

November 2018

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VOL. 12, ISSUE 11

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Meredith Collins, Publisher

I believe that no matter what our circumstances are, there are always many things for which we can be thankful. Sometimes it isn't always easy to be in a thankful frame of mind, especially when things aren't going the way we want. That is human nature.

At times thankfulness can sneak up on us when we may be focused on our own problems and not in a giving mood. We can lose sight of how fortunate we are owing to our personal setbacks.

For example, when we bemoan being without electricity for a few hours when a storm hits then witness the devastation and destruction others are facing elsewhere in the country. It humbles us and reminds us how to count our blessings.

I am thankful for many things too. For people who enter my life whether they stay or eventually go. It is the time we have that I am most thankful for. There wouldn't be much meaning in life without connecting with others through grace, understanding and patience. It is true that the more love you give the more you get back. I have been taught this lesson in life many times over, and I am thankful.

We've interviewed several people in this issue that I admire for their spirit. They too are grateful for the opportunities they have been given in life, in love, in business, and living here in Williamsburg. NDN

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Antiques & Gratitude

By Brandy Centolanza

Bettiane Sweeney reached a major milestone this year. In August, she celebrated her 80th birthday surrounded by family. The special occasion provided the perfect opportunity for her to reminisce about her life and reflect on all that she is grateful for, including her five children, 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild as well as her career as an antique collector and dealer.

Bettiane is certainly thankful for the life she's built in Williamsburg. Though she was born and raised down the road in Portsmouth and also lived in Newport News, she has called Williamsburg home for more than four decades. She's resided in the same house for 46 years, raised her children here, and has especially loved working and now volunteering at Colonial Williamsburg.

"I have lots of wonderful memories of my children growing up in Williamsburg and learning all the history," she says. "We don't think of Colonial Williamsburg as a place that you go and tour. We look at it as home."

As a young child, Bettiane was close to her grandmother, Mary, on her mother's side.

"I was the first grandchild on both sides of my family for five years before my brother was born, so I was doted on," she says. "My grandmother taught me a lot of things. She gave me a lot of my confidence."

Bettiane first became interested in antiques thanks to her grandparents.

"Both of my grandmothers kept a lot of things," she says. "My love for antiques came from them. It's a comfort to me."

Her husband, Bill, whom she met when they were both performing in community theater in Newport News as young adults, was also an antique enthusiast.

"He didn't want to do yardwork, so he started antiques," she says.

Bettiane and Bill, who passed away in 1990, both began collecting antiques in their 20s. The pair lived in the Hilton Village area of Newport News at the time, and Bill would stop off at an antiques shop on his way home from work at Newport News Shipbuilding. He usually brought back furniture and other antique pieces.

"I still have the first thing he ever bought, an old desk," Bettiane says. "I will never get rid of it."

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Bettianne and her husband used to spend their weekends scoping out antiques, mostly American Federal furniture as well as furniture from the 18th century, at auctions throughout the area.

“We would take the kids along and lay out a blanket for them with some snacks,” she says. “In those days, we could take \$25 and buy so much stuff that we couldn’t fit it all in our car.”

The couple later built their house in Williamsburg around their antique collection. It is still filled with old tables and chairs, chests, desks, and other furniture, quilts, rugs and other textiles, country knickknacks and vintage items.

“A lot of it is stuff that I just like, but other stuff is here for the nostalgia,” says Bettianne. “I have my mother’s old piano from when she was nine years old.”

Bettianne’s husband began to take the hobby more seriously, researching antique pieces at the library and then tracking down items to later sell.

“He’d leave here early in the morning on a Saturday and would come home late at night,” she says. “He was always on the hunt. He just loved it.”

Bettianne and Bill started selling antiques at

shows in Richmond and then a friend suggested Bettianne open up her own antique shop. For a few years in the 1980s, she ran a store called the Dower Closet on Jamestown Road across from the Old Chickahominy House. Her shop carried old country furniture, Americana knickknacks and other merchandise.

“I’m a people person, and I loved to sit and chat with the customers,” she says.

Bettianne also became heavily involved with an antique show that used to be hosted each year at Walsingham Academy where her children attended school. She headed up different committees for the event through the years and even served as a chairperson for two shows.

“With five children, I was always involved in school projects,” Bettianne says. “I enjoyed working the antiques show at Walsingham the most because of my background. I liked picking out the dealers for the show because I could pick dealers who had things that I liked.”

In 1981, Bettianne stepped down from assisting with the antique show at Walsingham Academy to start her own show, The Holiday Antiques Show. The show is held each November at the Doubletree by Hilton hotel near Kingsmill. Roughly 1,000 visitors attend the show, which

features between 30 and 40 vendors from across the country.

“I used to travel all year long searching for dealers,” she says. “I am always looking for good dealers who have the very best stuff. Finding dealers is a gift.”

Now, Bettianne starts prepping for the show in early spring. Her children and grandchildren help out during the weekend of the show, selling tickets and greeting people.

“I have people who are loyal to the show and come every year,” she says. “I see myself as working for the antique dealers. I am here to help them out. I do the best I can.”

This year’s Holiday Antiques Show is slated for November 23-25 and will feature dealers selling antique furniture, vintage pottery, china, porcelain, and other artwork, jewelry, silver and more.

To Bettianne, the best antiques are all handmade products from either the 18th, 19th or early 20th centuries.

“We don’t do reproductions,” she says. “I also don’t advise buying antiques online. You want to be able to look at something, see it, feel it.”

And, yes, Bettianne still enjoys adding to her own personal antique collection. When her hus-

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band died, Bettianne started collecting ceramics in addition to her furniture and house décor.

“I’m always looking for unique pieces,” she says. “All of my furniture pieces were bought separately piece by piece. I don’t want anything that looks like what everybody else has.”

When Bettianne closed up her shop on Jamestown Road, she went to work at Colonial Williamsburg for 17 years. She even donated a few items from her antique collection to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Now retired, Bettianne continues to enjoy Colonial Williamsburg as a volunteer.

“I do tours in the art museums,” she says. “I talk to people about folk art, decorative art and ceramics. I collect a little bit of all of that. It’s been a lot of fun.”

Bettianne has also long been interested in genealogy and has spent a few years tracing her ancestry back to Jamestowne.

“I am a member of the Jamestowne Society,” Bettianne says. “My love for genealogy also started with my grandmother. She always loved history. It’s been a lot of hard work tracing my ancestry, but I love it.”

Bettianne enjoyed celebrating her 80th birthday over the summer. Two special birthday gifts included a trip to Boston to see a performance of the Boston Ballet as well as a train trip to Washington DC to see musician Andre Rieu in concert.

“The Boston Ballet has been on my bucket list,” says Bettianne. “My family surprised me with tickets. The Andre Rieu concert was a gift to myself. I’ve always been a lover of music and the arts. It’s all been very exciting.”

This also pretty much sums up what life has been like for Bettianne Sweeney for the past 46 years here in Williamsburg.

“I am definitely grateful,” she says. “Williamsburg is the best place for me to be.” NDN

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RITA METCALFE



It's all about people

By Lillian Stevens

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For nearly 27 years, Rita Metcalfe has been the face of Human Resources at William & Mary. On January 1 she will officially step down from her position and join the ranks of other friends and neighbors who are retired.

“This is a bittersweet moment in my life,” Rita says. “but I’m ready to see what the next chapters will hold.”

Over the span of her career at W&M, the university’s senior director of human resources operations has served under five presidents and five department heads.

For her part, Rita has found William & Mary and VIMS to be a wonderful place to work all these many years. It’s bittersweet because she will miss the sense of community she has come to know and love on both campuses.

Rita arrived at W&M as the university’s benefits manager on April 16, 1992.

“I came here from my former job at the Hampton Housing Authority,” she says. “I enjoyed that job, but our home was in Williamsburg, our daughter was a baby and I was looking to find a job here.”

She was well-versed in governmental benefits because that was part of her job at the Housing Authority. With her strong HR background, especially in VRS (Virginia Retirement System), Rita says it was fairly easy to pick up her new responsibilities. One of her responsibilities at the time was to oversee benefits for the university’s approximately 2,000 faculty and staff members. It was an uphill climb at first.

“All of the benefits staff had just vacated HR, which was then known as ‘personnel services.’ So, there was just me and a workman’s compen-



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sation person who reported to me.

Rita's job involved orientation of new employees and conducting information sessions when new systems were implemented.

"In 1992, the state had just introduced a new health plan called 'Key Advantage' to state employees," she recalls. "There were hundreds of people showing up for the information sessions I was conducting for faculty and staff. Many of them were angry about the state making such a dramatic change to their health insurance. During my first week in a new job, I had to go and face all of these employees."

"Human resources is about people," she says. "And I'm very much a people person. I try to show compassion where compassion is needed, and I think people have come to know that I will always be honest and candid with them. I don't sugarcoat things."

Over the years, Rita has worked in progressive roles. From her first assignment in benefits, she was promoted to assistant personnel services manager, then director of benefits, before assuming her current role as senior director.

It wasn't all easy. Rita recalls that many years ago, under different leadership, her own

position in the department was abolished. Although she had an opportunity to apply for a new position, there were no guarantees. It's an experience that she says provides perspective when helping others in similar circumstances.

"It's not always an easy job but we do our best to offer what we can with the kind of compassion people deserve," she says. "It's really about treating everybody the way you want to be treated."

Rita would like to dispel the myth that people tend to think of their human resources officers as inflexible, policy-driven people.

"We are flexible, and we do try to find the gray area to a good solution. You have to look at the big picture to see if there's something we can do to help a person without breaking rules, regulations or abusing policy."

As one might suspect, there's no such thing as a "normal day," especially at the outset of a new academic year. In addition to time-sensitive demands, there's a phone that rings non-stop, hundreds of emails to field each day and drop-in visitors.

"Today, I had two new international faculty members come in with I-9 issues which required 30 to 45 minutes of time with each of

them. If they didn't get their visa in time, their paychecks would be delayed."

Rita hasn't taken much time to make lofty plans about what comes next. For the moment, her goals are short-term projects centered on organizing things at home and spending quality time with family, especially her mother. Rita and her husband, Ken, live in the home where they raised their daughter, Ashley. The family has been there some 30 years, although today Ashley lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she works as a certified financial planner. "She's still after me to clean out things," Rita says with a hearty laugh. "So, I'll probably work on that."

Rita gets a little emotional as she prepares to leave the place she's spent nearly half of her life.

"I have loved every minute," she says. "I have learned that people truly do want the best for you here. They will cheer you on in good times and rally behind you if something bad happens. Even though we are big, we are small enough to band together to help one another. I think it's because of the relationships we have across campus.

"The people here are just good-hearted people." NDN

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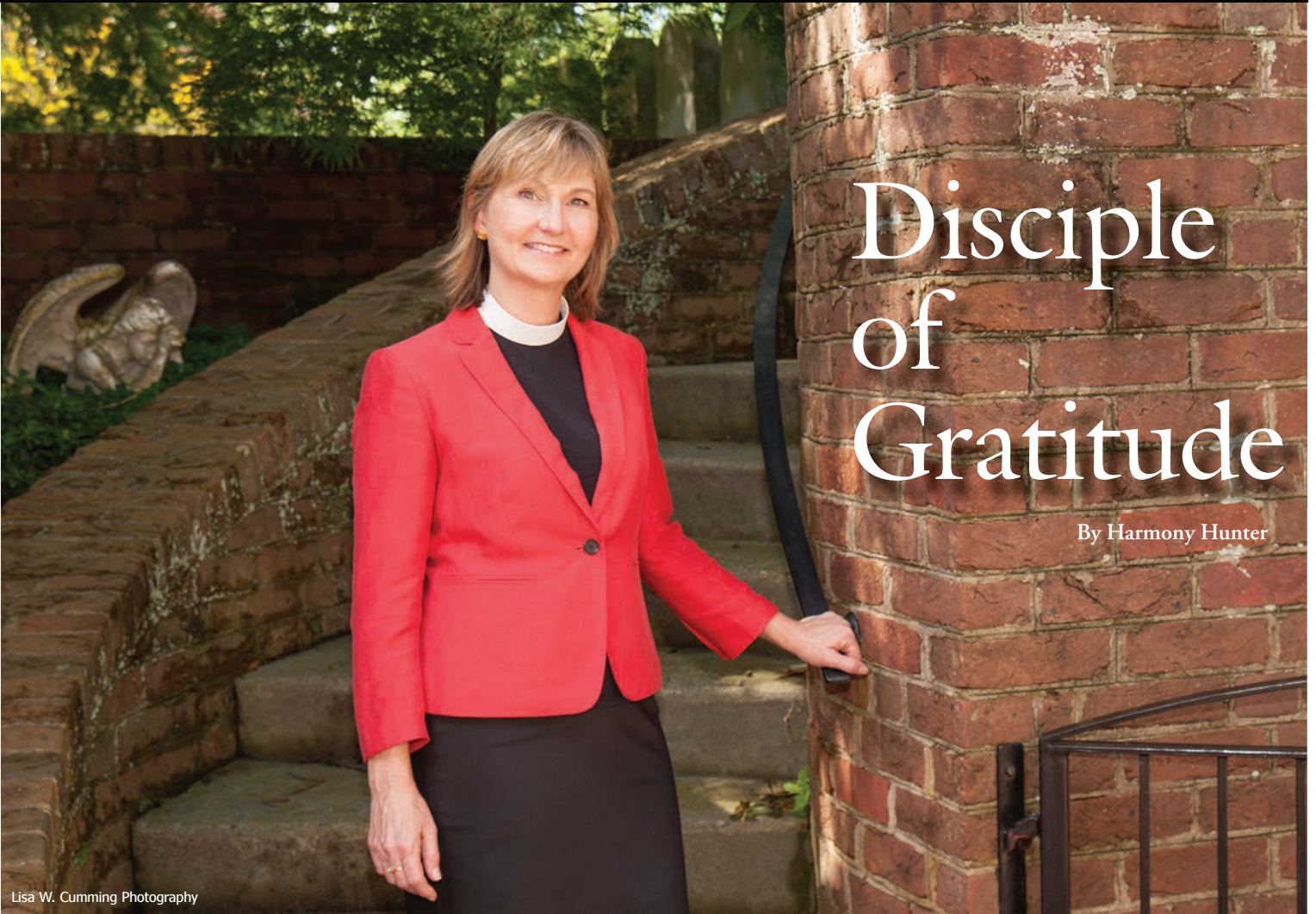
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JACQUELINE SOLTYS



Disciple of Gratitude

By Harmony Hunter

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Like many of us, Jacqueline Soltys has tried out more than a few careers in the course of her life. She has taken joy and pride in each, but it was not until she felt a calling to join the ministry two years ago that she understood exactly where her passions, talents and faith had been leading her.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, she is the leg-

acy of immigrant forebears. “My dad’s parents came through Ellis Island as adults, from Eastern Europe. As he grew up, his parents spoke Slovak. When I was about 3, my grandmother had a stroke. She lost her English, but she retained her Slovak. But the whole time I have any memory of her, she spoke only Slovak. So, we really couldn’t have a conversation,” Jacqueline

says.

Despite their language barrier, Jacqueline’s bond with her Slovakian grandmother would lay the groundwork for a lifetime of fascination and affection for the land, literature and language of her ancestors. “When my grandmother was recovering from her stroke, she came to Boston and she lived with us. Around that time,

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I was learning my alphabet and listening to kids' records, and apparently the two of us did that together. We spent a lot of time together," Jacqueline says.

As Jacqueline grew and her family later relocated to North Carolina, her connection to her grandmother receded to the background yet remained lodged in her subconscious to be summoned at a critical point in her life. "I went off to college thinking I was going to be an MD. My dad was a doctor. I was interested in neurology. The brain and the mind have always really interested me," she says.

The pre-med track was doomed by a simple scheduling conflict. Cut from a too-full class and casting about for course hours to rebalance her shortened schedule, Jacqueline snapped up a Russian language class, not suspecting that it would fan the low coals of her early memories and instantly rekindle a connection to her roots.

"When I turned up in this Russian language class, I had this feeling that I was being reminded of something that I already knew. I didn't consciously remember anything from when I was 3, but it was almost like a dream. I just dove

in. From the moment I sat in that class, all the other ideas about what I wanted to do just disappeared. So, I became a Russian major."

With her very first foray into the study of Russian, she was fully engaged. "I felt so lucky. It was just like: I knew. There was nothing else I wanted to do. I would finish up my science class homework and then I would reward myself by going to the language lab and just soaking in the Russian," she says.

This immersion into a foreign language and a new culture placed Jacqueline in an outsider's position, from which she was able to examine humanity from a different angle. "When you learn a language well enough to sort of live in it, and I spent time in the Soviet Union, I think it forever changes the way you look at the world. It shifts your perspective and gives you a new way of understanding and maneuvering in the world. That's what Russian did for me," says Jacqueline.

This feeling of deep connection to the Russian language and the training it gave her to observe and understand foreign customs and creeds was a touchstone she would return to throughout

her life. As time and family carried her forward through geography and career, Jacqueline held that experience of rightness, of recognizing when a thing was meant to be, in her heart.

Jacqueline, her husband Stuart Henderson, and their daughters, Sophia and Grace, found themselves in Knoxville, Tennessee after a job opportunity at the Oak Ridge National Lab moved them southward. It was there that the first suggestion of a ministerial career entered Jacqueline's conscious thought.

"I had been doing a lot of volunteering at church, and the woman who was running the Christian Education Program was a seminarian working toward getting ordained. She had to stop work to just focus on exams, and she recommended me to replace her. I did that job for three years, and it was during that time that I started thinking 'I kind of feel called to the priesthood.' But I didn't say anything about it to anyone, even to my husband."

During their time in Knoxville, the logistics of distance to the nearest seminary, caring for two small children, and a job that demanded frequent travel from her partner meant that the

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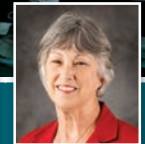
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time wasn't right to pursue ordainment. But the seed had been planted.

"We left Knoxville, and we moved to the Chicago area. Then it became logistically possible. Our kids were old enough to get on and off the bus, and there was an Episcopalian seminary nearby. I spent a long time thinking about it, and I thought: I will take one class, and then we'll see."

That first seminary course was a watershed moment for Jacqueline. She says, "It was a little like the experience of those first days of learning Russian. I just sat there, and I couldn't soak it in enough. It felt so good. When the class was over and I was driving home, I literally cried the whole way home because I was so happy." Thus bolstered, she began to work toward ordainment in earnest.

Though she was raised Catholic, it was the Episcopalian philosophy of openness and interpretation that resonated with Jacqueline when she pursued her own religious scholarship. "The Episcopal church is a wide tent. There's room for all different ways of understanding God and approaching God and lis-

tening to your conscience. For me, maybe because I've moved all around and learned another language and been a part of different cultures, I have a hard time when the point of view is not open and doesn't allow other perspectives in and isn't willing to be flexible."

Rooting out scriptural meanings and reconciling ancient materials with modern questions is a challenge she relishes. She says, "Religion is almost like an algorithm. Since the very beginning of time, people have been thinking about how to have the best possible life, fullness of life and what it means to be truly human. And there's been a lot of real data coming in to test those ideas."

It's a path of questioning, and for Jacqueline, the intellectual exercise never gets old. "I think a lot of what ties me together as a person through all of my various permutations is that I am relentlessly trying to figure things out and understand things: mainly people — who we are as human beings, how we work, why we do the things we do and why we don't do the things we don't," she says.

Gratitude is at the core of Jacqueline's ev-

ery action. Whether she's working as a hospital chaplain supporting families through their worst crises or sharing her musings from the pulpit, she knows that life is precious, and she is uniquely fortunate to be doing something she feels deeply called to do.

Reflecting on her life's course, Jacqueline Soltys is philosophical. "My life has not been a straight line; I've meandered and shifted focus and location many times. But my life as a priest seems to gather up all those various stages of my life and bring them all together. It's as if I've been in training for my whole life, collecting experiences and new perspectives and skills. Now I am being asked to use that whole toolkit life has given me for a deep and holy purpose."

She is deeply grateful for the stops and starts in her life, though she was not always so grateful at the time. "I have found that life is full of surprises, both welcome and unwelcome. For me, gratitude and hope tie life's experiences together and give them meaning. Without gratitude and hope, it is hard to be fully human, or to live life generously and well." NDN



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Gratitude for an Active Life

By Susan Williamson

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Charles “Chuck” Wynder walks with an easy grace, light on his feet, portraying the athlete that he is. In fact, in August of this year he was inducted into the National Veterans Golden Age Games as a Hall of Fame Athlete. He received the recognition and a plaque at this year’s (32nd annual) Golden Age Games in Albuquerque, New Mexico, one of five inductees this year and the first ever from Virginia. The award is based on sportsmanship, dedication, leadership and an active, healthy lifestyle.

The Golden Age Games are open to all disabled veterans, 55 and over, with a service related injury. The retired Army Colonel suffered a dislocated shoulder and torn knee ligament during his thirty years in the service. He was nominated for the Hall of Fame by the Hampton DAV chapter. Other Virginia chapters are in Richmond and Roanoke, corresponding with the location of VA hospitals. Next year’s

DAV Golden Games will be held in Anchorage, Alaska.

In prior years, Charles has entered two to four events at the games, but this year the 77-year-old decided to try for ten. He competes in the 75 to 79-year-old age group. Scheduling conflicts eliminated one event, badminton, but he managed to earn medals in seven events and ribbons in the remaining two - 10k cycling, three swimming events, three field events—shotput, javelin and discus, indoor bocce and pickleball. He received a large engraved ring for his favorite event, cycling.

Charles rides an average of 100 miles a week, both around the community and on the Capital Trail. He belongs to the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists and rides with them as well as with friends and alone. He is active at the Kingsmill Sports Club, and some years he also competes in the Virginia Senior Games.

Charles is very familiar with gratitude. “That has always been my mantra,” he says. When the Hampton native graduated from high school, he had planned to enlist in the Marines. His high school coach dissuaded him and found a way for him to attend St. Paul’s College, a historically black college in Lawrenceville, Virginia founded by the Episcopal Church in 1888.

“I grew up Baptist, but became an Episcopalian when I learned the services only lasted an hour,” Charles says with a smile. The college closed in 2013 due to financial difficulties and has since been sold to a Chinese company.

He transferred to Florida A&M where he minored in biology and majored in health and physical education. ROTC was mandatory at the land grant school. At graduation he applied for and received a direct commission as a second lieutenant in the US Army. “I was fortunate,” he says. “I had the option of an assistant-

ship, a teaching job or the military.” Having grown up in the Hampton Roads area, he was familiar with military service and chose that option, enlisting for a four year stint.

His first assignment was training at Fort Benning, Georgia in logistics. He was assigned to the Medical Service Corp which trained out of Fort Sam Houston in Texas. Charles volunteered for Vietnam and his hold luggage was sent there, but he was sent to France instead, another life situation for which he is grateful. “I lost a brother there,” he says. “I never found my hold luggage.” He considers that loss an omen of what might have happened to him. In 1967 French President De Gaulle withdrew from NATO and American troops were reassigned to Germany.

When his stint was up, he left the military and had an eclectic career path, teaching, working as an instructional supervisor and then working in civil service. After eleven years, he re-entered military life to complete a thirty year career before retiring from Fort Monroe as a member of the Medical Service Corp. He points out the silver Caduceus on a picture of him in dress uniform, explaining doctors and nurses wear gold emblems. A military career had both positives and negatives, but Charles appreciates the lasting friendships and travel and job experience opportunities it provided. For a time, he worked as an aide-de-camp for a two-star general. “Whenever we went to eat,” he says, “the general always made it a point to go back and thank the cooks and cafeteria workers for his meal. I wouldn’t have thought to do that, except for his example. Everyone should be valued.”

Charles and his wife moved to Williamsburg from Washington, D.C. when he was transferred from the Pentagon to Fort Monroe and she worked for the IRS in Richmond. When they both retired, they traveled, and the couple went together to the Golden Games location each year. “My wife would help the less able veterans,” he says. “She was always helping.”

She passed away in 2014, nine months after being diagnosed with a brain tumor. “I didn’t go to the games when she was sick, and afterwards it was too hard to go without her. I always thought I would be the one to die first.” But eventually he returned to the competition.

He and some friends used to participate in Bowling on the Green behind the Williamsburg Inn. “I volunteered three hours a month to show tourists how to bowl in the historical manner, but the new CW president replaced our bowling area with a putting green.” While clearly regretting the loss of the green, Charles is philosophical about it. “I guess the new president had different goals and financial priorities.”

Charles is the father of three biological children and two stepdaughters who together have provided him with fifteen grandchildren. His oldest son is an Episcopal priest, an assistant to the bishop in Washington, D.C., a second career after spending many years in the practice of law. His younger son followed his father into the military and is a colonel on active duty. His daughter is a captain in the public health service, working in Philadelphia. The stepdaughters live in Richmond, and he is clearly proud of and grateful for his family.

Charles Wynder admits that there were downsides to the military life, but he isn’t one to dwell on the negative. His humility, his soft-spoken manner, his continuing service to others and his zest for living all speak to the leadership, sportsmanship, dedication and healthy lifestyle for which the Golden Games recognized him.

Gratitude is indeed the mantra for his active life and he lives it.

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feeling deprived. "A diet is just a diet. They don't teach you lifelong habits," she explains. "And we have four components to our program. It's the nutrition, of course, but we also have one-on-one coaching and that's huge. Plus, we have community support. We have a private Facebook page for clients and pre-clients to scope out, ask questions and 'stalk' the page. The inspiration and positivity are overwhelmingly amazing." She adds that there are many stories about people on the program who find they no longer need their medications for diabetes and sleep apnea, just to name a few. The fourth component to the program is education, which she finds fascinating. "For example, I never knew that sugar is more addictive than cocaine and that's why I sleep so soundly now because all that is out of my system," she says.

Growing up in a Greek family, Victoria was an athletic child, playing tennis avidly and eventually winning a college scholarship to Elon College (now university) in North Carolina. "My parents were always playing tennis. That's how I grew up," she says. "I wasn't like your typical kid. I played Maryland State tennis, I did Regionals, I did Nationals and the Mid-Atlantic tournament." The youngest of three, she and her parents, sister and brother lived in Ellicott City near Baltimore, a place that she looks back on with fondness now. "I was raised in a tennis community and we all went to tournaments together. We were like family," she says. As a kid, she says she was "on the heavy side" but tennis kept her weight under control. Her nickname was "Miss Potatoes," due to her fondness for the popular carbohydrate. It didn't help that her "Ya Ya" (Greek word for grandmother) lovingly prepared fried potatoes on a near-daily basis. But that old childhood temptation doesn't haunt her anymore. "Your taste buds totally change [on this program] so now all I crave is protein and greens," she says with a grin. Many of her favorite Greek dishes are lean enough to fit into her new lifestyle.

She and her husband Eric, a high-end security sales and project manager, have been married almost 18 years and have two children: Jake, who is 12 and a seventh-grader and Sophia who is nine and in the fourth grade. The Schumachers moved to Williamsburg 13 years ago after getting fed-up with the heavy traffic and the long commutes in the Baltimore area.

She recently started a new job as community marketing manager for Velocity Urgent Care and is brimming with excitement about helping even more people take charge of their health. "I have a heart of gold and am constantly wanting to help others. That's just who I am," she says. In addition to sharing her knowledge and joy with others, she finds time for fun along the way, mostly with her children. "It's just very important to build those memories instead of focusing on materialism," she points out. "I found that out when I was cleaning out my parents' closets and, you know, they're not here anymore, and it's all just stuff." Travel is another one of her passions because "life's too short to go to the same place all the time."

Victoria Schumacher's ultimate weight loss goal is 75 pounds though she plans to take it step by step and always focus on how she feels throughout the process. What she knows for sure is that she loves the results she's seeing so far, physically, emotionally and mentally. "I'm grateful that this program came around, and I feel so much better," she says. Her advice to her younger self would be "to focus on school and to always be involved in the community and build relationships." And what does she suggest to anyone seeking a happy life? "(Rely on) your faith and put your heart and soul into your family," she says. "Live every day and focus on your kids because it's crazy how fast it flies by."

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ALEX MORRISON

Smiling with Gratitude

By Kathleen Toomey Jobs



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Williamsburg native Alex Morrison has a lot to smile about. His wife is expecting their first child, a boy. He has a job he loves in the family business; the business is growing; and the business, Morrison Dental Group, is active in the community, giving back and spreading smiles. Alex is thankful that the team at Morrison Dental, both employees and patients' families, are willing to help others and are involved in so many local charities.

Alex works off of John Tyler Road in Williamsburg on the second floor of the original dental office his father purchased when he first formed Morrison Dental Group 26 years ago after 10 years of Navy service. Alex grew up in Williamsburg, attending Lafayette High School before heading to Hampden-Sydney College where he majored in Spanish and History. He now serves as the Chief Compliance Officer and Director of Logistics for the Morri-

son Dental Group which has grown to encompass eight offices, employing 92 people. The practice has grown organically, Alex explains, with offices located in Richmond, Norge, Newport News, Hampton and Chincoteague. The business is completely family-run with Alex's mother serving as Chief Operating Officer, Alex's wife working as the marketing officer and his father both seeing patients and working with the 17 doctors across the network.

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The style and decor in the Williamsburg office is characteristic of all the offices in the network, light, brightly colored, welcoming, with lime green dental chairs and walls painted in jungle scenes.

The dentists and staff at Morrison Dental spend time at their home offices, but they also are on the go and regularly moving to other offices, particularly on weekends when they are dedicated to giving back. One of the charities the team at Morrison Dental has supported for 19 years is the Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center (OTMDC) on Olde Towne Road in Williamsburg. The OTMDC functions as a rural safety net clinic and provides preventative care and early intervention services. Alex says, "Olde Towne provides an incredible service for the community. It's staffed by volunteers." He adds that the size of Morrison Dental has "helped with the ability to provide products and samples." Access to care, Alex stressed, is so important. He's proud of the way the community works together to service those in need.

The Lackey Free Clinic in Yorktown is another location where the Morrison Dental team volunteers. Like OTMDC, the Lackey Free Clinic serves patients who are uninsured and indigent at highly reduced costs. It's about giving back, Alex says. He is conscious about stressing the network of partners and volunteers who make these organizations such vital assets to the community. Lackey Free Clinic draws on the services of more than 200 greater Peninsula doctors, dentists and health care practitioners.

"We want to do our part," he says. "It's a great responsibility to do things for the community and for people who can't."

Another labor of love for the Morrison group is the nationally based American Dental Association Give Kids a Smile program which provides a day of free dental care for children while stressing oral health. Operating out of an office in Norge for the past two years, the Morrison group has provided more than \$250K of donated dental services and treated more than 50 children last year. Providing care to children is especially important, Alex shares. "Kids and veterans don't often get a choice," he explains. "Kids aren't buying the sugary food. They don't know innately the dangers of too much candy or too many sweets." He explains that poor oral health is often a precursor to other health issues.

While Give Kids a Smile helps children, Smiles for Heroes is a program centered on veterans and their oral care needs. Priscilla Hanson, one of the staff members at Morrison Dental Group, first heard about the program and brought the idea to the family. Alex credits Priscilla with the planning and being the driving force to launch the effort. The entire Morrison Dental Group was quick to sign on and rally behind the cause. The goal of Smiles for Heroes is to provide a day of free dental care for veterans without dental care insurance.

The Morrison team "does as much as we can," Alex says, "extractions, hygiene, oral cancer screens, root canals." Last year, they treated 90 veterans in two offices. This year's event, which was scheduled for September 22, had already filled up 150 spots by early September. Operating out of three offices (Williamsburg, Norge and Hampton), the Morrison Dental Group team planned to work from 8:30-3:30 and see as many patients as they could. Morrison Dental Group partners with the Veterans Administration and works with Fort Eustis to get the word out. They put signs on the roads and advertise on social media. Veterans can call the office directly to make an appointment or look on line.

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"If you think of the Hampton Roads area, we're extremely dependent on the military," Alex says. "It's nice to have a way to give back." Alex repeatedly points out that the Smiles for Heroes is a full staff effort, which has grown organically. Doctors, hygienists, assistants and administrative staff all work together. There may be a national program but their effort is something done and coordinated at the local level. Sal's by Victor donates food and lots of the Morrison Group patients chip in where they can. "Everyone is doing it for free," Alex adds. "We live here in this community and want to make it a great place to live and work. I'm so proud of what our company has become."

Talking about the work Morrison Dental Group does is not easy for Alex. While he is proud and grateful for the company and all they do, he prefers to do charity quietly and avoid any hint of self-promotion. Still, his passion for the cause is hard to keep hidden. He happened to be listening to the WHRO Hearsay radio show with Cathy Lewis over Labor Day. Cathy was asking listeners what they liked or didn't like about their jobs. Alex felt compelled

to call. He dialed in and was suddenly live on the air. When Cathy asked what he liked about his job, Alex started talking about the ability to help other people, and people responded.

Outside of work Alex likes to garden and describes himself as an avid composter. He grows loofah, grape tomatoes, peppers, and flowers. Most of the gardening is done on the Eastern Shore. He thinks something in the soil over there makes the Cayenne level hotter in the peppers. In addition to gardening, he likes to cycle. He bikes on the Capital Trail and around the York River State Park. He tinkers with woodworking and fly fishing. He tends to his dogs. And Alex Morrison practices gratitude.

"I encourage people to find a way to give back." He returns the conversation to where it started. "If people have the time or ability to donate to something or somewhere, it's so important. It's what makes our community great." NDN

Olde Town Medical Center can be found at www.oldtownmedicalcenter.org/

Lackey Free Clinic in Yorktown can be found at lackeyclinic.org/

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COMING HOME

By Erin Fryer

What almost killed Janet McCartney Grimmsett saved her life.

At just 30 years old, Janet was involved in a plane crash that broke her back in three places and caused severe head trauma and a spinal cord injury that left her paralyzed from the waist down. The doctors told her that she would never walk or gain control of the lower half of her body again. They were wrong.

Today Janet stands tall and is ready and waiting to greet everyone who walks through the doors of her antique shop in Toano with a big

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Born and raised in Croaker, Janet is a country girl with roots that run deep in James City County. She is also the proud owner of Lucky Junque, the new-and-improved antique and architectural salvage shop that recently opened in the old farmhouse on Richmond Road. You know, the one with the big yellow chair.

While she loved growing up in Williamsburg, Janet had her sights set on the big city. Her parents encouraged her to move to Richmond to quench her thirst for city life, but Janet, along with her young daughter, Brittany, picked up and moved to Austin, Texas in search of new experiences.

Janet spent a decade in Austin until that horrible day when she was invited to board a small plane with just two other passengers and a pilot. She was sitting in the front seat when the plane ran out of fuel and fell out of the sky.

Everyone survived the crash, but Janet was left with severe injuries that changed the course of her life forever. "I broke my back in three places, had a spinal cord injury and had two plates and 49 screws put into my head. I tell people if they think I have a screw loose, I might," she says with a laugh.

Janet was told she would never move below her waist. Unable to support herself or her young daughter, she left Austin and moved home. In the years that followed, Janet had to rely heavily on her sister who lived in Richmond. At this point, her mother had passed away and her father was in no shape to care for a daughter in a wheelchair.

Janet moved in with her sister, which ended up being a godsend because she had help with her 10-year-old daughter and was close to Virginia Commonwealth University where she spent years doing rehabilitation therapy.

"It was such a hard time," Janet says. "I had to depend on my sister to get my daughter around. There are also so many things you don't see on the outside when someone is paralyzed from the waist down. It affects everything in your nervous system. I had lost all control."

Little by little, Janet's right side started to come back. She still doesn't have 100 percent control, but it's a dream that she never thought would come true.

She eventually started walking again with the help of a walker and is now able to move around her new store with the help of forearm crutches. While she does intermittent therapy

sessions, Janet plateaued years ago and exceeded what the doctors thought she would be able to do.

"I am so blessed," she says. "That is how Lucky Junque came to be. I am lucky to be here and doing what I love."

Janet says that what almost killed her saved her life. "It made me a better person and gave me an appreciation for the things we take for granted. I hug everyone because you never know if you will see them again. Life is short, and you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring."

The years in between the plane crash and the opening of Lucky Junque were filled with lots of pain but also joy. Janet continued her therapy and got better year after year. As a single mother, she needed a job and was able to go back to work as an office assistant. Eventually, a chance encounter in a restaurant led her to find something she thought she would never have again: love.

Janet met Eric Brown, and the rest is history. The pair have been together for 11 years. "He is the most supportive and loving man," she says. "He loved me for all of my faults and is a huge part of my life and the reason that Lucky

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Junque was able to happen. I would have never been able to do this without him.”

Janet’s love for antiques stems from her childhood. Her father had an old farmhouse where the Harris Teeter in Lightfoot stands today. In that location he ran an antique store and fish market. “I was always hunting through old barns with my daddy and finding antiques,” she says. “My love for old stuff runs very deep.”

Janet has been living in Mechanicsville for many years, but returned home last year to care for her father as he battled lung cancer. After he passed, she acquired the old farmhouse in Toano and planted roots in Croaker once again.

“I have always considered Williamsburg to be my home and acquiring the farmhouse was God’s way of telling me to come home. My Mom is buried at Olive Branch Baptist Church, my grandparents are at Hickory Neck Episcopal Church, and the farmhouse is right in the middle of them. I feel like I am surrounded by my family.”

While she has always loved antiques, Janet caught the bug for architectural salvage years ago while working at an antique shop in downtown Richmond. In addition to the farmhouse, Janet has a 7,000 square foot barn behind

Lucky Junque full of architectural salvage that she calls “Pinterest Paradise.”

While many of her beloved relatives have passed away, Janet is surrounded by people who love her and want to do everything they can to support her dreams and her passion for Lucky Junque. Many of her relatives still live in the area, and she has a host of friends who are willing to step in and help her with whatever she needs.

Rhonda Poteet works for Janet at Lucky Junque and has quickly become one of her closest friends. In fact, Rhonda and Eric are responsible for bringing the famous yellow chair back to life in front of the old farmhouse. “I would have never gotten rid of that,” says Janet. “It’s a landmark in this town and I love old furniture, so it’s perfect. The history of Toano is important to me, and the chair is part of that.”

Janet’s mother used to say that Janet has never met a stranger, and this is evident by the way she treats her customers. Every person that walks through the doors at Lucky Junque is greeted by her bright smile and open arms.

“I always said that if I ever had my own store, I would have friends, not customers,” she says. “I want a hometown feel where I

will remember your name, face and what you bought because it’s important to me. You can’t go to these big box stores and get recognized. You’re another face in the crowd, but not at my farmhouse.”

Janet celebrated the grand opening of Lucky Junque in September and poured her entire soul into the project. She has big plans for the place, and while she wants to be able to do everything herself, she still has to ask for help from her friends and family who are more than happy to lend a helping hand.

“My mind tells me I can do all the stuff I want to do, but my body says no,” she says. “If my body could keep up with my mind, we would be in trouble!”

Janet says she can feel her parents’ spirit all around at Lucky Junque. “They are definitely here,” she says. “And they would be so proud.”

Janet McCartney Grimmett often thinks back to those first two years after the plane crash and how helpless and guilty she felt because of the burden it placed on her young daughter. “There were definitely times when I felt like I should have died in that crash, but what almost killed me saved my life because it brought me back to my roots. I’m finally home.” **NDN**

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A Mission for Life

By Anne Conkling



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Life could be much easier if we were handed a schedule, with a list of dates and places and good contact names and emails for when we need help. For those super organized deep thinkers who really did sit down one day and plot their life journey, a list prepared by someone else might take all of the fun out of it.

When LaTonya Wallace-Conyers graduated from Lafayette High School, she had a

plan. Born and raised in this area, like many other graduates she was ready to see Williamsburg from her rearview mirror, and she wasn't coming back, except to visit and check on her mother, Linda. Stretching her wings took her on a few adventures, and when she stopped long enough to listen to her inner voice, she turned her car right around and headed back to Williamsburg. Her corporate experiences prepared

her for charting her own path, combining the drive and structure of a big business with the opportunities for growth which are inherent in a smaller format.

"Five years ago, getting married was not on my radar," she says. Today she is a wife, mother, volunteer, networker, business owner, professional photographer, an expert on the web and social media, a marketing coordinator and an

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DESIGNS by REGGIE AKDOGAN

entrepreneur who thrives on technology and helping others grow in their careers. She is also very involved in her church. “My plan was not God’s plan. He is in charge,” she says.

One of her talents is in the field of photography, and her Uncle David took her along on a number of wedding shoots. He was probably the first mentor who started LaTonya on the right path. She learned a lot about people, composition, lighting and handling a wedding crowd. As her uncle began to pull back on the wedding jobs, she moved ahead.


Helen Oderisi, a well-known local photographer who also grew up in Williamsburg, became a kind of mentor to LaTonya. Under Helen’s tutelage, LaTonya learned vital lessons about running a good business, ordering products, selling packages and always creating a memorable image. “We met on a schedule, and I studied her skills. She shared her knowledge and success with me. I learned to always have a plan B,” she says. One of her lessons was the business equation: 80 percent is running a good business, and 20 percent is your craft.

Photography has helped her life come together in many ways, and she gives back by being the photographer every year for the United Way Day of Caring. And it played an important role in putting her in the right place at the right time, such as Tony Conyers, who was at that time her future father-in-law, assumed the role of cupid and introduced her to his son Anthony. Not just once. “Every piece of my path has been laid out for me, and now I can see it so clearly,” she says. “Listening for God has become a precious habit.”

Family is a very important facet in her life, and LaTonya knows that her family is an integral part of her well-being and personal success. She is very close to her mother. Now that she has a daughter of her own, the family oriented aspects of Williamsburg make a lot more sense. She has come to respect the importance of stability, having faith and trusting in God’s plan to both sustain and empower her. She thrives in her personal and professional life by helping empower others to achieve their business goals.

She worships and volunteers at New Zion Baptist Church, and sees Pastor Whitehead as a role model, leader, teacher and guide. He is well known for leading this welcoming, energized and growing congregation. “The church family at New Zion have a real love for our community. Pastor Whitehead is engaged in our ministry, and he gets his hands dirty too,” she says. LaTonya handles the multimedia and marketing for the church. Watching and listening to her Pastor has inspired her to get more involved in the community. She was a member of the 2018 LEAD class through the Chamber of Commerce, an intensive 10 month program where students are introduced to community leaders which provides intellectual and personal connections. The LEAD class is for participants like LaTonya who are ready to take an active role in defining the future for our region.

LaTonya Wallace Conyers goals and personal image of being a success are simple. “I want to be the best wife and mother that I can be; always to be a better person than I was yesterday; to provide value in everything I do, to successfully help people and to walk in God’s way and please Him.”

There is excitement in her voice, and a sense of mission for her life choices. “I want my little girl to grow up and be proud of what her mother did,” she says. 

AMY STAFFORD



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Body & Soul: *Where Faith and Fitness Meet*

By Linda Landreth Phelps

It's understandable that Amy Stafford, President of Body & Soul Fitness, is passionate about what she does. She envisions her business as equal parts mission field and career. "It's also my heart," Amy says. "Body & Soul is an international non-profit ministry and exercise organization. I've been teaching fitness classes here at Williamsburg Community Chapel for


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17 1/2 years, and a couple of my students have been with me the entire time.” The classes Amy teaches are designed to nurture our outer shell, as she puts it, while recognizing that a crucial component of a healthy lifestyle is maintaining a robust spiritual element. “There is a tangible connection between the physical and spiritual dimensions of our lives,” Amy says. “But there is no spiritual pre-requirement or litmus test here. People of every faith, or even none at all, are equally welcome to participate.”

Body & Soul offers seven different levels and styles of class. Each one is expressly tailored to a student’s level of fitness and desired emphasis in exercise. Classes are declared to be a judgment-free zone, with no body-shaming allowed. Students wear whatever they’re comfortable in, and those who might feel intimidated at a gym find it a safe place to be. Since it’s a non-profit, costs are kept to a minimum.

“We charge a straight five dollars an hour, and you can register for as many classes as you like,” she says. Most classes are 75 minutes long. “Once you’re warmed up, I find adding

an extra 15 minutes at the end accomplishes a lot!”

On this particular day, a dozen seniors are diligently following Amy’s lead in Longevity Fit360, a class where they are working with light weights and performing many of the exercises while seated. Some classes target 55-and-over populations while some are best for younger people looking for more of a cardiovascular workout.

“In this 45-minute class we work on balance, coordination, flexibility and strength. Those are issues that everyone needs to address as we get older. I believe the average age in this class may be close to 80, which is pretty cool!” The Christian music is lively and contemporary, a playlist with songs and tempos curated to match the activity. Amy looks for music with positive, uplifting lyrics. “It’s not just exercise,” the instructor says, “it’s also worship, fellowship and community.” At the end of the class, women gather in clusters to chat or pray for each other and the concerns that they share.

There are five more Body and Soul instructors in Williamsburg, some teaching at New Town United Methodist Church, but the classes Amy personally leads are all at her home church. “My husband, Steve, and I have been members here at the Chapel for a long time,” she says. “We moved to Williamsburg 21 years ago, when our daughter, Jordan, was a baby. She’s a junior at Liberty University now and plans to go into Youth Ministry after she graduates. Steve sold his business two years ago and is now with William & Mary as their structural professional engineer.” That move was part of the couple’s plan to simplify their lives. They downsized and are relishing their reduced-stress existence as residents of Newtown. “We can stroll right on over to a nearby restaurant for dinner,” Amy says with a smile. “It’s wonderful!”

She is a certified Group Fitness Instructor and also a personal trainer, which is how her fitness career got started in Williamsburg. Her program actually had its genesis at a women’s Bible study held at a Maryland church in 1981.

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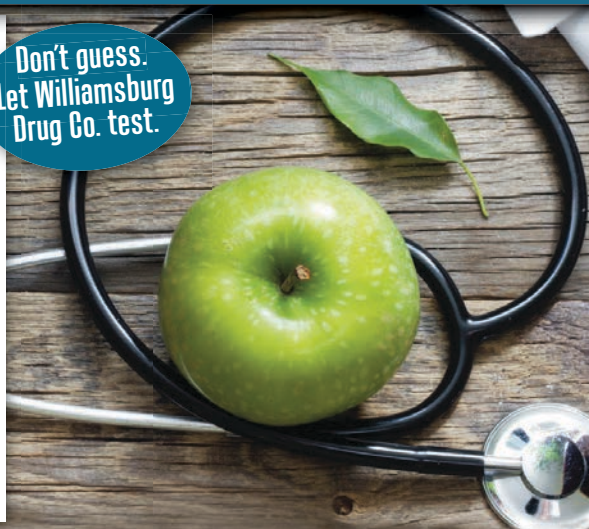
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Jeannie Blocher was a prayer partner of its organizer and, being a dancer herself, insisted they needed to offer something more than just sitting in a chair for hours. “We need to get these women moving,” she declared to her friend. Jeannie choreographed some movements to a favorite hymn and led them in simple exercises. “The women were so enthusiastic that they didn’t want to stop and wanted to do it regularly,” Amy says. One thing led to another, and now they’ve got 170 instructors in churches, schools and facilities all over the United States. Regional directors in the U.S. oversee their operation, and an international director helps leaders in different countries, but as president, Amy serves the Body & Soul Board of Directors directly.

When she first began teaching classes, she led everyone personally. These days, the increased number of offerings plus the added venue means Amy needs her team of instructors to assist. “Being in the classroom is what fills my passion bucket, though. I love seeing choreography come to life, being face-to-face with my students, sweating and finding joy together,” Amy says with a big smile.

She’s eager to watch her ministry grow and encompass everyone. “Body & Soul can be planted anywhere,” she says. “All you need is someone who is willing to be trained by us as an instructor, and a location to teach.” They provide digital training materials and do the research and pay the copyright for the music chosen. “We may have first started in Maryland and then spread to Virginia and southern states, but we have a vibrant presence in California and Arkansas, and we’ve just added Missouri and South Dakota.”

Many people have struggled with weight or staying fit, or both, at one time or another, but for some of the Body & Soul participants, internal issues and invisible needs are just as crucial as concern for health and outward appearance. “Humans are built for relationships. One particular person comes to mind when I think about meeting those needs,” Amy recalls. “Her husband had been deployed, and she felt very alone and afraid. She found community here and shared her feelings of vulnerability with her class, asking for prayer support. This woman’s classmates also took her meals and helped care for her and the children until her husband returned.”

Amy sees her senior fitness class members as being even more connected than her younger students. They know what’s happening in other people’s lives and will bring those concerns to class for prayer. Better yet, they’ll bring their hurting friend.

“In the three years since we began that class, one of our ladies became a widow, and we had the privilege of walking through that with her. Today she stayed a little while after class and shared a sweet story about her husband with me,” Amy says.

Amy Stafford is passionate about her work, and in fact sees it as her calling. “We are here to be encouragers. We walk along with our students, whether their struggle is physical, spiritual, or emotional,” she says.

“We want them to come away refreshed, restored and ready for whatever comes next in life. That’s why this isn’t just a business; it truly is a ministry.” NDN



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DARCI BADAMI



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

GRATITUDE FOR A GOOD LIFE

By Alison Johnson

Life as an elementary school special education teacher is exhausting, challenging and unpredictable. Yet every day, Darcie Badami is thankful for the opportunity to teach.

“This work is so rewarding,” Darcie says. “These kids make me laugh and bring me so much joy every day. The littlest ones, especially, are so excited to come to school and see you. They’re basically like your cheerleaders, and you’re also there to build them up. I don’t




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know a lot of people who can get those feelings from a job.”

Now in her fourth year at James River Elementary School, Darcie works with kindergarten, second grade and fifth grade students with a variety of health or learning challenges, including Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, developmental delays and emotional disturbances. Some face multiple physical and/or mental disabilities.

On the academic side, Darcie helps her students with reading, writing and math skills, from basic counting in kindergarten classes to more complex reading comprehension in fifth grade. Many also need guidance on social skills, classroom behavior, organization and maintaining attention, especially as they begin to prepare for the transition to middle school.

All students with disabilities need advocates, Darcie stresses. “They’re often misunderstood, and they have the potential to be our greatest innovators. They can’t advocate for themselves, so they need someone to help them find their voice and be successful. I have learned to appreciate each of my student’s unique abilities and their spirit to thrive in the face of adversity.”

Most special education students can succeed in a general education setting with the right accommodations in place, Darcie says. She is grateful that James River Elementary, like other Williamsburg-James City County public schools, is committed to seeing beyond diagnoses and labels and incorporating students into “regular” daily life as much as possible.

“It’s not, ‘Oh, these are my kids and those are your kids,’” she says. “People aren’t looking at me to take my kids out somewhere away from the bigger group. Our staff doesn’t look at it that way. It’s our kids and our class. It’s such an inclusive environment, which makes me feel so fortunate to be here.”

That philosophy of acceptance benefits all children. “They can teach each other. Each side is capable of so much more than they realize.”

While teaching has become Darcie’s passion, the career was never in her mind as a possibility as she was growing up. An Ohio native, she majored in Art History at Ohio State University and imagined that she would one day work in art restoration.

Yet after Darcie married Brian Badami, a Coast Guard Operations Specialist, and gave birth to the first of her two children, she be-

gan to contemplate jobs that would allow for frequent moves. Initially thinking she could teach art, she earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Maryland and embarked on what has become a 12-year career in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Virginia schools.

With a certification in general education, kindergarten through eighth grade, Darcie has taught almost every subject in that age range, from English and history to science and math. Special education, however, grabbed her heart. She has now held those positions for seven of her 12 years.

“I’m not sure why, but once teachers move from general education to special education, it’s rare for them to want to go back,” she says. “There’s a shortage of special education staff, for one thing. But you also get a feeling of making a difference.”

Continuing education has been critical. Darcie completed a Master of Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders at Johns Hopkins University and has taken several graduate courses at the College of William & Mary since Brian’s transfer to the Coast Guard Training Center in Yorktown in 2012.



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Darcie is currently working on her Administration certification through Longwood University, which would allow her to consider more supervisory positions in the future. She expects to be done with that program by August.

“My goal is to be in a role where I feel I can make the biggest impact for the biggest number of kids, whatever that turns out to be,” she says. “They need people to take action for them.”

Like most teachers, Darcie’s days are long. She wakes up at 4:45 a.m. to go for a run or complete a strength-training workout to boost her mental focus, and she arrives at James River Elementary by 8 a.m. to greet kids as they walk into the front lobby.

A typical morning routine takes Darcie from a fifth-grade planning session to kindergarten reading, followed by fifth-grade math and second-grade reading. After a 30-minute lunch break, she’s off to fifth-grade reading, second-grade writing, kindergarten writing and, finally, kindergarten dismissal.

In many classrooms, Darcie leads students in small group sessions designed to help everyone keep up with the day’s lessons. With

her fifth graders, she’s also gently pushing them to build independence and stamina for middle school, where they will be faced with longer full-group classes and tougher academic skills such as analyzing novels versus short reading passages. Her older students also must prepare for end-of-year Standards of Learning tests.

“Every day is definitely an adventure,” Darcie says. “I’m pulled in a lot of different directions, and I’m often pushed out of my comfort zone, but I feel that constantly allows me to grow as a teacher and also as a person.”

Darcie credits her students with teaching her to be more patient, playful, humble and grateful for everything she has in her own life. They’ve also given her insights on how to parent her own high-achieving children, son Myles, 16, a high school sophomore, and daughter Ellie, 12, a seventh grader, and recognize each of their strengths. They’ve stunned her with their progress and optimism.

“They are just so funny, brave, smart and wonderful, all in their own ways,” she says. “They have the best senses of humor and perspectives on life. Even if I get tired, I spend a lot of my day smiling.”

Darcie is equally appreciative of her co-workers: “I have never worked with people who are so devoted to student success, not just academically but emotionally as well. They always go beyond expectations for students and each other.”

While school is over around 3:15 p.m., many staff members stay much later, Darcie notes. She often doesn’t head home until 4:30 or 5 p.m., and she usually brings work home with her. “This job really doesn’t stop,” she says. “The challenges are always going to be the paperwork and deadlines required for special education. There are not enough hours in the day to stay on top of it.”

To unwind, Darcie likes to listen to her favorite band, Phish, take evening walks with her family and practice yoga, which she also teaches every Saturday morning at the Body Balance studio in Williamsburg. She is happy that Brian will be stationed at Yorktown for at least one more year and possibly longer.

Being thankful, Darcie says, is easy. “Every day, I walk out of my school with new lessons that I’ve learned,” she says. “My eyes are open to all the good things I have. I will never lose sight of any of it.” NDN

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Corey Miller Photography

A Focus on Customer Service

By Dawn Brotherton

Many people overlook the business behind self-storage. Mike Monteith can explain in great detail the care and planning he and his business partner have put into American Classic Self-Storage.

Mike was born in Newport News and grew up traveling the United States with his Coast

Guard family. He completed his undergraduate degree in business from Old Dominion University and his master's degree from Avery University in Danville, Virginia before settling in the Hampton Roads area.

He became enamored with the business when he was in college working on his MBA.

"I thought it was an interesting model, because no matter the economy, whether it's good or bad, everybody's going to need storage at some point." For people that are in between homes, downsizing or just have no basement storage space, the need is very real.

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the storage industry. I met a gentleman, and we later became partners in American Classic Self-Storage. He had been in the self-storage business and real estate development, and he taught me everything that he knew. And then I brought a technology component to it," Mike says.

The items customers are placing offsite have real value to them or they wouldn't be saving them. Mike understands the importance of keeping others' treasures safe and secure. The state-of-the-art technology he has employed to all 11 of his storage locations provides around the clock surveillance. "If you come at night, whether you're male or female, you want a place that is well-lit, clean and safe. We're all those things."

The customer-base for storage in Williamsburg is varied. There are many homeowners' associations that don't permit the storage of boats or recreational vehicles at the residences, so people need another place to park their vehicles. Moves into assisted living or retirees downsizing also generates the need for inside, long-term storage. Military and college students often have a need for temporary storage. It's not a glamorous business, but Mike knew storage deserved more attention than it was getting, and he knew he was the one who could do it better. "A lot of people think of self-storage as big, ugly, orange doors. That's really not the case anymore. We're not gravel lots with weeds. We're very well landscaped. We like to think of ourselves as a retail location."

Unlike the caretaker mentality of old, American Classic Self-Storage is modern, clean and locally owned. The professionals who greet you in the office are ready to answer your questions, address your concerns immediately and help you determine what you need. "A lot of people are military. They call us from different states, and they say, 'my house is not ready yet. I have a thirty-foot box truck that will be there on this date. I just need a place to put it.' So we try to destress that and just say, 'hey, it's okay, we're here.' We do everything we can to try to ease that stressful move because moving is stressful. And it's your things."

At American Classic Self-Storage, they understand that not everyone has the same needs. "Certain people have things that may need climate-controlled storage, which is heated and cooled. For example, a lot of people have paintings, musical instruments or leather furniture that maybe needs to be in a condition space versus the college student who maybe has more IKEA-style furniture and only needs storage for three months over the summer. They are very different types of storage users."

Mike focuses on customer service and satisfaction. "We spend a lot of time training and educating our folks to really take care and solve the customers' storage needs, whatever they might be." They have over 6,000 renters, so there is always something going on. Mike visits each of their 11 locations every month, greeting people and talking to employees.

Larger, publicly traded companies have come in to buy up small, independent operators, but Mike says he and his partner aren't sellers. "I don't know what the landscape is going to look like in ten years, but I'm a long-term player in this space. I would imagine that there's always going to be a need for storage. I do look at the numbers, and the average length of stay for storage users is shrinking." American Classic Self-Storage is taking that into consideration and adjusting their business model to account for the change in the industry. They don't believe in raising rates on a customer six months after they have all their items moved in. Once a rate is locked in, it is a number of years before they consider making an increase.

When looking for locations for their buildings, Mike doesn't search the traditional off-the-beaten-path areas. He wants to be where the people are and where they can easily get to their belongings if they need something. "We actually want to be seen. We want to be visible, and we want to blend in with the surrounding retail. So, we work hard with the city to have a certain look to fit with the neighborhood and the surrounding streetscape," Mike says.

His partner, Greg Allen, concentrates on the banking and financing side of the business. Mike prefers to be boots on the ground. "I call myself the CWO, which is the Chief Whatever

er Officer." He's not afraid of getting dirty and can be seen doing construction, picking up trash or driving a dump truck with a tie on. In preparation for Hurricane Florence, Mike was on a ladder cleaning out gutters to ensure no backup would cause leakage inside the units. He spends a lot of time pruning trees to avoid any damage to roofs if something falls.

Inevitably there will be items left behind by renters, but when they do, Mike and his co-workers make the most out of the remnants. They gather clothing and smaller items to donate to people in need. Other things they recycle. The most common items deserted are old televisions or other outdated electronics and appliances. "We try to make sure they don't end up in the landfill. We e-cycle them."

Mike enjoys being in business for himself. "I've always been a pay-per-performance kind of guy," he says. He likes to work hard and also have flexibility in his schedule. He and his wife, Hadley are raising two daughters, Madeline and Hannah. Mike loves bringing the girls to work with him, and they think it's an adventure to help him clean out units and sweep, preparing for the next renters.

"We like the fact that when you deal with us here, you really are supporting a local business versus out of state operators or publicly traded operators," Mike says. In addition to the onsite employees, Mike develops relationships with small contractors and local business people. "We have dozens of contractors that we count on every day for things like pest control, landscaping, heating and cooling."

When he isn't hopping between one of their 11 locations, Mike Monteith enjoys sailing and teaching his daughters how to sail. He and his wife also own the Merrimac Shores Marina in Hampton. He appreciates being on and near the water, reading, relaxing, or organizing for his next work day. "The interesting thing about being self-employed is there's always something to do. You really have to define your downtime because you could work twenty-four seven."

"I want people to know that storage is similar across all of our competitors, but where we really excel is true customer service. That's how we are different." NDN



Corey Miller Photography

KICKBOXING PERSONAL TRAINERS

By Dawn Brotherton

Natalie and Sean Joslin have dreamed of owning their own business for years. Now their dream is about to come true with 9Round Fitness. The original company was opened in Greenville, South Carolina, based on the idea that people don't need to spend more time at the gym. They just need more focus and intensity.

The 30-minute kickboxing circuit is a total body workout where the heart is monitored so

the athlete can stay in the best fat burning zone throughout all nine rounds. "We are keeping you in your zone. We want you to stay in that healthy zone. It's not about the calorie burn. It's about the pulse points that keep you in your maximum fat burning and aerobics zone," Natalie says.

Natalie became very interested in fitness while following her military spouse to various duty stations. "I started personal training just

for something to get me out of the house. It was sort of my escape." She quickly took that love to the next level by getting her certifications and becoming a personal trainer. Natalie was instrumental in starting the personal training program at the United States Military Academy at West Point. "I taught teenagers beginning strength training and nutrition."

Natalie has her degree in Special Education from the College of Charleston and taught in

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various schools over the years, but her real love is fitness. When she came to Williamsburg in 2006, Natalie worked for the Naval Weapons Station and Cheatham Annex, running physical training for sailors and their dependents three days a week, eventually working her way up to becoming the athletic director.

Sports and fitness have always been an important part of Sean's life as well. "I played soccer internationally, all the way through college. I played for Team USA Select over in Europe for two summers," Sean says. He attended Rutgers University then joined the Navy supply corps. His travels have taken him all over the world and to every continent. Although he claims he can't run as far or as fast anymore, he says he can still do the kickboxing workout. "I have arthritis in both knees and a torn ACL. If I can do it, you can do it."

"Kickboxing is a fun workout," Natalie says. Unlike other gyms in the area, there are no class start times. Class begins when you show up. There are nine rounds in the circuit. When you're ready, you join in, starting with jumping rope. A personal trainer will be on hand to demonstrate the moves you need to accomplish. By following the sound of the bell and moving

to the next round when directed, you can complete a comprehensive workout in 30 minutes.

It's not all about boxing. The idea is to train like a boxer, focusing on cardio, core and strength training using resistance. There is no contact with other gym members and no actual boxing takes place. "The gym has a family-feel to it, whether you know anybody else in the place or not," Sean says.

Sean is already looking at the long game. "We know we're going to be there fifty-five to sixty-five hours a week initially." Then, as it catches on and the first gym is operating with a staff that allows them to cut back on their hours, they are planning a second and maybe third location. "Then we start over again with the fifty-five to sixty hours a week. If we were doing this for the short game, I would have just kept working for companies like I had been for the last ten years, and [Natalie] would just continue being a teacher."

For Natalie, working in various gyms and with personal training in many locations, the idea of having her own gym has always appealed to her. "I've worked in nine gyms over the years, and I've learned so many great things from each of them. I also learned things that I

would have changed myself from each of them." While working in Fairfax, Virginia, Natalie took a class on heart rate-based training. "It was the first time I'd strapped a heart rate monitor on and thought, oh my goodness, this is amazing. Why would you not train according to your heart rate? Why would you not train in your zone? I love that component."

Natalie Joslin looks forward to providing personal training to more people. In the 9Round concept, a trainer will be on the floor at all times to help members through the workout as needed. The workout is designed to get the maximum effect in 30 minutes a day, three times a week. Sean believes that's a workout most people can find time for.

"Many times, people are hesitant about joining a gym because they are embarrassed," Sean says, "The nice thing about our gym is that it's small. You're not going to have people standing around watching what you're doing. The rounds are in a line, so you're not all bound up on top of each other. So, for somebody who does have that fear about being overweight or embarrassed, there's no need to be. People are there to take care of themselves, and we are there to help them." NDN

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The Williamsburg Music Club

By Narielle Living

Corey Miller Photography

The Williamsburg Music Club has been providing the region with musical performances of many varieties since 1964. Today, Donna Herman continues to shepherd the organization as a new era of musicians and audiences benefit from these stellar performances.

Donna and her husband, who are originally from Houston, Texas, love living in this area. In 2010, she was introduced to the Williamsburg Music Club through other members who

attended her church. "I felt really welcomed by the warm and friendly members," she says of her introduction to the group. "The musical program during that meeting was just outstanding, and I was really happy to see how committed the club members were about supporting the young, talented musicians. I came home and put the third Wednesday of every month on my calendar, making it a point to attend the meetings regularly at Lewis Hall at

Bruton Parish."

The Williamsburg Music Club held its first official meeting on May 20, 1964 in Providence hall. "There were 37 ladies in attendance, and Phyllis Varner, who passed away in 2014, was the first club member," Donna says. Bylaws were adopted in 1965, and the purpose of the club at that time, as well as today, is to bring together people who are interested in music, to encourage musical pursuits and to

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make contributions of a musical nature to the community. "They were committed to helping young students," Donna says of the original members. "The purposes had been fulfilled by presenting musical programs September through May and providing scholarships and benefits and that kind of thing."

In 1967, the club began awarding scholarships to music students, a tradition that continues to this day. Known as the Grants-in-Aid, this program aims to award music scholarships to young musicians through an audition process. "Our Grants-In-Aid program awards scholarships to sixth through 12th grade students in the Williamsburg area. Students may use their award for music lessons, they can attend summer music camps, they can purchase music scores or maybe even a new musical instrument," Donna says. Her face lights up as she reminisces about previous winners. "Last March, it was really an exciting day when 13 out of 32 students competed, and we awarded scholarships totaling 8,500 dollars."

Donna notes that support for new and emerging musicians through the Grants-in-

Aid program has not waned since the inception of the club. "Our members commitment to providing ongoing support for the auditions is one of the most remarkable things," she says. The Williamsburg Club endowment fund was established by a gift in 2004, done in honor of the club's 40th anniversary. The gift helps ensure that the mission of the club can continue, which includes "to identify talented young music students and maintain funds to assist in their development; and to contribute to and/or encourage varied musical pursuits throughout the greater Williamsburg community." Donna says the endowment secures the future mission for the club, and only the earnings from the endowment fund are utilized for the awards. "The principal is protected in perpetuity. We always welcome gifts to the endowment fund. We want to ensure a lasting legacy for young musicians in the Williamsburg area. We are also a 501c3 organization and any contributions received to the endowment or the Grants-In-Aid funds may be tax deductible."

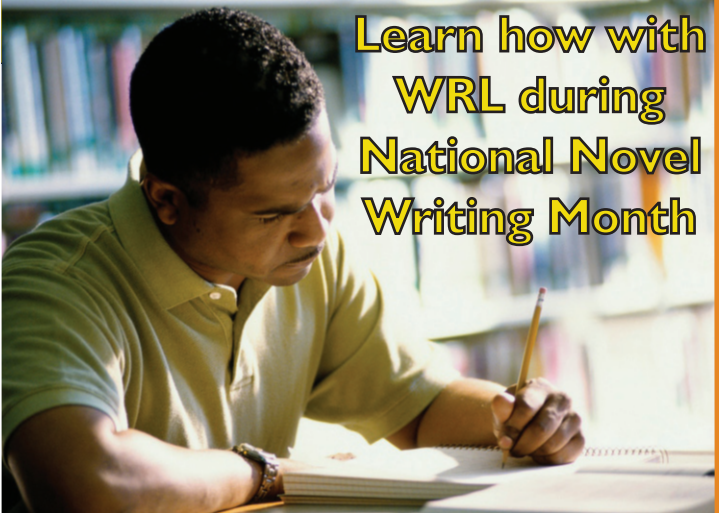
People who are interested in hearing perfor-

mances with the Williamsburg Music Club can always check the website for upcoming performances. "We meet on the third Wednesday of every month at Lewis Hall, which is part of Bruton parish, located on Duke of Gloucester Street. Parking is on Duke of Gloucester Street and to enter onto the street people would turn onto Nassau off Francis street, turn left, drive a short distance, park and there's Lewis Hall. It's very easy to find. Coffee and refreshments are offered from 10:00 to 10:30. We have a short business meeting, and then we have a little break for people to visit. Our program begins at 11 and usually lasts until 12."

The first vice president of programs has the responsibility of finding the performers. "We get a lot of suggestions that are passed on to her," Donna says. "She works on scheduling the performers throughout the year. We encourage performers from all over to come. It can be anyone from anywhere."


The lineup of upcoming musicians is impressive. The month of December includes David Lemelin, who is currently Principal Clarinetist with the Richmond and Williams-

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burg symphonies, accompanied by Richard Becker who will illustrate the musical influence of Robert Schumann on his contemporaries Niels Gade and Franz Schubert. January will provide a musical performance many have never seen before, classical banjo. John Bullard, who has arranged classical repertoire for the five-string banjo, provides listeners with a new voice in the future of chamber music. February brings Williamsburg composer and playwright Vicki Robbins performing her original musical drama, "Chocolate Wings," Rami Bar-Niv, one of Israel's most acclaimed pianists, performs in March and The Boteourt Chamber Singers will perform in April.

And of course, the Grants-in-Aid auditions will be held on Saturday, March 9 at Ewell Hall next year.

Donna stresses the importance of the Grants-in-Aid auditions to the future musicians of this area. "Our Grants-in-Aid auditions are very important. It's part of our club mission to support and recognize and nurture the musical growth of our young musicians. So many of them they have performed abroad and

even won international competitions. Many of our winners are now enrolled in colleges across the country pursuing musical degrees, and we just feel a real pride and joy for these students who have achieved their dreams and a lot of them are now professional musicians." Donna reminisces about the first time she volunteered to assist with the auditions, which are held annually on the second Saturday of every March on the campus of William & Mary. "It was just amazing to see their poise, professionalism and commitment to ongoing musical studies. It was inspiring to see how talented, dedicated and committed they are."

The Williamsburg Music Club is open and available to anyone in the community. "We love meeting new people, and we invite everyone to come to our meetings to learn more about the music club. You can go to our website, www.williamsburgmusicclub.org to learn more about what we do. I feel very privileged to serve as president. It's an honor to lead the club, and it's provided me with a lot of opportunities to meet so many individuals in the area who share the love of music, especially

these gifted young students. They are just such a joy." In addition to being President of the club, Donna has also served as secretary and as speaker bureau chair which allowed her to arrange recitals in the community and provided an opportunity for the students to perform. "It's been a wonderful experience."

Donna Herman's love of music extends even further into her community. Both she and her husband are active members of the bell choir at Williamsburg United Methodist Church, where this year marks their 20th consecutive year of offering free concerts. "A magical moment for me is when the chorus rehearses the Hallelujah chorus for the first time. It's joyful to hear it," she says. "We like to volunteer our time for the church and the community. I feel it's very important to give back as much as we can."

Donna has always been very heavily involved in both church and community activities and most of those undertakings are musically centered. "I consider my second career as volunteering for church and community. I think that's really important." NDN

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Health

A Holistic Approach TO WELLNESS

By Lillian Stevens



Lisa Cumming Photography

Last winter, Dr. Elizabeth Lauren Weeks, who practices a branch of medicine known as osteopathy, launched Apple Tree Medicine, PLLC.

In conjunction with conventional medical, surgical, pharmacological and other therapeutic procedures, practitioners of osteopathic medicine approach the treatment of the patient bearing in mind these underlying principles: that each person is a unit of mind, body and spirit, that structure and function are interrelated and that the body has self-regulating capacity.

“Both allopathic (M.D.) doctors and osteo-

pathic (D.O.) doctors are medical doctors who complete four years of medical school,” Dr. Weeks says. “Also, both types of doctors complete an internship and residency and sit for exams before securing their license to practice medicine.”

What makes them different? “The main distinguishing factor for the D.O. is training in osteopathic manipulative treatment, or OMT,” she says. “OMT is just another tool in my toolbox that, when appropriate, I can use to help someone.”

Not all patients will be a candidate for OMT,

but if they are Dr. Weeks will decide which techniques might be applicable based on that individual’s overall health and medical situation. An elderly patient, for instance, is likely not going to be a candidate for certain procedures, but there are techniques “gentle enough to be used on a 115-year-old patient.”

Dr. Weeks can even use OMT to relieve fluid from a child’s inner ear or bring relief to a baby boomer suffering from joint pain. There will be occasions, however, when OMT is not going to be appropriate.

“In my mind, doctors are facilitators,” she


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says. “Our job is to educate patients and facilitate wellness. Often, there are things going on in our lives that can bring on symptoms. I’m interested in learning what is going on in my patients’ lives, what is going on at home and what is going on at work. It’s all part of the picture.”

Consider, for instance, the patient who complains of a headache.

Like many of her colleagues in the field, Dr. Weeks has a simple approach to medicine. While she obviously can prescribe medications, she is a proponent that when possible, less is more.

“If we’re not treating the root cause and we are just treating the symptoms, then we are never getting rid of the problem in the first place. If you need drugs, I will prescribe them but if you don’t need them, don’t take them. Also, people are often taking multiple medicines and that includes supplements. The more medicine a person takes the more we have to worry about increasing the risk of side effects and the risk of medications interacting with each other.”

“I want to be able to spend what I think is an appropriate amount of time with my patients because I want to provide the best possible care I can. This means taking time to listen, taking time to get to know my patients, taking time

to answer their questions and educating them about their health. That usually takes a minimum of 30 minutes.”

Dr. Weeks, who grew up in Michigan, is the only one in her family to pursue a medical career. She attended college at Colgate University in upstate New York then headed south to medical school.

“I had graduated from college with a degree in molecular biology,” she says. “And I was starting to research my options for medical school. It was only then that I discovered osteopathy. Just the philosophical difference led me to want to be a D.O. Then, I learned that two of my own doctors were actually D.O.s, something I had not realized. I loved my doctors!”

Dr. Weeks graduated from the Osteopathic School in Lewisburg, West Virginia, then landed in Blacksburg, Virginia for her residency. Toward the end of her residency, she began contemplating her next move.

“The government has a massive database where they rank all municipalities regarding whether or not they are underserved by primary care doctors. I pulled up that database and started sifting through the data.”

She knew she wanted to stay in Virginia, so she whittled the list from there. “I knew I

wanted to practice somewhere where there was need. I liked Blacksburg but my research suggested a greater need in Williamsburg. When I was still in residency, I made a trip out here a couple times because I like small college towns and wanted to check out the area. I had a checklist of what I was looking for and found that Williamsburg would be a great fit for me to put down roots.”

One of the things on that checklist included a community choir that she could join. “I have always loved singing,” Dr. Weeks says. “I sang in my high school choir, and I sang in college. Then, when I moved to Lewisburg for medical school, I was excited to discover that they had a local choir and enjoyed getting to sing with them as well.”

She moved to Williamsburg in fall 2016 and has found a choral home. “I am a member of the Williamsburg Women’s Chorus, and I also sing in my church choir.”

Dr. Elizabeth Lauren Weeks is excited about her new community and her new practice, located on Mount Vernon Avenue across the street from Williamsburg Professional Pharmacy.

“It will take a while to build up a patient base, but I have certainly enjoyed a warm welcome to the Williamsburg community.” NDN



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Planning and Design

By Narielle Living

Lisa Cumming Photography

Interior designer Elizabeth Kennis is adamant that all good design, whether residential or commercial, starts with one important thing: a plan. She says that common design mistakes happen when there is no plan. “That is why I’m so adamant about a plan, so whether the issue is that the sofa didn’t fit the room and it’s awkward where it is or maybe that countertop looked great in the big stoneyard but not in the kitchen or that tile looked great in my bathroom until we put it everywhere... all those types of mistakes happen because there is no plan.”

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Elizabeth and her husband married right after college. They moved to New Orleans for a few years before coming to Virginia, and they settled here 22 years ago to raise their family. “It’s a great place to raise a family,” she says. “Our daughter’s a senior in high school this year so we will be empty nesters next year. My son is at the Air Force Academy, but it’s been a great place

to live.”

In college, Elizabeth first majored in education, not design. “I don’t think I realized design was even an option at that point.” Like many others, she chose a major, education, when she first entered college and didn’t think much of it. Still, at that time there was a foreshadowing of where her life would end up.

“Every day I had to walk through the architecture building as I was going to my classes, and it always drew me, but I don’t think I could do it. I wish I had done it.” Although it was an opportunity missed she doesn’t regret her initial decision. “I may not have met my husband if I had done that; I found my niche regardless.”

Later, she got back to her original passion and did two years of architecture work while pursuing her Masters in Architecture.

The decision to move from teaching into design was not made lightly but was part of a decision to find a new purpose in life and find the type of work that was more suited to who

she was. “There were parts of teaching I absolutely loved,” she says. “But they say that work should not feel like work. Teaching felt like work. Teachers are amazing, but the ones who do it and are successful absolutely love it and it doesn’t feel like work, and I knew I was not in the right place.”

After constant feedback from friends and family, she made a decision about her new career. “I thought: I love this, it’s something I’ve always done, why not learn more, become an expert and do it for a living.” Because her children were still young, her education and move into the field was slow. “I did it as I could. As the kids got older, I was able to focus more, and I just never looked back. I love what I do.”

Elizabeth started her company, Elizabeth Interiors, almost six years ago but has been in the design field, off and on, for the last 15 years. When it comes to new projects, she starts from the very beginning. “Whenever I approach a project, I approach it from bare bones. We cre-

ate the space, whether it's a whole house or a room. We listen to the clients, find out what their heart and desire is for that space and how they want to use it," she says. "It's my job to make their vision the best it can be as it comes to life. It always starts with space planning, then we layer rugs, art, furniture and window treatments."

The design and layering are all done with the client's lifestyle in mind. "How are they going to use it? Do they have dogs? Kids? What can we give them that's comfortable that's going to endure the family and the animals? Do they want to have parties every weekend?" Elizabeth says it's important to provide beautiful things that will endure in the space, and not only endure but will be beautiful 25 years from now and not be out of style.

"There's a lot of thought and planning that goes into every project so we don't ever do things piecemeal. We start with a finished plan, then we implement the plan as we can." She adds that sometimes a client is only able to do part of the plan, but at least they have the blueprint for moving forward when they are able to continue with the design. "They at least have the plan, and we're working toward an end goal."

Elizabeth understands that it can be overwhelming to take on a remodel or house project, but she insists that a plan is all you need to stay the course. "My philosophy is if you're going to do it then do it right. Don't try to save a penny here or a penny there. Start with a really good plan and then implement it as you can. Otherwise you throw good money after bad, and you're not ever fully happy with the end result even though you've had to live through

the construction."

When determining a plan for a space, Elizabeth comes up with the design then calls in the people who can decide what needs to be done to make the plan come to life. "My designs are conceptual, then I bring in the engineers and the contractors," she says. "Even architects have to bring in engineers. We are the creative, then they tell us what can and can't be done. We problem solve based on what they tell us." Her job, she says, is to imagine how best to create a space based on what she is told by the engineers. "I think that the added benefit we bring to somebody is that we see everything as a whole, how it's going to be finished."

In the world of interior design, Elizabeth says that colors are coming back into style and she is excited about that. "I tend to stay away from the trends. You want to be current, but not trendy. There's a difference. That's why I do my big pieces pretty neutral, because if we want to be current maybe we will switch out some pillows, change an area rug or throw a big fun chair in, but I tend to stay away from super trendy things." Although she tends to avoid trends, she will work with trends that are classic styles, such as Hollywood Regency.

"I've done Hollywood Regency, and while that might be trendy now it was also trendy in the 20s, so there's a little bit of a timeless look. Unlike shiplap. Shiplap is great if you're in an area where there's a lot of shiplap. We're not in that area. Shiplap will be one of those things where 10 years from now people will look at it and it will look dated. So, when you're making those big investments like having your floor redone, stay away from those trends. You can do

it in small ways and keep things current without being too trendy."

For Elizabeth, one of the most important design elements to a room is lighting. "It is my favorite part of the project because everything we do from a design standpoint is what it is because of the light that we put in. The light, more than anything else, will create the mood." She adds that light should create some drama at night while being plentiful for work tasks during the day. It should all be adjustable and beautiful. "It's a structural thing you add to your home that you will never regret. It's really crucial, especially in new construction renovations, that lighting be done correctly, so we do lighting consults for people."

Another aspect of interior design involves mixing older pieces of furniture with newer pieces. On several design boards in her studio, Elizabeth points out how these elements can function together. "It's a visual thing, it's a functional thing and it's also part of that layering that creates a feel. If you walk into someone's home and everything is brand new and matching, then it is not inviting. You want your house to look collected and not designed."

For Elizabeth, the best part of this job is the end result. Because of that, she tends not to charge the usual retail prices for furniture that she orders for her clients.

"My goal is to see all everything finished. That's more important to me than charging retail, so the vision is complete. That's where my joy comes in. If someone does come in and get a plan, I always tell them even if it's 10 years down the road please send me a picture when it's done. That's what I love." NDN

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December 1 and 2

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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!

SKATE JAM AFTER HOURS

October 26, 2018

From 5-8 pm at the Skate Park, 5301 Longhill Road (adjacent to the James City County Recreation Center). This glow-themed night will include a skate competition divided into beginner, intermediate and advanced divisions where participants are judged on style, flow and difficulty of run. Warm ups begin at 5 pm and registration is required for admittance into the park. For info/registration, visit jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation or call 757-259-4200. Weather permitting; if inclement weather is forecasted, please call the Activity Hotline at 757-259-3232.

Hey Neighbor!

ST MARTIN'S AUCTION FOR HAITI

October 27, 2018

Starts at 7 pm. Advance sales \$30 per ticket. The Men's Fellowship at St. Martin's Episcopal Church is hosting its first C.L.O.A.K. (Caring, Loving, Outreach, Action, Kindness) gala auction. The recipient of the proceeds is St. Vincent's Center for Children with Disabilities (<https://stvincentshaiti.org>), in

Port au Prince Haiti. St. Vincent's is a school for children with physical disabilities in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. For additional information on tickets, auction donations or direct contributions, contact Ted Lyman at tlyman45@outlook.com or the SMEC office at 757-229-1111.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S MASTERWORKS 2 CONCERT

October 29 – 30, 2018

The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) will host its second concert of the season, Masterworks 2. Concerts will take place at the Kimball Theatre at 7:30 pm. For more information, visit williamsburgsymphony.org.

Hey Neighbor!

AVALON CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

November 2, 2018

Join us for the second annual golf tournament fundraiser - ticket proceeds support Avalon Center's mission to end domestic and sexual violence. Registration and information at avaloncenter.org/avalon-classic.

Hey Neighbor!

SCATTER KINDNESS LUNCHEON

November 2, 2018

Blooms that Brighten, Inc. is celebrating its 10 year anniversary of improving the quality of life for senior by holding a "Scatter Kindness" luncheon at 12 noon at Two Rivers Country Club, Governor's Land. Tickets are \$35. Contact Louise Carlson at 757-784-1566. This Williamsburg nonprofit organization provides fresh flowers, free of charge, to residents in continuing care communities and hospice houses

Hey Neighbor!

USMC BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

November 3, 2018

The Williamsburg Area Marines (WAM) will observe the 243rd Birthday of the founding of the United States Marine Corps at Legacy Hall in New Town from 6:30-9 pm. USMC Color Guard, traditional readings, guest speaker, and cake cutting. Heavy hot and cold buffet, cash bar. \$ 35 per person. All Marines and friends invited. For information call 757-

879-5153.

Hey Neighbor!

SECOND ANNUAL HOLIDAY CRAFTS FAIR

November 3, 2018

From 10 am - 3 pm at 5800 Mooretown Road. Baked goods, homemade crafts and holiday gifts will be for sale. SpiritWorks Foundation is a Recovery Community Organization. For information, call 757-903-0000.

Hey Neighbor!

VIRGINIA THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL

November 4, 2018

From noon to 4 pm, celebrate the re-enactment of America's first Thanksgiving at Berkeley Plantation. The festival begins with a parade including horse-drawn carriages, fife and drum corps, festival entertainers and participants. First person re-enactors, musicians and magicians stroll the plantation grounds. The Chickahominy Tribal Dancers perform. For additional information call 804-829-6018 or 1-888-466-6018 or go to www.virginiathanksgivingfestival.com.

Hey Neighbor!

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If you know someone you think we should write about,
please email our Editor, Narielle Living, at:

narielleliving@gmail.com

Next Door Neighbors

TAX-AIDE SEEKING VOLUNTEER TAX PREPARERS

November 5, 2018

Williamsburg Tax-Aide is seeking volunteers for the upcoming 2018 tax season. The program provides tax counseling and preparation service to taxpayers with low-to-moderate-income, with special attention to those aged 60 or older. For information on becoming a volunteer and for details about the November 5th orientation meeting, please email District Coordinator George Richmond at grichmond4@live.com.

Hey Neighbor! TRINITY ORGAN SERIES

November 7, 2018

Join us for the opening concert of the 8th season of the Trinity Organ Series featuring Dr. Martin Sunderland, Organist and Music Director at Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach. Time: 1 pm at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road in Williamsburg. A reception will follow the free concert. For more information, call 757-229-3631, or visit www.bedevea.org/concerts.

Hey Neighbor! FALL COLORS WALK AT WHITE OAK TRAIL

November 10, 2018

Susie Yager, of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, will lead a level, easy walk through a lakeside woodland, with a portion of the trail on boardwalk over a beaver-dammed swamp. The trail is a 2.6 mile loop, level and easy, but may have some wet or muddy spots. Meet at Newport News Park's Discovery Center, on Constitution Way, at 10 am. Use the NN Park entrance at Constitution Way. From Jefferson Ave, turn onto Constitution Way; drive 0.9 mile; the Discovery Center will be on the right (GPS coordinates 37.181682, -76.537173).

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG YOUTH ORCHESTRAS CONCERT

November 11, 2018

The Williamsburg Youth Orchestras will hold its first concert of

the 2018-19 season at the Hornsby Middle School auditorium at 4 pm. Tickets will be sold at the door: \$10 adult/\$5 students (ages 6-17). The Fall Concert will feature the Junior Wind & Brass Ensemble, Strings Orchestras, and Symphony Orchestra. Music by Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Mahler's Adagietto, and more will be performed under the direction of WYO conductors, Dr. Grandis, Ms. Nixon and Mr. Stehle.

Hey Neighbor! DREAM CATCHERS' COWBOYS UNCORKED EVENT

November 11, 2018

Tickets are on sale now for \$75 and are available online www.dreamcatchers.org or by calling 757-566-1775. Cowboys Uncorked is an annual fundraiser held at the Williamsburg Winery for 275 guests, hosted by and benefiting Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center. From 6 - 9 pm. Wessex Hall at the Winery is transformed into a western town - complete with a DJ, country line dancing lessons, western whiskey bar, jail house, gunslinger quick draw contest, games and more! Wear your boots & jeans and leave the heels & wingtips at home! This fundraiser supports Dream Catchers' life-changing equine assisted activities and therapies for children and adults with special needs.

Hey Neighbor! PRESENTING THE SCHUMANN QUARTET

November 13, 2018

At 8 pm in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre. The four musicians of the Shumann Quartet exude a strong connection and communicate without words. They have been praised by the Süddeutsche Zeitung as playing "staggeringly well...[and] with sparkling virtuosity and a willingness to astonish." For further information and tickets visit our website --- chambermusicwilliamsburg.org

Hey Neighbor! WOMAN'S CLUB MEETING - COME JOIN US!

November 14, 2018

The Woman's Club of Williamsburg-GFWC is a group of women with many different talents and interests who have banded together to enrich the quality of life for citizens of our community, all while having fun and forming life-long friendships. We meet monthly for a short business meeting and to enjoy lunch and fellowship. Please email Lori (lori@womansclubofwilliamsburg.org) if you'd like to join or attend a meeting or to get more information about our activities. Meetings start at 11:15 am and are held at Ford's Colony Country Club, 240 Ford's Colony Drive. Visit us online (www.womansclubofwilliamsburg.org) or on Facebook ([@thewomansclubofwilliamsburg](https://www.facebook.com/thewomansclubofwilliamsburg)).

Hey Neighbor! WCAC JURIED SHOW TO END SOON

November 16, 2018

The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Gallery's second Annual Regional Juried Show features 80 of the best works of regional artists and artisans and includes 2-D and 3-D artwork in all styles and mediums. The show was judged by Ken Wright, former Arts Commissioner of Virginia and current resident artist at the d'Art Center in Norfolk. WCAC is located at 110 Westover Ave. in the Arts District. Hours: Tues.-Sat. 11-3; Sun. 12-4. 757-229-4949. www.visitWCAC.org.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG YOUTH ORCHESTRAS CONCERTO COMPETITION

November 17, 2018

The Williamsburg Youth Orchestras will hold its annual Concerto Competition on at 4:30 pm, Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. WYO members will perform a memorized concerto for the audience. The winner of the competition will be featured in their Winter Concert (February 10, 2019) as a soloist. This event is free and open to the public.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB PRESENTS CHRIS

MOONEY, BARITONE

November 21, 2018

Mr. Mooney has been delighting audiences since his debut as Marcello in La Boheme at the Aspen Music Festival. This November, he will be joined by his students in presenting Art Songs of the 20th century, by Bernstein, Copland, Musto, Blitzstein and more. Program begins at 11 am, coffee and business at 10 am, in Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish, 331 Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg (next to the Barnes and Noble bookstore). For more information, visit www.williamsburgmusicclub.org, 757-291-9082.

Hey Neighbor! HERB SOCIETY TO HOLD OPEN MEETING

November 13, 2018

The Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit (CTVU) of the Herb Society of America will hold an open meeting in Williamsburg. The program for the meeting, "Down the Rabbit Hole: A Curious Look at Herbal Trees and the National Herb Garden (NHG). The meeting will be held in the fellowship hall at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, and is free of charge. For more information, contact Donna Pratt at 757-608-8929.

Hey Neighbor! 59th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HOMES TOUR BY GREEN SPRING GARDEN CLUB

December 1, 2018

The 59th Annual Christmas Homes Tour, presented by the Green Spring Garden Club Inc., will take place from 9:30 am - 5:30 pm. This year's tour features five unique properties from the 18th to the 21st century. Tour tickets are available only through Green Spring Garden Club. To find more detailed information on tour homes and to order tickets, visit the Garden Club website: <http://greenspringgardenclub.org>. Inquiries may be sent to: greenspringgardenclub@gmail.com.

Visit WilliamsburgNeighbors.com for a complete Hey Neighbor listing.

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INTERMEDIATE

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OCTOBER 2018
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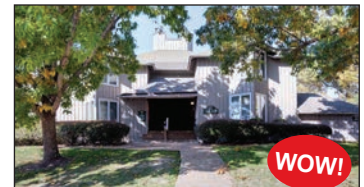
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