

March 2018

WILLIAMSBURG'S

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VOL. 12, ISSUE 3

PRICELESS

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Luis & Krystal Arriola

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When, in the course of human events...ok, wait. It is not quite an event that significant. But, when a small, community magazine such as ours undergoes transition with its senior staff, it can be disquieting. The transition I am referring to is that of Greg Lilly, our exceptional editor and friend. Greg will be moving away from the area to be closer to family, and to enter into the next new and exciting phase of his life. We wish him all the best and I personally want to thank him on behalf of myself, all those who contribute to Next Door Neighbors, and our readers for the superb job he has done over the last decade. Wherever you go, you will always be fondly remembered as our good neighbor.

The loss of Greg is softened by the promotion to editor of one of our most talented writers, Ms. Narielle Living. Narielle brings a world of experience and enthusiasm to her new job and we are fortunate to have her step into her new role. I encourage you to visit Narielle's website, www.narielleliving.com, to learn more about her and her career as an author. You can also contact her directly with story ideas and more. 757-320-6059. narielleliving@gmail.com NDN



Greg Lilly



Narielle Living,
Editor



Meredith Collins,
Publisher

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LUIS & KRYSTAL ARRIOLA



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

TOGETHER & EQUAL

By Tryna Fitzpatrick

Second Lieutenant Luis Arriola hails from a small island in the Pacific Ocean. His wife of ten years, Krystal Harrell-Arriola, is from a small town in Georgia. Ask them what common values their cultures share and the answers are immediate and resolute.

“Devotion to family,” Krystal says. “Yes, family,” Luis agrees. Theirs is a love story that spans the globe, blending culture and race to bring together two families from very different parts of the world.

Krystal, an optician and store manager with Jellenek Family Eyecare in Williamsburg, is from Tifton, located in south-central Georgia. For Luis, an information technology analyst in the United States Army, it’s a bit more difficult to explain. “I was born and raised in Saipan. Most people have never heard of it,” he says. “It’s a small U.S. island in the Marianas near Guam.”

Indeed, the island is part of a self-governing United States insular area known as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and that makes Luis, and its other native residents, American citizens. At around

five miles wide and twelve miles long, the little-known island is brimming with history and cultural diversity. For outdoor enthusiasts, Saipan is renowned for its stunning scenery, including the spectacular Blue Grotto, a limestone cavern descending deep into the turquoise waters of the Pacific. For others, it's remembered as the site of the brutal Battle of Saipan where thousands of American and Japanese civilians and service members lost their lives during World War II. For Luis, it will always be home.

As a child, he enjoyed a veritable mixing pot of culture, customs and culinary traditions thanks to the diversity of the people. Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese and Koreans make up the largest percentage of the population, along with the native Chamorro, the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands. Luis's father is Chamorro and Japanese. His mother is Filipino. "On a typical day in our household, you would always hear different languages being spoken," he says. "You would hear Filipino, Japanese, Chamorro and English. I was able to understand and speak each one of them."

Luis's mother was a school teacher, and

his father served as an elected member of the Commonwealth House of Representatives in the 5th CNMI legislature. His 1985 win was a family affair with Luis and his three siblings actively participating in their father's campaign. The process was documented in National Geographic when the magazine featured a photo of then 5-year-old Luis and his father. The image depicts a young Luis sitting roadside and holding a homemade sign with the message "please vote for my daddy," while his father waves to passing cars. The experience had a profound impact. "Helping my dad win his seat was one of my fondest memories growing up," he says.

In high school, Luis was a member of the ROTC and later joined the Army National Guard. In 2003, after graduating from the University of Guam with a Degree in Computer Science, he received his commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. "Things went fast from there as I went into active duty and was deployed and stationed at different places," he says. "From Korea, Lithuania, Iraq, Afghanistan and numerous locations across the continental United

States, I was always on the move." His military service eventually brought him to Georgia where he experienced genuine southern hospitality for the first time. It's also where he met Krystal. "She was working in a local eye clinic, and I stopped in for an appointment. I thought she was so beautiful. I kept going back to get new contact lenses just so I could see her," Luis says. "After a while, she realized something was up," he adds with a laugh. They were married in 2008 and now have three children: Simiyah (Mya), 12; Lucy, 6, and Lucas, 3.

Krystal, who lived in Georgia all of her life, was skeptical of their relationship at first. Although she and Luis were unconcerned with their racial differences, she wasn't so sure if others would agree. "I remember wondering how people were going to take to us," she says. Turns out, her fears were unfounded. "I'm so thankful that our families and friends were all very accepting of us," she says. The military community was supportive too. "Diversity is absolutely nothing new in the military. Interracial families are actually commonplace now," Krystal says. Growing up in rural Georgia, she explains

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that wasn't always the case. As a student at Tift County High School, she was crowned one of two homecoming queens - one black, the other white. The longstanding tradition was a leftover relic from the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutional-ity of racial segregation.

Krystal didn't question it at the time. "When you grow up in that environment, you take what you see as the norm," she says. She changed her mind after watching a TV show that was popular with teenagers at the time. "I remember wondering why (the characters) didn't have a segregated homecoming court. Somehow, they managed to select a queen based on popular votes and not race." Years later, she found herself struggling to explain the "separate but equal" practice to her daughter, Mya. "I was flustered and stuttering over my words trying to give a logical reason. My daughter just frowned at me and said 'No way, Mom! What year were you really born?'" Krystal says with a laugh, recalling Mya's disbelief. "As late as the 1990s, I was still being directly affected by Plessy v. Ferguson," she says. Today, Krystal

embraces the experience as an opportunity to teach her children that our differences do not need to divide us. "I tell the kids to embrace and celebrate their heritage and the heritage of others." After all, that is exactly what she and Luis have done with their own families. "I have been able to share my southern culture with Luis, and he shares his Pacific Islands culture with me," she says. "While the food, music and customs are different, the strong family bond is the same."

The family has moved often over the years, but it wasn't until they were stationed at Fort Eustis that they felt they had found their new home. Both Luis and Krystal feel a connection to Williamsburg and have enjoyed becoming part of the community, thanks to the help of the people they've met along the way. "Through my job, I meet so many wonderful locals and new transplants of all ages," Krystal says. "They always offer recommendations for date night, kid's activities and fantastic eateries." Blue Talon and Fat Tuna are among their favorites. The family also enjoys strolling through Merchants Square and immersing themselves into

the history at Jamestown. Williamsburg's focus on family and community also fits in with the values they hold dear.

"During a snowstorm, our neighbors were helping each other shovel snow off each driveway and sidewalk," Luis says. "We all made sure our neighborhood roadways were taken care of when the storm settled," Krystal agrees. "After being stationed in several different locations, the greatest thing I have discovered about Williamsburg is no matter your gender, race or age - the opportunity is here," she says. "You can spend Friday having a fabulous lunch with your 86-year-old friend from Prague, Saturday morning cheering for the William & Mary freshman lacrosse player you met at a winter festival, Sunday dinner with local friends at Amber Ox debating anything from politics to the funniest meme you saw all week... and that's just last weekend," Krystal says with a laugh.

Krystal and Luis may come from different cultures and races, but together they show how differences bring strengths to relationships and create a hearty, devoted family. NDN



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An Advocate for Future Generations

By Lillian Stevens



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Local attorney Brian Smalls is a busy man. The married father of two runs his own law practice, serves as president of the local chapter of the NAACP, is active in his church and is involved in his young family's various activities. Brian grew up in Williamsburg and says that he and his wife, Sonya, can't imagine raising their children any place else. With extended family nearby and the quality of life Williamsburg has

to offer, they have established deep roots here. Like many others who have lived in the area for the past 30 or so years, Brian has seen sweeping changes, both in terms of new development and the landscape in general. Changes on the diversity front are sometimes slower to emerge, but they are there nonetheless.

"I grew up here in the 1980s," Brian says. "There were African Americans and there were

white people. When I left for college in 1999, there wasn't a whole lot of diversity beyond that. But seven years later when I moved back (after law school), I noticed that there were more Hispanics and Latinos here, as well as a growing Asian population and people from the Middle East. So, it's amazing to see the changes over that span of time."

Thinking back to his childhood, Brian says

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that somewhere around first grade, he noticed he and his friends and classmates weren't all the same color.

"I remember an awareness that there were people who looked different than I did, and that I looked different than some other people," he says. "But I think one of the things that my parents were set on was making sure that my brother and I knew that it doesn't matter what we look like on the outside. You treat people the way you want to be treated. We were taught the Golden Rule from an early age."

Brian credits his parents for being wonderful role models who encouraged their sons to embrace their heritage and their ethnicity.

"Every Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, the local NAACP branch had a breakfast over at Colonial Williamsburg," Brian says. "So, my parents would take us to that. I can't remember missing a single year."

Today, Brian serves as president of that same branch, the York-James City-Williamsburg (YJCW) NAACP. The local organization boasts some 500 members.

In his role as president, Brian's top three initiatives are education, legal redress and voter registration.

"Through our education committee, we are advocates for an excellent and equitable education for all WJCC children. We also have John Tarley, of Tarley Robinson PLC, as chair of the legal redress committee. That's pretty unique, because not many branches have a legal redress person who is actually an attorney. We don't provide legal representation for individuals, but we will certainly answer questions if we can, and point members in the right direction when necessary."

It's as though Brian has come full circle.

"Attending the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast was my first exposure as a kid to the NAACP," he says. "Then, fast-forward to high school. There was one year I was invited to emcee the breakfast. The following year, I was one of the Lafayette High students honored along with other local high school students."

Those kinds of experiences really resonated with Brian.

"There were so many people who had a positive influence on me. Growing up my childhood church was First Baptist so there were a ton of people there that had a positive impact on me here in the community."

The historic church, established by slaves in 1776, is one of the first black churches in America.

Brian went on to graduate from Lafayette, then studied at the University of Michigan where he majored in sports management communication and played football. Fun fact: One of his teammates at Michigan was Tom Brady of the New England Patriots. The Patriots' quarterback played at Michigan before going to the NFL.

After graduation from college, he and Sonya, who had just graduated from Hampton University, were married. The couple headed south to Miami, Florida where Brian would be attending graduate school.

"I went to the University of Miami for law school," he says. "I always tell people I had no plans to sit for the Bar exam or become a lawyer. Mainly, I thought a law degree would give me an edge and make me more marketable when it came to the competitive field of professional sports. That's where I really saw my career going."

Brian sailed through law school, and he was slightly surprised to find that he enjoyed the litigation classes. After graduation, he sat for the Virginia Bar exam, after all. He passed.

He and Sonya moved back home to the Peninsula, and Brian took a job

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with the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office in Newport News. He spent nearly five years there as a prosecuting attorney.

"I was working a good bit with the juvenile and domestic relations team there," Brian says. "It was a great opportunity to work with young people and individuals from all different walks of life."

By 2012, Brian was ready to open his own law practice. He says that going out on his own was completely within his comfort zone, because he'd seen his father do it.

"My dad is a dentist here in town. He set up shop here in 1983. My mom was his office manager and my brother and I were always at his dental office when we weren't in school. We grew up there. We were there before and after school. You could say that my parents set the example for my family as far as combining family with business."

Brian's law practice focuses on estate planning and business law. "I have a passion for working with families and being able to establish legacies for their children and grandchildren."

His practice is located just a stone's throw from Berkeley Middle School. Sonya manages the office, and the couple's children are often onsite. In fact, during Brian's interview, Sonya emerged briefly with Brayden and Brielle in tow, providing an opportunity to get a quote. When asked what makes her father an especially great dad, Brielle, nine years old, had this to say: "My dad is awesome, loving, caring, and he has a lot of experience with being a lawyer."

The children are students at Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School. Brayden, the older of the two, will turn 11 in May and enjoys playing football for the Williamsburg Hornets.

"For the past couple years, I've been an assistant coach on my son's football team," Brian says. "It's been so great to do that! I must admit, though, that between coaching, my business, and my volunteer work, my plate is pretty full!"

Brian says that the YJCW NAACP is especially interested in recruiting younger members.

"We have people who have been involved for decades," Brian says. "Their leadership and guidance has been invaluable. We welcome everyone, but we are encouraging a younger generation, the millennials, to get on board. We want to be diverse as far as age goes, too."

It's no secret that being a diverse community makes Williamsburg a better community for all of its residents and neighbors. At the core of it lies communication and basic manners. Speaking of communication, Brian would like to clear up one common misconception about NAACP, one that involves diversity.

"I think that one of the mistaken perceptions about NAACP is that it's an organization just for black people. While we are certainly advocates for issues from a social justice standpoint, the NAACP could not and would not exist unless there was diversity. We have a very diverse branch here in this wonderful community, and that is something that I want to see continue."

In the months and years to come, Brian looks forward to doing what he can to keep his home town moving steadfastly forward.

"If we really want to see change and progression I think it's important that we be willing to listen first and then speak. There are other perspectives out there and we must be willing to hear them. We might not agree on certain things, and there will always be conversations that make us uncomfortable, but we need to be willing to have an open dialogue." NDN



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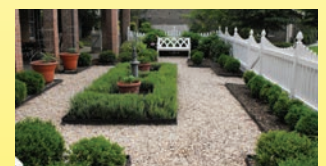
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Human Geography

By Dawn Brotherton



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Rebecca Houston is a Hampton Roads native, trained to see herself as part of the bigger picture within her community. Now she is sharing that knowledge with students through her teaching.

Growing up in Yorktown, Rebecca traveled with her parents and explored the battlefields in the local area. Through those experiences,

her love of history grew. While studying history with an education minor at Old Dominion University, she took a class in Cultural Geography. This was her first taste into the eye-opening study of Human Geography.

“I was always interested in all aspects of human culture’s effect on history. Like, what did the people in the past do? Why did they do that?

How was it different? I love to know how things were different than how we live today,” Rebecca says.

After spending a year teaching at Menchville High School in Newport News, Rebecca took a summer to learn new things by working for the National Park Service in Yosemite. She enjoyed it so much, she decided to suspend her teaching

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career and continue her exploration of the parks, completing six months each at Yosemite, then the Everglades, and finally Cape Hatteras. Although she enjoyed this lifestyle, she recognized the need to settle back into a routine. “This was 15 years ago, so really pre-digital,” she explains. She only communicated with her parents sparingly with a rare email or phone call. “I was alone, but not lonely, because you had this community of seasonal workers that are doing it with you. But I was just ready to come home and be close to a grocery store and have some modern amenities.”

She first came back to the area and worked at Colonial Williamsburg as a server in one of the taverns. That was about the same time that the first wave of exchange, non-immigrant workers came to the city. The program was established for individuals to participate in a work-based and study-based exchange. They were referred to as J-1 workers because of their visa status.

“I would quiz them about why they came here to work,” she says. One worker explained that the unemployment rate in Poland was up to 40 percent. As a J-1 worker, Rebecca’s friend was able to work here for the summer and pay her

college tuition. Rebecca found this fascinating and spent more time shuttling those without a car around to see the sights nearby. Seeing Williamsburg through an outsider’s eyes sparked Rebecca’s curiosity even more.

Soon she was fortunate to find a home at Bruton High School, teaching World History I, U.S. History, and Nutrition and Wellness. About seven years ago York County decided to integrate the new Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum for Human Geography into the course selection, and Rebecca was asked to participate. The more she learned about it the more excited she became. “It’s been a trial and error with the course in general. As it changes it has become more analytical,” she says.

Human Geography is the study of where people are, how they use the land, and how that affects the world around them. “It’s more than just the language people speak. It’s what do they do for work? What do they eat? How do they use the land? What’s their political system like? It’s like taking snapshots of what everything is like and piecing it together to make people better understand where they are and what surrounds them, locally, regionally and globally.”

Rebecca is part of a larger network that gathers teachers, professors, and geographic information system specialists from across the United States to read over the essays submitted during the AP exams and grade them. “It’s created a great support system with others that are teaching, and because they are all from different places, their ideas are different.” This is yet another example of Human Geography at work.

Human Geography students see where they can make a difference in their world. “I like it because it’s something new all the time. Every day there’s something new that affects them on gender issues or food production or diversity.” She enjoys watching as her students make the transition from hearing and understanding the examples in class, to applying the concept to something heard on the news or read in a newspaper. At Bruton some kids have been together since kindergarten while others have just arrived. There are a lot of military families in the area, and some kids have traveled more than others and have different experiences to share.

“We take the journey together,” Rebecca says. “Because this class is community-based and the school is smaller I think the students feel more



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open to sharing their experiences.”

Human Geography is a good building block for interpersonal communications that will help students in whatever job they have later. “It’s a good way for the students to get their feet wet, especially if they haven’t had opportunities to travel or be exposed to different cultures,” Rebecca says. “Everyone is going to become a global citizen, whether they do it willingly or kicking and screaming,” she adds.

For many people the thought of diversity immediately makes the leap to ethnicity or race. Rebecca defines diversity in broader terms. “It really is more about what you are doing culturally and what you are doing for economics or work or what’s your kind of normal. Diversity is about people, not based on race or ethnicity, but the fusion of different ideas and concepts.”

Although most people think of Williamsburg as a small tourist town surrounding Colonial Williamsburg. It’s actually a town with a major university and a varied labor pool. “This area has one of the highest regional concentration populations of scientists and engineers in the United States. We’re not a Silicon Valley or Research Triangle, but in Hampton Roads, we

have a diverse workforce from tourism to astrophysicists.”

Rebecca believes the great thing about Williamsburg is that people here are willing to have the necessary conversations to ensure everyone is getting the services they need to grow. Whether that means additional William & Mary housing, the bodega on Capital Landing, or the Eastern European food market off of Bypass Road, Williamsburg is a melting pot and has been since its establishment. “We’re diverse not only because of where we are. We’re diverse because how we started historically,” Rebecca says. This is where the first wave of immigrants came, she explains, where the first African-Americans were brought. Today we’re people that have lived here a long time, just moved here, are military transplants, or come in from other areas to work. All have a voice in the geographic mass and in where we are going next.

Rebecca finds examples for her classroom within our area. It’s easier to discuss the issues that the students can see locally, like affordable housing and J-1 workers, and then expand regionally to the rest of Virginia before trying to apply the lessons to other countries. “Where we

are is unique in a lot of ways because of our exposure to many different things. Some people just don’t have that opportunity.” Being so close to Washington D.C., Virginia Beach and the Appalachians means people living in this area see a diverse way of life, economic opportunities and cultures.

Rebecca and her husband, Phillip, also a teacher at Bruton High School, apply Human Geography at home every day. They have a one-year-old named Reese and four-year-old, Paige. “I like to think they’re human geographers at heart. We were driving to Richmond, and my four-year-old said, ‘I know we’re almost to Uncle Zach’s, because I see murals and no more trees and lots of big buildings.’ That is a simple example of Human Geography,” Rebecca says with a proud smile. She and her husband want their kids to be globally exposed so they can better understand the world around them.

According to Rebecca Houston, the best way we can embrace diversity is to just be open and aware of what’s going on in our community. Our diverse makeup allows us to continue to grow as each person adds their own ideas and concepts to our community. NDN



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MIKEY & CHELSEA MAKSIMOWICZ



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

A TASTE OF DIVERSITY

By Lillian Stevens

Chefs Mikey and Chelsea Maksimowicz met almost six years ago when they were working at the same restaurant in Washington, D.C. They have been cooking together ever since, both on and off of the job.

In June, 2016, the couple tied the knot. Late last year they moved to Williamsburg which they call their “forever home.”

Later this year, the couple will launch Casa

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Pearl, a restaurant they are opening in partnership with Mikey's sister and brother-in-law. Casa Pearl will be located on Merrimac Trail, not too far from the Virginia Beer Company.

Though the two chefs have long planned to open their own restaurant, they weren't sure until recently what the exact concept would be. Even though they love cooking together, Mikey and Chelsea are from vastly different culinary backgrounds.

"I'll put anything in a tortilla," Chelsea says. "But Mikey's all about shellfish which isn't something that I grew up eating."

Mikey hails from the Northern Neck where his father has a commercial crab license. Childhood summers were spent crabbing with his father, so he grew up cooking and appreciating the bountiful seafood that the region has to offer.

Originally from California, Chelsea recalls that food was a tremendous part of her family's dynamic. "My mom is from Central America, and my dad is part German, part Irish and so culinary diversity was very much a part of my childhood."

Since the couple has been together, Chel-

sea says that she and her husband have each brought the other out of their culinary comfort zones. Mikey loves everything she cooks, while she has indeed developed a taste for seafood.

As its name suggests, Casa Pearl will be fun and eclectic. There will be a daily happy hour during which oysters and small bites will be featured. Menu offerings will include a variety of delectable dishes, but especially seafood and tacos.

"Our tacos will be different though," Mikey says. "We are veering away from authentic Mexican fare. Instead, we might offer an Asian

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inspired taco with grilled fish that has been marinated with chimichurri, cilantro soy aioli, and an Asian cabbage slaw.”

When it’s warmer out, expect crab boils, traditional low country boils and people playing cornhole on the patio. In the winter months, there will be the traditional South Carolina oyster roast.

“Basically, that’s where you throw the oysters on a big table,” Mikey says. “It’ll be an ‘all you can eat’ type of thing. We envision people enjoying their food and their beverages. We want to be a fun place.”

“The food will be playful and southern inspired,” Chelsea says. “We’ll do oysters and clams on the half shell, as well as ceviche.”

Ceviche is a seafood dish popular in the coastal regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is typically made from fresh raw fish cured in citrus juices, such as lemon or lime, and spiced with aji or chili peppers.

“We have talked about doing this ever since we met,” Chelsea says. “For a while now we’ve been playing around with different ideas [and] just stocking them away for when the opportunity arose.”

While they were in Washington, Mikey was the executive chef at Fiola, a high-end restau-

rant, and Chelsea was working at Blue Duck Tavern. “I basically begged her to quit her job and come work with me,” he says. “That was a pinnacle moment for us because we realized that we could take a restaurant and whip it into shape. So, we knew that running our own restaurant wasn’t so far out of reach.”

Since they are fairly new to Williamsburg, Mikey and Chelsea have enjoyed immersing themselves in the food and beverage culture here, while getting acquainted with their new community. They’ve spent some time visiting establishments near their home, such as the Virginia Beer Company, Old City Barbeque, and Amber Ox, a recently opened brewpub adjacent to William & Mary’s campus.

Despite their culinary pedigrees, Chelsea and Mikey have always preferred restaurants with a cozier, more casual vibe.

During a visit to Williamsburg, they were having a meal at Shorty’s Diner on Merrimac Trail, when serendipity struck. “We looked out the window and there it was – the vacant Texaco gas station across the street,” Chelsea says. In Charleston, she had worked at a restaurant that was a renovated gas station, something she thought was exciting and trendy.

“We saw that vacant Texaco and we just

knew,” Mikey says. “We fell in love with that whole idea in Charleston. We knew we wanted a place where we could put our spin on fine dining, but in a fun, relaxed atmosphere with a lower price point.”

Atmosphere and design aside, though, it comes down to the food.

Growing up, Chelsea remembers cooking with her grandmothers when she was as young as two years old.

“With my maternal grandmother, I’d make carne asada and pupusas and all of those wonderful things,” she says. “And with my grandmother on my dad’s side, we were always baking pastries. I remember food, family, big parties. It just brought everyone together. So that was a large part of my upbringing.”

Because food and cooking were so ingrained in her, she studied culinary arts while attending high school, but sports were also a passion back then. “I lettered in culinary arts, and traveled to competitions, but was mostly into sports as a kid. I was on the USA traveling team for volleyball.”

When an injury ended Chelsea’s sports career, she wound up pursuing her other love – food. She spent two years in England, where she took classes at London’s Le Cordon Bleu

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culinary school. Ultimately, she returned to the west coast and finished the program at Le Cor-don Bleu in Portland, Oregon.

“At the end of the program you have to do an internship at a restaurant, so I chose to pursue restaurants in Washington, D.C.,” she says. For his part, while he was in college, Mikey says that he wasn’t sure what direction he wanted to take, professionally. So, the avid surfer moved to the Outer Banks where he surfed by day and worked as a dishwasher in restaurants at night.

“That’s when I kind of fell in love with the restaurant life,” he says. “I decided to go to culinary school and completely immerse myself in it.”

He trained at the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan, then spent three months in France completing his internship. He followed that with a year in Argentina, then five more in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, before moving to D.C.

“It’s been a lot of fun,” he says. “But we are ready for a different pace at this stage of our lives, both professionally and personally.”

Mikey and Chelsea have embraced their new community. They look forward to some-day starting and raising a family here, but for the time being they are happy to share their home with a beautiful Chesapeake Bay Re-

triever mix named Daisy.

The two might bring very different culinary styles and ideas to the table, but they are both very much outdoors people. They enjoy hiking, and they love everything associated with the local waterways – boating, fishing and crabbing.

“We’ve spent time in D.C. and also Charleston,” Mikey says. “But Williamsburg is close to family, offers good schools for our eventual children, and close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay. That makes it perfect for us.”

As the days grow warmer and the temperatures start to rise, Chelsea and Mikey Maksimowicz look forward to getting outdoors and visiting the Williamsburg Farmers Market in Merchants Square. “We’ve heard wonderful things about the Williamsburg Farmers Market,” Mikey says. “We look forward to visiting, meeting the farmers and discovering some great locally-sourced products.”

The young chefs are passionate about food, family and their new hometown, and they very much look forward to making new friends in the business. “In every city, we’ve noticed a tight knit group of the restaurants,” Mikey says. “We look forward to becoming part of that here.” **NDN**

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SAMUEL FORAKER



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Wise Beyond His Years

By Alison Johnson

In his eight years as an actor, Samuel Foraker has worked with people from all walks of life. At age 12, he has bonded with white and black, rich and poor, young and old, Christian and Jewish, acting amateurs and Broadway professionals.

Those relationships have made Samuel even more passionate about treating everyone with respect and kindness, especially after his own experience as a target for middle school bullies last fall.

“It doesn’t matter if people look different, or

if they have something that makes them different,” Samuel says. “What matters is on the inside. Everybody matters. No one should make you feel like you’re not someone special.”

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Samuel, whose growing resume includes four years starring as Tiny Tim in Busch Garden's annual winter production of "Scrooge No More!" As an actor, singer and dancer, Samuel has seen diverse castmates turn into a family by the end of each season.

"We all have the same dreams," he says. "We all want to make good memories for ourselves and for the people who come to watch us. We want to spread happiness. We don't want a show to come to an end, because we get really sad to say goodbye."

The third of four children, Samuel began acting at age 4 when his parents Carl, a product support specialist, and Karen, a homemaker, noticed his high-energy, outgoing personality. Samuel remembers his debut role clearly; dressed as Uncle Sam, he had to stand onstage at the Kimball Theatre and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

"At first, I was like, 'Wow, I can't do this,'" he recalls. "I was really nervous, but then I got out there and said it and I thought, 'Oh man, I love this.'"

Acting has been both a refuge and a source of confidence for the sixth grader, a straight-A student who admits to perfectionist tendencies. Now homeschooled through Liberty University Online Academy, Samuel juggles a rigorous curriculum with his roles and acting, music and dance classes. Sometimes, he brings a laptop to performance venues to finish work during downtime.

"There are a lot of responsibilities in the world, and as an actor it's nice to walk away and be something you never thought you would be," he says. "You get to submerge yourself in a new world and feel new things. Then later, if I'm doing schoolwork and think I can't get through it, I tell myself, 'Come on, you did four seasons at Busch Gardens. You can do some simple work for school. You can keep going.'"

Articulate, sensitive and deeply connected to his Christian faith, Samuel does admit to getting jitters at times. "The way I handle it is to remember that all I can do is my best," he relates. "The only thing I get very nervous about is losing the chance to spread joy, to bring the audience on an adventure."

Samuel also has learned to handle occasional rejections at auditions. "It's usually not about them saying you can't do a part, that you're not good. It's that you're just not what they're looking for at that moment. Like sometimes they only want someone with brown eyes and brown hair, and sometimes they want someone with blue eyes and blonde hair."

While obviously wise well beyond his years, Samuel is also just a regular kid in many ways. He loves computers, spaghetti, Papa John's pizza, the animated movie "Sing" and the Netflix series "VeggieTales in the House." He also likes math, playing piano, serving at his church, Liberty Baptist at York River, and participating in youth activities through Liberty Student Ministries.

For the past three summers, Samuel has been involved in Stage-Lights Theatre for Children, performing in "Wizard of Oz, Jr.," "Alice in Wonderland, Jr." and "The Lion King, Jr." The latter show offered him one of his most challenging roles, Shenzi the hyena. "I had never played a villain before, and I had to learn quite a few lines," he explains. Tiny Tim, though, has been Samuel's favorite role to date. Busch Gardens cast three people in the prominent part during its Christmas Town season, so Samuel performed in a third of the shows – about 50 in total.

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Alexander Cavitt is a college student at TNCC. He will soon complete his Fine Arts degree, with Honors. Alexander was one of the winning entries in the 2017 Student Writing Contest. His paper, "Offshore Drilling, Detrimental or Beneficial?" is but one example of the hard work, diligence, and perseverance Alexander has demonstrated, not only at TNCC, but in his life.

When Alexander was 3, his mother, Margaret Cavitt, was told by his pediatrician that he would possibly never speak and that he had "pervasive developmental disorder," to which she said, "What is that?" The doctor said, "Autism." Recently, Margaret shared, "There are no words to describe how proud I am of Alexander. I am overwhelmed. I have watched, first hand, how hard he has worked to get top grades and to do his best to make his teachers proud."

Nancy Bailey (pictured above) is a Professional Counselor at TNCC and coordinates accommodations and services for students with disabilities. She said, "Honestly, Alexander makes my job easy. He is proactive, independent, and a strong self-advocate!"

Alexander also works, does community service, and participates in several Arc programs, such as, Open Art Studio. Alexander says, "Drawing, painting, and pretty much any type of creative art are my things. I love classic rock and roll music, and I like being a student at Thomas Nelson."

Alexander is The Arc.

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He was assigned an afternoon shift one day and an evening shift the next, followed by a day off. The experience included badge swipes for park entrance, shift clock-ins, microphone checks, warm-ups and meals with the cast. Samuel also played a partygoer during group scenes.

The schedule can be overwhelming. “Sometimes it wore me down,” he says. “My mom helped me a lot with getting through it, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.” Over time, he has learned not to procrastinate with school, he adds. “I remind myself that if I want to get my work finished, I need to just start it rather than sitting there thinking about it, and that it will be fine whatever grade I get.”

Samuel hopes to be a full-time performer as an adult, ideally in a combination of roles on Broadway and in television, movies and Christian films. He has auditioned for a few TV roles already, including parts in a History Channel series and a mayonnaise commercial, albeit unsuccessful so far. He has considered the possibility of living in New York City one day, but he more often reflects on how grateful he is to have so many opportunities in his much smaller hometown.

“In Williamsburg, there are lots of theater-related things to do,” he notes. “So many friendly people are in this town, and I love it. It has opened many doors for me.” He describes one of his acting coaches, Naomi Marrow, of what is now Backstage Theatre Productions, as his hero. He was devastated when the British woman passed away in 2016. “She just always stood by my side,” Samuel says. “She taught me all the basics of acting and improvisation, and she was such a good person.”

Not everyone has been friendly and supportive, unfortunately. Samuel doesn’t shy away from describing the painful bullying that began when he started middle school in 2017. He believes he was judged for being “too hyper” and having acting jobs at such a young age. By November, he had left school to begin studying online.

“People who had been so nice in elementary school turned cruel, and it broke my heart,” he says. “I just think everyone should enjoy living life and follow their own dreams. There is never a reason to make others miserable.” To his credit, Samuel also refused to change himself. “If they have a problem, that’s their fault. I don’t want to be somebody who is dull and doesn’t care.”

Happily, Samuel has developed close friends outside of school, one boy in particular who is always kind to both him and his younger brother, Preston, 10. Speaking of Preston, Samuel is excited that his sibling may be catching the acting bug too.

“He might audition at Busch Gardens next year,” he says. “I’m hopeful that I will get a part too, but if he does and I don’t, I’ll be cheering him on like crazy.” Samuel also is close with older sisters Kathryn, 21, and Olivia, 18, and dotes on the family’s Maltese dog, Fritz. His family has always accepted him, he notes, even if they don’t always love how loud he can get when he practices vocal projection.

Samuel Foraker knows he’s lucky to have found his passion so young, although he understands that he may need some kind of “extra job” to pay the bills as he tries to make a living as an actor. He’s working to improve his weakest area of performance, dance and enjoying just being himself, in a community of people who also embrace diversity.

“Being a child performer has helped me to really explore friendship with those on the same journey as I am,” he says. “I just enjoy the fact that I have my whole life to learn about acting.”



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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

All Sisters & Brothers

By Narielle Living, Editor

The word “home” often conjures a cozy image and carries a feeling of warmth and safety. Home is the place we come back to time and again, the place we are comfortable, the place we are accepted and loved. Olanrewaju Lasisi, however, has made the entire world his home, especially Williamsburg, which he sees as a

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place to love and explore.

A PhD candidate at William & Mary (W&M), Lasisi (as he prefers to be called) came to the United States from Nigeria in 2016 in order to study at the university. According to him, his experience here in Williamsburg has been beautiful. “I’ve never been so comfortable as being in Williamsburg in my life. I tend to see Williamsburg as a home far away from home, and everyone here as my brothers and sisters from another mother.”

Lasisi studied archaeology as an undergraduate when he lived in Nigeria, and he came to Williamsburg to continue his studies at the suggestion of a professor. “I’m an archaeologist, so I studied archaeology. When I finished I met Professor Gerard Chouin, a professor of African history who teaches here at William & Mary. I had sent him an email about my research work in Nigeria to clarify something and ask some questions. He was already developing another site in Nigeria, and he said it was a good time for us to meet. He was the one who advised I apply to study abroad.” Lasisi studies the archaeology of defensive ditches, including ancient walls that surround kingdoms. He is continuing his work in archaeology with the Anthropology Department at W&M and expects to be here for another few years.

Archaeology is a passion for Lasisi, and that shows clearly when he speaks about the subject. “One of the basic questions we ask is what happened, where, when, how and why did this happen. There’s a saying that if you don’t know where you’re coming from, then you don’t know where you’re going. All this endeavor is for us to understand what happened in the past. How did the humans lead in the past, and how did they solve problems. Once we know how they solved problems, then we know how we can solve our problems today.” He goes on to describe the possibility of a wall surrounding a kingdom, with the wall having been built at a time when there were no tools that would help build the wall. “No tractors, no bulldozers, no mechanized farming technique, no digging apparatus. How did they do that? You start looking at indigenous technology and see that they were prolific toolmakers who were able to solve their problems without computer technologies. If we are thinking about our ancestors as being prolific then we should think of ourselves as much more prolific. So we tend to relate, open a window into the past, a mirror to see the present and a lens to project into the future about how far we can go in life. Who is going to tell us about this past if not the archaeologist?”

When Lasisi first came to Williamsburg, he wasn’t sure what to expect, but his first experience affirmed his decision to study here. Upon his arrival, he was scheduled to initially live with a woman named Rachel. “She was an alumna of the William & Mary anthropology department,” he says. “I think they posted a message on the internal email. Who wants to host a Nigerian for two weeks before he gets settled with accommodations on campus? That was in 2016. Rachel hadn’t met me, but both she and Lauren, another wonderful person, agreed to host me for one week each.” Lasisi was stunned at the offer, especially since neither woman knew him. The day he arrived, Professor Chouin picked him up at the airport and drove him to Rachel’s house. “I met Rachel, I met her husband and I met their nice cat. I felt right at home. They

were feeding me,” he adds, still surprised at this act of generosity. “I didn’t have money on me because it was a bad time to travel out of Nigeria at that time. I didn’t know how I was going to cope. They were my stronghold, they gave me what I needed. They were feeding me. I was so touched. For one week, they took me around Williamsburg. I felt so happy. A week later I went to Lauren’s house and experienced the same thing. That was how I knew that during my stay at William & Mary, no, in my lifetime, I would be nice to everyone I meet because it touched me. They had never met me, but they were nice to me. Why should I not be nice to people? So I got a moral lesson. Be nice to everyone.”

Lasisi does his best to make that his personal code. “When I was going to the United States everyone in Nigeria said I had to be careful because of my color, blah, blah, blah,” he says. “But when I got here it was totally opposite. Like in my church, there is no barrier based on color. It’s the same thing at the college.”

He works as an assistant and teaches classes in his field. For Lasisi, this is a wonderful opportunity to meet and get to know more people. “It’s nice,” he says. “The students are fine. Someone once told me he was having problems with his professor because of his color, and I said boy, I don’t know what you guys are talking about, because I don’t feel anything. I feel everything is fine. Seriously, in class there are beautiful students. When I look at everyone I don’t see color or white, I just see beautiful students. It’s just me and people, me and humans.”

Although Lasisi notes that the campus of W&M is diverse, he finds it less so when he ventures beyond the grounds. “I think that’s normal. In terms of population, you can’t expect everywhere and everyone to be 50/50. It’s expected to lose that balance outside of campus.”

The difference between Williamsburg and Nigeria is vast, making this an interesting place for Lasisi to explore. Nigeria is the rainforest of West Africa. Typically, the rainforest only has a dry season and a wet season, so if it’s not rainy it’s going to be so sunny. December has what is known as the harmattan period, when a very cold, dry wind blows in from the ocean. It never snows in Nigeria, meaning that Lasisi’s first experience with snow was magical for him.

“The snow, to me, is something so special and amazing because I’ve never seen it in my life in Nigeria,” he says. “It snowed in Colonial Williamsburg last night, and it is so cool. Everything I’m seeing in Williamsburg is so new to me.” When Lasisi first arrived and was asked by his host, Rachel, what he would like to see, he knew his answer immediately. “I said to her once I open the window everything I’m seeing is so new, and that’s the truth. The trees, the street, the houses, there are new structures I’ve never seen in my life, so I don’t need to go anywhere else. Let me see Williamsburg. I’m still seeing.”

Lasisi is adamant that the people around him are amazing people and encourages the community to continue generating positive energy. “Just keep doing what you’re doing, because you have no idea whose mind you are changing. For good. Because I have never felt any hostility at all from the people, then it puts me in the position to be very good to everyone, whether a person is good to me or not. Being good to a person can change that person to be a better person in the long run.” NDN

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DAVE WUNIBALD



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Commonalities

By Brandy Centolanza

When it comes to celebrating diversity David Wunibald, an active member of the Temple Beth El synagogue in Williamsburg, focuses more on finding the commonalities he has between people rather than the differences. It is

a lesson he learned while serving in the U.S. Army.

David spent 28 years in the Army, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He traveled the world interacting with various people during his time

in the military, which helped him develop an appreciation for different people and cultures.

“There are people from all walks of life who join the Army,” David says. “They range from those who may have had legal problems as a

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youth to those who are well educated and highly motivated. There are people of all different ethnicities, sizes and shapes. But none of that matters. No one cares about age, race or orientation. We are all different yet we are all the same. We make it work.”

Instead of worrying about what people look like or where they come from, members of the military work together on a common task. They are focused on doing their job well.

“I’ve met all different kinds of people in all different parts of the world, and yet we all focused on the task at hand,” David says.

He feels it should be the same in civilian life with everyone that we come across.

“We are all diverse,” David says. “We all have different religions, work, education, life histories and backgrounds. Do we focus on our similarities or our differences? Wherever I go, I always look for the similarities. Our commonalities far outweigh our differences. If we take the time to get to know someone, look inside, and increase our understanding, we can find the commonalities and only good can come from that. The potential good that comes from greater understanding is immeasurable.”

David grew up in Nebraska, surrounded by

people of varying faiths. His maternal grandfather was a Baptist minister, while his mother was Presbyterian and his father practiced Judaism.

“I attended a Methodist College and belonged to a Lutheran fraternity,” David says. “Some of my best friends were Catholics. I had a lot of exposure to different faiths. I grew up in an interfaith household and we celebrated a lot of different holidays. I learned a lot about respect. My mom was respectful of my father’s faith, and he was respectful of hers. It also taught me to be receptive to other ideas.”

As he got older, David began to more fully embrace Judaism.

“I always knew that I was Jewish,” he says. “It just felt right to me. I always knew it was my path, and I never veered from it.”

He became active with his synagogue in Nebraska. In 2005, while serving in Afghanistan in the Army as an Operations Officer, he saw the need to provide better access to religious services for soldiers. David took on the additional duty of serving as a religious lay leader, or a civilian rabbi, for other Jewish soldiers and government civilians working in the area.

“It was a good experience for me,” he says.

“I got to know many of the chaplains very well and developed a great working relationship with them in our efforts to support the soldiers.”

Every Friday night, David and a group of non-Jewish volunteers led a convoy to a distant location in order to conduct services.

“They all dedicated part of their one day off per week to help get me to another site so I could lead services for the troops,” David says. “I was, and still am, amazed and thankful for their dedication to enabling a small band of Jewish soldiers find a time and place to worship. We really helped the soldiers while we were there. I also helped coordinate Catholic and Protestants services. Everybody had a place to go.”

David and his family relocated to Williamsburg in 2006 after David was assigned to Fort Monroe in Hampton. Now retired from the military, David works as a defense analyst at Fort Eustis.

Not long after moving to Williamsburg, David became active with Temple Beth El.

“We were very pleased with the rabbi there, and it just felt like a place where we could see ourselves and become involved,” David says.

Temple Beth El is the only synagogue in Williamsburg, and is unaffiliated, welcoming



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Jewish people from all backgrounds as well as those with interfaith families. David started out serving on the synagogue's education committee. Later, he was asked to join the board of directors, and served as vice president. He also served as president for four years. Currently, he is in charge of maintenance for Temple Beth El's building and grounds.

David enjoys the diversity within the Temple Beth El community, which ranges from those who are just learning about the Jewish faith to those who grew up as Orthodox Jews, and everything in between.

"We have everybody here, people from all over who do a lot of different things," he says. "It is a varied community, and we've found a level where we can co-exist and have a great religious experience."

David is pleased to see that Temple Beth El's Rabbi, David Katz, is working with other local religious leaders on an interfaith council.

"Increasing understanding and building coalition is far more powerful than remaining separate, and this is a fine example of what can be accomplished when we open our minds," David says. "The rabbi really works to bring out

the best in people. It's important that we stop focusing on differences and see what we can do hand-in-hand to help heal the world. There is a Jewish phrase for that, Tikkun Olam."

Beyond Temple Beth El, David is also active with the Boy Scouts. "My father was a Scout, and I am an Eagle Scout," he says. "One of my sons is an Eagle and another is working toward becoming an Eagle. I've been involved with scouting for 25 years."

David is the Committee Chairman for a troop of roughly 100 Boy Scouts, who go on monthly camping trips and work on numerous community service projects throughout the year. "I enjoy helping young boys become responsible, self-reliant, confident young men," he says. "I like helping to shape them as they grow within the Troop and become just great young leaders."

A father of five, there seems to be no downtime for David. "We have three teens in the house now, so we lead an incredibly busy life with music, sports, Scouts and academics, and then life at Temple Beth El."

Family, faith, community service, sports, and music are all important components of David's

life. On the rare occasion that he does have some free time, he prefers to tinker with cars or build small projects. His very first car, a 1939 Buick Coupe, still sits patiently in his garage, and he hopes to one day restore it.

David and his family enjoy calling Williamsburg home. "I love the proximity to so many things we like to do: the beach, the mountains or Washington, D.C.," he says. "The amount of history we walk across every day is incredible." On one of their first walks in Colonial Williamsburg, David and his wife, Julie, stumbled upon the Taliaferro-Cole House and Shop. Julie, who has been doing genealogical research for more than 35 years, discovered she had a direct connection to the Taliaferro family. "We didn't know about that before we moved here," David says. "So, that's a nice tie we have here. We also have a daughter who works as a junior interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg, so it feels like we've come full circle."

David Wunibald is inspired by the people he meets every day either through Temple Beth El or the Williamsburg community at large. "We love it here," he says. "Raising a family here is such an enriching experience." NDN



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MODERN DAY FAMILY



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

By Narielle Living, Editor

Sometimes diversity can be an important feature in some aspect of our lives, perhaps becoming a deciding factor in a life choice or a reason to move to a particular area. It can be the reason to travel to a vacation destination, or it can add flavor to some characteristic in our surroundings. For Andrea Grimes and

Tony Pleasant, however, the fabric of who they are is so woven with diversity that they usually don't think about it.

Andrea grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and came to Williamsburg in 2006. Tony is from Prince George county and came to Williamsburg to be with Andrea. Their story

is one of a modern romance. "We met on Match.com about six years ago," Andrea says. "He contacted me, and the funny thing was it usually took me at least a month to give a guy my phone number, but I gave him my number that night. We talked until three in the morning, and that was that."

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When their relationship reached the point of moving in together, they decided on Williamsburg because Tony says it was easier for him to uproot and come here. Andrea loves Williamsburg, and while Tony likes the area, too, it was a bit of a change for him.

"I'm a country boy. I grew up surrounded by cornfields on all three sides and train tracks a hundred yards behind my house. It's an adjustment to live this close in a subdivision with people all around you."

Andrea is widowed, and Tony is divorced. Both have children, who are mostly grown. Andrea has six children, and Tony has two. "My two oldest, my twins, are from South Korea," Andrea says. "We adopted them as babies. After that, every two and a half years one was born, like clockwork. The twins are the oldest, the one in college is the youngest."

Tony goes on to say that his twin boys are 31 years old and live in Richmond. "It's ironic," he says. "I was born and raised in the country, and they hate the country. They moved

to Richmond and got an apartment together. They are not coming back to the country."

Both Andrea and Tony have diversity between them with their children, but their family diversity goes one step further. Andrea is Caucasian, Tony is African American. Most of the time they don't think about it. "Our family has always been multi-racial," Andrea says. "We just don't think anything of it."

In general, nobody else seems to think anything of it, either. Tony says he has not witnessed any overt reactions to the two of them being together. "I haven't noticed anything. Maybe a glance, but then they take it in and go back to what they're doing. It's like it's no big deal, really, at least in the circles we're in."

When he moved to Williamsburg, Tony decided to start attending church with Andrea. Used to attending a small, rural church, he began going with her to a Lutheran church in Williamsburg. "I was born and raised a Baptist, and that's what I relate to predominantly. When I moved here she was already a mem-

ber of King of Glory, Lutheran church, so I go there. I actually joined last year, and I'm a member now. I kind of think of it as taking the best of both and blending them together. All in all, they have similar beliefs. The rituals and formalities are different but what it boils down to is pretty much the same thing."

Andrea notes that she was flexible about religion and would have tried something new with Tony. "I certainly wouldn't have minded going to a Baptist church if that's what he wanted, but he didn't have a church here."

Both Andrea and Tony have jobs that they love. Andrea is the writing tutor at Thomas Nelson. "I taught college writing in Baltimore for twenty-something years." Although she does not write for publication, Andrea has recently begun a blog. Her blog is about her son, Stephen, who died in 2016.

"No mother should bury a child," she says. "I don't mind talking about it, but people aren't comfortable with it. People think if they ask about him, they'll bring me down. Sometimes

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I don't know what people think, because they don't mention it to me." It is easier for people to discuss death, she says, when it is related to someone who is older. Beyond that, some don't know what to say. "People will say things like, he's in a better place. But I just want my son back. I don't know if people think it's contagious and that's why they won't talk about it." Her blog, rememberingstephen.blogspot.com, is a way for her to share memories of her son while continuing to work through her grief.

Tony has done a number of jobs over the years and is currently a registered nurse. "Ironically, I work in hospice," he says. "There's a very high burnout ratio with this job. It's not so much the emotional toll, although that affects some people, it's everything else around it. The paperwork is tremendous. I come home and do three, four and sometimes five hours of paperwork a night. I can see why people get burned out after a while, but I love the job. I love working with the families and making a difference with people at that point. I'm in it

for a while, and we'll see what happens down the road."

Tony says that his twins, although they have been on their own for a while, are supportive of his relationship with Andrea. "They've come over for dinners and different events. My kids are kind of like me, they're subdued, and they don't express a lot of emotion about things. They enjoy coming over, and they like her."

Andrea says that her kids love Tony. "My kids, at least my youngest son, definitely think of him like a father, because his father died when he was 12. He thinks of him as Dad now and sends Father's Day cards. My daughter does, too."

In the end, Andrea and Tony are two people who are very much in love and have created their own family. The diversity, although it exists, is secondary in their lives. "We're boring, but I think that's the point," Andrea says. "We're just a family. We have 3 different skin tones, and we're boring. We eat Chick Fil A and we go to the movies and we fall asleep

on the sofa in front of the TV. We argue over whose turn it is to feed the cat. I don't think anything makes us different or unique."

"The thing about Williamsburg is that it's a melting pot," Tony says. "So many people come here to retire, and they're from different parts of the country. The military is here, so you already have that diversity, and I think because of that people are more accepting."

They agree that they've never felt socially ostracized by anyone, including neighbors and church. "We love Williamsburg," Andrea says. "We bought beach property in Chincoteague and one day we'll go there, but I can't see ever leaving Williamsburg."

The future looks bright for this modern-day couple as they navigate the ups and downs of life together. But some of that brightness might perhaps be coming from the twinkle of the ring Andrea Grimes is now wearing on her left hand, a recent gift from Tony Pleasant and an indication of the long future they have together. NDN

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Diversity as Strength

By Dawn Brotherton

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Sitting in the miniature chairs at a small table in an open room full of colorful teaching materials, neatly aligned shelves of work and rolled up rugs in a basket, Beverlee Mendoza is right at home. As a teacher for the Williamsburg Montessori School Children's House program, she has lived in Williamsburg for the last 30 years. To her, Montessori feels so natural because it is very much like how she was brought up in Trinidad, learning the most important things at her mother's side from an early age. "We

were actively involved in everything at home. If she was cooking or baking, we were right here, sharing in making the dough, stirring the pot, opening the oven or cutting the greens," Beverlee says. Her family was not the exception for this type of teaching. It was normal in her community for the children to be very involved in the running of the household. It was part of being a member of the family.

Beverlee moved from Trinidad to New York to attend Montessori training when she was 27.

The schooling she completed in her country didn't transfer to the U.S., so she had to start over. It was an adjustment for her five-year-old daughter, Reba, as well when she came from the southernmost Caribbean island and a warm climate, to the U.S. and a snow storm in December. Those weren't the only adjustments that had to be made. Beverlee and her daughter felt the firsthand effects that sometimes come with living in a diverse community. At times, Reba and her Jewish friend were left out of playdates or

- Story continues on Page 39

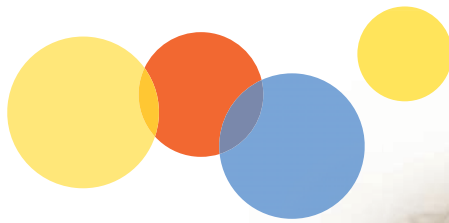
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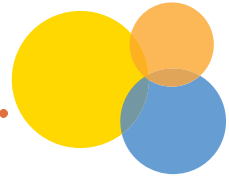


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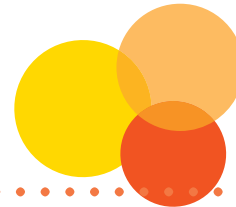
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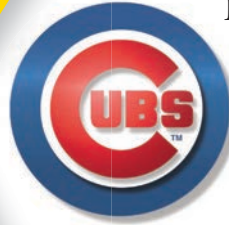


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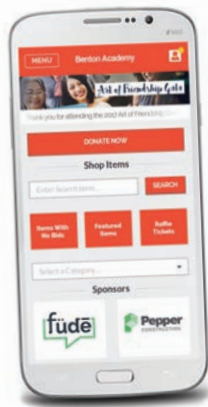
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activities sponsored by others in her class. Reba was a bookworm and quick learner in Trinidad, so her mother was not happy that Reba was initially labeled as an at-risk student, presumably because of her skin color and her accent. It didn't take long for the school system to spot their error and place her in the gifted program instead. Reba continued to excel through her graduation from Bruton High School and on to law school. She is now a successful attorney in Richmond.

Beverlee also continued to grow and shine. In addition to her Montessori training, she received her bachelor's degree from Christopher Newport University and her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from William Howard Taft University. But Montessori is her passion. She is now the Lower Plane School Coordinator and a Children's House Directress for the school.

The Montessori teaching method is based on scientific theory that Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, educator and innovator, developed after observing children who were labeled as incapable of learning. She had lived through two world wars and was ada-

mant about teaching respect and coexistence with cultures and religions. Because of this, she crafted the peace curriculum that is presented to toddler classes and middle school students alike. It starts with your basic grace and courtesy - please' and 'thank you', 'may I have a turn'. It extends to studying world religions and cultures in elementary and middle school. The students learn to compare and contrast ideas, so they walk out with the sense that they're one piece in this very big world, and they are all important and all valued.

"Montessori environments are a reflection of how the world should be. It is based on respect for nature, people and things. Diversity equals strength, learning and acceptance because each person is unique and special and should be cared for," Beverlee states. The Williamsburg Montessori School has a lot of diversity within its small population of roughly 145 students. They have teachers and faculty from seven different countries, and students with parents representing at least 15 countries. Although the kids notice a difference in skin color, speech patterns or religious practices, Beverlee says they don't really see it as significant. They are

all part of the same community, and they talk openly and naturally about everything, without being concerned that they will be ridiculed.

At the beginning of each school year, Beverlee starts with the same reinforcement of kindness and manners, which are the foundation behind the Montessori learning environment. Children learn to listen to others, and they are allowed to agree or disagree respectfully without being told that their point of view doesn't matter.

"They are free to express their thoughts without fear of reprimand or feeling like they are going to be wrong or that it's not okay," Beverlee says. With that comes applicable respect, for themselves and others.

The children are also good at discussing religion. "I wish we as adults could emulate what they are doing," Beverlee says. One child mentions he believes in God. Another chimes in that God is in the wind and in the trees. Another answers that that isn't the way his family believes, but that's okay. The kids share their thoughts and opinions, and no one gets offended.

The Caribbean lilt of her voice is still prominent even after more than 30 years in the U.S. "A lot of adults say I have an accent," Beverlee



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says. “But not once in my 30 years has a child said to me, ‘I don’t understand your words’, or, ‘you have an accent.’” The kids can accept and understand her better than some adults because they are more open to people being different.

As early as lower elementary, students are taught how to go into the community, how to ride a bus, and how to approach people for help. They know how to express their thoughts respectfully, listen, mingle with people from various groups, and engage with older people. They can do it with a great sense of confidence that makes them successful in other aspects of life. The grace and courtesies they learn make discussions in the classroom more engaging.

“With the way of life we cultivate here, students are able to transfer that to the outside world, listening, divulging information without fear, and receiving information with respect,” Beverlee says. “Because that’s a main part of the curriculum in Montessori, it’s going to be natural to carry to the outside world.”

Beverlee is a firm believer that children can flourish at many tasks from a young age. “You give them the right tools, you show them how to do it the right way, and they will know it

and they will excel. They are capable human beings.” She has great confidence a child that has been steeped in the Montessori teachings will go out into the world a more self-confident human. They aren’t afraid to share ideas. They know they are capable and aren’t afraid to apply or show their capabilities. She believes the strong foundation will make it easier for the students to stand up for themselves and others, not giving in to cultural biases or acts of disrespect. They know how to disagree respectfully and learn from other’s opinions.

“They know what’s it’s like to work hard, to accomplish tasks. It’s because they have this great sense of joy to learn and discover. So, if you have this great joy to learn and discover, you will go and do things. It doesn’t seem like a chore or burden,” she explains.

She trusts that different cultures can help heal the world. A child from India or Africa may hold the key to curing certain diseases. Other countries have different plants, or even ways of doing things, that may be just what we need in the U.S. to make a breakthrough. It starts with young children.

“If a child is not given an opportunity be-

cause of the way he looks or talks, I think a country will be less well-off,” Beverlee says. She feels that if children were given equally good schooling and healthy food to nourish them, our society would make more advances in medicine and technology. “When we deny people because of what our prejudices are, we do a great disservice to our planet and our world.”

What is the best thing we can do to embrace diversity in Williamsburg? Beverlee says we need to talk more. “People need not be afraid. Because when we talk and when you get to know one another, you find out people are more alike than different. They may eat different foods, or speak differently, or look different, but we are all the same.”

One of the reasons Beverlee Mendoza is such a staunch supporter of Montessori teachings is that she feels it better prepares the children for their future in a diverse world. They learn to be more accepting, to be strong against adversity and to work collaboratively within a community. “Peace, justice, fairness, love, equality and making sure human beings are taking care of ourselves and the planet. That’s what living in a community is all about.” NDN

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SHARON DORSEY



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Bringing Everyone to the Table

By Erin Zagursky

Sharon Dorsey was about to retire after more than four decades of service to Colonial Williamsburg (CW) when she was offered something she just couldn't pass up - an opportunity to lead the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts.

"Everything I've gone through in life has prepared me for what I'm doing right now," she says. "Everything happens for a reason."



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Sharon, executive director of diversity and inclusion for Colonial Williamsburg, knows what it's like to be excluded and discriminated against, and she also knows the power of inclusion. She grew up in York County during the days of segregation and attended an all-black school. One day, her father told her and her siblings that they were changing schools.

"I said, 'Where are we going and why are we going there?'" Sharon says. "And the only explanation that he gave us even then had nothing to do at all with race. He said, 'I want you to have the best educational opportunity you can have. I want you to go to school where you have the new books and not get the used books.'"

When the siblings arrived at their new school, known as "the white school," Sharon says, they quickly became aware that they were not welcome by many. However, the principal, Sharon says, made the children feel included, making sure they were protected and treated equally.

When Sharon was just 13, her father died, leaving her mother to provide for nine children. To help out, Sharon began looking for a summer job as soon as she was old enough, and someone recommended Colonial Williamsburg. She was hired as a busgirl for a restaurant called The Motor House Cafeteria, which was located near where the Woodlands complex is today.

Sharon got married right after graduating from high school and moved away, but she soon returned to the area and was looking for a job. Once again, someone recommended Colonial Williamsburg, telling her that there were openings in reservations. However, when Sharon arrived at human resources and asked about those openings, she was told they didn't exist.

"I went back and forth with the receptionist, voices were being raised, and the human resources manager at the time comes out and says, 'Let's just call over there and see if there really are openings.' So that's essentially how I was hired," she says.

"When I got into Colonial Williamsburg, I found out that at that time, they actually had two job postings. One was affectionately known then as the 'white jobs,' and the other one was the 'black jobs,' and I was applying for a job that wasn't on the appropriate list."

Despite that start, Sharon said she immediately met people at the organization who were wonderful to work with and made lifelong friends. She spent her first five years back at CW on the hospitality side of the organization before becoming a benefits clerk in human resources, and she has remained in that division since.

"I worked all disciplines in human resources, but I found out very early on that what I enjoyed most was really working with the people and making a difference in their lives," she says.

After spending decades helping CW employees through all stages of their careers, Sharon was considering an early retirement. But then Mitchell Reiss took the helm of CW as its president and CEO.

"The world was changing to a more diverse world, and Mitchell, as the fifth president I worked under, came in and said, 'We have to represent the world we're creating. We're seeing diverse guests. How can we provide an exceptional guest experience for everyone if we don't have inclusive representation and opinions reflected in our business decisions?'"

Mitchell started by diversifying the board and then the senior leadership team of the organization, including more women and people of color as well as people with different areas of expertise and experience. "It's refreshing when you go to the senior leadership team meetings now because you have all these different perspectives and energy," Sharon



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Mitchell also asked Sharon to lead the diversity and inclusion efforts, and though retirement beckoned, she stayed.

“Part of it was, wow, it’s about time. I didn’t think I’d stay here long enough to see this happen,” she says. “There is a certain freedom in knowing I could actually retire whenever I want to, but this is important enough, this is exciting, this is going to go a long way in ensuring the organization is going to continue in the future, and it’s so relevant to what we’re doing in the historic area.”

Two surveys administered by CW, one in 2014 and another in 2016, indicated that employees wanted the culture of the organization to change so that is was more inclusive of the ideas and opinions of its staff members instead of what they perceived as a top-down hierarchy with unnecessary bureaucracy and information silos.

“They articulated that they had really good ideas but they didn’t know who they could give them to, and so Mitchell did several things from that. He said we will have diversity and inclusion at Colonial Williamsburg,” Sharon says. “He also charged us with putting together a cross-section of employees across the divisions. Every division of the organization was represented and, again, different backgrounds, different levels: front-line, director-level, different races, etc. It’s called the COMPASS Team -- Culture of Mutual Purpose, Accountability and Shared Stories.” The members of the team, created in August 2016 under Sharon’s leadership, received training from an external company and have since been instrumental in putting together Colonial Williamsburg’s mission and vision statements as well as its list of core values: courage, inclusion, relevance and craftsmanship.

“That came from a diverse group of people working together,” she says. “They are so fantastic. They are so talented. I just love working with them so much.”

The team also helped human resources refresh its onboarding and orientation programs. This year’s initiatives include working on CW’s employee recognition programs.

The team members meet with Mitchell monthly.

“He relies on them to be candid with him, and they are,” Sharon says. “And he values their opinion.”

Although progress has been made, CW’s diversity and inclusion efforts are still in an educational phase, Sharon explains. “We don’t actually teach; we more try to reflect it in our interactions with staff. When people hear diversity, they automatically think race and they think Affirmative Action and they think statistics and all those things, and it’s not that at all. Although the corporate phrase is diversity and inclusion, if I could change it, I would put inclusion first because I think if you have the inclusion, you’re going to have the diversity. So, we are still educating our employee population about what diversity and inclusion is, and that’s even at the senior level.”

Still, the efforts are beginning to permeate every aspect of CW, from guest interactions to employee relations. People have expressed interest in joining the COMPASS team, which will rotate members every six months, and employees are bringing their ideas to Mitchell. “I’m excited about the direction we’re going in,” Sharon says.

When she retires one day and is pursuing her genealogical research hobby, she hopes to see CW continue to evolve as a place that truly cherishes diversity and inclusion. “I’m just a big believer in how things can move when you have everyone at the table,” Sharon Dorsey says. NDN

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Next Door Neighbors Business



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Full Speed Ahead

By Greg Lilly

Debby Wood Venne expanded her business when others would have scaled back. She was diagnosed with breast cancer two years after losing her father, Jim Wood, to prostate cancer. “Watching his battle was much harder than facing cancer twice myself.” During her first diagnosis, she had two small children, a one year old and a four year old.

“The sign for the business, Bob’s Upholstery, had blown down,” she says. She didn’t have

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the energy to get it set back up. “I would have had to decide where to put the sign and meet with the city. I was so busy. I had a second child and didn’t have time to worry about the sign. I thought, people will know where I am. People should know where to find me or my phone number. I ended up not doing anything about it.” With the two children and the business and her cancer treatments, she let the customers come to her, sign by the road or not.

“Most of my accounts were commercial accounts then. If a residential customer didn’t know me, they wouldn’t have been able to find me,” she admits.

Six years after she stopped treatments, she was diagnosed with breast cancer for a second time. “They caught the cancer early. I ended up doing chemo again. I had a double mastectomy. Then I thought, ‘Okay, my kids are in school during the day. I could do this business more than part-time. I hired another guy to help us, and things started getting busy.’”

Debby’s family moved to Williamsburg when she was a year old. “My dad was in the

military. We left Norfolk to come to Williamsburg where he started law school at William & Mary. My parents decided that this is where they wanted to stay. We did not miss a football or basketball game. Before they built the Alumni House, all the alumni events were held at what was the Hospitality House. It was the continuation of the party, and we were there with all the other little kids, hiding under all the banquet tables.”

She remembers the many school field trips to Colonial Williamsburg. “Dressing up in colonial costume, playing colonial games, and finding your way through the Governor’s Palace maze were always the highlight of the annual CW field trip,” she says. “The Grand Illumination will always hold a special place in my heart. My husband and I had our first date there. And of course, the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony. In those days, there were only a few handfuls of people at either of those events compared to that of today.”

At Busch Gardens, Debby spent many days wandering the property as a child and as a teen.

“Those were lasting, happy memories at Busch Gardens, whether it was from our family outings in the 1970s, having the opportunity to participate in a TV commercial for the park in the early ‘80s, or concerts with friends as a teen, it was one of my first memories of independence when my mom would drop me off.”

Debby had attended public schools through tenth grade and then went to Walsingham Academy, graduating from Walsingham in 1985. Not sure what she wanted to do as a career, she started a jewelry business while in college. She had worked in her father’s law office since the time she was eleven, answering phones and filing, and going to law school became a possibility in her mind.

“I did not go to law school,” she says. “My dad, Jim Wood, had gone into practice with Bobby Bland and Bill Stone. Then he decided to go out on his own. He had a law student who clerked for him.” She explains that Virginia is one of the few states that allow law apprenticeships. “My father had a law student leave the law school and ‘read law’ with his firm. That

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person took the Bar Exam and became an attorney. So, I thought I would read law at my dad's firm. By that time, a second guy was clerking for Dad and decided he wanted to read. Virginia only allows one reader at a time, so I didn't pursue it. I realized that maybe law school wasn't for me."

She continued to weigh her options. Her family owned the property where Bob's Upholstery was located. "Bob, who owned the business originally, had passed away. His daughter decided she didn't want to continue. I took it over. That was 18 years ago."

Debby had taken sewing and upholstery classes before. "I thought, 'I can do this.' At that point I thought I was very skilled and knowledgeable," she says with a laugh. "Those first years were a learn-as-you-go period."

She learned and worked with skilled upholsters. Then her father died. Then she was diagnosed with cancer, twice.

Instead of scaling back, she accelerated her commitment to the business.

She decided to add a fabric store, Savvy Swatch, to the building. "I wondered what to do up here (on the main level of the building on Second Street). This was a long-term dream and goal to incorporate the fabrics into the business. From there, I decided I had made a commitment to do this and I'd go through with it. In our workroom, we now have four full-time upholsters and one apprentice. Up here, we have the fabric store and interior designers."

She has made the business a one-stop destination for upholstery and for home design, adding rugs and a line of paint to the offerings.

"The whole main floor, the fabric shop has come to fruition. From a production level, we have doubled the business. The fabric shop brings customers in for high-end fabrics at a great price. That was my whole thought. The upholstery labor is the art in this business. It's very difficult to find people who do it well. I'd rather not compromise on the artisans downstairs. The fabric offerings keep the workroom working. That was the whole point. That's why I started the fabric business. It has kept the workroom working. We do all kinds of upholstery: residential, commercial, marine and automotive. I have two second-generation upholsterers who learned from their fathers who had their own shops."

The Second Street area is a glimpse of old Williamsburg filled with local merchants, crafts people, independent restaurants and a brewery. "This street has a neighborhood feeling," Debby adds. "I love this location. This shop has been here for almost 50 years. We're growing, but I want to stay in this building."

The future holds an updated website, more social media interaction, a huge selection of fabrics, rugs, and paints, plus interior design services and the artisans of upholstery in their workshop downstairs.

"None of which would be possible without the continual support of my family, my extended family, all those great people who I have the opportunity work with, and my friends," Debby Wood Venne says. "There will always be stress in life, no matter who you are. I'm just fortunate that I have all these people around to remind me to take a deep breath every now and then." NDN

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A LIFETIME OF TENNIS

By Greg Lilly

“Tennis is a great lifetime sport,” Tomas Gonzalez says. Tomas is the new director of tennis at Kingsmill Resort. “We moved here most recently from Richmond and now live in Toano. The Williamsburg area is a great place for me and my family. And for tennis,” he adds.

Tomas grew up in Chile. His father was a tennis player. Tomas picked up a racket because he saw how much enjoyment it gave his dad. “I enjoyed hitting the ball and the exercise part of it. It was challenging and fun. That’s what got me hooked. No one is good when they are

learning, but I liked it. I liked the challenge.” He explains that an underlining goal of most children is to be able to one day best their parent at the game, especially when that parent has taught them. “So that was an incentive for me to continue playing and to continue to im-



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prove,” he says with a laugh. “But, most importantly, I played tennis because I enjoyed it.”

His father was patient with Tomas. “That helped me learn. The parent relationship can be tricky when it comes to coaching. He kept it fun. When I got older, we knew the best fit was to start training with a group and a coach.”

By the age of 14, Tomas had become skilled and played in large tournaments. By the next year, he started competing in national and professional tournaments. “That turned into international tournaments and travelling. A lot of players dream of playing professionally. That was the dream I had. I got there before I thought I would, in terms of maturity. I was not at the level that I probably needed to be at 15 or 16 years old. But, I had goals, and for me, it was about being able to stay at that level.”

Tennis was a priority for him, but also he knew that the path to professional tennis required a 100 percent commitment. “At that time, I didn’t want to put all the eggs in the same basket. I always enjoyed going to school, as well. As I was playing, still young and not sure where tennis would take me, the opportunity to play college tennis presented to me.” Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois recruited Tomas. “That gave me the opportunity to balance academics and tennis.”

At Southern Illinois, he majored in business and played tennis. “When I graduated, and was probably at the peak of my tennis career, I had a summer job coaching at Harvard University in Boston. At the beginning of that summer I fractured my ankle.”

Back at Southern Illinois University, they offered Tomas the assistant coach position. “I took it because I wanted to stay engaged in the game, and I always enjoyed coaching. That’s when I decided to pursue a master’s degree while I coached at the university. It all came into place, slowly. But, it was frustrating because I still had the hope to continue playing. This injury set me back about a year.” He stayed active with the teams, hitting and training. By the time he recovered, he realized that being a pro tennis player was not what he wanted to do anymore. “At that point I didn’t know if I would continue to coach or go into a business job. Coaching took over.”

He explains that the best coaches are the ones that care about the players. “Tennis coaching is not just about teaching forehands and backhands. It is about seeking what is best for the individual. Everyone will have different goals, and being able to understand the player’s goals is a huge part of how successful you can be with different players. A lot of it is being able to remove any obstacles that a player may bump into, whether those are technical, mental or emotional. It’s not just about technique. To me, the technique is the easy part. Getting a player to come together mentally and emotionally is what really helps them break through.”

After he coached college for about three years, he travelled and coached a few players who were playing on tours. An opportunity arose for Tomas to be the pro at the Philadelphia Country Club. “That was a good experience where I was working at the club and working with high-performance players. These players were very driven, looking to go from the junior level to playing college tennis, which is the step between junior and pro levels.” He had a success getting his juniors into college programs. One group in his academy had every player go on to play

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Division I college tennis, with the exception of one who had a legacy to Duke. "Duke recruits the players from the top 30 or 40 in the nation. He was a great player, but not way up there to get recruited by Duke."

From Philadelphia, Tomas had the opportunity to go to Richmond to the Country Club of Virginia. "I continued that momentum of working with a lot of juniors and adults on their game." Then Kingsmill came up. "I really liked the vision that the new ownership, Escalante, has on tennis and the support they are giving to the program. They are very committed to the growth of tennis in the community. I thought I was a good fit for Kingsmill."

For his neighbors looking to get out of winter hibernation and back onto the courts, Tomas says to start gradually. "You don't want to go from little activity over the winter to 100 percent when the days turn warmer. I would recommend to start with light exercise, not necessarily on the court, but go for a jog or a bike ride. Develop core strength, which are muscles that are very engaged on the tennis swing. Gradually start doing that prior to jumping onto the court. As you begin to play, build up the time on the court. Hit some. Take a lesson to sharpen your game. Then slowly increase the amount of play so you're not going 100 percent on your first time out."

A big part of tennis conditioning, he explains, is injury prevention, and that is based on core strength and flexibility. "I suggest classes such as yoga and Pilates to my clients. These are exercises that are low impact and good for core strength and flexibility."

Tennis programs at Kingsmill start in mid-March. Tomas and his team offer programs for players of all ages. "That first junior program is very fun for the children starting at the age of three and is about developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Our ten and under program has smaller courts and equipment adapted to the size and development of the junior player. We go up to the high school players in performance. On the adult side, we offer all levels from beginners to single strategy clinics, double strategy clinics, a stroke of the day and Sunset Tennis – an evening clinic. Also, a popular program is Cardio-Tennis, which is a combination of high tempo exercise with music while hitting tennis balls." Other big draws to the tennis program are the events. "Leagues, class instruction, clinics, lessons and camps," Tomas lists, "social events, competitive events, and fun & family events."

Anyone can be a member of the Kingsmill Club and be part of the tennis program, he stresses, not just the people who live in the Kingsmill community.

Still new to the Williamsburg area, Tomas and his wife, Rosario, are enjoying getting to know the community. "We have three young children: Lucas, Emma and Tomas, Jr. We have three dogs as well. It's a very busy house."

Tennis can be as intense as a player may want or as casual. "There's not just one speed. You can play at any age," Tomas Gonzalez says. "You can play tennis with your family, make a lot of friends playing the sport. I find a lot of value in a sport that you can play your entire life. I have met and worked with players in their 90s. They started when they were ten years old. I hope that anybody in the community who has thought about playing tennis finds the encouragement to try it. Most people that come out and try tennis continue to play." NDN

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Just Dance!

By Greg Lilly

Lynda Byrd-Poller is one of our neighbors participating in this March's Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars. The event raises funds for Literacy for Life and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Virginia Peninsula.

Lynda has served on the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters in the past. "We had mentors in the schools, particularly at the high schools and middle schools, come in a couple of hours a



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week to just talk with the students and make sure they were on track academically,” she explains about one of her favorite programs.

“Literacy for Life, formerly Rita Welsh, is probably just as close to my heart. My dad wanted to get his GED. My father left school when he was a junior to help with his family, so he never graduated. It was later in my life before I found that out. It took a lot of courage on his part to go back to school and get his GED. He would talk about his classes. Brenda Mitchell was his teacher. He adored her. He would come home and do his homework. There was this one time he had an end of the year celebration. They had written a poetry book. He read his poem at Barnes & Noble. All the family went to hear him. That was really nice. We were so proud of him. He passed before he could actually earn his GED.”

Her father was the Reverend William Byrd, Jr., pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. “My father became a minister the year I was born,” Lynda says. “He was a supply pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church and he worked between Shiloh and Mt. Pleasant before Mt. Pleasant asked him to be their pastor.” Lynda was born and raised in Williamsburg, just as both of her parents were. “My mother’s family came from the

Cheatham Annex area, and they were displaced onto Penniman Road. My dad’s family was originally from where Camp Peary is and displaced to Grove and Highland Park.”

Her father pastored for many years then retired and later joined Lynda’s family church, St. John Baptist Church on Penniman Road. “My mother worked for Bruton Heights Elementary School and that’s where she retired from when it shut down. She spent 37 years as the cafeteria manager. I was born and raised around schools.”

As a young child, Lynda would line up her baby dolls, stuffed toys and reluctant cousins to play school. “I always wanted to teach,” she says. “Well, except for the young fantasy age when I wanted to be a detective because of Charlie’s Angels. That was so cool back then,” she adds with a laugh.

Her sister, Patricia Byrd-Pritchett, was a teacher, so when Lynda graduated from Lafayette High School, her sights were set on becoming a teacher as well. At Hampton University, she studied elementary education, pre-k through eighth grade. “I quickly realized that nursery school was not the right age for me. Then I just fell in love with middle school. I love that age group. They are funny. They take

themselves way too serious. As parents, we take them even more serious than that. It’s a fun age. It’s an age where they are coming to know themselves. I began as a teacher at Berkeley Middle School.”

She taught at Berkeley for three years, and then Toano Middle School opened. “That was exciting to help open a new school. My husband, Vaughn, is in community and housing development. It seems like every neighborhood he was working on, he worked with the adults and I worked with the children. That was a neat experience. I enjoyed my time as a teacher.”

An opportunity at the central office opened and Lynda worked under Dr. Carol Beers in academic services. “My job was minority achievement coordinator. I did that for four years, and I loved it because I got to teach students on Saturdays and during the summer, but I also got to do professional development. It was an opening to things I could do as an administrator.” She went back to school for her master’s degree and an opportunity came up at Berkeley to be assistant principal. “I had missed being in the schools. I did that for two years. A principalship opened at Toano. Nothing happened on my time schedule. It moved a little fast, but I enjoyed every step of it.”

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In 2006, she stepped down as principal and went into Human Resources. "I started studying that and I was hooked. I loved it. I went back to George Washington University and earned my doctorate. That's what I am doing now."

At her office, she received a phone call from Scott Johnston, a former Lafayette High School classmate and one of the organizers of Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars. "I had a lot going on," she says. "When he asked me about doing this benefit, I didn't know if I had the time. I had danced when I was at Hampton University, in the Terpsichorean Dance Company. That was some years ago and I wasn't sure if I was ready to start again, physically. He told me about the two organizations that would benefit from the event - Big Brothers Big Sisters and Literacy for Life. I had emotional connections to both. Scott played on my heart. I agreed to be part of it."

Steve Kirvan, owner of 7 Cities Ballroom, is her dancing partner and coach. "He is awesome. He plays to my intellect. He knows I know how to dance, but he's constantly telling me to get out of my head. I'm thinking about the steps too much. Just dance."

She admits to being a logical person, wanting

to break down the dance into its steps. Steve's mantra for her is: Just Dance.

"Feeling it, because if I can do that, it translates to the audience. We want the audience to be entertained. We want them to feel what we're doing, and we want the dance to be believable, not robotic, but fluid. That's what Steve is stressing with me."

Being part of Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars is more than learning/feeling dance steps. Lynda's participation has given her renewed insight. "I feel stretched in a lot of different ways. I'm learning something new about my capacity to commit and dig in, which is something that had been lessons of my parents for a long time. Be focused. Have a plan. Break that plan down. You will get to your goal. I guess this is confirmation for me. If you commit to doing something, somewhere along the middle, you think, 'I can't do this.' The lessons that my parents had shown me, just from their pure work ethic is - keep at it and do what you can do today; tomorrow will worry about itself. You will get there. That's one lesson that I can take away."

Lynda and Vaughn have four children. "They've been watching," she says, "and that's another reason to keep going and show them

how this fits into who you are. This is my community and I want to give back. That's an important message to leave to them. That's my motto to my kids - leave the place better than you found it.

Their oldest, Brandon, calls from Rhode Island to check on how Lynda is progressing in her practice schedule. Kayla, a sophomore in college, stays connected to her mother's progress. "My teenagers, the twins (Eli and Olivia), keep asking if I'm sure I can do it!"

Lynda sees her life as a service to her neighbors through her career in public education. "An author in the education field once said that we get all the blueberries in public education. We don't get to stand at the Farmers' Market and pick out the blueberries that we don't particularly want to deal with, the challenging or not fully ripened. That's what I love about public education. All the berries have value. I enjoy that. I love this community and being able to serve it in education, church and in activities like Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars. This has been a blessing for me." NDN

Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars is Saturday, March 3 at William & Mary's Phi Beta Kappa Hall. For more information: www.WilliamsburgStars.com

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Songs of Healing

By Greg Lilly

Songs and ballads passed from generation to generation, telling the tales of life and its struggles. Helen Hope Dillard spent many years singing around Colonial Williamsburg as one of the balladeers and many years helping her

neighbors as a local counselor, specializing in trauma and addictions.

“Those ballads we sang around CW were about human nature,” Hope says. “They are a wonderful mirror to the 18th century life. They

describe life the way it was, especially for women. Women of that time had to hide who they were and what they wanted. The songs reveal they were a little passive-aggressive in getting their desires met.”

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Hope grew up in James City County on her family's dairy farm. "Lots of work to be done, a good life, close to the earth," she describes. "My father's name was Joe Wenger. He came down here from Ohio in 1937. He farmed and milked cows twice a day until he was 80 years old. He was a hard worker."

Hope graduated from James Blair High School. All the while, music filled their home. "My mother was a singer. When I was growing up, she used to sing those old songs. That just flowed easily for me to start doing that. I began playing the guitar when I was in third grade. We were a family of musicians. My mother and father loved to sing."

After James Blair High School, Hope headed to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to major in music and voice. She had always been interested in people's stories and what made them do the things they do. She decided that she would transfer to William & Mary to earn her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology.

"I started at Eastern State Hospital. I did my practicum there, which was really meant to

be. I was very interested at the time in doing family counseling, to see how the homeostasis balances out, how when one person is dysfunctional the other person has to over-function. I've always been interested in the deeper things of why people are the way they are and people act the way they do."

While at Eastern State, Hope became interested in the field of addictions. "I gave lectures, ran small groups and counseled families there."

During this time, she went back to W&M to earn her Master's Degree in Counseling. She worked with Williamsburg Place and the Williamsburg Center for Therapy. Then she decided to go out on her own.

From her family counseling, she honed her interest in addiction and trauma. She explains that trauma and addiction are connected. "For example, children of alcoholics are traumatized by that. They take on different roles to deal with it. Usually if there is an alcoholic, there is an enabling spouse. So, the children take certain roles as a result of that dysfunction. A lot of times, there is trauma." Family roles and

dynamics become confused. "A child can take on many different roles. There is the 'parent-child' who feels they need to take control, take care of the siblings or make dinner because the adults are not dealing with it. There's the 'lost-child', who emotionally disengages. The 'perfectionist' feels they need to be perfect in order to make the family look good. The 'scapegoat' acts out and is angry because of the dysfunction. These are ways to take the pressure off the dysfunctional parents and the child put it on themselves. That's traumatic. Very often, they get stuck in those roles throughout their lives. I see these patterns in people 50 or 60 years old."

At the Williamsburg Center for Therapy, Hope did work with EMI (Eye Movement Integration), which is related to EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) that she utilizes today. "It's integrating the emotions and the intellect together when it comes to trauma. Re-experiencing the trauma and putting it into more perspective. I started using EMDR and it really works. That's one of my specialties. I also did some additional train-



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ing in EMDR to be able to do that more effectively.”

Her experience and expertise in trauma accounts for more than fifty percent of the clients she sees. “There’s a long gamut of trauma going from Iraq, rape or murder at one end of the spectrum, to maybe getting bullied as a child, watching your parents fight or feeling helpless at the other end. Actually those childhood traumas are harder because children soak all that in and internalize the feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, powerlessness and of not feeling safe. That becomes a part of who they are because they are too young to process it and realize it is not their fault.”

She explains that usually a series of events reinforces those feelings. “It becomes an Achilles’ Heel – wham, bam, every little thing enforces those feelings the child has internalized and has not been able to process.” Trauma is cumulative, she states. “It’s much harder when you are really young and unable to process it than it is when an adult works through trauma from war or other violence.”

With PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disor-

der) or other trauma issues, most people think of it in relation to soldiers, but it can be anyone.

“It’s harder when you have internalized things as a child, and it becomes how you feel about yourself as opposed to an isolated incident or experience. Those cumulative experiences become part of your psyche. I’ve seen clients when they have had sexual abuse as a child. Because it is so painful, they push it away. I can’t do anything until they start remembering.” Memories bubble up. Flashbacks occur. A movie or novel or song may trigger recognition. “Clients start to remember things as they are able to handle them. It’s a snippet here and a snippet there. It’s good that it comes gradually because the person may be overwhelmed.”

Counseling, she explains, is very much a personal relationship between her and her clients putting together uncovered puzzle pieces. “I love to get to the bottom of it to see how I can help. EMDR really does work. It is fascinating and I enjoy it.”

Hope has started a women’s group that deals with trauma and the affects of trauma on

relationships, particularly dysfunctional marriages. “Also I’m getting into spirituality,” she says. “I’m very interested in people who have had near-death experiences and am thinking about starting a group and researching that. Anyone can call me if they have experienced a near-death experience.”

Folk songs sung by Hope and her family on the farm piqued her interest in why people do the things they do. She veered her career from music to psychology, but kept singing as a balladeer at Colonial Williamsburg. The songs echoed the daily trials and struggles of the residents of Williamsburg then and now.

“I balladeered at Colonial Williamsburg for about 25 years while my children were growing up,” Helen Hope Dillard says. “While I did counseling, I continued to balladeer because I just love it. I play the guitar and mandolin and do the 18th century Celtic music. I was very blessed because I was able to do both singing and counseling. I still sing a little bit, but the balladeers are no longer at Colonial Williamsburg. I was very blessed that I was able to do that and that I’m able to do this.” NDN



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Daffodil FESTIVAL

By Greg Lilly

Deborah Wesolowski coordinates the annual Daffodil Festival held in Gloucester each spring. Her roots run deep in her ancestral Gloucester and in her hometown of Williamsburg.

Debbie was born in Williamsburg in Bell Hospital off Jamestown Road on Cary Street.

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Debbie's father was an entertainer and entrepreneur, creating events around Sea Island and opening a night club, the Golden Isles Club, on Saint Simons. "Every Saturday night, they would broadcast live from the Golden Isles Club. I would go watch those rehearsals as a four or five year old."

Eventually, her parents divorced, and Debbie and her mother moved into the "big house" on Capital Landing Road with her grandparents.

"Growing up in Williamsburg, you are inundated with history, which I learned to love. But, after a while, I wanted to get away. I went to New Mexico. That's where my first marriage was. I was privy to the first big idea created in a brainstorming session that I was a part of. My ex-husband was a police officer in Albuquerque. He'd gone through the police academy with a buddy, Greg MacAleese, who had worked as a journalist. There had been a rash of break-ins, and a guy had been killed at

a gas station." Debbie's husband invited MacAleese and his wife to join him and Debbie. They brainstormed on raising money to create leads for the police, since the police department's budget was tight. "We wanted to find a way to get the public to give the police leads. If the lead panned out, there would be reward money. In this brainstorming session, we found that there were few eye witnesses to the crimes. I thought a movie to show what had happened would help jog people's memory." Along with the local TV station, they created a reenactment of the crime. "It was played on KOAT TV and generated a lot of leads. That became the Crime Stoppers program. It began in Albuquerque, New Mexico in an apartment at four in the morning from two couples brainstorming."

They had their children in Albuquerque, but sadly divorced. "I found myself creating ideas and being involved in Albuquerque. I helped with fundraising, club events, fashion shows. My children were getting older and all

my family was here, so I decided to move back to Williamsburg."

Back in Williamsburg, Debbie worked around town in such diverse jobs as DJ at Adams nightclub in the 1980s and as the move-in coordinator at Chambrel. "As Move-In Coordinator, I had marketing ideas and interior design skills, which I had developed in New Mexico. That led me to start my own business of creating environments for Alzheimer's patients. I've retired, but still consult on that."

In the past few years, Debbie pulled back from her career to deal with some family issues. "I am a breast cancer survivor. I was involved with that some. We had a lot of cancer in the family. I lost a sister. I became more involved with my family, including my mother. She was 94 when she passed four years ago. I have six children that I have raised." When life calmed somewhat after her mother passed, Debbie wanted to get involved in events again. "Mom was from Gloucester County. I heard that the Daffodil Festival was looking for someone to

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help coordinate it. The Moores and the Nuttalls were prominent in Gloucester. I knew Gloucester. I remember those daffodils everywhere.”

That first year, 2014, that she was with the festival, Debbie observed. “I learned the history of the festival. It goes back to the first settlers of Gloucester bringing daffodil bulbs in the hems of their skirts. A woman who was a great entrepreneur and was about to lose her estate decided to sell the daffodils – ship them up to Baltimore. They were the ‘poor man’s rose’ on the docks of Baltimore. Gloucester became known for daffodils.”

One of her goals is to have the festival change and evolve over the years. The first public event is March 3rd, the unveiling of the festival’s limited edition print. “Regional artists submit work to the theme. This year is ‘Paint the Town Yellow.’ They create a piece of art that includes the daffodil and the theme. The art is voted on and we have a winner. The winner will be unveiled on March 3rd at Arts on Main

in Gloucester.”

The festival weekend is March 23rd & 24th and kicks off with a parade. “After the parade, we have the bulb tour. People who are gardeners can go to Brent & Becky’s Bulbs, that long established farm with antique, heirloom and new bulbs. The Daffodil Show is in Botetourt Elementary School. It is spectacular. At the festival, we generally have 150-200 vendors from all along the Atlantic seaboard, with fine art, crafts, quilting, really, anything you can think of, these vendors have. Our food court has a variety of menu items and live entertainment. There are children’s games and amusements for the younger kids. Also, the historic buildings will be open for tours.”

History repeats in Gloucester with the blooming of the daffodils. “I love watching the festival unfold, like the first daffodil of the season blooming,” Debbie says. “All the hard work that goes into it, from all the volunteers and the Parks & Rec Department, is amazing. Then when I see the smiles on all the visitors’

faces and to hear their comments, the joy that comes after a lot of work is so worth everything to me.”

Lining up the parade participants is the most fun for Debbie because she knows the weekend is beginning. “We gather in a big parking lot in the early morning hours. The anticipation is thick. I start working with the parade participants in early February, and it’s so fun to see what everyone has come up with and created.”

Another favorite aspect of the festival is seeing the art submitted for the annual limited edition print. “I’m an art enthusiast,” she says. But the crowning event is the daffodil show. “It is spectacular,” she adds.

“When it is all over, it’s pretty amazing,” Debbie Wesolowski says. “Everything comes together: the infrastructure, the people, the tents. All this makes the ‘happy’ bloom! If you love gardening, history, art, music, good food, crafts, it is all wrapped up in the Daffodil Festival.” [NDN](#)

DaffodilFestivalVa.org

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Hey Neighbor!

Please visit

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com,

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

To submit your non-profit event to Hey Neighbor! send a paragraph with your information to: heyneighbor@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

UNITED WAY OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA'S 2018 CAMPAIGN

Across Virginia, 39% of households struggled to afford basic needs in 2017. In the hope of change, the United Way of the Virginia Peninsula (UWVP) works towards moving 10% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Households and Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) Households out of poverty by the year 2023. United Way of the Virginia Peninsula's President and CEO Steven S. Kast states, "This year's United Way Campaign is a testimony to the hard working individuals who believe every individual can live healthy and productive lives." Let us continue this and create lasting change together. To donate, please go to www.uwvp.org.

Hey Neighbor!

MASTER WORKS CONCERT

February 26 and 27, 2018

The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) will present its third Master Works concert of the season, Couperin Craze. At this concert, the audience will step into the world of French baroque composer, organist and harpsichordist François Couperin for an evening of enchanting music. Both performances take place at 8 pm at the historic Kimball Theatre in Merchants Square, Colonial Williamsburg. The concert will be conducted by WSO Music Director and conductor Janna Hymes, who celebrates her 14th season with WSO in 2017-18. Online ticketing is not available for this concert. Please call (757) 229-9857 to purchase tickets.

Hey Neighbor!

SLEEPING BEAUTY MUSICAL COMEDY

March 3 and March 11, 2018

The Community Alliance for the Performing Arts will be presenting two exciting performances of "Sleeping Beauty," a Musical Theater Comedy featuring the American Youth Players. This is an Emmy Award winning show from the Prince Street Players, designed specifically for young audiences. March 3, @ 2 pm at the Kimball Theater in

Williamsburg and on March 11@ 2 pm at the Ferguson Center for the Arts, Peeble Theater in Newport News. Tickets are \$17 for children under 12 years of age and \$22 for adults. Call (757) 229- 8535 or visit our website at www.capafund.org and go under "Orders" to reserve your seats for this exciting upcoming performance.

Hey Neighbor!

HERB SOCIETY TO HOLD OPEN MEETING IN MARCH

March 13, 2018

The Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit (CTVU) of the Herb Society of America will hold an open meeting on Tuesday, Mar. 13, in Williamsburg. The program for the meeting, "Don't Put Anything on Your Skin You Couldn't Eat," will feature Elizabeth Lord, of Maidens, VA, owner of Elizabeth Lord Naturals. Open meetings provide non-members a chance to learn about the Herb Society's mission, programs, and local volunteer opportunities. The meeting will be held in the fellowship hall at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, and is free of charge. Light refreshments will be served at 1pm and the program will start at 1:30 pm. For more information, contact Donna Pratt at (757) 608-8929.

Hey Neighbor!

ANTIQUÉ APPRAISAL AND LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER FOR RESPITE CARE OF WUMC

March 15, 2018

From 10 am – 3 pm, Ms. Jo Anne Alley will give her expert opinion about your antiques or garage sale "find" and you will receive an informal written appraisal. Ms. Alley, whose expertise lies in appraising glass, china, porcelain, fountain pens and furniture. \$40 per person includes one appraisal item and a full plated lunch at Two Rivers Country Club at Governor's Land. Respite Care of Williamsburg United Methodist Church offers a social weekday afternoon enrichment program for seniors with special needs, while providing a gift of time to their caregivers. For more information on the event or the

Respite Care program, contact Carolyn Yowell at (757) 229-1771, ext. 354.

Hey Neighbor!

COTTAGE GARDENS

March 17, 2018

Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 am, open to the public. Local landscape architect and former garden director at Colonial Williamsburg, Gordon Chappell will talk about the history and design of cottage gardens and the plants found in them. The program is free, although a \$5.00 donation to help the Garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact Gordon at gordonchappell@cox.net. Weather permitting, after the program Master Gardeners will be in the Garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG YOUTH ORCHESTRA SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

March 18, 2018

Williamsburg Youth Orchestra will hold its Chamber Music Program and Middle School Brass & Wind ensemble concert at 5 pm at the Ewell Recital Hall at the College of William & Mary. This event is free and open to the public. The concert will feature six ensembles of trios, quartets, and quintet, as well as debuting WYO's first brass & wind ensemble. TRADOC musician, Sergeant Siegerdt, will conduct the brass & wind ensemble. Please contact the Executive Director, Tanya Song, for more information at manager@wyomusic.org or visit www.wyomusic.org.

Hey Neighbor!

DISCOVERY LAB AT VIMS - MARSH MADNESS

March 20, 2018

Discovery Labs are free, family-friendly programs provided each month by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR) at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point, VA. Designed with

elementary-aged youth and their parents in mind, each lab focuses on a different topic related to the Chesapeake Bay and our local environment and includes exhibits, demonstrations, and hands-on activities as well as a short presentation by a scientist from VIMS. On March 20th, Marsh Madness will take over the Discovery Lab as participants complete hands-on activities that teach about the importance of the wet and wonderful marshes found around the Chesapeake Bay. All Discovery Labs take place from 6-8 pm (presentation from 6:30-7 pm) on the VIMS campus in Gloucester Point. Registration is required due to limited space. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 to register and to find out more information on this and all upcoming Discovery Labs.

Hey Neighbor!

BIKES OUT OF HIBERNATION

April 7, 2018

Come join Williamsburg Area Bicyclists along with James City County Parks and Recreation for this FREE event happening at Chickahominy Riverfront Park on Saturday, April 7th from 9am – 2pm. Mechanics from local bike shops will offer free safety inspections and assistance for minor repairs. Guided fun rides of 5, 10, and 15 miles along the Virginia Capital Trail are scheduled to start at approximately 15 minute intervals from 10 am until 1pm. Riders under 18 must be accompanied by an adult, and all participants are required to wear a helmet. Light refreshments provided. In the event of cancellation, please visit wabonline.org or call the Activities Hotline at 757-259-3232

Hey Neighbor!

CONCERT- WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

April 12, 2018

The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra together with the Williamsburg Choral Guild presents the concert of the year! Music director Janna Hymes will conduct this collaborative concert featuring Shostakovich's Festive Overture, Op.96 and Beethoven's Symphony NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS MARCH 2018 59

phony No. 9. Featured soloists will be Colleen Daly, soprano; Ann McMahon Quintero, mezzo-soprano; Kirk Dougherty, tenor; Branch Fields, bass. Want to go? The concert will take place at the Williamsburg Community Chapel at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$50 /\$60 at www.williamsburgsymphony.tix.com.

Hey Neighbor! **HERBS A-PLenty! ANNUAL PLANT SALE**

April 14, 2018

The Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit of the Herb Society of America will hold its annual plant sale in Williamsburg from 8:30 am – 3 pm, rain or shine. This will be the first time the sale has been held at the Society's regular meeting venue, inside the fellowship hall at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road. The sale will feature a wide assortment of herbs, including harder to find varieties, as well as other garden-related items. For more information, contact Donna Pratt at (757) 608-8929.

Hey Neighbor! **19th ANNUAL WILLIAMSBURG BRITISH CAR CLUB & EUROPEAN CAR SHOW**

April 14, 2018

Preregistration must be received by April 7, 2018. All registered cars will be placed in a class for judging and award purposes. Cars must be parked with their assigned class to be eligible for awards. Trailer parking available nearby. Display cars must be driven onto the show field under their own power. Classes will be determined by preregistered entries. This is a popular vote car show. Judging and balloting will be conducted by the registrants. The number of preregistered cars in each class will determine the number of trophies awarded in each class. This is a rain or shine show. A portion of the proceeds will be given to FISH INC. Door prizes will be awarded and there will be a 50-50 raffle. This year our featured marque is Daimler. Email: wbcregister@outlook.com, contact: Roy Gavilan (757) 637-5902. Show hotel is Embassy Suites, 3006 Mooretown Rd., Williamsburg, VA, (757) 345-7606, rate is \$139 plus tax. Use code DLO. Reservation cutoff date is 3/16/18.

Hey Neighbor! **THE ROTARY OF JAMES CITY COUNTY PRESENTS 5 CONCERTS AS FUNDRAISERS**

April 14 - August 25, 2018

The Rotary of James City County's largest fundraiser of the year is a 5 concert series. All concerts are held at the Kimball Theatre from 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Tickets are \$20 a person or all 5 con-

certs for \$80. 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Williamsburg Community as Rotary is hosting the event to raise money for local organizations. The first concert of the series is The Michael Clark Band on April 14 (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/michael-clark-band-tickets-42033564523>). Other concerts are May 19 – BRASSWIND (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brasswind-tickets-42034048972>). July 28 - The Rhondel's (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-rhondels-tickets-42036330797>). August 25 - Pam and Bill Gurley with Fiddlesticks joined by Jack Cowardin and Bobby Hornsby (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bill-and-pam-gurley-with-fiddlesticks-joined-by-jack-cowardin-and-bobby-hornsby-tickets-420-36376935>).

Hey Neighbor! **DISCOVERY LAB AT VIMS - BE A BAY BUDDY!**

April 17, 2018

Discovery Labs are free, family-friendly programs provided each month by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR) at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point, VA. Celebrate Earth Day at the April 17th Discovery Lab. Through eco-friendly activities, crafts, and demonstrations, attendees will learn about human impacts on the Chesapeake Bay and ways they can lessen those impacts and lead more "bay-friendly" lifestyles. All Discovery Labs take place from 6 - 8 pm (presentation from 6:30-7 pm) on the VIMS campus in Gloucester Point. Registration is required due to limited space. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 to register and find out more information on this and all upcoming Discovery Labs.

Hey Neighbor! **THE WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LEAGUE DINNER CONCERT AND FUNDRAISER**

April 21, 2018

Popular Virginia performer, Frank Cubillo, will bring his spotlight performance of Frank Sings Frank for a memorable "AN EVENING OF SINATRA" to the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra League's spring dinner and concert fundraiser. After the performance and elegant 3 course dinner, the evening will conclude with a live auction and paddle raise. Funds raised will benefit the Symphony's primary purpose of providing Williamsburg area children access to musical education beyond the classroom as well as excellent orchestral musical performances that enhance our community's quality of life. Tickets are \$115/person. Reservations required by April 11, 2018. For reservations contact Marie

Mamikonian at mariamams@hotmail.com or (630) 390-6170. Sponsorships are also available at levels from \$250 to \$1,000. Details also available at <http://www.williamsburgsymphony.org/League/#specialevents>.

Hey Neighbor! **GARDENING FOR BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES**

April 21, 2018

Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 am, open to the public. Bob Schamerhorn, an award-winning nature photographer, will share information packed with tips and experiences on how to improve any property for a diversity of wildlife. Bob will show specific examples and results of a suburban landscape becoming inviting to a variety of birds, butterflies, insects and mammals. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. The program is free, although a \$5 donation to help the Garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact Bob at bob@iPhotoBirds.com. Weather permitting, after the program Master Gardeners will be in the Garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom.

Hey Neighbor! **DISCOVERY LAB AT VIMS - PLANT AND ANIMAL COLLECTIONS**

June 12, 2018

Discovery Labs are free, family-friendly programs provided each month by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR) at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point. The June lab will showcase different types of specimen collections - from plants, to insects, fishes, and mammals - as well as the tools and methods scientists use to collect and preserve specimens. Dr. Eric Hilton, Associate Professor at VIMS, will explain how scientists all over the world are using specimens from the VIMS Fish Collection. All Discovery Labs take place from 6 - 8 pm (presentation from 6:30-7:00 pm) on the VIMS campus in Gloucester Point. Registration is required due to limited space. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call 804-684-7061 to register and to find out more information on this and all upcoming Discovery Labs.

Hey Neighbor! **THE WILLIAMSBURG AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program is based at Williamsburg Jamestown Airport in Williamsburg. Our sole purpose is to train high school students to be pilots. Students must be

at least 16 years old and in the 10th, 11th, or 12 grade. Donations pay for the cost of this program. Please make your check payable and mail to: Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program, 102 Marclay Road, Williamsburg, Va. 23185. You may also drop your check off at the airport in person.

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 information, contact (Men) Gale King, rgking10@gmail.com; (Women) Sheryl Buckner, sbuckner88@gmail.com.

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

Ongoing

Every Monday, 1 - 2 pm. The Peninsula Agency on Aging has partnered with Shanti Garudasana, Inc., non-profit promoting mindful movement, to offer a free weekly Chair Yoga class. People with chronic pain and challenges with balance are welcome. At the Messmer Community Services Center, 312 Waller Mill Rd., Williamsburg, (Off Bypass Rd.). No registration needed; just drop by. Call 757- 345-6277 or email Information2@paainc.org if you need more information.

Hey Neighbor! **REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S CLUB**

Ongoing

The Monticello Woods Club House, 199 to the Monticello exit toward Jamestown. Second Monday of the month at 6:45 pm. HTRW is the only local Republican Women's club that meets evenings. For more information visit our web site: Welcome to Historic Triangle Republican Women or look us up on Facebook

Hey Neighbor! **BIBLE SUNDAY ON MONDAYS**

Ongoing

There is an comprehensive and in depth on going bible study and question answering session held at the Williamsburg library in Norge every Monday night starting at 6:00 pm. so if your bible study is lacking the quality of study that you need to answer such questions then you are invited to join us, see you there. Contact: 757-253-0172 or 7576046649

Hey Neighbor! **HOPE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER**

Ongoing

Hours: Monday- Thursday 10:30 am – 3 pm. Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 pm by appointment. 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. Located at 1315 Jamestown Road, Suite 202. Phone: (757) 229-6472. Visit: www.hopewilliamsburg.org.

Hey Neighbor! HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS IS LOOKING FOR FALL RELIEF VOLUNTEERS

Ongoing

Housing Partnerships is in need of volunteers to help us provide vital home repair assistance. We are a local nonprofit that provides emergency home repair assistance to our neighbors throughout the Historic Triangle. Volunteers assist with roof and flooring repairs, painting/sealing, as well as other minor repair jobs. Experience is preferred but not needed. We welcome all skill levels and are looking for help through November. Scheduling is flexible. If interested, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Kat Shaub at volunteers@housingpartnerships.org or at (757) 221-0225.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CONNECTION

Ongoing

A monthly luncheon from 12 noon – 1 pm with an optional Meet and Greet/Vendor Shopping Time from 11:30-12 noon. We are open to all women. We socialize, shop, enjoy a delicious meal, listen to an inspirational speaker and maybe make a new friend. Please join us at 11:30 am to socialize and shop, or for lunch and speaker only. Reservations are required. Our luncheon is held at Center Street Grill - 5101 Center Street, Williamsburg. Cost is \$14.00 all inclusive. Call Hazel Tillar for more information. (757) 229-4036.

Hey Neighbor! VCE MASTER GARDENER REGISTRATION

Ongoing

The James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners' Program is accepting applications for the Class of 2018. The entirely community based volunteer program is under the guidance and leadership of the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech and has been providing horticulture based programs for James City County and Williamsburg for over 20 years. Classes

meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 am – 12 noon, January 9- March 27. For application and more information, contact the VCE office at (757) 564-2170 or visit www.jccwmg.org.

Hey Neighbor! THE TIDEWATER VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (TVHS)

Ongoing

TVHS offers unique tours, lectures, social events, plus behind-the-scene adventures during 2017-18. "History in your own backyard" takes on a new meaning when you know what all TVHS has to offer. TVHS opens doors to "off-the-beaten-path" and "not open to the public" historic sites. Lectures by experts in their field provide information prior to tours to complete the experience. Bill Kelso, everyone's favorite archeologist, says, "You can read about history in a book but you can walk thru it here." To learn more contact us at 757- 259-9134 or visit us on the web: www.tv-hs.org or info@tv-hs.com. Lectures are open to the public. Call or visit the website for more information. Everyone is welcome.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays

Enjoy the heart of Williamsburg in Merchants Square while shopping in this producer-only market for produce, prepared food, fish, artisan cheeses, meats, pasta, cut flowers, and handmade soaps. Hours are 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. The market includes live music from 9-11 am. Chef demonstrations, Master Gardener exhibits, and exhibits along with local shops and restaurants. The market now accepts SNAP/EBT, credit cards and W&M Express. For information, call or contact 757-259-3768, www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com.

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@yjcwnaACP.org

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. 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) relies heavily 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. There is something for everyone. 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! 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! 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! HEAD START OPEN ENROLLMENT

Ongoing

Williamsburg James City County Community Action Agency's Preschool 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! 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. 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

For a complete listing visit
www.williamsburgneighbors.com

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

**BEGINNING
CONSTRUCTION
ON
PUBLIX**

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

Enjoy!

February 2018
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge



ADVANCED





Return to Excellence

Outpatient Joint Replacement at Tidewater Orthopaedics

Is joint pain keeping you from staying active, restricting you at work, or preventing you from doing what you love? At **Tidewater Orthopaedics**, we understand that joint pain can keep you from living life to the fullest. Our board-certified **outpatient joint replacement surgeons** are all specialty-trained in the latest joint replacement techniques to get you back in action quickly and safely.

Outpatient joint replacement procedures are performed at the CarePlex Orthopaedic Ambulatory Surgery Center, providing the best, most advanced orthopaedic care. The COASC is **the ONLY outpatient surgery center in the region to offer so many joint replacement procedures . . .** knee, hip, shoulder, ankles, knuckles, and more.

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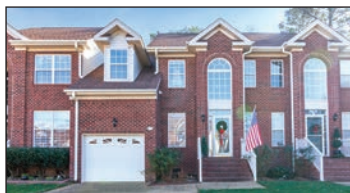
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