

December 2019

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VOL. 13, ISSUE 12

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**Jim White**



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Meredith Collins, Publisher

For me, the holiday season is a time to reflect on our beliefs and our lives. Where have we been? Where are we going? How do we really want to live our life? It is a time to deepen family ties, renew old friendships and to become more aware of our daily interactions with others. There is no other time of year so relevant to us for awakening our sense of wonderment and that reminds us more of the importance of giving.

In this issue, the neighbors we spoke with told us how much joy and pleasure they get out of giving. All around us our neighbors are creating welcome baskets, decorating the town and preparing stockings for complete strangers. They are setting up multiple Christmas trees adorned with personal remembrances for their family, and educating others while celebrating the Hanukkah Festival. In every instance, these folks are carrying on traditions rooted in their family history, in their cultural beliefs, and their strong sense of faith and spiritualism.

It is my sincere hope that you, too, feel the strength of the love and generosity in the stories in this issue and that your holiday and your entire new year are full of the same warm and wonderful joy of fellowship and peacefulness that you read about in these pages. NDN

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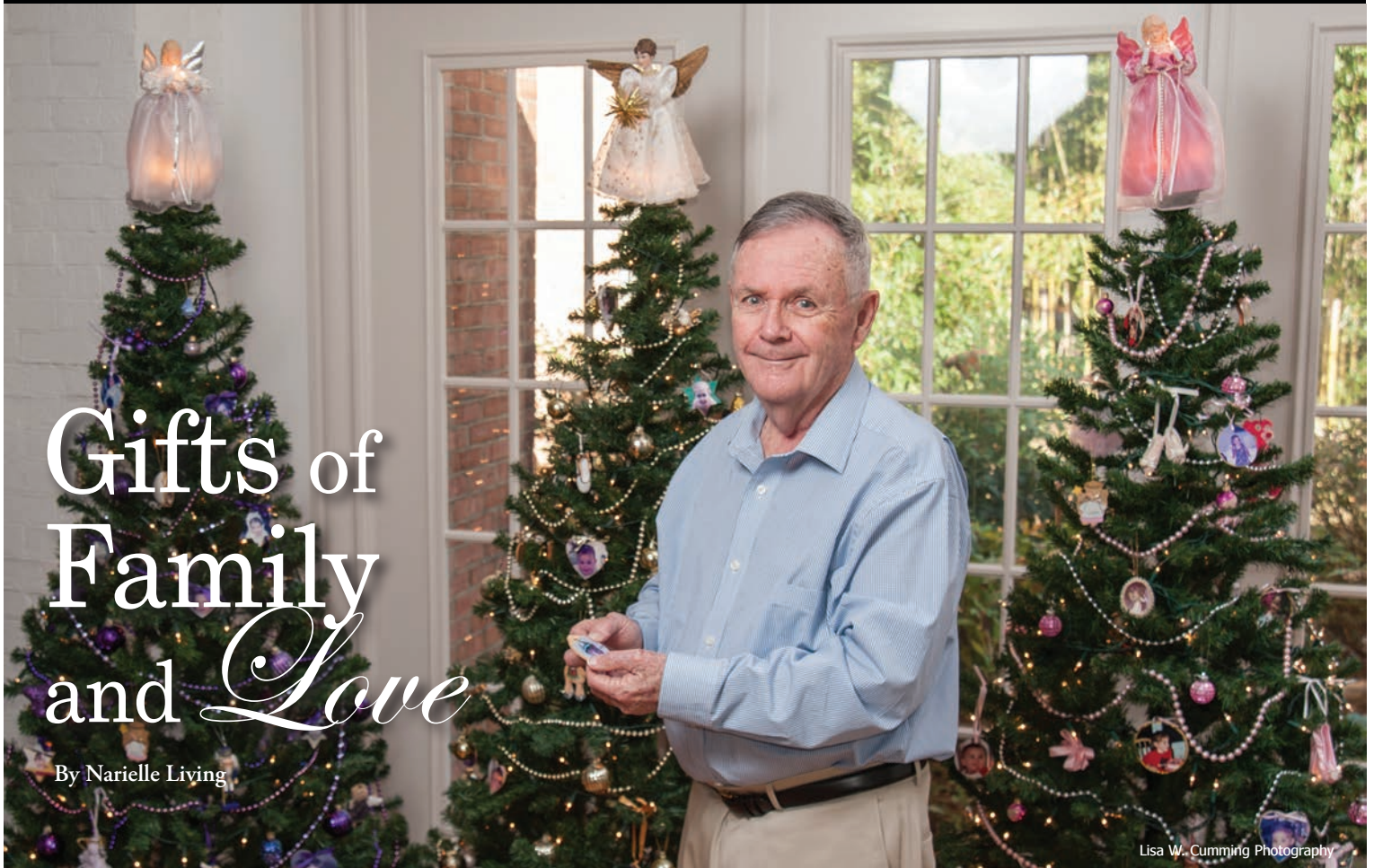
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# Gifts of Family and Love

By Narielle Living

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The spirit of Christmas is alive and well in Jim White's home. With a total of ten different trees, each with its own theme and many dedicated to family, Jim's work is a testament to the devotion he has for his family. Although each tree is "fake," the love that goes into decorating them is very much alive.

Upon entering the home, a small tree is proudly displayed. "This is Elizabeth's tree, this is how it all started," he says. At the time his daughter was a baby, and Jim was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. "We didn't have any money, of course. I went from being a school teacher to a 2nd lieutenant and I got a cut in pay. This tree," he says, pointing at a small one with photos of his young daughter, "cost four dollars in 1962." In addition, Jim has trees dedicated to his granddaughter's colleges as well as trees with fun decorations. The one big tree is in the room off the back of the house, clearly meant to be the tree the family gathers around.

In addition to the whimsical variety of Christmas trees, Jim's house proudly displays a number of paintings. Some were done by his wife, Joyce, and others came from artists he and his wife enjoyed. "We had an art gallery in Norfolk, and she would paint," he says. "I imported

paintings from Germany for a while." Jim is proud of his wife's paintings, and he turns on a light to illuminate one on the wall. "That's Loch Ness," he says of the painting. "She painted that. She was the talent."

Warm memories of Joyce abound in the home. "Joyce had breast cancer for over 20 years," Jim says. "First in one breast then the other. She was an artist who taught herself at age 65 to play the harp. She played for Hospice House."

Jim and Joyce came to Williamsburg in 1972. Her love of Christmas was always evident. "We started off with the little trees and it just kind of grew," he says. "My wife loved Christmas; we called her mother Christmas. We would listen to Christmas music in July."

Jim met Joyce while working at a church summer camp one year, and his work experience with them was intense. "We met at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly," he says. "I was a cook and volunteered my services to the church for the summer. That was a mistake. I worked at least 11 hours a day, six days a week. They gave the cooks 11 dollars a week. I was in the kitchen at 6a.m. and worked until 10:30 or 11p.m." In addition to the extreme work hours

he endured, he was also charged a fee to clean his uniform. When he asked for a few days off to attend his sister's wedding, his supervisor gave him a hard time. "I lost my religion that summer. Anyway, thank God I'd learned to cook in Boy Scouts."

Jim's father was a field engineer for Western Electric which meant the family moved around when he was growing up. "I was born in Texas in 1937, and I went to first grade in Texas. Then we moved three times in Texas but that was just the beginning. I had been in 38 states by the time I was 18 years old."

The family moved from Texas to Washington, D.C. and then to New Jersey. It was in the northeast that Jim experienced a true difference in culture. "We went into a soda fountain and asked for Dr. Pepper," he says with a smile. "The guy went over to the telephone book and checked and came back and said 'There's no Dr. Pepper here.'" Because the soda was not available at that time in New Jersey, his father would bring it back to the family after he traveled for work. In addition, he would bring Fritos back. "They didn't have Fritos up there either. But we had never had pizza before living there."

At that time, television was just becoming

a popular addition to many households. “Dad built a TV, and the screen was about four by five inches. We had about 20 kids and my sisters in my bedroom watching that television.” Jim remembers life in New Jersey with fondness and describes it as an education in various cultures. “It was a melting pot, and the people were wonderful,” he says. “German, Italian, Jewish.”

After attending half of seventh grade in New Jersey, Jim and his family returned to Texas for a brief period. “We stayed for about a year then moved to North Carolina. I was very active in scouting. That was pretty nice. We had a boy scout camp called Worth Ranch the big adventure. It was out on the Brazos River. I really enjoyed that.”

Jim ended up attending and graduating from Virginia Tech and then enlisted in the Army. “I was supposed to go in the army in June ‘61, and they gave me my orders in June ‘62,” he says. During that year he supplemented his income by teaching, which his wife was already doing. “I taught electricity and electronics in Portsmouth. I was not a good teacher but I was a good influence on the kids. I was a disciplinarian.”

Once he completed his year of teaching, Jim

served in the Army for the next six years. During his stint in the military, his wife’s family had relocated to the Norfolk area.

“My father-in-law was the preacher at Central Baptist church in Norfolk. I worked in the shipyard in Portsmouth and we lived in south Norfolk,” he says. But despite living on the southside, Jim and Joyce found themselves in Williamsburg quite often. “We just loved it here,” he says. They also loved the idea of raising their children in the historic area, so in 1972 they purchased a home and came to live in Williamsburg, a decision he is glad they made. In 1978, when the Perry Como show was being filmed for a Christmas special, his daughter, Elizabeth, had a small, walk-on part. His daughter, Wendy, was able to take Scottish dancing lessons in the area, and both girls eventually worked for Colonial Williamsburg.

Jim’s love for his wife shines through each time he speaks of her. “My wife was brilliant,” he says. “She was a straight-A student. She didn’t care about the grades but she wanted the knowledge. We made a really good team.”

Working on the Christmas trees in his home has become progressively more difficult. This year, he began putting the trees up in August. “I usually wait until September and put one

tree up, decorate it, but I have Parkinson’s and I can’t climb a ladder anymore. I had help this time.” A friend from the St. Andrew’s Society offered to help Jim this year, which Jim gladly accepted. “He did a magnificent job. Usually I do it as far as I can reach.” In the past, all the Christmas decorations were taken down by January, and Jim notes that it’s usually easier to take them down than put them up. However, hauling things up the attic stairs is a chore now, and he will probably ask for help again. “I used to do it all by myself.”

A variety of family members will be with Jim at his house for the holidays, gathered around the tallest tree in the back of the house. “Every other year our oldest granddaughter, who is married and lives in northern Virginia, goes out west to her husband’s place. This year she’ll be here.” In addition, he has family from Atlanta, Georgia who will come to stay with him, and his daughters will be there to celebrate as well.

For Jim White, the Christmas season is about family: those who gather round and those who have passed on. While he keeps the spirit alive by remembering his wife and the many others he misses, he is grateful for the loved ones who are with him today. Surely having family and love is the best gift of all. NDN

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# The Look of the Season

By Narielle Living



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Many people who arrive at Colonial Williamsburg for the holidays expect to see an old-fashioned, iconic setting. In order to achieve that particular look and feeling, a team comes together and makes magic. One member of the team, Joanne Chapman, is the landscape manager. She is responsible for managing the gardeners who maintain the more than 26 historic area gardens, such as the palace and the George Wythe house.

“They are a group of very talented employ-

ees,” she says. A schedule is made that includes when activities will occur and when interior and exterior decorations need to be hung. This year, Joanne is overseeing a number of these fun activities.

During the holiday season, the gardens stay the same. The iconic gardens, the ones photographed the most, have flower beds and vegetables. Other gardens that Joanne manages are basically turf and shrubs. “Right now, they are planting the bulbs and the flowers that will

remain in the garden through the winter. We decorate the town,” Joanne says.

According to Joanne, Colonial Williamsburg has not had a decorated wreath sale for a while. “That is something we are bringing back to meet guests’ interest,” she says. “It did go away, and we received feedback that people have really missed it so we brought it back. We are only focusing on two weekends, the weekends of Thanksgiving and Grand Illumination.” The wreaths will be sold in the area next

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to Shields Tavern.

In addition, apple candle workshops will be offered. An apple candle is either a red or green apple that is decorated with greenery and holds a candle in the center. "It's a decorative item for the tabletop," Joanne says. If the apple candle is kept in the refrigerator that, along with the natural moisture of the apple, helps to keep the greenery alive.

"We did a handful of these apple candle workshops last season and they were so popular," Joanne says. She notes that it's a really wonderful activity because families can come in and participate together. "It appeals to a wide age range."

The wreath decorating workshops, where staff demonstrates how to attach an assortment of fresh and dried materials to the fresh wreaths like those they make for display in the Historic Area, are so popular that they sold out early. In November, they had a "behind the scenes tour" where guests were treated to a look at how the staff makes the decorations on display in the historic area. "That was popular."

Joanne has spent many years in the landscape design industry. She worked as a horti-

culturist for about 10 years at a golf and country club in northern Virginia, where she and her husband lived. Then, in 2000, her husband was transferred here for work. "He was given the option to go to Richmond, or the Richmond area," she says. "When we looked at Richmond, he was doing a lot of work between Richmond and Norfolk at the time, and this was the perfect and the most desirable location. It's just beautiful."

They also had been to Williamsburg previously, both separately and together. "We'd been here on our honeymoon," Joanne says. And although they were not regular guests, they had both visited Williamsburg several times as kids with their families. "When we came here on our honeymoon, we thought wouldn't it be great if we could live here? Sure enough, 14 years later, we get transferred down here."

When they arrived in the area, Joanne's dream job was to work with Colonial Williamsburg. At that time, her oldest child had just completed her freshman year of high school and Joanne decide she needed to stay at home for her kids. "I chose to stay home for the first year and a half, and I did some landscape design for my previous employer

and some clients." After two years, her children were very well adjusted to the move, and she found she was bored at home. Unfortunately, Colonial Williamsburg did not have a job opening for her at that time.

At that point, she got a job with York County as the landscape superintendent. "I worked with York County for about 13 years when finally the right opportunity opened up here. I threw in my application and was very happy to have gotten hired."

Landscape design was always a personal interest of Joanne's. "After my first daughter was born, I went to work very part time," she says. "I just was not a stay-at-home, full time kind of mom. I worked for a garden center very part time and I loved it." She and her husband have always gardened, which served to stoke her interest in the process. "I started taking landscape design classes, and one thing led to another," she says. From that part-time job at the garden center she went on to work at the golf course and country club. "They were in the process of renovating a lot of the property, and I got hired there to do that." Although she has a degree, Joanne says that much of her learning of this field has been hands-on. In ad-

# Are You Gathering with Your Family for the Holidays?

You may find things have changed when you are with family this holiday season. Perhaps you notice the ones you love, who were seemingly young and vibrant, are now older and more frail. Perhaps some members are no longer with you or you have gained new family members such as grandchildren, new in-laws, or even grand fur babies.

These times should remind you that your estate plan should keep pace with your life and family. During this holiday season, take time to examine your family situation and start conversations with your loved ones about the future.

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dition to taking landscape design certification classes and other industry-related classes, she is an ISA certified arborist, a designation which indicates her level of professional knowledge in all aspects of arboriculture.

Joanne and her team will decorate the exterior of over 125 buildings for the holiday season. This includes the smaller buildings that may be attached to the residence, such as a dependency, kitchen or office. And each year they have a new plan for doing this. "Some of the buildings are iconic so the palace is decorated the same every year or there will be a style that is the same, like the George Wythe house," she says. "Those are traditional decorations that people look for and want to take their picture in front of, and they expect those buildings to look the same."

Each year, residents participate in the decorating competition. The competition is divided into professional and amateur categories. "The designers have to use particular materials that are approved but their designs are up to them." The residents who live in Colonial Williamsburg homes are responsible for their property, whether they do it themselves or hire a professional or simply hang greenery outside

the home. "We are responsible for all the other buildings."

This year a new competition has emerged, the Debra Lees competition. Debra was an employee who created delightful decorations each year. "She would start in the summer baking cookies, and she would use cookie dough for her decorations." She decorated using primarily nursery rhyme themes. "Sadly, she passed away suddenly this year. She was well liked by her colleagues, and we thought there would be a big void without her. A lot of people came up with the idea to do something to recognize her, so we approached her daughter about having a Debra Lees award." This is a new category that designers are eligible to participate in. Each designer usually designs multiple properties and will be able to nominate one of their designs for the award. "Everyone, including her family, is just overwhelmed by that."

Refreshing and replenishing is another aspect of Joanne's job. "What goes up the week of Thanksgiving is not what's going down at the end of the year. The fruit goes bad or the squirrel has eaten it or the weather, sun or rain, destroys it. We have staff who check all the decorations every morning and sometimes

that piece of fruit can be replaced onsite."

Historians have done research on the colonial era, and most of the holiday decorating was only done on public buildings. "We have one print that shows an outside tavern with bunches of green, so it's pretty much deck the halls with boughs of holly." But people like to see the holiday spirit alive and decorated wherever they go, so the idea of an old-fashioned Christmas was born. By merging Virginia customs and English traditions a symbolic look for Williamsburg was created.

Williamsburg is known for its appearance, and of course that includes Boxwood shrubs. That, however, has changed. "They were used in Christmas decorations, and they really are associated with the Williamsburg look. However, we no longer use Boxwood due to the Boxwood blight. We don't sell Boxwoods. We don't bring in Boxwoods and we don't use them in our Christmas decorations. This is to try to keep that disease out as long as we can."


As Joanne Chapman gets ready to help create a memorable holiday season in Colonial Williamsburg, she is grateful for the ability to work in this beautiful area. "I absolutely love it here." NDN

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# Cultivating Relationships Year-Round

By Caroline Johnson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

As a resident of Williamsburg for two years, Dawn Everton has made this her home by finding meaningful ties to the community and creating lasting relationships. With a focus on gratitude and giving back, she finds joy throughout the holiday season and year-round.

Originally from Brooklyn, New York, Dawn moved to Yorktown as a kid in the early 1980s.

With her father in the Navy, the family had relocated to the Naval Weapons Station. Her introduction to the Williamsburg area came from attending school at Waller Mill Elementary School, Queens Lake Middle School, and Bruton High School. An active student, Dawn was involved in ROTC, band and athletics.

Having lived in Newport News and Rich-

mond before relocating to Williamsburg for her job in 2017, she knows she landed in the right spot. "I'm happy to be back in Williamsburg," Dawn says. "I didn't realize how much I loved it. I should have moved back sooner!"

With her parents and brother living in Richmond and her two children living in Newport News, she is grateful to be living so close to fam-

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ily. Her daughter, Kierstin, is following in her footsteps working in the banking industry and her son recently graduated high school.

Dawn has been in the banking industry for 29 years, having started at the Naval Weapons Station's credit union as a teller. Since then, she's held a multitude of positions from loan officer to branch manager. "I enjoy the financial industry," Dawn says. "I feel comfortable in it and feel like I can really help someone."

As a relationship banker with C&F, her job allows her to do just that. C&F is a community bank, with its headquarters in New Kent. She recently celebrated her second anniversary here in October. Working with customers in all stages of life, she values the relationship aspect of what she does.

It's her main goal to build relationships with existing customers and bring in new customers to the bank. Whether she's helping open an account or assisting with loans, she works to make her customer's lives easier financially. "I like to do a relationship review with customers and sit down to get to know their goals," Dawn says. "I work with them to get them where they want to

go... I want to put people in good positions for their future." For Dawn, it's about much more than just banking. It's about what she can do for each person who comes in.

"It's very rewarding to be able to help others," she says. "It's what gets me up in the morning, knowing someone is counting on me to help them with something that day."

Especially surrounding the holiday season, she finds that credit card debt and getting through the holidays financially is a common concern. "What works for one person won't necessarily work for someone else," Dawn says. "You have to find what works for you." One idea that Dawn shares with clients is to create a budget and stick to it, making a list of what you'll need to buy and writing down how much you're able to spend.

Dawn doesn't just build relationships and make connections at work. She enjoys networking through local events and opportunities as well. Networking allows her to not only meet new people personally but also serves as a way for her to build her professional network. "Even when I'm not at work, I've still got my banking

hat on," she says. "You never know who you're going to meet!"

Even if she can't help a client or connection within a certain area, her networking allows her to be able to recommend other people, especially local businesses. "I'm always whipping out business cards for people to refer to," Dawn says. "I want to support other businesses and send them to places I can trust."

It's this attitude toward her community that drives her involvement in many other ways. As a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, she drives twice a month during her lunch, a workplace benefit, and is on the committee for "Foodapalooza," a fundraiser for Meals on Wheels. While C&F allows employees hours each year to volunteer, they also create opportunities for employees and customers to give back within the bank.

"All of our locations do a gift drive each holiday season for local children. We have tags with information on what the children want, and we're able to go out and buy the gifts and bring them back to be distributed." Another initiative C&F participates in each year is collecting scarves and hats for the Salvation Army.

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"I love helping people," Dawn says. "I'd rather do for others than for myself." Last year, she was able to bring all the collected gifts to the kids at DJ Montague Elementary School, allowing her to see their work in action. The holidays are a special time for Dawn both personally and professionally, and being allowed to mesh her passions together is rewarding.

During the holidays, Dawn also finds herself grateful for the traditions her family has built. On Christmas Eve, they take part in the Italian tradition of The Feast of the Seven Fishes. "It's a big thing," Dawn says. "I always grew up with that, and my mom very much wants to keep the tradition going."

Even though the holiday season can seem a bit stressful, Dawn reminds herself to find gratitude in all that she has. "I have a roof over my head and running water," Dawn says. "I try to think about and appreciate the little things." The holidays amplify this gratitude, putting things into perspective. "It's easy to get wrapped up in wanting more. But I'm grateful for what I have."

One of her favorite parts about the holidays in Williamsburg is looking at decorations and enjoying Williamsburg traditions. Visiting Christmastown, exploring Colonial Williamsburg and listening to Christmas carols, she finds it even easier to love the area during this time of year.

In her spare time, Dawn Everton enjoys activities like bowling, bike riding, going to the WISC, catching up on her favorite shows and spending time with family. Living close to Jamestown beach, she has fallen in love with the area, the bike trails and events like Jamestown Jams. She always makes time for her dog, Gus, who is a rescued Dachshund. She likes to take him for walks and explore the area.

"There's always so much going on around here," Dawn says. "No matter where you go, there's a strong sense of community." Even though she's already made her mark on Williamsburg, she's excited about the potential for her future here. "I've come a long way in two years. There's still so much for me to get involved with." NDN

## Next Door Neighbors

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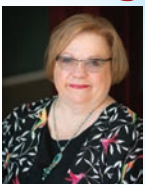
# Spirituality is our Commonality

By Wheston Chancellor Grove

Li Cara, speaker, singer and transformational lightworker, is passionate about spreading awareness to others regarding our individual and collective purpose on earth. Li is an empath. Like many empathic sojourners, an impetus was needed to awaken what lay inside her.

“In 2012, I had my awakening,” Li says with a smile because she knows it sounds cliché. The epiphany, however, came in an unusual way.

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Li worked in restaurants for many years. She was constantly busy. “I had children, lived a normal life as most people do, often dissatisfied or feeling I wasn’t good enough.” Li would curse herself when she looked in the mirror and everything around her reinforced these negative emotions. “I didn’t know anything about energy, reflection or mirroring at the time.”

She was working in a bar in Florida. Her shift lasted until 2:00 a.m., then she would go home, barely sleep, and get up to take her children to school. She’d return home and go back to bed. She hit an emotional wall and thought, “What am I going to do?”

Clicking through channels while dozing off to sleep, she came upon a different speaker. Li listened for a few minutes and then the woman brought up Jesus, and Li quickly changed the channel. “I was the one who always challenged organized religion, even growing up, but I believe in a higher power.”

Every day, flipping through channels, Li would come to this speaker. “Every day I

watched a little longer.”

Then a different voice inside Li’s head, along with an image, presented itself. “You can step out on the promises of God. If you ask to serve, your life will change,” the voice told her. “I asked, I prayed, which I didn’t know how to do, but I had nothing to lose. I was hit with a lightning bolt.” The image was “splats of tar over golden light.” Life does that, she acknowledges. The pain, represented by the tar, mars us and the pure light we are innately created to give. “I felt loved in the deepest way, perhaps for the first time. The word ‘beloved’ I literally felt in that moment.”

The experience was overwhelming and unconditional. “It’s hard to understand as a human, but the Divine is in us. Too many slip between the cracks of spirituality and religion.” Li knew, without yet understanding why she was supposed to embark upon a new path, that her purpose was to bridge this gap by focusing on the heart and sharing the knowledge with others.

Li grew up on Long Island and dreamed of making it on Broadway. “I love performing and singing.” That dream fell by the wayside when her family moved to Florida her senior year of high school. Li stayed in Florida, married twice and had three children. She continued to sing, but not as the starlight she had once dreamed of becoming. Where she worked, she enjoyed being in front of a crowd, performing opera. Little did she know then that this experience was just another way the universe was nudging her in the direction she was intended to go.

In October 2015, Li moved to Williamsburg with her husband and their youngest son, now 16. Li has since divorced but remains friends with her ex husband.

Her older children, ages 30 and 28, live in other states. Her son is an artist and credited with the illustrations for Li’s new book, “Unleash Your Light: Access the Divine Within.” For the past three years, Li has held a live show on Facebook every week addressing a different topic. She also holds meetings the first Monday

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of every month at Unity Williamsburg Spiritual Center located off Penniman Road. Sometimes guest speakers attend. They discuss different aspects of spirituality.

As seekers of truth, empaths have a propensity for questioning everything and digging to unearth the “why” behind something. “Eventually, you turn the questions on yourself,” Li says. “The self-awareness starts to expand. The universe puts the next step in front of me, or the next person I need to interact with comes along.” Li does not sidestep what comes her way. She embraces it all, even when it presents an inner struggle or pain. “Most realms are not physical. But humans are meant to experience feelings. From lifetime to lifetime we are here to learn different aspects of being. Who knows what the full-on big picture is. I sure don’t know. It’s above my pay grade!” she says with a big laugh.

Li had been on the fast track for a long time. Then neuropathy struck and slowed her down, physically. “I had to embrace self-acceptance in

a way that I never had been able to before.” Li began celebrating the things she was still able to do, rather than continuing to beat herself up over what was no longer possible. She discerned the value in her struggle. “If the universe puts it in front of me, I’m supposed to experience it.”

Li knows firsthand that people worry about other’s perceptions. “Each person has a particular purpose in life. I believe this a thousand percent. It is our choice, however, to pick up that mantel and wear it. It’s our choice to step into a different awareness. Many do not because it’s difficult. You can’t convince someone of something unless he or she truly believes it within themselves.”

When asked what she says to those who call her crazy or silently pass judgment, Li is transparent. “The people who call me crazy, that’s a lot,” she says. “What I would say to them is that being kind to others and being kind to yourself is the basis of all of this.” Her voice is expansive. “You don’t have to believe in God or spirituality to be kind in order to see how it changes

your life. If someone scoffs then that person is usually challenged with lack of research.” One activity she asks people to try is to go three minutes a day thinking positive, nice things about themselves. Most people can’t. It’s not easy.

Li often starts a session with new people by asking them what they call the Divine. God, Mother Earth, Spirit, Allah, Yahweh, Gaia, Adonai, “call it Fred, it does not care what you’re calling it as long as you’re seeking!”

Li Cara is not on any spiritual bandwagon. Nor does she regurgitate what other “spiritual” guides have spoken. “It comes from me. But it is not of me.” It is given through her. Li is a messenger who hit rock bottom and was willing and ready to look inside. Each of us is “a singular expression for the plurality of collective consciousness.”

Li knows her journey is circuitous. She sees others awakening as well. Where religion divides, spirituality unites. “It is time for us to step out of the shadows because spirituality encompasses all religions.” NDN



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# Mom's Christmas Stocking

By Erin Fryer

When Maura Santoni lost her mom in 2017, she needed a way to honor her memory in order to cope with the loss. A chance encounter with a distant relative has led her to Mom's Christmas Stocking, an annual tradition that gives back to so many in the community and beyond while simultaneously helping Maura to heal.

Raised by a single mother, much of Maura's

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childhood was spent watching her mom, Mary Jean, battle one cancer after another. The mother-daughter duo was very close, but Mary Jean was dealt a difficult card when it came to her health.

“Growing up, it was hard being a child of a mother who had cancer,” she says. “She was always getting more bad news, but she was so strong. When I was 14, she got diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, and the doctor’s recommendation was to let the cancer take over instead of prolonging the agony.”

After that diagnosis, Maura remembers going with her mom to the lawyer’s office to get her affairs in order. She knew that the plan would be for her to go live on her uncle’s farm in Connecticut. “It was scary not knowing what was going to happen to my mom,” she says.

Like she had time and time before, Mary Jean chose to fight the cancer, with her reason being that she had a daughter to live for. Her goal was to make it until Maura turned 18 years old, but she defied all the odds and made it well past that, ultimately passing away years later in 2017.

“The fact that I just lost her a few years ago is amazing and really a dream come true,” Maura says. “She got to see me grow up, get married and meet all of her grandsons. She ended up passing away peacefully while living with me. I was too busy being grateful for all the time we had together instead of [feeling] sad.”

Instead of being overcome with sadness over the loss of her mom, Maura felt a calling to honor her memory, but she wasn’t sure how. She started making phone calls to family and friends to let them know that her mother had passed, and eventually landed on the phone with her cousin’s wife, Wendy.

Wendy had also lost her mom, and she told Maura about a special way that she honors her mother’s memory, which actually came at her mom’s request. One day, Wendy was looking through her mother’s files and found a sheet titled “Mom’s Christmas Stocking” that read: “Every Christmas you have always filled a stocking for Mom. I want you to continue doing so. Choose the very things I would love. Find someone to give this filled stocking to: a woman in a prison, or in a rehab, or a homeless shelter. This is the most precious Christmas gift I could receive or you could give, sharing the love we know with someone who really needs a shot of love. And, in this way I will continue to share your Christmases and continue to be a part of my wonderful family.”

After finding the letter, Wendy launched Mom’s Christmas Stocking which is now a non-profit organization in New York City. She makes hundreds of stockings for mothers each holiday season. Deeply touched by her cousin’s idea, Maura decided to honor her mom’s memory by doing the same thing closer to home.

“I held a celebration of life ceremony with a group of my friends after my mom passed, and I asked them to all bring small things to add to the stockings,” Maura says. “I asked them to bring small, precious items for moms like cozy socks, warm hats, scented lotions, lipsticks, nail polish and jewelry and anything that was special to give a mom to fill in stockings. We filled 21 stockings and handed them out to mothers at area shelters, and I got the most wonderful thank-you letters back. These women would tell me how they are always worried about their



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children and family at the holidays and never thought anyone would care about them.”

The following year, Maura traveled to New York City to be a part of the big, annual Mom’s Christmas Stocking event where she joined forces with Wendy to produce nearly 400 stockings for mothers in the NYC area. “Being a part of the big event was special, and I hope to do that every other year. I would love to do it here one year and there the next and keep going and growing the number of stockings we are making.”

Maura is hoping to get volunteers who are interested in helping her stuff the stockings involved, as well as local businesses who are interested in donating small items for the stockings.

“I am sure there are people out there like me who have lost their mom and need a way to honor their memory,” Maura says. “My first Christmas without my mom in 2017, I felt the need to do something for someone else. There are people who don’t find the holiday season to be as wonderful and magical as it’s supposed to be. This is a way to help shine a little light on someone else’s holiday.”

Maura hopes to see Mom’s Christmas Stocking become a huge event in the Williamsburg area. Anyone looking to get involved can email her at [maura.santoni@gmail.com](mailto:maura.santoni@gmail.com) for more information on how they can lend a helping hand this holiday season. “My goal this year is to do 50 stockings, maybe more,” she says.

Originally from Connecticut, Maura and her family moved to the Tidewater area when her husband, an engineer, took a new position that brought them south.

A registered nurse by trade, Maura currently serves as a nursing instructor at Thomas Nelson Community College. “I knew I wanted to be a nurse since I was in high school,” she says. “Back then, I was shown a video about nursing in school and that was all it took. To this day I still feel like I was meant to be a nurse. I worked nine years as an emergency room nurse and stayed home with my boys and took care of my mom, and now I am trying something new with teaching and really love it.”

Maura’s life is centered around helping others. When she isn’t working as a nurse or creating Christmas stockings for those in need, she is deeply involved with the area’s lost dog pages on Facebook and regularly helps families reunite with their pets. If she sees someone post to the group that their dog is missing, Maura makes it a mission to find it, calling all the animal shelters and even setting out on her own to track it down.

“It’s not the most relaxed hobby, but it’s rewarding,” Maura says. “You help one dog and you think you’re going to get a break and then next day there are new dogs that are ‘lost and found’ who need help too.”

During the season of giving, Maura does so much to give back to her community. “It’s a new tradition that I hope to share with others,” she says. “It’s not all about giving a gift to make someone feel special, but it’s also to help people that need something in their lives.”

Maura Santoni’s hope is that others can feel the same joy she does giving to others and pass it on and be inspired and put their own twist on things. “The holiday season is not all about getting and giving gifts. It’s about spreading love and doing something for someone else.” **NDN**



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Living a Season of Joy and Wonder

By Dawn Brotherton

“The awe and wonder and joyful anticipation of lying on the floor under the Christmas tree in the evenings before Christmas, with my brother and sisters in our PJs, staring up at the multi-colored lights in the otherwise dark room. That was so magical!” That’s what Cheryl Clark remembers most vividly from her childhood when she thinks of Christmas.

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Cheryl grew up in the Episcopal faith in St. Louis, Missouri. She was the middle of four children, a brother three years older and twin sisters three years younger. She recalls the candlelight in the darkness of the church, on the altar, in the Advent wreath and down the aisles. "The smell of the evergreens decorating the church held the magic of our family and was permeated with holiness." Adding to the wonder was the singing of traditional Christmas carols. "That, to me, is Christmas," she says.

"I think traditions are so important, particularly in this rapidly changing world." Cheryl isn't referring to just religious ceremonies. She gives the example of how we always start a baseball game the same way. "It's a point of stability and comfort. I hope that people will create special traditions their children will remember forever. Whether or not they continue those traditions, they will look back on them with joy and comfort."

Cheryl graduated from William & Mary with a degree in English and a minor in sociology. She stayed in the area to teach at Warwick High School for one year. Grading papers late into the night did not meet her expectations

of what she would be doing once she started teaching. When the opportunity came for her to study in England, she grabbed it.

She attended the University of York to study art, literature and history of the Middle Ages, as well as paleography, the study of ancient writing systems and the deciphering and dating of historical manuscripts.

Although Cheryl had fallen away from the church while in college, her graduate studies got her back inside the church. As it happened, the art history professor was a stained-glass specialist. "The town of York has probably more than fifty percent of all the medieval glass in England. We had art history seminars at the medieval parish churches," Cheryl says.

While traveling around Europe, she stopped at every parish church and cathedral. "I would be amazed that people built these without modern machinery. I'd look at the way the concrete steps were worn down over the centuries from people going to the altar to be married, to be confirmed or to be baptized," Cheryl says. "I learned more Bible stories looking at stained glass than I had in Sunday school."

When it was time to come back to the States,

she settled in Boston. She taught eighth grade English and world history during the day and went to school at Boston University in the evenings, studying for her doctorate in Educational Leadership.

She returned to Williamsburg in 1979, where she taught sixth grade at Bruton Heights while working on her dissertation. After she received her doctorate, she moved to Arkansas. Cheryl continued her love for learning in a variety of jobs from Director of Social Studies and International Education for the state of Arkansas to Director of Development Education for the Heifer Project to Assistant Principal of a junior high.

"In 1995, something moved me to give up something for Lent," Cheryl says. Since she hadn't been to church in years, she was uncertain about the drive behind her decision. But it went so well, she decided to give up something different for Lent the following year. Just as she started contemplating going back to church, out of nowhere, three different people invited her to attend church with them. She got the message.

It had been 28 years since she had attended



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services, so Cheryl took the newcomers class to get reacquainted to the Episcopal faith. Before she knew it, she was a liturgist, then a lay Eucharist leader. About this time, she had a dream about a man and a little girl. "He's walking and she's skipping along behind them and he says,

'Take my hand. Follow me.' And that little girl was me, and I took his hand and soon I wasn't skipping. I was floating," Cheryl says.

Everything started happening faster for her at this point. She met with leaders of the church and told them about her dream and other signs she had experienced. They were convinced she had been called to be a priest, and soon she was off to divinity school after only having been back in the church for three years. Another three years of study at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, and she received her robes and was placed in a small church in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

"Newly ordained priests have something like an internship. You're in a system somewhere, or you have a mentor, and the expectation is that you will move on after two or three years," Cheryl explains. But things didn't work out exactly as planned. The church she went to was

small with no assistant and no mentor.

"They thought because of all my years of administrative experience in the schools that it would be a piece of cake. But those teachers were paid to show up at my workshops, and we're now talking about the care and feeding of volunteers. It's a totally different culture," Cheryl says.

Her first Christmas as a priest was particularly memorable. The town had two Episcopal churches. Just before Christmas, the other priest had a heart attack and was in the hospital. Cheryl was left to conduct Christmas services at both churches.

Not only was it her first Christmas service, it was her first time at a different altar other than her home church. During the family service, she was called upon to bless the creche, or manger scene, which she had never done before. The assistant at the church had the ritual written out for her so she knew what to do.

When she moved into place to begin the blessing, she noticed there was nothing in it. The altar guild had forgotten Mary, Joseph and even baby Jesus. Thinking quickly, she blessed the stable to prepare for the family and went on

with the service with only the altar guild the wiser.

Cheryl served in Pine Bluff for ten years. By that time, she was 62 years old and decided to retire back to Williamsburg. But retirement doesn't equal relaxation for Cheryl. She volunteers at SpiritWorks which supports people with recovery from addiction. She's on the board for the Grace Episcopal Church Day School and is an active member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority alumni group by serving on the house board supporting the local chapter.

She enjoys all Williamsburg and this area has to offer. "There is just more than anyone could possibly want to do, and there always seems to be someone who wants to do it with you," she says.

When thinking about the Christmas season, one particular line from the Episcopal Prayer Book comes to Cheryl Clark's mind. "We pray for God to give the newly baptized, 'an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works.' Surely at Christmas, we can hope to give that joy and wonder to others." NDN

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# Honoring old traditions. Making new ones.

By Lillian Stevens



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Christmas in Williamsburg. There's almost nothing quite like it. From Colonial Williamsburg's Grand Illumination to Busch Gardens' Christmas Town to any number of services at some of the iconic churches here, locals and tourists alike revel in the much loved holiday.

Ashley Campbell, co-owner of The Welcome

Basket of Williamsburg, has lived here for a decade now, and says she loves the many ways the community comes together to celebrate the season.

Ashley was raised in Cocoa, Florida, where she enjoyed many of the same holiday traditions as everyone else, like parades and Santa

Claus, but the winter there isn't typically cold.

"I'll be honest, growing up in Florida, I learned more about the Spanish settlements in St. Augustine than the English settlement at Jamestown," Ashley says. "Williamsburg is wonderful, though. There are so many things to do. We love to go to CW and just walk in

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the historic area. We also love Christmas Town at Busch Gardens.”

Of course, the seasons and temperature initially took some getting used to.

“It is much warmer where I grew up,” Ashley says. “So, when Santa brought us bikes for Christmas we were able to go outside and ride them! Up here, it might be cold or even snowing.”

A white Christmas, though rare for Williamsburg, has been known to occur.

Snow or no snow, though, the season usually starts with the trimming of the trees. In this area, popular trees range from Fraser firs to Leland cypress, cedar to pine. Real or artificial? That’s just a matter of personal preference. In her native Florida, Ashley says it’s the palm tree in a local park that is usually decked out for Christmas, sometimes with beach ball ornaments.

“Growing up, our family always had an artificial tree. But my husband, Stephen, and I will have a real tree at Christmas. That’s one of our family traditions.”

Stephen, a local attorney, grew up in the area and picking out a real tree each year has been a tradition he enjoys.

As much fun as the various preparations and activities are, those memories created with family are the ones most near and dear to Ashley’s heart. Over the years, one of her favorite things to do is bake Christmas cookies.

“Whether gingerbread houses or cookies, Christmas baking is a really fond memory from my childhood,” she says. “My father would make his homemade icing recipe, so that’s something we always did as a family. It’s something that I truly loved and have made a tradition with my own family.”

Holiday baking is also a way to keep her father close at Christmas and keep his memory alive with her children.

As Christmas Day approaches, the excitement mounts.

“On Christmas Eve, my children each open a Christmas Eve box which always includes new pajamas,” Ashley says. “We’ll also have popcorn and hot chocolate and read ‘The Night Before Christmas.’”

By Christmas morning the excitement will surely grow as more presents are exchanged and the holiday is solidly underway. Still, what really matters the most to Ashley is sharing these moments with her family.

“I love just being together,” she says. “I remember when I was young, being at my grandparent’s house in Jacksonville. We had all of the cousins and extended family there for Christmas. There was a huge dinner, a toy train around the tree, all of that. I remember everyone looking out the big window, and we swore we saw Santa fly across the moon!”

It’s a magical time, and holiday cheer is always abundant this time of year. Ashley believes, however, that kindness is for all seasons. As co-owner of The Welcome Basket of Williamsburg, spreading kindness to new home buyers in the area is somewhat of a calling for Ashley.

“Welcoming new neighbors and spreading kindness is at the core of what our welcome baskets are all about.”

Though the basket contents will not change at Christmas, the way they are decorated will lean toward the festive. “We do switch out our colors with different seasons. And of course, there’s going to be a pop of red and green ribbon at Christmas.”

Ashley thinks quite a bit about broadening their scope, or branching out to other areas, but being a full-time mom while co-owning a busi-



  
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ness is fulfilling for now. "It can be a challenge, but Ashlyn and I both knew we wanted to stay fully involved with our children, so we choose to keep things simple for the time being."

Each brings her own unique talents and skills to the table. "I'm more of the tech-y person," Ashley says. "And Ashlyn has built wonderful connections. She calls herself an introvert, but I disagree!"

Ashley particularly loves the graphic arts, creating spreadsheets and assembling the baskets whereas her partner is happy delivering the goodies and meeting new neighbors.

"For new residents, these welcome baskets are one of their first impressions of their new community," she says. "So we want to make sure that when a new neighbor needs something, they know where they can go. I also love that we are highlighting locally owned businesses."

Because she is deeply immersed in her commitment to spread kindness, Ashley was thrilled to be invited to create baskets for the area's recent WMBGkind event. The initiative was a part of the 2019 Class of LEAD Greater Williamsburg in conjunction with the Chamber & Tourism Alliance. "Be Kind" was designed to

inspire meaningful change in area schools, local governments, businesses, and neighborhoods.

"Kindness is at the root of all that we do," she says. "So, we were honored to be a part of that."

With happy chaos at home and a flourishing new business, Ashley has less time these days for some of her other hobbies which include thrifting, refinishing furniture and decorating. From time to time, though, those hobbies still find their way into her life.

"I used to have a shop called Sweet Tea & Lemons," she says. "My focus was mostly refinishing furniture, but I'm a thrifter! I got the joy of thrifting from my mom and grew up going to the thrift store, which I didn't think was so much fun at the time. I love to search for and find things now."

"I truly love finding just the right items, from furniture pieces to wooden salt and pepper shakers. I was always looking for things to customize and then sell them in my shop."

One fun example of how her creativity translates to the holidays involves a craft she originally saw on Pinterest.

"It started out as personalized table settings for Thanksgiving," Ashley says. "I used ribbon

in colors that matched my Thanksgiving table and Scrabble pieces from another project. I used the Scrabble pieces to spell out the names of our dinner guests, and then those turned into little keepsake ornaments for our guests to take home."

As she prepares for the holidays, Ashley Campbell looks forward to the celebrations and time spent with family while reflecting on all that has happened since she and her husband met. Even though Stephen is a native of Williamsburg, the couple met in Florida where Ashley lived and worked at the time.

"I was teaching Kindergarten in St. Augustine, and my friend, Emily, who was also a teacher, kept talking about this guy, a friend of her husband's from law school."

The guy was Stephen and the four ended up attending a baseball game together. Stephen and Ashley clicked immediately.

"Stephen made a bet," Ashley recalls with a laugh. "Well, I took the bet! And won! Ever since that, the running joke is 'you'd better not bet me.'"

It's a safe bet the holidays will be fun and memorable for the Campbells and their family, near and far. **NDN**

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# HOLIDAYS AT TEMPLE BETH EL

By Ashley Smith



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

In just four years, Jill Hyman and her family have settled seamlessly into the fabric of life in Williamsburg. The Hyman family moved to Williamsburg after the second of their five children graduated from high school. Jill says, "It was the right time for a professional move." Until that point, the Hymans had lived in tropical southern Florida their entire lives. "We were so comfortable that we turned down career opportunities in other places."

At the time, Jill served as the Director of Provider Enrollment and Credentialing for the University of Miami Health System. As a healthcare administrator, she had a calling to

listen to and protect others by ensuring that the medical professionals caring for them in their most vulnerable moments were qualified. "It was my duty to make certain that doctors and providers represented themselves fairly." It was a job she loved and at which she excelled.

Suddenly, with three children still in elementary school, the right job came along and they took the chance that brought them to Virginia.

Why Williamsburg? "We could have lived anywhere from Virginia Beach to Williamsburg, but we fell in love with Williamsburg." Jill and her family were swept away by the

beauty of the area, the abundance of celebrations of the arts and culture, the historically rich environment, and appeal of four seasons. From the James River and Carlton Farms to William & Mary and its distinguished faculty, Williamsburg is the best of both country and city life, in Jill's estimation. "It is just an absolutely marvelous place!"

Upon their arrival, Jill focused on settling into her new surroundings. She served as a room parent at Matoaka Elementary and helped her children find their footing in various extracurricular activities. One of her children began harp lessons and is now an accom-



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plished harpist while another has since joined the Flute Frenzy under the direction of Margaret Carlson. Flute Frenzy plays at Occasion for the Arts, Great Wolf Lodge, Bruton Parish and the Hospice House. Jill has served as the organization's president and continues as the resident grant writer.

The most rewarding way that Jill serves the Williamsburg community, however, is as the office administrator for Temple Beth El, the only synagogue in the historic area. As the only synagogue for this area, Temple Beth El has deliberately chosen to remain unaffiliated in order to best serve the needs of the most people possible. Their policy is to embrace Jews of different backgrounds and welcome interfaith families.

In addition to her administrative strengths and having a Master's in Business Administration, Jill has always had a passion for Jewish education and a calling to be with people. It was two years ago that she answered the ad for the office administrator position, and every day since has been an adventure.

"Each day is different," she says with enthusiasm. Temple Beth El serves a wide variety of people from the Jewish faith. There are Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform members within the congregation and they are all welcomed, from NASA engineers and scientists to former choreographers for the Joffrey Ballet. Here, they find peace and connection to the larger Jewish community. All of the Jewish holidays are celebrated at Temple Beth El. Many people outside of the Jewish faith have heard of Hanukkah, and it is a holiday most often associated as happening during the Christian season of Christmas. The Hanukkah festival was inspired by events that happened around 166 B.C. At that time, there was to be a rededication of what was known as the Second Temple and the menorah, a gold candelabrum with seven branches, was to be kept lit every night. However, there was only enough oil to last for one day.

At that point, this is where the miracle is said to have happened. Despite only having enough oil for just one night, the flames continued to burn throughout all eight days and nights, leaving the people enough time to find a fresh supply of oil.

Customs for the Hanukkah festival can include traditional foods such as latkes (potato pancakes) and jam-filled donuts. The exchange of gifts can happen on each night of the festival, as well.

The Jewish calendar is full of holidays, and the synagogue has just ended celebration of the high holy days, including Yom Kippur and Sukkot. Yom Kippur, also known as the day of atonement, is observed with fasting and prayer and is the holiest day of the year in the Jewish tradition. Sukkot is a seven-day festival held to commemorate the sheltering of the Israelites in the wilderness. It has been a busy time but it reminds Jill of why she loves her role at Temple Beth El.

In addition to the hectic pace of the recent holy holidays, Temple Beth El joined Jill in celebrating the Bat Mitzvah of her daughter, Yona. A bat mitzvah is a ceremony that signals a young girl has become an adult and is now a responsible member of the community. This ceremony requires much preparation on the part of the child, who is deeply involved in studying and learning, and the parent, who often organizes a celebratory party once the religious service is complete.

Jill loves her work with the people of Temple Beth El. "People come in and they have difficulties and challenges, and it is my job to be caring, confidential, and share a kind word. Every life matters." With her passion for justice and education, and her gratitude to have found such an incredible community to raise her family, Jill Hyman is an ideal person to offer that kindness. NDN

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# CHANDRA NIMS BROWN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

## CRUISING THROUGH CHRISTMAS

By Brandy Centolanza

During the holiday season, Chandra Nims Brown finds much joy in helping other people give the gift of travel. Chandra is a certified travel advisor with Cruise Planners Global Travel Pros. She specializes in family vacations, all-inclusive

vacations, ocean and river cruises, group vacations, destination weddings and honeymoons.

During the holidays, many families and individuals choose to forego the traditional stay at home gatherings of family and friends and opt

to take a trip abroad or somewhere within the United States.

“I help plan a trip based on the way you like to travel, what you want to see and what you want to do on vacation,” Chandra says. “I’ll ar-

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Chandra worked for years in the corporate world for major companies such as Kraft and the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group before she decided to switch gears in 2008.

“I was looking for something different to do, and I loved to travel, so I decided to become a travel agent,” she says.

Chandra took to the travel business slowly, with a part-time job. She started out working for a few years with an established travel agency based out of Miami, Florida. Chandra later became co-director of the Maryland chapter of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) and decided to venture out on her own. Last year, she bought the franchise for Cruise Planners. She rents space for her business from the new Ignition Center business accelerator on Richmond Road.

Traveling has certainly never been a foreign concept for Chandra. Her father, Theodore Nims, was a vice president for the appliance division of General Electric (GE), so her family moved around a lot. Chandra was born in Boston, Massachusetts, went to high school in Minnesota, and college in Florida.

“I moved sixteen times when I was a kid,” she says.

Chandra was also on the road a lot while working for Kraft and the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, experiencing life in major cities across the United States. She met her husband, Vincent Brown, in Atlanta, Georgia while he was working as a football coach and she was a cheerleading coach. The couple, who now have four grown children, later lived in Charlottesville, Virginia while Vincent, a former professional football player who played for the New England Patriots, worked as a football coach for the University of Virginia. Chandra and her husband relocated to Williamsburg last year from Connecticut after Vincent accepted the job as associate head coach, defensive coordinator and linebacker coach for the William & Mary Tribe football team.

“We were so excited about our move to Williamsburg and to be a part of the community here,” Chandra says. “The people here are just fabulous.”

As a travel advisor, Chandra assists people with planning trips locally, across the country and around the world. Her destination specialties include Hawaii, Mexico, the Caribbean, Alaska, Europe, Asia and Australia. She especially loves planning cruises. Last summer, Chandra spent 17 days touring Hawaii. She visited four of the islands.

“It was just incredibly beautiful,” she says. “Each island is completely different than the other islands.”

Chandra’s favorite Caribbean island is Jamaica. She celebrated her 50th birthday at a resort in Montego Bay.

“Scotchies is a great restaurant in Montego Bay,” she says. “I also recommend people do a sunset catamaran at Marigot Bay in St. Lucia. Cancun is also a great destination.”

She also suggests boarding cruise ships heading to Bermuda or the Bahamas.

“When you are on a seven-day cruise, you typically visit four or five ports,” she says. “That is the beauty of a cruise vacation. You can vacation

without all the unpacking.”

Helping others plan a dream vacation is a reward. At the moment, Chandra is busy pulling together a surprise 60th birthday celebration cruise to Jamaica involving 56 people. Next year, she has three destination weddings in the works.

“I love bringing people all together for a fun and happy time,” Chandra says.

Cruising also brings together friends and family of multi-generations, during the holidays or anytime. “I do a lot of girlfriend getaways and family reunions,” she says. “It’s nice to see the grandparents with the grandkids. A cruise has something for everybody. There are different itineraries for everybody and no one is bored. It is awesome.”

River cruising is also growing in popularity.

“It’s become a huge, huge market,” Chandra says. American Cruise Lines offers small cruise ship trips along the Eastern and Western seaboards as well as along the Mississippi-Ohio and Columbia-Snake river systems. There is also the American Queen Mississippi Riverboat.

“Some people want to see the same route as Lewis and Clark, see the Mississippi River or go to Mardi Gras,” Chandra says. “A river cruise is very different than an ocean cruise. It allows you to really experience a city and its people and immerse yourself in the culture.”

When Chandra plans trips for large groups, she sometimes travels with them to ensure everything runs smoothly, particularly when boarding a cruise ship.

“I just feel that is really important,” she says.

When it comes to winter holiday vacations, the least expensive time to travel is the week before Christmas, while the most expensive is the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day. But Chandra says travelers don’t need to go far to have a good time.

“Places like Wintergreen Resort, Massanutten Resort and the Homestead Resort here in Virginia are great,” she says.

When she is not on a cruise ship, Chandra likes to do puzzles, cook and explore all that Williamsburg has to offer. Still fairly new to the area, she is only beginning to see what a special place the Historic Triangle is to live.

“I think we’ve pretty much hit all the restaurants downtown and in Merchants Square,” she says. “I like Amber Ox Public House. Their wings are to die for. I just ventured down to Yorktown three weeks ago to the Riverwalk Landing. That was a lot of fun.”

This year will mark her first Christmas in Williamsburg, and she is looking forward to experiencing all the local holiday traditions.

“The Christmas parade is already on my calendar,” Chandra says. “I can’t wait to see all the Christmas lights. I love the holidays and how everyone is just so happy.”

Chandra will also be boarding three cruise ships this December for three separate trips. Family trips have always been memorable for Chandra Nims Brown, her husband and her children.

“At Christmas time, think outside of what you can wrap in a box,” Chandra says. “Think about giving a gift of adventure for your family. A gift of travel and experience is something you will always remember and have forever.” NDN

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# LESLIE PEARCE



# The Gift of a True Family

By Susan Williamson

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Her husband's deployment to Kuwait will make Christmas a little dimmer for Leslie Pearce and her family. Steve Pearce was preparing to retire from the North Carolina Army National Guard where he serves when his most recent deployment orders came through. Steve has been away off and on since April, and the last time he was at home was Father's Day.

Although depressed at first, Leslie prayed and received both comfort and a sense of purpose. Phone calls from family and friends helped to

buoy her spirits. While Steve is away, she intends to grow her copywriting business and lose the weight she gained during treatment for breast cancer in 2016. She is actively networking for her business, and she joined an exercise class at her church. Meeting challenges is part of who she is. The couple had a son, Paul, when Leslie was 45 and now she is the 61-year-old mother of a 16-year-old junior at Jamestown High School. "I know nothing," she says with a laugh, "because he knows everything."

Although Steve won't be home for Christmas, his ex-wife, Joan, will be an invited guest. Joan is the mother of Leslie's stepdaughter, Alexis, and lives in Charlotte.

"When I married Steve," she says, "God told me I needed to become friends with this little girl's mother. I did and she reciprocated. We've been spending holidays together ever since. Joan is like an aunt to our son, and it's been a blessing to our blended family." Alexis is now 26 and will be coming from California where she is com-

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Holiday food staples for the family include fruit salad, nuts and bolts mix, a vegan kale salad for Alexis, vegetarian entrees for Paul and a turkey for the two mothers. "And Sister Schubert rolls are always on the menu," she adds. They plan to attend area Christmas events including the Christmas parade, the Grand Illumination and possibly the Yorktown Boat Parade.

Despite the challenges she has faced, Leslie operates with a spirit of gratitude and is thankful for her life in beautiful, historical Williamsburg, her family, her church community, the friendships and people in her life.

Leslie has spent most of her career in real estate, beginning in 1994 in Memphis, near her home town of Jackson, Tennessee. In 1997, she decided she was ready for a mid-life change and moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. She knew only two people there and sold one of them a house. She became involved in the leadership committee of a large, interdenominational church called Forrest Hill.

Meanwhile, Steve moved to the area to be near his ten-year-old daughter, Alexis. He decided to attend the church where she and mother worshipped. Since it was Super Bowl Sunday, Steve was invited by the singles class to attend the Super Bowl party at Leslie's house. So, Leslie says with a laugh, "A good man did show up on my doorstep, although they say that never happens." The couple later married and their son, Paul, was born.

Steve served additional deployments, and Leslie continued in real estate but longed for a career with more time at home to be with Paul and Alexis. In 1999, she began to consider writing for a living. In addition to being a Realtor, she also operated a home staging business. She loved the creative nature of improving listed

homes and helping buyers see the potential in a prospective home. Sometimes her staging was so successful the owners would say, "I like it this way. I don't want to move now," and she had to remind them that they hired her to sell their house.

Life in Charlotte was hectic, with increasing crime and traffic. The couple decided to move. They considered Savannah, then Charlottesville. When they voiced their wish for a small town with good schools, close to water, her mother-in-law suggested Williamsburg.

The family moved to Williamsburg in 2014, eventually buying a home near Jamestown High School and the Williamsburg Community Chapel where they attend church. At first, Leslie continued her real estate career and studied to obtain a Virginia license. She worked with Long and Foster before leaving to concentrate on her writing.

After considering a career change for several years, in the spring of 2018 she attended the American Writers and Artists Incorporated (AWAI) convention in Delray Beach. The AWAI offers classes in copy writing and job listing sites. The conference gave her the confidence to follow her dream of a writing career.

For now, she wants to concentrate on business writing, but down the road, she may want to write some stories. She says, "And I do have some stories to tell. My grandfather and his two brothers from Tennessee married three sisters from New Orleans. My great-grandfather was King of Mardi Gras. They're all gone now, but I have an 85-year-old uncle who still works full time in Tennessee, and I have cousins all over."

Working from home gives Leslie the opportunity to indulge in her hobbies of genealogy, cooking, decorating, repurposing objects and

furniture, visiting flea markets and antique stores and meeting people. "I'm an extroverted homebody," she says. "I'm the daughter of an artist and a salesman, so both creativity and people are my path." Another hobby of hers is music. She loves sixties and seventies classic rock, classical music, jazz and Christian music, but not rap, hip-hop or heavy metal. She plans to rejoin the Williamsburg Community Church Choir. Walking the Greensprings Interpretive Trail with their white Labrador, Lucky, is another activity she loves. Their home in Jamestown Hundred backs up to the trail. "I love our home, and, as a former Realtor, I was attracted to the wonderful floor plan," she says.

Leslie loves the small-town feel of Williamsburg and the many activities it has to offer. "I was busy getting my Virginia license and working in real estate when we first moved," she says, "and I haven't taken the time to really explore the area." She looks forward to spending more time exploring the local history and visiting interesting places during Steve's deployment.

Steve is due back in July. He started his business, Pearce Property Repair, in 2016. He hopes to have it up and running again by the fall.

Leslie Pearce isn't shy about what she is doing and why. She says, "God gave me the gift of gab, so I might as well make a living with this gift." Her gift is more than conversation, however, it is her true desire to form and expand community, to bring people into her circle and join them to each other. She exemplifies that goal in her networking, in her business and in her family celebrations.

Leslie Pearce looks forward to the holidays and the time she will spend with her family. She is mindful of all that she has to be thankful for and the steps she is taking to make her life even better. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# A Way with Water

By Narielle Living

Clark Northcott not only loves his career, he is passionate about helping others with his product. "Chlorine is put in the water for one reason and one reason only: to kill living organisms. You shouldn't drink it. And you darn sure shouldn't bathe in it, because you take in

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more chemicals bathing than you do drinking. When bathing you absorb it and you inhale it.”

Clark’s company, Virginia Filtronics, provides home water filtration systems and scale blasters to homeowners who are unhappy with the quality of their water.

“We have weird water in James City County,” he says. “Besides being heavily chlorinated, we get our water from deep wells. We have a limestone aquifer, and that’s where the white scale comes in.” One of his products, the scale blaster, is designed to eliminate the white scale deposits that build up on shower heads, faucets and areas where water is supplied. Scale deposits can scar a home’s fixtures and build up in the pipes and hot water heater, creating other problems down the line. A scale blaster can eliminate these deposits. Clark says that after attaching the scale blaster, the water is the same quality as bottled water. “Women can’t believe what it does to their hair,” he says.

Clark started working in this business about 15 years ago. At that time, he was selling what he refers to as point of entry systems such as re-

frigerator filters, shower filters and sink filters. He received a phone call from a man who lived in Governor’s Land.

“He said he had just moved here from New Jersey and the water sucks. I said ‘I’ve got a filter.’ He said ‘it’s not that as much as it is this white stuff, white scale, we’re seeing everywhere’. I went, ‘I’ll get back to you.’ I got on the internet and started looking. I called one company, didn’t like what they said, called another company, didn’t like what they said, called Clearwater Enviro Tech, and I liked what they said.”

Clark asked them to send him a sample of their product and he put it on his own home. “I’ve had a whole house filter for years. My wife saw a difference in the first shower. So, I called the guy back and said ‘I’ve got something’. He said, ‘Get out here and put it in.’”

He proceeded to order another scale blaster and installed it exactly the way the engineers had directed. Three days after that he spoke to his wife about this system. “We were in the garage. It feels like yesterday but it was 15 years

ago.”

When he called the person who had the scale blaster installed in his home, the man told him, “My daughter was home for spring break. She stopped her shower midstream and said ‘what have you done to the water’.” With that kind of endorsement he knew he could get behind this product. “So, we started selling it.”

Clark grew up in the central Florida area in the town of Lakeland. His family also has roots in West Virginia, where he was born.

“My dad was an engineer,” he says. “He flipped between the coal industry in West Virginia and the phosphate industry in central Florida. We had a fairly prominent family in Huntington.”

He goes on to relate that his family gave land to Marshall University, a school which became more well-known after the movie *We Are Marshall* was released. “They named a science hall after our family.” Red Dawson, a surviving member of the Marshall football coaching staff, was a family friend. One day Red called Clark’s brother to tell him the Northcott signs



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at the college were being torn down. He asked Clark's brother if he wanted the signs, and of course his brother said 'yes'. However, when he arrived to pick it up, he found he was unable to do so. Clark remembers his brother saying, "Red, this thing's bigger than my house. I can't use this."

A part of Clark misses Florida life. He refers to himself as a "Gator," a term used for people who attended the University of Florida. "I got my degree from the University of Florida but I went to high school here in Virginia," Clark says. He attended the Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg, an all-male boarding school. "I hated every second of it but when I got to college I realized I'd gotten one heck of an education."

Today, Clark has sold his water filtration and scale blaster systems all over the country, including Hawaii. He acknowledges that right here in James City County is the perfect place for this system. "The water here is so odd it's perfect for that. It's got a lot of scale in it, and it's got a lot of chemicals in it."

One of the environmental benefits of the system is that it produces water that is the same quality as bottled water. Homeowners can simply refill their water bottles and not worry about buying more plastic.

Clark says that just because we have scale here it does not indicate that our water is hard. "We have extremely soft water." In comparison, Clark works with a client in Henderson, Nevada. In that part of the country, they have 39 grains of hardness in their water. "We have between one and three but we get the scale out of the aquifer. That's where it's coming from." Water softener will not help, he says. "I've probably taken 50 of those systems out."

For the installation of the system, Clark uses a licensed and insured professional plumber. "I do the change outs because it's simple. I just unscrew a couple of things and flush it out, but for a full installation I get a professional plumber."

The thing that Clark has noticed about this business is that people will buy his system because of the scale blaster and they fall in love

with it because of the filter.

"They have no idea what's in the water and how you can change it and how simple it is," he says. "We want them to put chlorine in the water to kill living organisms but right before you use it rip it out. It's simple."

According to Clark, Virginia Filtronics adds value to two of the most important things in a person's life: the family's health and a home's net worth. He adds that the system, when left behind, adds value to the home.

"It doesn't cost a lot of money to maintain. It's good for 100,000 to 150,000 gallons. I'll put a sticker on so people know when to replace it." He says that although people pay for a new filter, he doesn't charge any costs for labor.

Clark Northcott has found a calling with his business and is happy to educate people about the water they have in their home.

"They are finding more stuff in the water every day. If they don't test for it they don't know it's there," he says. His system works to remove these impurities which can leave a residue, smell or build-up of scale. NDN

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## A Sport Without Age Limits

By Dawn Brotherton



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The smell of cut grass. The swirl of dirt in the breeze. The crack of a bat as it connects with the ball. For people who miss these sensations, take heart. Williamsburg now has a senior slow pitch softball league for men over the age of 50 and women over 40.

The Williamsburg Senior Softball League (WSSL) is finishing up its second season at Kiwanis Park, where they play Tuesdays and Thursdays from nine to noon. They have even started to sprinkle in a few evening games when the fields are available. WSSL started in the spring with 36 people and have already grown to 60, which includes seven women. Currently, they have enough players to make up four teams, but they are hoping to grow. Eventually the league would like to have enough women to field their own teams separate from the men, but until then, women are welcome although the league is not following co-ed rules.

Jim Ratkus is the commissioner of the Williamsburg Senior Softball League and one of its founders. The league emphasizes safety and encourages camaraderie, but some players retain their competitive spirit. Jim has to keep

reminding the players to take it slow. “I have to tell people, remember whose body you’re in, because our mind is still sixteen years old,” Jim says. They don’t want players sliding into home plate and getting injured. “We’re not the same people we were twenty years ago.”

The long-term vision for league growth is to have enough players to form two or three divisions, each with four to six teams. In this way, the divisions could be split depending on whether players were competitive or new to the game.

For now, the players are simply divided in Silver, Blue, Gold and Red teams, and they only play for bragging rights. If a team is short players, it is perfectly acceptable to borrow people from another team. “I want to make sure you’re happy, but we have to make sure everybody’s safe, having fun and getting their money’s worth. I mean, if you can play fifty games for three dollars a game, that’s a pretty good deal, entertainment-wise,” he says. Games are 75 minutes long or seven innings, and teams supply their own umpires to keep the costs down.

“If you did it forty years ago, you can still do

it; not at the same speed or the same intensity, but you can still do it and have fun,” Jim says. Playing in their own league, WSSL is able to be flexible with the rules they follow. They try to be adaptable for their athletes where possible. A few players can’t run well, so they allow another player to run in their place.

Jim looks forward to his time on the field. “I’m very appreciative of the other fifty-nine people who show up to let me play,” Jim says. Williamsburg has the demographics to allow a senior league of this nature to thrive.

When Jim and his wife, Anne, were looking for places to retire, the choices were Williamsburg or Wilmington, North Carolina. Jim had graduated from William & Mary, and Anne’s family was from Williamsburg, so they knew this area well. They decided to give Wilmington a try first.

Although Jim had played pickup games and church softball in northern Virginia while he was working as an air traffic controller, he didn’t join his first league until 2015. “I wanted to see how I could stack up with the guys in Wilmington, and believe me, guys in North Carolina take their softball very seriously,” Jim

says.

While in Wilmington, he played with John Antretter who moved to Williamsburg 2017. The following year, Anne and Jim joined him here, and the men instantly put their plan into action to start a senior league for the Triangle. They now have a board of directors and a WSSL Creed that gives the organization direction. Though Jim loves any sport with a ball in it, he really appreciates being part of a league, something bigger and more organized than pick-up games.

"It pushes you to get better. I know these guys are good, so I want to get better," he says. Jim says the league has had great support. "Williamsburg Parks and Recreation... I can't say it enough. They have been fabulous to us. They have worked with us from the get-go." Local businesses have also assisted with the league's start-up, and the teams reciprocate by meeting for lunch after their games at area restaurants.

Growing up in northern Virginia, Jim played many sports. "If you ask me to go jog for twenty miles, I wasn't built for that. But you throw a ball out, I'll run twenty miles chasing the ball

around all day long," he says. When he attended William & Mary, Jim played rugby just to try something different. Now, besides softball, he is enjoying pickleball at the neighborhood courts. Pickleball is a combination of tennis, ping-pong and badminton. "I tell people it's like playing ping-pong while you're standing on the table and using a wiffle ball instead of a ping-pong ball," Jim says. When he isn't on the softball field, Jim can be found at Quarterpath Park on the indoor pickleball courts, or on the outdoor courts at Ford's Colony, Governor's Land or Settlers' Mill.

As the WSSL season comes to a close, Jim and Anne are looking forward to the holidays. Decorating for Christmas is a very important tradition in their family. When they first moved back to Williamsburg, it was early December. The first boxes they unpacked were the Christmas decorations. They also enjoy driving around to look at how other people are decorating their homes for Christmas.

Jim and Anne are happy to be back in Williamsburg. "There's something that has always appealed to me about Williamsburg. I don't know if I reincarnated from some Revolution-

ary War person, but I grew up about two miles from Mount Vernon; I lived in Boston for a year; I went to college here. There's something about the colonial thing that draws me. I just love when a little bit of snow is falling, and I get a chance to walk around Colonial Williamsburg."

But even the thought of snow doesn't turn Jim's mind from the softball league. The most challenging part about WSSL is getting the word out. He and the board are handing out business cards around town to anyone who looks like a promising candidate. Jim encourages anyone who is interested to give it a try. "Don't be afraid. Our talent distribution is varied. We have had some really good players, and we have two ladies who said they've never played before. They're having a blast. We have a huge spectrum of talent."

Jim Ratkus reminds people that sports keep a person physically active, mentally alert and emotionally engaged. "You could say that we're seniors with attitude. We share an attitude about aging that embraces sports participation." They welcome all seniors who want to play to join them. NDN

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# One Iota of a Chance

By Paige Brotherton

Arts  
& ENTERTAINMENT



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

In Williamsburg, music is everywhere. It's playing from phones and computers, murmuring softly in the background at a restaurant, even echoing from the shower. Although people hear music every day, they don't always listen to it. Sam Eure, founder of the Iota Music Festival, is on a quest to expand our understanding of all that music can be.

Sam was born in Texas, but he moved around with his military parents, seeing many

places. Particularly memorable are the festivals in Hawaii. During his six years on the islands, Sam attended plenty of Mayday celebrations and King Kamehameha Day parties that were not just musical but also welcoming. "They were very community driven," Sam says. "You see families, and you're invited even if you're a visitor to come in, join what's going on and learn something." Sam remembers the dancing and performances with fire, expressions of art

all unique to the Hawaiian culture. "You can just culturally experience something really cool that's going on that you may not be familiar with." It was a good way for Sam's musical family to see a new side of the art they already loved.

"My mother, she was a vocalist. I used to watch her singing in church," Sam says. It had always been clear that his little sister had inherited the gift of song from their mother,

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as she was sweeping the floor at district and state competitions while studying opera, but it wasn't until college that Sam would come to realize he had a powerful voice too. Meanwhile, he took up several musical instruments in middle school and was playing seventeen different instruments by the time he finished high school. But despite his fluency in the craft, there was some element missing. Sam taught himself to play guitar and to this day, plays only by ear.

"I wanted to learn something that was not constrained by sheet music," he says.

Even with his affinity for music, Sam did not enter college with the intention of pursuing it as a career. Instead, he took a completely different path, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Government from William & Mary.

"I thought I was going to go to Capitol Hill and work in politics and change the world that way," Sam says. He remembers being told he was too nice to be content operating the great machine of government, but Sam values his time spent at college as integral in finding himself and his music. When not in class, he would write songs in the stairwell of his dorm.

"Little did I know that three floors up in the same stairwell, they would always show up when I was playing," Sam says with a smile. "They would do their homework while I was writing my songs." His friends encouraged him in both his original compositions and his voice, eventually inviting him to join a capella group at the school. Sam enjoyed singing with the crowd, and by senior year completed solos with confidence, realizing the full extent of his musical ability.

While pursuing his MBA, Sam discovered social entrepreneurship, which inspired the future he creates today. "I took my first class on building community and how you can really foster an environment where it's nonzero sum game strategy: you don't have to lose so I can win, we can both win."

The interest in helping the community that led Sam to government followed him to music. First, he absorbed the knowledge presented in his business classes and applied it to a career in music, an aspect of the trade that many people underestimate. "Most people don't use contracts and they don't really know how to navigate the marketing side of it," Sam says.

"There's a way to have balance and have fun with what you do and be passionate about what you love, but then also make money sustainably, and have a professional respect where venues are pursuing you."

There's a lot more behind-the-scenes compromising and decision-making than the music industry would have audiences believe, and an understanding of the business side is crucial to success.

Next, Sam began to trade the lessons he'd learned with the other musicians he crossed paths with. From Denver to Nashville to New York and even all the way to Germany, Sam has traveled the world with his guitar, singing some covers but mostly his original music whenever possible. He met plenty of other artists on his journey and was able to learn both tricks of the trade and musical techniques from them.

"In all those places, something that was very different from Hampton Roads was the community aspect," Sam says. "It wasn't hyper competitive. People were really helping each other. Here, people will help you but they're more frenemies than your friends." But as he grew more comfortable in his career as a musi-

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cian, Sam set out to change that.

When considering where to start, Sam remembers wondering, “What is it that the community could really be served the best by? What do they need? A lot of it has to do with the access to education, understanding the business side of creativity.” Some artists must work with brokers and agents to market their work rather than being in control of their own independent art, but Sam wants to expand the horizons for artists of all sorts trying to find their footing in an undertaught career. His desire for change encompasses not just musicians, but painters, graphic designers, and any freelance artist that has ever needed the support of a community to grow.

“The grand vision of Iota is to really provide a place for all those creative ventures.” Sam’s eyes light up as he talks about the festival he began two years ago. “I had to start small. My minimum viable product was what I know best, what I am a member of: the music community.” Ever since Iota first got off the ground, Sam has put an emphasis on improving and expanding its reach, constantly collaborating with artists and audiences to foster

the sense of unity he would like to see in the industry. “Having those open conversations really allows people to feel invested in and also want to invest in what you’re building.”

A true performer knows that the music sounds best when everyone plays together, and a musical community is no different. Instead of competing for limited venue space and gigs, Sam uses Iota to give musicians a platform to share their voice alongside their peers. One of the most important elements to him is that at Iota, groups play only original music. For many local groups, this is one of their first chances to get exposure for their voice.

“A lot of people say ‘oh my gosh, I’ve seen this band before but I’ve never heard their music, and the music is fantastic. Why don’t they play this when they’re playing out?’ And usually it’s because the venues want them to play covers and stuff that people can recognize.”

Another important factor in Iota is the variety of sounds. Speaking of the past year’s performance, Sam says, “We had some Americana, some folk. We had some jazz, and we had some soul, rhythm and blues styles, and pop music as well. We’re looking to have a very diverse ex-

perience.” He continues to reach out to bring new artists into the fold in the hopes that each successive year will bring a new style for both audiences and fellow musicians to appreciate.

More than anything, the Iota music festival is a way for Sam to share what he cares about most with the community. After dealing with a personal health crisis, it was unclear whether he’d ever be able to perform again. After building a career on just that, Sam struggled to cope with what felt like the loss of his inspiration and joy. “If that goes away again, how can I still be involved in music? How can I surround myself with the thing that I love?” Sam remembers wondering. “And I started to focus on the community and found the same amount of love in what I’m building.”

From the depths of a personal battle, Sam Eure emerged with a mission to bring his passion to others so that the music would continue to echo through Williamsburg whether or not he could make it to the stage.

“They told me, ‘You have less than one Iota of a chance of getting back to playing music.’ And the word just stuck with me. All it takes is one Iota of a chance.” NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# A Life in Equilibrium

By Harmony Hunter

Jim Smith's life is a study in balance. A personal fitness trainer and restorative recovery practitioner at once, he thrives in the space between extremes. His personal philosophies and professional path have evolved in tandem, culminating in a drive to share what he's learned about health and resilience with everyone he can.

"The better somebody's body functions, the



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better they feel. Physical training is not just physical, you're actually building your spiritual self, enhancing yourself in every aspect as a holistic human being," Jim says.

Physical fitness goes beyond a basic jog around the block for Jim. In 2013, he developed his original personal training business, JymBodies Personal Fitness Training. His approach coupled a focus on strength with an interest in nutrition, deepened by ownership of his York County health food store, Healthy Solutions, until 2009 when the business was sold. Though Jim's career has since carried him forward from these early professional forays, his knack for finding balance was evident from the beginning.

An interest in peak physical performance was always present in Jim's life. "I can't really pinpoint a moment where it began, because I've always gravitated toward being healthy, doing everything I could to be healthy and doing everything I could to help other people be healthy," Jim says. Regardless of his talent's roots, Jim was enjoying a career in a field he wholly embraced, which is a satisfaction many

never achieve.

The Smith family was thriving, but when they had the chance to move to Hawaii in 2009, Jim, his wife and their two sons knew it was an offer too good to pass up. While his wife directed a dialysis clinic on the Big Island, Jim turned his focus to his two sons, homeschooling them through an online charter school.

This was a time of scholarship for father and sons both. While Jim shepherded his boys through their studies, he pursued the life of the mind with his self-published sci-fi series. "The books I write are pure supernatural adventure. It's pretty much just a fun romp through different things with different beings," he says as he describes them. "All my books take place in a world I built." He has two novels and a book of short stories to his name, with plans to add a new installment soon.

But life at a desk would never suit Jim, so he complemented his authorship while in Hawaii with a dive into a new fitness field: Mixed Martial Arts, or MMA. This explosive sport combines discipline and controlled aggression in a full contact competition where anything can

happen. "I wanted for my own personal knowledge to know how to train MMA fighters for their strength and conditioning," he says.

This curiosity turned into an expertise as Jim's natural ability for the sport made itself evident. He soon realized a new area of focus to add to his personal training resumé. "Even though I was the oldest guy in the class, you know, they all noticed I wasn't getting tired. The next thing you know I had to get a business license so I could train them for their fights."

The athleticism and the challenge of Mixed Martial Arts appealed to Jim, and he knew that there was more to the sport than physical strength alone. The combatants needed strategy and self-awareness to have the edge in a fight. He says, "You have to deal with physical pain. There could be injury if you don't tap out. You have to know when to resist and when to say, 'you've got me.'" Along with training these athletes, Jim hosted seminars and designed programs for MMA fighters.

True to form, Jim pursued another, nearly opposite, expertise concurrently to this new type of intense combat training. It was in Ha-

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waii that he became a licensed massage therapist, using his knowledge of physical exertion to bring his own intelligence to this branch of recovery. He finds a deep satisfaction in the specialty. "Clients might not have the knowledge of movement quality and things like that, so anything that I can impart to them in that scope of practice, I try to share. They can actually get results when they're not seeing me and feel better when they're not seeing me."

Jim's long study of fitness, flexibility and endurance training have taught him that the recovery and resilience that can come through practices like yoga and massage therapy are just as crucial to the total athlete as cardio and weight training. "You have to take ownership of your part in it and follow through with different things for movement and stretching to make your body feel better for specific issues. And if I can impart some of that to you, then my knowledge can help a person feel much better."

The family's ten years in the 50th state were an idyll worthy of its reputation for aloha. A vivid blend of cultures joined in the islands,

and Jim embraced the rich experience of living and working with immigrants from around the world. "Hawaii is about the closest you can get to living in a foreign country and still be in the United States. It's really amazing to see so many people from different places and cultures around the world. Some have lived there for generations, but others have just moved there," Jim says.

Likewise, Jim's two sons took to the islands' sand and sea culture as eagerly as any teen boys might be expected to. "They loved growing up there," says Jim. "It's always spring or summer there, everybody's laid back. They're surfing all the time; I know I did." The foods, the celebrations and the breathtaking scenery were a source of joy for the entire family.

Circumstances called the Smiths back to the mainland this June when Jim felt his duty to be present in his 92-year-old mother's care after she broke a hip. His sons were ready to embark on their path to college in Virginia, so the whole family reluctantly packed their Hawaiian shirts and headed back to the tidewater area.

What surprised them was how much they enjoyed being back. Jim's boys had the honor of choosing the family's new home, and they settled on New Town off of Monticello Avenue in Williamsburg. The community's new-urban layout is a delight to Jim. "I walk to work, I walk to the gym, I can walk to the bank and walk to the movies." Living in a neighborhood where residents only have to get into the car to go to the grocery store suits Jim just fine.

Reacquainting himself with the American South has been an unanticipated pleasure. "I've actually ended up feeling like I've returned home. I feel good about it." Little things, like changing leaves or the new energy that comes around the holidays, are an unexpected pleasure. "When the seasons change, it seems like peoples' outlook changes," Jim says.

A new balance has been struck for Jim Smith and his family, but his instinct for wellness and wholeness remains at the core of every pursuit. He says, "It's all about being as healthy as you can be; being able to be self-sufficient and take care of yourself. That's my passion and that's my calling." NDN

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# Creating Spaces

By Alison Johnson

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

At an age when most young kids are drawing animals and stick figures, Rasheda Tripp was sketching houses.

As an elementary school student, Rasheda also built homes from Legos, filling them with miniature furniture and appliances crafted out of cardboard boxes. She made display “meals” with leftover dough from her father’s home-made dumplings. Sometimes, she put mirrors on the floors of real rooms so she could stare at ceilings, and then pretend to walk on them. Yet Rasheda learned that buildings could be hazardous, too. In some of the housing where she grew up, mold on the walls sickened her mother, brother and two of her three sisters, all of whom had asthma. Scrubbing it off with bleach often wasn’t enough.

“I didn’t know why, but I knew the spaces we inhabit shouldn’t cause us harm,” she says. “Then the owner of my after-school program told me I could be an architect and do it for a living. It’s all I’ve ever thought to be.”

Now 35, Rasheda is an architect for GuernseyTingle, based in New Town. Although she currently works remotely from her home in Charlottesville, she has played a role in numerous local projects, including expansions at Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist and St. Bede Catholic churches and dormitory renovations at the College of William & Mary.

A member of the American Institute of Architects, Rasheda specializes in multi-family

housing and retail and government projects. She plans buildings, developments and additions not only in Virginia but at times in neighboring states.

For example, Rasheda designed Tanglewood Pavilions in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, a shopping center that includes prominent businesses such as T.J. Maxx, Dollar Tree and Ross Dress for Less. Attending its 2015 opening was a career highlight, as it was the first project Rasheda had been involved in from start to finish.

“We spend months, sometimes years, working with clients, translating their vision into an actual design,” she says. “The moment we start to see the drawings become real, tangible buildings never gets old. It’s by far the most rewarding part of my job.”

Rasheda is responsible for guiding clients through what initially can feel like an overwhelming process. Her biggest challenge is achieving their goals within budget and schedule constraints. “We work together to prioritize needs versus wants, and find ways not to cheapen the design aesthetically,” she says.

Practicing in a place like Williamsburg, Rasheda also has come to view history not as one point in time but as an evolving idea, which architecture can help shape.

“I get to be part of how spaces are transformed from their original purpose to fit a current need,” she says. “I’ve worked on hotels

turned into student housing and been part of congregations planning additions for the future of their churches. There’s always a nod to what was, while embracing new potential.”

Rasheda spent her childhood not far from Williamsburg, in Portsmouth. She left to attend college at the University of Virginia, where she briefly considered a career in psychology or social work but never found a connection like she had with architecture.

After graduation, Rasheda spent three years at RRMM Architects in Chesapeake before heading to Washington University in St. Louis to complete a Master of Architecture. She worked at the global firm HOK in Washington, D.C., then started at GuernseyTingle six years ago.

For five years, Rasheda and her husband, Randy Tripp Jr., lived in Williamsburg while Randy worked in admissions at William & Mary. In 2018, Randy became Director of Scholarship and Alumni Services for the Ron Brown Scholarship Program, a Charlottesville-based organization that guides African American high school students through the college application process.

Since then, Rasheda has been based in an office in their townhouse, relying on computer, phone and conferencing technology to connect with co-workers and clients. Her two children, Micah, 3, and Mason, 7 months, go to day care so she can put in full-time hours.

Rasheda commutes to Williamsburg once or twice a month, or whenever needed for her clients. Sometimes her location is ideal. A current project is an addition to a government building in Charlottesville.

One of Rasheda's favorite local projects to date was the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist addition, completed in 2017. The expansion to the church's original space added much-needed offices and classrooms.

"The people in the congregation were so friendly and so involved and excited, and they also were grateful for my expertise," she relates. "They appreciated what I could do to help them, and I got such great feedback on the final result. It was really satisfying."

Rasheda also has assisted with the conversion of a hotel and motel into the One Tribe Place and Richmond Hall residence halls at W&M, as well as on renovations to the Landrum Hall dorm and work at the Parkside Williamsburg Resort.

Architecture remains endlessly fascinating to Rasheda. The first detail she notices in every building is one of her childhood obsessions: ceilings. "My husband has become used to me zoning out and staring up for the first few minutes we go anywhere," she admits.

Rasheda's two favorite types of ceilings are

either very ornate, such as those painted and carved in cathedrals, or missing altogether, such as the upper spaces in grocery stores where duct work is often visible.

"I like it when there are so many details that everyone can see something different in them," she explains. "Or, I like it when there's nothing there at all, because then you can see what's behind the curtain that's usually there."

In terms of home design, Rasheda is a fan of layouts that blur lines between indoor and outdoor spaces. In her townhouse, for example, sliding glass doors lead out to a deck which in turn backs up to a wooded ravine. "It's like we're living right with the trees," she says.

Open floor plans are popular in general, she adds. "People like to be able to see from one space to another and to use each one for multiple purposes. We've gotten away from naming each room and assigning it only one function. I also think the best architecture happens when people find ways to interact with spaces in a different way than we as designers intend."

Before she was juggling a growing career and her beloved-but-energetic sons, Rasheda's favorite hobbies were traveling, do-it-yourself projects and reading. She's now more into taking naps, walking with or without a stroller

and baking. "I've perfected my pound cake," she says.

Like many families, the Tripps have created unique holiday customs to make December a special month. One is to go to a Christmas Mouse store together every Christmas Eve to pick out an ornament that symbolizes the past year.

Last year was the first time that Micah was able to make his own selection. He chose a firetruck with a character from the animated series PAW Patrol, Marshall the dalmatian, although he quickly decided it should be a toy.

"He kept taking it off the tree, and eventually I gave up," Rasheda says with a laugh. "I'm not sure what will happen this Christmas when we want to hang it up again. But either way, we're excited to include the baby in the tradition this year."

For kids and teenagers potentially interested in architecture, Rasheda Tripp says it's never too early to start drawing and paying attention to how different settings make them feel.

"Which spaces make you comfortable or uneasy?" she says. "What is it about those spaces that evokes those emotions: the ceiling height, the amount of natural light, the wall surfaces? The way we experience space is just as important as how it's constructed." NDN

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## PEACE ON EARTH



## Next Door Neighbors



# Hey Neighbor!

Please visit

[www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com](http://www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com),

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

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

## **Hey Neighbor!** ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CON- CERT - CANTORI CHORAL ENSEMBLE

December 1, 2019

At 5 p.m. at Walnut Hills Baptist Church, 1014 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg. Cantori Choral Ensemble will present its 15th annual Christmas concert, featuring favorite music from past Christmas concerts alongside new settings of Christmas carols. The audience will be treated to a cappella choral settings, as well as music accompanied by Rebecca Davy on piano and organ, Wayne Hedrick on flute, and Stephen Custer on cello. Will-call tickets may be reserved by sending a check made out to Cantori Choral Ensemble to 3341 Derby Lane, Williamsburg, 23185. Ticket prices are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Visit: [www.cantoriwilliamsburg.org](http://www.cantoriwilliamsburg.org)

## **Hey Neighbor!** ADVENT FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 4, 2019

Please join with the Youth Choir, Bell Choir, and Schola Cantorum of Saint Bede in this beautiful

candlelit service of choral music, Scripture readings, and traditional congregational hymns of the season. Bring a friend to this annual tradition at 7 p.m., Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road, Williamsburg. For more information, call 757-229-3631, or visit [www.bedeva.org/concerts](http://www.bedeva.org/concerts).

## **Hey Neighbor!** 60TH ANNUAL GREEN SPRING GARDEN CLUB'S CHRISTMAS HOMES TOUR

December 7, 2019

9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. This year's tour will consist of five exceptional private residences in Historic Williamsburg. All homes will be decorated in seasonal period appropriate floral arrangements. Advance tickets are \$35 per person available for purchase online at [www.greenspringgardenclub.org](http://www.greenspringgardenclub.org) until November 15. Tickets may be purchased for \$40 on December 6 & 7 at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center and at the houses on the day of the tour. Tickets include free parking at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center and use of the CW buses from the Visitor Center and around the Historic

Area. Proceeds benefit local beautification, Horticultural projects and Scholarships for college and Nature Camp.

## **Hey Neighbor!** WILLIAMSBURG CONTRA DANCE COMMUNITY

December 7, 2019

The Williamsburg Contra Dance Community is hosting a dance with live music performed by the Friends of Appalachian Music! This is a diverse and beginner-friendly group dedicated to celebrating this American tradition. If joining for the first time, come early: most of the teaching happens in the first 15 minutes. 7:30 – 10:30 p.m. at the Norge Community Hall, 7402 Richmond Rd. \$5-10 suggested donation at the door. More information available at <https://williamsburgcontradance.wordpress.com/>.

## **Hey Neighbor!** WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD

December 8, 2019

At 2 p.m., St. Martin's Episcopal Church, join the Williamsburg Choral Guild for our holiday con-

cert, The Snow Lay on the Ground. This program features Stephen Paulus's Gabriel's Message and Steve Heitzeg's little tree, both set for choir and harp, plus a number of traditional carols celebrating the holiday season ahead. Tickets are available at [www.williamsburgchoralguild.org/tickets/](http://www.williamsburgchoralguild.org/tickets/) or from a Guild member. Adult tickets are \$20 both in advance and at the door; student tickets are \$10 with ID; no cost for children under 12.. For more information, please visit [williamsburgchoralguild.org](http://williamsburgchoralguild.org) or visit our Facebook page.

## **Hey Neighbor!** VOICES IN THE MANSION; DARK ENOUGH TO SEE THE STARS IN A JAMESTOWN SKY

December 10, 2019

From 7-9 p.m., at 695 Chippokes Park Rd. Surry, VA. Finish off our 2019 writers series with historical fiction author Connie Lapallo. Reflect on tales of the Starving Time through the distinctive female perspective of Lapallo's own ancestor, Joan Pierce. Tickets include park entrance, reading admission, refreshments provided by the Friends of Chippokes, and a man-



Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg will be celebrating its 30th Annual Elegant Culinary Affaire on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at Kingsmill Resort, from 5:00-9:00 p.m. The evening will feature a Great Gatsby theme and will be led by Master of Ceremonies Bobby Hornsby.

Seating is available for purchase for \$250 per person, with all proceeds benefiting Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg. For more information about the Elegant Culinary Affaire, sponsorship opportunities or to purchase your seats, visit [www.williamsburghospice.org](http://www.williamsburghospice.org) or call 757-253-1220.

sion tour. Tickets can be purchased by calling 757-294-3625.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **ANGELIC SOUNDS TO PERVADE NARFE WILLIAMS- BURG'S HOLIDAY DINNER** December 10, 2019

Three young harpists will perform traditional holiday tunes at the holiday dinner of the Williamsburg Chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. The harpists are students from the Williamsburg Youth Harp Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing young people in the Williamsburg area an enriched educational experience through the study of, and performance on, the harp. The event will take place at the Colonial Heritage Restaurant, 6500 Arthur Hills Drive, Williamsburg. Cost for the dinner, payable to the restaurant, is \$25. Please RSVP no later than Thursday, December 5, to Pat Gamble at narfe.williamsburg@cox.net.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **FLUTE FRENZY HOLIDAY CONCERT** December 13, 2019

Flute Frenzy celebrates the holidays at 7 p.m. Meet the entire flute family (piccolo, flute, alto, and bass) as we present a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional flute choir music reflective of the season. All youth and adult Flute Frenzy flute choirs will perform in the concert. Our youth flutists will also share music in the lobby before the concert. The concert takes place at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Rd, Williamsburg. Free will offering; reception follows. For more information: [www.flutefrenzy.org](http://www.flutefrenzy.org).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **CHIPPOKES PLANTATION HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE** December 14, 2019

From 1-6 p.m. at 695 Chippokes Park Rd. Surry, VA, experience the festivities of the season in a special way with our third annual Holiday Open House event. Tour the Jones-Stewart Mansion as it is decked for the holidays and warm

yourself up in the historic Bick Kitchen where you'll meet our volunteers in period dress showing the sights, sounds, and tastes of holiday hearth cooking. There is no fee for the event, however the daily park entrance fee still applies. Dress for the weather as some activities will be located outdoors and/or inside a tent. For more information, contact the park office at 757-294-3625.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL VISION TOUR** December 17, 2019

The mission of Covenant Christian School is to glorify God by creating a Christ-centered, learning community of Covenant families in which education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life. If you would like to see firsthand what makes Covenant Christian School different, join us at 8:15 a.m. at 116 Palace Lane for our 45 minute school vision tour. To RSVP, please call 757-378-2189. [ccswilliamsburg.org](http://ccswilliamsburg.org).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB** December 18, 2019

The Asian Community Service Center will present a program exploring the Essence of Chinese Traditional Culture, featuring a performance of traditional music on the Chinese GuZheng by Borong Tsai. Chinese piano and violin music will be performed by Eugene Liu and Angel Lu. This program is presented free as a gift to the community from the Williamsburg Music Club. In Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish, 331 Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg. Program begins at 11 a.m., preceded by the meeting and Coffee Hour at 10 a.m. For information, visit: [www.williamsburgmusicclub.org](http://www.williamsburgmusicclub.org).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **WASHINGTON NATIONAL CA- THEDRAL CHRISTMAS DAY- TRIP FROM WILLIAMSBURG** December 18, 2019

From 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., enjoy a luxury Travel Coach to the Washington

National Cathedral, just in time for the Holidays! Leave from Williamsburg and spend the day in the National House Of Prayer. Receive a Private Guided Tour, Worship in the Upper Choir, Explore the collection of Nativity Scenes from around the world, Indulge in the Gift Shop. For more information, call 757-525-9282.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **VIRGINIA SYMPHONY HOLIDAY BRASS** December 18, 2019

The bold sounds of the Virginia Symphony Brass section will ring in the holidays with a blast! Experience the festive sounds of the season in a concert filled with wit, virtuosity, and the glorious music of the holidays--featuring the VSO brass and percussion sections in an all-new program. Time: 7:30 p.m. at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road. Parking is limited, please consider carpooling. Tickets can be purchased through the Virginia Symphony at [www.virginiasymphony.org](http://www.virginiasymphony.org). For more information, visit [www.bede-va.org/concerts](http://www.bede-va.org/concerts).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **SHERWOOD FOREST WILL HOST TWO TEAS** December 18, 2019

Come see this beautiful home of former President John Tyler. The house will be decorated for Christmas. Enjoy delightful finger sandwiches, scones and deserts, as well as lovely tea. From 1 - 2 p.m., a Teddy Bear Tea for children, ages 6-12 with an adult. A puppet show and music will be part of the tea. From 3 - 4 p.m., an English Tea will be served with entertainment and music. Limited seating for both teas. Must make reservations. Before Dec. 18. All proceeds go to Westover Episcopal Church and their outreach programs. Contact 757-561-6430.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **LATISHA'S HOUSE FOUNDA- TION ANNUAL GALA** January 25, 2020

Latisha's House Foundation (LHF), a long-term safe house for adult female victims of sex traffick-

ing that offers individualized support to empower them to build a bridge from their traumatic past to a positive future, will hold its annual gala from 5:30 p.m. - 10 p.m. at Two Rivers Country Club. This year's theme, An Evening of Wine and Roses, will feature a Five Course Dinner with Wine Pairings, a Silent and Live Auction, and Dancing. For information on sponsorship and tickets, contact the LHF office at (757) 346-5344, [latishashouse@gmail.com](mailto:latishashouse@gmail.com) or visit the website at [latishashouse.com](http://latishashouse.com).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **WCAC'S SMALL WORKS/ HOLIDAY SHOW UNDERWAY** Ongoing through Dec. 20, 2019

WCAC's current show, "Small Works/Holiday Show," is now underway. It brings to the gallery a wide variety of small paintings, photography, 3-D art, holiday cards and more specially priced for the gift-giving season. Be sure to visit our Artisan Corner with its selection of artisan pieces and jewelry. WCAC is located at 110 Westover Ave. in the Arts District. Hours: Tues.-Sat. 11-3; Sun. 12-4. For information, call 757-229-4949 or visit [www.visitWCAC.org](http://www.visitWCAC.org). The center will be closed from Dec. 21 through Jan. 13.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **GROVE COMMUNITY GARDEN** Ongoing

Come grow with us! Garden plots and volunteer opportunities abound at the organic/biodynamic Grove Community Garden! Learn to grow your own food by participating in our Second Sunday Garden Days at 4:30 p.m., or stop by the garden after 4 p.m. Mon-Fri and on weekends. Adopt a garden bed and produce your own nutrient-dense food for you and your family, volunteer your time, or donate! Jordan Sturdivant, Director, 757-418-5274.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED GROVE CHRISTIAN OUT- REACH CENTER** Ongoing

Grove Christian Outreach Center,

located at 8800 Pocahontas Trail is gratefully accepting volunteer applications on a regular basis. Call 757-887-1100 to schedule an appointment to come in for a tour and to see how you can get involved. Contact Barb by email at [barb@groveoutreach.com](mailto:barb@groveoutreach.com) for more information. Also, check us out on the web at [www.groveoutreach.com](http://www.groveoutreach.com) to find out business and client hours, and "like" us on Facebook to keep up to date on regular events!

## Hey Neighbor! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### Ongoing

Please consider volunteering an afternoon per week or a Saturday morning with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program during the coming tax season. VITA provides free tax return preparation and e-filing services February 1 through April 15 for low to moderate income taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their federal and state tax returns. VITA will train you to complete tax returns for our clients. Please contact Al Cummins at 757-259-0739 or at [almarlene10@cox.net](mailto:almarlene10@cox.net) if you wish to join this very worthwhile community effort.

## Hey Neighbor! VOLUNTEER WITH SENTARA WILLIAMSBURG RE- GIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

### Ongoing

Join us. Our volunteers play a vital role in helping us provide exceptional health care. The department matches individual talents and interests to the needs within the hos-

pital as possible. New volunteers attend an orientation to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of volunteering and any specialized training their service area requires. Contact: Debi Hardin, Volunteer Coordinator @[dnhardin@sentara.com](mailto:dnhardin@sentara.com) or call 757-984-7195.

## Hey Neighbor! WOMAN'S CLUB MEETING

### Ongoing

The Woman's Club of Williamsburg-GFWC is a group of women with many different talents and interests who have banded together to enrich the quality of life for citizens of our community, all while having fun and forming life-long friendships. We meet monthly for a short business meeting and to enjoy lunch and hear from an invited speaker. We welcome prospective members at any of our meetings! 2019-2020 meeting dates: Dec. 18, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, Mar. 25, Apr. 22, May 27, and Jun. 17. Email Linda ([linda@womansclubofwilliamsburg.org](mailto:linda@womansclubofwilliamsburg.org)) or Mary ([mary@womansclubofwilliamsburg.org](mailto:mary@womansclubofwilliamsburg.org)) if you'd like to join or attend a meeting. To get more information about our activities, visit us online at [womansclubofwilliamsburg.org](http://womansclubofwilliamsburg.org).

## Hey Neighbor! PINOCHLE OR BID WHIST CARD GAMES

### Ongoing

Senior group of card players is looking for any person(s) who would like to play either Pinochle or Bid Whist cards. We meet every Tuesday at Williamsburg's Moose lodge from 1:30 - 4 p.m. Location: 5429 Richmond Rd, call

703-944-5107 for questions.

## Hey Neighbor! JOIN MASTER GARDENERS

### Ongoing

The VCE Master Gardener Program is currently accepting applications for its 2020 Training Class! The entirely community-based volunteer program has been providing high-quality horticulture-based programs for James City County and Williamsburg for over 20 years, with guidance and leadership from Virginia Tech and the Virginia Cooperative Extension. We welcome residents of Williamsburg, James City, New Kent, and Charles City Counties to become part of our educational programs and events. No experience necessary! Classes meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 9 am - 12 noon, January 7 - March 26, 2020. For application and more information, please visit us online at [www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org) or call the VCE office at 757-564-2170.

## Hey Neighbor! NEW PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

### Ongoing

Led by Dr. Lyzette E. Velazquez of Riverside Neurology and Sleep Specialists. Dr. Velazquez offers a free, well-round monthly discussion featuring, in addition to herself, experts in the field, including physical therapists, dietitians, home health care workers, psychologists and more who will provide education information useful to anyone who interacts with the disease. Fourth Tuesday of each month, 2 pm, at Riverside

Doctor's Hospital Williamsburg, 1500 Commonwealth Avenue, Conference Rooms A&B. Open to the general public. Parkinson's patients, caregivers, health care workers, interested community members.

## Hey Neighbor! THE ARC NEEDS DRIVERS!

### Ongoing

The Arc of Greater Williamsburg is seeking additional drivers to transport clients to evening activities and programs in our beautiful, handicapped accessible vehicles. Paid and volunteer positions are available! Activities are conducted 7-9 p.m. CDL license is not required. DMV and background checks will be conducted. For information please email: [pam.mcgregor@thearcgw.org](mailto:pam.mcgregor@thearcgw.org). Visit our website at [thearcgw.org](http://thearcgw.org).

## Hey Neighbor! OSHER COURSES & LECTURES

### Ongoing

The Osher Institute at William & Mary concludes its 28th year of lifelong learning with nearly 178 courses, activities and one-time-lectures. Visit [www.wm.edu/osher](http://www.wm.edu/osher) to review courses and lecture topics and sign up for a membership and register for courses. Members may register for up to eight courses and an unlimited number of activities and one-time-lectures each semester. Your membership is a ticket to learning about the world, engaging with others who have diverse life experiences, and enjoying the social sides of life. Questions? Call 757-221-1506 or email us at

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## Hey Neighbor!

### THE WILLIAMSBURG ROSE AND THISTLE - EMBROIDERY

#### Ongoing

This chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America meets the second Tuesday of each month (except June and December) from 10 am - noon at King of Glory Lutheran Church at 4897 Longhill Road in Williamsburg (Room 313). All types of hand embroidery are encouraged and visitors are welcome. Bring your stitching and meet other area stitchers. For information, contact Jennifer Reed at (202) 200-1369 or LNER4468@hotmail.com.

## Hey Neighbor!

### DONATIONS NEEDED

#### Ongoing

Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) is in need of gently used shower chairs, tub transfer benches, grab bars, rollators, transport (lightweight) wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs in all adult sizes. Bariatric wheelchairs and rollators are especially needed. To donate, contact Diane Harrah, Program Assistant, F.R.E.E. Williamsburg Chapter, 757-707-4741. F.R.E.E. is a non-profit that gifts mobility related equipment to adults who are uninsured or under insured and have no other means of obtaining needed mobility related equipment and bathroom transfer aids. If you or someone you know is in need of equipment call 757-707-4741 or visit our website at [www.free-foundation.org](http://www.free-foundation.org). Find us on Facebook at F.R.E.E. Foundation of Virginia.

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG EAGLES

#### Ongoing

The Williamsburg Eagles Aerie 4548, a nonprofit group that gives back to the local community, is located at 113 Palace Lane in Williamsburg (behind Jose Tequila's and Rocco's). We are a member's only bar/restaurant similar to the

Moose Lodge. A couple of fun facts about the FOE Eagles: 1904-Eagles make the first public plea for Mother's Day; 1935- Eagles played prominent role in the passing of the Social Security Act; in 1985, blooming from a strong relationship with member and entertainer Danny Thomas, the Eagles became the first organization to top \$1 million in donations to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Call Kevin Mallory for more information: 757-259-6868.

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (WAARC)

#### Ongoing

The Williamsburg Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) meets every month on the Second Tuesday at 7 pm in the Community Room of the JCC Library on Croaker Rd. Vast opportunities to enjoy amateur radio and perform public service to the community. Members meet for breakfast every Saturday. Visit us at [k4rc.net](http://k4rc.net). or email to [info@k4rc.net](mailto:info@k4rc.net) for more details.

## Hey Neighbor!

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, WILLIAMSBURG FAITH IN ACTION

#### Ongoing

Faith In Action relies on volunteers to help keep seniors living independently in their own homes. Volunteers transport care receivers to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, bank, pharmacy, etc. Volunteers also provide in-home services such as care giver support, visits, and light chores. Faith In Action offers a flexible schedule for its volunteers. If you have a few hours to dedicate to someone who may need to get to a doctor's appointment, or just enjoy a friendly visit, then we have the place for you. If you are interested in volunteering, call the Williamsburg Faith In Action Office at 757-258-5890.

## Hey Neighbor!

### JAMES CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

#### Ongoing

"A Door of Hope" No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, we're glad you're here. James City

Community Church is located at 4550 Old News Rd., Williamsburg. Services: 9 am (nursery provided) and 11am (birth - 5th grade programs provided). Come join us and feel free to participate as much or as little as you feel comfortable. We also offer Celebrate Recovery every Wednesday at 7 p.m. Visit our website at [www.jccchurch.com](http://www.jccchurch.com) to learn more about JCC3.

## Hey Neighbor!

### VOLUNTEER WITH JCC PARKS & RECREATION

#### Ongoing

Volunteer with James City County Parks & Recreation! Lend a hand, Make a difference, Be a part of something great! Volunteering is your gift to our community. For a list of volunteer opportunities both in parks and recreation and County-wide, contact Angie Sims at [angie.sims@jamescitycountyva.gov](mailto:angie.sims@jamescitycountyva.gov) or call 757-259-5403.

## Hey Neighbor!

### LEARN MORE ABOUT HOSPICE HOUSE

#### Ongoing

We invite you to tour our home and gardens and learn about all we do for the community. On the first Thursday of the month, drop by between the hours of 12 - 2 p.m. to learn more about our organization. Questions or to RSVP (not required) Call: 757-345-5195. Email: Diane Schwarz, [dschwarz@williamsburghospice.org](mailto:dschwarz@williamsburghospice.org), 4445 Powhatan Parkway, Williamsburg VA 23188. [www.williamsburghospice.org](http://www.williamsburghospice.org). Caring for people at the end of life, comforting the bereaved and empowering others to do the same.

## Hey Neighbor!

### LOCAL FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

#### Ongoing

Life with Pigs Farm Animal Sanctuary in Williamsburg rescues farm animals that get to come and live out their happily ever-after here. For more information, contact Ryan at Life with Pigs Farm Animal Sanctuary, 219-331-6204.

## Hey Neighbor!

### TURF LOVE PROGRAM

#### Year-Round

The Turf Love program is offered by the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District to JCC residents who wish to grow and maintain a healthy lawn while protecting our surrounding environment. Through this program, homeowners can request a visit from a trained Virginia Cooperative Extension James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener, known as a Lawn Ranger, who discuss the importance of environmentally-friendly lawn care, and the potential for environmental issues that stem from not maintaining a healthy lawn, with each homeowner. To learn more about this program, please call 757-645-4895.

## Hey Neighbor!

### BIRD WALKS WITH THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

#### 2nd and 4th Saturdays

From 8-10 a.m., on the second Saturday of every month, the Williamsburg Bird Club leads bird walks different parks in the Williamsburg/James City/York area. The second Saturday is at a different park each month. Please check the calendar at [williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://williamsburgbirdclub.org) to find where these walks are held. New Quarter Park is located at 1000 Lakeshead Dr. in Williamsburg near the Queens Lake Neighborhood. Exit the Colonial Parkway at Queens Lake and turn right. Travel a short distance to Lakeshead Drive and follow the signs to the park. Meet in the parking lot. Bring binoculars or borrow some from the office. Free and open to the public.

## Hey Neighbor!

### VOLUNTEER WITH WILLIAMSBURG COMMUNITY GROWERS

#### Ongoing

Join us for a couple of hours of fun garden work planting, weeding, harvesting, learning about small scale farming and participating in our local food system! Our one-acre garden is located under the Dominion Energy power lines between Warhill High School and WISC, off Stadium Road. Tuesday evenings and second Satur-

days mornings - choose as few or as many days as you wish, and children are welcome! Almost all of our harvest is donated to local charities. Community Garden plots available too! Email growwilliamsburg@gmail.com, or sign up at <http://signup.com/go/EFuuFjo>. Visit [www.growwilliamsburg.org](http://www.growwilliamsburg.org) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

## Hey Neighbor! CALL FOR THEATRICAL VOLUNTEERS

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

## Hey Neighbor! F.R.E.E. OF WILLIAMSBURG

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

## Hey Neighbor! ABUNDANT LIFE GROUPS MEETINGS

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

## Hey Neighbor!

## VIRGINIA AERONAUTICAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

## Hey Neighbor! A GUIDE - SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID FOR WOMEN

Ongoing  
This provides a great overview of the financial assistance opportunities for female students and how to optimize them. The guide details about 64 scholarships for women, presented in a useful search tool. Other financial aid opportunities discussed are fellowships, loans and work-study programs. An expert interview provides further tips and advice. The guide concludes with additional useful resources. You can see it all here: <https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/college/financial-aid-for-women/> LearnHowToBecome.org is a comprehensive career resource with a mission to help students and aspiring professionals understand what it takes to land their perfect career.

## Hey Neighbor! AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP

Ongoing  
The Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program organized in 2013 at Williamsburg Jamestown Airport (KJGG) in Williamsburg, Va. Our purpose is to get young people involved in aviation and get their private pilot's license. There is no charge to the student for the flight training. Students must be 16, 17, or 18 years old and in the 10, 11, or 12 grade when they start the flight training. The program is

1 year long. The training is done at Williamsburg Jamestown Airport through the Williamsburg Flight Center. Your donations are tax deductible on your State and Federal Income tax. Any amount that you can donate will be used for training the students. Please make checks or money orders payable and mail to: Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program, 102 Marclay Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185. Cash Donations are also accepted at the airport.

## Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG PARKIN- SON'S SUPPORT GROUP

Ongoing  
Persons with Parkinson's and their caregivers meet at the Williamsburg Landing Health Club and Spa on the second Monday of each month at 1 pm. Join us as we learn from experts and share our experiences. Contact Jacob Hostetter at 757-221-0160 or [WPSG@cox.net](mailto:WPSG@cox.net) for more information.

## Hey Neighbor! MOM'S PRAYING FOR CHILDREN & SCHOOLS

Ongoing  
You can't be the perfect mom, but you can be a praying mom. Moms join together to pray for our children. No matter what age group, Pre-K to Graduate student, adult children and grandchildren. Now more than ever our children and our schools need the peace and power of prayer. Moms in Prayer International meets weekly every Wednesday at Calvary Chapel Williamsburg from 1 - 2 p.m. Calvary Chapel is located at 5535 Olde Towne Road (behind Food Lion). Contact Info: Jeanne Hallman, 757-220-8400, [Jeanne4J@cox.net](mailto:Jeanne4J@cox.net)

## Hey Neighbor! BIBLE STUDY IN NORGE

Ongoing  
There is a comprehensive and in depth ongoing bible study and question answering session held at the Williamsburg library in Norge every Monday night starting at 6 pm. We also use the teachings based on the Shepherds Chapel for

those that study with them. If your bible study is lacking the quality of study that you need you are invited to join us, see you there. Contact: 757-253-0172 or 757-604-6649.

## Hey Neighbor! MATURE SINGLES GATHERINGS

Ongoing  
The Mature Singles Network, an organization for single Williamsburg area residents who are 55+ holds a no-host Social Gathering on the third Saturday of every month. For more information email [maturesinglesnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:maturesinglesnetwork@gmail.com).

## Hey Neighbor! HOPE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

Ongoing  
Monday- Thursday 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 pm by appointment. All services are free and confidential- no insurance needed. We serve all women with unplanned and unexpected pregnancies. We also accept donations of new or gently used baby clothes up to 2T, as well as maternity clothes. Located at 1315 Jamestown Road, Suite 202. Phone: 757- 229-6472. Visit: [www.hopewilliamsburg.org](http://www.hopewilliamsburg.org).

## Hey Neighbor! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Ongoing  
National Historical Park (consisting of the National Park Service at Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield) continues its mission, preserving and protecting the interests of the public since 1930. The Park operates two visitor centers and several historic homes. A need exists for regular volunteers four hours a day, one day a week, orienting visitors to the park and the area. We also need volunteers to conduct tours for the public and operate historic homes. So, consider becoming a steward of your wonderful national parks, and begin at Colonial National Historical Park, (Historic Jamestowne or Yorktown Battlefield) by contacting Mike Byrd at 757-898-2422. Come make a difference!

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

**NUTCRACKERS  
ON GUARD AT  
VICTORIA'S  
RESTAURANT**

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



ADVANCED

Enjoy!

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

NOVEMBER 2019  
In the Neighborhood  
Photo Challenge



# Medical emergencies don't happen on a schedule...



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**"This place is amazing. Everyone was friendly, professional and on top of their game!"**



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*Andrea Pokorny*  
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**757-291-9119**  
andrea@williamsburghomefinder.com  
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Cozy, light-filled & sought after Aldrich model with room enough for visitors and guests. Beautiful entry way with hardwood floors leads to large eat-in kitchen with granite, SS, gas range, and bar seating for up to 5. Great room features dining area and windows overlooking comfy deck to catch the breeze with stairs to backyard. Offered at \$385,000.

*Sue McSwain*  
Guiding You Home  
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**Happy Holidays**  
and all the Best in the New Year!

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*dianebeal*  
dianebeal@lizmoore.com  
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**Happy Holidays!**  
Enjoy this beautiful season.

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Denise@LizMoore.com  
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**Ford's Colony**  
3 BR | 2 BA | 2,086 SQ FT  
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Downstairs and Upstairs Masters Suites  
Elegant, all brick home  
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*Rebekah BREWSTER*  
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