Ability to work with spread sheets. (7) Ability to communicate effectively financial matters with staff, board members, grantors and others. Prior experience working with Federal, State and local grantor agencies is a plus. Experienced with grant audits.

Requirements – BS degree and/or MBA in accounting/business with at least 5 years working in a multi-funded non-profit financial office. EOE. Send resume to – Attn: Human Resource Department Williamsburg-James City County, Community Action Agency, 312 Waller Mill Road, Suite 405, Williamsburg, VA 23185. (757) 229-9332. Salary Range – \$55,000 to \$60,000.

Hey Neighbor!

VOICES OF CHANGE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Ongoing

Develop your leadership and public speaking skills in a safe, friendly environment with the Voices of Change Toastmasters Club of Williamsburg. Visitors are welcome; this is an open club. We meet every Friday at 12:05-1:05 pm in the second floor conference room at EVB (formerly Virginia Company Bank), 1430 High Street, Williamsburg. For more information, visit www.voicesofchange.toastmastersclubs.org or www.facebook.com/VoicesofChangeWilliamsburg.

Hey Neighbor!

BIBLE STUDY AND WORSHIP

Ongoing

Informal, interactive Bible study and Holy Communion worship each Wednesday evening, 6:30 pm, at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 612 Jamestown Road, right across from the campus of the College of William and Mary.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

Ongoing Saturday mornings

Enjoy the heart of Williamsburg in Merchants Square while shopping in this producer-only market for produce, fruit, fish, artisan cheeses, meats, pasta, cut flowers, and handmade soaps. The market includes live music, chef demonstrations

and exhibits along with local shops and restaurants. The market now accepts SNAP/EBT, credit cards and W&M Express.

Hey Neighbor!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: WILLIAMSBURG AREA FAITH IN ACTION

Ongoing

Faith In Action relies on volunteers to transport care receivers to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, bank, pharmacy, etc. Right now, the demand for transportation is increasing. Faith in Action offers a flexible schedule for its volunteers. "Our organization was built on the idea of people helping people," Smith said. "If you have a few hours to dedicate to someone who may just need an arm to lean on to get to a doctor's appointment, then we have a spot for you." If you are interested in volunteering, call the Williamsburg Faith In Action offices at (757) 258-5890.

Hey Neighbor!

VIRGINIA AERONAUTICAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY (VAHS)

Ongoing

Every third Wednesday of the month, the Williamsburg chapter of the parent VAHS headquartered at the Richmond Airport Aviation Museum meets with aviation related speakers, programs and field trips. Everyone with an interest in aviation is encouraged to attend meetings in the second floor conference room of the Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport terminal building. Come for the camaraderie and learning experience, which comes with expanding your interest in aviation – past, present and future. Point of contact: (757) 258-0376

Hey Neighbor!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

Ongoing

The Tidewater Virginia Historical Society, TVHS, offers unique tours, lectures, social events and behind-the-scenes adventures. TVHS opens doors to “off-the-beaten-path” and “not-open-to-the-public” historic sites. Lectures by experts in their field provide information prior to tours to complete the experience. A recent archeological dig took place at New Quarter Park. A video dedicated to the dig, “Joys of Discovery” is currently running on the Cox community channel 46 at 3 pm daily. An Infomercial is running several times a day. Another dig that will be open to the public will be held in August. To learn more contact us at (757) 28-5587 or visit us on the web: tv-hs.org or info@tv-hs.com.

Hey Neighbor! **BUS DRIVER POSITION** **AVAILABLE**

Ongoing

Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency (WJCC-CAA), Head Start bus driver position available: Approx. 5hrs/day for 160 days per year. Requirements: CDL, P&S endorsement, HS/GED diploma, and able to pass VDOT physical, and have satisfactory DMV driving record. All applicants please email: headstart@wjccactionagency.org, or come to 312 Waller Mill Road, Suite 400 in Williamsburg, or call (757)229-6417. EOE.

Hey Neighbor! **NEW WATA BUS ROUTE** **SERVES JAMESTOWN AREA**

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) will begin a new pilot route serving the Jamestown area. The new route is funded through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grants. The Jamestown route will serve the most densely populated area of James City County that until now has

not been served by public transportation. The route will provide citizens and visitors access to public transportation in an area with several neighborhoods, schools, businesses, medical facilities, shopping, time share communities, churches, and the Jamestown Settlement. The new route will provide 15-hours of daily service (6 am – 9 pm), Monday through Friday starting at the Williamsburg Crossing Shopping Center, on the side of Food Lion. It will travel along Rt. 199 to Jamestown Rd., Greensprings Rd., John Tyler Hwy., and back to Jamestown Rd. Transfers can be made at the Williamsburg Shopping Center to the Red Line taking you to the Williamsburg Transportation Center accessing all other routes. “We are in the business of connecting people and being able to reach this part of the County now is very exciting for us,” said Kevan Danker, Executive Director of WATA. “This new route allows us to serve a wider range of customers and once they board a WATA bus they have access to our entire system of routes throughout the Greater Williamsburg area.” The route will be evaluated over three years to determine if it can be continued based on ridership and availability of funds. Fares on the Jamestown route will be free through February. Starting March 1st fares will be \$1.25 per trip, \$2 all day or select one of our many additional passes. Passengers that transfer onto Jamestown from another WATA route through February 6 will receive a voucher for an all-day pass. Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) provides public transportation to residents and visitors in James City County, Williamsburg, the Bruton District of York County, Surry County, and connection to Newport News. For more information about WATA, visit www.goWATA.org or call the WATA at (757) 220-5493.

Hey Neighbor!

NEIGHBORHOOD BASKETBALL LEAGUE (NBL) SIGN-UP

Ongoing

Registration for the Neighborhood Basketball League for boys and girls has begun. Cost is \$15 for Williamsburg and James City County residents and \$22 for non-residents. Parent’s signature is required if the student is under 18 years of age. The ages are 10 to 18 years old. Bring proof of age. If you need more information, call Linda or Yvonne at (757) 229-9332. Sponsored by Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency.

Hey Neighbor! **VOICES OF WILLIAMSBURG**

Ongoing

Do you want to end your fear of public speaking? Develop communication and leadership skills? Join Toastmasters in a caring and supportive environment. On Marvelous Mondays: Get a Powerful start to your week! Time: 7 am at the James City Community Center, Longhill Road. On Wonderful Wednesdays: meet, mat, and speak time at 7 pm (4th Wednesday of each month). Location: Anna’s Brick Oven, 2021 Richmond Road. Contact John Steinbach at (757) 897-6819 or <http://voicesofw.toastmastersclubs.org>

Hey Neighbor! **HEAD START OPEN** **ENROLLMENT**

Ongoing

Head Start is a Preschool Program for Children ages 3 to 5 serving income eligible families, including children with special needs. To apply, call (757) 229-6417 or visit us at 312 Waller Mill Road, Ste. 400, Williamsburg. For information contact Williamsburg James City County Community Action Agency.

Hey Neighbor! **BRUTON PARISH SHOP** **CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Ongoing

We are the Bruton Parish shop located in the Parish House of Bruton Parish Church on Duke of Gloucester St. We have been here since 1995 and are a 501©3 store. We give all of our net proceeds to the Outreach and Mission ministries of the church. Our sales people are volunteers comprised of parishioners of Bruton Parish and other churches in the area. It is not a necessity to be a church member but just a believer in our mission. All ages are welcome from teenagers to mature adults. Much of the money raised by the shop is used in Williamsburg and the surrounding areas. We need more men and women to staff our shop. We are open 7 days a week 7 hours a day except Sunday, when we are open for 4 hours in the afternoon. Call Carol Weaver (757) 220-1489.

Hey Neighbor! **ST. MARTINS EPISCOPAL** **CHURCH**

Ongoing

1333 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg, (757) 229-1111. 10 am Sunday school; 8 am, 9:15 am, 11 am worship on Sunday, Noon Healing, worship on Wednesday; 5 pm Taize Service on Saturday. Visit www.st-martinswmbg.org.

Hey Neighbor! **BIBLE STUDY**

Ongoing

If your church or Bible study group leaves you wondering about Biblical questions such as what really happened in the Garden, where did Cain get his wife, what is the mark of the Beast, or any other lingering questions, perhaps you should join us for our weekly Bible study at the Norge library. Every Monday from 6 - 9 pm. Contact (757) 253-0172 or cell (757) 604-6649.

Hey Neighbor!

CALL FOR MUSICIANS

Ongoing

Do you play a musical instrument? Have you always wanted to be a part of a theatre's live orchestra? The Williamsburg Players, a 58 years-old, all volunteer, 501-C3 IRS non-profit community theatre, is looking for musicians to help bring the joy of musical theater to the area. Especially needed are rhythm section players such as key-boards, guitar, bass guitar, drums, and percussion. You should be able to read music. Email Mike McCoy at wmmccoy01@cox.net, or call and leave a message at (757) 229-1679.

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS - COLONIAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

Ongoing, first Monday

We meet the first Monday of every month at the James City Library on Croaker Road at 6:30 pm. The club is one of the few photography clubs in the area and has been in existence for over eight years. We have about 60 members with skill levels ranging from novice to nationally recognized. The club web site is www.cnpvcva.org

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS - JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY

Ongoing, Second Sunday

The Jane Austen Society North America Southeastern VA Region meets on the second Sunday of every month at the Schell Room, Williamsburg Regional Library (515 Scotland St.) at 2 pm. Donations accepted to help defray cost of meeting room. All are welcome to attend. For more information, visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/JASNASoutheasternVa>. For membership information visit the national site at www.JASNA.org.

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS – REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

Ongoing

The City of Williamsburg Republican Committee meets at the Williamsburg Regional Library the second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Come and join other city residents who care about the future of their country. For more information please email rpc.lbg@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS – THE COLONIAL AREA REPUBLICAN MEN'S ASSOCIATION (CARMA)

Ongoing

CARMA meets on the third Thursday of each month at Giuseppe's Restaurant at 11:30 am. For more information, please go to their website at: www.carmagop.com.

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS - JCC REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

Ongoing

The James City County Republican Committee meets in the auditorium of the James City County Human Services Center located at 5249 Olde Towne Road. Monthly meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7 pm. Meetings are open to all who are interested in making a difference in our community and country. For information, please visit www.jccrc.org or email JCCRepublicanCommittee@gmail.com

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS - HISTORIC TRIANGLE REPUBLICAN WOMEN (HTRW)

Ongoing

Location: Thomas Nelson Community College, President's Board Room at Thomas Nelson Community College (3rd Floor). Time: second Thursday of the month at 7 pm. HTRW is the only local Republican Women's Club that meets

evenings. For more information please visit our web site: <http://www.htrwc.org> or look for us on Facebook.

Hey Neighbor!

MESSY CHURCH

Ongoing

Are you looking for an innovative worship time that is fun, interactive, reflective, musical, creative, delicious and prayerful? Then come to Williamsburg United Methodist Church the second Tuesday of every month from 5:30-7:30 pm for Messy Church! Each month we celebrate a different theme. This experience is called Messy Church because we will be learning about God through active means as well as Bible teaching. Snacks, crafts, games, music and fun, followed by dinner are all a part of worshipping God together. Messy Church is free and for people of all ages, all denominations, and all abilities. For further information, go to www.williamsburgumc.org or call (757) 229-1771 and ask for Cindy, Kay or Andy. Williamsburg United Methodist Church is located at 500 Jamestown Rd across from the college in Williamsburg.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG F.R.E.E. FOUNDATION

Ongoing

The Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) celebrated their Ribbon Cutting/Open House March 24. FREE is a non-profit organization that gifts mobility related rehabilitation equipment to adults who are uninsured or under insured and have no other means of obtaining needed mobility equipment including bathroom transfer aids. Volunteer opportunities are also available. For more information visit www.free-foundation.org, find us on Facebook or call (757) 707-4741.

ABOUT Hey Neighbor!

Hey Neighbor! is designed to help non-profit organizations, civic groups and churches to communicate their needs and happenings to our community. There is no charge for placing an ad in this feature.

To submit your listing, follow the directions outlined on page 55. Hey Neighbor! submissions are emailed to: HeyNeighbor@cox.net.

This email inbox is checked only once a month. If you email story ideas, questions etc., they will not be viewed in a timely manner. For this type of communication, email the publisher directly: Meredith@WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

Next Door Neighbors is mailed to 39,911 homes each month. Your organization can benefit greatly from this free exposure. This feature can be helpful in your fund raising efforts for your cause, it can help you find volunteers and much more.

Refer to the Hey Neighbor! deadlines on page 55 to learn when you should send your email for the months you need.

Thank you!

Williamsburg's
**IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD**
photo challenge

**NATIVITY SCENE AT
YANKEE CANDLE**

Find the 12 differences
between the original
photograph (top) and
the altered photograph
(bottom).

Enjoy!



INTERMEDIATELEVEL

**Look for the answers
in the next issue of
Next Door Neighbors**

November 2015
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge





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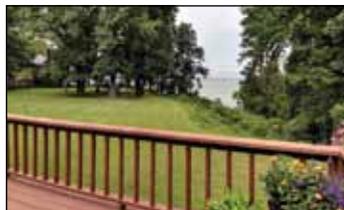
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