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WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors[®]

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PRICELESS

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The Great Outdoors

Becky Gwynn



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Meredith Collins, Publisher

Is it a coincidence that, as we were putting together this issue on the *Great Outdoors*, that the weather got warmer? Finally. I only know that this magazine required me to work inside all weekend when I would rather have been out in the yard taking a walk with my dogs or riding my bike. I'm ready for good weather and spending more time outdoors. I am sure you are too.

Who wouldn't be inspired by the beautiful Williamsburg outdoors in the spring? Or any time, for that matter. Exquisite fields and farms and parks and trails and forests abound. There are excellent outlets for water fun as well. They are lovingly tended, cultivated and improved by a bevy of dedicated people who work to make our outdoor experiences are the best they can be. We are truly fortunate to have so many quality opportunities to enjoy our environment in so many ways.

This issue can't introduce you to every one of our outdoor enthusiasts, of course, but you will find some stellar examples of caretakers and many outdoors aficionados included here. They are well worth meeting in the *Great Outdoors*. NDN

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More Than Just a Job

By Harmony Hunter

Becky Gwynn had every intention of becoming a doctor. She was in her third year of the pre-med program at William & Mary, where everything was moving according to plan, until one summer she met some larvae that would sweep her off her feet.

During the summer of 1984, while visiting her parents in Paris between semesters of college, Becky worked at the European Parasite Lab, where she contributed to a project that would change her future. She couldn't know it at the time, but fishing fly larvae from cow patties would give her life new purpose and meaning.

This decidedly unglamorous experiment had a fascinating hypothesis: could the flies that plagued cows on farms across Europe be controlled by a natural predator, such as a second, larger fly? The notion of constructing natural solutions to environmental conflicts hit Becky like a lightning bolt. Her ideas of becoming a physician were abandoned, and she pivoted im-

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mediately to her new field.

She found her way to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), a path she's kept to for nearly 32 years. Today she serves as Assistant Director of Wildlife Diversity. "I'm mostly in an office. A lot of times my work is policy development and administrative to ensure that the great people I work with can do their parts," she says. "But the best days are when I'm in the field."

Working "in the field," as Becky calls it, can encompass a pretty exciting array of possibilities. Often she finds herself at prescribed fire sites, where DGIF collaborates with other forestry interests to help restore the pine savannah habitat that was widespread in Virginia when settlers landed here in 1607. Almost the first thing those settlers did was chop down trees, and the species that took the hardest hit was the native longleaf pine.

In controlled burns, the endemic and invasive white pine species is thinned out to allow the native long leaf to regain a foothold. Restoring this native fauna benefits species like

turkey, quail, deer, field sparrow and prairie warblers, who all evolved to thrive in this habitat. The method is efficient, cost-effective, and natural: three ingredients that Becky loves to see combined. "We call the longleaf pine 'Virginia's Founding Forest,'" she says.

Becky's work can carry her from fire to water, as she lends her assistance in projects on the Eastern Shore of Virginia to study and support shorebird breeding populations on the barrier islands. "This is an area where we can be on the forefront and play a preventative role," she says. Migratory shorebirds, waterfowl and geese might follow a course on the East Coast anywhere between Maine and Florida, so Becky and her team monitor those activities and breeding patterns. The Eastern Shore's coastal islands play a very specialized role for migratory birds, and are designated as an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations.

Several endangered and threatened beach-nesting bird species breed there, and biologists from DGIF work in concert with other conservation agencies to monitor the breed-

ing rates, distribution and population of these shorebirds. Benefits of this work reach beyond the simple virtue of conserving rare native Virginia species. These animals can provide early warning indicators when coastal ecosystems are threatened and are a valuable, albeit winged, partner in environmental monitoring.

Regarding concerns that come closer to Williamsburg, Becky plays a key role in managing a population many Virginians come into contact with every day: white-tailed deer. These encounters can often be a source of conflict as this wild species struggles to adapt to human encroachment. Becky and DGIF employees use a strategy of linked land acquisition so that long corridors of uninterrupted and undeveloped land can replace the natural routes that modern development can displace. Land acquisition has a double benefit in preserving native contours as well as providing safe places for wild creatures to live alongside their human neighbors.

Deer are of great interest to hunters, photographers and nature lovers, and they've been

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familiar to Virginians since the first landing. With their present numbers estimated as high as one million, there may be twice as many deer in Virginia today than when settlers spied the first one in the woods of Jamestown Island in 1607. Although they came close to extinction in 1900, their adaptivity and quick rates of reproduction have restored their familiar form to Virginia's evening landscape. It's Becky's role to help smooth interactions between humans and the white-tailed deer, limiting clashes with suggestions for people to plant less tempting ornamental plantings and acquiring large tracts of land where deer can keep to themselves.

The lovable form of the black bear may be romanticized in art and literature, but they are another Virginia species that requires careful management. "Sometimes we find bears where they shouldn't be, like crossing a major highway," Becky says. Bears are naturally shy, but new development can sometimes nudge a bear out of his home range. With larger male bears tipping the scales at 500 pounds, relocating a wayward bear can be a monumental task.

Becky and her partners at DGIF walk a fine line between protecting this cherished, curious and ingenious species and minimizing the possibilities for negative interactions.

Trees, birds, deer and bears might well be considered a full dance card for any conservation professional, but for Becky it's just the beginning. "I got my first taste, and love, of endangered species when I was at Virginia Tech in graduate school and was working on several projects focused on the natural history of many of our rare freshwater mussels in the Upper Tennessee River system in southwest Virginia. Understanding the role of mussels in our natural systems as indicators of good water quality and biological filterers was another one of those pivotal points for me. Finding ways to restore those declining populations is something I've been involved in throughout my career," she says.

Becky's joy is tempered with sober challenges. Pressing issues are before Virginians. To Becky's eye, loss of habitat is affecting not just wildlife but also our children. "Kids don't have

opportunities to interact with nature the same way they might have 30 or 40 years ago," she says. Safety concerns and screen time can devalue nature for all citizens. "It's really a web of life we are critically a component of," she says. She places a premium on changing mindsets on the value of wildlife and ensuring that they have a place in future generations.

Becky and the team of biologists and educators offer hundreds of pages of resources on their website at www.dgif.virginia.gov. From frequently asked questions about native species to tips for making your own backyard welcoming for wildlife, there's a whole lot to get excited about in Virginia's natural landscape.

For Becky Gwynn, this work is more than just a job. She points out that she's been with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for 32 years and counting, and she's found meaning and satisfaction in every day. The organization positions itself as a trustee for wildlife for all people, and this is a mission that resonates for her. "I can't think of a more noble cause to be a part of," she says. NDN



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JIM CORLISS



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Birding in Williamsburg

By Brandy Centolanza

Birding and being a part of nature has always been, well, second nature to Jim Corliss. Jim is a long-time member of the Williamsburg Bird Club and an active part of The Christmas Bird Count, an annual census of birds across the Western hemisphere that is conducted by the National Audubon Society each winter.

“I’ve been birding a really long time, since I was about ten years old,” Jim says. “It’s something that my dad first got me interested in while I was growing up.”

Jim was reared in Maryland and has vivid memories of bird watching with his father as a child.

“I grew up in a rural area that was just great for bird watching,” he says. “We would go to South Mountain to watch the hawks migrate. We also went to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge to watch thousands of migrating Canadian geese and snow geese. That was an amazing spectacle to be fortunate enough to

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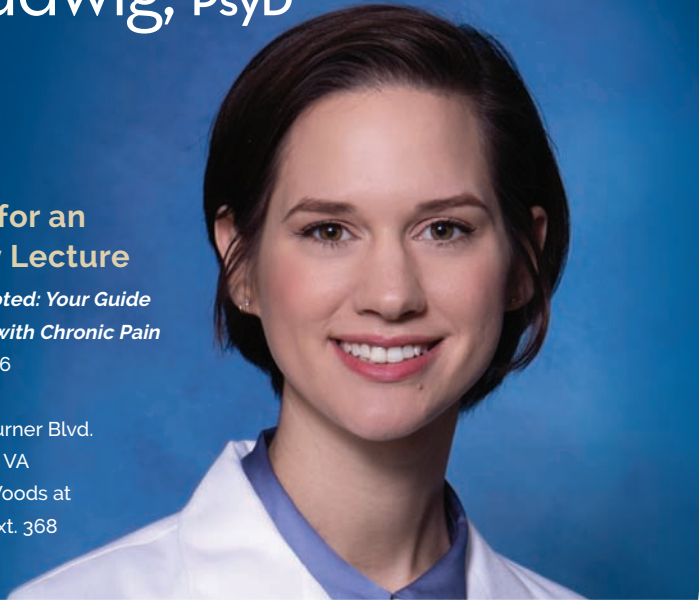


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witness.”

Jim took a respite from birding during his college years at Virginia Tech but started taking the hobby seriously once again while living in California after graduation. A mechanical engineer, Jim spent a decade working at NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California before relocating to NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton 25 years ago. Jim connected with the Williamsburg Bird Club about ten years ago.

Williamsburg Bird Club, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, is a group for birders and bird enthusiasts of all ages in and around the Williamsburg area. Scores of bird club members turn out each month for field trips to local trails and parks to connect with nature and observe birds of various species. While most members are retirees, the Williamsburg Bird Club also has a core group of William & Mary students who are also involved.

“Every now and then a young child, about middle school age, comes out and expresses an interest in nature, birding and being outdoors, and that is always fun to see.” Jim tries to find time to go bird watching at least once a week. He likes to frequent Greensprings Interpretive

Trail in James City County as well as York River State Park. More than 200 species of birds have been recorded at Greensprings Interpretive Trail, which is part of the Virginia Birding Trail. New Quarter Park near Queens Lake in Upper York County is another popular spot for birders. Williamsburg Bird Club hosts a public bird walk at New Quarter Park on the fourth Saturday of each month.

“I find being outdoors very relaxing,” Jim says. “It’s rejuvenating. I enjoy the serenity of hiking down a trail in the center of the woods and listening to the sounds of the forest.”

Whenever possible, Jim also treks to the Eastern Shore and to the mountains of Highland County for bird watching.

“Kiptopeke State Park and Chincoteague are popular places for birding,” he says. “There are particular birds you only see on the Eastern Shore and there are particular birds you only see in the higher elevations in Highland County. Here in Williamsburg, there are different birds you can see during the different seasons. There are waterfowl in the winter that migrate here from Canada and, in the summer, there are birds that come up from South America to breed. We have a lot of different habitats for

birding with the forest areas and all the rivers and waterways. That makes birding very interesting around here.”

The most common birds found in Williamsburg are the Northern cardinal and the Carolina chickadee, although Jim is often on the lookout for the red-headed woodpecker, the mascot for the Williamsburg Bird Club.

“I am always excited to see a red-headed woodpecker,” Jim says. “It has a full head of beautiful hair and the colors are just so striking on it.”

For the past few years, Jim has been active with the Christmas Bird Count. From December 14 through January 5 of each year, the National Audubon Society holds a bird count across the United States, Canada and in Central America in order to calculate long-term bird population trends. There are roughly 2,500 count circles (each circle is 15 miles in diameter) in the Christmas Bird Count. Volunteers assist with identifying different bird species and counting the number of birds in each species. Last year, Williamsburg held its Christmas Bird Count on December 16 in eleven different locations. Birders calculated 25,000 birds of 120 different species. Jim oversees Wil-



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Williamsburg's counting circle, coordinating volunteers to help with the event and then compiling all the necessary data to send on to the National Audubon Society. In addition to the eleven coverage areas in Williamsburg's count circle, people can also report any birds they see in their own backyard.

"You don't have to be an expert birder to participate," Jim says. "You can count from your own home or neighborhood. We had 120 people participate in the Christmas Bird Count last year, and we had just as many people counting at home as we did out in the field."

Jim enjoys being a part of the Christmas Bird Count because it provides "a very good understanding of how species change in abundance and either decrease or increase over time."

The Christmas Bird Count first began back in 1900. In the 1970s and 1980s in Williamsburg, birders may have counted as little as ten American bald eagles. Today, however, there can be a spotting of more than 100 eagles during the Christmas Bird Count. And, while the eagle population has soared locally, the population of the Northern bobwhite has been on the decline. The Christmas Bird Count also enables birders to track species that may not be

commonly found in the area.

"We had a rare sighting last year of a yellow-throated warbler during the Christmas Bird Count," Jim says. "Someone in Kingsmill spotted it at one of his bird feeders. It was the first time that bird was seen during the Christmas Bird Count. They are here usually during the summer but not in the winter."

In addition to the Williamsburg Bird Club, Jim is also a member of the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. His wife, Nancy, whom he met and fell in love with during his time at Virginia Tech, encouraged Jim to join the Virginia Master Naturalists after seeing an ad about the organization in the local newspaper.

Virginia Master Naturalists is comprised of volunteers who love science, nature, and being outdoors and who work to help conserve and manage natural resources and public lands.

Through Virginia Master Naturalists, Jim has been involved with other bird counts as well as wildlife mapping (a year-round count of any animal that is spotted). Jim also volunteers with tree research at the New Kent Forestry Center and oyster research at Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester.

"What is great about the Master Naturalists program is that it is very diverse in the types of activities that you can pursue," he says. "I try to do anything that has me being outdoors."

Any outdoor activity brings pleasure for Jim. He especially loves to camp, hike and bike with his family, but, it is obvious that birding is tops on his list. "I love the mix of history with the abundance of outdoor activities here in Williamsburg," he says. "For example, I can go to Jamestown Island and soak in the history, see an archeological dig, and then take a drive around the island and do some terrific birding. It's birding in a different light."

Jim Corliss is proud to promote the hobby as a part of the Williamsburg Bird Club.

"It is rewarding being part of a supportive group like the Williamsburg Bird Club," he says. "There are a lot of opportunities to learn more about birding through the club. You can learn a lot from someone who is experienced who can help you learn to identify birds. Or, you can simply watch from your own home. Put up a bluebird box or a chickadee box, set up some bird feeders. Birding is very rewarding. It's a thrill to see a bird you don't know and work hard to identify it." NDN

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Butterflies, Plants and the Way of Nature

By Linda Landreth Phelps



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Virginia Master Naturalists are volunteer educators and citizen scientists. They're also stewards who help to conserve and manage natural resources and public lands, according to their organization's website. Adrienne Frank and her husband, Gary Driscoll, are counted among the 1,397 certified Master Naturalists listed in Virginia in 2018. They both joined the area's Historic Rivers Chapter in 2008 and sat on the board as soon as they completed the organization's course of study.

"I've served in almost all capacities since then, gaining an understanding of what's needed here and at the state level. There are doubtless more charismatic leaders than I in the chapter," Adrienne says modestly, "but last year I was nominated and elected president."

Adrienne is currently serving the second of her two-year term, as well as staying active on the boards of both Friends of Dragon Run and the John Clayton Chapter of The Native Plant Society. She's a member of the Wil-

liamsburg Bird Club, too, as well as a volunteer at Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Since retiring from her 39-year career as a therapist with Child Development Resources (CDR) in 2017, she's been free to pursue her lifelong passion for nature without restraint.

It's easy to identify Adrienne and Gary's house as belonging to people who are connected to the natural earth. Their entire front yard is short on decorative lawn and long on useful garden. The fenced, raised beds spill over

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"Before I moved to Williamsburg 40 years ago to work for CDR, I used to own and milk goats. I still love them, but they need so much attention. You really can't own them and have any other job, so instead, I decided to collect goat-related items." The heaviest concentration of this collection adorns the home's dining room. There are billy goats, nanny goats and kids featured in figurines and wall art everywhere. "They're wonderful, annoying pets," Adrienne says. "They're so gregarious and smart, but terrible mischief-makers!"

Adrienne came by her interest in nature early

in life, thanks to her parents. "My mother, a college professor, was a lichenologist and botanist," she explains. "She emigrated from her native Wales after World War II and met my father in the United States." Family legend has it that she won his heart one wintry Wisconsin night when she decided to sleep outdoors, covered in leaves, rather than in her crowded college dorm. Both of Adrienne's parents led wildflower and mushroom walks, went foraging for wild foods and were quite active in conservation efforts throughout their lives.

After high school in her small New Jersey hometown, Adrienne continued living at home for two years while she attended Centenary College, where her mother was a member of the faculty. She later transferred to Columbia University to pursue her degree in Occupational Therapy and then went on to Virginia Commonwealth University for postgrad studies in the same field.

"I wish I'd paid more attention on those long walks my mother took my sister and me on," Adrienne admits, "but as a child, I just didn't think that sort of thing was cool." She finds na-

ture exceptionally cool now.

Adrienne became interested in observing butterflies about 15 years ago. As a joint project with the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, Adrienne recently compiled a full color brochure picturing 59 of the 90 summer butterfly species found in the Williamsburg area. Seen together as a group, their fragile beauty is amazingly diverse, but many of them may be unfamiliar to the casual observer. Their habitat ranges from impenetrable cypress swamps to backyard gardens. Even their fanciful names enthrall. From Eastern tiger swallowtails and Monarchs to the less commonly seen Great spangled fritillary and Painted lady, the diversity of shapes and colors among the species is remarkable. Sadly, if you've noticed a scarcity of these lovelies recently, it's not your imagination.

"Butterflies are in crisis in many areas," Adrienne says. "Their natural habitat is disappearing with development, creating places we refer to as nectar deserts." Native plants such as milkweed and nectar-rich flowers and trees are being eliminated and replaced with those

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that may be pleasing to the eye, but provide no benefit to wildlife. Ford's Colony signature tree, for instance, is the ubiquitous crepe myrtle. It bears prolific flowers in season, but they produce almost no sustaining nectar. Butterflies travel great distances to find their preferred nectaring plants and learn to avoid such deserts.

Adrienne recommends that anyone who is concerned with preservation of pollinators such as butterflies and bees familiarize themselves with beneficial plants. "It's just as easy to plant nectar-rich flowers and trees," she says. "You just have to know what they are. Mountain mint, bee balm and coneflowers are several that attract pollinators, but explore the whole list while planning your garden. Some are crucial host plants, food for the caterpillars which precede the butterflies."

Adrienne and Gary have combined their passion for birds, butterflies and other wildlife with a love of the water. As longtime Friends of Dragon Run (FODR), they have done many a paddle along the Dragon's 35-mile run to the Piankatank. The key to its protection is the re-

moteness of the area and how difficult it is to access. Most put-in points are a mile hike in. "If you have any interest in exploring a pristine wilderness, that's the way to do it," Adrienne says. Spring paddle sign up has started, exclusively by online reservation. Slots fill fast and the season only lasts until May 13th. The meet-up point is in Saluda, and kayaks are provided. FODR kayaks are small enough to navigate the tight turns through the swamp, and equipped with radios so paddlers can hear a knowledgeable guide describing the river's history, flora and fauna. "It's the most beautiful river on the Middle Peninsula, in my opinion," Adrienne says.

Paddling is just one of the things Adrienne and Gary have enjoyed throughout their years together. Through work opportunities and just for fun, they've traveled the world. The couple has taken bicycle trips to Ireland, Scotland and Portugal. While working for CDR, Adrienne trained and provided technical assistance for early childhood personnel throughout the U.S. and beyond. As an expert in her field, Adrienne traveled to Texas 35 times, as well as Alaska

and New Hampshire on multiple occasions. She led trainings in Canada, Germany and the Republic of Georgia. They've explored several continents as they visited family or friends in Wales, South Africa, Australia and Poland. Their hearts, however, remain firmly rooted in Tidewater and all its wonderful wildlife.

"It's my goal to help preserve our wild habitat, especially wildflowers and native plants. It's so sad to see acres of green lawn in our parks, but not a flower or butterfly in sight. If you can find any dirt country roads, notice the diversity of wildflowers and insects along the borders that are left unmown," Adrienne says. "At one of our favorite butterfly viewing spots, we recently noticed that home construction is planned which will completely destroy their habitat."

Adrienne Frank's chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists is currently working with James City County on beautification projects. "We donated and planted wildflower seeds at Warhill Stadium," she says. "It may not be a native area, but at least the butterflies will have someplace to go to nectar." NDN

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An Outdoor Job

By Susan Williamson

Michael Wilcox loves the outdoors, and his favorite hobbies are backpacking and camping. His job as a Recreation Specialist gives him just the right mix of outdoor time and indoor planning during the winter months. He works mostly in the 545 acre New Quarter Park, but he also has responsibilities at Back Bay Park in Yorktown and Charles Brown Park in the Lackey community. With a Williamsburg address, New Quarter Park lies adjacent to the Queens Lake community.

A native of California, Michael grew up in Orange County and then moved to the Palm Springs area for middle school and high school. After high school, he had a desire to leave the desert. "I wanted somewhere new," he says. "I wanted something different. My mom was in Texas, and I liked it there, so I decided to give it a try." His move to Texas took him to the University of North Texas in Denton, where he majored in recreation, event and sports management. His job experience is varied but centers on being outside: summers at summer camps in Maine; a job in Outdoor Education and Environmental Awareness at Yellowstone National Park; and parks and recreation departments in Texas. An internship in New Hampshire was es-



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

pecially significant to his future plans, although he did not know it at the time he accepted the job.

His experiences in Maine and New Hampshire caused him to fall in love with the East coast. He also fell in love with Alexandra Ratliffe, who became his wife. "She was working in New Hampshire during my internship, and she followed me back to Texas so I could finish my education," Michael says. Alexandra is a native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania and works from home as a program manager for a national non-profit, The Student Conservation Association. When not working, they like to travel, visiting new places and relatives in Texas and Pennsylvania. Alexandra enjoys camping as

well, and they spent their first anniversary backpacking in the Shenandoah Mountains, which is where Michael had proposed. When he is indoors, Michael enjoys reading, playing board games and trying new foods.

Michael and Alexandra both wanted to live on the East Coast, and she wanted to be closer to her family in Pennsylvania. When Michael began looking for jobs, the parks position was on the top of his list. "They wanted someone to develop new programs," he says, "and that's what I wanted to do." So far, Michael and his wife have enjoyed living in this region and have settled in nicely with their Basset Hound mix.

Last June, the park held its first ever Ecology, Art and Nature Camp for students age eight to

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twelve. Campers studied mammals, birds, insects, trees and plants. They made upcycle art projects such as fairy houses, bird boxes, and sun catchers. The first camp was limited to 15 campers, but the 2019 camp will accept 20 youth. The campers learned “leave no trace” which means how to sustainably interact with nature without disrupting their surroundings.

This year, Michael will be supervising the tennis program as well as pickleball at Back Bay Park during the spring and summer season. In the future, he hopes to hold an outdoor recreation camp, featuring non-traditional sports. Activities will include archery, kayaking, disc golf and fishing.

New Quarter Park offers three miles of hiking trails and seven miles of mountain bike trails which may also be used for hiking. There is a fishing pier and kayak rental on Queens Creek is available May through September. Patrons may bring their own kayaks as well. During May through September Bay Country Kayaks offers rental and kayak tours with eco tour leaders on the third Saturday of the month. There is a softball/all-purpose field, volleyball courts, picnic shelters and disc golf course.

Another popular program is Movie in the Park, April through October on the third Saturday night starting 15 minutes after dark. The April movie will be Over the Hedge shown at New Quarter Park. Other movies will be shown at Charles Brown Park and the McReynolds Athletic Complex.


Monthly two hour programs known as “Walk and Talk,” usually held on Fridays or Saturdays cover topics such as snakes, insects, and nature journaling which can include writing, drawing or pressing flowers. The February program featured a huge poplar tree located in the park. A few of the programs are designated “Wash and Talk” in which the attendees clean artifacts found in the park. Various volunteers conduct the programs.

Camp Peary donated the New Quarter Park property in the 1970s, and Queens Creek divides the park from the camp. In the early 2000s York County began to develop the park and it opened to the public in 2005. At certain hours, Michael hears revelry bugle calls from the camp. Park visitors have reported hearing machinery and gunfire during base maneuvers.

In addition to its outdoor recreation function, New Quarter Park is also the site of archeological digs. The park got its name from being part of the “new quarter” 2000 acres outlying from Carter’s Grove Plantation owned by Robert “King” Carter. Some archeological surveys were conducted in the 1970s.

More recent exploration, begun in 2006, on a bluff overlooking the York River as well as Queens Creek showed evidence of occupation by Native Americans, Europeans and African Americans, the latter two groups during the late 17th century and first half of the 18th century. The site is known as the Ellyson Armistead Site. Armistead was a York County Sheriff and Justice of the Peace in the second quarter of the 18th century. Early maps show a cluster of buildings on the bluff. Amistead’s heirs sold the property to Nathaniel Burwell of Carter’s Grove in 1777.

In 2015, a rubble filled cellar was discovered with colonial period artifacts. Each season’s digs find new artifacts and more evidence of the settlers who once occupied the bluff. The park itself has more than 30 historic sites. Prehistoric fossils and evidence of Native American tool making have also been found in the park.

Michael’s desire to leave the desert and explore new areas has led him to an opportunity to work in a beautiful natural setting doing what he loves. Thanks to his efforts, people of all ages will enjoy being outdoors in New Quarter and other outdoor environments. 



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A Day in the Park

By Erin Fryer



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

If you've ever spent the day hiking the trails, kayaking or exploring one of James City County's public parks, you've seen the work of Michelle Lightfoot.

Michelle has served as a Park Operations Manager for the county for three years and oversees six parks, outdoor pools, playgrounds, the skateboard park and the newly completed Splash Pad.

"I've been with the county for 21 years," Michelle says. "I started working part-time at the Rec Center as a customer service assistant, and through the years I have taken any opportunity for advancement that has come my way. James City County is all about professional growth.

Whenever a new position has opened up, I have always been the first to raise my hand so that I can learn and grow. I continued to take different opportunities until an operations coordinator position for the Rec Center opened, and I did that for about five years."

During her time as operations coordinator, a position became available in the parks department and they asked Michelle if she would be interested. "I was so used to being inside and wasn't sure if I wanted to work outside, so I asked if I could do it for six months to try it out. Once again, the county is all about professional development so they were willing to let me try it without fully committing. I was only in my cur-

rent position for 30 days when I went back to the Rec Center and told them I was not coming back. I absolutely love it."

While Michelle loved everything about working at the Rec Center, especially the people who work there, she has fallen in love with the beauty of the parks.

"My favorite thing about my job is just getting outside in the parks," Michelle says. "I love walking the trails and getting to meet park patrons. That's how I find out how they are liking the parks and what they think we need."

A few years ago, Michelle saw a need to replace one of the pools at Chickahominy Riverfront Park because it was having several issues.

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Fast-forward to summer 2018 and families from all over the county and beyond are enjoying a new pool-going experience with the addition of the Splash Pad. “The kids love it, and it’s just a great place for non-swimmers to play,” she says. “Parents always have to be an arm’s length from their child in the pool, but on the Splash Pad they can relax a little more and just keep an eye on them. What really got me was when I saw the children in wheelchairs accessing it and enjoying it. That was the best.”

Michelle oversees all the parks on the upper end of James City County, including Upper County Park, Diascund Reservoir Park, Brickyard Landing and Little Creek Reservoir Park.

In addition to maintaining the county’s parks, pools and playgrounds, Michelle also inspects the playgrounds for the county’s public schools. For the county’s playgrounds, she is in charge of replacing and fixing equipment if it’s broken and makes sure everything is in good shape, especially the things that get a ton of use, like the zip line at Kidsburg.

One park that Michelle wishes more people in Williamsburg knew about is Little Creek Reservoir Park. “I just wish more people knew where it was and everything it has to offer,” she says. “It’s located off of Forge Road in Toano and has a reservoir, boat ramp, jon boats for fishing, kayaks, canoes, trails and a playground.”

Michelle says that Little Creek is her favorite park in James City County. “It has beautiful scenery and even four ducks that live there. We call Little Creek the hidden gem because everyone loves it once they go there; we just have to get them there. When I walk on that fishing pier and look out over the water, the view takes my breath away.”

One of the ways Michelle has made sure she is giving park patrons what they need is by physi-



When Maria enrolled at Literacy for Life, she did not speak English and had a very limited ability to read or write in any language. She never attended school in her native El Salvador—but she hoped it was never too late to learn! Maria and her tutor, Betsy, started with “Hello” and the ABCs. Since then, Maria’s reading has improved by two grade levels, and she feels much more confident and independent. As the cook for her large family, she is especially excited that she can go to the grocery store and name the items she buys, “like tomato, garlic, and carrots!” She and Betsy have developed a special friendship and enjoy learning about each other’s cultures, taking field trips in the community, and laughing a lot! Betsy has found the tutoring to be fun, stimulating, and gratifying as she works with someone so dedicated and appreciative. Looking ahead, Maria now dares to dream of achieving a goal which once seemed impossible: becoming an American citizen.



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cally getting out in the parks and talking to people. For example, one day Michelle was walking the trails at Little Creek and there was a patron who was having some difficulty walking. This showed Michelle that she needed to get some benches installed along the trails, so she worked with a local Boy Scout group to make it happen.

Another project Michelle is very proud of is the new mountain biking trail that recently reopened at Upper County Park in Toano. "It's been so nice to get feedback from the patrons who live in the area who thank me for getting those trails reopened," she says. "I worked with the Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association to go out and pick up debris and make sure the paths were cleared. I am so glad people are getting to enjoy them again."

In addition to walking the trails, Michelle loves to kayak and play basketball and racquetball. Unfortunately, she suffered a knee injury a few years ago that has forced her to take a break. In her free time she also loves to spend time with her co-workers. "All of us in Parks and Rec will get together and go bowling and do other fun things like that," she says. "They're like a second family."

Michelle says that three years ago she was

very different than she is today. "I was always overseeing indoor facilities," she says. "Sometimes we would go outside on the weekends, but nowhere near as often as I do now. Kayaking is really my thing now, as well as trail walking. I love getting out on the trails at Freedom Park in particular. They are gorgeous."

Michelle has been married to her husband, James "J.J." Lightfoot, for six years. The couple recently built their dream home and settled down in Providence Forge after years of renting homes in James City County.

Born and raised in Newport News, there weren't any recreation centers or pools where Michelle grew up. "I believe in recreating and think it's really important," she says. "Now I get to recreate for a living, which is pretty awesome."

The youngest of five children, Michelle has always been into sports. "I've played basketball my whole life," she says. "While I enjoyed playing most sports, basketball was my true love. I had never heard of racquetball until I started working at the Rec Center, but I am into that now too. The issues I am having with my knees is making it hard to play either, but I still love them."

After graduating from Denbigh High School, Michelle visited Williamsburg with one of her siblings to see a friend who lived in town. That friend knew about Michelle's love for basketball and introduced her to the Rec Center, which at the time was much smaller than it is today. "I could not believe how small Williamsburg was," she says. "We would come here from time to time when we were growing up to visit Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens, but I never really explored the town. This was back when Ironbound Road had nothing on it except for the Rec Center, and I remember thinking it was huge. It was really the only game in town at that time."

Impressed by this facility that was unlike anything she had seen before, Michelle applied for a part-time job. Fast-forward to today, and Michelle Lightfoot is more than two decades into her career with James City County and was recently awarded the Employee of the Year designation by her colleagues.

"I was so very honored to receive that recognition," Michelle says. "Everyone who works for the county really goes above and beyond so it was really cool to win. It was like icing on the cake." NDN



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A Love of Hiking

By Dawn Brotherton



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Do you know Williamsburg has approximately 80 miles of hiking trails? Matthew Maney does, and he has probably hiked them all numerous times.

In high school, he ran track and cross country but didn't have a passion for it. It wasn't until his military deployment to Europe that he found an activity to pique his interest. It all started when he was stationed in Germany. Looking out his apartment window one day, he spotted a square on the side of a mountain and he figured it must be a castle and set out to find it. He drove as close as he could, then started the hike to it. This was in the days before GPS, and when he topped the rise, he realized his destination was actually on the further mountain. He hiked back to his car, drove around to the other mountain, and began his trek again. In the course of this adventure,

he discovered the plethora of trails to explore. Once he reached the castle, he was surprised to find restaurants inside.

"During the hour that I was in the castle, there were about two hundred people coming and going, bikers and hikers. German families always go out and walk on weekends." Matt describes the European culture surrounding hiking as being safe and trusting. Land owners welcome the hikers that utilize the trails that cut through their property. Hiking is second nature to many Europeans. It's for all ages in all weather. "That's just the way it is over there. Every weekend you're driving anywhere, you'll see families walking. You'll see individual hikers. You'll see bikers everywhere," Matt explains.

Matt was stationed with the Army as a liaison officer between his unit at the Horn of Africa

and African Command in Stuttgart, Germany. He knew many associates who had traveled to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, and he began wondering if he could do it. He gathered a team of people to train together by hiking various trails. His favorite hikes were in Switzerland. "The trails are very well maintained, and they have street signs." He discovered that not only was hiking good physically, it was great mentally. "When I'm out there, I am not listening to anything other than nature. You can't beat that."

In order to get in shape, the group started with smaller hikes. "Every other week, we would drive down to Switzerland or Austria and hike on some of the Alps, trying to get some elevation. It was an absolute blast. We did everything from beautiful hikes that went just as planned,



to hikes where we got totally lost and didn't come home until one or two in the morning."

Matt and five others reached the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro in 2009. "And afterwards, I had the hiking bug. I hiked all the time." He was extended on his military duty numerous times for a total of three years, so he took advantage of his time off to see more of the countryside.

"In Germany or Switzerland, you're doing hikes in the middle of the woods, and there's a restaurant. Someone who wants to sell you beer or a wurst. You can't beat that. And they love having hikers come through."

Matt spent six years on active duty Army as a helicopter pilot before transferring to the Army Reserve to finish out his 33 years. After active duty separation, he continued to work for the Army as a government civilian until his retirement in 2017. Now he can focus on the things he enjoys most in life.

Williamsburg has its fair share of trails snaking through the parks and communities that are virtually unnoticeable unless you go looking for them. Matt tries to get in at least a 5-mile hike each day. He really enjoys Freedom Park. "If I want to do more than five miles, I'll just double up trails, five to ten miles. There's good little

hills back there, not big mountains or anything like the Shenandoah, but it's a challenge."

In order to share his passion with others, Matt started the Williamsburg Hiking Meetup. "We meet every Thursday afternoon at four o'clock, generally at Freedom Park or Warhill Sports Complex." They always welcome new people. Matt recommends you check the Meetup.com website in advance for the location.

One the most rewarding parts of hiking for Matt is the people he meets. "It's an amazing group of folks. We have nothing in common, but we're meeting to go hiking."

When he isn't hiking, Matt enjoys online chess and has met many virtual friends over the years. One he plays regularly with lives in Scotland. "To be honest, ninety percent of the people never say anything other than hi and good luck." Then he stumbled across one who was also an avid hiker. They had played over one hundred games in a year and a half, when the Scotsman invited him to visit and go hiking. "They rolled out the red carpet like you wouldn't believe for me." Matt was impressed with the beauty of Scotland and bewildered by the number of people of all ages that hike there regularly, thinking nothing of the frigid temperatures or

drizzling rain. Thanks to this friendship, Matt is now officially a Laird in Scotland, owning one square foot of land in that country. He even has a certificate to prove it!

Matt has set his long-term goal to hike the entire 2,500 miles of the Appalachian Trail, which he estimates will take five months. He's going to test his resolve this July by hiking the last 450 miles of the trail to the southern tip.

The whole ethos of the Appalachian Trail is a culture unto itself. "They're very friendly to you in the town center along the trail. Damascus, Virginia is the hiking capital of the world. They have a big week-long festival. The Appalachian Trail runs right through it." Matt describes how people who have done the trail before go out of their way to support other hikers. Families will camp along the trail and cook burgers for hikers that happen by. There are huts along the way where you restock supplies if needed or drop things when you over pack. It's always an adventure.

Matthew hasn't set the date for his five-month Appalachian journey, but in the meantime, he will continue training on the trails around Williamsburg and spreading his love of hiking with others. NDN

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Joshua's Farm

By Susan Williamson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Forge Road in Toano brings to mind the bluegrass region of Kentucky. Attractive homes are interspersed with horse barns and surrounded by miles of plank fence. Horses graze in paddocks and pastures. At Joshua's Heritage Farm, Joshua Carr continues the heritage he began at the age of four when he first rode a horse. "My grandfather built this barn for my mother about fourteen years ago," Joshua says, "and he named the farm for me." Joshua and his partner, Justin Watkins, have been operating a horse boarding, lesson, trail, breeding and

show operation for the past five years.

After graduating from Christopher Newport University with majors in psychology and business, Joshua obtained a Master's Degree in Professional Counseling from Liberty University. He decided to return to the horses in a professional capacity.

"I grew up showing on the 'A' circuit hunter shows," he says, "and later at American Quarter Horse Association shows." Justin showed in western pleasure, western riding and trail classes. Together, they run a horse operation

specializing in hunters, showmanship, western pleasure, equitation, trail and western riding with both American Quarter Horses and American Paint Horses. They offer English hunt seat, western riding and western pleasure lessons. Twenty horses are housed on the farm's twelve acres, with an eight stall show barn, four stall barn and numerous paddocks. The boarding operation is full, although the partners would eventually like to buy additional farm acreage to expand their operation. The boarding horses comprise several breeds and

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purposes. "We have everything from cavalry reenactors to trail riders to people who want to show," Joshua says.

The farm competes in several levels of horse shows, attending the National Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio and the World Paint Show in Fort Worth, Texas, as well as breed shows at the Virginia Horse Park and other regional shows. They also bring riding students to Newport News Park where they compete on farm owned lesson horses in the Deer Run shows.

Both Joshua and Justin teach lessons, for the most part private, unless family members wish to ride together, in their all-weather outdoor ring with sand footing. They are currently teaching about forty-five students. Training duties for their own, as well as customer horses, are shared. In addition to lessons and training, the farm offers trail rides at York River State Park and summer camps. Birthday parties are available in the summer months. Teenage riding students are chosen as camp counselors and have input in planning the camp schedules and activities. Josh is grateful that the counselors are there to help out. "The counselors think

about things I take for granted and add interest to the camps."

Joshua believes that horses can have a positive effect on a child's world. "I think hanging out at the barn is good for kids," he says, "and once they know how to brush a horse and be useful, we like for them to be here." In addition to offering affordable lessons, he likes to encourage students to be successful in life, and they try to be proactive in supporting their students' education. He says that they have a tradition of awarding one deserving youth student a \$2,000 scholarship each year. The money must be used to further his or her education whether it be college, another training program or educational event.

Joshua clearly loves working with horses, and when he talks about them, he lights up. His favorite part of training is working with the young horses, getting them ready for showmanship-in-hand classes and teaching them to lunge. Lunging, or longing (both terms are correct), involves having the horse move in a circle around the handler at the end of a long rope or canvas lunge line. It helps the young horse to develop muscle and balance as well as to learn

to respond to commands. Young horses are also exercised by being "ponied" or led behind another horse or an ATV. "We try to let the horse tell us what he is meant to be," Joshua says. "Trying to make a horse do something he is not suited for will only result in frustration and unsoundness." The movement and form of a hunter under saddle are much different from that of a western pleasure horse. "Once in a while you will have a good all-around horse that can do both." When he has bred, raised and trained a young horse, the goal is to sell it. Even though he will miss working with it, he enjoys seeing a horse develop and bond with its new owner.

Joshua's grandfather, local builder and developer Jim Griffith, is now retired. In addition to naming the farm for Joshua, he also named developments after his other grandsons, Joshua's brothers, Jacob, Alexander and Michael. Jim developed Jacob's industrial park in Toano, Michael Commons near Sentara Hospital and Alexander Commons by the old DMV.

Joshua is following his grandfather's heritage in another way. He worked as an intern in his grandfather's real estate development and

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contracting business one summer. During his college years, he took a few design and architecture classes as electives. In January of this year, he trained to become a real estate agent with Howard Hannah Realtors®, working out of their New Town office in Williamsburg. At first glance, it's very different from working with horses on a farm, but he likes it and has managed to dovetail the two careers so they fit together nicely.

Joshua's goal is to help people who want to develop small horse farms and other small acreage properties, especially in the Toano and surrounding areas. He has taught some of his horse clients how to put up a fence, how to prevent and recognize colic and other horse diseases and how to choose good quality hay. Eventually he and his brothers might work together to develop small farms and estates.

For the moment he is devoting about forty hours a week to the horse operation, mostly mornings and evenings and about thirty-five to forty hours to his real estate career. While Joshua is growing that career, Justin is taking the horses to shows. They ship to an average of two away shows a month for ten months and six to

seven local shows. Different horses go to different shows depending on the owner's wishes and the competition level of the horse. Several out-of-town owners visit occasionally and they enjoy cook-outs and hanging out at the farm.

Joshua's Heritage Farm is well designed and beautifully kept. The show barn's brick aisle way and large stalls are clean and neat. The horses appear fit and well-groomed. Joshua's passion for horses and for his students and customers comes through in his conversation and in how he conducts his business. He is equally enthusiastic about finding homes and farms for his real estate customers. He knows what makes a functional and attractive horse property and is willing to help first time landowners become responsible small farmers.

When Joshua Carr's mother put her four-year-old son on a horse and Joshua's grandfather supervised him as an intern, they both sparked interests and passions which serve him well and will last a lifetime. His love of horses and of the land has led to two fulfilling careers. His education in business and psychology helps to enhance the people skills needed in both careers. NDN

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VOLUNTEER OUTSIDE!

By Erin Fryer



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Williamsburg is widely regarded as a premiere location for retirees because of its scenic beauty, history, culture, recreation and entertainment options. Another element that makes the Colonial Capital such a desirable place to spend one's golden years is the host of opportunities available to lend a helping hand.

Marilyn Riddle is a certified Master Garden-

er with the James City County/Williamsburg (VA) Master Gardener Association, where she has logged more than 2,500 hours of volunteer work since she first got started 18 years ago. She also serves as her unit's representative as well as a board member.

A retired high school math teacher, Marilyn and her late husband, Ed, built their home in

Williamsburg in 1989 after raising their four children in Newport News. Originally from Verona, Mississippi, Marilyn moved to Virginia after graduating from the University of Mississippi in 1963 to pursue her passion for mathematics and space at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton.

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pursue a degree in business education, but then the space race came along,” Marilyn says. “I remember being enthralled as a young girl that much of NASA’s work was done at Marshall Space Flight Center, just 150 miles east of my childhood home. That’s what ultimately led me to switch my concentration to math.”

While she is technically from Verona, Marilyn often tells people she is from Tupelo because that is where she went to high school after her freshman year. “The high schools consolidated which is one of the best things that has ever happened to me,” she says. “Even though I was from a very small town in the south, our high school was top of the line and opened a lot of doors for me. I consider myself very lucky to have gone there.”

Marilyn notes that the area she grew up in wasn’t exactly widely known across the nation, with the exception of one of its residents, Elvis Presley. “We are from the same county, but I never got to meet him,” she says. “I saw him play at a fair before he got very famous, but if I would have met him, he would have laughed at me because I was a nerd. It wasn’t all that common for women to go to college, or to study math for that matter.”

Marilyn’s greatest inspiration in life is her

late mother, who originally sparked her desire to garden. “My mother always taught me that humility was a virtue,” she says. “That is probably considered old fashioned today, but she was my role model and she tended to an acre garden for our family for 65 years.”

During Marilyn’s senior year in college, her placement office helped arrange for different interviews. The fact that she was a math major set her apart from the other females in her class, so she had a lot of opportunities. Marilyn ultimately decided to accept an intern position at NASA Langley.

After one year at NASA, Marilyn came to the realization that she would rather be working with people. She already had her teacher’s certificate, so she combined her love of math with her teaching credentials and desire to be with people and began teaching math in the Newport News public school system.

Marilyn worked as a teacher at Newport News High School and later transferred to Denbigh High School. She took a break from teaching for 15 years to raise her four children: Brian, Kevin, Craig and Lisa, and later returned to work at Denbigh where she retired.

When Marilyn got started with the Master Gardeners almost 20 years ago, she began tak-

ing classes twice a week. “I am the only one from my class who is still active,” she says. “There are a few emeritus people, but I am the only active one.”

The JCC/WMBG unit of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program is comprised of trained volunteer educators who work within their local communities to promote sound horticultural practices. The JCC/WMBG unit alone has about 230 master gardeners, 21 interns and 29 emeritus gardeners.

In order to become a master gardener, Marilyn had to complete a 13-week training program. “After I had gotten through with my intern classes, I began looking at what projects were available for me to work on. We didn’t have a lot of projects back then. Today, we have 20 in our unit. At that time what appealed to me the most was volunteering in Colonial Williamsburg.”

In Colonial Williamsburg, the gardens are maintained by paid employees, volunteers and master gardeners. There are several beautiful gardens in the historic area, but the first one Marilyn tended to was the George Reid garden behind the George Reid house. She worked there for two years before she was asked to become the coordinator for the project. “That’s



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how I like things to go” she says. “I like to start at the bottom and build my way up, so that’s what I did.”

As the coordinator, Marilyn oversaw a team of about 25 people, and it has since grown to 50. In 2007, she voluntarily stepped away from the project so she could focus on her role as state president for Delta Kappa Gamma, or the International Society for Key Women Educators.

During the years that Marilyn oversaw the George Reid garden, her team was asked by Colonial Williamsburg to take over the maintenance of the Shields Kitchen Tavern Garden. “That was an interesting project because the gardens sit on top of an underground service tunnel,” she says. “I have no idea how much soil was between the garden and the tunnel, so it was interesting.”

Marilyn’s favorite project with the master gardeners was working on the “veggies team” in Colonial Williamsburg. “Lettuce is my favorite vegetable to grow because it is so easy,” she says. “I never had any lettuce other than iceberg until 25 years ago, and now I hardly ever use it. My favorite is arugula. Growing your own veggies prevents you from being exposed to the solutions that are used as a preservative, so I love to

grow my own for several reasons.”

Marilyn says her chapter of the master gardeners has some of the highest criteria for their members of any association, and they have to meet a certain number of volunteer hours to maintain active membership. “We have to have continuing education every year which we get by having educational lectures at our meetings.”

In addition to her duties as a master gardener, Marilyn also serves as the representative for her unit of the Virginia Master Gardeners Association. She has served in that role for almost a decade.

Marilyn says the reason she loves getting outside and volunteering with the Master Gardeners is because it’s just plain healthy. “It gets me outdoors and moving. I can really tell a difference in the way I feel, and I think I would have warded off some of the orthopedic issues I have had if I had been out more.”

In response to some of the orthopedic issues Marilyn has been battling, she has started working on horticultural therapy projects at places like The Landing at Woodhaven and the respite program at Williamsburg United Methodist Church. “It’s how I make lemonade out of lemons,” she says. “I am still able to be involved, but in projects that don’t require as much from

me physically.”

While she loves volunteering outside and gardening, Marilyn’s biggest hobby is reading. “I read almost exclusively autobiographical novels,” she says. “I don’t have a favorite book, it’s usually whatever I have just finished reading. I like to read novels from each political persuasion.” She also loves watching college basketball games, working on Sudoku puzzles and visiting historical sites.

Right now, Marilyn said she is averaging two to three hours of volunteer time with the gardeners per week, but at her peak it was much more. She admits she is beginning to age out of some of the more active projects, but she has been very intentional about maintaining active membership. “There is a fine line between being active and emeritus,” she says. “Emeritus aren’t required to do any work, but they can if they want to.”

With all the volunteer opportunities available in Williamsburg, it is hard to choose just one, and you don’t have to. While Marilyn Riddle has dedicated much of her time over the past 20 years to the master gardeners, she has had a hand in many other organizations as well. “It’s just a great way to keep busy after retirement,” she says. NDN



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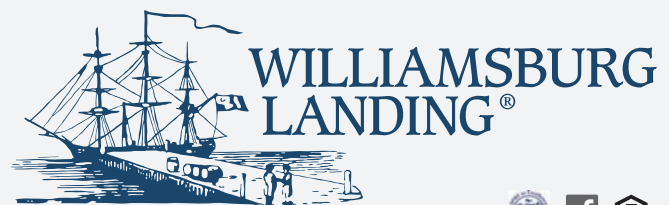


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For the Love of Trees

By Lillian Stevens

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Stewart Ware has built his life around a passion for plants and their native habitats. The local plant ecologist and retired William & Mary faculty member is especially interested in trees as populations of a species.

“To me, they are fellow living beings,” he says. “I’ve always wanted to learn more about why trees grow where they grow in nature, and how they sustain themselves. I’m interested in what other species they interact with, how they adapt to nature and environmental factors, and how they cope with competition from other trees.”

Stewart incorporated that interest into a career that spanned 43 years at W&M where he was a professor of biology. Though his title now includes the word emeritus, Stewart can often still be found on campus interacting with colleagues and students about their research. He is also involved in the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, named after the famous 18th century botanist, who was once a circuit court clerk in Gloucester County. Membership in the organization includes beginner and experienced botanists and gardeners alike, as well as individuals who just enjoy getting out to walk and see some wildflowers and trees. There are educational programs, field trips and workshops for all seasons.

For his part, Stewart enjoys sharing his knowledge and tree identification skills in a va-

riety of ways, including regular tree and plant walks. “My wife was active in the Native Plant Society well before I became involved,” he says. “But I enjoy participating whenever they invite me to give a talk or lead a field trip.”

In January and February, he typically leads small groups out on aptly named “nude tree walks” where they explore common upland trees, as well as some rarer trees. During these expeditions, Stewart helps folks learn how to identify trees in winter conditions, admittedly a little tricky when they are without their leaves.

“At first, I suggested to Mary Hyde Berg, one of our founders, that we call it a leafless tree walk,” he says. “But she thought ‘nude tree walk’ might attract more attention. Whenever someone referred to it as naked tree walk, she would correct them. To Mary Hyde Berg, the word ‘nude’ sounded artistic, whereas ‘naked’ sounded risqué.”

No matter what one calls these excursions, Stewart is the perfect leader for tree or plant walks in any season. Naturally, the native plant society has a particular focus on those that are indigenous to the region.

“We are interested in native plants that produce the kinds of things birds like to eat, the kind of leaves insects can feed on and the right kind of nectar for native bees and the honey bee.”

For local tree enthusiasts, the Coastal Plain

of Virginia and the Piedmont of Virginia are nearly unparalleled. “We have gobs of beautiful trees here!” Stewart says. “Growing up in Mississippi, everything was pines, southern red oak and magnolia. In our yard there, we had a little water oak and pecans and some holly trees.”

While the area boasts an abundance and variety of trees and other plants that make their home here, there is also a peculiarity. This region is home not to just some species at their northernmost limits, but it’s also home to some species at their southern limits.

“This is a particularly good state to live in if you’re interested in this sort of thing, which of course I am. My wife and I wrote one joint paper together, and it was about the southern species that reaches its northern limit here in the coastal plain as a tree, but the herbaceous plants underneath that are more northern species reaching this far south.”

Stewart is interested in the impact that environmental factors have on native trees and plants. In fact, some of his most important research began in the wake of Hurricane Isabel, the deadliest, costliest and most intense hurricane in the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season.

“I never focused on hurricane damage over the years because we never had significant damage,” he says. “Until Isabel.”

On campus, the College Woods around Lake Matoaka, as well as the lake itself, serve

as a living laboratory for faculty and student research at William & Mary. Naturally, Stewart and his students were anxious to inspect the woods after the storm passed.

“The College Woods, as a whole, sustained little damage,” Stewart says. “But there were these downdraft winds, which are often associated with hurricanes, which can be devastating. They are not tornadoes, but straight-line winds that come down and run along the ground for a while and then go back up. And in the oldest, finest, least disturbed portions of College Woods, one of those things came down across that peninsula between the two arms of Lake Matoaka and just did terrible damage.”

After his initial shock, he began working with a team of students on research that will actually continue into the next century. “We focused on a part of the Woods where 80 percent of the canopy was gone. Once the canopy was gone all these plants started growing underneath. For five years, we watched the understory expand and close up the canopy. We have four different sets of plots that we are continuing to sample.”

Stewart’s years on the faculty at W&M, and his body of research (90 percent of it conducted outdoors) are certainly impressive, but

he maintains that one of his greatest joys has been learning and sharing his knowledge with others. Leading talks or field trips for the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society is a perfect extension of that.

“When I was in high school, I became really interested in birds and trees. But I saw that as more of a hobby, not a career. When I got to college, I found that I loved learning new information and when I got new information I was so excited to share it with other people!”

Originally, Stewart thought he would choose English or math as a major, as both subjects were interesting to him. Then came a science class.

“I took a course which turned out to be general botany,” he says. “In the labs, the instructor wanted us to learn to recognize common native trees so we could do an exercise and use our knowledge. Well, thanks to my copy of Golden Guide to Trees from my youth, I already knew how to identify those trees, so I just plunged right into it.”

Eventually, a professor who had encouraged young Stewart asked whether he might consider a career teaching at the college level.

“I told him that my parents were retired and that they couldn’t possibly afford the cost

of graduate school, and he said, ‘Well, son, if you’re good enough you can get a fellowship to graduate school.’ So, he groomed me for that. I was helping with his research and he had me do an honors project my senior year so I had some research experience by the time I went off to grad school. All because he sort of took me under his wing.”

The native of Mississippi who wound up at Vanderbilt University for graduate school was hired by William & Mary very soon after he earned his Ph.D. One of the first things he did at W&M was recruit the scholar who would become his wife and then colleague in the biology department.

“Donna and I met in graduate school,” he says. “A year after I came to William & Mary, she came here because I persuaded her to marry me. They had just finished building Millington Hall, which was recently demolished, and soon she was hired as herbarium curator.”

All these years later the wonder of learning, teaching and nature continues for Stewart Ware. As winter turns to spring, the Wares will be headed to Missouri where they will spend the month of April.

There, the couple will enjoy some quiet time, much of it likely outdoors. NDN

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From Farming to 4H

By Dawn Brotherton



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Carl Frick always assumed he would be a farmer in Spokane, Washington, like his family before him. He was a member of Future Farmers of America, raising and showing hogs at fairs. He has come a long way since then, traveling the world and eventually settling in Virginia. He has always loved the outdoors, so it's natural to find him thriving in his current position as Associate Extension Agent, 4H Youth Development for James City County, York County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson.

That's a mouthful, but it basically means he gets to help empower young people to lead for a lifetime. The 4H youth program is one part of the Cooperative Extension System, which is a partnership of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In our state, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Virginia State University bring vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.

Carl's office puts that information into action. "I always ask the question: how do you learn best? About 98 percent of all respondents, over all the kids that I've ever interviewed, have all responded 'hands-on.'" Carl reaches into the

schools and community groups to offer supplemental educational opportunities for youth to explore new areas of interest. His office serves over 180,000 residents. "It's about building relationships with our neighbors in the communities that we serve."

One of the biggest challenges he faces is getting the word out about his programs. Many people hear 4H and equate it with agriculture. That may be where it started, but the possibilities are endless. Recently he worked with a school to create catapults, testing energy, force and motion. They even have computer coding clubs. "I'm always looking for caring adults, people who want to really help grow the next generation of youth. At some point, these youth are going to be adults one day, and hopefully they're going to be productive members of our community and do wonderful things. If that's a skill they learn as a child, taught by caring adults that have that mindset also, I believe when they become adults, they are more likely to give back."

Carl and his wife, Lilliana, met when they were stationed in Germany. They were both in the armed services. After they got married, Lilliana continued on as an Air Force nurse, while

Carl got out of the military and followed her career. Over many moves and miles, they raised three boys, Jason, Joseph and Justin.

When they came to Hampton Roads, Carl was looking for summer camps for the boys, and friends recommended the Jamestown 4H Camp. He quickly signed on to be a camp volunteer. "I saw kids being kids. They were running, playing, laughing, smiling, just being kids, what fantastic camp memories are made of." He continued to volunteer for another five years.

After completing his Master's Degree in Education, Carl was a public elementary school teacher in Hampton, Virginia for three years. He then taught at Thomas Nelson Community College for a few years before finding his way to the Virginia Extension office. "When I'm working with youth, it's all about the experiential. It's learning by doing," Carl says. His favorite time is when he sees the information click into place. "When their eyes open up, and they have their 'aha' moment. The most rewarding is when they learn something new, and they don't realize that they've learned it. You can see them apply that knowledge and the smile on their face when they get it."

When the position in the Virginia Coopera-

tive Extension opened up, he applied. Now he gets to share his enthusiasm for informal education across a broad audience. There are a variety of clubs for youth to join, and adults can volunteer to start new clubs within their area of interest. Gardening is only one example. “The Master Gardeners teach them about soils and propagation. The kids are provided all the materials to raise twenty or thirty mums. Then they meet a few times to learn how to balance a register, improve business skills, and work on their communication skills.” After the flowers have bloomed, the kids take them to market to sell, and they get to keep the money they’ve earned. “It’s a fantastic educational tool, because it gives them the opportunity to see that a little hard work, a little effort, a little time learning something along the way, and they can make some money from this,” Carl says.

The Clover Buds is a new program for five to eight-year-olds. While the older 4H members dive deep into a topic, the Clover Buds get to experiment across a variety of areas to help them find their interests. “One month, they may do something on nutrition. And then the next month, they might do something STEM related. The next month, they might do some-

thing agricultural related, maybe dissecting lima beans or something like that. It’s all activity based.”

The Pet Pals is a service club for older children to take their dogs into the retirement communities. “They’re developing their leadership, citizenship and life skills by going out and communicating with an older generation, having conversations with them and spending time with them, and hopefully learning about that individual person they’re speaking with but also sharing their story.”

Although Carl never dreamed of teaching when he was growing up, he says his grandma might have had some subtle influence. “Out of the middle of the fields in Washington state was her school house where she lived in the back and taught in the front.” Instead of teaching, his dreams were of professional football.

When Carl was stationed in Germany, he played football on the base and then was picked up by the Second Bundesliga, the German American football league. He even tried out for the Frankfurt Galaxy. Today, however, he has given up football and now follows his youngest son’s soccer games. Carl volunteers with the Virginia Legacy soccer team, chaperoning as

they travel to various states in the region.

Lilliana is a neonatal stress test nurse in the civilian sector. The two oldest boys are in college and the youngest is in high school. The Fricks came to the area because of Langley Air Force Base but are staying for all the opportunities in Hampton Roads. “It’s a good mix of beaches, and it’s hot during the summer. We’re close enough to mountains to get my fill of skiing, hiking and camping.”

Carl has always enjoyed the outdoors, camping, hunting and fishing. Recently he has picked up a new hobby—bird watching. “I love seeing different birds and just learning about their habitats and migration,” Carl says. He’s a voracious reader so is now studying books about birds.

As an Extension Agent, Carl Frick gets to share his love of the outdoors in a culturally rich environment. He has found a career that suits him well. “It’s not the income, but the outcome that counts,” he says. He has been serving the community in his current position for about one year and continues to grow the program, furthering opportunities for youth and teaching others to have enthusiasm for the environment. NDN

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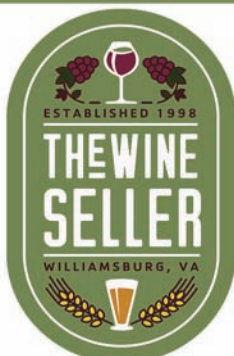


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A Business Uncorked

By Caroline Johnson

Deby Kidney loves wine and loves people. Luckily for her, she's found a way to combine these two loves through her work as an Independent Wine Guide with Traveling Vineyard. Deby has lived in the Williamsburg area for 25 years. After playing in a community band, working at Weight Watchers, and working in her current position at Williamsburg Winery, amongst others, she runs into people who "recognize her from somewhere" often. Her position as an Independent Wine Guide has given



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her the opportunity to bring her Williamsburg experience full circle, connecting her to old friends and new.

Like so many before her, after receiving her college degree, Deby struggled with finding a job that felt “right.” Eventually, she found the military musician program within the Army, which was a perfect fit. She joined and was able to play the flute during her years in the military. When the time came for her to retire, she sought out other opportunities to continue her love of playing. Deby spent time playing with a community band and now plays with Flute Frenzy Williamsburg Flute Choir. She plays at events such as church services and private parties. Deby previously was involved in the choir and handbell choir of her church while staying busy raising her children as they grew up in Williamsburg. She has been involved in a multitude of activities in the community, including being a leader at Weight Watchers, working at Starbucks, and serving as a member of two churches.

Deby and her family moved here from Ha-

waii in 1994 after she was transferred to Fort Monroe. Serving as a musician in the Army, Deby was torn about this move. While she was excited to join the vibrant community and rich history Williamsburg had to offer, moving from Hawaii was a tough choice, as one could imagine. She and her family first lived in Hampton for a year before eventually moving to Williamsburg. She is now proud to call Williamsburg home and enjoys the true sense of community that surrounds her.

At one point, Deby was uncertain about what her next involvement in the area would be until she found her calling. It all started with a good glass of wine!

When a friend invited Deby to join her for a wine gathering years ago, it was an obvious “yes!” The event would have a knowledgeable guide with wine and some snacks, and she would get to meet new people. She went, did the wine tasting and immediately knew this was something she needed to be a part of.

“I’m the kind of person who just dives into something,” Deby says. “In this instance, I

signed up right then and there.” That night, Deby signed up to be an Independent Wine Guide. This was just the start of something great.

While Traveling Vineyard provides guides with all necessary training, she wanted to take it one step further. She began searching every website she could find and reading every book she could get her hands on that would help her learn about all the intricacies of wine. As she began getting more and more involved, she saw an open opportunity to be a Wine Ambassador at Busch Gardens. She applied and was given the position. This opportunity took her love of wine and her knowledge about the details one step further. It helped further her love of Williamsburg, of interacting with people and of sharing good wine. She poured for Busch Gardens for three years and allowed herself to get fully immersed in the culture, the underlying details and all that people loved about wine. She knew she wanted to continue to treat wine as an experience and share it with others.

Deby felt confident that she had found the

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right fit with her role as an Independent Wine Guide and continued to educate herself and look for ways to be involved in the wine community. She takes pride in what she does and works hard to ensure that the wine gatherings she leads are centered around two things: good fellowship and good wine.

To Deby, a wine gathering led by her is a time that is spent relaxing, learning and trying new things. "I make it easy for the hosts and hostesses," Deby says. "All they have to do is get the people there." When Deby is hosting a wine gathering, she brings five bottles of wine with her. A typical gathering starts with an introduction to Traveling Vineyard where she explains the fun in store for the evening. This gives her an opportunity to not only share the story of the company but also her personal story. Once they begin the tastings, she walks through five different wines. While the attendees taste the wine, they get to indulge in food that pairs well with that wine and learn all about the facts behind the wine.

One important part of the wine tasting pro-

cess that many people don't know about is the importance of the proper tasting steps of the wine. "It the same steps as it is to taste coffee. But wine is always a gathering beverage. It's so much more fun than coffee." After the attendees get to taste and enjoy the wine, they're able to ask questions, talk more with Deby about what she does, and then purchase the wine at the end if they would like to.

While Deby has a traditional tasting event "menu" that hosts and hostesses are able to provide to pair with the wine, she has a lot of fun working with more "out of the box" menus as well. Some of the most fun gatherings she's led include Pringles tastings, ice creams, Girl Scout cookies and junk foods. "People can request tastings that they would like, or I can suggest ones for them," Deby says. Another thing people may not know about wine is how much of an effect the food that is eaten with wine can have on the taste of the beverage. "If you pair the wine with the wrong food, the food can actually taste bad. If you put the wrong things with it, it can change the flavor

of the wine." While educating others on topics like this is a highlight of her work as a Traveling Wine Guide, the business side of it is just as fun and enjoyable.

Thanks to her experience with Traveling Vineyard, Deby eased into her current position as manager of tasting at Williamsburg Winery here in Williamsburg. She began less than a year ago as a tasting guide and was able to move into a leadership role. "All of this stems from Traveling Vineyard," Deby says. She is currently studying to be a Certified Specialist in Wine (CSW), a distinction that will allow her to further her love of wine and her education on the subject. "What I do is so much fun. I started this position with Traveling Vineyard for financial reasons, and now my focus has shifted to the friendships. It's constantly changing."

As Deby Kidney continues to excel in her business, her love for people, wine and Williamsburg is rooted in all she does. "I feel even more like a part of the community now," Deby says. NDN

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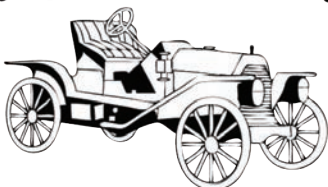
Feeding an Army

By Wheston Chancellor Grove

“Feeding an army” is a common expression. For Major Kayla Ramotar, it’s her career. At the age of 36, she is the Command Dietician for all initial military training. There are 21 training locations across the United States, and four nutrition programs which she oversees and manages within the Army. She was instrumental in creating the Performance Readiness Bar Program, which is designed for recruits undergoing the Army’s initial training. The readiness bar is fortified with essential nutrients, namely calcium and vitamin D, which are essential to improving bone health and decreasing the risk

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of stress fractures during training.

“My profession is in high need right now, and I see the Army taking the bull by the horns. We have noticed an impact on the recruiting pool due to society’s [battle] with being overweight, but we also have an issue with soldiers who are struggling to eat healthy.”

It is no secret that obesity in our young population has exponentially increased. This is concerning for the Army because young men and women are its primary recruiting population. “It’s not that recruits are coming in larger than normal. There is a weight standard. We just find that they struggle much more once they are in to maintain an acceptable weight. And that’s due to many factors: behavior, learned behaviors, the environment they grew up in, lack of knowledge and proper education on how to eat well. Some of that may come from lack of money and/or resources.”

Many people think a good diet is expensive, but there are cheap options for consistently eating healthy. A significant part of Kayla’s job is to cultivate awareness in recruits. Her team doesn’t just focus on helping them eat right, they also ensure recruits have the knowledge to

make informed eating decisions. “It’s not a diet, it’s a lifestyle. Until you show me what your current lifestyle habits are, I can’t help you. I might make a recommendation you don’t like, so I have to tailor suggestions to each person.” Adapting small changes over time evolves into a healthier lifestyle. This can be hard for some people to digest because our society is accustomed to the instant trend diets.

In talking with Kayla, it is evident she lives what she does. She teaches by example. Before moving with her family to Williamsburg three years ago this May, Kayla served as the Program Director for the Army’s Medical Department School in San Antonio, Texas. She was excited to return to the east coast. She wanted to “come home” for a while. Kayla was born and raised in upstate New York in a little town known for NASCAR, Watkins Glen. She earned her bachelor’s degree at Cornell and completed a Master’s Degree at New York University (NYU) while working for the Veteran’s Administration (VA) in the Bronx. She loved her work, but a stronger love followed suit when she met her husband, Kaissoondial “Robin,” who was in the Army at the time.

Robin is from South America. While at the VA, Kayla worked with a director who was a retired nurse out of the Army. She told Kayla, “You’d be great, you should join.” Kayla realized she was already servicing veterans in her current job. If she joined the Army, the population wouldn’t be different, they’d just be younger. She’d be working at the other end with recruits. “I always wanted to do something for my country.” Thus, with the encouragement of her director and the support of Robin, Kayla joined the Army at age 25. She entered military life thinking she’d do her time and get out and have the experience to reflect upon. Eleven years later she’s still in, enjoying what she does. Joining the Army was “one of those things where I thought, ‘Why not give it a try?’ If I don’t like it, I can go back to the VA system which I love, but I ended up loving this more.”

At first, being in the military didn’t seem much different than working for the VA. However, Kayla didn’t understand why dieticians were limited to serving in hospitals. One of her hopes was to see dieticians mobilized into military units. Fortunately, Kayla’s hope has been fulfilled. She’s witnessed the implementation of

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these changes. She also sees the scope of the recruit's life. Candidly, she explains how boot camp is a process of stripping a person down to build him or her back up. Part of that process now involves drilling proper nutrition into the recruit so that he or she is prepared to adopt healthy habits from the start.

Kayla understands the commitment and sacrifice of Army life. She knows her work is vital. "We're very fortunate in the Army right now to have leaders who are invested in making sure we're taking care of the health and wellness of our force, not just from the performance standpoint but the medical one as well." Proper nutrition can prevent injuries. The Army is looking upstream and seeing what can be done differently when recruits arrive for basic training and even prior to joining. Ongoing education throughout their career span will mitigate some of the problems that arise. "You can never prevent all training-related injuries, they will happen, but what we can do is strive to make sure [our soldiers] are better off overall."

Kayla and Robin, along with their two young children, Reilly and Savannah, love Williamsburg and make it a point to experience

the local highlights as much as possible. They enjoy hiking and bicycling. Kayla was excited to move to Williamsburg because she'd never been farther south than Washington, D.C. She loves the history, especially sharing it with her kids who can have hands-on experiences with Jamestown, Yorktown, and Colonial Williamsburg just down the road. Also important to the Ramotar family is dining. There are many unique restaurants in the area. Kayla and Robin love sampling the cuisine culture wherever they go. Local haunts and the general flavor of a particular community, the people who make it their home for years, attract Kayla.

Kayla Ramotar is down to earth and takes her work in stride. "I don't do it for the recognition. My drive to make a difference is my initiative." When asked how she balances family life with military duty which often hinges on the unknown and requires living with unexpected changes, Kayla offers learned advice. "Live like there is no tomorrow. Embrace today and surround yourself with people you can lean on. You especially feel this with your Army family. You can't do everything alone. This value is reinforced in the military with the

concept of a battle-buddy mindset."

Kayla's mother is the most selfless person she knows. She came to help Kayla for a year when daughter, Savannah, was born. "When you go into labor and your husband isn't there, well, you have to focus on the positive in any situation and make extended connections." Being in the military throws people of all different backgrounds together. Connections are formed with individuals you'd never think was possible.

Kayla also emphasizes cultivating a sense of community with friends outside of the military. "Underneath I'm just a person with a job. Same as anyone else." Kayla stresses the importance of getting to know people, finding connections. "Soldiers have that common ground provided because we're all soldiers." When you get right down to it, people from all walks of life are more alike than they are different. Fostering synergy for the benefit of dietary and social needs requires a healthy dose of stripping away toxic fuels, be it misguided behaviors, mental and physical habits, or junk food! Building a strong army, a strong sense of community, starts from the ground up. NDN



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An American Experience

By Narielle Living

Scott Percic grew up in York County, in the family-friendly neighborhood of Edgehill. After graduating from York High School, he attended William & Mary, where he received his Bachelor of Science Degree and later his Master of Science Degree. While a student at William & Mary (W&M), he also went to the contra dancing events held at the school. “They used to do a contra dance once every fall semester at the college,” he says. “I went to that a handful of times.”

Contra dancing is a little like square dancing, but with long lines of dancers. The music is high energy, with a large band that has fiddles, banjo, guitar, hammered dulcimer, piano, accordion and bass. As the caller gives instructions, the dancers follow along, with everyone moving in one direction until told to turn or circle. The result can look almost like the inner workings of a clock. For Scott, there is definitely one aspect of all this that he loves.

“It’s really that community, getting to know the people in the area, people who like contra dancing,” he says. Each person experiences dancing with most of the others in the room at some point or other, he adds. “The way the dance works you start out in a set of four, and you’re dancing with your partner and the other two people in that set of four. After 64 beats you and your partner progress to the next two peo-



Corey Miller Photography

ple. Throughout the dance you sometimes dance with 40 people as you go up and down the line.”

After graduating, Scott found a group located in the small community of Norge: the Friends of Appalachian Music Contra Dance. “After I graduated I started going to Norge more often. About four or five years ago I started going more regularly and really fell in love with it.”

Scott eventually got a job working in fundraising and data analysis for W&M, and he continued to show up for the contra dances. One night he decided to broaden his horizons and tried a new location. That is how he met Phoebe. “She was calling a dance in Richmond, and it was the first time I went to a dance outside the Norge area. They mentioned that she went to

W&M, so I struck up a conversation.”

He smiles as he remembers their first conversation. “Being on the fundraising side and knowing that she went there, I asked if she wanted to make a gift.”

His initial question worked. The couple was recently married. Both are enthusiastic and kind, and they are well-suited to each other, which comes through clearly when they discuss their support of contra dancing and the role it plays in their lives.

A faculty member at W&M, Phoebe spends her spare time as a caller for the dances, an activity that she grew up with. Both of her parents were avid contra dancers and even had it at their wedding. “I’ve been dancing forever,” she says.

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"I had friends who danced, a couple of kids I would not have known otherwise. There was a good number of us when I was a kid."

Phoebe and Scott work as a team. "Phoebe calls the dances, and I'm someone who stands up at the front and lets people know what move to do when. It's a beginner friendly activity," Scott says, adding that Phoebe is very good at helping people. "She's kind of become known in the community for being really great at teaching beginners the first time around."

The couple now lives in the Williamsburg area, but Phoebe grew up in the Charlottesville region. Since dance has always been a part of her life, especially contra dancing, she is always on the lookout for places that offer contra dancing. "I've been part of the contra dance community since I was a little kid so when I get to town I always look up where the dance is."

Contra dancing has a rich history in America. Focused in the New England area, this was a popular community event during the 17th and 18th centuries. "It's an American tradition," Phoebe says.

Phoebe adds that it's okay to show up to a contra dance on your own. "The cultural norm there is that you ask someone new to dance every dance. Anyone can ask anyone else, and if

you're a new face, there are certain people who are very friendly and are looking out for you and are asking you to dance. You can come and be the shyest person, and people are going to ask you to dance."

For folks who might not consider themselves natural dancers, Phoebe says this is not an obstacle. "The great thing about contra dancing is the only skills you need are walking and generally following directions, but that's about all it takes. Those friendly people are going to be experienced and help you get through." She adds that it might even be easier to learn and follow the calls if you are on your own.

Many of the contra dances have a review for beginners at the beginning of the evening. Other places teach people as they progress through the dance. "I think it's really interesting to build up each dance where there's a number of core moves that happen throughout the night that are taught pretty early on, and the caller walks the community through the dance two or three times to get people started and familiar with what's coming next," Scott says. "After they walk you through nice and slowly the second time, it's a little bit faster. When the band starts to play, they usually start on the slow end because people are learning the dance. The band slowly

picks up speed and makes sure the dancers can handle it, it helps the dance be a fun speed, fun pace and a thrilling trip up and down the hall."


Although she loves dancing, Phoebe also has a passion for the art of calling. "I like that I could contribute to the community and keep it alive." She decided to try her hand at calling after she moved to Blacksburg when she was at college. "They needed more callers," she says. "I had just moved to Blacksburg and there was a callers' workshop." After the workshop, her friends signed her up to call a dance. "Everybody has a different way they get in, most people do it because it's another way to contribute."

Phoebe says that it's important to show up wearing comfortable clothing and shoes. "Just come excited to join in, that's the way we learn, everyone was a beginner once. As long as you keep walking people can help you. It's good to know people are really friendly in the community, someone will ask you to dance and someone will talk to you."

Both Phoebe Williams and Scott Percic have found their calling: to be with friends and newcomers, welcoming everyone as they grow their community. "Just come and try it! I think a lot of people don't realize this is an American folk tradition," Scott says. NDN

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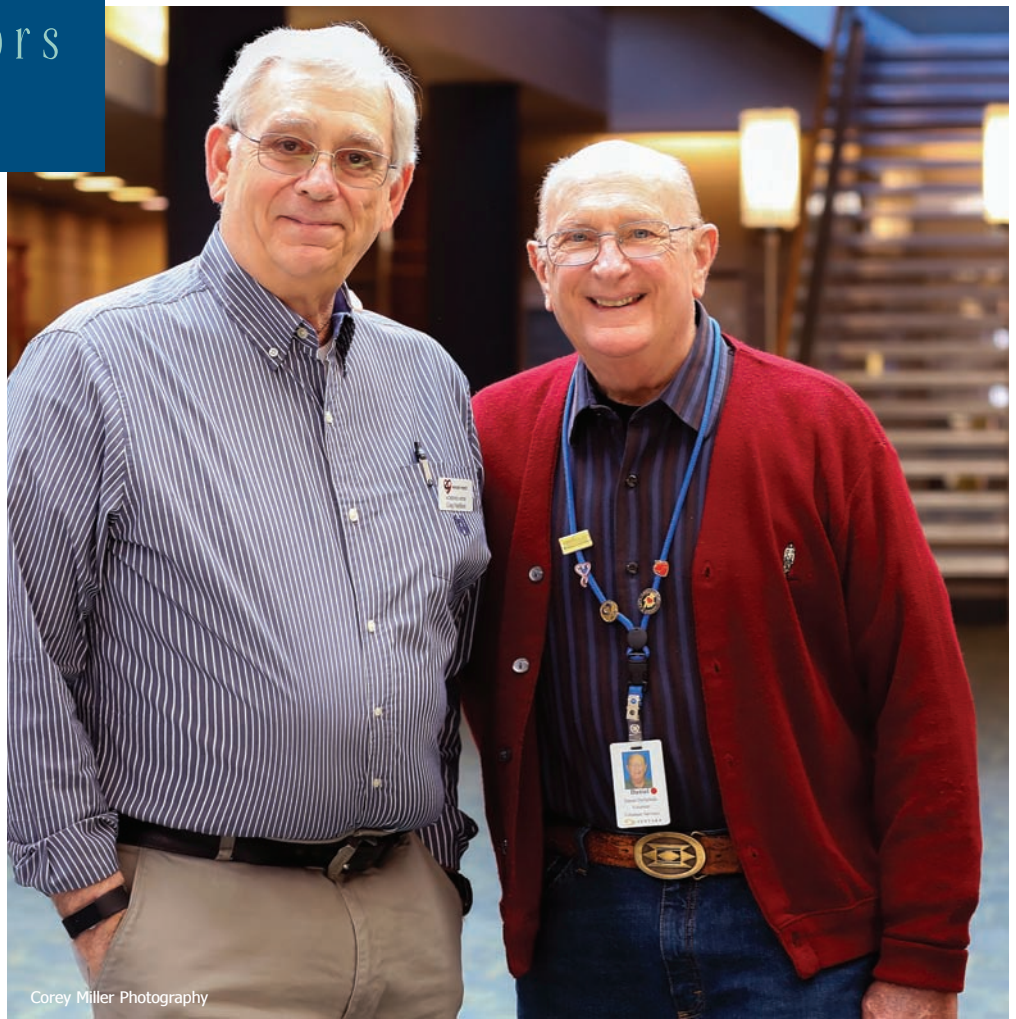
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Mended Hearts

By Alison Johnson



Corey Miller Photography

The diagnosis came out of nowhere. Before February 2018, Craig Hardison (left in photo) had undergone 12 surgeries to repair everything from two detached retinas to a painful back and hip, but his heart had never been a problem.

During a routine physical, Craig's doctor heard abnormal sounds through his stethoscope. He recommended a cardiac stress test that landed Craig in the hospital, where doctors found one of his coronary arteries was completely blocked and another had a 60 percent

blockage, requiring a stent. "I nearly fell out of my chair when I heard," Craig says. "I was really scared."

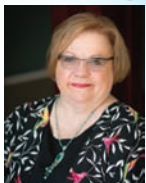
About three months later, when Craig walked into an exercise rehabilitation program at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, he was still scared. Then he met Dan Dollarhide, who had been a heart patient for more than 30 years.

"Talking to Dan just really helped me," Craig says. "Even with all he'd been through, he

was so positive and hopeful. I often thought, 'I sure could have used Dan to encourage me back when I was laying there in the hospital.'"

That thought, and Craig and Dan's friendship, what is behind a new support program for heart patients in the Historic Triangle. The two have helped create a local chapter of Mended Hearts, a nonprofit, peer-to-peer group that provides emotional assistance to patients and their families, covering topics such as lifestyle changes, mental wellness, recovery and treat-

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ment.

Williamsburg Chapter 427 will work in partnership with Sentara Williamsburg Regional, with Craig, 69, as President. Dan, 78, will serve as Visiting Chairman, overseeing and training the volunteers who can meet with pre- and post-operative patients. Mended Hearts also will offer monthly support meetings at the hospital and, if requested, follow-up phone conversations and educational materials.

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women in the United States, Dan notes. In fact, one in every four deaths each year is caused by a form of it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Many people who are diagnosed become very despondent and depressed,” Dan says. “Support groups are essential to getting them through. You do have to rethink your life, but we can show them that you can be okay again. There is most definitely life after heart disease, and they are not alone in their journey.”

Founded in 1956, Mended Hearts has about

300 chapters in North America, based at hospitals and rehabilitation centers where members also serve as volunteers. Trained volunteers visit more than 200,000 patients a year. A second group, Mended Little Hearts, works with infants and children affected by congenital heart defects and diseases.

Williamsburg’s new Mended Hearts program fills a gap between Richmond and Norfolk, an important addition to an area full of older retirees. Chapter 427 has 10 charter members, including Dan’s wife, Carol, who will act as Vice President, and Craig’s partner, Pam. Dan and Craig expect its ranks to grow quickly. Its motto: “It’s Great to be Alive — And to Help Others.”

“We are people just like them,” Craig says. “We have heart disease and have been through what they are going through with the scary hospital stays and all the rehab and doctors’ visits. We can show we care and that there is hope.”

While Craig is fairly new to heart disease, Dan first had a massive heart attack in 1986, at age 45, which he links to a cigarette habit that

he immediately quit. The former high school and college gymnast also overhauled his lifestyle and eventually was running three miles a day, but he had to undergo quintuple bypass surgery in 1997 and received his first Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator, or ICD, in 2000 to keep his heart rhythm normal.

Dan has needed multiple other procedures over the years, including a 2018 operation to improve the function of his mitral valve, which allows blood to flow within the heart. He currently has congestive heart failure and atrial fibrillation, which essentially means that his heart doesn’t pump blood efficiently. He sometimes gets tired just walking to his mailbox.

“Craig, he’s just had a stent or two. Nothing,” Dan jokes.

A Washington, D.C. native, Dan first learned about Mended Hearts with his 1997 operation, when an Accredited Mended Hearts Visitor stopped by to see him. “He helped set my mind at ease, and I realized that it was a wonderful way to give back,” Dan says. “This organization has been around for more than 60 years, but it’s

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really a well-kept secret.”

Before moving to Williamsburg in 2006, Dan held several positions with the National Capital Area Chapter of Mended Hearts, including President, Visiting Chairman, Newsletter Editor and Web Administrator. He also visited heart patients several days a week at area hospitals, staying for as long as they wanted to talk.

“I have a positive outlook about all this,” he explains. “I can help people. I get joy and comfort from what they say to me. I love to hear their stories and try to help pick them up.”

Craig, a frequent jokester and prankster, turns serious when asked about Dan’s influence: “There’s not a better guy around. He has the most amazing attitude, and he can talk to anybody. He has taught me so much.”

Craig credits Dan for motivating him through his three-month rehab program, where cardiac patients go to regain their strength on treadmills, ellipticals and stationary bikes while wearing heart and blood pressure monitors. They also learn proper breathing techniques and how to increase and decrease their heart

rates safely.

“It can be frightening to push yourself at first,” Craig says. “The people were what made it the best experience, especially Dan.”

In fact, both Craig and Dan embody the Mended Hearts philosophy of living full, happy lives. Craig, born in Flushing, N.Y., is an Air Force veteran who arrived at Langley Air Force Base in 1984. A father of two grown daughters, he worked as a Maintenance Data Systems Analyst for 24 years before retiring in 1994.

Since his diagnosis, Craig has improved his diet and lost about 13 pounds. He enjoys going to the beach, playing golf, traveling, walking his dogs, listening to oldies music and reading mysteries. For the past 18 years, he also has worked as a walking scorer at the LPGA golf tournament at Kingsmill Resort.

Dan retired in 2005 after 44 years of Federal Service as a software engineer. He was on the team that automated the Library of Congress. He and Carol, who have been married 57 years, settled in Fords Colony after decades of vacationing in Williamsburg. They have three children and nine grandchildren.

As much as his health allows, Dan still bikes, walks, plays golf and travels, and he also likes to cook and bake. In addition, he volunteers on Fridays to drive a golf cart that shuttles patients and visitors at Sentara Williamsburg Regional to and from the parking lot. “Fun job!” he says. “You meet some great people.”

The two friends are grateful for their loved ones, fellow 427 charter members and administrators at Sentara for backing the new chapter.

“We’re just really excited about this,” Craig Hardison says. “We both wanted to give back to our community of cardiac patients. We’ve already got nine or 10 more people who want to join, so we think the level of interest is going to be high.”

“We’re not going to stop heart disease, of course,” Dan Dollarhide adds. “However, what we can do is support people going through it, and that’s a lot. That camaraderie is the spark of the whole program. We can build a network here that will only get stronger.” NDN

For more information, visit mendedhearts.org or email Craig Hardison at rete7usaf@hotmail.com

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Corey Miller Photography

Ulster Scots in America

By Narielle Living

Most Americans are familiar with the story of the many Irish immigrants who fled the potato famine and came to America. Few are familiar with the story of the Ulster Scots, however, the Scots who migrated to the Northern part of Ireland in the early 1600s. Joel Patton, (right in photo) founder of the Ulster American Homestead Garden Center, is passionate about this history. “There are 44 million people in America who are of Irish extraction or trace their roots back there, and 24 million of them are not Irish at all. They are what’s called



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Ulster Scots, or what they call Scotch Irish,” he says.

Joel and his entire family came to America in 2005 after a lengthy immigration process. “We looked at many different places. It would have been easy for us to relocate to England, Scotland, Wales, even the commonwealth countries of Australia and New Zealand.” Getting into America was a lengthy and costly process for the family, but one that they ultimately decided would be best for their future.

“If you weren’t dedicated to do that you wouldn’t do it,” Joel says. “It was difficult to get the visas, and it was a long process. You really had to dig in there.” Prior to settling in the Williamsburg area, they had traveled to different locations to determine what would be right for them. “The day we arrived in Williamsburg, the sun was shining. I thought I was in heaven and everything was right with the world. We saw a boy scout troop coming through Colonial Williamsburg, and I said to my son I think we’re going to end up living here.”

Joel’s son, Jonathan, smiles at the memory. “I thought we were just on reconnaissance. That was right before 9/11.”

There is much about America that Joel loves. “I like a lot of things about America, but a lot of people’s perceptions back in Ireland are different than reality,” he says. “I like the attitude to freedom and the fact that you can speak your mind here and have the freedom to do that. It wasn’t healthy to do that in Northern Ireland.”

As Joel talks about his home country, he reminisces about the weather, something on the minds of most gardeners. “We’re really blessed with wonderful weather here. Back home it was wet, and it was hard work. Here you expect a dry, sunny day.”

Jonathan remembers his first introduction to the area. “We didn’t know much about Williamsburg until we visited, but the Realtor® had told us there would be so many houses and developments coming to the area. He said there will be retirement communities on your doorstep.”

Joel thought he was exaggerating. “He wasn’t. It has grown in the 15 years we’ve been here.”

The Patton family ran a garden center in Northern Ireland for 40 years, a place that was

started by Joel’s father. “Our garden center had been attacked 25 times over there so we decided that with 300 years in the one place it was time for a new life. I wasn’t that young, but it was a good move.”

The conflict in their home country was the tipping point for the Patton family. “Northern Ireland went through a very difficult 30 year period with unrest, which people know a bit about. I had been the youngest elected person at 22 years of age in my town, and I was still politically active right up until I left. That was not very healthy. I had also served part time in the military which meant I was a terrorist target over there. One of the reasons we decided to leave was because of that. You had two different communities at odds. You had the peace settlement, but it was still a very difficult place to live.”

The garden center is set off the road on Ro-chambeau Drive, a sprawling location that has proved suitable for the family. Upon arrival, most people are greeted by Bruno, the friendly family dog who loves everyone. Accustomed to the wet and colder climate of Northern Ireland, Joel and his family had to relearn the

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business of gardening and make adjustments in what they sold here in America. It was clear from the start that this was a different kind of place, and they were going to have to stock a different kind of plant.

"I've been gardening for 55 years, since I was a child, but here everything is different. The climate is different, and soil doesn't exist at all." Of course, one of the major differences is the weather, something that every gardener pays attention to. "In Northern Ireland it was consistent: wet and dreary. Here, you get a winter with a 70 degree day. Back home, 70 degrees was a warm summer day."

The weather and soil type are generally useful for understanding what to plant in an area. Jonathan notes that often, because people come to live here from other places, they don't understand what to plant. They may be used to a particular type of plant that works well in one location but it won't grow as well here.

Joel is very matter of fact about this. "We've been here for 15 years. We don't know everything but we've learned a lot of lessons, and we try to impart that to people. So, if you ask for something that won't work, we'll say it won't

work."

The garden center is very focused on helping people be good stewards to the land. "The environment is changing here but we are also doing away with a large part of the ecosystem that we need. As gardeners, it's incumbent on us to try and fill that gap. Rather than taking some nice, architecturally beautiful plant to put in your garden and give you green all year round, we have to start looking at things that are good for bees, insects, wasps and butterflies."

Joel is also cognizant of the fact that certain kinds of trees and plants can only grow in certain environments, something he tries to teach his clients. "It's amazing how little people are aware of that. Take a dogwood. People love dogwoods. But dogwoods grow as a perimeter plant in the forest along the edge of the woods. They need the drainage supplied by the roots of other trees. You take a dogwood and plunk it in the middle of your yard, nine times out of 10 it will die, especially in the clay soil. Mountain laurels are what they say, meant to be in the mountains."

Jonathan mentions another trend that he

sees: organic gardening. Joel agrees, saying he thinks it will be one of the biggest changes in America. "You've got all these insecticides and herbicides, and it's doing a lot more harm than good," Joel says. "We tend to be green over here, and 90 percent of the things we sell are organic." He goes on to say that in many cases nature takes care of itself. "If you see bagworms growing on your trees don't reach for the sprayer and start killing them. There are species of birds that eat these things. You spray them and you're killing a whole lot of things. Without being overbearing to people and scaring them, we say that this is a good thing. We do worm castings to help people grow their plant. We have an organic deer repellent, which is a pretty smelly, nasty thing to put on. We sell that, we do fish fertilizer based on old fish parts and we use that here. It's just wonderful stuff but there are no chemicals at all in it."

It is obvious that both Joel Patton and his son Jonathan Patton truly love their family, their jobs and their new country. "I love getting up every day and working here," Joel says. "It's a real blessing to get up every day and work with my family." NDN



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March 29-31, 2019

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March 30, 2019

James City County Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Road, 7-9:30 p.m., all ages. Ages 13+ are \$5/person; 12 and younger Free! Join us for a night of family FUN and entertainment. Enjoy structured games in the gym, create various craft projects together, splash in the pool, dance to some tunes, play

racquetball or old-fashioned board games and more! If preregistering, please register everyone who is attending! Pre-registration recommended but not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Info: 757-259-4200 or jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation.

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March 31, 2019

Spend Sunday afternoon, March 31, 2019, making lace with either lace bobbins or tating with a shuttle and learn a new craft. We meet at the Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland Street, Room B. Supplies will be available for use in the class. We'll meet again on Sunday, April 28, 1 – 4 p.m.

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April 5, 2019

Skate Park (adjacent to the James City County Recreation Center), 4 p.m. \$10/person. All ages and experience levels welcome! Skateboards, bikes, food, music and of course, prizes make this skateboarding and BMX competition one not to miss! Participants will be divided into experience categories and judged on style, flow and difficulty of the run. Registration and warm-ups begin at 3:30 p.m. Spectators are free and welcomed. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Preregistration is recommended,

but not required. Register by April 4 and save \$5. Co-sponsored with Triangle Skateboard Alliance. Info: 757-259-5355 or jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation <<http://jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation>>.

Hey Neighbor!

SPRING CO-OP SHOW AT WCAC

April 5, 2019

The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center is wrapping up its first Textile Extravaganza show. The show includes exhibits, free demos, and workshops. Don't wait to see and experience it! See https://visitWCAC.net/classes_gen_info.cfm for details. The 2019 Spring Members' Co-op Show runs from April 9 to May 24. Featuring artists with larger bodies of work, this show offers a wide variety of 2D and 3D mediums and styles in the main and middle galleries. Also, see "Flowers and Gardens" featuring more members' works in the Fireside Gallery. All artwork is for sale. Hours: 11-3 Tues.-Sat.; 12-4 Sun. 110 Westover Ave.

Hey Neighbor!

WHOLLY HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO

April 6, 2019

The Tri-County Pastor's Council will sponsor a Wholly Health & Wellness Expo from 10 am - 2 pm at St. John Baptist Church. Council members include pastors of churches in Williamsburg, James City and York. There will be health education, health screenings

and community resources available. Door prizes will be awarded. The event is free and open to the public. St. John Baptist Church is located at 1397 Peniman Rd., Williamsburg.

Hey Neighbor!

BIKES OUT OF HIBERNATION

April 6, 2019

(Rain Date April 20) Looking for an opportunity to get your bike out of 'hibernation'? Come join Williamsburg Area Bicyclists along with James City County Parks and Recreation for this FREE event happening at Chickahominy Riverfront Park on Saturday, April 6th, from 9am – 2pm. Mechanics from local bike shops will offer free safety inspections and assistance for minor repairs. Guided fun rides of 5, 10, and 15 miles along the Virginia Capital Trail are scheduled to start at approximately 15 minute intervals from 10am until 1pm. Riders under 18 must be accompanied by an adult, and all participants are required to wear a helmet. Light refreshments provided. In the event of cancellation, please visit wabonline.org or call the Weather Hotline at 757-259-3232 For more information, contact Williamsburg Area Bicyclists at info@wabonline.org

Hey Neighbor!

THE BUFFOS

April 8, 2019

7:30 PM. Williamsburg Library Auditorium. Opera in Williamsburg will



RAIN OR SHINE!

HIKE for HOSPICE HOUSE!

Sat., May 4, 2019 • 9:30am – Noon
PARK EAST AT GOVERNOR'S LAND

For info, to register or make a donation, visit www.hikeforhospicehouse.org

Join family and friends for an uplifting memorial 2 mile walk. Register as an individual, form a team or make a donation to support Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg



Questions? Contact Hospice House at 757-253-1220 • 4445 Powhatan Parkway, Williamsburg, VA 23188 • www.williamsburghospice.org

host The Buffos, outstanding comic bass-baritones Stefanos Koroneos and Adelmo Guidarelli, with soprano Kinneret Ely. The concert program includes funny duets, trios, and arias from best-loved opera classics. Tickets are available on our website, www.operainwilliamsburg.org.

Hey Neighbor!

40 AND OVER CAREER CLUB

April 9, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! April Topic: How to Talk the Talk – Interview Skills to Close the Deal. Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor!

LET FREEDOM RING!

LUNCHEON

April 9, 2019

Connie M. Harshaw will speak at the April 9 NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees) Association luncheon. Her topic will be Let Freedom Ring. Ms. Harshaw, a retired Federal Senior Executive and the first elected president of the Potomac Valley Section of the National Council of Negro Women, is a member of Williamsburg's First Baptist Church, which was founded in 1776 by a group of enslaved men and women. She also played a significant role in establishing the Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Williamsburg Chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) association meets regularly on the second Tuesday of the month at the Colonial Heritage Restaurant, 6620 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg. Lunch is served at 11:30 am, following a social gathering at 11. Please RSVP no later than the Thursday before the Tuesday luncheon to Pat Gamble at narfe.williamsburg@cox.net. For the April luncheon, the reservation deadline is Thursday, April 4.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY

ORCHESTRA MASTERWORKS 4

CONCERT

April 9, 2019

Williamsburg Community Chapel at 3899 John Tyler Hwy. Doors open at 6:30 pm, concert begins at 7:30 pm. Visit <http://www.williamsburg-symphony.org> for program details. Music Director Janna Hymes will

conduct the concert. Visit williamsburgsymphony.tix.com for tickets or call (757) 229-9857. Ticket prices are \$38/48/\$58 and \$10 (student ticket).

Hey Neighbor!

FREE LECTURE AT RIVERSIDE DOCTORS HOSPITAL

April 11, 2019

"An Insider's Report on the 2019 Commonwealth of Virginia's Legislative Session and Impact on Health Care" Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6pm. Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg is happy to offer the community this free, monthly lecture series. Please join us as Riverside providers discuss pertinent health-related topics geared toward those who live in our vibrant region. Mark Duncan, Director of Government Relations for Riverside Health System, will discuss the General Assembly's recent legislative session as it pertains to the health care industry and our region. For additional information, or to RSVP: <https://www.riversideonline.com/rdhw/doctor-is-in.cfm>

Hey Neighbor!

SUMMER CAMP FAIR

April 12-13, 2019

James City County Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Road. Free! Friday, April 12 from 3-7 p.m. and Saturday, April 13 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Attend the 6th Annual Summer Camp Fair to learn about great camps and register your kids at the same time! Goodie bags for first 200 guests! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Camps include day (full-time and part-time) and overnight camps, sports, adventure, scouting, dance, music, arts and theater, vacation bible schools, special needs, academics – science, foreign language, history, preschool to high school camps and more! Offered in partnership with WilliamsburgFamilies.com. Info: Kristy Maynor at kristy.wf@gmail.com or Olivia Bada at Olivia.wf@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor!

SINGLETRACK MANIAC 50K

TRAIL RUN (AGES 18+)

April 13, 2019

Freedom Park, 5537 Centerville Road, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. \$75/runner. Experience Freedom Park in a whole new way! The generous 10-hour time limit (19 minute mile pace) for the 31-mile Ultra race is great for beginners, but the singletrack trails are technical and challenging with constant roots and elevation changes. If you're looking to

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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



BIKES OUT OF HIBERNATION

April 6, 2019 • 9a.m. to 2p.m.

Looking for an opportunity to get your bike out of 'hibernation'? Come join Williamsburg Area Bicyclists along with James City County Parks and Recreation for this FREE event happening at Chickahominy Riverfront Park on Saturday, April 6th, from 9am – 2pm. Mechanics from local bike shops will offer free safety inspections and assistance for minor repairs. Guided fun rides of 5, 10, and 15 miles along the Virginia Capital Trail are scheduled to start at approximately 15 minute intervals from 10am until 1pm. Riders under 18 must be accompanied by an adult, and all participants are required to wear a helmet. Light refreshments provided. In the event of cancellation, please visit wabonline.org or call the Weather Hotline at 757-259-3232 For more information, contact Williamsburg Area Bicyclists at info@wabonline.org

surpass the marathon and want to stay local, this is the first event of its kind in the area. 100 max. Register at marniac50k.com; no onsite registration. Info: 757-259-4176.

Hey Neighbor! MEN WHO COOK

April 13, 2019

From 6- 8 pm, the Kiwanis Club of Colonial Capital will hold its second annual "Men Who Cook" charity event at the Community Services Center on Waller Mill Road. This event raises money to support needy children in the greater Williamsburg area. It will feature local "Celebrity Chefs," donating their time and energy to produce tasty dishes for guests to sample. Celebrities such as Jim Icenhour (JCC Supervisor), Bradley Rinehimer (JCC Police Chief), Danny Diggs (York County Sheriff) and Dave Masterson, (President, Sentara Medical Center) will show off their culinary skills. Over twenty chefs will prepare signature dishes and, for only \$30 per person, guests can enjoy tastings plus a glass of wine, beer or soda. To purchase tickets, contact Pete LaVault at (757) 345-8114 or email at petelavault@yahoo.com.

Hey Neighbor! ANNUAL GALA

April 14, 2019

Save the Date! The Virginia Symphony Society will be hosting its annual gala at the Two Rivers Country Club. "An Evening on Broadway" includes wine, dinner, live music and auction. Proceeds raised support the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Mark your calendars to ensure you don't miss this wonderful event! Visit VASymphonySociety.com for more information.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB

April 17, 2019

The Botetourt Chamber Singers of William & Mary. The Williamsburg Music Club proudly present some of the best vocal talent from the College of William & Mary. Their program Cecilia Sings! will include choral music from Renaissance madrigals to traditional spirituals under the musical direction of Dr. Jamie C. Bartlett. This program is presented free as a gift to the community by the Williamsburg Music Club. Begins at 11 a.m. preceded at 10 a.m. by a Coffee Hour and business meeting. Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish, 331 Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg, next to the bookstore. www.williamsburgmusicclub.com, 757-291-9082.

Hey Neighbor! LUNCH WITH WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CONNECTION

April 18, 2019

Join us for brunch at Bonefish Grill in New Town from 9:30-11 am. There will be a message provided by an inspirational speaker affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries. The cost to attend is \$15, all inclusive. Please RSVP by email at myconnectionRSVP@yahoo.com or by phone at (757)229-4036 by Tuesday, April 16th so that we may save you a seat. All are welcome!"

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG-JAMES CITY COUNTY SCHOOLS: CAREERS IN TEACHING EVENT

April 18, 2019

Interested in pursuing a career in teaching? If you have a Bachelor's Degree, join us on Thursday, April 18, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Williamsburg-James City County School Board and Central Office located at 117 Ironbound Road. Learn what it takes to earn a teaching license in Virginia. Meet with University representatives to receive information on teacher preparation courses. Bring your college transcripts and our licensure consultant will review them and give you guidance on the best path to your career in teaching. For information, call (757) 603-6400.

Hey Neighbor! ANNUAL VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SALE

April 20, 2019

The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society is having its Annual Native Plant Sale! Doors will be open from 9:45 am -2 pm. It will be held at the Williamsburg Community Building at 401 N. Boundary St in Williamsburg, across the street from the library. This year's theme is Native Plants for Butterflies and other Pollinators. Come to the sale for plants, for education, and to support our native pollinators that depend on them.

Hey Neighbor! EASTER MORNING SUNRISE SERVICE ON JAMESTOWN ISLAND

April 21, 2019

Visitors and Area Residents are invited to attend the 2019 Easter Sunrise Service held on Historic Jamestown Island. The service will start at 7:00 am on Sunday, April 21. Worshipers have gathered around the Jamestown Cross for over 60 years to celebrate Easter together. Representatives from many faiths will participate in the ecumenical service. This event is sponsored

by the Partnership of Williamsburg Churches, in cooperation with Preservation Virginia and the National Park Service. Service will occur rain or shine. There is a 10 minute walk from the parking area to the Riverfront where the service is held. It is recommended to wear shoes suitable for walking and standing on potentially wet ground. Bringing lawn chairs and blankets is highly encouraged. Please note: Bathroom facilities may not be available. GPS Address is 1368 Colonial Parkway, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185. For more information, please call (757) 258-1132.

Hey Neighbor! HERE FOR THE GIRLS FUNDRAISER

April 25, 2019

Join us at the Historic Hornsby House Inn Bed and Breakfast, 702 Main Street, Yorktown, for an amazing evening of wine tastings, delicious food and a lot of fun for a great cause! From 6- 8 pm. Peninsula Women's Network is partnering with Here for the Girls to host a community outreach event and fundraiser. Here for the Girls, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit with the mission to improve the lives of young women affected by breast cancer. All Proceeds from this event will provide vital funding to the women they serve. Wine Tasting Event tickets are \$44. *Non-tasting Event tickets are \$22. Come have fun and enjoy the event without the wine tasting. Registration/Ticket Link: <https://peninsulawomensnetwork.org/meetinginfo.php?id=65&ts=1549972885>

Hey Neighbor! OPERA IN WILLIAMSBURG'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

April 26, 2019

7 PM, Stryker Center, 412 N Boundary St, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Meet and hear the artists of Opera in Williamsburg's The Magic Flute, in town rehearsing for their upcoming opera performance of The Magic Flute. Free and open to the public; seating, parking, and very light refreshments available.

Hey Neighbor! GLOUCESTER HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR – HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK IN VIRGINIA

April 27 – May 4, 2019

Gloucester County's rich history dates from just after the settlement at Jamestown in 1607 and its role during the American Revolution was pivotal. The southern tip of the county's peninsula extends into the York River

and is directly across from Yorktown. This prime military vantage point is the location of one of our properties, Little England Farm, built in 1716. Visitors will enjoy access to additional private homes and grounds, including Sweetgrass, a low-country style home which looks across the Severn River to Warner Hall, George Washington's great-great-grandfather's estate. Also open is Belvinhem Quay, which overlooks Timberneck Creek and boasts an extensive art collection. Abingdon Episcopal Church, the largest colonial church in Virginia and one of only eight built in the form of a Latin cross, will be our headquarters. All properties are in the town of Hayes. For questions, contact Durfee Betts, Chair at (617) 448-3724 or Peggy Montgomery, Co-Chair at (804) 516-5261. Gloucester@vagardenweek.org.

Hey Neighbor! WSO FUNDRAISER

April 27, 2019

Come help celebrate the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra's 35th anniversary on at Kingsmill Resort. The event, sponsored by the Symphony League, includes a cocktail reception, fabulous dinner and entertainment capped with a live auction and paddle raise. This annual event, the League's major fundraiser, provides hands-on instrumental coaching to WJCC school children by orchestra musicians and provides "Instruments for Kids" while also giving financial support to the orchestra. For like-minded music lovers this is your opportunity to support the treasure of a community orchestra. Visit www.williamsburgsymphonyorchestra/league for more information and a registration form; or contact Marie Mamikonian at (630) 390-6170. Deadline for reservations in April 17.

Hey Neighbor! MAGIC FLUTE DINNER CONCERT

April 30, 2019

6 PM, Magic Flute Dinner Concert, Colonial Heritage Clubhouse, 6500 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188. Enjoy a delicious dinner and hear singers of Opera in Williamsburg, in town rehearsing for The Magic Flute, with music director Jorge Parodi and pianist Alexandra Nauhenko. Choice of dinner entree; cash bar available. One may attend the dinner+concert for \$55, or concert only for \$25 (with seating at 7:30). Tickets are available now on Opera in Williamsburg's website, www.operainwilliamsburg.org or reserve by phone at (757) 871-3653. Please get your dinner tickets by April 25.

Hey Neighbor! 20TH ANNUAL BRITISH & EUROPEAN CAR SHOW

May 4, 2019

Sponsored by the Williamsburg British Car Club at The Shops of High Street on 5/04/19. Show will be held at Revolution Golf & Grill at The Shops at High St. This location offers close proximity to hotels, restaurants, shops and the Colonial district. Registration form on our website. Featured marque is Morgan to celebrate their 110th year of production. Phone: 757-637-5902. Hours 10 AM to 3 PM Saturday. Awards at 2 PM. Admission is \$25 at show, \$20 pre-registration due by April 26, 2019, and spectators free. Come out and see over 150 British & European vehicles on display, automotive vendors, door prizes, 50-50 charity raffle. Food available at onsite restaurants for quick & easy pickup. For more information contact Roy Gavilan at wbccregister@outlook.com or call 757-637-5902. Website for the show is www.wmbgbrit.com

Hey Neighbor! GARDEN TEA PARTY

May 5, 2019

Come out and enjoy paradise garden on the ground of the historic Chippokes Plantation. From 1- 3 pm, we are having a Garden. Varieties of teas and finger foods and tours of the mansion will be free; entrance into the state park is \$7 a car, rain or shine. Location is 695 Chippokes Park Road, Surry Virginia

Hey Neighbor! MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 5, 2019

2 PM, Kimball Theatre, 428 W Duke of Gloucester St, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Opera in Williamsburg presents: Mozart's The Magic Flute, in German with English dialogue and English supertitles. Live fully-staged opera with world-class cast, with orchestra. Conductor: Jorge Parodi. Stage director: Eve Summers. Details and tickets at www.operainwilliamsburg.org, or by phone at 1-800-249-0179.

Hey Neighbor! MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 7, 2019

7 PM, Kimball Theatre. 428 W Duke of Gloucester St, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Opera in Williamsburg presents: Mozart's The Magic Flute, in German with English dialogue and English supertitles. Live fully-staged opera with world-class cast, with orchestra. Conductor: Jorge Parodi.

Stage director: Eve Summers. Details and tickets at www.operainwilliamsburg.org, or by phone at 1-800-249-0179.

Hey Neighbor! STROKE SENSE: CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS, INTERVENTION AND REHABILITATION

May 9, 2019

Drs. Ramakrishnan and Soueidan will lead a discussion about "Stroke Sense: Causes and Symptoms, Intervention and Rehabilitation." Learn how to identify a stroke, causes and symptoms, treatments available and what is involved in the rehabilitation process. Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg offers the community this free, monthly lecture series. Join us as Riverside providers discuss pertinent health-related topics geared toward those who live in our vibrant region. For additional information, or to RSVP: <https://riversideonline.com/events/Upcoming-Events.cfm?id=69>.

Hey Neighbor! MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 9, 2019

7 PM. Kimball Theatre, 428 W Duke of Gloucester St, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Opera in Williamsburg presents: Mozart's The Magic Flute, in German with English dialogue and English supertitles. Live fully-staged opera with world-class cast, with orchestra. Conductor: Jorge Parodi. Stage director: Eve Summers. Details and tickets at www.operainwilliamsburg.org, or by phone at 1-800-249-0179.

Hey Neighbor! THE MANY VOICES OF WOMEN

May 14, 2019

The Williamsburg Women's Chorus Concert - The Many Voices of Women will be held May 14, 2019 at 7:30pm. The concert will be held at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. The concert will feature music for written by women for women's voices. A performance by the Berkeley Middle School Singers and three selections by the Choraliers will round out the program. Tickets are \$15 for Adults and \$5 for Children, available at www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org

Hey Neighbor! 40 AND OVER CAREER CLUB

May 14, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, net-

working, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! May Topic: Maintaining Positivity During Your Job Search. Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor! ROTARY CLUB CONCERT SERIES OPENS WITH BRASSWIND

May 17, 2019

The Rotary Club of James City County will host its Tenth Annual Concert Series this year, presenting four shows: Brasswind, The English Channel: A Tribute to the British Invasion, Charlie Dunn and Billy Joe Trio in an Elvis Genre show, and Soul Intent. Ticket sales from all shows will go toward organizations and causes in the community that are supported by the Rotary Club of James City County. These include Literacy for Life, The Arc of Greater Williamsburg, Williamsburg House of Mercy, and the Grove Christian Outreach Program. Tickets for the entire four-event concert series are \$80, and individual tickets are \$25. For tickets, go to the Eventbrite webpage: <https://www.eventbrite.com> and search for Rotary Club of James City County Concert Series.

Hey Neighbor! DREAM CATCHERS ANNUAL FUNDRAISER BRIDLES & BOOTS

May 18, 2019

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center is hosting Bridles & Boots, an exciting new version of their annual fundraiser. The event runs 5-9 pm at the riding facility (10120 Fire Tower Road, Toano). Formerly known as Bridles & Bow Ties, attended by 375-400 guests, this event is a favorite on the Williamsburg social calendar, and a "SELL OUT" each year. The evening includes a cocktail hour with delicious appetizers, champagne, oysters, premium cocktails, wine and beer, as well as tours of the facility, student spotlights, and amusements such as the Preakness on the jumbo screens, meet/greets with our horses! An elegant seated buffet dinner follows with a live auction sponsored by TowneBank which will feature one-of-a-kind experiences and a "paddle raise" for our Dream Rider Scholarship Fund. Tickets are \$100 each. Sponsorships, ranging from \$1,000 Barn Buddy Sponsorships and \$2,000 Table Sponsorships to a \$5,000 Student Spotlight Sponsorship, are still available. For tickets, contact Terry Jacoby at the website, www.dreamcatchers.org.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MASTERWORKS 5 CONCERT

May 21 - 22, 2019

Kimball Theatre at 428 W Duke of Gloucester Street. Doors open at 6:30 pm, concert begins at 7:30 pm. Visit <http://www.williamsburgsymphony.org> for program details. Tickets available by phone at (757) 229-9857.

Hey Neighbor! ANNUAL GALA - VIRGINIA SYM- PHONY SOCIETY

April 14, 2019

The Virginia Symphony Society will be hosting its annual gala at the Two Rivers Country Club. "An Evening on Broadway" includes wine, dinner, live music and auction. Proceeds raised support the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Special Guest: Broadway star Tiffany Haas. Visit: VASymphonySociety.com for more information.

Hey Neighbor! 40 AND OVER CAREER CLUB

June 11, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! June Topic: Using and Navigating Websites to Identify Jobs. Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor! EYE DISEASES AS WE AGE

June 13, 2019

Dr. Anthony Farah, who specializes in LASIK Laser Vision Correction, Laser-assisted Cataract Surgery and General Ophthalmology, will review the latest on the symptoms and treatment options for three of the most common eye diseases that affect the eyes as we age. Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg is happy to offer the community this free, monthly lecture series. Please join us as Riverside providers discuss pertinent health-related topics geared toward those who live in our vibrant region. For additional information, or to RSVP: <https://riversideonline.com/events/Upcoming-Events.cfm?id=70>.

Hey Neighbor! ROTARY CONCERT SERIES

June 22, 2019

Kimball Theatre. 7:30-9:30pm. Featuring The English Channel: A Tribute to the British Invasion. Tickets available at jccrotary.org or through eventbrite.

Williamsburg's
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
 photo challenge

COPPER FOX
DISTILLERY

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

Enjoy!



INTERMEDIATE

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

MARCH 2019
 In the Neighborhood
 Photo Challenge



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