

May 2010

WILLIAMSBURG'S

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PRICELESS

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Meredith Collins, Publisher

This is my favorite theme of the year. I have always loved animals and have always had pets. Presently, we have two dogs and two cats. I am not alone in my love for animals. Pets are a part of many homes in Williamsburg.

There are a variety of companion animals in our community - dogs, cats, birds, hedgehogs, ferrets, fish, lizards, pigs, snakes and more. There are also a

number of people dedicated to furthering the health and well-being of our pets and, subsequently, the people who love them.

We present here locals who have opened their homes to troubled animals, to animals in route to adoption, and to animals on their journey to a career of service. We also present people who have forged careers in veterinary medicine, pet grooming, animal rescue and sheltering, and pet care.

We each may have a different idea of what type of pet will become our best friend, but whatever the case, there is no shortage of animals that need and deserve our care. Read on to meet some wonderful neighbors of both the human and animal kind. NDN

Inside

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4. Dr. Keith Frickey | 37. Neighbor to Neighbor |
| 8. Cecile Glendenning | 38. Amber Linnekin |
| 12. Naomi Voss | 41. Sarah Podolin |
| 16. Ashley Seutter | 43. Dick Smith |
| 19. Morgan Snyder | 46. Tyhe and Jessica Anderson |
| 22. Britanni Coles | 48. Nancy Hathaway |
| 26. Bobi Toward | 50. Hey Neighbor! |
| 29. Amber Taylor | 54. In the Neighborhood |
| 31. Josh Elmes | |
| 35. Jennifer LaFountain | |

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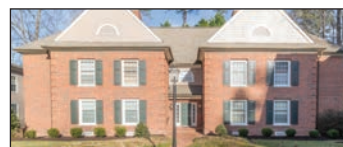
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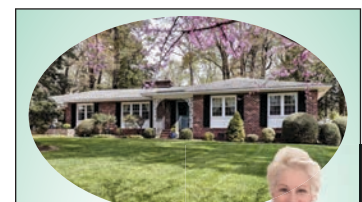
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Helping to Save Pets and Their People

By Narielle Living

Dr. Keith Frickey has come a long way from his roots in south Louisiana, but he has become the person he knew he was destined to be: a veterinarian. Keith's work in emergency veterinarian clinics is the culmination of years of hard work and dedication to animals, along with a dash of addiction to a fast-paced life. "That's why I do emergency medicine, I'm sort of an adrenaline junkie," he says with a smile.

Keith's mother used to tell people that he

had declared his career intentions at a very early age. "According to my mother, when I was three years old I said 'I'm going to be a veterinarian.'" Although he never gave his future much consideration, he believes growing up on a farm influenced his decision. "We lived on a lake in a trailer in south Louisiana, no electricity, no anything, in the middle of my uncle's cattle pasture. We had cows, and veterinarians would come to care for them. When I was in

high school, I had to do a career day thing, and I was like that's what I'm going to do, become a veterinarian."

It's a long way from stating a desire and making it happen, though. Keith knew that he wanted to do this, but the road to get there was arduous. "We had to take MCATs (medical college admission test) at that point, so we were basically competing with med students with our scores. The competition was higher

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for vet school, but it's what I wanted," he says. Despite the rigor, he made it happen. "My dad was a fisherman, so I found out how to get grants and did what I had to do. I worked some jobs and worked during school and made sure I did it."

Working in an emergency veterinary clinic is grueling and time consuming. He works 12 hour shifts and says that during that time they don't really stop for breaks. "It usually goes into 14 or 15 hours. Unfortunately, you also see a lot of euthanasia during emergency. I think I had 10 yesterday. That's a record."

With euthanasia, Keith says that the injuries in these animals are severe enough to warrant this, but it doesn't make it any easier. "You have that emotional bubble that you're in, and you have to be in because part of that process is being with the people and helping them." Keith is no stranger to this sad fact of pet ownership. "I've been through it. I think I've euthanized six of my own."

It does not come as a surprise that Keith is no stranger to being a pet owner. It can be difficult in his job not to bring home every animal

who needs care, but he has learned not to respond to every case who needs a home. "I did that at one time and had four cats and three dogs at one point. But you have to be rational." Knowing his busy lifestyle, he has fewer pets now and currently only lives with one dog, a young German shepherd, and one cat, who is fond of knocking things off of his dresser.

His German shepherd came to him as a rescue. Originally, Keith had been interested in adopting a different shepherd who was at his previous emergency clinic. "They had a shepherd who'd been shot in Newport News, shot in the face by the owner. I had thought about adopting him, but I kind of dragged my feet, and they adopted him out. When I switched clinics and I started here, they had a shepherd puppy who looked just like him. He is sweet."

Keith and his wife, Wendy, came to Williamsburg after looking for a place to settle on the east coast. "My wife's family is in Maryland. We always vacationed here or came here for her work, so I really like the place. I like the water and all the history." Since they are both history buffs, he knew that this would be the

ideal location for them.

Wendy is a children's book author who creates music to accompany her books. "She has a company that she formed, and she produces science based music CDs," he says. The books feature a frog, Flumpa, who teaches kids about ecology and science, and she does live performances based on the book.

"In 1995, we really got busy traveling a lot. I was still working full time as a veterinarian in Maryland. We had a vehicle kind of like an RV for the music stuff but it also gave us a place to sleep, so I pretty much lived behind the clinic where I worked." Keith describes working several nights in a row and then starting the vehicle and going places to perform with his wife. "It was interesting," he says. "She focuses on grade school age, and we went to lots of schools, festivals, fairs and museums. We performed a lot around here at one point, including the aquarium."

Keith has never regretted his decision to choose the veterinary field. "There's something about that pet/human interaction that brings out the best in people. It's a very important



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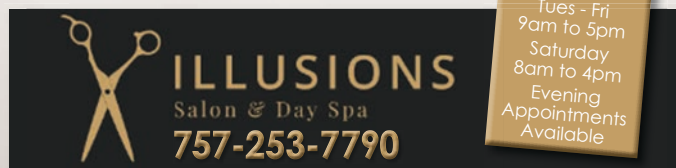
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bond, and I like being part of that and helping, especially in emergency medicine and critical situations.”

As an emergency veterinarian, Keith has seen a number of tragedies. He urges people to be smart when it comes to their pet’s health. “I think, most importantly, talk to your veterinarian or research on your own about breed specific issues. Large dogs have the potential for bloat, you should know what to look out for. Short faced dogs shouldn’t go out in the heat in the summer. Know the limitations of your pet, and the specific issues that could arise.” Knowing pet poisons is important as well, such as chocolate and grapes for dogs or lilies for cats. But it is imperative to know the dangers specific breeds are prone to.

“Some people think their bulldog can go for a walk in 100 degree weather. Don’t do it, because he won’t make it. Know the potential hazards for your specific breed, your pet, and in general the hazards out there.”

He is very careful with his German shepherd, Guinness. “Poor Guinness,” he says. “I’m always telling him no you can’t have that

stick. Do you know how many sticks I’ve dislodged from the backs of throats that have gone through the neck? My wife says I know too much.”

Keith has considered training his dog to work with a local search and rescue group, as the shepherd shows an affinity for that type of work. The schedule for search and rescue can be arduous, however, and he wants to be certain he has the time. “It’s something I’ve always wanted to do. I’m turning 60 this year.”

Similar to a decade earlier, Keith is taking the time to consider the direction of his life. “Fifty slowed me down and made me think I wasn’t going to change the world. I was at least halfway through or more, and I thought what have you done, are you happy with your career, and it really made me focus on what I wanted to do. I am happy, and I am where I want to be. I believe you wake up every day and you learn something. You continually improve, and you look at yourself and decide where to improve and what to do both personally and professionally. It helped me realize that I have led a full life and done a lot.” NDN

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OPENING THE DOOR FOR DOGS

By Erin Fryer

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The life of a dog owner is rewarding and wonderful, but it's also a huge time commitment. For those looking to share their love with a dog but unable to take on the full-time responsibility, there's a simple solution: fostering.

Cecile Glendenning has been fostering dogs for more than two years and just had her 27th dog get adopted. While coping with the loss of her own dog, Cecile and her husband, Bruce, felt their home was missing a canine component. After reading an article about the

local foster business "Home for Hounds," Cecile reached out and asked how she could get involved.

"Fostering is great for people who travel because it's not a long-term commitment," Cecile says. "We love having dogs around but

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we travel a lot, sometimes for several weeks at a time.”

Cecile and her husband, Bruce, are retired and love to travel, mostly in Europe. Fostering dogs helps the couple get the best of both worlds by allowing them the freedom to go wherever they please without the guilt of leaving a pet at home.

“We went into this saying we aren’t getting another dog because we can be gone for long periods of times,” Cecile says. “There’s so much guilt when you go away. We travel mostly in Europe, but we also go to visit our kids.”

In addition to traveling, Cecile also loves to knit and always knits blankets for the dogs she keeps as well as dog sweaters for the Humane Society Bazaar. “They can take them to their new home,” she says.

As far as fostering goes, Cecile compares it to being a preschool teacher. “You take them in, figure out what they know and what they don’t know, reinforce potty training, teach them how to play well with others, encourage

them to share toys, and then you move them along.”

People make comments to Cecile all the time about how she must get attached and it must be so hard when the dogs get adopted, but she says that after she has a brief moment of sadness when they first leave, she is happy for the dogs to go to their new home. She is also happy to have her own freedom back, at least until another dog comes along in need of a safe home.

“We almost always have a trip planned,” Cecile says. “So, it’s nice when they get adopted, and it’s fun to see them leave with their new families. We have a few we talk about a lot and some favorites but at the end of the day we know we are always going to go away eventually, so we don’t get too attached.”

They have never taken in a dog that had any serious problems, and the longest they ever kept a dog was eight weeks. “We have had a lot of beagles and beagle mixes. The dogs we take in are always under 30 pounds.”

The dogs acquired by “Homes for Hounds”

are pulled from shelters and are considered adoptable. Sometimes hunting dogs haven’t had a lot of interaction with people, so they need more work and socialization. “We tend to get the better ones you can put on a leash and are good to go. It’s fun to observe them and try to figure out if they are scared of anything. For instance, we had to stop our grandfather clock because the chiming was freaking out one beagle. We take them to Colonial Williamsburg and see if they are scared of sounds, people or horses. Some are not impressed at all, while others are very impressed by the sheep.”

While the owner of “Homes for Hounds” does the finding and screening of the dogs, she also takes care of all the costs. “I buy treats and toys, but the food is covered. Whoever adopts the dog gets the bag of food they have been eating out of to make the transition easier.”

When there is an interested adopter, they go through a screening process before they come to Cecile’s house to meet the dog. “I



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have never had anyone come that I was unhappy with. If I ever had reservations about anyone, I would have to ask more questions and make sure they are a good fit.”

Cecile and Bruce have been in Williamsburg for seven years, but the pair originally met as students at William & Mary (W&M). Bruce attended the law school and Cecile was class of 1980, then got her masters degree in 1993. After graduating, they moved to Northern Virginia and started a family. When their youngest daughter decided to follow in her parent’s footsteps and attend W&M, they decided to return to Williamsburg where it all began.

Now with both of their daughters grown and living on their own in South Carolina and Texas respectively, Cecile and Bruce have the time and space to open their doors to any foster dogs looking for a safe home and people to give them love. They also enjoy when their daughters come for a visit and bring their own dogs with them.

“We never have had two dogs at once, but

it can be nice to have two because they can be friends and keep each other company,” Cecile says. “When my daughters bring their dogs, it’s great to be able to let them all play. Sometimes if there’s a dog with separation anxiety they do better with another dog around.”

While the Glendennings haven’t taken on more than one dog at a time, they did have two puppies for one day. “It was exciting, but it was a lot,” Cecile says with a laugh. “They were peeing everywhere.”

Cecile doesn’t have an age preference for the dogs she fosters, and she pretty much cares for whoever needs a home. “I like to take them around, try to see if they are okay riding in a car, how they do around people, and expose them to a lot of different things. It’s nice to be able to tell the people adopting them what to expect. I keep notes on all of them so I can look back on the memories.”

The shortest length of time that Cecile ever fostered a dog was four days, and the longest was eight weeks. “I love when the dogs first get here and they do a big sigh and you can

tell they can finally relax and breathe because they are no longer in a shelter or in a stressful environment. You don’t know what their past experiences were, but it’s nice to see them settled and relaxed. It’s fun to start teaching them a few things. I try not to throw too much at them at once, but it’s fun to see them grow and make progress.”

For those looking into fostering, Cecile says to go for it. She is always trying to recruit new fosters, but she also wants people to really know what they are getting into before they do it. “The main thing you need to do is just dog proof your house,” she says. “It’s definitely nice to have floors that are easy to clean.”

The most important thing a potential foster parent needs to have is time. “If you live in an apartment and work all day, the dog won’t be too happy,” Cecile says. “You have to have the time and be home for them. It’s a great thing to do in retirement. All we have to do is open our doors and welcome them in with loving arms.” NDN



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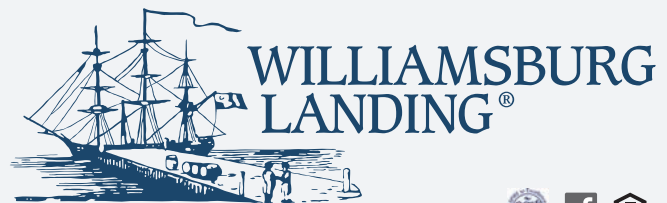


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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Birds & Babies

By Brandy Centolanza

Naomi Voss is the proud pet owner of two cockatiels, Chicken and Dumplin'. She and her family love it when the two birds greet them each morning.

"They are a good alarm clock for my kids," she says with a laugh. "They like to join us for breakfast."

Chicken and Dumplin' can also be found by Naomi's side every evening as she preps

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the family dinner. “They will just sit on my shoulder and hang out while I am cooking,” she shares. Not only do Chicken and Dumplin’ enjoy watching Naomi cook supper, they like to sample it, too.

“They love Taco Tuesday,” she says. “They just love the smell of Mexican food.”

Chicken and Dumplin’ feast on pellets and seeds as well as fruits and vegetables such as kale and blueberries and taco staples like lettuce, tomatoes and a little cheese. The birds also nibble on scrambled eggs on occasion.

“I’ve always loved having birds,” Naomi says. “They are amazing pets.”

Naomi’s first pet bird was a budgie, a British parakeet, which she owned as a teenager. Naomi, who grew up in the military, joined the United States Air Force after high school and then picked up her first cockatiel to keep her company while she was stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii.

“He was a beautiful, white-faced cockatiel, so I named him Alaska,” she says. “He thought he was a human being. He was a great support for me and helped me out a lot. I took him to

work with me. I took him everywhere. Later, I got him a friend, and I named her Flapper.”

Naomi met her husband, Michael, in the military. The pair and their two sons, Hayden and London, traveled the world while Naomi and Michael served in the Air Force before settling in Williamsburg a few years ago. Chicken and Dumplin’ joined the family in 2017. Chicken was six months old when Naomi picked him up after answering an ad on Craigslist while Naomi found Dumplin’ at just eight weeks old at The Feathered Nest, a store in Williamsburg specializing in birds. The family also owns a dog, Jasper, a Golden Retriever and Labrador mix.

“The birds definitely try to assert their dominance over the dog,” Naomi says with a laugh. “I was a stay at home mom for a while, so the dog kept me company. Dogs are nice because you have to take them for a walk, so you are getting outside and getting your vitamin D. The birds are also nice to hang out with during the day.”

Chicken and Dumplin’ do have a cage, but Naomi also likes to let them wander the house

and explore.

“They are very inquisitive and like to walk around and check things out,” Naomi says. Chicken likes to sing, and the family is trying to teach him the theme song of “Star Wars.” Right now, he can harmonize the song from “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay.”

There are many rewards to being a bird owner, but there are also challenges. Like owning any other pet, there is plenty of waste to clean up. Their feathers can also collect dust, so there is a lot of daily maintenance. Cockatiels can also live up to 25 years, so they are a lifetime commitment.

“They are dusty and messy, but they are so worth it,” Naomi says. “I love birds because they are small and cute and a lot of fun. They will bond to you and become just like a part of the family. It is awesome.”

In addition to caring for her husband, sons and pets, Naomi also looks after scores of other women as a doula. A doula provides guidance and support to pregnant women before, during and shortly after labor. Naomi first became interested in being a doula following her own



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birthing experience with one of her sons while stationed in Germany.

“I delivered a baby without a support system, and it was scary,” she says. “I just feel that doulas are needed, especially for those who are serving in the military, and I want to do what I can to support other military moms.”

Naomi first became a doula in 2010. She established Diamond Doula Services in Williamsburg in 2016.

“I chose the name Diamond Doula because just like diamonds are a girl’s best friend, doulas are a mom’s best friend,” Naomi says.

Naomi is a certified birth doula through Childbirth International and is also certified as both a birth and postpartum doula through Doula Trainings International. She strives to educate, guide, and advocate for pregnant women so that they can make the best decisions for themselves and their families. This may range from helping mothers-to-be choose the right doctors and hospital to assisting them with their labor and delivery options.

“I’ve read everything there is to do with pregnancy, and I am just fascinated by the

whole process of being pregnant, having a baby and becoming a mother,” Naomi says. “Having a baby is such a big part of a woman’s life and being there to support women like this just fills my cup. I love it.”

Naomi has assisted with 114 births since first becoming a doula, 37 of them through Diamond Doula. Through her business, Naomi serves women, particularly those in the military, in Williamsburg, Newport News, Hampton and surrounding areas.

Naomi meets with women about halfway through their pregnancies to get to know them on a personal level before the big day arrives. Developing a relationship is a critical component of assisting the pregnant woman. “It’s a very intimate situation, so we want to make sure that we are comfortable with each other,” she says. “I’ll go over a birth plan or wish list with them and discuss what their options or preferences are. Some women might want birth tubs or essential oil patches, which helps them relax. I also make sure dad is taken care of and I’ll assist for about two hours after the baby is born to help with learning to breastfeed.”

Naomi is also a substitute teacher for the local elementary schools and enjoys horseback riding and making her own jewelry. Like many who call Williamsburg their home, she relishes where she lives.

“We love Colonial Williamsburg, and we go to Busch Gardens all summer long,” Naomi says. “I also love my neighbors. I live on the best street in Williamsburg.”

Eventually, Naomi would like to open her own office as a one-stop shop for pregnant women to fulfill all their needs. Her dream business would include belly-casting, doula services, chiropractor services, and massage, spa and other self-care services. She has made 25 belly casting moldings for women so far to preserve their memories of being pregnant.

“They would be able to do everything all in one visit,” Naomi says of her vision. “I want them to leave feeling like a thousand bucks.” Her future, of course, also includes more birds, as Naomi Voss would also one day like to breed birds.

“I love babies, no matter what kind of baby it is,” she says. NDN



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In Purr-suit of Happiness

A Labor of Love

By Wheston Chancellor Grove

Like her beloved sphinxes, to the eye Ashley Suetter is an anachronism. She embraces her eccentricity and is both refreshing and disarming. She lives for the moment and tells it straight. Growing up, Ashley didn't have any pets. When she was 12, she volunteered at an animal shelter. From the ages of 15 to 18, she worked at the shelter. It wasn't until a hoarding situation saw 50 sphinxes rescued and brought into the shelter that Ashley was



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introduced to her first sphinx. “I fell in love with them,” she says. Joby, whom she found on Craigslist, was her first sphinx. That was many years ago. Long since passed away, he still has a media presence as an adorable internet meme.

Even for cat lovers, the Sphinx is not a breed most people readily seek to own. For one thing, they have no fur. It’s a misnomer, however, that they are completely hairless. Examined under a microscope, tiny follicles are visible. Also, they are prone to health issues and require much love and attention. Ashley says, “They’re a hot mess of a cat. I love that.” People assume they’re easier to care for because of the lack of hair. The opposite is true. Their ears need to be cleaned every few days since the canals aren’t protected by fur. Ashley and her husband keep the house like a sauna, at 75 degrees. The cats have sweaters, too. In terms of personality, they are a “cat-dog-monkey-baby combination, ideal for someone who doesn’t want kids, but still desires a creature who needs more attention than a typical cat, but less than a child.”

Sphinxes crave attention and enjoy being held. They are intelligent and extroverted. Their large lemon-shaped eyes are mesmerizing, sometimes compared to an alien’s in shape, not color. Their physiognomy, with high, strong cheekbones and a pensive gaze, purport a sage-like presence. The Sphinx looks as ancient as the pyramids of Egypt, yet the breed was started in the 1960s. So, what does a sphinx feel like apart from resembling a naked and wrinkly supernatural curmudgeon, albeit age old counselors? They feel like a “warm peach.”

Ashley’s father was in the military. Growing up, her family moved from California to Kansas, Italy, and Virginia Beach, just to name a few. “When I first met my husband, Coty, he didn’t like cats. I told him, if you want to stay with me you better like the cat. I had Joby at the time. My husband fell completely in love with him.” Ashley and Coty moved from Norfolk to Williamsburg in 2017. Coty’s job brought them to the area. He is a therapist at The Pavilion. Ashley was skeptical about moving to Williamsburg, but supportive, nevertheless. Like her cats, Ashley is hard to miss. She’s an anomaly, in wardrobe and character. Exhibiting her tattoos generates many looks. She worked in a tattoo shop for ten years. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything. It was like a family. Tattoo parlors have changed so much since then. The rawness is somehow being lost. I loved working there.”

According to Ashley, people take tattoo artists for granted and stereotype them. Skin etchers devote their lives to perfecting their art. Ashley is candid when she says how, initially, she was a little put off by Williamsburg residents. “Tattoos aren’t prevalent here. I really felt like an outcast at first. I’m the weirdo until you get to know me.” Ashley is diplomatic and open. Her differences have prepared her to welcome misfits, including her cats. “I’m guilty as well, thinking everyone here was stuck up and rich. Once you get to know people, that changes. I wear wigs and full makeup. I get the looks, but I have no problem being that weirdo.” Having settled into Williamsburg, Ashley has come to realize how assumptions on both sides fall away through conversation. “I very much enjoy waking up to the sound of birds instead of yelling

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Like her cats, Ashley doesn't live the conventional life. When asked what she does, Ashley responds, "What don't I do? I'm of the persona that if you want to do something, do it." Ashley loves inventing. She makes patents for the beauty industry, which is a long process. She is a freelance graphic designer and an author and illustrator for Amazon books. One of her books is about her former Persian cat, Dana, whom she adopted at the ripe old age of 18. Ashley says, "I love the old cats. People overlook them all the time at shelters. They're better than a kitten and usually house trained. They just need companionship." Ashley also makes and sells vintage clothing and models the attire, even with her cats in the photographs. The pictures are elegant, Victorian-esque. Of course, no resume would be complete without playing an instrument. The musical saw is Ashley's pastime.

Currently, Ashley and Coty have three sphinxes—Georgie, Rosie and Lincoln. "I take on the hard cases. Georgie lived outside on a chain for seven years and was never dewormed. As a result, he has chronic IBD. Lincoln was found in a wire cage with other cats and kittens in an airport. He needed the most care so I took him over the other ones. And Rosie was rescued from a shelter." Caring for them is a full-time job, which Ashley pays for herself. People online will donate through Instagram in response to posts she makes about daily happenings and how to care for a sphinx. However, Ashley never asks for donations. It's a labor of love. People give to the cause because of the information she provides, and they fall in love with the cats and their stories. The pictures of her darling cats are hilarious. One shows Lincoln draped over her shoulder. Another image is of two taking a bath with caps on their heads. Ashley uses the photos to promote adopting from shelters as opposed to going to breeders.

Unlike most cats, sphinxes need baths at least once a month, if not more. They have no eyelashes and their eyes require a quick clean every morning. Their skin can get a yeast infection because of moisture trapped in the wrinkles. "You need to be able to devote time to them." They are also prone to developing heart conditions so many, not all, don't live longer than 10 or 11 years of age.

"If a person doesn't like a cat right now, I would say he or she just hasn't given it a chance. Dogs are easy to please. But cats—you have to prove you're worth their time and earn their respect. The difference with sphinxes compared to other felines is that they want your attention." As Ashley recognizes from her hours of tending, this is her calling. "It fulfills my heart. All the other jobs I do fund my being able to do this." She trains her cats for mental stimulation through positive reinforcement. Animals feed off of emotions. She also supplements with training cookies. "I have a good crew of cats because they learn from each other." Through vigilance and the labors of love, Ashley Suetter treats her cats with the best kind of therapy—TLC. NDN

To smile and learn about sphinxes go to [Instagram.com/sallystrose](https://www.instagram.com/sallystrose).

Caring for Exotics

By Susan Williamson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Morgan Snyder grew up watching television's Animal Planet and Steve Irwin on "The Crocodile Hunter." She loves all animals and is especially fascinated by reptiles and other exotics. "I wanted a bearded dragon, but my mother said, 'No lizards.'"

When Morgan moved to the country to live in the basement apartment of a Toano home, she couldn't wait to buy one. She picked one from a local pet center. Albie lives in a large glass tank in her living room. Albie is actually

her second bearded dragon, as the first one did not survive.

Bearded dragons are members of the genus Pogona and have an area of scales which can turn black when the animal is threatened or stressed. This is the beard. They generally range in size from 12 to 24 inches, and with good care, can live into their teens. The reptiles undergo brumation, a type of hibernation when light and temperature fall below certain levels. Although animals in captivity have fairly con-

stant light and heat, Morgan said that the lights are turned off at night and that Albie also reacts to the shorter day length from daylight that shines in through her front door.

Bearded dragons are native to Australia and in captivity eat meal worms, crickets and roaches. Morgan uses Dubia roaches, native to South and Central America. Bearded dragons need a dry environment. On warm, sunny days, Albie goes outside in a tub to bask in the sun. Inside, he has a special light to provide adequate heat

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and light spectrum. Bearded dragons produce a mild venom, but it is not harmful to humans, which Morgan prefers. "I don't want snakes or anything venomous," she says.

Two Red-eared slider turtles also share the living room in a separate tank. In another room, specialized tanks hold two leopard geckos, scientific name *Eublepharis macularius*; a Madagascar day gecko, scientific name *Phelsuma grandis*, better known as the Geico Gecko, of television and print advertising; and an Axolotl or Mexican Salamander which is actually an amphibian.

The *Ambystoma mexicanum*, or Mexican Walking Fish, has gills and lives mostly in water. They are facing extinction due to pollution in their native area near Mexico City.

Each species has special dietary and humidity needs. Light is very important, and OVB bulbs provide the right type of light. The Madagascar native comes from a jungle environment and requires high humidity. He eats fruit and nectar along with a few insects. The other geckos are native to the Middle East and eat vegetables such as squash and lettuce. Geckos live into their teens and most species average 12 inches.

Morgan has learned her reptile keeping

knowledge primarily from YouTube videos. She found an excellent place to buy reptiles in Virginia Beach, Pet Paradise. Their reptiles are captive bred which means they are less likely to suffer from parasites and no eco-disruption was involved by capturing a wild lizard. She also found a vet, Dr. Gustafson at Warwick Veterinary Hospital, who is very knowledgeable about reptiles.

Although reptiles are not interactive with humans, for Morgan, the appeal of keeping them is about something else. "They are definitely a 'look don't touch' type of animal," she says. "The appeal is in the challenge of creating bio-active tanks, creating ideal mini-environments." In the future, she would like to acquire a Sailfin dragon and a crested gecko.

"People wishing to keep reptiles need to do their research," Morgan says. According to her, since most reptiles live into their teens, reptile keeping requires a commitment. Responsible ownership means being willing to obtain the proper feed and equipment to maintain a suitable environment for the species. In addition to specialty pet stores, Morgan says, "There are also online private breeders who do a good job."

For Morgan, learning about exotic creatures

is one of the benefits of reptile keeping. She loves learning in general. She is currently studying Norwegian on her phone through the app Duolingo. "I'm still at level one," she says with a laugh. "Very much a beginner."

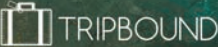
Morgan's day, or sometimes night, job is as a pharmacy technician at Sentara Hospital. She completed a dual credit program through Jamestown High and Woodside High School known as New Horizons which led to her pharmacy technician certification at graduation. She has since studied pre-pharmacy at Hampton University for two years, as she planned to become a pharmacist. Now her career goals have changed, and she is leaning toward biology and conservation, hoping to someday teach or work in the conservation field.

She met her boyfriend, Alex Norton, when they both worked at the Farm Fresh on John Tyler Highway. Alex is now working as a computer technician at Colonial Computers and loves his new career. He was enthusiastic about getting into reptiles and also enjoys their two cats, Bob and Grayson, both rescues obtained through Pawsitively Precious cat adoptions in Williamsburg. With a laugh, Morgan describes the cats definite opinions about the lizards.



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“They would like to eat them, but not Albie, he’s too big.”

Another one of Morgan’s passions is gardening, which she also studies via YouTube videos. The walkway to her apartment entrance is lined with tulips, hyacinths and other spring flowers, and two raised beds are under construction beside the path. Garlic, planted last fall, is waiting a summer harvest. Starter trays of newly planted Echinacea, carnation, zinnia, bachelor button, poppy, mum, marigold, cosmos and sunflower seeds sit around the generous sized living room.

Morgan’s landlord, her former work supervisor, has two dogs and free-range chickens which Morgan also enjoys. She and Alex are saving money to someday buy land where they can have a huge garden, raise animals and live sustainably. “I’ll be the outdoor one,” she says, “taking care of animals. I’d love to have goats someday and grow flowers for a farmer’s market.” While Alex also enjoys the outdoors, his computer skills would more likely be his contribution to a future farm operation.

She and Alex sometimes go to First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach for “Herping”, joining a group which looks for reptiles. She also enjoys Freedom Park, Green Springs Trail and the Virginia Living Museum where she used to volunteer until school and work schedules became too hectic.

Another of Morgan’s passions is art. Colorful paintings of rainforest scenes and vegetation hang on the apartment walls. Giant fern leaves and tropical flowers in her paintings might remind some of her creatures in their native habitat.

Morgan has combined her love of learning and nature into hobbies which continue to teach her about the world around her both locally and in the far away native lands of her exotic creatures. She sets a great example while being a proponent for responsible animal keeping, be it domestic or exotic. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

READY FOR ANY KIND OF PET

By Elara Strand

Brittani Coles has a medley of pets in her home, and she and her family lovingly care for each of them. Even a snake knows when someone cares about it, as is evidenced by her son's relationship with Striker the snake.

"Striker is definitely more calm with Aiden and will wrap around his arm for hours," Brit-

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tani says.

This is no accidental bonding between pet and owner. Aiden, 11, begged his parents for years for a ball python but it wasn't until the family moved from Michigan to Virginia a year ago that his parents, Brittani and Casey Coles, felt it was a good time to get him a pet of his own.

Striker is far from the only unusual pet in the Coles' household. In fact, the Coles' house is full of unusual pets who have formed strong bonds with their human family. Aiden's little brother, Brody, was as eager as Aiden to have a pet of his own. Griffin the lovebird came to the family via Brittani's mother, the children's grandmother. She brought Griffin to Brody on a visit to the family as a Christmas present.

Lovebirds need a lot of daily attention. If they're a single bird, as Griffin is, the lovebird will bond strongly with one person. Brody, 9, is up to the task of being Griffin's favorite person. Brody pets, plays with and cuddles Griffin several times throughout the day. The work Brody has put in to gain his bird's trust has built a real bond between the two. Griffin kisses Brody and even climbs inside Brody's shirt to snuggle.

In pursuit of Brody, Griffin became an escape artist. "Before we got our big bird cage, we had a small bird cage, and the bird learned how to open the door. His cage was upstairs where my son's bedroom is and he would fly down the stairs to find Brody throughout the day. It was so funny because he would fly all the way down and then run around until he found him. And he didn't care, he didn't want anyone else except for Brody," Brittani says with a laugh.

Even the youngest member of the Coles' family is eager to become best friends with her pet. Vivien, 2, is starting young with her pet hedgehog, Chester. "Vivien is definitely an animal lover, so she usually holds him at least once a day and lets him run around by her. She would hold him all day if I let her," Brittani says.

Chester came to the Coles family as a rescue. Fortunately for Chester, this rescue story has a happy ending. "We saw a post on Facebook that somebody needed a home for one that was a rescue and it wasn't working out, so we thought 'we're going to try it out and see,' and he's still here."

According to Brittani, Chester's quills can be prickly. "His quills are very pokey. If he had been handled more when he was younger, he definitely would not be as skittish as he is now. We would be able to pick him up without needing gloves. You can tell when he is nervous because he curls into a ball. He also jumps, which makes his quills poke, and they hurt terribly." Brittani attributes this behavior to the fact that he had not been handled properly in his former home. "He wouldn't do any of that if the previous family had handled him," she says. "We have had him about a year, and he is finally allowing us to hold him without being afraid." Chester isn't immune to the charm of the Coles clan. Now that he is bonding with the family he relaxes with them. He uncurls from a ball, lays his quills flat and will often make a little purring sound when being held.

To most people they're just hedgehogs, but the majority of hedgehogs kept as pets are domesticated African pygmy hedgehogs. Hedge-

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hogs have quills on their back and sides but soft fur on their stomach, which is why they curl into a ball when they feel threatened. Hedgehog quills are made of keratin, just like our hair and nails.

Caring for such a diverse array of creatures is no easy feat. These exotic pets have daily needs beyond fresh food, water and bedding. Striker eats a mouse about once every five days and once he's eaten, he needs to be left alone to digest for two to three days in his cage. His cage needs to be kept warm and humid, and a heating pad under his cage gives Striker a hot spot area when he needs it.

Griffin loves sunflower seeds, popcorn and pieces of banana for snacks. The most specialized care he requires is not food, but stimulation. His cage has plenty of colorful dangly toys and mirrors for him to enjoy. But of course, Griffin's favorite thing is to be out of the cage and with Brody, maybe playfully tugging a pencil away from him, a favorite game of theirs.

Chester, might have the most surprising diet of the three pets: cat food. For treats Chester loves nibbling on pieces of apples and carrots. Whatever his diet, it seems to be working since Chester is known as a bit of a wild man around the Coles' house and is always running around.

The biggest difficulty for the Coles when it comes to their pets is finding someone else to take care of them when the family wants to travel. Friends and family can be a little put off by Striker the snake.

"Usually people are shocked and somewhat frightened that we have a snake. We've had some relatives say they didn't want to stay here because of the snake. They're usually a little apprehensive about him," Brittani says. Griffin and Chester have gentler reputations. "A lot of people think the hedgehog is very cool, and they want to see him or feel him because he's pokey. When we took the bird to the vet, a lot of people wanted to look at him because he's small and cute."

The Coles homeschool their children, and as a result all of the pets have more time to be out of their cages and bond with their owners than they might otherwise. "They bring their pets to school with them, and they get to hold them and have them with them while they're learning throughout the day. So, it's really fun for the kids," she says.

Sometimes the pets even take center stage in the kids' lessons. "We had a couple of different chapters during our science class about different animals and vertebrates and invertebrates, and it was really neat to be able to show the difference between each of the pets versus what we were learning about in the books, and have them right there, hands on, with us."

Brittani is happy for her kids to have the extra enrichment in her classes and for what her children learn from their pets outside of class. "It's really something to teach them how to take care of somebody and how to care about something else besides themselves, and they really care about them."

Now that Brittani Coles knows all the work that goes into taking care of a snake, a bird and a hedgehog, would she do it again? "We're up for anything at this point," Brittani says with a smile. NDN



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BOBI TOWARD



DOGS ARE HER PASSION

By Lillian Stevens

Local dog groomer Bobi Toward recalls that when they were teenagers, her friends earned extra money by babysitting children.

“I was not into that,” she says with a hearty laugh. “I babysat dogs.”

By the ripe old age of 12, Bobi was teaching herself to groom dogs and has been at it for 45

years since.

“I used to babysit for two English sheepdogs,” she says. “And their owner offered to pay me to shave her dogs. Well, I had a little Peekapoo at home, so one day I asked the girl who groomed our dog if I could borrow her clippers. Then, I started practicing clipping my Peekapoo and

worked my way up to the sheepdogs.”

Today, the professional dog groomer owns a grooming salon which is aptly named Bobi’s Dog House. Located a short distance from Colonial Williamsburg on Merrimac Trail, the place is absolutely bustling with people and dogs, as well as potential clients looking for

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There's a really pleasant vibe upon entering the shop.

"Customers sit out here in front and visit with each other while I groom their dogs," Bobi says. "I only groom four to five dogs a day, though, because I want to take the time to get to know the dogs. It's a personal experience for me for each and every dog. I am an immense dog whisperer, and I like to joke that I was a dog whisperer long before Cesar Millan; I just didn't market myself the way he did."

Bobi says that the most rewarding part of her chosen career used to be the gratification she got watching a dog leave her shop "with not a hair out of place."

"Today, I'd have to say the rewards come from the dogs and their owners. I have stood here and cried with my customers, whether it was over the loss of a dog or a husband. I guess I never got the knack of just being a professional and not getting involved in my customers' lives."

The hardest part of her day is somewhat unexpected. "I think the hardest part is breaking in the babies!" Bobi exclaims. "Bring me a baby and a year later, I will turn him into the perfect

dog who falls asleep on the table. While they are here, they are bathed twice in warm water. The washing and blow drying relaxes them so much that they just get tired."

Watching her in action during this interview, it becomes apparent that it's more than warm water and hair dryers. Bobi talks quietly to the dogs, caressing and smoothing their fur with a gentle, loving touch. They respond immediately.

"I take care of some of Williamsburg's very elite," she says. "I also take care of a lot of older and behaviorally challenged dogs. I cater to everyone, and I love each and every dog."

For several years, while scouting out the perfect property for her shop, Bobi worked for other employers.

"I started in Buckroe, and worked my way up the Peninsula," she says. "I landed in Williamsburg when I was offered a position with Pet World."

Bobi worked as a groomer at Andersons Corner Animal Hospital during the first year they were open, eventually opening her first shop. "That was very exciting," she says. "My first shop was over on Route 199 and Route 5. My

husband built the shop from the ground up in the old location."

Despite her nostalgia for her former store, she loves her new place. "This is an awesome location! I've been here since 2012. I've got a good business and great clientele."

"When I was a senior in high school, my father saw a local TV program that focused on small businesses," she says. "This one in particular was about a grooming salon in Flushing, Michigan. So, my dad sent me down to that grooming salon on weekends for training," she says. "I learned a lot there, like how to scissor. I mean, think about trying to keep a dog still on a round table with a glass top and no noose. It is definitely a trick!"

Though her heart was always with the dogs, over the years there were other careers.

"I worked as a supervisor for major cleaning companies. I also learned how to work on computers from the ground up. I worked in quality control in the auto industry, and I did a stint with a friend who built cop cars. We'd strip them to the bare bones for auction, then we would rebuild them — cages, gun racks, lights, computer parts too."

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Aside from her time in Michigan, and a few years spent in Greece, Bobi has lived in Virginia and considers the Commonwealth her home.

“At one point, I went back to Michigan with my mother to help take care of my grandmother,” she says. “But after ten years, I told my husband I missed Virginia, so we came back. Plus all his family is down here. This is the only place I feel I’m supposed to be. This is home. I loved Michigan, but hated the cold winters.”

Bobi met her husband, a retired U.S. Marine, through his sister.

“When we got married,” she says, “my dad told my husband, ‘you do realize when you say I do take this woman to be your wife, you also get the dogs, the birds, the guinea pigs, and the rabbits, right?’”

She clearly loves all animals, but Bobi also has a soft spot in her heart for young people. While she doesn’t employ a staff, she has mentored several individuals, including a special young lady named Sierra.

“Sierra had just moved here from Germany,” Bobi says. “She contacted me and said that she wanted to work as a volunteer for the summer.

I thought ‘why not?’ She would ride her bicycle over every morning with her shiatzu named Bo in the basket of her bike. She was always on time and was a very hard worker. After a year, she decided to focus on training dogs, and she’s a very good and dedicated trainer.”

Currently, Sierra is attending college in Pennsylvania, and the two remain in touch. “She’s working toward her dream of becoming a behaviorist for animals.”

Bobi is the mother of five children, one of whom tragically died in 2013. “He was my youngest son, and I lost him in a motorcycle accident,” she says quietly. “That was very hard.” A bright spot is Willow, the baby granddaughter who lives locally. “She’s so sweet, and the only grandchild who lives here in town.”

Other bright spots include the rest of her family, even though she doesn’t get to see the out-of-town ones often. And, there’s always Bobi’s Dog House, a source of daily joy and Bobi’s livelihood.

Though she loves all dogs of most any breed, Bobi is partial to Bouviers and owns two of them.

“Bouviers are a Belgian carting breed,” she says. “They are very willful, headstrong dogs as all herding dogs are, so they have to be worked with when they are young. They are independent but their personalities are awesome.”

The dogs generally weigh 80 to 100 pounds, so it’s a must that their owners be firm, but as in all cases of canine ownership, also loving and fair.

In all, Bobi owns five dogs, including Standard poodle, a toy poodle, and a Pomeranian.

Bobi has another great interest also. Throughout the year, she collects five-dollar bills, and when the holidays roll around, she invests her collection of Abe Lincolns into holiday lights at her residence.

“Most of my customers know I do this and are tickled to participate because they look forward to seeing my yard each year.”

The display grows with each passing holiday season, and her Penniman Road property made one of the “must see” lists in town last year.

Whether at home or work, Bobi is surrounded by happy, thriving dogs. “We’ll never be rich,” she says. “But we’re happy.” NDN

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Who lets the Dogs Out?

By Linda Landreth Phelps

To begin a work day with tail wags of delight is gratifying. Caring pet owners often arrange for their furry friends to take a break from monotony and isolation by hiring pet sitters like Amber Taylor. Amber loves all animals, from hedgehogs to horses, and treats each of them as if they were her own. Her employer, Charlotte Price of Canine Ambassadors in Williamsburg,

knows she can count on Amber to put her clients and their pets first, even spending the occasional night to give them special care when an owner is away.

She's careful about which clients she accepts, however. Aggressive dogs that are a bite danger she passes by. "I have learned to let cautious or fearful dogs approach me. I'll offer the back

of my hand and let them sniff me first. If they lick my hand, I pretty much know I'll be okay. When I'm walking an unfamiliar dog, if another dog approaches, I'll turn around and go the other way. I'm not sure if they're friends and would much rather be safe than sorry."

The most challenging job Amber remembers to date was a client who owned three Great

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Danes. "They were huge - much too big for me to walk them," the petite woman says. "I'd just let them out of their crates and try to play with them. The yard was tiny, just a postage stamp, and so was the house. When they were all together, there was hardly room to move. They took up all the floor space," Amber says with a laugh. "When I sat down on the couch, I was immediately buried in dogs." The terrified family cat stayed upstairs, along with the hedgehog.

Amber is a pet owner herself. Tigger, seven, is an orange and white marmalade cat that wandered into her life one day while she was living in Hampton. "Tigger is a big boy who looks a lot like Garfield," she says. "He showed up one day out of the blue. My apartment was on the second floor, so I have no idea why he picked my door; maybe he just somehow knew I loved cats. My sister and I had rabbits and guinea pigs and even pet geese when I was growing up, but we never had any cats or dogs, so I guess I'm making up for lost time!"

Amber, 43, is a Yorktown native who graduated from Tabb High School. Over the years she has also lived in Hampton and Newport News, but is currently enjoying her Virginia Beach waterfront condo that was left to her when her father passed away from kidney disease two years ago. She literally goes the extra mile for her clients, as well as two other part-time jobs, caregiving for elderly people and working at Yankee Candle Village.

"I really don't mind the commute," she says. "I guess I'm just used to it." She has private caregiving and pet sitting clients all over the Peninsula, from Hampton to Toano.

Amber says she always enjoys meeting new people and loves a challenge, a requisite in all of her jobs. "There's such a big need for caregiving

these days, but it takes a lot of patience," she says. As a young girl, Amber used to volunteer at an assisted living facility in Newport News where she'd sometimes see staff members be less than patient with the residents and wonder why they had chosen a career that requires such vast reserves of empathy. Not everyone is suited to it, but as a single woman, Amber seems to have both time and compassion to spare for people and animals in need. She's currently hoping to expand her clientele on the other side of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel now that she's a resident there.

For the past three years she's worked at Yankee Candle Village. Her favorite part of the job is when she's working in Holiday Park, the Christmas-themed area where she specializes in personalizing many different kinds of ornaments for customers. "I kind of surprised myself. I didn't think I'd be able to do the lettering neatly." Amber feels it's a magical place to hang out, especially when Santa's on duty at his workshop.

Amber has no timetable for changing this active schedule, but her family history teaches that life circumstances can change all too easily. Wisely, her plan for the distant future is already firmly in place. As part of her inheritance, Amber owns a ground-level vacation condo in Las Vegas, which she presently rents. "As he got sicker and less able to walk, Dad stayed there for longer periods of time," she says. "I'd visit him often, and together we'd go to the Strip for the fantastic dining bargains. You can get a prime rib dinner with dessert for ten dollars there!" Her father was fond of a little recreational gambling, as well, his specialty being blackjack. "It takes actual skill, not just luck, to win at blackjack," Amber says. "It's much cheaper to live in

Nevada than Virginia Beach, and the doctors there are wonderful, so at some point, when the time comes, I'll probably retire there." A practical plan, but for now Amber's enjoying the view from her third floor beach condo, where dolphins play tag in the surf at sunrise. She can watch them frolic without feeling any responsibility for their care, which seems like a pretty sweet life, indeed. The summers get crowded, so Amber prefers walking the beach in the off-season.

"I grew up in an active family. We were skiers, and would travel to Stowe and Massanutten regularly during the season, and every year we'd go to New York City for Christmas." Amber loved skating in Rockefeller Center and watching the Rockettes perform at Radio City Music Hall. She still likes to travel, visiting relatives in California and planning a trip to Disney World this spring with her friend, Joanne Ballis, whom she met while working at Yankee Candle. Amber and Joanne plan to get in some shopping and miniature golf as well as a visit with Mickey and Minnie.

Amber leaves real golf for others to pursue. "My grandfather used to take me with him to the driving range, but I was more interested in seeing how fast the electric carts would go. Not very fast, as it turns out!" Amber also enjoys bowling and would like to take up playing tennis again some day.

It's clear from her enthusiasm, energy, and drive that Amber Taylor isn't making a decision to retire to a peaceful life in Las Vegas any time soon. She's having fun and feels too useful in the pursuit of her three simultaneous careers. She's always looking for new challenges, new clients, and sees plenty of furry dogs and playful cats in her future. NDN



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A PUPPY NAMED Fairfax

By Lillian Stevens

This past winter, Josh Elmes and his family opened their hearts and their Kingspoint home to a very sweet and gentle puppy of eight weeks. His name is Fairfax, and he is a yellow, soft-as-butter mix of purebred Golden Retriever and Labrador Retriever.

Like many of their friends and neighbors, the Elmes family has enjoyed every aspect of bringing a new pet into the home. Unlike many, however, they will only have Fairfax during his formative puppyhood, or until May

2020.

“We are volunteering to raise Fairfax for a wonderful organization known as Canine Companions for Independence,” Josh says.

Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) is a non-profit that provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities.

“Our main role is to shower Fairfax with love and affection,” Josh says. “There’s training and teaching of commands, but it’s mostly

about love, socialization and visits.”

Raising the nearly six-month-old puppy is very much a family affair.

Inga Carboni, Josh’s wife, says that there is great satisfaction in knowing that ultimately Fairfax will be paired with an individual with a disability and that he will help someone live a more independent life.

“Our job is easy,” Inga says. “These dogs are a perfect mix of obedience and affection, and Fairfax is a very laid-back, smart dog.”

Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) was founded in 1975. CCI dogs are either Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers or, like Fairfax, crosses of the two breeds, both of which are known for their strength, devotion to people and intelligence.

“There are probably between 25 and 30 CCI dogs between Virginia Beach and Richmond,” Josh says.

There are certain requirements, of course, that come with preparing a dog for a life of service, and some of them are time intense. “I’m the at-home spouse,” Josh says. “So I’m here for Fairfax’s supervision and training.”

Fortunately for Fairfax, his interim family is devoted to every aspect of their role.

Daughters Katherine, 13, and Audrey, 11, are happy to do their part in providing their young canine charge a safe home with lots of positivity. They assist with feeding, a healthy diet, of course, and are always up for activities that help Fairfax with his socialization skills. When outdoors, he is always on a leash or within a fenced area, and he must wear his yellow CCI cape when in public. At night, he is

required to sleep in his kennel.

Two Sundays per month, the pup meets with professional trainers at the Gloucester Kennel Club. The family underwrites that cost, as well as any medical attention, including spay/neutering.

“Many of these expenses can be tax deductible because Canine Companions for Independence is a non-profit organization,” Josh says. Beyond the tremendous satisfaction they derive from volunteering their time and efforts in this positive way, they basically just love having Fairfax around. As was evident during our interview, the puppy is crazy about the girls. When they leave for school or other activities, the puppy does not complain, whimper or pout.

Naturally, there have been one or two challenges. For instance, everyone constantly swings between “here’s an adorable puppy to play with” and “here’s a dog that will have a purpose and a role.” For that reason, even the words they say and the games they play must be carefully thought out. Tug of war cannot be played because it will teach him the wrong

behavior for his future job, and certain words must be avoided because they will be part of later training.

According to Josh, they learned about Canine Companions for Independence during a very difficult time in their own lives.

“We had a pair of cats who were 16 years old,” Josh says. “Last fall, I was at the vet putting down the second of the two when I saw the Canine Companions poster on the wall of the animal hospital.”

The family had been talking about getting a pet, perhaps a dog, which remains a possibility that hasn’t been ruled out. But timing and their travel dynamic made raising a puppy the perfect fit.

Inga is a faculty member at William & Mary. With sabbatical in a few years, the family hopes to live abroad for a year. Perhaps owning a pet will come after that, but for now everyone is enjoying their volunteer role and proud of the special animal they are raising.

By all accounts, the young pup is happy everywhere he goes. Thus far, he has already visited an adult care center outside of Richmond.



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Additionally, in order to prepare him for being comfortable around traffic, Josh takes Fairfax walking around store fronts all over town, from Colonial Williamsburg to New Town to the Premium Outlets.

"I take him to CW once or twice a week," Josh says. "People see his cape and are pretty good about asking before the approach him. He is learning to sit and be still when approached."

Soon Josh will start taking Fairfax to larger places like the big box stores and hospitals. Getting comfortable in those settings is important because CCI dogs can wind up anywhere from the hustle and bustle of a big city to more rural areas. For that reason, Fairfax must be comfortable and prepared for anything that might lie ahead.

Bred by Canine Companions for Independence, the dogs are sent to four regional centers around the country. Josh and Inga picked up Fairfax at the tender age of eight weeks, from a center off of Long Island, New York which is just a stone's throw from where they grew up in Massachusetts.

"Inga and I drove up to New York to pick him up, and to participate in a one-day orientation," Josh says. "The children stayed here with grandparents so they wouldn't miss school."

The girls were eager to meet Fairfax. They'd seen a picture of him as a baby, adorable, of course, and the anticipation was mounting. When they finally got home, the kids were still awake. "He was the sweetest little thing, and the girls were so excited to meet him," Inga says.

Of course, the puppy period between two months and 18 months is an important time in a dog's development, so everyone will continue making sure to introduce Fairfax to a wide variety of people, places and situations.

"We will have him until around May of 2020," Josh says. "Then he will go back to the regional center in New York where he will undergo intensive training for about nine months."

After training, if Fairfax passes his evaluations, he will be paired with someone in one of the four categories laid out for assistance.

Those categories include: service dogs who help adults with physical disabilities manage tasks and increase independence; skilled companions, trained to perform tasks accompanied by an adult facilitator; hearing dogs, trained to recognize and respond to important sounds by alerting their partners, who are deaf or hard of hearing; and facility dogs, expertly trained dogs partnered with a facilitator working in a health care, visitation or education setting.

When Fairfax is paired with his new owner, there will be more training as the two bond and get accustomed to each other. Then comes his "graduation" ceremony in New York which they will be invited to attend.

It will surely be a bittersweet moment, as the Josh Elmes and his family passes the leash to Fairfax's new owner.

For his part, Fairfax is living in the moment and oblivious to what lies ahead, even though he's being so carefully groomed for it. As our interview concludes, Fairfax begins chasing his tail and giggles erupt. It's a safe bet that smiles, giggles and a lot of love will follow Fairfax wherever he lands. NDN

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JENNIFER LAFOUNTAIN



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A Creature is a Creature, No Matter How Small!

By Caroline Johnson

While some days working at an animal shelter can be tough, it's the positive days and the adoption stories that make the job worth it. For Jennifer Lafountain, working as the Volunteer and Community Engagement Manager has allowed her to witness many encouraging moments for volunteers and has given her the chance to see a variety of animals find their new homes. Jennifer started with Heritage Humane Society (HHS) in March 2018 and splits her job between two things. On one hand, she manages the coordination of the over 600

volunteers at the shelter. For the other part of her job, she helps out with special events in the community. She spends part of her time out in the community and part of her time at the shelter.

After getting her Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Jennifer knew she would eventually do something with animals. She grew up in Newport News and has been in the Hampton Roads area her entire life, moving to Williamsburg ten years ago. Jennifer is an animal lover through and through, having owned a rabbit,

five dogs, one cat, a guinea pig, and once fostered a falcon and hawk. When she adopted her dog, Cooper, from HHS five years ago, she knew she wanted to be here. "I fell in love with this place and how great they were throughout the adoption process," Jennifer said. "They made sure I was set up for success."

Setting new or seasoned pet owners up for success is a large part of what the team at HHS does. Whether someone is adopting a dog, cat or small animal, the HHS team is there to prepare them in any way they can. While dogs and

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cats are the animals most commonly housed at the shelter, the shelter is home to many small critters who are waiting for their forever families as well.

HHS has seen a multitude of small critters come through their door. The shelter has housed guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, rabbits, rats, ferrets, chinchillas, sugar gliders. The list goes on. While they work with a local shelter that specializes in the care of certain small animals, such as Guinea Pig Rescue or House Rabbit Society, they are an open admission shelter. This means that they take in all animals, no matter what, not euthanizing for space or time.

“Since we’re open admission, you never know what’s coming in,” Jennifer says. Because of this, the shelter is equipped with the education and necessary supplies to make sure they can serve each animal that comes through their door. The shelter has trained their back staff to care for the small critters as well as some volunteers who express interest. Small critters may also be an opportunity for high school students who are not yet old enough to walk the dogs to help out as well.

While the case for each animal coming through the shelter’s door is always different, most small critters are either surrendered or found stray. “When small critters are released into the wild, it’s a death sentence,” Jennifer says. “Often times people will release their animals because they think they’ll survive, but they don’t know how.” Small critters stay at the shelter as long as it takes until they get adopted. They once had a mouse stay for over a year until it found its home, although the hope is to get them adopted as quickly as possible.

In their current space, the small critters are housed in cages in the hallways. However, HHS has something exciting on the horizon. “We recently received a grant for a small pet adoption room. This 2018 Oxbow Animal Rescue Grant will be great because we’ll be able

to get them out of the hallways and give them the space they need to run around and allow people to meet them.” Jennifer and the team hope to have the new space up and running in June. “Our hope is to have all the supplies in place by then.”

Donations are abundant at HHS, evidenced by the piles of donated goods waiting to be sorted. However, while many volunteers and community members bring in donations for the dogs and cats, the small critters often get overlooked. “We are always in need of things like Carefresh bedding, Timothy hay, Bunderland toys, food for small animals and Petco or Petsmart gift cards,” Jennifer says. “When rare animals like chinchillas come in, they need specialized items that we just don’t tend to always have.” Enrichment toys are especially important for small critters such as guinea pigs, hamsters, and bunnies, who have teeth that constantly grow.

Most people come into the shelter knowing the general type of animal they’re looking for. Small critters can be overlooked amidst the tail-wagging dogs and sweet cats waiting in Cat Corner, but Jennifer wants to stress how small critters make great additions to families as well. “They make fantastic pets.” Small critters can work for smaller environments, such as the pet rabbit Jennifer had years ago when she was living in a smaller space. “Small critters are different in the care side of things and have some unique things about them,” she says. “Small critter care is comparable to a dog or a cat. They need companionship and intellectual stimulation. The more you give to them, the more you get back from them.”

Although the number fluctuates throughout the year, the shelter sees an influx of small critters in the Spring. At one point in time, they had nine small critters. The shelter sometimes institutes a foster home for small critters if they need to socialize more or get some time away

from the center, although they’ll still be listed as available for people who want to come in and meet them.

Jennifer stressed that small critters are still a commitment, requiring proper care and a specialized diet. HHS provides bountiful information about small critter care by giving new owners resources and guides on all topics from general care to diet. The team will also help owners find a veterinarian who can treat small critters, since not every veterinarian can. The small critter application includes household information and the option of putting a 24-hour hold on the animal after the application is completed to give the prospective adopters time to think their decision through. This gives prospective adopters time to get supplies they need and ensure their environment is prepared. “We take up to three applications per animal in case someone falls through,” she says.

One thing that Jennifer Lafountain wants people to know about the Heritage Humane Society is that they’re open to visitors who just simply want to spend time with the animals. “We have kids come and read books to the cats in our Cat Corner,” she says. “You don’t have to come only to adopt an animal.” The staff works together to ensure each animal that comes through their doors gets a new lease on life.

“Some animals don’t have the best start to life. It’s nice to see the opposite.” The team works each day to create an environment at the shelter that is best for each animal, no matter how small, and making sure they go to a home that is the right fit for them is part of that work. “While some days are tough, we’re all here for the same purpose. We speak for them because they don’t have the voices to speak for themselves.” NDN

For more information on the Heritage Humane Society, including volunteer opportunities, donation needs, and available animals (large and small), visit their website at heritagehumane.org.

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A Love of Community Engagement

By Narielle Living

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Amber Linnekin has an energy and enthusiasm that is infectious, and she brings that to everyone she meets in both a personal and professional capacity. As vice president/branch manager of Sonabank, she consistently works to connect people within the community and has an ability to assist business owners, particularly small business owners, with networking and growing their business.

Originally from the New River Valley region in Virginia, Amber grew up in the mountains and lived there until the age of 11. “Then we

moved to Mathews County, which is surrounded on three sides by the Chesapeake Bay. I’ve always been in Virginia, always kind of a small-town girl. I got the best of both worlds because I got to run around the mountains as a child and ride bikes and four wheelers and all that. Then I got to spend my teenage years on the beach.”

For college, she decided to go to Radford University. “I went into business administration,” she says. “I knew that I needed a career where I could pick up a steady paycheck and be

secure once I got out. That was a big thing for me. I wanted to be able to support myself and have insurance.”

She admits that in high school she had considered a career in journalism because she has a love of writing. It was a difficult decision, but in the end she had to choose the safer route. “It was really hard not knowing that I would be able to find a good job right away,” she says when talking about a writing career. “I chose the safe decision and went with business. I did write for a paper in Richmond for a little while



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just trying to get into it, but then I moved to Williamsburg eventually, and I couldn't keep up with doing that on the side and working full time."

After graduating from college, Amber decided to move to a different state to jump start a new career. "For a short while I was living between Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I was a small town girl trying to live in the big city," she says. While she is glad she made the move, it ultimately did not work out for her. "It was definitely a culture shock, an eye opener. It was worth the trip out there and the six months or so that I tried it out, especially to try to find a good career after college."

Once she returned to Virginia, she crossed paths with a friend of hers who was working in banking. "She was over at First Market, which was at Ukrops." Her friend suggested Amber apply for a job at First Market. "That was perfect. When I came back, I drove from Florida and went straight into an interview. It was a great fit for me. Ukrops had great people, strong

values, the culture was great and I could learn. I was on the teller line but I learned about loans, and I learned how to open accounts. They're in the grocery store so I got the full training."

One of the more interesting facets of this particular job was what Amber called "aisle time," when she had to go out into the store and meet new people. "This forced me to come out of my shell," she says. "It was the last thing I wanted to do, but I had to go out and talk to people. I'd go out with a tray of cookies or something." She considers that experience to be what helped her get used to the world of banking and communicating with customers. "I had to be able to walk up to someone in a grocery store and try to talk to them, find out how they were doing and somehow turn that conversation into maybe opening a checking account before they left. It was awkward and weird but it got me used to being in social situations."

Amber's move to Williamsburg came about because she had many friends from college who

lived here. "They had a First Market in Williamsburg, so I knew I could transfer. And my best friend was here. A lot of my good friends who I met at Radford were from Williamsburg."

After living in the area for a while, Amber met her husband, Ryan. "He was born in Raleigh but really, he went to high school in Williamsburg so he's been here most of his life." She loves this community and is happy to be here. "It's a great town to have a family. It's great to have kids here, and it's a small community yet there's a lot to offer."

Although she began her professional career as a teller, Amber quickly moved up in the world of banking. She says that for people with some experience in the field of banking, there's a lot of opportunity. "That's why you see a lot of people moving around in banking. Once you get some experience other opportunities open up, and people start to hear your name, and you get phone calls to go other places." That is exactly what happened for her. She had

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been offered a position to be a branch manager for a new bank that was opening on Monticello Avenue. "They hadn't even broken ground yet, it was super exciting," she says. This experience meant she was able to hire and build her own team. "That's when I really got to go out and do more networking, talking to people and finding my passion in that area."

During her time as a branch manager, she got engaged and then married her husband. They then had two children. One day at work the mortgage officer who was next to her asked if she would like to work in the mortgage section of the bank. "I did, and I loved it," she says. "I had two small children at that time, and it was more commission. So that was a little scary for me, but at the same time I loved it. I loved the people aspect. I was drawn to helping the first time homebuyers. I found a specialty with VA and USDA and was just trying to help people with niche programs. That was a really good experience, but it was commission."

As happens in the world of banking, Amber's name was passed along to someone at

Sonabank who called her in for an interview. Clearly the interview went well. "Here I am, four years later. It's been really good. Your team matters a lot, and I have a good team here; I have good support." Her decision to be on the team at Sonabank was in part fueled by a desire to be more active in Williamsburg. She was promised a strong team to work with and the freedom to work within the community, and it has been a wonderful fit for her.

"I do a lot with the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance," she says. "I was involved with Heart for Orphans before, but now I'm more involved with them. I've been able to go on multiple mission trips."

With this job, there is no "typical" day for Amber. Her mornings are spent getting ready for the day with her seven and nine year old, and she is usually at the office by eight. "I may be here in the office most of the day, depending on our staffing, or I may even be on the teller line. What I try to do is schedule different community involvement things so I can be out as much as possible. I am either here in the

office or hosting an event." Amber hosts events to educate, inform and allow businesses to network. This includes the Tables of Eight for the Chamber and Tourism Alliance, SBA seminars on funding for small businesses or working with the Women's Business Council. According to Amber, this diversity throughout her day is what keeps it interesting.

Currently, her goal is to be deliberately impactful to people on a larger scale. "I think I've always really had the heart to help people, especially in situations that they really have no way to help themselves... like the orphans," she says. "Working here I can help people by making your business come to life for you, getting you involved and connected with other people."

One of the things Amber Linnekin likes to do is have her children participate in service-related activities with her. "I like to take the kids with me when the United Way hosts things, where you can feed the needy and things like that. I want to be involved on a bigger scale through the community." NDN

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Swim Parent with a Purpose

By Gail Dillon

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Sarah Podolin wasn't a swimmer growing up and admits she knew very little about the sport until her kids started swimming. Now, as president of the board for the Williamsburg Aquatic Club (WAC), she has become something of a subject-matter expert. "It says a lot about the club that they could get me to be this involved," she says with a laugh, explaining that the seasoned "swim parents" took her under their wing.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Sarah was a self-described "mathlete" in high school as well as an enthusiastic volunteer. "You know, every organization you can think of, that kind of a kid." She was also an exchange student and lived in Burgos, Spain for a year.

Sarah and her husband, George, who is an attorney, moved from Philadelphia to Williamsburg six years ago when he took a job as assistant dean for career development at William & Mary. Formerly a social worker, she ran a methadone maintenance program for pregnant and parenting women in Philadelphia. Sarah switched careers and was then working in the pharmaceutical business as a clinical lead for drug testing to ensure reliability and consistency.

"Pretty much every psychiatric or neurologic drug that goes to trial goes through this pro-

cess," she says. "We had to train all the people administering these tests and then follow up with them for additional training. It was very data-driven but also people oriented." She has done some consulting work since relocating to Williamsburg but is currently devoting her time to her family and to WAC.

WAC uses two local swimming pools, James City County Recreation Center and Eastern State Hospital's pool. "We have a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship with them," she says of Eastern State, adding that they share year-round access to the pool.

The kids who swim for WAC come from Williamsburg, Toano and Yorktown and range in age from five to 18. There are seven levels depending on age and ability, and they swim every month of the year except for August.

Her 15-year-old daughter Sophie and 12-year-old son, Jake, started swimming in Philadelphia and are both dedicated to it, though Jake also plays lacrosse, baseball and basketball. She points out that WAC wholeheartedly embraces kids who live to swim but also kids who enjoy other sports as well. "Our focus is trying to get our swimmers to fulfill their complete potential," Sarah says. "However, if they

want to participate in three or four other sports throughout the year, we'll make room for those swimmers as well. There's no guilt or pressure to always have to make swimming first because they understand that kids, especially when they hit middle school or high school, need to explore a lot of different things; we are all about making swimming fun for kids."

From the age of five when the young athletes focus on learning the strokes to age-group swimming when "improving technique and speed" happens and all the way up to the high school level, when the serious swimmers are in the pool six days a week, WAC is able to serve all ages, levels and abilities. She points out that their swimmers are impressive young people, in and out of the pool. "Most of our swimmers maintain incredible grade point averages. You know they're always on the honor roll," she says.

"The thing about swimming is you have to be very diligent and you have to be very organized so most of our swimmers apply those skills to the rest of their lives."

As president of WAC's board, Sarah coordinates with four other board members who are also swim parents. She describes the board's mission as "strategic," explaining that the cen-

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ter's head coach, Harold Baker, is in charge of most of the day-to-day operations. "He's great. He's been a real fixture in the community for 40 years," she says. In addition to his coaching duties, he also runs the Kingswood pool during the summers. The board handles fundraising, strategic planning and alumni development, just to name a few. Getting an alumni database established is high on their list of goals. National fame has found two former WAC swimmers. Ben Colley and Katie Hoff have swam on the USA National Team, while Katie Hoff has been to the Olympics.

WAC is planning a multifaceted 40th anniversary fundraising event in honor of two swimmers, one who is battling Multiple Sclerosis. Betsy Lavin is the mother of three talented swimmers as well as a former William & Mary competitive swimmer and a coach too. In 2016 she swam a million yards despite her physical challenges. "It was sort of her way of thumbing her nose at her MS diagnosis," Sarah says, adding that she was eventually featured on ABC Nightly News. "We're really proud of her."

The second swimmer, Colin Allison, is a student at the University of Virginia. At the age of 15, he had Hodgkin's Lymphoma and recovered but is now battling Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. Titled: "Forty Years, 40 million Yards," all money raised will be split between the MS and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies. "We're going to get 40 or more of our swimmers to volunteer to get donations and we're going to publicize it out and we're hoping to generate up to \$40,000 to split between the two causes," Sarah says. Swimmers who are participating will have all their yards counted from last January on. The fundraising will go the end of this year, at which time there will be a big closeout ceremony.

"We've always been a service oriented swim team. If we can pull it off, I think it'll be really awesome," she says.

She credits WAC for helping her family feel welcome in Williamsburg when they were new to the area, especially her daughter Sophie. "Even when school friendships were shaky, she always had her swim friends and always had that endorphin-filled activity at the end of the day to kind of take the edge off of things."

Becoming immersed in the world of swimming was challenging for Sarah at first. She admits that grasping the terminology was like learning a foreign language. "Thank God for swim parents. I didn't know what 'motivational times' were and I didn't know what cuts were, and I didn't know what an illegal finish on a breast stroke was. I didn't know any of this stuff. I sort of learned over time."

One of the biggest surprises for her was that swimming runs entirely on volunteers, even the officials. She says each family is expected to routinely take on a job throughout the year and at every swim meet. Her job is to cook for the "hospitality room" and daunting as it sounds, she enjoys it. "I cook all the food. I might cook 250 meals for a weekend — taco bar, southern spread like pulled pork, chicken and mac and cheese. I do like to cook for other people a lot."

When she isn't running a board meeting, car pooling her kids and others to swimming practice or cooking enough food for a small army, Sarah is probably hiking.

"I'm a huge National Parks buff," she says, going on to describe the 10-week family hiking trip she took her kids on in 2016. "We went from Williamsburg all over the country visiting 52 national parks. We went all the way to California up to Yellowstone and then back. We did all the southwest parks [and] saw every part of the country." Her future hiking plans include the Grand Canyon this June and later, the Laura Ingalls Wilder trail in the Midwest. NDN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

A Life with Music

By Alison Johnson

Music first flowed into Dick Smith's life when he was a young child, as he watched his parents and their friends dance to Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. At age 14, he picked up a guitar and taught himself songs by the Kingston Trio.

Now 71, Dick has spent most of his years as a musician, including nearly 50 years in the Smith and Wade duo with his close friend

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Cabot Wade. He has so many stories that it's impossible to know where to start, from playing for a traditional tribe in rural Kenya to performing for Prince Charles and Princess Anne in London.

Dick has entertained students in Indonesia after they helped stop a Communist coup in the 1960s, with his band under military guard. He has jammed in front of the Coliseum in Rome and toured all over Europe, East Africa, Canada and the United States. He has leaned on fellow musicians to help him readjust to civilian life after the Vietnam War.

"So many adventures," Dick says. "I'm not rich by any stretch, but it's a marvelous way to live a life."

Today, Dick's regular local performances as a duo or with his four-member group, the Smith-Wade Band, still bring him overwhelming joy. "I don't care if it's an audience of 10, 50 or thousands of people," Dick notes. "I stand there thinking, 'I can't believe I get to be on this stage.' It's not that I feel I don't belong there. I do. I just can't believe I get to do exactly what I love."

Dick is a singer, songwriter, guitar and har-

monica player, as well as chief tech for sound and lights, for the Williamsburg-based groups. Both perform cover tunes from the 1960s, newer songs and original compositions. The duo is known for tight harmonies and a surprisingly full instrumental sound, while the band is well suited for larger settings and events with dancing.

A natural extrovert, Dick doesn't get nervous on stage. "It's like being at home," he says. "I am very comfortable there. Whether there are two, four or more musicians on stage, I love the feeling of being one in the lights when we are all in the moment."

Dick also likes to go into the crowd and meet as many people as possible, and he takes pride in sparking good memories with oldies songs.

"One thing I've learned as a performer is, it's okay to make people happy," he says. "You see their faces light up when they realize, 'Oh, I know that song!'. We can take them back to when they were 20, or even a teenager, and it touches them. We're not changing their lives, and I don't try to idolize what we do, but we're helping them for a night and that matters."

In all his years as a musician, Dick has had just one formal guitar lesson. Instead, he taught himself guitar and harmonica, picking up tips from many musicians along the way.

"It doesn't make me a wonderful guitar player or harmonica player," he stresses. "It just means I don't like to practice. I do what's necessary pretty well. I've never idolized any performer, but I've learned from all of my friends over the years who were very generous with their time and talent." He pauses, then says with a laugh, "I also can just stand there and look real good."

Dick's collaboration with Cabot Wade dates all the way back to 1966, although they didn't formally create their band until 1971. The Tennessee natives met while performing in the touring group Up with People, founded in 1965 to help connect people of different cultures and beliefs worldwide.

Dick performed with the organization for several years, amidst his time studying business, English and Sociology at Tennessee Tech University and Middle Tennessee State University. He also was drafted into the Army and served for two years, including a year in Vietnam.

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system when Dick returned home from war. “You do come back a little jittery,” he recalls. “It was much easier to come back to people I already knew and just throw myself back into music and an uplifting message.”

In the summer of 1972, Cabot, who went to school at William & Mary, invited Dick to travel to Williamsburg to play music together for two months. Dick soon decided to stay permanently. Decades later, the duo now performs at the Williamsburg Lodge every Saturday night.

The Smith-Wade Band, which also draws from a roster of musicians John Tracy, who Dick also met through Up with People; John Shaffer; and Jon Wade, Cabot’s son; appears regularly at Two Drummers Smokehouse near Lanexa. In addition, the band has performed at the Elegant Culinary Affaire for Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg and, for 25 years, the King and Queen Ball and Fourth of July Ice Cream Social at W&M.

While the musicians often get together to practice during the week, Dick also has a full-time job as Training Director and lead trainer at Computer Concepts, a sales, repair and train-

ing company and authorized Apple service provider. Part of his work is to help maintain the company’s Web site, keep customer databases updated and send out monthly newsletters.

“I do a lot of things pretty well,” he says. “I did well enough with music to make a living out of it for many years and to make many friends.”

An avid reader, Dick has at times found himself playing for people and in places he had learned about in books and magazines.

The trip to Kenya, for example, was organized by Jack Paar, a comedian and host of the Tonight Show from 1957 to 1962. The idea was to see how members of the semi-nomadic Maasai people would react to music of the Smithfields, a 16-member recording and performance group sponsored by Up with People.

“Suddenly I’m in front of men standing there with their shields and swords, staring,” Dick says. “By the end, all of us were jumping up and down, playing music together.”

The Smithfields also performed at the Ambassador’s Residence in London for Prince Charles, who proved to be an enthusiastic music lover. “As soon as we were done, he jumped

up and came right at us, telling us how much he enjoyed it. It was fun. It’s always fun.”

As for that trip to Indonesia, where he traveled with Cabot and another local, Ken Ashby, “It was still quite tense, but we were young and didn’t think anything could happen to us,” Dick recalls. “The young people there wanted music, and we could give that to them.”

Back at home, Dick and his wife of 38 years, Ann Morgan-Smith, who works in hotel restaurants, have two grown children, two grandchildren and two dogs: Tucker, a Chihuahua addicted to fetch, and Memphis, a Lab mix that loves to gallop.

Luckily, the canines live with an owner with plenty of energy himself. Dick sits up as soon as he hears his bedside alarm, which features an original song by Cabot, and often reads science fiction to unwind from night shows before he can fall asleep.

So, not surprisingly, Dick Smith has no plans to retire from his life as a musician anytime soon.

“I’ll play until I’m too ugly or can’t sing,” he says. “I’m getting close on the ugly, but I’m still singing pretty well.” NDN



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Sarah Tuohy’s pregnancy was smooth sailing until complications resulted in a premature birth for little Nora, who spent seven weeks in the neo-natal intensive care. When Nora was released, Sarah experienced breastfeeding challenges that left her feeling drained and hopeless.

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Next Door Neighbors Health



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Providing a *Cozy Home*

By Erin Fryer

Nestled in the wooded neighborhood of Queens Lake is a home where those living with mental and physical disabilities can fulfill their dreams and live their best lives.

Tyhe and Jessica Anderson are the owners and operators of Andersons Cozy Home, a

group home they run out of their house. The couple, who moved to Williamsburg three years ago, strives to offer a family environment for their residents and to help them do the things that bring them the most joy.

Originally from New York City, Tyhe and

Jessica met in college in Syracuse, New York, despite having grown up just 15 minutes from each other in the Bronx. After graduating from Le Moyne College, the pair moved south in search of a warmer climate and less snow.

“I was working for Hertz at the time, and

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they transferred me to Tidewater, Virginia,” Tyhe says. “I had never heard of Tidewater before, but when I got down here I fell in love. We originally moved to Newport News before going to Norfolk, then Hampton and eventually here to Williamsburg.”

Since graduating, Jessica has held jobs in the mental health field, mainly in senior centers and group homes. Tyhe was a multi-location manager for Hertz and managed several different locations throughout the Tidewater region, including Williamsburg. Shortly after moving to Newport News, the couple got engaged while on a trip to Italy, and later got married. After finding out they were pregnant, the Andersons moved to Norfolk.

While living in Norfolk and working at a brain health facility, Jessica met Michael, a 28-year-old patient who did not have a diagnosis for whatever disease was wreaking havoc on his mind and body. When Michael was finally able to go to Richmond to get his diagnosis, Jessica accompanied him, and he was ultimately diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia.

Though she was still working, Jessica was also fighting a battle for her own health after being diagnosed with lymphoma. She managed the brutal rounds of chemotherapy and radiation by setting goals and dreaming big. Her dreams of eventually starting her own group home got her through the hardest days of her treatment. Jessica beat the cancer and was in remission when Michael received his diagnosis, which meant he was going to have to move to a nursing home.

“When someone is suffering from mental and physical disabilities, you want them to be in the best environment possible,” Jessica says. “And for Michael to go to a nursing home at 28 years old broke my heart. I couldn’t let that happen.”

With Michael as their first resident, the Andersons started Andersons Cozy Home. Shortly after, they moved to Hampton where they found a five-bedroom home that would better accommodate their new business.

In the years that the Andersons cared for Michael, he got outside and lived his dreams. “Just because someone is sick, doesn’t mean it’s

the end of the world,” Jessica says. “They can still have dreams and fulfill them, and they can still be a part of a family.”

In the three years Michael lived with the Andersons they went to beaches, festivals, and took trips. He drove his favorite dream car, played the guitar and even got Tyhe to start playing. “In this business you look past the diagnosis and really get to see who the person is,” Tyhe says. “Michael lost his ability to speak, but because I was so connected to him and with him every day I was able to understand every emotion he had. We knew it all just by looking at him through his facial expressions.”

One of Tyhe and Jessica’s favorite memories of Michael was when they went to Ocean Breeze Fun Park in Virginia Beach. “I held Michael’s hand and took him into the water to see if he would like it, and he got the biggest smile on his face; the biggest one I have ever seen. I can’t get it out of my head. He was so happy,” Tyhe says.

Michael ended up passing away right after the Andersons moved to Williamsburg. They knew all along that his dementia would one day overcome him, and in the years leading up to his passing the Andersons gave Michael the best life possible.

The Andersons’ top goal that they strive to meet every single day is to provide a family environment for their residents. They welcome them into their home and hearts, incorporating them into family meals and holidays. Even the families of their residents become a part of their family. While the residents live upstairs in the Andersons’ home, Jessica, Tyhe and their son, Cosme, live downstairs so they are always on-site to provide whatever help is needed.

For Jessica, having time with her family is everything. When she was employed at the brain health facility, she worked a lot of nights and weekends and barely saw her husband and son. When the opportunity to work from home presented itself, it not only allowed Jessica to fulfill her dreams professionally, but personally as well, allowing her the opportunity to do the little things, like take Cosme to school.

Caregiving has always come naturally to Jessica, but it wasn’t until she was deep into

her cancer battle that Tyhe found his calling to be one as well. “I had a good job but I was struggling to find my purpose,” he says. “I felt I could do something so much more meaningful. I was never really a caregiver before I had to be one for Jessica, and I loved it. We decided we wanted to make a more meaningful life and do more meaningful work. I want to feel good about what I do on a daily basis.”

The Andersons have taken in a number of other residents since Michael and can accommodate up to four people at a time. On the weekends, they open their home up to the residents’ families to come and just spend time together, relaxing in the living room, walking around the neighborhood or playing basketball with their son.

The Andersons love to take their residents to local events, including the farmer’s market in Colonial Williamsburg and the Second Sundays festival. They took their current resident, Pam, to the Virginia Safari Park for Mother’s Day last year, and enjoy going to arts and music festivals throughout the Tidewater region.

Both Jessica and Tyhe agree that getting to spend time together as a family is the most rewarding aspect of their business. “I love being able to pursue my passion while still getting to be there for my son and husband every day,” says Jessica. “Getting to do what you want to for work while getting to spend all of this time with family is a dream come true.”

Tyhe says the most rewarding aspect of the business for him is getting to change people’s lives. “For every resident we have had so far, we specifically find what they enjoy in life, and we do it. It takes away from their disease state, and it’s so important to have that kind of lifestyle.”

It wasn’t until they made the move to Williamsburg that Tyhe Anderson left his fulltime job at Hertz to go all in on the family business. Their resident, Pam, had a difficult time adjusting after moving from Hampton to Williamsburg. “That’s when I decided to do this full time because Pam became very attached to me,” Tyhe says. “She wanted to be around me, and I was able to calm her down. I had to choose between my future with the company and the business, and this is my future. I get more fulfillment from doing this.” NDN

Heart  for
orphans
Group Homes

Making A Home

By Dawn Brotherton

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Nancy Hathaway has answered her calling. When she came to Virginia Beach in 1986, she never dreamed she would end up living in Williamsburg and running homes for orphans in Ukraine.

Nancy was born in New York and raised in the New Jersey-New York area. She went to school at Farleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey for theater and Russian studies. During college, she did some modeling and picked up a few small parts in New York City.

Farleigh Dickinson had a campus in England where Nancy studied for a few semesters and fell in love with the country. She remained after graduation, doing some modeling work. She married and had her son, Damian. After seven years, she decided it was time to come back to the States.

She moved back to New York City, working as an actress and model. In 1981, she was cast as the villainess on the daytime drama "Another Life," filmed in Virginia Beach. During

that time, she came to love Virginia and everything it had to offer. Even as she transitioned back into production in New York City, she kept one foot planted here. Routine flights between Norfolk and the Big Apple allowed her to maintain her busy work schedule. She took on more Department of Defense contracts as the audio-visual production officer to create commercials and instructional videos. Eventually, she gave up New York City and moved to Williamsburg full time, working freelance in production.

"I still did some modeling work when I get called or auditioned for commercials, but for the most part, my bread and butter in those days was producing programs," Nancy says.

In 1994, her pastor introduced her to Stephen Hathaway. "We hit it off as friends initially, but we were from different worlds, so I wasn't sure how that was all going to work out. But we have the same values. That is what I love about Steve — his integrity. It was very important to me to find a person who meant

what he said. Steve is a straight arrow and honest as the day is long."

Nancy continued producing, and Steve ran Hathaway Power, but they felt something was missing. "We started praying that God would use us somehow in some way, and He began to talk to us about adoption. That was scary for me. In fact, it was terrifying for me, because I had a son who was almost grown. And to me, adoption equals baby. And I thought, I'm too old to go back to baby stuff." They began the home study process, and at the end of the six months, the social worker asked where they were going to adopt from.

Steve and Nancy hadn't selected a place, deciding to leave it in God's hands. "Within a couple of days, I got a call from the director of admissions at our church asking if Steve and I were free to go to Ukraine in a couple of weeks. They had a ministry that was bringing eyeglasses over, and they needed worker bees to help out with it." Steve was unavailable due to work commitments, but Nancy went. For

the first six days, she worked with the eyeglass ministry. The last day, a local took them to see other things that were happening in the area. They visited an orphanage for babies and another one for school-aged children.

“There are about 104,000 orphans in the country and that’s not even counting the kids who are out on the streets,” Nancy says. “Ninety percent of those kids have living parents who have put them in the orphanage and have gone on with their life. Maybe there’s alcoholism or drugs, or maybe they’re in prison, but in many cases, they leave and don’t even visit the kids. It’s such a heartbreak; the kids grow up with this sense of rejection, being abandoned to an institution where they’re just a number.”

Nancy and Steve prayed about it. They came to the conclusion that God had laid this opportunity at their feet. They had to investigate further. They made their plans and traveled back to Ukraine to pick out a child. “They brought out this little girl with big, green eyes and this whacked off haircut that they give them. She recited this poem, and the whole time I’m looking at her, a voice in my head was calling out, ‘That’s her. That’s her. That’s her.’” Steve confirmed her instinct, and they took nine-year-old Natalie home with them. She spoke no English, but that’s where Nancy’s college Russian studies helped out.

Six weeks later, Steve couldn’t shake the feeling that there was another child out there for them. Nancy admits being cautious. It was a huge undertaking, expensive and heartbreaking. She wasn’t sure she could go through it again. Days after Nancy promised to pray about it, Natalie bounded into the room and jumped on Nancy’s bed. She was insistent that Nancy had to go back to Ukraine and adopt little Angelina. Again, Steve and Nancy be-

lieved that the message was clear and could not be ignored.

Nine months later, they found themselves with Natalie back at the orphanage in Ukraine. Natalie had changed a lot in a short time.

“Her own teacher didn’t recognize her. That’s how much she had changed. A lot of times, kids have this downcast kind of sadness over them. And Natalie just had a sparkle,” Nancy says. Then they were introduced to a tiny nine-year-old who was no bigger than a kindergartener. While they were meeting Angelina, an older girl tried to put Natalie more at ease in the situation. It was strange for her to be back after she had been so fortunate as to have been adopted.

This didn’t go unnoticed by Nancy and Steve. They left with Angelina, but three months later, they were back to pick up fourteen-year-old Sveta.

Even after their personal adoption adventure was over, Nancy and Steve continued to tell their story. Friends and acquaintances began to adopt through the same process. Their church sponsored a children’s choir from the orphanage to travel throughout the mid-Atlantic and perform. Because of this effort, 39 of the 41 children were adopted.

But that still wasn’t enough for Nancy. Only one percent of the 104,000 children would be adopted; the others would age out at fifteen or sixteen, often ending up back on the streets, repeating the cycle. “I had this vision of a family-style home with Christian house parents who could help the kids transition into adult to see what it’s like to live in a healthy family with a healthy marriage,” Nancy says. “That vision took a while to get off the ground, but eventually we started opening homes where kids can transition [from the orphanage]. They live there for a few years, some as much as four

years, but usually the average is two to three years.”

Now Heart for Orphans has three houses and numerous outreach programs to teach teens life skills such as cooking, balancing a budget and cleaning a house. Each house is designed to hold approximately ten teens per family, so the kids get the attention they need from loving parents.

As Founder and Director, Nancy makes regular trips to the Ukraine to train staff, check on progress, and make sure everything is running smoothly. In the United States, she speaks to different groups about Hearts for Orphans and raises money for the program.

“The biggest challenge is trying to explain what the situation is like. I mean, you hear the words, but we all see it through an American mindset until you’re actually over there, and you understand how different it is, the prejudice against the orphan and the implications and how tough it is for them to get by. It’s hard to explain without seeing it, quite honestly. The people who have gone and seen it and come back are pretty darn passionate to help.”

Although Nancy spends a lot of time with Heart for Orphans, she also enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and extended family whenever she can. She and her close friends have maintained an annual beach weekend ritual for the past 24 years where she can kick back and relax with a good book. That recharges her to deal with the two rambunctious Golden Retriever puppies she is training. With the puppies, along with their old hunting dog and an outdoor cat, she has her hands full around the house.

But soon, Nancy Hathaway will be headed back to Ukraine and the Heart for Orphan houses there, making homes for children in need. NDN

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

narielleliving@gmail.com

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

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

Hey Neighbor!

PEDAL THE PARKWAY

May 4, 2019

Colonial Parkway, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Free! Enjoy a car-free ride, walk or run the 8-mile stretch of the Colonial Parkway between Williamsburg and Jamestown. Non-competitive - start at your own time, pedal at your own pace, and ride as much (or as little) as you like. A rest stop is provided at the Archer's Hope overlook at the mid-point of the ride. This event is great for all ages, young families and athletes with special needs. Start at Williamsburg (Newport Avenue) or Jamestown (Jamestown Settlement). Info: bike-walkwilliamsburg.org.

Hey Neighbor!

KIWANIS GIANT YARD SALE

May 4, 2019

From 7 am - 1 pm at 1230 Richmond Road (old ACE hardware). There will be furniture, kitchen-golf-yard equipment, women's clothing, pictures, books, knickknacks, sporting goods, games and much more.

Hey Neighbor!

THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EMPLOYEES SPRING ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

May 4, 2019

To be held at the Historic Triangle Community Services Building, 312 Waller Mill Road, Williamsburg VA. Hours from 9 am - 6 pm. Come out and support Colonial Williamsburg

Employees, Retiree's and Volunteer's in their artistic endeavors. You will find Photography, Paintings, Norwegian Rosemaling, homemade Jams, woven items, band boxes, leather goods, jewelry, Chocolates, dolls and lots more.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG YOUTH ORCHESTRA CONCERT

May 5, 2019

The Williamsburg Youth Orchestra (WYO) will hold its last concert of the 2018-19 season at 4 pm at Hornsby Middle School. WYO Symphony Orchestra will feature Tchaikowsky's Nutcracker Ballet, Glazunov's Intermezzo Romantico, Stravinsky's Berceuse and Finale, and Mussorgsky's Khovantchina Overture. Tickets will be sold at the door: adults \$10/students \$5. Visit www.wyomusic.org for more information.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD PRESENTS LUX: THE DAWN FROM ON HIGH

May 5, 2019

Virginia Wesleyan University's Chamber Choir joins the Guild as it performs its last (and perhaps, most exciting) concert of the season. The Williamsburg Choral Guild will present its last concert of the 2018-2019 season, LUX, at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church, 500 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg, at 4 pm. Tickets are available at <https://www.williamsburgchoralguild.org/tickets/>

or from a Guild member. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door; \$10 for students; no cost for children under 12. For more information, please visit williamsburgchoralguild.org or visit our Facebook page #williamsburgchoralguild.

Hey Neighbor!

GARDEN TEA PARTY

May 5, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 5, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

STATE PARK PASSPORT TOUR

May 7, 2019

Meet in the James City County Recreation Center lobby, 5301 Longhill Road. 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$15/person; \$10 for James City County & Williamsburg residents. Join us for a tour of some of our Virginia State Parks. The May trip is to False Cape, Back Bay Tram Ride & Ship Wreck Historical Hike. Trips are open to patrons ages 8+ (16 & younger must be accompanied by adult) and are available first come, first served. Preregistration is required at least one week in advance of trip date. Fees include transportation to and from trip destination and all park admissions, amenities and excursion fees. Patrons are encouraged to bring a bagged lunch and any extra snacks and drinks that you may need throughout the day. Info: 757-259-5355 or jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation.

Hey Neighbor!

MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 7, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!



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STROKE SENSE: CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS, INTERVENTION AND REHABILITATION

May 9, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

MOZART'S THE MAGIC FLUTE

May 9, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

12TH ANNUAL KIWANIS GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 10, 2019

Kiwanis Club of Toano's annual golf tournament will be at Ford's Colony County Club Blackheath Course, to benefit children's programs in The Historic Triangle (James City, York and New Kent Counties and Williamsburg). Captain's Choice, 10:30am registration, 1 pm shotgun start. Dinner and prizes included. Beverages available throughout the day. Details at <http://bit.ly/ToanoKiwansGolf> or contact Jamie Stallings, Chairperson at jamie.stallings1@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor!

PLANTS WITH A PURPOSE - SPRING PLANT SALE AT WBG

May 11, 2019

From 8 am - 2 pm, at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden - Located within Freedom Park at 5537 Centerville Road, Williamsburg. Find plants that do more than just look pretty! Our selection has been chosen by WBG's highly experienced team of Horticulturists, Master Gardeners, and Native Plant Experts, and features native plants, perennials, water-wise, deer

and rabbit-resistant species for both sun and shade. Support pollinators and wildlife in your own garden by using Plants with a Purpose. Plus, VCE Master Gardeners will have an on-site Help Desk to answer your gardening questions. Rain or Shine - inside the Garden. Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted. All proceeds benefit the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. For eNews delivered right to your inbox, sign up at www.bit.ly/wbgnews or text WBGARDEN to 22828.

Hey Neighbor!

THE MANY VOICES OF WOMEN

May 14, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

40 AND OVER CAREER CLUB

May 14, 2019

From 9-10:30 am, join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! May Topic: Maintaining Positivity During Your Job Search. Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB

May 15, 2019

The Williamsburg Music Club proudly presents the youth winners of this year's Grants-in-Aid Auditions at their Annual Spring Luncheon and Program. The very talented junior high and senior high musicians will perform their winning selections. Meeting and program begin at 10:30 am in Bruton Parish Hall, 311 Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg, next to the bookstore. www.williamsburgmusicclub.org, (757) 291-9082.

Hey Neighbor!

ROTARY CLUB CONCERT

SERIES OPENS WITH BRASSWIND

May 17, 2019

The Rotary Club of James City County will host its Tenth Annual Concert

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

Hey Neighbor!

FLUTE FRENZY SPRING CONCERT

May 17, 2019

Flute Frenzy will present a spring concert to end its 2018-19 season. The concert takes place at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond, at 7 pm, and is free to the public. Directed by Margaret Carlson and Traci Bluhm, Flute Frenzy Fantasia, Capriccio and Prelude flute choirs will perform. The program will feature a varied repertoire of recent compositions for ensembles of piccolo, flutes, alto flutes, and bass flutes. A reception follows the concert. www.flutefrenzy.org

Hey Neighbor!

FAMILY FUN FEST

May 18, 2019

Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission: \$5/car (cash or check only). All ages. Enjoy petting animals, hands-on activities, inflatable rides, family fun with music and contests too! Featured: "Toxic Meltdown" by Knockerball Hampton Roads, Touch-A-Truck and pony rides with the Teeny Tiny Petting Zoo (\$), Roaming Characters (12:30-1:30 p.m. & 2-3 p.m.), the Community Showcase with performances by local groups and dance performances plus face painting, balloon animals, health and wellness activities, arts and crafts activity stations and moonwalks. Register for the Fun Run and stop by the "Good for You Zone" and see why being healthy can lead to loads of fun. Grab some lunch provided by our food vendors (\$) and visit all of our local craft and business vendors (\$). Weather permitting; in the event of inclement weather, please call the Activities Hotline at 757-259-3232.. Info: 757-259-5353 or jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation.

Hey Neighbor!

DREAM CATCHERS ANNUAL FUNDRAISER BRIDLES & BOOTS

May 18, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

MARINE SCIENCE DAY AT VIMS

May 18, 2019

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science's annual open house is a fun-filled and educational event for the whole family. Join us in Gloucester Point for exhibits, children's activities, critter collection in the York River, lab tours, seafood cooking demonstrations, mini-lectures, and more. With this year's theme of Search Out, attendees will learn about the ways VIMS scientists discover new solutions to help marine life and our marine environment. For more information and to register visit www.vims.edu/msd. Registration is not required, but pre-registration allows you access to the "fast-lane" at check-in. The first 100 people to register online will receive a free, Marine Science Day reusable shopping bag when they check-in on May 18th.

Hey Neighbor!

THE TIDEWATER INTERGENERATIONAL ORCHESTRA

May 19, 2019

The ever popular "Future Artists Concert" includes 13 year old Gale Szczykowski performing the "Paganini Violin Concerto No. 1." She will be joined by her triplet siblings in the

Vivaldi Concerto. Don't miss this extraordinary concert featuring extraordinary young people. Time: 1 pm at Saint Bede's Kaplan Parish Hall, 3686 Ironbound Road. Free. Concert artists, adult players, and accomplished students interested in playing with the orchestra should contact the coordinator, Dr. Alice Lindsay, at tio@cox.net.

Hey Neighbor!

40TH ANNUAL NAACP LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS BANQUET May 19, 2019

At the DoubleTree by Hilton, Dr. Katherine Rowe, President of William & Mary, will serve as Honorary Chair for the event, and Mike London, W&M head football coach, will be the guest speaker. Event theme is "NAACP: Embracing the Next Generation." Silent Auction/Reception – 4:30 pm. Dinner/Program – 5:30 pm. Proceeds support the Branch civil rights programs and advocacy work, youth leadership development, and community outreach efforts. For tickets (\$65) go to www.yjcwnaacp.org or call NAACP Branch Office at 229-3113.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MASTERWORKS 5 CONCERT

May 21 - 22, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

THE WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CONNECTION

May 23, 2019

Join us for brunch at Bonefish Grill in New Town from 9:30-11am. There will be a message provided by Penny Zee, an inspirational speaker affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries. Her talk is titled "The Different Kinds of Love and the Love that Makes a Difference". Mary-Anne Grimm from Perfectly Posh will be featuring natural based soaps, lotions, and body scrubs. The cost to attend is \$15.00 all inclusive. Please RSVP by email at myconnectionRSVP@yahoo.com or by phone at (757) 229-4036 by Tuesday, May 21st so that we may save you a seat. All are welcome!

Hey Neighbor!

MOVIES UNDER THE STARS

May 24, 2019

Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 1350

John Tyler Highway. 8:30-10:30 p.m., Free! Bring lawn chairs, blankets and snacks. We'll bring the stars. All ages welcome; children 12 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Scheduled feature: Mary Poppins Returns; movies subject to change. Weather permitting; in the event of inclement weather, please call the Activities Hotline at 757-259-3232.. Info: 757-258-5020 or jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation.

Hey Neighbor!

WCAC'S SPRING CO-OP SHOW Through May 24, 2019

The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center's Spring Members' Co-op Show is currently underway. The show features artists with larger bodies of work and offers a wide variety of 2D and 3D mediums and styles in the main and middle galleries. Also, in the Fireside Gallery are "Flowers and Gardens" and the Artisan Corner. Both shows feature members' 2-D and 3-D works in a variety of mediums. All artwork is for sale. WCAC is closed for installation May 25-June 3. Hours: 11-3 Tues.-Sat.; 12-4 Sun. Located at 110 Westover Ave, Williamsburg.

Hey Neighbor!

"THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!"— ANNUAL SHOWCASE

May 31 - June 1, 2019

Institute for Dance, Inc. (iDance) is pleased to present the 2019 Spring Showcase: "That's Entertainment!" Join us to see all that our students have learned in our year-end showcase of all dance styles! Your family won't want to miss this entertaining celebration with innovative choreography and talented dancers. There are three festive performances at CrossWalk Church, 7575 Richmond Road: May 31 at 7 pm; June at 1 pm and 6 pm. Tickets go on sale to the general public on May 6 at noon and can be purchased at <https://tickets.shovation.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=518>. iDance is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. For more information, call (757) 229-1717 or visit <https://institutefordance.org/annual-recital/>.

Hey Neighbor!

WMCI'S 2019 SUMMER COMMUNITY COURSES

June 3 – August 1, 2019

Session II, which goes from June 3 - June 27, includes classes such as Chinese Level II, Chinese Calligraphy, Hulusi, Chinese Flute, and Tea Appreciation in Chinese Culture. Session III goes from July 8 - August 1, and in this session we will be offering a course in

Traditional Chinese Customs. Classes will primarily be held at Rowe House, 314 Jamestown Rd, Williamsburg, VA. For more information, visit our website: <https://bit.ly/2FZ6Rou>

Hey Neighbor!

COMMUNITY DAY-HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY HOMES, HEALTHY COMMUNITY

June 7, 2019

The Williamsburg Area Association of REALTORS® would like to invite you to the annual "Community Day" taking place on June 7th, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Please join us and take advantage of a free Shredding Truck service (available 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.), complimentary Wellness Screenings by Riverside, healthy snacks, a bake sale (proceeds to benefit The Arc of Greater Williamsburg) and so much more! Come on out and enjoy the event – 5000 New Point Rd., Williamsburg – in the parking lot! Questions? Email info@waarealtor.com or call (757) 253-0028.

Hey Neighbor!

WOMEN'S WELLNESS WEEKEND June 7-9, 2019

Join us at Jamestown 4-H Educational Center and treat yourself to a weekend designed for women ages 18 and better. Enjoy wellness workshops led by professional speakers in their respective fields. Join us on Friday, June 7, 2019- Sunday June 9, 2019. Arrival is between 4-6pm and departure is on Sunday at 1:00PM. Guests stay in our renovated lodge with rustic charm. Our professional culinary staff will prepare nutritious meals for your stay. Workshop Topics and Activities May Include: Paddleboard Yoga, Fitness Classes, Nutrition Workshops, Jewelry Making, Crafts, Zumba, Basket Weaving, Cooking, Canoeing, Kayaking, Reiki, Fishing, Tai-Chi, Stress Management, Archery, Campfires, Massage, Aromatherapy, Work Life Balance, Reflexology, Naturopathy, Sailing, Drumming Circle plus much more! Call for more information 757-253-4931 or <http://www.jamestown4hcenter.org/programs/#adult> to register. \$160/person for full weekend (includes lodging) or \$85 for Saturday only (no lodging).

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG BOY SCOUT GOLF OUTING 2019

June 9, 2019

Join us at 1pm for the seventh annual Williamsburg Boy Scout Golf Outing to benefit the Scouts of Boy Scout Troop 300, Boy Scout Troop 414 and

Cub Scout Pack 414. We will have a great day of golf at the beautiful Kiskiaki Golf Club in Williamsburg, VA. The event will include a 4-person scramble, box lunch, and awards reception and dinner following the golf. All players also receive a free two-week membership to Kiskiaki for the two weeks leading up to the event. Registration and information at www.planmygolfevent.com/32675-Scouts. Contact John Lacy (757) 784-6656 for additional information.

Hey Neighbor!

40 AND OVER CAREER CLUB June 11, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

FOOD TRUCK RALLY ON THE RIVER

July 13, 2019

Jamestown 4-H Educational Center Presents Food Truck Rally on the River! Join us for "Beats and Eats" from some of your local restaurants on wheels! Food, Beer and Music! The fun begins at 4:00 on Saturday July 13th at Jamestown 4-H Educational Center. This is a family friendly event and pets are welcome! \$5 per car. We hope you will join us for another fabulous event on the river! For more information, please check out <http://www.jamestown4hcenter.org/events> or call us at 757-253-4931

Hey Neighbor!

EYE DISEASES AS WE AGE

June 13, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

13th ANNUAL CONSERVANCY GOLF CHALLENGE

June 20, 2019

Join us for our 13th Annual Conservancy Golf Challenge to benefit the Historic Virginia Land Conservancy at Ford's Colony Country Club for a Captain's Choice tournament on the spectacular Blackheath golf course. Prizes, raffles and an awards dinner follow the 1:00 pm shotgun start. If your registration is less than four golfers for this flighted, net event, golfers will be arranged into teams. Please visit our website at www.HistoricVirginiaLandConservancy.org for a registration form and details about this action packed day!

Hey Neighbor!

ROTARY CONCERT SERIES

June 22, 2019

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

Hey Neighbor!

2ND ANNUAL WILLIAMSBURG PRO AM BBQ COOK OFF

June 30, 2019

The Rotary Club of the Historic Triangle is proud to present the 2nd Annual Williamsburg PRO AM BBQ Cook Off from 11 am – 4 pm at Jamestown Beach Event Park. Ticketed guests will get unlimited samples of pulled pork, beef brisket and sides from some of the area's top BBQ purveyors and vote for their favorites. We have added a VIP ticket which gets you a "bottomless" souvenir glass mug for unlimited refills of beer and hard cider. Craft beer provided by Billsburg Brewery. More information at our website www.WilliamsburgPROAMBBQ.com. All net proceeds go to benefit 3e Restoration, a local non-profit that seeks to walk with our area's homeless and socially displaced back to wholistic sufficiency.

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-afters here. We currently have a calf named Winnie who just arrived and has some mobility issues. She drags her back legs when walking and while she currently seems to be doing great, we are seeking a solution so that once she reaches full weight, she can continue to be mobile into old age. We also have another calf

named Jenna who was born infertile, 4 turkeys, 7 chickens, and 3 pigs (who sleep on the couch inside often with a chicken in diapers on their backs). 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!

ROTARY CONCERT SERIES

July 20, 2019

Kimball Theatre. 7:30-9:30pm. Featuring Elvis Genre Concert. Tickets available at jccrotary.org or through eventbrite.

Hey Neighbor!

FLUTE FRENZY SUMMER CAMP

July 29 - August 2, 2019

Come join us for Flute Frenzy's Summer Camp: "A Week in the Big Apple" (for youth entering grades 6-12). Professional instruction and Technique classes; Learn to play Piccolo, Alto, and Bass Flutes; Games, Crafts, & Snacks. Be a part of Flute Choir Performances! Location: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Road Williamsburg. For more information, visit www.flutefrenzy.org

Hey Neighbor!

ROTARY CHARITY CONCERT SERIES

August 17, 2019

Kimball Theatre. 7:30-9:30pm. Featuring Soul Intent. Tickets available at jccrotary.org or through eventbrite.

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@jamescity-countyva.gov or call 75-259-5403.

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, 4445 Powhatan Parkway, Williamsburg VA 23188. www.williamsburghospice.org. Caring for people at the end of life, comforting the bereaved and empowering others to do the same.

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 Saturdays 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 and follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Hey Neighbor!

GRIEFSHARE

Ongoing

Walnut Hills Baptist Church, 1014 Jamestown Road, will offer a Grief-Share program beginning on Sunday February 3, 2019, and running for 13 weeks. This ministry is a Biblical, Christ-centered support group for those who have lost a loved one. It includes a video seminar, small group discussion and a participant guide. There is a \$15 registration fee to cover the cost of the participant guide. The group will meet from 2-4 p.m. each week in the church Hospitality Center. Participants are welcome to join at any time. Contact: Elaine Schrader at 757-268-1761 or eschrader4@gmail.com.

com. For more information, visit whbconline.org.

Hey Neighbor!

BUDDY ART

Spring Session 2019

Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center is accepting registrations for the 2019 Winter/Spring Session of Buddy Art, a free program which provides art activities for kids with special needs and/or physical disabilities ages 6 & up. Classes are scheduled for Saturdays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, March 16, and 23, 3-4 pm. at the JCC Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Road. www.visitwvacac.org/what-we-do/community-activities/buddy-art/

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. We need to raise approximately \$25,000.00 to finish the current class of 5 students. The Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program is a 501C-3 corporation licensed through the State Corporation Commission of Virginia.

Hey Neighbor!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Ongoing

We have an urgent need for a few volunteers with trucks/trailers and who are able to lift slightly heavy equipment like wheelchairs. It is on an as needed basis but the commitment would be no more than 2 times monthly. Contact: Diane Harrah, Program Assistant, Williamsburg F.R.E.E., 757-707-4741 or www.free-foundation.org. 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, hover lifts, wheelchairs and power scooters. 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, or find us on Facebook.

WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

Williamsburg's
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
photo challenge

CHRISSY & FACE
HERITAGE HUMANE
SOCIETY

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

Enjoy!



INTERMEDIATE

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

APRIL 2019
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge



A Commitment to Listen, A Partnership of Care



Stacy Slat, M.D.

Dr. Stacy Slat is board-certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She completed part of her military service at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton. Dr. Slat considers it a privilege to be trusted with some of women's most vulnerable life moments. "I view medicine as my vocation," says Dr. Slat, "and I strive to deliver compassionate care and recognize the unique needs of each patient."

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Gynecology Services:

- Pelvic Pain
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- Abnormal Uterine Bleeding

Obstetrical Services:

- Normal and High Risk Pregnancy
- Labor and Delivery
- Postpartum Care and Lactation Medicine
- Prenatal and Postpartum Mood Disorders



Read about Dr. Slat and her patients at
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Sue McSwain
REALTOR®, MS, SRES, SFR

908-400-1440

suemcswain@lizmoore.com