

July 2017

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VO. 11, ISSUE 6

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Once of the nicest things about producing this magazine is that when we select a theme and identify the people we will interview, we never know exactly what we are going to find and what we are going to learn in the process. So, when we bring this magazine to your home, we are not unlike the people you will meet in this issue. A lot of hard work and a passion for sharing something good with our neighbors and friends is accented with a slight sense of awe over what we are able to bring to you in print.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

One thing I definitely learned with this issue is that I could have named it differently. I should have called it "Farm to Table with Love", because the people in this issue don't get their biggest thrill from the revenue or popularity that comes from people seeking out their talents and their wares. They all very clearly are primarily motivated by the excitement of sharing something of themselves, something personal and wonderful and something crafted with love. Isn't that what being a neighbor is all about? NDN

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CORRECTION: Shay Lelegren who was featured in the June issue of Next Door Neighbors, did not work for the tin shop at Colonial Williamsburg. We regret the error and any inconvenience it may have caused.

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Cover Photo by Lisa Cumming

CHEF TRAVIS BRUST



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Farm to Table

By Lillian Stevens

While many of us are still sleeping, Chef Travis Brust is preparing for a workday that will begin at 7 a.m. and likely extend beyond 12 hours. In addition to his day job, he also invests his time cultivating the next generation of culinary professionals through Colonial Williamsburg's Culinary Apprenticeship Program.

Travis' official title is Executive Chef and Food and Beverage Director for the Williamsburg Inn. He joined the culinary team at the Inn in 2002, and was named Executive Chef in 2011. As such, he oversees the restaurants at

the Inn, the Golden Horseshoe Clubhouse, the Green Clubhouse, and the DeWitt Wallace Museum Café.

"It's a seven-day operation with 24-hour menus, banquets, golf events, and other commitments," Travis says.

That's actually the appeal. He loves working at a resort, especially one as prestigious as the Williamsburg Inn.

"There is nothing mundane about my job. No two days are alike. Even though we are a boutique hotel, this is a massive operation. And I think we have the greatest service and

culinary staff anyone could ask for."

The restaurants at the Inn incorporate many local products, including fish from the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding waters. Travis and his team step it up a notch, though, bringing history alive with food. Some of it is prepared with items purchased just blocks away at the Williamsburg Farmers Market.

"Every Saturday morning, one of our sous chefs will go down to the Farmers Market to find products we will feature in our specials that evening," Travis says. "This time of year, there will obviously be a lot of vegetables and

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fruits, especially strawberries and blackberries. We'll also use fresh mushrooms or grass fed beef."

One might say they are turning 'Virginia Grown' products into 'Virginia Made' products.

But what about that history angle?

"There will be a story tied to the food," Travis explains. "If you consider the food influence here in Williamsburg, there was the expanse of the British Empire and the colonists that moved here. And there was the spice trade, with goods coming in through the Caribbean islands right here to our ports on local rivers. We had East Indian spices, Northern Morocco influences, citrus and rums, as well as other spirits coming in."

At the Inn, those influences are popping up on the menu. Guests might enjoy, for instance, a chocolate sorbet hinted with cardamom, or a lemon posset.

"Lemon posset is an inherently British dish that we put our Southern twist on. We'll serve it with shortbread cookies with some fresh lavender or rosemary from our gardens."

From concept to execution, Travis has a lot of fun working with his team of chefs, but he also enjoys mentoring 12 apprentices.

"Apprenticeship is so important," he says. "If you think about it, this country was built on apprenticeships. You couldn't make a brick until you built the fires in the brickhouse for maybe two years. You had to repetitively do the same motion over and over to build muscle memory, to become excellent at your craft."

For the past seven years, Travis has served as chair of the apprenticeship program at CW. It's a pro bono role, one that is very near and dear to his heart. The program is overseen by The Virginia Chef's Association, a chapter of the American Culinary Federation.

For emerging chefs, muscle memory is one of many skills they gain through an apprenticeship program. "They aren't just reading about it, they are doing it," Travis says. "When they graduate our program, the apprentices are certified by the American Culinary Federation. They also have an associate's degree from J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College, and are certified through the Virginia Department of Labor."

"And they have our wall art for having graduated our program," Travis adds with a smile.

The most important credential, however, is that they can cook. "There's no replacement for experience. No matter what we do, we are always learning."

Of course, learning extends beyond the kitchen, and the Williamsburg Farmers Market has a tent earmarked just for the CW apprentices.

"We've been at the market for about eight years," Travis says. "We're there on the fourth Saturday."

Through sales of their baked goods or other items, the apprentices raise funds to help underwrite "learning" field trips, but they also hone their social skills while gaining a sense of ownership of their own small business, just like other market vendors.

"Last February we traveled to New York City and attended the American Culinary Federation Signature Series. We dined at 11 Madison Park, a restaurant that has been ranked as one of the world's best."



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Working at the tent can help new chefs break out of their shell. Chefs today are more in the public eye than ever before. As an example, regulars to the market are familiar with the weekly chef's tent where the demo includes preparation and interaction.

"The cooking demonstrations are great because they provide local chefs the opportunity to showcase our new products and interact with guests," Travis says. "We also love to hear feedback and share ideas."

The apprentices are lucky to have such a powerhouse mentor. Among many awards, Travis placed first in the 2012 World's Chef Challenge in Las Vegas and second place again in 2013 as well as winning Virginia Chefs Association Chef of the Year in 2014.

At the World's Chef Challenge in Las Vegas, he competed with approximately 20 others in the "professional chef" category, including Food Network stars. The competition was three days long.

"There were a couple of us Chesapeake guys who got the invite to come out there and compete," Travis says. "We did really well for the first half of the competition, and then won the last round."

The dish they prepared was a rendition of what the Queen of England was served at the Williamsburg Inn when she visited in 2007.

"We used a West Coast rockfish, and West Coast oysters that were stewed down with some potatoes, and a sun choked butter sauce around that. With a little greens served on top, it was really nice."

Not everyone gets to prepare food for the Queen of England, of course, and Travis' trajectory emerged over time. He grew up in Long Island, New York. His father worked as a wedding photographer, and his mother was a teacher's assistant with a baking hobby.

"My mom was a home baker," Travis says. "But becoming a chef myself wasn't necessarily something that I grew up wanting to do."

As a young teenager Travis' vision included earning some spending money.

"I had a friend who worked in an Italian restaurant," he says. "So, I was able to get a job there as a dishwasher."

Before long he was promoted to a salad station worker. By his 14th birthday Travis was working the appetizer station.

"One night I made this Portobello mushroom appetizer," he says. "Well, it turns out that my English teacher was in the restaurant that night. And she had my appetizer! The next day, in school she was talking about this amazing appetizer and it was mine!"

Travis was used to hearing compliments from family and friends about his cooking, but this was different. This was an inspiring moment. After graduating from high school, he entered an apprenticeship program at The Balsams Resort in Northern New Hampshire. There, he took classes and participated in the paid apprenticeship program.

"At Balsams I racked up over 6000 hours of hands-on training with some of the best chefs in the country including Chefs Phil Learned, Steve James, Hans Schadler, Jacky Burette, Kurt Zugger, Ryhs Lewis, Thomas Gardener, just to name a few."

The rest, as they say, is history. Travis didn't necessarily plan to stay in Williamsburg for 15 years, but plans can change. Today, Travis and his wife, Jenna, make their home in Williamsburg with two pugs. When it's time for a little break the couple heads down to the family beach house on the Outer Banks in Rodanthe. NDN



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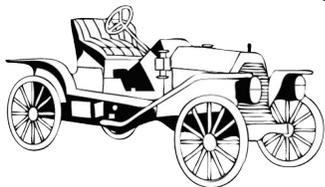
Aromas OF THE MARKET

By Naomi Tene' Austin

One of the best things about summer in Williamsburg is the Farmers Market where local growers, craftsmen, vendors and business owners can convene in one place and sell directly to their customers. Conveniently located on Duke of Gloucester Street and set against the backdrop of Historic Colonial Williamsburg, this refreshing throwback to simpler times provides a welcoming atmosphere for visitors, students and families to gather on Saturday mornings to chat, browse and fellow-

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ship. Beyond the lure of fresh asparagus, ripe strawberries and blemish free tomatoes, it's the coming together of friends, neighbors and gregarious vendors that has made the market such a success for the past 15 years.

"It's all about community," says Donna Stein, Farmers Market vendor and manager at Aroma's Coffeehouse Bakeshop & Café. "At the Farmers Market, there is time to stop and talk and really get to know people." I caught up with the Pittsburg native to talk about the Farmers Market, Aroma's and her love of Williamsburg.

Nuzzled on Prince George Street in Merchants Square, Aroma's is an undeniable local favorite. True to its name, the café boasts a bountiful menu of aromatic brews, freshly baked treats, and delicious American fare. "We cover all sorts," says Donna. "Our offerings accommodate people that really love coffee and love the different nuances of the bean, and also the casual coffee drinker."

On any given day, you can find the dining room filled wall-to-wall with guests spilling over onto the front sidewalk porch and the newly renovated back patio. From college students eagerly typing on their laptops and sipping coffee between keystrokes, to stroller pushing mothers with small children in tow, to groups of senior citizens gathered for lunch and good conversation, the restaurant is always buzzing with life. "It's like the Cheers of the coffee world. You just feel comfortable from the moment you walk in," Donna says of the diverse clientele that frequents the establishment. "We have our regulars and when they walk in the door, everyone knows them by name." With almost nine years of employment with Aroma's, she wouldn't have it any other way. "I love people! I always said that if I had to be tied to a desk all day, I couldn't do it," she shares. "We have the best customers and that makes the perfect balance."

While the hustle and bustle of daily operations keeps Donna and her staff on their toes, the Farmers Market is a welcome change of pace. "At the Farmers Market, people are really laid back. There is time to stop and talk," she says. "It's out there that I get a chance to ask

them how they're feeling, or how their operation went, how their family is doing." For Donna that kind of genuine hospitality extends beyond just customers. She has developed great relationships with fellow vendors as well. "Over the years, I've gotten to be very close with them," she says. "I used to have a woman that was next to me, and she left about two years ago but she ended up coming out of retirement to cater my daughter's wedding." Comradery, while always welcome, never comes at the expense of great product and service.

"We bring over hot coffee and iced coffee," she says. "We started a couple years ago bringing over cold brew." Iced lattes and espressos are guaranteed crowd pleasers. Not one to rest,

Donna upgraded the Aroma's Farmers Market menu with a few new refreshing treats. "We do a great basil lemonade made with locally grown basil that we get from another vendor at the market," she says. "We've added a ginger peach lemonade as another good one that we do once peach season hits."

For Donna, the path from barista to boss worked in tandem with her relocation to Williamsburg. As a military wife, she moved from place to place with her husband, Todd and their three children, for several years before settling in the area. "At the time that we moved here we still had a house in Michigan that we couldn't sell because the economy was really bad," she recalls. Donna decided to go to work to help ease the load of having to pay mortgage in one state and rent in another. Seven months after moving to Williamsburg she began working part-time at Aroma's. "I hadn't worked outside of the home, other than volunteering, in years," she says. "But when I came to work here I immediately fell in love."

Aside from the customers, with whom she quickly became familiar, Donna was drawn to the strong sense of family and community she experienced at work. Having spent most of her adult life apart from her larger family, she embraces the community of elders and students that frequent the establishment. "These people are like family to me. I feel so parental to the college kids that work here, and I get to see

them grow up. My co-workers and the people that come in here will call me up sometimes just to ask 'How are you? How's your daughter? How's your husband?' It is so uplifting and encouraging to come in here every day." The job wasn't the only selling point that convinced Donna and her family to settle and stick around. "The number one reason we stayed here was the weather," says the Pennsylvania native. "I'm not a big summer person, but I love the spring and the fall, and the winter here is nothing like being at home," she says. "This area gets to see all of the seasons."

Donna credits Aroma's owners Don and Geri Pratt for giving her the autonomy to manage their business and the weekly showing at the Farmers Market. "They are very respectful of my opinions," she says. "I feel very valued in this organization because I know they trust me. They trust that I have a finger on the pulse of what the customers want." In addition to the café, the Pratt's also own a smaller location, Aroma's Abridged, located in the Swem Library on the campus of William & Mary. In 2015, with the opening of The Hound's Tale of Fresh Bites and Great Spirits on Prince George Street, the couple added another restaurant to their business portfolio. Donna sees the enterprising couple as role models, not only for herself but for the many college students that they've brought onboard throughout the years.

"I have learned so much from them," she says. "They work very hard, and they're always looking to see what else they can do, and how it will enhance the community."

A die-hard Steelers fan, Donna recalls her first interview with Geri. "It was funny because Geri and I are both Pittsburgh natives," she says. "I like to joke sometimes that she only hired me because I'm from there." Under the leadership of the Pratt's, Aroma's was one of the original vendors to support the Farmers Market. Shortly after Donna came onboard, nearly a decade ago, Geri asked Donna to start managing the event. She's been doing it ever since.

"The Farmers Market has evolved so much since I first got there, and I love it," Donna Stein says. "I think it's great." NDN

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NEVER MISSES THE MARKET

By Alison Johnson

If it's a Saturday morning and the Williamsburg Farmers Market is running, Mike Westfall never misses it. In fact, he usually arrives by 7:30 a.m., as vendors are getting ready to open up sales.

Like most regulars at the weekly market

in Merchants Square, Mike has his favorite products, croissants, scones, strawberries and asparagus, to name a few, and routines, which now includes meeting friends for coffee. Before his wife passed away in April 2016, they would walk around together, always picking up two

blueberry scones as they left to eat at home.

Now president of the market's Board of Directors, Mike takes pride in how the event regularly draws people into the heart of Williamsburg, a place he first fell in love with as a history-loving, 12-year-old Indiana boy on

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vacation with his parents.

"The market is a place where everybody crosses paths," he says. "Whether you're a visitor or a resident, you can find something that interests you. It's important to continue to have a vital downtown even as a community's retail focus drifts outward and there are more competing attractions."

Launched in 2002, the market operates from early March through the last weekend before Christmas, with a break for Grand Illumination festivities and with an added Valentine's Day edition. The space can accommodate about 40 vendors, including farmers, plant nursery operators, bakers and watermen. All offer fresh seasonal goods such as fruits, vegetables, artisan cheeses, meats, pastas, cut flowers, homemade soaps and more that were either grown or produced in Virginia.

"As a buyer, you get to interact with the people who directly grew or created what they're selling," Mike notes. "We don't let people bring in products from the outside and resell them. We're pretty unique in that respect. We have some very high standards."

Some weekends also feature live music or a chef's tent with cooking demonstrations. On any given Saturday, the market draws between 1,000 and 1,500 shoppers between its hours of 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., some with kids or dogs in tow.

Mike's job is to run monthly board meetings, help communicate with vendors and residents and act as a liaison between the market's three founding sponsors: the City of Williamsburg, Colonial Williamsburg and Merchants Square. He has served on the board for about five years and as president since 2014.

"Our board is really dedicated to making sure the market is the best it can be," he says. "There's not a lot of turnover, and we are really strict on quality."

Mike, 67, is a firm believer that anyone who chooses to live in a community should be active in that community. And he most definitely chose Williamsburg. He was not yet a teenager when he decided he'd settle here one day.

Born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Mike loved history so much that his parents asked a staff member at a local museum for ad-

vice on where to take their son on their 1962 family vacation. Colonial Williamsburg was the answer, along with the old plantations that surround it.

"I remember that trip so well, down to little details like eating egg salad sandwiches at the old drugstore downtown," he relates. "This is where I immediately felt comfortable."

Mike also got used to the idea of buying directly from farmers during his childhood. His father was an ophthalmologist and had a number of patients who were farmers. His parents and grandmother, who lived with the family, took him to a farm on some Saturdays to buy fresh eggs. "Those were the days when people ate eggs for breakfast every morning," he says with a laugh.

In college, Mike focused on the arts, attending the Winona School of Professional Photography and the Fort Wayne Art Institute before earning an Art History degree from the University of St. Francis. He built a career in the health care industry, however, ultimately retiring as Property Manager and Construction Manager for Indiana's Parkview Health System.



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Through the years, Mike has held leadership positions in numerous historical and preservation organizations. Those include the Indiana Historical Society, the Lincoln Library and Museum, the largest collection of Lincoln materials outside of the national archives, and the Allen County Courthouse Preservation Trust, where he is still a board member.

Williamsburg was never far from Mike's mind. In the 1990s, he and his wife, Susan, bought their first property here so they could make frequent visits. They became full-time residents in 2011, along with their cats Aliya and Stewart.

Mike has kept up an active volunteer schedule in retirement, alongside his hobbies of photography, cooking and collecting books on food, Virginia history, archaeology, travel and nature. He has served on the board of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA, now Preservation Virginia) and as co-chair of the APVA Jamestown Planning Committee, and is on the boards of the Friends of the Williamsburg Library Foundation and The Fort Monroe Foundation.

Mike's love of history helps him answer occasional questions about possibly moving the market out of Merchants Square so it could grow larger. But getting bigger, even in the current location, isn't a goal for the board.

"We like it being part of Williamsburg's historic life, right in the place where it traditionally has always been from the earliest days of the country," Mike explains. "That's part of what makes it special. We also want to focus on quality, and we don't want people having to cross Henry Street or College Corner." The market helps shops in Merchants Square attract customers, he adds.

The market's good reputation attracts vendors from many parts of the state, including Charlottesville, Virginia Beach and Charles City and Westmoreland counties. One Christmas tree vendor comes in from Farmville. A few customers even travel from other states. Mike has friends from Indiana who like to visit the popular Christmas markets to buy wreaths decorated with magnolia leaves and holly.

The biggest challenge in his post is part of any business: managing people with many dif-

ferent personalities and personal situations.

"Our vendors can have problems like anyone else," he says. "It's not uncommon to get a call on Friday afternoon or evening that there's a problem, someone is sick, or there's a family issue, and that vendor can't come the next morning. That's hard on the customers if they are disappointed, and then we also need to reorganize the market so we don't have any big gaps in space."

And of course, there's the weather. "If it's rainy and cold, we hear quite a bit of grumbling," he says. "Still, people are always glad they came and leave with something good."

As for Mike, he tends to buy what's most fresh and in season: "I try to spread out my buying as much as I can from different people. We have a great mix of vendors."

In the five years he's lived here full-time, Mike guesses he's missed only two or three markets, all because he was out of town. He usually plans any travel around it, especially since his wife passed away and the market's vendors and board members have become like an extended family for him. NDN

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WILL & CHERIE APPERSON



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Farming is in the Family

By Cathy Welch

Family pride and a desire to glean all they can from the Mastermind in the family drives the success for MillFarm Christmas Trees & Berry Farm partners, Will and Cherie Apperson.

“I try to learn every day from him,” Will says of his father, Billy Apperson.

“Will has started carrying a notebook so he can write it down,” Cherie says.

Croaker’s Millfarm Christmas Trees & Berry

Farm is a registered Century Farm having operated over 100 years. It is one of the oldest farms in James City County and is located off of I-64. “We got off the boat in Jamestown and Croaker is as far as we got,” Will says of his

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family's lack of traveling gene. "We didn't go farther because we didn't see any benefit in it."

Their farmland on Fenton Mill Road has been in Will's family over 300 years. His grandfather came to the farm site first and built his home place. "Billy told me when they came through and burned down the Governors Palace and Colonial Williamsburg during the Revolutionary War, the home place was burned too," Cherie explains. "They rebuilt it quickly and it's still standing."

Will believes their farm is no better than other local farms. "The only thing we had going on is we already had customers established with our Christmas tree business before we started getting into the berry business," he says. "And one thing we have that no one else does is my father, that's a big plus."

Billy Apperson, a regional forester and current part-time state employee was in charge of several special projects: the American Chestnut Restoration in Charlottesville and saving Virginia's Longleaf Pine, both near extinction. The William J. "Billy" Apperson Longleaf Pine Forest, is a 2000-acre forest in Suffolk named to honor his efforts.

"My dad's blessed with the touch of being able to grow stuff," Will explains. "I've taken dead trees out of his pickup truck, planted them and just because he touched them, they grew."

When Will was a boy, the family grew apples and peaches. When he was about 17, they switched to Christmas trees because landowners sought Billy's advice about the value of farming Christmas trees. "He's one of these people who would grow it to figure out how to tell people to do it," Will explains.

Cherie (a motel kid whose family ran the Princess Anne Motel for 50-plus years) is five years younger than Will. "My school bus stopped across the street from MillFarm every day," Cherie says. "Years later, a friend brought him to my house, we shot pool all night and have been together ever since."

The couple has a 17-year-old daughter, Lottie, and a 12-year-old son, Will. Will, Sr., is site supervisor for David A. Nice Builders working on municipal projects. "I'm on heavy equipment every day, mostly excavators and bulldozers," he explains. "We also do a lot of road building and parking lots."

Cherie is a teaching assistant at Bright Beginnings Learning Center working with the two-year-old special education class. "I work with miracle babies," she says.

Over seven years ago, two big changes came to MillFarm: the first blueberry plants went in followed by blackberries and strawberries; and Will, Cherie, her mother and their children began manning a booth at the Williamsburg Farmers Market.

The workload around the farm is shared by the entire family. Will's stepmom, Mary, a retired Delta Airlines pilot, does ground maintenance, handles the banking and mans their telephone.

As far as the division of labor goes between Will, Cherie and Billy, the equation is simple. "We tell him all the time, you plant it, we'll sell it," Will explains. "My dad grows it, and we do the marketing, selling and customer relations."

Will and Cherie oversee the farm's Christmas tree business. "That's very overwhelming for us," Will says. "We work the farm every day we're not at work."

Will and Cherie pick, clean, store and grade berries, and they take care of the market. They handle restaurant sales and all work at the Farmers Market. "It's a nice summer market," he says. "We are there every week we have product."

"During berry season we're on the honor system at the farm," Cherie



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says. “We want you to pick our berries and we want to make it as easy and convenient as we can.”

The family works berry sales on weekends, but customers can pick berries at their convenience. Containers are available so visitors can pick berries and drop cash in the box outside the farm’s store.

“If we have a large crop we may be open from Tuesday to Sunday,” Cherie explains. “Or we might be picked clean and have to close by noon on Saturday.”

MillFarm attends the Williamsburg Farmers Winter Market between Thanksgiving and Christmas in addition to the summer market. They take wreaths, greenery for decorations and anything else they can to market. In winter, Will helps Cherie set up the market, but he is needed at the farm for tree sales. So her mother, Charlotte, and the kids help out.

“It’s very hectic because between Thanksgiving and Christmas we’re only open on Saturdays and Sundays,” Will says. “That time of year we really don’t know if we’re coming or going working seven days a week.”

MillFarm’s wreath business operates from Halloween to Christmas. Cherie and Will make the wreaths, plain and decorated. “I’ll make plain ones and go places such as the Colonial Heritage Garden Club and church groups and show them how to decorate them,” she says. “We do custom decorated wreaths in bigger diameters and as special orders for Colonial Williamsburg restaurants including Berret’s Seafood Restaurant and Taphouse Grill and The Riverwalk in Yorktown.”

MillFarm’s Christmas trees are priced by the foot, most selling between \$36 and \$42. When they have a drought (like a year ago), they bring in Fraser firs from a friend’s farm that are cut fresh weekly.

“Tagging of the Christmas trees is something we look forward to every year,” Cherie says of the process customers use to claim their tree prior to purchase, beginning as early as October. “Last year, we looked out our kitchen window after dark and someone had put solar lights around a tree. It was glowing.”

MillFarm Christmas Trees & Berry Farm sells a variety of berries. One recent crop is the delicious “Suziblu” Southern Highbush blueberries. The Appersons stage early, middle and end crops so they have product available throughout the season. They had their first crop of asparagus this year.

The onsite farm store keeps the family and customers warm in winter. Built by the family, the structure boasts pine beams, poplar siding and heart pine floor. They keep the wood stove running in winter and offer free hot chocolate. “Our daughter and her best friend run it because I’m at the Farmers Market,” Cherie says. “The market gives us the chance to meet people and then those people come here. It’s a connection for us.”

“People want fresh, locally-grown, healthy stuff whether it’s a Christmas tree or a berry,” Will says. “The same customer that would cut a Christmas tree will come pick berries.”

Cherie says, “We want people to be satisfied and say, ‘These are the sweetest strawberries we’ve ever had, and that was a great place.’”

The Appersons like to include other farms in their business. They work closely with Kelrae Farm. “We sell their produce here and they sell our berries there,” Cherie says.

The family fishes from their boat in the York River and enjoys visiting the Outer Banks. Will and Cherie Apperson volunteer for the Warhill Marching Band’s season by pulling their trailer. Lottie is in the band’s Color Guard. Will is also a lifetime member of the local volunteer fire department.

“We’re just very humbled by our customers and what people think of the farm,” Will says. “We get bigger every year and always have plans in the works for future growth.” **NDN**

MONICA MOYER



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

MARKET BUZZ

By Ben Mackin

Just as the sun begins to rise on most Saturday mornings, an organized bustle takes place at Merchants Square in Colonial Williamsburg. The work is just beginning for the vendors and volunteers at the Williamsburg Farmers Market as they put up the tents, unload and arrange their fresh produce, seafood, flowers and baked goods. They look forward to the morning ahead of them. For assistant market manager Monica Moyer, the sights and sounds of the market as it is being set up signals that

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she is nearing another successful end to the logistical buzz that is the Farmers Market.

"A majority of my job is done back in the office," the Dartmouth, Massachusetts native says. In her role as the assistant manager, Monica has to be a jack-of-all-trades. From clerical work to designing signage and updating social media, from helping run the market's board of directors meetings to making sure vendors and equipment are all ready to go, Monica has no shortage of tasks.

With all of her responsibilities one might suspect that Monica has been at this for quite awhile, but surprisingly she has only been on staff for about a year. "I've never worked for a farmers market before this," she says with a laugh. "I've attended several but never worked for them."

Despite being a relative newcomer to the arena, Monica says her background working in marketing has made the Farmers Market a good fit for her. Monica graduated from Fitchburg State University in northern Massachusetts with a degree in communications media. After college, Monica began working with the marketing department at Sodexo, a food

service management company. She worked as an area marketing coordinator, assisting half a dozen colleges around New England with marketing their food services. After ten years, one wedding and three children, Monica made the decision to stay home with her kids. In 2014, Monica's husband, Stephen, who also works for Sodexo, took a position at William & Mary when the company began managing the dining facilities at the university. Monica decided to get back to work and started working part-time at W&M helping with administrative tasks and anything else necessary. "I work pretty much anywhere they need me," Monica says. "You never know where I might end up on any given day. One day they might need me on one of the food trucks, or on a cash register, or back in the office."

As the summer comes, the college students go, and so does the work. That leaves Monica without much to do on campus. Not one to sit idly by, she applied for the part-time assistant job with the Farmers Market. As she got into her new role, she found that it was quite similar to the administrative roles she'd had in the past. She immediately began helping the board

of directors with preparing agendas and minutes for the monthly directors meetings, keeping financial records and making sure fees are collected from vendors, as well as keeping up with any licenses and applications they might need.

After all of the clerical work is complete, she turns her attention to the logistics of the market. "As the week goes on, I make sure we are packed up. Everything is mobile. We have several pop-up tents that we use every week. I ensure they are ready to go, as well as making sure we are charging the equipment and that the portable Wi-Fi is working."

The job lets her flex her marketing muscle, too. "I help design placards when we need those, A-frame signs and posters that we put up around Merchants Square." On the day of the market, she and the rest of the staff, the volunteers and the vendors meet at the storage locker where they keep the equipment for set up. "We have a lot of great volunteers that come out and help," Monica says of the crew. "During the year, we get a lot of help from William & Mary students, and then we have people from the area who have been volunteer-



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ing for years and years. They are the life-force of the market.”

From the storage facility, the short-distance traveling show heads for Duke of Gloucester Street. They have the set-up down to a science. From the time they arrive at Merchants Square, it only takes about an hour until the market is up and ready to go. “Once the bell rings and the market opens, I can relax a little bit and enjoy it, until we have to take it all back down again a few hours later.”

In a job that requires her to wear several different hats, Monica particularly enjoys the variety of programs they roll out for the public. This year’s 15th anniversary celebration includes a series where culinary stars from all over give lectures and showcase their talents to the Farmers Market attendees. She also enjoys programs like the Power of Produce Club, which is designed to get kids interested in local food systems through games and conversations with the farmers and other vendors at the market. Monica notes, “I really like the Two Bite Club where kids come and try two bites of foods they might not be used to. We give them tokens that they can use around the market. It’s

just really nice to see the kids try new things and have fun exploring.”

As challenging as putting on the market every week can get, Monica enjoys her role behind the scenes. But when it comes time to interact with the public, she is at her best. “I was a tour guide in college, so I love talking to people and telling them the story of this market,” she says. “I love the atmosphere the market has, people of all different ages, cultures, both locals and visitors. It really brings the community together.”

Capitalizing on that sense of community the market brings, Monica sets out to engage the visitors. Like a hostess who wants all of her guests to have a good time, she tries to get the visitors to ask vendors questions about everything from what they sell to how they came into their business. “They are all such nice people,” Monica says of the vendors. “Not only do they like telling people about their product, but they like to tell them their stories, too.”

Look for Monica Moyer buzzing around the Farmers Market, engaging both vendors and attendees, spreading the fun and discovery of a Saturday morning in Merchants Square. **NDN**

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MICKEY WHALEN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Gifts of Nature

By Linda Landreth Phelps

“Fifteen years ago, when the Williamsburg Farmers Market first started, my family was there among the very first vendors,” Michele “Mickey” Whalen recalls. “My mother, Violet Vogel, and my younger brother, Wally, had been growing and selling plants from their

yard for years, but this new venue meant an opportunity to get serious about it.” Their business enterprise, Gifts of Nature, and ten other vendors gathered in Merchants Square under the organization of Libby Oliver. “Libby is an absolute doll,” Mickey says, “and so

great to work with. Now Tracey Herner has taken over, and she is full of ideas to expand the market.” Since its inception, vendors have increased to number as many as 40 booths at the height of the season.

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ing business at the market is an optional, centralized method of payment using tokens in exchange for cash, credit, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, ensuring that everyone has access to fresh vegetables and healthy foods.

The market season, originally spring to fall, has been extended, and now is in operation for at least one Saturday in every month but January. To be eligible to sell at Williamsburg Farmers Market, you must either grow or make your own products. Gifts of Nature doesn't feature edibles, but the plants and flowers grown on their home's three-plus acres certainly qualify as "eye candy," and definitely feeds the soul.

Their floral menu will vary according to the season. "We had a Valentine's market in February," Mickey recalls. Pots of tulips and daffodils, or basically anything that can be grown from a bulb, start the cycle. "We order the bulbs and plant them, carefully timing them to be ready for the spring markets. Next up are the lilies, then come summer plants, and of those, coleus

are my favorite." Mickey tells all her customers that coleus are a great bargain; not only are the various types of colorful leaves appealing to the eye, they're also easy to reproduce. "Trim your plants and take the cuttings and root them in a glass of water, then plant them in soil. Where you've cut, two stalks sprout, and the original plants get fuller. That's a perfect example of our name: Gifts of Nature."

In the fall season, they purchase pumpkins from Allen's Farm, another market vendor, and creatively decorate them with paint to resell, which brother Wally especially loves doing. Winter is the time for wreaths and swags. "We hand-cut branches from different types of evergreens and bundle them together. People use them as they are or take them home to decorate. They're a quick seller at \$5.00 apiece; we can't make them fast enough!"

This retail undertaking was driven by Mickey's brother's lifelong passion. "Wally is autistic and was born totally deaf," Mickey says. "He's a joy, and our family thinks of him as our gift of nature. Our mother wisely let him follow

his interests wherever they led, so Wally's two abiding fascinations are growing plants and breeding pet geckos...which is not easy, by the way," she says with a smile.

Wally, now in his 60s, never learned American Sign Language (ASL). When he attended the New York School for the Deaf, their policy at the time was to mainstream deaf children by teaching them to speak. Children were forbidden the use of their hands, which didn't work well for those with autism. By the time educators decided to teach Wally ASL, he preferred his own method of communication, an intuitive pantomime which functions quite well since most hearing people are not fluent in ASL. Working together as a team, the family makes a success of life and a business which they totally enjoy.

Mickey commuted back and forth regularly from their native New York to lend a hand when Violet and Wally relocated to Williamsburg in 2001. "Mom bought a house in Quaker Estates, and Wally immediately started calling on his new neighbors to give them his unsolic-

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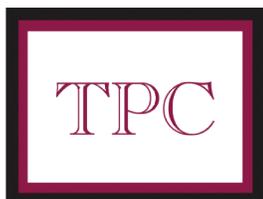
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ited advice about the care of plants,” Mickey remembers with a chuckle. One couple had a greenhouse, and worked out a mutually beneficial arrangement that Wally would have the use of it in exchange for caring for their yard. Five years later, Violet got a phone call. “Your son is telling us you’re buying our house,” the neighbor who had just put it on the market said with a laugh. Wally got his way, and the greenhouse and acreage now enjoy Wally’s single-minded, focused devotion. “We don’t have a garden, we have pots!” Mickey says. “Up and down the driveway we have pots, and when there’s a cold snap coming, we bring them all in the house.”

Three years ago, Mickey moved permanently to Williamsburg, taking over full responsibility for Wally in order to allow their mother to retire. Having reached the age of 92 this year, Violet has earned her rest.

Mickey’s three grown children and husband remain closely connected. “This arrangement wouldn’t work for everyone, but it keeps our marriage fresh because we’re always happy to

see each other when he visits,” Mickey says. “Lately he’s been talking about leaving Queens for someplace warmer, so I asked him if he wanted to move to Virginia. He said no, he was thinking of Belize! We’re scuba divers, though I don’t know how to swim, so that would be fun.”

Since making Williamsburg her home, Mickey has brought new ideas to the business. “We were barely breaking even, not really charging for our labor,” she says. “So I’m making changes and adding new products, such as my Cups of Nature.” Mickey plants individual cup and saucers with cuttings, and she’s finding them to be popular items at the market.

“Williamsburg Farmers Market is wonderfully special because you’ve got three distinct groups who come,” Mickey explains. “First are the locals, the regular customers who you see every week and who become friends. Then you’ll get interesting tourists from everywhere on earth. The college is right next door, so the students come, too.”

Its diversity, location, and aesthetic appeal

helped win our local market statewide recognition, according to Mickey. “We won an award for Best in Virginia two years ago, and we’re always neck-and-neck for first place with another market,” she says with understandable pride.

Coming from the north, Mickey says she finds this area to be different in many wonderful ways. “I love Virginia. It’s so green! Here the people are warm and friendly. They talk to each other and look one another in the eye. I’m a yakker, and I like that.”

Mickey Whalen plans to be around for many more anniversaries of Williamsburg Farmers Market. “I’ll be doing this forever,” she promises. “I learn new things every day about plants and customers. It’s like a parade, being in the booth. I adore watching the children go by, and the dogs...so many different breeds. We provide a water bowl and dog biscuits for them. The only time we’ve missed in fifteen years was when the Farmers Market was canceled due to a hurricane,” Mickey says with pride and a big smile. NDN

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A MARKET FOR THE COMMUNITY

By Lillian Stevens

On any given Saturday morning between spring and fall, some 1000 to 1500 people will walk through the award-winning Williamsburg Farmers Market. Tina Taverna has volunteered at the market for 14 out of the 15 years it has been in existence.

“I think that one of the best things about the Farmers Market is that it brings the community together,” Tina says.

Located in Merchants Square on Duke of Gloucester Street, the popular market features over 40 vendors with products ranging from fruits and vegetables to flowers and artisan chocolate, cheese, meats, honey, baked goods, peanuts and even handmade soaps. Everything is Virginia grown.

Tina works at the information booth, answering questions and generally pointing people in the right direction. She also enjoys



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

walking around and greeting the vendors.

Her shift starts each Saturday morning at 8 o'clock sharp.

“Sure, sometimes I’m tired and don’t feel like rolling out of bed,” she says. “Sometimes the weather forecast is for 100+ degrees or rain. But every time I get down there, it’s just so great. It’s about people coming to shop and connect with others on a Saturday morning.”

The weekly market attracts a diverse follow-

ing. There are young families, retirees, students from William & Mary, and tourists. “There are so many different questions that come our way, whether it’s someone looking for the nearest ATM or a person looking for a particular kind of mushroom.”

Over the past 15 years, there have been two market managers. From 2002-2013, Libby Oliver lent her expertise and experience to the Williamsburg Farmers Market.

When Libby retired in 2013, Tracy Herner took on the role.

“Tracy brings so much energy and enthusiasm to the market,” Tina says. “She is passionate about serving all members of our diverse community. She really engages the children, too, with programs like the Power of Produce (POP) club, which provides a fun opportunity for children to engage directly with farmers. The children also participate in educational

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games and demonstrations. POP Club kids receive vouchers to spend at the market, allowing them to make their own shopping decisions.

“POP runs from the end of May through summer and really brings the children in,” Tina says.

Aside from the buying and selling of wonderful local products, there’s also an atmosphere that is not unlike a block party.

“Each week, the music is phenomenal,” Tina says. “Whether we have someone playing a guitar or a vocalist singing a song. It makes the market just come alive.

The chef’s tent is also very popular, and Tina is thrilled about a particular chef demo that will take place on Saturday, July 8. As part of its 15th Anniversary, Chef Jerome Grant of the National Museum of African American History and Culture will be the featured chef.

“I actually got to meet Chef Grant in Washington, D.C.,” she says. “And that was so special. In fact, our meeting was delayed when he received a phone call about a cooking demo for the Today show. It was so exciting to meet him and talk with him about our Williamsburg market.”

On July 7, there will be a ‘Conversations with Jerome’ event at the Williamsburg Library, followed by a cooking demo at the Farmers Market on Saturday, July 8. If a celebrity chef at the local chef’s tent sounds unexpected, Tina has learned to sometimes expect the unexpected.

“One Saturday morning about four years ago, I showed up as usual at 8:00 a.m. to volunteer,” she says. “I had no idea what was in store for all those attending the market on that morning. As I was selling one of our market bags to a patron, I heard the sound of someone playing a violin.”

Knowing that there is always music at the market, she didn’t pay much attention - at first. “Then, I heard another violin, and another. Suddenly, I saw a large number of students gathering in a circle in front of the information booth and they all had string instruments. I then realized this was going to be a ‘flash mob’ and before you knew it, there were all these students playing their instruments.”

The string band was from one of the local high schools.

“Thanks to them, we experienced a morning at the market that I will never forget,” Tina

says.

This, however, was not her first flash mob in Colonial Williamsburg.

“I was in CW one hot summer’s day when 400 members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir appeared in the crowds on Duke of Gloucester Street. They were dressed in regular clothing, so we didn’t know who they were at first. Then, they started singing, and the sounds were so incredible. We all just stood in amazement as we heard the choir singing. That was truly another day to remember in CW.”

Tina has fond memories of the Williamsburg Farmers Market over the years, and traces her first visits back to 2002.

“Our daughter Jessica was in her last year of law school at William & Mary,” she says. “So sometimes we’d be in town on Saturdays.”

A year later, Tina and her husband decided to build a home in Williamsburg where they would eventually retire. The couple has lived all over the world, but was living in Northern Virginia before moving to Williamsburg.

“We chose Williamsburg because it’s near NOVA where we still have a lot of friends,” she says.

Early on, Tina set about getting acquainted



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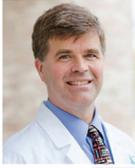
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“We were building a home in Fords Colony, and Jim was busy with the contractors,” she says. “So, every Saturday morning, I’d visit the Farmers Market. I didn’t know anyone here at all, so I’d walk around downtown. One of the first things I did was get my Good Neighbor pass from CW.”

Tina quickly familiarized herself with Duke of Gloucester Street, as well as the other streets in the Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg. “I learned CW inside out, even before I started volunteering at the market. I didn’t realize at the time just how beneficial knowledge would later be.”

One Saturday morning as Tina was walking downtown, she decided to stop and introduce herself to Libby Oliver, the market manager at that time.

“It was a match made in heaven!”

Tina has loved watching the market grow in so many different ways over time, and she particularly enjoys talking to the vendors. “You learn so many things from the vendors and that’s really special.”

Market Manager Tracy Herner is delighted

to have such a loyal, steadfast volunteer.

“I’ve known Tina since 2011,” Tracy says. “She has been such an asset as a volunteer for the market on Saturday mornings. Tina is always willing to lend a hand with a smile on her face!”

Perhaps that sense of community comes from having grown up in a small Massachusetts town herself. Once she was grown, though, she chose to spread her wings in the big city. After graduation from high school, Tina and a close friend moved to Boston. The two quickly found jobs as medical secretaries.

“It was a big step, living in Boston, and an amazing experience,” she remembers. “Although I must admit that my mom and dad weren’t too thrilled because I was living there during the era of the Boston Strangler.”

In the early 1960s, the so-called Boston Strangler murdered over a dozen women in the Boston area. While Tina was certainly cautious, she wasn’t so fearful that she ran back home to Mendon.

“I had to experience being on my own,” she says. “And I loved the city!”

She lived in Boston for seven years, and it was there where she met the man she would

eventually marry.

“Jim was a salesman from New York,” she says. “We were married in 1969. In the late 1980s, during Jim’s career with Mobil Oil, we actually lived in Saudi Arabia for three years.” The couple has three daughters, one son and 12 grandchildren (one of which is expected in June).

The family has lived and traveled all over the world, so it’s no surprise to learn that Tina has built her own career as a travel agent. She’s an outside agent working under the umbrella of the Travel Corner. Her hours are flexible to allow ample time for family and her volunteer work at the market.

“Taking care of grandchildren is the priority for sure,” Tina says. “Of our four children, three have settled nearby, so I’m happy. We have been blessed.”

Over the years, no matter where they were living, Tina always made it a point to find a farmers market.

“The Saudi markets were fabulous,” she says. “I’d go buy the figs and the fruit, but it was just a great way to meet people.” For Tina Taverna, that’s the draw, engaging people and fostering that sense of community. NDN



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MOLLY BERNICE SLATER



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HANDMADE WREATHS FOR GENERATIONS

By Narielle Living

The Slater family is a warm, generous group of people who can be found selling wreaths at the Williamsburg Farmers Market. They have been working together for generations, creating not just wreaths for the holidays but giving

people memories they can carry for a lifetime. Mollie Bernice Slater (Mollie Bernice), the mother of the Slater family, says, “We have so many people who totally depend on us for their Christmas wreath. It’s part of their tradi-

tion, and if we don’t do it then we’ve ruined Christmas.”

The business began in 1917 with Edward Slater. He was 17 years old and a hard worker. Mollie Bernice still has documents that tell of

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his beginnings. “They called it truck farming,” she says. “He went down to Duke of Gloucester Street the summer he was 17 and took a load of vegetables to sell.” The paperwork indicates “he did right good,” and in 1917 that was high praise.

According to Mollie Bernice, at that time Edward claimed a spot in what is now across the street from the ticket office. Today, Mollie Bernice and her family set up for the Farmers Market in almost the same location. “We are right across the street from his spot, across from Barnes & Noble,” she says. “My father-in-law is ecstatic because that’s where his family started.”

In 1977 Albert and Betty Slater, the next generation, took over the business. At that time, a farmers’ market was located on the site of the former A&P grocery store. Once that location closed, the family needed to find a new place to sell their products.

“When they closed the farmers’ market at the A&P everybody was dispersed, and nobody could sell in the city of Williamsburg.” Being resourceful, Albert approached Todd Smith of Whitley’s Peanuts and asked if he could set up outside his business. “Todd told him yes, you could use my corner. They’re a family business and were tickled to let another family business use their lot. He’s always been so good to us.” Although the farmers’ market had been disbanded and selling wares outside was not allowed at that time, the city of Williamsburg granted an exception for the Slater family because they had been doing this since 1917 and were “grandfathered.”

The Slaters are a close-knit family. According to Mollie Melissa, daughter of Mollie Bernice, “We don’t just do wreaths together. We tractor pull together, we farm together, we do everything together.” Sometimes all that togetherness can cause bickering, but arguments don’t last. “We don’t stay mad at each other,” Mollie Bernice says.

Customers return year after year to get their wreaths, and the Slaters usually have a personal connection to the families. “I have a customer, and for years she would call and order five pounds of boxwood,” Mollie Bernice says. “She would use it to make things with her daughters. I would always have this for her, and her husband would come to get it. He was a really nice fellow.” According to Mollie Bernice, her conversation with the husband was the same each year. “I would say, what are those girls up to, buddy? And he would say, well you know them, they’ve got to have that boxwood and get it straight at the house.” Two years ago the customer called, but Mollie Bernice did not have any boxwood available. Her source had had a fire, and the English boxwoods had been scorched. “She said to do whatever I could, because her husband had Alzheimer’s and the doctor didn’t think he had much longer to live.”

Mollie Bernice was determined to get the boxwood to her customer. She went outside to see what she had in her yard when she discovered a large trash bag. Inside was English boxwood, which her husband had picked up at another location. “I said thank you God. We had it ready for them the next morning. They came to the market, and he was in a wheelchair. He looked right at me and said what are you doing, girl? I asked him if he was going to decorate the boxwood today, and he said you know these girls have got to have it so they can have Christmas.



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His wife stood there with tears going down her face, because he didn't know anybody, but he knew my voice. This was a conversation we'd been having for years."

Mollie Bernice is grateful she was able to help the family during what was to be his final Christmas.

Everybody in the family has a role in the business. Mollie Melissa's husband, Adam, is the banker and keeps the finances organized; Mollie Bernice's husband, Jim, collects, carries items and loads the trailer; Mollie Bernice's son, Steven, takes credit cards and carries products for the customers. "He also makes some of the most beautiful magnolia wreaths ever."

Mollie Melissa has played a big role in the family business. As a child she was home schooled, and her mother enrolled her in interior design and floral design classes. She too has a natural talent for creating beautiful wreaths as well as managing aspects of the family business. When she was 11 years old she and her mother began taking over the business from her grandparents. Mollie Bernice says of her daughter, "She is a force of nature to deal with. At that age, she started managing my women. We had ladies work for me, and they would work in the daytime and she would run them and I would sell on the market."

Mollie Melissa adds, "I would make them drive me to go get stuff, tell them how to get there."

"She'd go pick up stuff, they'd go wherever I needed them," Mollie Bernice says. "Mollie, she could run people in the military."

Mollie Bernice doesn't just sell wreaths to her customers, she talks to them to find out exactly what they need. She says that people don't often realize that it's not a matter of simply sticking a wreath on your front door. You also have to consider the door, the house and the placement of the wreath. "When I'm talking to folks, they're usually looking at the wreath and asking questions." She asks about door color, shading and the presence of storm doors with glass or screens. "When the sun hits the glass on a storm door it heats up to about 145 degrees. The wreath won't last because you're smoking it. So this year we used magnolia leaves that are dyed and dried in glycerin. They form the outside, then there's different dry material on it. Your stuff is already dead because you've cut it but it needs to be treated. I started doing these for folks who put it between the storm doors, and they're very thin. I will stand there with you and make sure you buy the correct thing. I don't want to sell you something you can't use."

Mollie Bernice has a philosophy of family that she puts into practice every day. "Tell your children 'I need you to help me.' I always said that to my children, I need you, I need you to help me, so they knew they were needed and part of the solution instead of the problem. So many people treat their kids as if they are the problem, but my kids were part of the solution. Even when my son, Steven, would not make a wreath, he cooked for us. He's an excellent cook. Everybody has a talent, so you should find what your kids' talents are and really use that. Show them how that could be part of helping the family. Everybody has a talent, and you have to use it to the benefit of the family. In doing the Christmas wreaths we've found that everybody has talents, and you have to find out what they are and use them." NDN



Creative GARDENS

By Brandy Centolanza

For the past six years, Teresa Bennett, owner of the home and garden décor business, Gardens & Accessories by Teresa, has turned out on Saturday mornings for the Williamsburg Farmers Market. Her favorite part of the market is interacting with her customers.

“I enjoy talking to people, whether they buy anything or not,” Teresa says. “There are a number of people who’ve become friends through the Williamsburg Farmers Market. There are also a number of dogs who come visit me each week. I enjoy the conversations and the community aspect of the market. If I don’t see someone come by after a month or so, I start to worry about them. It’s nice to have people stop by to buy a plant or topiary

to add to their garden or stop by just to chat.”

Her business, which she operates from her home, specializes in wire art topiaries, plants, and other products. A love and appreciation for nature has long been a part of Teresa's life.

“Gardening is something I've always enjoyed,” Teresa says.

She grew up in the countryside near Roanoke, Virginia, and spent most of her time as a child helping both sets of grandparents tend to their farms and gardens. When Teresa and her family moved to southeast Virginia 23 years ago, she and her husband, Bob, raised two children in York County. Teresa was excited to have enough land to grow her own garden. Yearning to learn as much as she could about gardening, Teresa signed on for the York/Poquoson Master Gardeners program back in 2001.

“I found it interesting that the climate was so different here, and the challenges were different than other places I've lived,” Teresa says. “I thought by being a Master Gardener I could find out more about what grew best here. I also wanted to do it because I wanted to grow pretty flowers.”

Teresa spent the next seven years volunteering with the children's gardening club at Seaford Elementary School. She taught students in third through fifth grade about the environment and habitat gardens.

“I enjoyed all the questions they would ask,” she says. “Every week, there would be questions that I would not know the answer to, so I would have to do some research. I also learned a lot that way. Most of the questions were about bugs or turtles or snakes, and that led to more of an awareness for me about my environment.”

Teresa later took on a part-time job at a small local nursery where she gained more knowledge about gardening as well as developed an interest in topiaries.

“I needed to make some money to support my plant and dog habit,” Teresa says with a laugh. Her family includes four standard poodles, Blackjack, Baron, Storm and Molly.

“They are my garden companions.”

In 2010, when the nursery went out of business, Teresa bought her employers' stock of topiaries and decided to start her own company. Her business carries 130 different styles of wire art topiaries, ranging from bugs and

birds to garden, farm, and other more exotic animals.

“We have everything from Loch Ness monsters to giraffes,” she says. The more popular topiaries are bunnies, turtles, frogs and dogs. Teresa showcases the standard poodle topiaries in her own yard. There are more than two dozen show dog topiaries available on her website.

“I really like the dog topiaries,” she says. “What is unique about them is that they are very accurate to that particular breed of dog.”

When Teresa first launched her business, she started out selling the topiaries at dog shows across the country. “Dog shows are very similar to farmers markets, just with more dogs,” Teresa points out. “I learned a lot about the different breeds of dogs. I've travelled all over for the dog shows: Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and some shows in the Washington D.C. area. It was worthwhile.”

Business further boomed for Teresa after one of the local newspapers wrote an article about her topiary collection. “I started getting phone calls from all over the country for orders,” she says. “I didn't even have my website up and running yet. It was a quick learning curve.”

Teresa began selling her merchandise locally first at the Yorktown Market Days farmers market each Saturday. Later, she secured a spot with the Williamsburg Farmers Market.

“I sold out of everything I brought with me during my first market in Williamsburg.”

The topiaries are a top seller at the market. Customers find unique ways to use topiaries beyond décor for the garden. One buyer painted two sitting German shepherd topiaries black and used them as an entrance for a party, while another patron bought a life-sized giraffe topiary for an event.

“A lot of topiaries have been used in weddings,” Teresa says. “Someone bought a poodle topiary for use at a funeral. Pet-friendly apartment complexes also like to use them outside by their entrances. I learn something new from my customers all the time. I just love their imagination.”

In addition to the topiaries, she sells her own homemade containers as well as a variety of plants, including sedums, hen and chick succulents, and tender succulents.

“Tender succulents have really grown in popularity over the last couple of years. I also

do air plants. I am also always looking for unusual containers to put my plants in. I couldn't find what I liked, so I started making my own containers.”

Beyond the Williamsburg Farmers Market, Teresa travels across the state for plant sales at various botanical gardens. Her busiest time of year at the market is early spring through early summer. This season, she hopes to add more annual plants to her collection, such as amaranths and annual vines like purple hyacinth bean vines and moon flowers. She'll also be at the market over the holiday season selling wreaths and other arrangements.

“I like plants that are unique, that you don't normally find anywhere else,” she says.

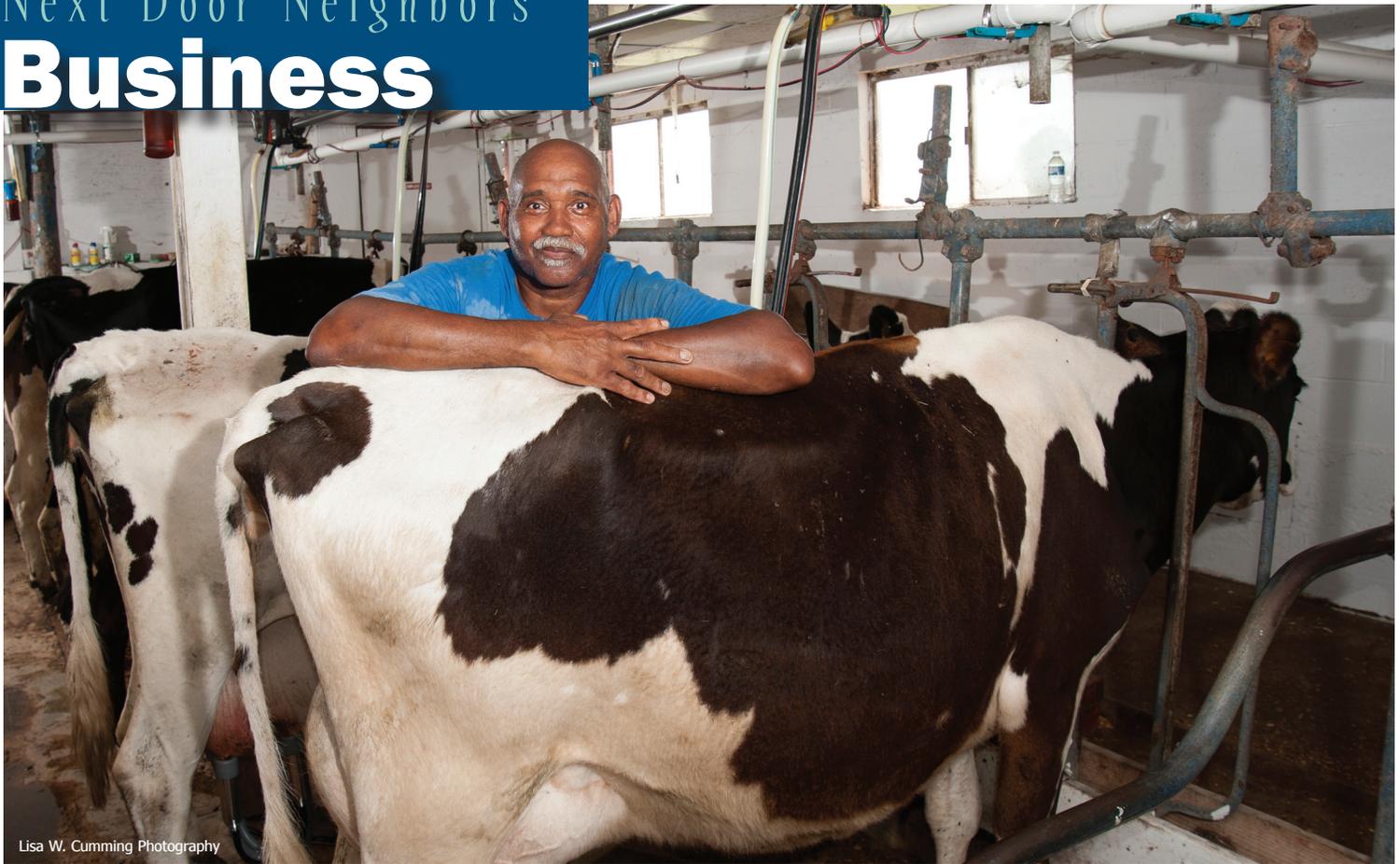
Not everything she grows at home is for business. She also enjoys tinkering in her backyard for pleasure on a daily basis. Her personal garden has banana plants, elephant ear plants, and giant split leaf philodendrons.

“I like tropical plants, anything unusual or different. I like gardening because I like watching things grow and seeing the change in the plants each season. Watching plants grow and develop is very satisfying for me.”

In addition to minding her gardening and designing topiaries, she also cares for her 93-year-old mother, leaving little time for anything else. Her husband and two daughters help Teresa with the business whenever they can, but it's mostly Teresa at the helm, which suits her just fine. “I enjoy the independence of this business,” she says.

Teresa may eventually consider a store front, but for now, she is focused on continuing to grow her online presence and spending each week at the Williamsburg Farmers Market, where she is not only a merchant, but also a patron. She feels farmers markets are special places where people can support small businesses and their local economy while learning how to make healthier food choices.

“Everything tastes so much better when it is fresh,” Teresa says. “We tend to forget that. Everyone knows what a fresh tomato versus a store-bought tomato is like, but it is also the same for things like broccoli and fresh greens and lettuces. It's just so much better. The Farmers Market has given me a greater appreciation for organically grown, locally-sourced ingredients and products. That appeals to my interest in the environment.” NDN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

A Beautiful Day

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Joel Smith starts his day at 5:30 a.m. each morning. During this time of year, he watches the sunrise over the James River as he heads to the barn to milk the cows. His father, Marion O'Connell "Okie" Smith, began farming the land that abuts the Colonial Parkway in the mid-1930s.

"He started the dairy farm," Joel says. "We all grew up loving the farm. Twelve of us kids. We all did our chores, every day. Milking cows is a seven days a week, 365 days a year, job."

He explains that his chores have mostly centered on the dairy cows since he was 12 years

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old. "What made me like milking the cows was when we were out in the hay fields, it was so hot and the May flies were so bad. My father asked who wanted to go in and milk the cows. I said I would and took off running for the barn. Getting away from the hay field was my main motivation," he adds with a laugh.

The summer heat doesn't bother Joel much anymore. "I'm an outside person. Doing my lawn service and working on the dairy farm, then I go to work at night at Cracker Barrel; it's something different to do. It breaks up the monotony."

His early mornings include chores around the farm, milking the cows and feeding the young calves. "You want to milk your cows at the same time each day. Keep them in a routine. Small farmers have to work off the farm to survive. The farm doesn't bring in the money needed to pay expenses. I work small jobs so I can purchase feed and do all the stuff I need to do for [the] animals."

The farm continues to be a family business, heading into the fourth generation. "I had two of my brothers doing the crops, Howard and

Paul. My brother, Peter, and I and my nephews, we do the milking. Some of my nephews drive tractor-trailers and then help on the weekends. It's about six to eight of us helping with the cows. My nephews have children that are coming now and learning about the farm."

His milking routine includes around 18 cows out of a herd of 30. "We're a smaller dairy farm. We'd like the herd to be about 60. It takes time. We have about 11 young ones growing up. Eventually, I'll be milking them, too. It takes patience to grow a herd." He raises the young calves to recognize and trust him. "Raising them yourself, you can be proud of what you have done and see them raised from babies. They get to know me as a person. I had five that I just started milking, raised from babies. I never had a problem with any of them, not wild or anything. They come in, nice and calm, because they are used to me."

The farm has cows of all ages and cycles of productiveness. "We keep our cows as long as we can. I believe in doing that. A salesman who sold us cows said about my father: 'If every dairy farmer took care of his cows like Mr.

Smith and his boys, I'd be out of business.' We don't push them to produce. A lot of big farms push their cows to be productive. We take care of them and let them live their life as long as possible."

On his wall, he keeps a picture of a cow called Whitey, a mother of many calves and producer of many pounds of milk for the farm. "When she got so old she couldn't produce milk anymore, we let her hang out in the field. We wanted her to live out her last days here with us. We weren't going to send her off to the market."

However, the animals aren't pets. Joel and his family know farm life is to feed the family and their neighbors, but they do appreciate the work of their livestock. The Smith's dairy farm supplies milk to a distributor that delivers it to local processors. "Sometimes the milk goes to Pet in Norfolk," Joel explains, "sometimes to Richmond, sometimes to Marva Maid. That distributor takes it where it's needed." From the processors, the milk goes to the retailers.

"With the cows I'm milking right now, I'm putting out about eleven hundred pounds ev-

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ery other day. That's sixteen cows. The truck comes every two days to pick it up. I don't push my cows. I'm thankful for what they can do."

He says some farms over feed their cows. "That burns a cow out. Their body wears out. Just like a person that eats and eats, they get obese. You don't want a fat cow. A fat cow doesn't produce well."

Since Joel works for himself, he can juggle his jobs to fit his farm schedule. "I can go out and cut a yard then come home and get my nap before going out to milk again. Then I go to work at Cracker Barrel. I'm about taking care of myself and taking care of business."

His lawn work comes to him from word-of-mouth. He started years ago helping out his neighbors and to raise extra funds for the farm. "I cut a friend's yard when he goes on vacation or needs me to." Then, while he was there, he helped out an elderly neighbor who needed his lawn trimmed. "I help the widows by cutting their grass. I'll cut their yard for whatever they can afford. I'll receive my blessing down the road. That person will tell another that I

helped them out when they were in need. 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.' I take that and go with it."

In the evenings, Joel works at Cracker Barrel. "I enjoy it. One district manager came in, opened the bread drawer and looked at the biscuits. He said, 'Joel was working tonight.' I have a very distinctive way of making the biscuits. Even the wait staff comes back to the kitchen to see if my biscuits are ready yet. It's something if people enjoy your food; that's all you want. It's good to be able to do something more than working the farm. If I sit around after working the farm, I would get fat! I need to burn off my energy. I like working at Cracker Barrel. Good people there, and it's fun."

As if his jobs don't keep him active enough, Joel helps a local widow every other week, vacuuming her house. "She says if I don't do it, it won't get done." He adds that his wife stays after him to run the vacuum at their house.

"We've been married for 44 years. My wife, Alice, and I have five kids and nine grandchildren. Alice was from New York. Our church is part of seven churches that Elder Michaux es-

tablished. Alice was in a church in New York. We used to go up every month to that church. That's when I first saw her. From there, I began to talk to her and court her. After five years of courting, we married in 1973. She learned to love the farm, but she likes to go back to New York from time to time."

Joel works hard and takes care of his neighbors. "I treat my neighbors the way I want to be treated. 'Love my neighbor as myself.' To me, that goes a long way. Whatever you do is going to follow you. That to me makes the best day ever. I enjoy taking care of the farm. Getting up and smelling that fresh air in the morning, I love seeing the new day. I say, 'Thank God, it's a beautiful day.' I love seeing the sun come up when there's a dark cloud in the east. The light comes through in beautiful colors."

After a day of working and helping his community, Joel Smith settles on his front porch to the cool breeze from the James River. "The Bible says, 'The sleep of a laborer is sweet.' People have many different callings in life. This is mine." NDN



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Corey Miller Photography

For the *Love* of Horses

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“I was on a horse before I started walking. I’ve always been around horses. My mom would put me in a Pack-n-Play and ride around me,” Kayleigh Hirsh explains. Kayleigh trains riders and horses to compete in equestrian events around the region at Carlton Farms Stables off of Greensprings Road.

Kayleigh grew up in Lenexa. “I’m a third generation horseman. My mother and my grandmother have always ridden and worked with horses. My grandfather was a farrier. As soon as I could sit up, I was sitting on a horse. By two years old, I would disappear at my grandmother’s house on Forge Road to ride

the pony.”

The pony’s name was Nippy because she used to bite people. Kayleigh would stack milk crates then shimmy up the pony’s neck to sit on her while she grazed. Apparently, Nippy didn’t mind. “My grandmother had lost sight of me, and that’s where she found me. The

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pony was great with me. She was my best friend until the day she died.”

Riding lessons began for Kayleigh at the age of five. “I was doing a lot of riding at different barns. When I was eleven, I got my horse, Country. I still have her.” She began entering riding competitions each weekend, up and down the east coast. For her trainer, Kayleigh would clean stalls and care for the horses at the barn to barter for her riding lessons and to board Country.

“Country was given to me by my aunt, who had been using her to breed. She wasn’t going to breed her anymore, so she brought her to me. I took her to that barn, and I spent several years working and riding at that barn.”

Before she graduated from school, she had been scouted to go train for a farm in South Carolina. She did well in upstate South Carolina until she took a fall that resulted in surgery and an extended recovery period. “I had to come back to Virginia,” she says. “The problem with horse training is that if you can’t ride, there is no source of income.”

She took a break, got married, and then started training again. “I hadn’t planned to get as big as this facility, but it’s been happening.” Carlton Farms has 56 stalls for boarding, a 16,000 square feet indoor arena, a lit outdoor ring and a larger ring used for lessons and shows. “Up until February, I was in ten stalls before moving into Carlton Farms in mid-March. This is so much bigger. This is something I always wanted to do.” The size of the facility allows Kayleigh to concentrate more on training and less on traveling to events for her own competitions. “It’s good to try a little bit of a calmer life, not so much travel,” she says. “I like the kids,” she says of ramping up her training career. “I like being able to share these memories, the memories that I had as a kid. Teaching them how to be good winners and good losers and about the life lessons that come out of this, lessons that will carry them through with new confidence in themselves. That’s why I wanted to get back into training.”

She begins teaching students to learn to ride as early as five years old. “My son just turned 6, and he started showing last year. Being the mom of a small child, I like getting the small ones started.”

New riders start on a lunge line. “A lunge line is a long lead,” she explains. “We start working them in a circle until they get their balance and feel comfortable on a horse. Then we build it up until they are eventually released into the big pen.”

Some kids are released after two or three lessons. Others may take a year on the lunge line. “It depends on the child,” Kayleigh says. “We revolve our program around each and every kid because each kid is so different. My son is still on a lunge line in lessons. He’s been on a horse since he could sit up, just like I did. I’ve had kids walk in, and it’s like they were made for it – very physically balanced.”

Equestrian sports consist of such activities in local shows as “pleasure” riding (no jumping) and “hunter” riding that includes jumping obstacles. Styles include English and Western.

“We do both English and Western here,” Kayleigh says. “Western, the saddle is completely different. Most saddles people see are English saddles, smaller with more contact with the horse. Western saddles are the big ones with a saddle horn on the front that most people have seen in John Wayne movies.”

She will train riders on Western Pleasure. “You’ll see those in shows.



“My biggest strength is being able to connect with patients and make them feel comfortable, which helps develop a doctor-patient bond. This allows me to solve their problems and make their lives better.” Dr. Evans

Dr. Evans attended the Southern California College of Optometry for four years, graduating with a Doctor of Optometry in 2013. His clinical training included rotations at Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma, George E. Wahlen Virginia Medical Center in Salt Lake City and Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland at the Naval Hospital. It was here that Dr. Evans was challenged with the fitting of complex post surgical corneas with specialty contact lenses an area he takes great interest in to this day.

“At the Naval Hospital, I had the privilege of working with patients who came from Afghanistan suffering with Traumatic Brain Injuries. Often they were dealing with multiple visual impairments. Weeding thru these issues and solving their visual problems, was really gratifying.” For the past four years Dr. Evans has worked in an ophthalmology practice in Fredericksburg, VA treating pre and post operative care of cataracts, glaucoma, cornea and refractive surgery.

“I really enjoy working with children as well. They are so much fun. Having a 7 year old son has really given me the ability and skill set to relate to them.” Dr. Evans

Dr. Evans joins Eye Center of Virginia with great aspiration, as he will be a decision maker in the delivery of patient care. He looks forward to the betterment of the practice by sharing his ideas and experiences.

“Dr. Schultz and I come from similar backgrounds and medical practices. We both worked in surgical practices that handled and managed a wide range of complex ocular diseases and conditions. We are also both well versed in treating post-surgical patients.” Dr. Evans

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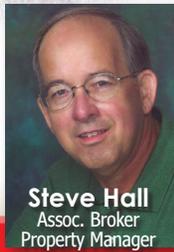
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The saddles are blinged out. They are the Rolls-Royces and Mercedes-Benz of the horse world. They are unmistakable. Western is where all the flash comes in. People wear the blinged out shirts and patterned saddle pads.”

The English riders are a bit more subdued in appearance at the shows. “The English riders look like they fell straight out of the 1600s. They wear the tan pants, black boots and navy jacket. They all look the same,” she says.

“Western is flashy saddles with silver and leather tooling. Western is slower. We ride the horses one-handed. Western came from the cowboy era’s competitions of who could ride at a comfortable speed and still cover a lot of ground. It’s smooth and comfortable and could be done all day. That was because the cowboys had to ride so far. While there is bling and glitz, it’s a comfortable ride. Western Pleasure appeals to a lot of the adults.”

With the English Hunter/Jumper, the jumping is a big concern for beginning riders. “The ground can be hard,” she adds with a smile. “Western is safer. You aren’t bouncing around. Western would be uncomfortable jumping because you could shish kabob your body on the saddle horn!”

Kayleigh trains her students for English competitions that include jumping and ones that don’t. She matches up horses with students for the best possible combination.

The competitive events aren’t just rider and horse; they are also team building opportunities with other riders. “Six or seven kids on a team in an age bracket,” she describes. “They help each other get ready for shows. They practice together. They have someone to help them and to bond with for each age group. We even have an ‘AARP team’ for our older adults that practice together and ride together. The AARP team is 40 years old and over. I did not name them that,” she’s quick to add. “One of the clients came up with that name.”

The students learn to communicate with their horse, just as Kayleigh did with Nippy and with Country. “A good rider has to communicate with something that doesn’t talk. Definitely, the horses will give attitude. They are 1200 pound toddlers. So, it helps to build relationships with people who are into the same things you are, to share techniques and to cheer each other on. It’s cool to watch the kids interact with each other.”

Kayleigh hosts events at Carlton Farms for her neighbors to discover the beauty of riding. She posts information about the events on Facebook under her “KM Performance Horses” page.

“I do this because I love seeing the fire get lit in kids. I love seeing them learn how to be good winners and good losers. I love seeing them be good competitors and be dedicated to something. There are so many things kids can do wrong in the world now. These kids are making safe choices. I have girls who are 15 or 16 years old, and all they can think about is their horse. They are here. On Friday nights, instead of out partying, they are in the stalls, braiding their horse’s mane.”

The barn, stalls, arena, rings and fields at Carlton Farms are a safe haven. “I’ve had kids have good days and bad days at horse shows. It’s great to watch them mature mentally. They always take the first losses so hard. Their first wins are so great. Over time, they realize they are more satisfied by my opinion, as their trainer, of how they did than what the judge said,” Kayleigh Hirsh says. NDN

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LEAVING HER PRINT IN WILLIAMSBURG

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Abigail Darrin's mural towers two stories on the wall of the Culture Café. Her graphic design skills created logos for local businesses such as the Triangle Restaurant, BlackBird Bakery and DoG Street Pub. Her inspiration started years ago from seeing her grandfather's work in Colonial Williamsburg.

Abigail was born and raised in Williamsburg. Her parents and grandparents lived their lives here, as well. "My father's father and my father's grandfather were both heavily into music in the area. They both worked for William & Mary at one point," she says. "My grandfather, Lyle Briggs, owned Neece Appliance on Prince George Street, where Aroma's is today. He was really into music and taught lessons for years. That was where his passion was. My great-grandfather wrote a victory march for W&M. I know they were still using it back in the 1960s when he died. No idea what happened to it after that."

Her uncle was a painter and showed his work at various art shows. "I love that he got to do what he wanted to do. That seemed like the way life should be. He worked for my father for a while." Her father, David Briggs, like his father before him, opened an appliance business, Williamsburg Appliance. Before na-

tional chains moved in, most appliances were sold locally. After her father died, the business was sold. Her brother lives in Gloucester and has his own appliance business there, Briggs Appliance.

"My mother's father, Robert Howard, worked for Colonial Williamsburg as a carpenter. At one point, he had made all the benches around CW. He made a lot of the signs. He built many of the carriages that are still in use today. Some of them have been repaired or replaced. I know the first time the Queen came to visit he had made the carriage she rode in."

He died the same year Abigail was born, so she never got to know him. Her mother, Rebecca Howard Briggs, kept photos and news-

paper clippings of him and would point out his work around town to Abigail.

"There was a big book press sign, three-dimensional, wood books in the middle of a press in Merchants Square," Abigail explains. "We'd walk by it and my mom would say that my grandfather had made that sign. I thought it was cool to see things he had made after all the years he'd been gone."

Growing up, Abigail loved art. "Like most teenagers, I never knew exactly what I would do when I grew up. But, one night I was sitting in The Trellis restaurant. It was the night of prom. They used to have these paintings on the wall. I thought it would be so great to paint something and have it on the wall for



Corey Miller Photography

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people to see," she says.

"Now, fast-forward 16 years, I did all the artwork on the menus at The Trellis. My artwork is on every table there. When I did the Black-Bird Bakery logo and packaging and website that was a funny moment for me. That sign was in the very place where my grandfather's sign had hung. For me, I get a huge kick out of that!"

In college, she took a variety of classes. She thought about majoring in photography, but worried she could never make a living at it. Maybe she needed a side business career like her father and grandfather had with appliances, but the memories of seeing her maternal grandfather's work all around CW stayed with her. "At one point, I was taking nutrition classes," she says with a laugh. "For an elective, I took a typography class. That opened up a Pandora's Box for me of graphic design. I couldn't stop there. I fell in love with graphic design."

Photography is still her art of choice, but she also draws illustrations, designs logos and graphic elements and creates websites. "It's nice to be able to go in and do everything on a project myself – photography, graphics, the website. I don't regret giving a few years to that exploration of my interests."

She had worked in some local restaurants in her early years. While in school, she had an assignment to design an event poster. She went to Chef David Everett to see what his restaurants had coming up. If she was going to do the assignment, she wanted it to be useful. Adam Steely, at the Blue Talon, told her about an upcoming event. She created the poster and continued doing graphic design for the restaurants.

"I'm very thankful for my business relationship with David Everett. He keeps me busy with his restaurants. Since I used to work in the restaurants, it feels like working with family now."

The logos, posters, menus and labels that Abigail has created have a combination of modern components with heritage elements incorporated in them. "David really prefers that weathered, aged, vintage look to things. That's beautiful, and I have a strong appreciation for it. You don't see it that often. Other companies are going with very contemporary elements. That's fine. I can do that, too. But I do tend to work with more detail, a different look. I like that because it helps me stand out." She likes to mix unexpected qualities to her work. "With the web design, I incorporate textured images so the site doesn't look purely digital," she describes. "That's fantastic because you are on a digital device and it looks like a non-digital item."

For the Culture Café mixed media mural, she used a combination of typography, photography, hand painted and drawn images. "That was a real treat. I sit behind a desk about 75 percent of the time. I designed it all on the computer first and then went on site. I'm so used to working on the computer, that's where I feel most comfortable designing and creating. I digitally mocked-up a picture I had taken of the wall to do the design. After that, I made a grid of what to do and started on the real wall."

Unlike other artists, Abigail Darrin doesn't sign her work. Like her CW carpenter grandfather, maybe she sees her art as belonging to the business that requested it. Or did she sign it in her own way? "Only my husband, Brent, knows I do this," she confides. "Any artwork I do, I have a computer file filter I created that distresses the images. I was using paint and a lot of other things to create that. At some point, I had paint all over my hands. I stuck my thumb right in the middle of it. So, if someone were to dissect those files, my fingerprints are literally in a lot of the work I've done." NDN

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House of Mercy

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Shannon Woloszynowski, the executive director of Williamsburg House of Mercy, explains that many people are reluctant to ask for help when they don't have shelter. "Rejection," she says. "People get a lot of 'no' from others when they've asked for help before. There's a stigma. Even in the way institutions make loans to people, good credit and bad credit. There's an implication that if you have bad credit, you are a bad person." She says there's a cause and effect in all of our actions, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be able to

get around it. "Everyone has done something wrong, but that doesn't mean they're homeless. No one deserves to be homeless. There are a lot of people with alcohol problems that live in houses. There are a lot of people with substance abuse issues or mental health issues that live in homes. Those issues shouldn't equate to homelessness."

The homeless get rejected. Shannon hears their stories at House of Mercy's Harbor Day Center where people can take a shower, get a warm meal, access computers and have con-

versations with new friends. Along with the Harbor Day Center, Shannon and her team at House of Mercy provide such services as fresh food distribution, a housing office, job search assistance, financial assistance and outreach, and a diaper bank and baby care supplies.

"One lady, over the winter, her story really touched me. It's a testament to our system and how things work," Shannon describes. "She walked along Richmond Road near the Pottery on a really cold night. It was about 1:30 in the morning. A James City County officer picked

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July 11 - August 8, 2017

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her up. He was a CIT (crisis intervention team) officer. He knew of the resources available and took her to the Community of Faith Mission's winter shelter. We work closely with them. They gave her a referral card to come see us the next day. We talked to her. Her relationship had turned abusive. She had heard in Newport News that there were homeless services in Richmond, and she was walking to Richmond. I asked where she was trying to get to. Her 'best friend in the whole world' was in Texas. If she could get to Houston, her friend would take her in." Shannon was able to buy the woman a bus ticket to Houston and supply her with food for the road.

"She called me a couple of months ago. She wanted me to know that we 'saved her life'. She's a veteran, and when she moved to another city, they put her in the same type program we do here for veterans. She's living in a new apartment, has her son living with her, getting counseling about the domestic abuse she experienced here and is working a new job. She wants people to know that they need to reach out for help. If the JCC officer hadn't picked her up, if the Community of Faith Mission hadn't referred her, if we hadn't had the financial depth to give her transportation, she wouldn't be safe and with her son and working. The system worked, and we got her back to where she needed to be."

Shannon has seen what people experience on the street. She was a law enforcement officer in northern Virginia. Growing up in Newport News, Shannon became a police dispatcher in Manassas. Then for six years, she was a police officer with Fairfax County Police.

"I was injured on the job and had a service-connected disability retirement. I was young, just 29. Fairfax County offered an educational benefit."

She finished her bachelor's degree at George Washington University and her master's degree in Moral Theology at Christendom College.

"Being a police officer, I got the privilege of being with people in crisis. I found myself on the front lines of what were often the greatest joys and greatest tragedies."

When she patrolled in the early 1990s, she didn't have access to the homeless services that are available now. "As an officer, I became very familiar with the homeless. We had encampments there, particularly around the Metro Stations. I was always impressed with their network, how they took care of one another. They didn't pilfer one another's things. If something was pilfered, it was by the neighborhood kids tearing up the encampments."

Shannon's bachelor's degree is in sociology. "From a sociological standpoint, it was fascinating how they formed a group and connections, how they looked out for one another. In Fairfax County, we would get people on the street with serious mental illness. Their brain has an affliction, something there they didn't bring upon themselves or ask for. They see things differently. All of these experiences equipped me for what I'm doing today. Whether it was crisis intervention or the quasi-street counseling and social work that we did as officers, it prepared me for working at House of Mercy."

The goal of assisting the homeless changed over the years. "In the early 1990s, the plan didn't include re-housing. It was a diversion to shelter. Where can we drop you off? Everything centered on thermal shelters. What could we do with this human being? Because they would

freeze to death if we left them on the street. All of these things informed the body of knowledge I have now and the compassion for people who are really at their lowest and don't have anything. That coupled with the theology degree made this something I was drawn to."

Shannon's husband works for the federal government, and they moved often." We landed in Williamsburg because he was the resident agent in charge of ATF in Norfolk. We passed through here in the early 2000s, so coming back was like being home for us. It is a great place to raise kids. We have four. My oldest is 26 and he's with Arlington's Sheriff's Office. The middle two want to go into Secret Service. The youngest wants to be a botanist. We're a law enforcement family plus a botanist."

About five years ago, Shannon says, the focus of assisting the homeless ended when they were placed in motels. "Soon, we saw that all these families were living in motels. We helped put them there." Shannon's direction was to start a slow change, a new idea about how to assist the community. "The end game is permanent housing. With this vision, we were able to use the motels as a path to have the permanent housing conversation. This shift helped us develop the program into what it is today."

The unsheltered homeless are reclusive; they're not panhandlers. "They have a way of traveling through the woods and along the railroad tracks. They don't look like the stereotypical homeless. They look like people going down the street to work. We had a guy come in and asked to get some food. He said he was living in the woods behind a restaurant off Route 199. What? He didn't look like someone homeless. As we got to know him, he taught us about what his needs were and the needs of that community. We needed street-level outreach, like the homeless day center (The Harbor Day Center), a place that they can come to us and we can start down the path to receiving services. We offer them a warm meal, a place to rest, a place to charge their phones. We have basic supportive services like hygiene items, bus tickets, transportation, medical co-pays, work boots, work clothes. By building a relationship with the homeless, we can shift them to the housing office."

Twenty-two Williamsburg area churches from the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission helped to start and now staff the Harbor Day Center. "We have cards to hand out to people about our services and how to get to us. If people in the community want to give someone money, give them money or buy them lunch if that makes you feel better. But if you really want to help them, get them to me. I can do more for them by getting them re-housed, by making sure they are sheltered and safe, fed and getting their medications – all the things they really need. I can do more for them in this system than you can by giving someone on the street one hundred dollars. If we can get them into the system, we start to get them re-housed and figure out what their needs are."

Williamsburg has many organizations working to help the homeless, whether it's Williamsburg House of Mercy, Grove Christian Outreach Center, the Salvation Army or FISH.

"We all have the same goal," Shannon Woloszynski says. "Find an organization that you have a heart for. Support the organization with time, talent, treasure. Volunteering will blow away your stereotypes. The people coming in are the working poor. They work, sometimes two and three jobs. They are our neighbors." NDN

For more information on House of Mercy, please visit www.WilliamsburgHouseofMercy.org

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Next Door Neighbors Home



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

THE HUNT FOR TREASURE

By Greg Lilly, Editor

For 20 years, antique and collectible enthusiasts have roamed the aisles of the Williamsburg Antique Mall. First a customer, then a dealer, now the manager of the mall, Wes Taylor stresses its community and celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Wes grew up in Hanover County and graduated from Lee-Davis High School in 1976.

He joined the Navy and served until 1980.

“I always wanted to be a firefighter because my father was a firefighter for the city of Richmond,” he says. “When I got out of the Navy, they weren’t hiring. I did various jobs like construction. I finally got on with the Richmond Fire Department in 1987.” He served as a firefighter for 29 years.

Married with four children and several grandchildren, Wes retired from the fire department in May of 2016. “At that time, I had been here at the mall as a dealer, probably since 2010. I always had been into bidding and buying at auctions or hunting through yard sales. I’ve always been an avid sports collector of baseball cards, sports memorabilia

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and things like that.”

He admits that he collected more sports memorabilia than his wife, Janice, could handle. “I was turning into a hoarder rather than a collector,” he says with a laugh. “Janice said to find an outlet. In order to keep going to auctions and sales, I had to find a place to sell. I came to the Williamsburg Antique Mall and started with a booth.”

Being a firefighter, Wes worked 24 hour shifts. “So, I had days off. I started working at the antique mall two or three days a month.” He wanted to see what sold, what the trends were and how to price things to get a perspective of how the memorabilia market operated.

“I retired in May of last year. In October and November, the manager and assistant manager that had been at the antique mall for years decided it was time to retire.” Several people encouraged Wes to apply for the manager job because he knew the business, a business that is a unique retail model, and he has a passion for the place and the people involved.

He started as a manager on December 15, during the hectic Christmas rush. “Getting to know the back office systems was a challenge since I had been a vendor and not worked in the office before. But, I love a challenge.”

Another opportunity for the new manager was the 20th anniversary celebration of the antique mall. July 15th and 16th is the weekend of the celebration. Wes, the staff and the dealers plan to hold an hourly raffle for antiques and collectibles donated by the dealers. Door prizes will be awarded and food vendors and wine samples will offer a taste of local culture. A car show of antique vehicles will line the parking lots. Vendors and dealers will present specials and sales in their booths. The big event is a series of “Antiques Roadshow” type appraisals of visitors’ own treasures.

Leading up to the July celebration, Wes and the staff have made some changes at the mall. “I didn’t want to come in and make big changes since many people have been here for a long time. We’re taking baby steps.” The sound system in the mall has upbeat music to have visitors tapping their feet to 1950s and ‘60s pop and rock & roll favorites. “We just finished installing a customer lounge in back,” Wes says. “People come here with their spouses. One may love to shop and the other may not. So, we built a comfortable place for people to relax.” At the back end of aisle J, the

lounge has coffee, water, Danishes, magazines and newspapers with comfortable rocking chairs. “It gives the people who don’t want to shop, a place to hang out and relax. That’s a big hit already.” For lunch, the La Petite Tea Room offers hormone free, free range and organic or natural food and beverages.

Wes ushered the antique mall into social media. “Malls, not necessarily antique malls, are struggling across the country. People are buying on-line. We took the challenge of how we should reach the customer of today. We have a new website. We are on Facebook and Pinterest and even on a Craigslist page where our dealers can upload photos of their items. People shop differently now.” He explains that antiques are items that people usually want to see in-person, so they can pick up the item and look at it closely. “So, we have an advantage there, but we still have to reach the people.”

The store is always a surprise for the customers. “The dealers are constantly bringing in new items, selling what is here, upgrading and rotating the stock. Just because you were here a month ago, doesn’t mean you are going to find the same things. There will be completely different items. That’s the fun. This is a hunt.”

People have told Wes that they found something that they hadn’t thought about in 30 years. “They’ll say, ‘Wow. I had one of those as a kid.’ That could be from the simplest toy to a set of dishes their parents had,” he describes. “It’s not a place you can shop on-line. You have to come here to experience it.” The antique mall isn’t the type of retail market where a decision to buy can linger for long. Return a week later and the item is gone. “We’ll have customers ‘think about’ an item. I warn them if they think they want it, to make the decision now. It probably won’t be here next time. But, that’s part of the fun of it.”

The mall is made up of many small “shops” stocked by dealers. “The dealers are our neighbors, people like you and me,” Wes says. “People like me that were collectors and realized they needed to downsize their collections. People who have inherited items and aren’t sure what to do with them. For years, they’ll pay for a storage unit to keep things, but eventually decide to bring it in to make some money from selling it. Anyone can be a dealer.” Booths of different sizes line the aisles

of the mall. In the front, showcases display smaller collectibles, such as coins, jewelry, stamps, glass and porcelain.

“One thing that makes us different is that we are not a flea market,” Wes stresses. “We are antiques and collectibles. We don’t have pots and pans that people just don’t want anymore. We are collectibles and antiques and vintage items.”

The customers at the mall consist of locals and tourists. “It’s a destination for some visitors. We have the regular tourists that come in during rainy days or hot days, but then we have visitors that come just to shop for antiques around the area.”

Wes has noticed that more and more young people are buying at the mall. Recently, a young couple came in looking for antiques for their first home. With the range of prices and variety of offerings from the dealers, the couple shopped for two days and left with a van full of furniture and decorative items for their home.

“Whatever your taste is, we have it,” Wes says. “We have some dealers who have high-end antiques, while others are into collectibles or more vintage things. It’s hard to walk through this four thousand square feet mall and not find something you like.”

Back in the 1990s, people were into mass collectibles like Beanie Babies or Bradford Exchange Collectible Plates, Wes explains. “We had showcases full of them. All that crashed. People have gone back to the basics. Now, we’re back to vintage things that spur memories of childhood or quality antique items. These are decorative items that you would want to put in your house.”

A part of the 20th anniversary celebration includes taking donations to raise money for A Soldier’s Child Foundation. The foundation helps support and mentors the children of fallen soldiers, men and women who died during active duty service. “I lost my son, Jeremy,” Wes says. “He was in the Army when he died. We’re raising our grandson, Ryan. A Soldier’s Child Foundation is a great cause.”

Wes Taylor makes sure he takes time during his day to roam the aisles of the Williamsburg Antique Mall. “I work here, but I’m still a sports memorabilia collector. I never know what treasure I’ll find.” NDN

www.ASoldiersChild.org

Hey Neighbor!

Please visit

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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:

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Hey Neighbor! KARAOKE IN THE PARK

July 1, 2017

Free, 7-9 p.m. at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway. Offered by James City County Parks & Recreation, come sing the night away while enjoying the park! All ages welcome; 12 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. In the event of inclement weather, please call the Activities Hotline at 757-259-3232 for any changes in schedules.

Hey Neighbor! MASTERWORKS CONCERT SERIES: MICHAEL STEVEN LIANOS, ORGANIST

July 3, 2017

This free concert will feature a performance of American masterworks by Copland, Ives, Buck, Sousa, and more! Come celebrate America with a patriotic potpourri of sing-a-longs and American-written folk tunes. Time: 7 pm at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road. For more information, call 757-229-3631 or visit www.bedeva.org/concerts.

Hey Neighbor! SUMMER CAMP AT DREAM CATCHERS

July 11 - August 8, 2017

We are offering 5 exciting weeks of

camp for children ages 9 - 13! Our camps include safe equine education, opportunities to become a Junior Volunteer, and mounted riding and ground lessons. We are also offering 1 week of Interactive Vaulting Camp, which is like learning how to do gymnastics on horseback. Our Advanced Camp for those who have a bit more riding experience will be held August 8-11. All our camps are taught by a qualified team of PATH Intl. Riding & Vaulting Instructors who put safety and best practices at the forefront of every camp! Our camps run Tuesday to Friday each week from 9 am - 1 pm. Cost is \$350.00 per week. Contact us 757-566-1775 or email pa@dreamcatchers.org to sign up today!

Hey Neighbor! REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR ANNUAL ANTHEM LEMONAID

July 14-16, 2017

For local families, enjoying a sweet glass of lemonade this summer can be more than just a refreshing treat. This July, hundreds of lemonade stands will pop up throughout Hampton Roads to raise money for an important local cause during Anthem LemonAid weekend. Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters has teamed up with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield to help raise awareness and funds for the fight against child-

hood cancer at CHKD. Families, businesses and community groups are encouraged to register and participate to benefit childhood cancer treatment at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters. Last year, 915 LemonAid stands raised \$132,000 for CHKD's cancer program. To support the success of the LemonAid stands, each participant will receive a free LemonAid kit that includes lemonade mix, cups, a pitcher, signs and more. Lemonade is sold for a \$1 donation and 100% of the proceeds will benefit CHKD's cancer program. To register visit AnthemLemonAid.com.

Hey Neighbor! CARING FOR ANIMALS

July 15, 2017

For all ages. At Freedom Park, 10-11 am. Meet in the Interpretive Center. Do you want to learn some helpful ways to care for dogs, cats, and other animals? Be prepared to fall in love with some adorable adopt-able animals. The Heritage Humane Society will help children learn about proper care, treatment, training and safety concerns with domestic animals. Please register by emailing wbgkids@gmail.com

Hey Neighbor! PARK TO PARK BICYCLE TOUR

July 15, 2017

Register early for this annual self-guided bicycle tour, 8 a.m.- 2 p.m., starting at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway. Choose from a Family Ride (ride as little or as much as you'd like), 15 miles, 30 miles or the Half Century Ride (50 miles)! The 50-mile ride includes visits to Veterans Park (formerly Mid County), Powhatan Creek Trail, Freedom Park, Little Creek Reservoir Park and Upper County Park. Cool off after your ride in the Chickahominy Riverfront Park pool. Cost and specific start time depends on ride option - \$20/\$15/\$10. Fee includes refreshments, pool admittance, maps, support vehicles to help out tired riders and lunch! Registration forms available at local bike shops, the James City County Recreation Center, Freedom Park, the Satellite Services Office in Toano or online at jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation. Offered by James City County Parks & Recreation in partnership with the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists. In the event of inclement weather, please call the Activities Hotline at 259-3232 for any changes in schedules. Register by June 30 and save \$5; onsite registration accepted.

Hey Neighbor! OLD AND NEW GARDEN FAVORITES

July 15, 2017



Be a SuperHero for a Child!

at The Vineyards at Jockey's Neck
Saturday, August 12, 2017

Fun Run 8:00am
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At Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 am, open to the public. John McFarlane, Assistant Director of Gardens and Grounds of The College of William and Mary, will talk about his favorite plants and local garden treasures from the Williamsburg area and William & Mary campus. He will share gardening insights from his 35+ years as a Virginia Horticulturist and his experience at William & Mary. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. The program is free, although a \$5.00 donation to help the Garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact John at jdmca@wm.edu

Hey Neighbor! **CWA FALL SEMESTER MEMBERSHIP, COURSE, LECTURE, AND ACTIVITY REQUEST** July 18 – 25, 2017

The Christopher Wren Association is a self-funded, volunteer-led organization dedicated to adults of all ages who seek opportunities for learning and enrichment of their lives. This fall CWA will be offering over 150 courses, one-time lectures and activities, including the popular Town & Gown Lecture series. The CWA catalog will be available July 6.. Students should go online to purchase their membership for the semester and submit their course and activity requests beginning July 18-25. For information about becoming a member and to view the current catalog, visit our website: www.wm.edu/cwa, or call the office at 757-221-1506.

Hey Neighbor! **NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE NIGHT** July 29, 2017

Free, movie starts at 8:30 p.m. at the Abram Frink Jr. Community Center, 8901 Pocahontas Trail. Enjoy a great movie outdoors under the stars! Bring lawn chairs, blankets and your favorite snack. All ages welcome; children 12 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Feature: Finding Dory (PG); movie subject to change. In the event of inclement weather, please call the Activities Hotline at 757-259-3232 for any changes in schedules.

Hey Neighbor! **FLUTE FRENZY SUMMER CAMP** July 31 - August 4, 2017

Flute Frenzy is sponsoring "A Week at the Oscars," a summer flute camp for youth flutists entering grades 6-12. The camp will 9 am -12:30 pm and will feature an August 5th performance at the Williamsburg

Farmers Market. Be a part of a flute choir and learn to play piccolo, alto, and bass flutes! Profession instruction technique classes! Tuition: \$135; need-based financial aid available. Registration forms can be found at www.flutefrenzy.org. Sponsored by Flute Frenzy a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Hey Neighbor! **CDR'S SUPERHERO 5K** August 12, 2017

The Vineyards at Jockey's Neck (2659 Jockey's Neck Trail), Williamsburg. This Colonial Road Runners Grand Prix Event boasts 500-plus attendees, including runners and walkers of all ages, fun runners, volunteers, and enthusiastic families. This event is family friendly and food, children's activities, awards, music, and ice cream will be available. For more information, visit 5k.cdr.org, or call 757-566-3300. This event benefits CDR, which serves young children and their families to help ensure that all children, no matter their challenges, reach their full potential.

Hey Neighbor! **5K RUN FOR THE ARC** October 7, 2017

The 8th annual Williamsburg Land-ing 5k Run for The Arc is Saturday, October 7, 2017. Online registration is now available at www.thearcgw.org. For sponsorship information please contact Pam McGregor at pam.mcgregor@thearcgw.org.

Hey Neighbor! **THE WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CHORUS OPEN FOR NEW MEMBERS FOR FALL SEASON** Ongoing

The Chorus is open to women of all ages and voice parts. Rehearsals are held on Thursday Mornings at Bruton Parish House from 10 am-noon. We will be preparing for our Winter Concert which will be in December. Rehearsals for the fall season will begin in September. If interested, contact Beckie Davy at bdavy@brutonparish.org to set up an informal audition.

Hey Neighbor! **YJCW-NAACP MEETING** Ongoing

The York-James City- Williamsburg NAACP meets the second Monday of each month (except July) at First Baptist Church, 727 Scotland Street, Williamsburg. Branch meetings begin at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact NAACP at yjcwnaACP.org

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG YOUTH CHO-**

RALE OPEN FOR NEW MEMBERS FOR THE FALL SEASON Ongoing

The Chorale is open to treble voices, boys and girls, grades 3-12. Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 pm at the Bruton Parish House choir room. Rehearsals begin on September 19. The Chorale is featured in the concerts of the Williamsburg Choral Guild and the Williamsburg Women's Chorus. Contact Ann Porter, aportermusic0@gmail.com for information.

Hey Neighbor! **ALL-AMERICAN TEA PARTIES** Ongoing

Colonial Williamsburg invites guests of all ages to take time to go back with its All-American Tea Parties the first and third Saturday of each month until August 19. The events, hosted by Mrs. Campbell herself at Christiana Campbell's Tavern, feature a special blend of tea and sippets of mid-day fare to be shared. Guests are encouraged to bring along their period-inspired dolls and partake in the midday festivities. All-American Tea Parties begin at 1 pm and last until 3 pm. Tickets are \$39.95 per person and are available at colonialwilliamsburg.com/tea-parties or by calling 855-296-6627, along with additional information, which is also available by following Colonial Williamsburg on Facebook and @colonialwmsburg on Twitter and Instagram

Hey Neighbor! **BIBLE STUDY** Ongoing

There is a comprehensive and in depth bible study and question answering session held at the Williamsburg library in Norge every Monday night starting at 6 pm, with questions such as where did Cain get his wife and what was the mark placed upon him or what is the mark of the beast and his number 666 mean or what is the unforgivable sin. So, if your bible study is lacking the quality of study that you need to answer such questions, you are invited to join us. Contact 757-253-0172 or 757-604-6649

Hey Neighbor! **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** Ongoing

National Historical Park (consisting of the National Park Service at Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield) continues its mission, preserving and protecting the interests of the public since 1930. The Park operates two visitor centers and several historic homes. However, like all national parks, Colonial relies heav-

ily on volunteers. A need exists for regular volunteers four hours a day, one day a week, orienting visitors to the park and the area. We also need volunteers to conduct tours for the public and operate historic homes. So, consider becoming a steward of your wonderful national parks, and begin at Colonial National Historical Park, (Historic Jamestowne or Yorktown Battlefield) by contacting Mike Byrd at 757-898-2422. Come make a difference!

Hey Neighbor! **NORGE DEPOT MUSEUM** Ongoing

At the JCC Library, 7770 Croaker Rd, Norge. The Depot is open from 10 to noon on Saturdays and 2 to 4 on Sundays. See railroad and local historical exhibits including artifacts, photographs, and clothing. A model railroad layout is running and a wooden railroad is available for children. Take their picture with our caboose! Free, but donations appreciated. More details at norgedepot.org.

Hey Neighbor! **GROVE, VA FACEBOOK PAGE** Ongoing

Come check out the new Grove Community Facebook Page. If you are part of our small part of Williamsburg or have an interest in the success of Grove, please join the group! This discussion page is a great spot to share information, work together to solve common issues and foster our sense of community. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/grovecommunity>

Hey Neighbor! **4-H SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION** Ongoing

4-H Junior Camp for residents of York County and Poquoson is scheduled for July 31-August 4, 2017. For more information regarding the York/Poquoson 4-H Camp, visit www.yorkcounty.gov/vce. 4-H Junior Camp for residents of James City County is scheduled for July 3-7, 2017. For more information regarding the James City County 4-H camp visit: www.offices.ext.vt.edu/james-city. 4-H Junior Camp, held at the Jamestown 4-H Educational Center in Williamsburg, is a residential, week-long summer camp program available to youth ages 9-13. Days are filled with camp classes (archery, kayaking, challenge course, arts and crafts, videography, etc.), unstructured recreation and swim time, flag ceremonies, evening programs, and campfires. Registration for both camps will take place online only. Camper registration fee

for both camps is \$285.00. Financial assistance is available for youth with financial need. For questions, please call 757-890-4940 (York County/Poquoson residents) or 757-564-2170 (James City County residents).

Hey Neighbor! **CELEBRATE RECOVERY**

Ongoing

A Christ-centered, confidential recovery group for anyone who has trouble dealing with life's hurts, habits, or hang-ups. We meet on Tuesday evenings at 6 for dinner. Our meeting starts at 7. Williamsburg Community Chapel – 3899 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg. For more information please call Steve Flanary 757-903-8683 or Patti Flanary 757-903-8681.

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CONNECTION**

Ongoing

A monthly luncheon for women. We socialize, enjoy a delicious meal, a little music, hear a great speaker and maybe make a new friend. Each month we feature 2 local businesses. So join us at 11:30am to socialize and shop; then lunch is served at 12. Our luncheon is held at Williamsburg Community Chapel – 3899 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg. Cost is \$12. Upcoming meeting dates are March 22, April 19, and May 17. Call Sheryl Buckner for more information, 757-342-1460.

Hey Neighbor! **WRITERS CRITIQUE - WORD WEAVERS INTERNATIONAL**

Ongoing

Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at the James City County Library – 7770 Croaker Road, Williamsburg. We provide a forum for writers to critique each other's work in a face-to-face format to learn about and improve our craft. Writers of all levels are welcome. While WWI is a Christian-based group, all writers are welcome. Contact Sheryl Buckner for more information, 757-342-1460.

Hey Neighbor! **SUBJECT: GOT QUESTIONS**

Ongoing

If you are not getting enough from your bible study or church group, then perhaps you should join us at the Williamsburg Regional library every Monday at 6 pm or contact us at 757-253-0172 or 757-604-6649, that's where you can get answers to such question as what really happen in the garden between Adam, Eve and the serpent (i.e., to say the Devil) or why isn't Cain listed in Adam's

genealogy, or where did Cain get his wife, did Adam and Eve really die the day they ate the forbidden fruit, and what was that fruit, or what is the mark of the beast 666 and what does it mean and what about the unforgivable sin and have I committed it, so if you have questions such as these, then bring them with you when you come.

Hey Neighbor! **COLONIAL HERITAGE INVESTMENT CLUB**

Ongoing

Open to all residents of Williamsburg area. Meetings held on the third Thursday of each month from 9:30 - 11:30 am at Colonial Heritage Clubhouse, 6500 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg. 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. Meeting dates listed at www.CHinvestmentclub.org.

Hey Neighbor! **WILLIAMSBURG AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FUND REQUEST**

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program was founded in 2013. Students must be enrolled in high school, at least 16 years old, and in 10th, 11th, or 12 grade. The students receive their ground school training, flight training, training kits, licensing fees, etc., at no charge to them or their family. All training is done through the Williamsburg Flight Center here at Williamsburg Jamestown Airport. The average cost of funding each student is approximately \$12,000.00. We need your assistance in our efforts to raise money to fund the students. Your donation is tax deductible for income tax purposes. To donate to this worthy cause, make your check payable to and mail to Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program, 102 Marclay Road, Williamsburg, Va. 23185.

Hey Neighbor! **HEAD START OPEN ENROLLMENT**

Ongoing

Williamsburg James City County Community Action Agency's Pre-school Program for Children ages 3 to 5. Serving income eligible families including children with special needs. Apply by phone 757- 229-6417 or in person at 312 Waller Mill

Road, Williamsburg.

Hey Neighbor! **HOPE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER**

Ongoing

New evening hours: Wednesday 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm by appointment. Also open: Monday- Thursday 10:30 am - 3:00 pm. All services are free and confidential- no insurance needed. We serve all women with unplanned and unexpected pregnancies. We also accept donations of new or gently used baby clothes up to 2T, as well as maternity clothes. 1315 Jamestown Road, Suite 202. 757-229-6472. www.hopewilliamsburg.org.

Hey Neighbor! **JAMES RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH SATURDAY EVENING SERVICE**

Ongoing

From Homily, discussion groups and light refreshments create a warm environment for Christian spiritual growth. Join us at 4931 Centerville Rd, Williamsburg. For more information, visit our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/JamesRiverBaptistChurch. You can also visit the website at www.JamesRiverBaptist.org.

Hey Neighbor! **CALLING LOCAL WRITERS!**

2nd Monday each month

Are you a writer* who longs for a group to connect with? Word Weavers International, Inc., established in 1997, has a local group just for you, Word Weavers Williamsburg. Word Weavers is more than just a group of writers clamoring for praise. Word Weavers has a tried-and-true formula for sharpening the skills of its members, turning out published authors who go on to win acclaim and awards. If you are a writer who is not afraid to critique and be critiqued, join us and see what all the WW talk is about. We meet on the 2nd Monday of each month from 5:30 - 7:30 pm in the Cosby Room at James City County Library - 7770 Croaker Road. For more information, go to: www.Word-Weavers.com or contact Sheryl: 757-342-1460. *While WWI, Inc. is a Christian-based group, all writers are welcomed.

Hey Neighbor! **CHRISTOPHER WREN ASSOCIATION COURSE, LECTURE, AND ACTIVITY REQUESTS**

Online and Ongoing

The Christopher Wren Association is a self-funded, volunteer-led organization dedicated to adults of all ages who seek opportunities for learning

and enrichment of their lives. This fall, CWA has over 150 offerings, including a wide variety of courses, activities (including the Town & Gown Lecture series), one-time lectures, and special events. The semester is already underway, but students are able to submit new or additional requests for courses and activities throughout the fall. For information about becoming a member, contact us at www.wm.edu/cwa, or 757-221-1506

Hey Neighbor! **HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS**

Ongoing

Historic Jamestowne seeks volunteers to greet and engage guests as well provide accurate information about this premier historic site. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available, including Visitor Center greeters, Fort Site interpreters, and Docents in our archaeological museum, the Archaearium. Volunteer shifts are available Monday through Sunday, 9:30 am - 1 pm and 1 - 4:30 pm. Training sessions will be held in the Spring and Fall. If you are interested in volunteering at Historic Jamestowne, please contact Kelly Williams at williams@preservationvirginia.org.

Hey Neighbor! **YOGA AND MEDITATION CLASS FOR ADULTS 60 AND OVER**

Ongoing

Every Thursday, 1 - 2 pm. The Peninsula Agency on Aging has partnered with Breathing Space, Inc., a non-profit promoting mindful movement, to offer a free weekly Chair Yoga class. People with chronic pain and challenges with balance are welcome. This program enables family caregivers to participate in a yoga class while their loved ones participate in gentle chair yoga at the same time. At the Messmer Community Services Center, 312 Waller Mill Rd., Williamsburg, (Off Bypass Rd.) in Room 801. No registration needed; just drop by. Call 757-345-6277 or email Information2@paainc.org if you need more information.

**FOR A
COMPLETE LIST
OF
SUBMISSIONS
VISIT:**

williamsburgneighbors.com

Williamsburg's IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD photo challenge

Cigars!

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

Enjoy!



ADVANCED LEVEL

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

June 2017
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge





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