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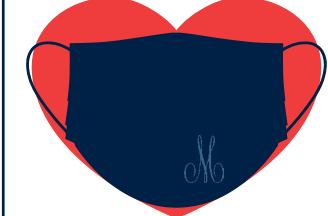


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Meredith Collins, Publisher

Do not try to read this on an empty stomach, or a full stomach for that matter, if you can't take reading about a whole lot of mouthwatering holiday food! Every holiday, when we have the pleasure of pulling together this issue, we hear about many of the same themes: food, family, and fun.

I am happy about that because this has been a year when it has been too easy to dwell on the negative, to chaff at inconvenience, and lose faith in the future. So, I say, fill us up with a mantra of food, family, and fun and let's immerse ourselves in all the warmth and promise the season has to offer.

I like the fact that our guests in this issue do not dwell on the pandemic or the restrictions that may limit their traditional celebrations and way of life. Instead, they acknowledge them, figure out work arounds, and talk about their plans to press forward and continue celebrating the holidays. I love their positive attitude. They make me want to come up with a socially distant and safe way to give the whole world a big hug. For now, however, I'll settle for making an extra effort to smile at all of my Williamsburg neighbors and wish everyone the happiest of holidays! NDN

## Inside

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5. Eileen Schafer                  | 34. Leroy & Carol Jackson |
| 10. Mary Cottrill                  | 37. Noreen Graziano       |
| 14. Stephanie Hall                 | 41. Neil Hollands         |
| 18. Elaine Schrader                | 42. Neighbor to Neighbor  |
| 22. Rev. Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly | 46. James Scott           |
| 26. Mirna Custis                   | 49. Nina Donnelly         |
| 30. Kelly Scallion                 | 53. In the Neighborhood   |

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## Recipe for a **Festive Holiday**

By Alison Johnson

In Eileen Shafer's home, Christmas Eve is a magical extravaganza.

Elaborate table settings. Extensive decorations. And a food frenzy: chocolate eggnog punch and cranberry sparklers to kick off the night, followed by a huge buffet of homemade appetizers, entrees and desserts, including gingerbread cookies from a 70-year-old family recipe.

"Many of these recipes are only prepared and served once a year, which is why they

remain so special to us," Eileen says. "Only one year, out of the 40 years that I have hosted Christmas Eve, did I run out of time to make those mouthwatering gingerbread cookies. My family has never let me forget about that one faux pas!"

Family traditions and gatherings have been a prime source of joy and comfort to Eileen since her childhood in Illinois, where she grew up with six siblings in a tight-knit family. As the former owner of an English

Tea Room and the author of a book on hosting afternoon teas, she also has arranged daytime Christmas teas for 30-plus years.

To Eileen's delight, today she often entertains with her daughter, Katie, who hopes to create similarly meaningful traditions for her two-year-old son, Chase. "Now that she is married and has started a family of her own, the same basic principles are important to her as well."

Eileen, 66, is originally from St. Charles, NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS DECEMBER 2020 5

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Illinois, a suburb 40 miles west of Chicago. Her mother and sisters all loved entertaining, baking and cooking, emphasizing food and mealtime camaraderie over gifts. They often combined dishes from their Italian, German, Irish and Scottish heritages.

“We cherished every holiday,” Eileen recalls. “Our houses were always filled with relatives and friends, and specially prepared recipes were the center of attention.”

After high school, Eileen started off her career in the legal world. She worked as a court clerk, legal secretary, and paralegal, ultimately managing two high-profile law firms in Chicago over a period of 12 years.

Eileen then decided on a professional pivot to one of her personal passions, interior design and decoration. During her 10-year stint in design, she gained experience in building and furnishing homes but most enjoyed accessorizing each room, down to the tiniest touches.

In the mid-1980s, Eileen noticed a resurgence of teas and tea-related gift items from her perspective as a designer and also the manager of an exclusive retail store. Soon, she developed a new interest, this time with all varieties of teas.

When Eileen and her husband of now-44 years, Ray, a custom builder and real estate broker, welcomed their daughter Katie, she began researching the history of tea. She opened a retail tea shop in St. Charles, Royal Tea Impressions, once Katie was in elementary school.

For five years, Eileen ran the store with her daughter by her side. “Katie grew up in the tea room, learning the basics of running a business, accompanying me on business trips and helping with historical research,” Eileen says. “She was my best employee and still encourages me in everything I do, to this day.”

To help market Royal Tea Impressions, Eileen created a monthly store newsletter with ideas for entertaining. As customers increasingly turned to her for advice, she also organized special programs and lectures about tea during various eras of American history. Gradually, lecturing and writing took priority over the retail business.

After Katie left for college, Eileen put together a book of history, recipes, photographs, professional artwork, and hosting tips. “Royal Teas with Grace and Style” was published in 2010, and Eileen is now working on a second book focused on hosting holiday and special occasion events. She also has contributed articles to an international tea magazine.

Eileen and Ray moved to Williamsburg in 2012. They had first fallen in love with the area during a 1984 vacation and had returned each year for nearly three decades. “We knew we wanted to make Williamsburg our permanent home one day,” Eileen says.

Since leaving Illinois, Eileen and Ray have stayed in close contact with her six siblings and his three, while forming strong bonds with their new friends and neighbors. “My life is an open book, as is our home, always open to a large family and many friends.”

Happily, Katie also settled in town after graduating from Christopher Newport University in 2011. In 2016, she married her child-



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hood sweetheart in an autumn wedding at the Williamsburg Inn and the couple welcomed Chase just before Christmas 2018.

The young family lives less than two miles from Eileen and Ray. Eileen, whose household includes miniature Schnauzers Teddy and Gertie, frequently babysits for Chase and her two “grand-dogs,” miniature Schnauzer Muffy and Golden Retriever Waylon. Katie also has resumed her role of helping her mom with family gatherings, as she did as a young child.

The key to hosting any event, even in stressful times, is to simply love doing it, Eileen says. While her holiday gatherings take weeks of work, bringing delight to herself and others is a priceless reward.

Typical Christmas Eve entrees are Shrimp DeJonghe, a casserole with garlic- and sherry-flavored bread crumbs that is a Chicago specialty; cheese tortellini layered with creamed spinach, tomato and cheeses; and fresh Italian seafood salad. Desserts include Italian Wedding Cake and Chocolate Mousse Pie plus the famous gingerbread cookies.

The display is designed to be both delicious and artistic. “I have always felt that a beautifully set table along with elaborate holiday decorations are just as important as the food,” Eileen says. “Attention to every detail has always been important to me.”

With this year’s pandemic putting a damper on big celebrations, Eileen plans to host Christmas Eve plus perhaps one tea, likely for family only. She encourages other families to find ways to continue old traditions or try out new ones, and to connect via online platforms or even with old-fashioned cards and letters.

“My only advice for the 2020 holidays is to find your own comfort zone,” she says. “A computer or smartphone does not allow the scents of things baking and cooking, or of fresh pine needles, but the one thing that virtual devices do offer are the smiles you can actually see.”

Once pandemic travel restrictions are lifted, Eileen’s bucket list includes a return trip to England for a tea-heavy vacation. On a previous journey in London, she went to afternoon teas at as many hotels and tea rooms as possible.

On her next trip, Eileen dreams of visiting the English countryside and Lake District to hit more tea rooms and experience the late-in-life home of one of her favorite writers and illustrators, Beatrix Potter, famous for children’s books such as “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.”

As for her favorite teas, Eileen has many. She prefers black blends in general and, if forced to select just one, a Darjeeling blend. “It’s considered to be the champagne of teas,” she notes.

Between preparing for Christmas, working on her new book and planning a new series of tea lectures that she hopes to launch in the near future, Eileen Shafer is eager to share her belief that generosity to others will make the holidays much merrier and brighter.

“I still enjoy serving tea to my family and friends, while writing and sharing my enthusiasm for entertaining with grace and style,” she says. “So, I guess I’d have to say I’ll never completely retire from any of it.” NDN





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MARY COTTRILL

# History at the Hennage Auditorium

By Kristine Hojnicky



Lisa Cumming Photography

For over 32 years, Mary Cottrill has brought captivating historical programs to visitors of the Hennage Auditorium at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. She began her audio-visual career as an announcer at the college radio station WCWM, and after graduating from William & Mary, she transitioned to the engineering side working at WTKR-TV and Computer Sciences Corporation, where she developed AV training

materials for the United States Army. She then found a home at Colonial Williamsburg, working her way up to her current role as the Manager of Museum Operations and the Hennage Auditorium.

“I’ve always enjoyed history, but an ad in the paper for an AV Tech is what got me working at Colonial Williamsburg,” she says. “Today, I’m responsible for ensuring the museum is ready, safe and open for our guests

every morning and facilitating high-quality programs in the Hennage Auditorium.”

Mary is originally from Chesapeake, Virginia and started visiting Williamsburg in the mid-1960s when her oldest sister began studying at William & Mary. After finishing her studies at the college, she decided to settle in the area permanently because of Williamsburg’s small-town feel.

“Here you know people, whether its city

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council members, your police chief or the members of the fire department. It's a nice place to be and you also get to meet people from all over the world who bring their own touch to the community," she says.

For over 20 years she has lived in the Highland Park Community with her husband, Lee Conder, who was recently honored for forty years of service as a member of William & Mary's IT staff. The couple share their home with rescue dogs Poe, a border collie, and Daisy, a blue-tick coonhound who makes them laugh every day. In their spare time, they enjoy fishing on the York River or in the Chesapeake Bay and learning to play music, inspired by their more talented friends.

As the Manager of Museum Operations, Mary was heavily involved in the recently completed massive renovation of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, including a 65,000-square-foot expansion which began in September 2017. In addition to a new entrance, lobby, museum café and museum store, visitors can explore exhibitions

in seven new galleries located along a grand concourse connecting the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum.

"Before, visitors would see our little building on Francis Street and think that was all we had to offer. They didn't realize that the brick wall behind it, which was designed to be a buffer between the old Williamsburg/James City Courthouse and the historic area, actually contained the majority of the museum," Mary explains. "In the auditorium, which is near and dear to my heart, we've installed new acoustic treatments to increase the quality of the sound and created a more welcoming space backstage for the performers. Each year, I wear a new Santa hat during the holiday program introductions, and I'm glad to retire my Santa hard hat this year."

Arguably, one of the busiest times of year for live performances is the winter holiday season. Traditionally, the Hennage Auditorium is known for delivering a performance schedule rich in history, music and song to

visitors and residents of Williamsburg alike.

"Planning the holiday season programming is one of the special parts of my job," Mary says. "It helps during planning to know that many regulars who come to town year after year will show up after Thanksgiving. They move into the Hennage for a week at a time to see all of the programs. It is fun to be reunited with my Hennage holiday family."

Mary typically begins planning for the holiday performance season, and the Exhibition Team starts planning for the Folk Art Tree install in June during a normal year. But this year, they were forced to get creative around the social distancing restrictions to ensure the safety of all the performers and guests.

In addition to adjusting ticket availability to accommodate lower attendance capacities in the auditorium, the musicians will forgo group singing and the inclusion of brass and wind instruments in their performances.

"It's been a challenge, but we have quite a few performers returning this year including

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John Turner, Kelly Kennedy and Timothy Seaman. They've been working with me to make changes so we can safely host performances for the community and with limited capacity, several programs have already sold out," Mary says.

Though the performances will be scaled back this year, Mary is confident that attendees will enjoy the holiday programming nonetheless, especially at the end of a tumultuous year. She plans to celebrate the holidays with her own family and friends in a manner that will be low key compared to those of years past but will still include some long-held traditions.

"I grew up with a family that put the Christmas tree up on Christmas Eve. That came from my mother's side of the family who were originally from Czechoslovakia," she says. She has held on to memorabilia from long-ago family holiday celebrations. "I still have some of the clips where they put candles on the tree and the singed ornaments that were hung a little too close to the can-

dles. We would also have a goose for dinner, and I'm sure this year we will keep the same traditions and share a good meal together."

Looking past the new year into 2021, Mary looks forward to building on the robust programming currently offered by the museums and the Hennage Auditorium, like the popular mid-day performances by the nation-builders from the historic area. She can't wait to bring back the America's Music Series with weekly concerts.

"We have the ability to create interesting opportunities where historical figures can time travel, having conversations they can't have out in the historic area," she explains. "We've had programs with George and Martha Washington conversing about enslaved people and how that was dealt with at the time of Washington's will, and young and old Thomas Jefferson talking to each other." Mary loves the fact that they can provide a space where these figures step out of the 18th century but still discuss 18th-century concepts that are relevant today.

"I'm inspired by talking with our guests, finding out that they learned something, seeing the smiles on their faces at the end of a program, or after the 'To Be Seen as an American' program, the tears in people's eyes as they come to face to face with racial injustices and better understand our complicated history. I've done my job if a guest discovers something new about our past which inspires them to become more involved as 21st-century citizens."

On Christmas Eve, when Mary Cottrill puts her Christmas tree up, she will do so knowing that she faced a year full of challenges and persevered like so many others. She will celebrate with her family and enjoy the lights, the food and the sentiment that brings them together. And she will remember how grateful she is for the people she works with.

"The best part of working at the museum is the great team I work with. They make even the most challenging year bearable," Mary says. NDN



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A portrait of Sonia E. Hepburn, MD, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white lab coat over a purple top, smiling. The background is a clinical office setting with a sink and cabinets.

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# The Joy of Being Together

By Susan Williamson



Lisa Cumming Photography

Food, fun and fellowship are central to Stephanie Hall's extended family year round, but especially during the holidays. Thanksgiving means gathering at her Aunt Susie's house near the Williamsburg Airport with everyone laughing, cooking, listening to music and singing.

Stephanie learned to cook early on at the age of eight with her grandma, Mrs. Norman Gambrell. "She was the best cook

around. Everyone loved her desserts."

During the holidays, the children love to join in the kitchen activity to make cookies and dumplings with the adults. Of course, football is on TV, with one side of the family strong University of Kentucky fans while the others are die-hard Duke fans. After watching the games, the entire family goes outside to play a little football. Although the game can get raucous, Stephanie says,

"There have been broken thumbs and fingers, but no serious injuries." Birthdays and other occasions might involve watching basketball and again rooting for their favorite teams.

After dark, there's often flashlight tag outside with all the cousins. Gathering around the fire for s'mores is another big tradition.

Stephanie's favorite holiday tradition is the Christmas morning with all of the lo-

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cal relatives at Aunt Susie's house for sausage biscuits and gravy, before each family adjourns to their own homes to open presents.

Then, the weekend after Christmas, they all gather for another Southern cooking fest. Stephanie and her cousin Andrea have a dessert competition with the favorites being dirt cake and banana pudding. Other regular dishes include her grandma's corn pudding recipe and "Whop It on the Counter Dumplings" made from canned biscuits. Her grandma, now deceased, originally made her biscuits from scratch, but as arthritis set in, she switched to the canned version, hence the name. Macaroni and cheese is another family favorite, and several family members recently held a mac and cheese cook-off with a wide variety of versions. Not only does the family enjoy cooking together, but they also turn it into a competition. Stephanie said she has made a commitment to healthy eating, but it won't happen during the holidays.

One highlight of the after-Christmas

gathering is the hunt for the pickle ornaments, hidden in the Christmas tree, one for kids and one for adults. Stephanie says, "It's green, so it really is hard to spot on the tree. There's a prize for the finders. Aunt Susie buys random prizes throughout the year. We also draw names for gifts, and many of the adults' gifts now involve donations to food banks and other charities."

Stephanie has three brothers and two sisters, so her immediate family alone is a large group when spouses, children, girlfriends and boyfriends all get together. In addition to her immediate family, aunts, uncles, cousins and their families, there is often someone from church or a friend who might be at loose ends for the holidays included in the family gatherings. After all, there is always plenty of food.

Another tradition is card playing. "We play every card game you can name," Stephanie says, "including 18 rounds of a card game known as 'golf', ten little Indians and many more. It's not unusual for us to play

until one or two in the morning."

Most of Stephanie's family live in Williamsburg, where she was born and raised. She attended Jamestown High School and Thomas Nelson Community College. A few family members live in North Carolina and a few in Arizona.

When the family gets together, Stephanie usually acts as the designated photographer. She and her two female cousins enjoy posing for pictures in the same location and similar outfits each year for serial "retakes." After she made pictures of cousin Andrea's new baby, her cousin suggested she start a photography business. She describes her photography as a "live and learn type of trade with lots and lots of practice." She considered the idea and decided to try it. She loves interacting with kids and creating photos of people of all ages. Stephanie Hall Photography began advertising on Facebook, and her time slots filled quickly for portraits and family pictures. She recently booked her first wedding. Stephanie must

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schedule her photo shoots for evenings and weekends, since this is a second job for her. During the day, she works as project manager for Peninsula Roofing Company in Newport News, a position she has held for a year and very much enjoys.

Stephanie marks every holiday and season by wearing a special headband. She and her family members celebrate a relative's birthday or her brother's wedding by decorating their homes with streamers and other festive adornments. "I say we trashed their house. We didn't really trash it, just filled it with decorations."

When family members aren't cooking for their own gatherings, they are quick to cook for the Meal Train at their church, Life-pointe Christian Church in Toano, which provides meals when needed for other members. Attending church has been another lifelong activity for Stephanie.

Stephanie and her spouse, Christy, have been married for three years. Their household includes Christy's mom who recently

moved in with them, as well as four dogs: two lab-pit bull mixtures, a rescue Beagle and a Chihuahua-Dachshund cross. Christy comes from a small town in western Virginia and a small family, so the huge family gatherings were somewhat of an adjustment for her. When Stephanie planned to "decorate" her brother's home while he and his bride were on their honeymoon, Christy questioned the idea. "Are you sure?" she asked.

Stephanie answered, "Of course. This is what we do."

When not working, cooking, shooting pictures and enjoying quality time with family, Stephanie enjoys attending concerts, especially country music performers like Florida Georgia Line.

COVID-19 precautions and restrictions were difficult for this fun-loving extended family. They supplanted their traditions by sending numerous birthday cards and once gathered outdoors at Pierce's Barbeque picnic tables for a socially distanced birthday party. "I really hated not being able to see

my nieces and nephews during the worst of the pandemic," Stephanie says.

Stephanie is attracted to the history and the small-town feeling of Williamsburg, keeping her close to her family. She jokes that there are five ways to get anywhere in town. She loves the local rivers and the nearness of the beach where the extended family often vacations together. Her favorite is the Outer Banks, but they also enjoy Sandston and Virginia Beach. "We grew up going to the beach every year," she says, "and we have continued the tradition, only now it takes a house with fifteen bedrooms."

Although Stephanie Hall has both a full-time job and a part-time career, she will always prioritize family time. Cooking, playing, laughing and interacting with those near and dear to her is who she is and who they are as a family. In a time when families are often scattered by distance or circumstance, this family carries on together, focusing on the heart of the holidays and their simple joy of being together. NDN

## From Our Family to Yours

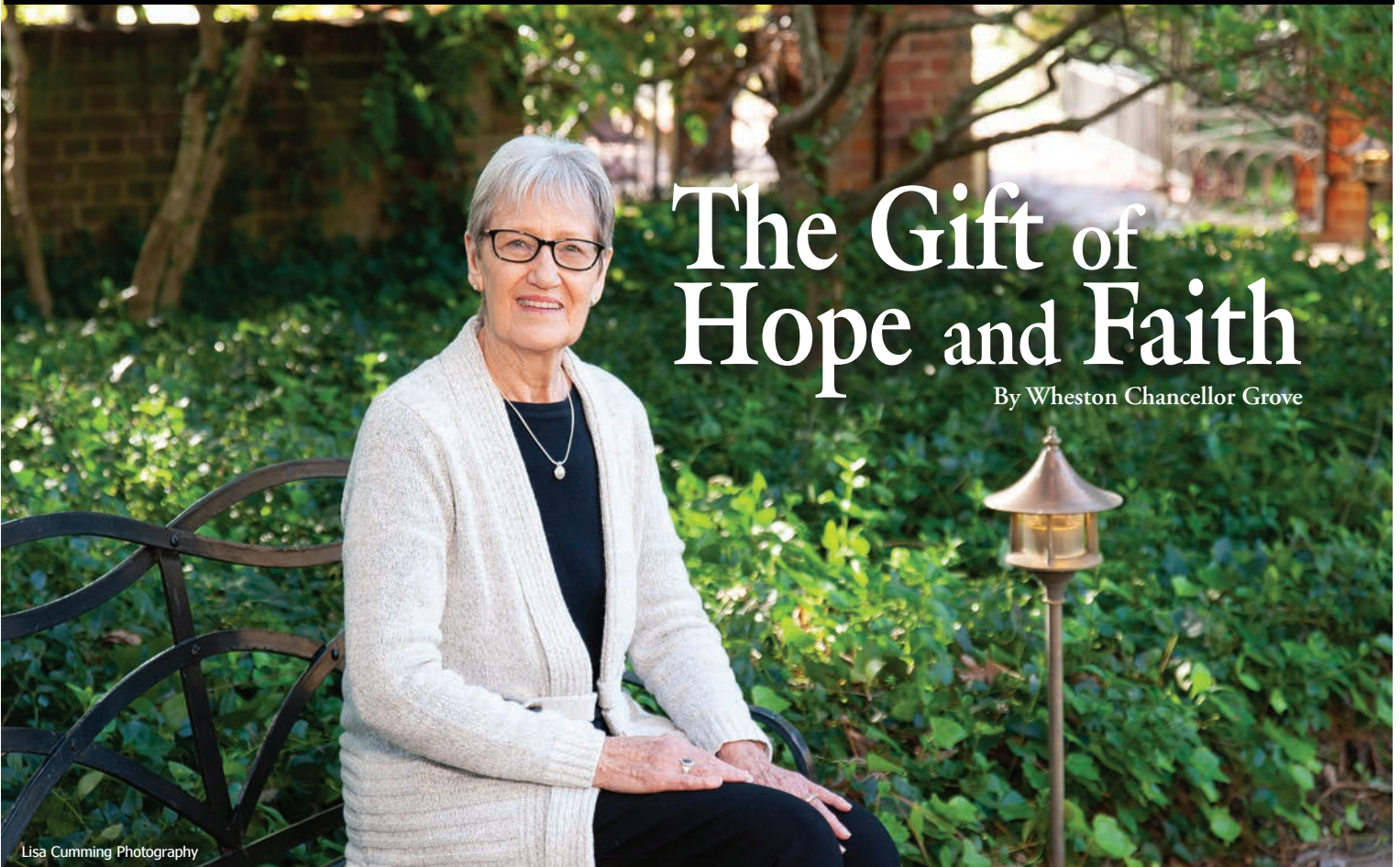
At this time of year, we tend to reflect on the months that have passed and the new ones that lie ahead. Who could have known the many challenges we would face in 2020? We have relied upon the strength and love of friends and family, and even those we do not know, during these difficult times. As the holiday season approaches, we are reminded how important these relationships are and how we need to keep one another close. The new year holds promise in many ways. My hope for you is prosperity and a true sense of peace in 2021.

*Helena S. Mock, Esq., Managing Attorney*



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# The Gift of Hope and Faith

By Wheston Chancellor Grove

Lisa Cumming Photography

There is no doubt that the holidays are stressful for many people. Factor in the loss of a loved one and life comes to a leveling halt. Aside from grief, those left behind may feel stressed about social obligations and commitments. The holidays heighten the sense of aloneness because it's a season for getting together with family.

In 2018, Elaine Schrader and her husband, Gerry, launched a chapter of GriefShare

through Walnut Hills Baptist Church.

GriefShare is an international program founded in 1998 by Church Initiative's President, Steve Grissom, and his wife, Cheryl, who is the Vice President. Local chapters have emerged in all corners of the world, providing support groups for those experiencing loss through the death of a loved one. The program is comprised of videos, 13-week meetings and a workbook. Williamsburg

resident, Elaine, embarked upon starting a chapter after a series of deaths in her local church and family. "I started going online to get some health for myself and then I found GriefShare."

Finding this group was purely accidental. "I became very interested and kept going back to the website. I presented [the material] to our pastors and told them I'd like to start a GriefShare ministry at our church, and



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# The Power of Community



**Dr. Richard Campana,  
First Med**

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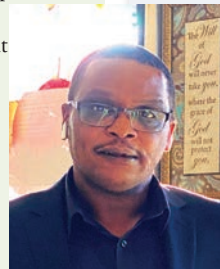
**“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.” Matthew 25:35**

Nestled off of 2nd Street, between Dr. Richard Campana’s First Med practice and Autobell Carwash, sits Empowered Believers Christian Learning Center. On any given morning, bright and early, you can see Bishop Curtis Harris already on the move between the church, First Med and all the while receiving phone calls from his community. “There are so many levels of [help], beyond the church,” says Harris.

After working next door to one another, Dr. Richard Campana and Bishop Curtis Harris found a mutuality in helping those most in need. “He’s the real deal. Most people just talk the talk, but he is walking the walk. And people are listening to him,” says Dr. Campana of Harris. Each morning, Harris and members of his church get together to put food boxes together for local families. The food provided is collected from food banks, grocery stores and donated from members throughout the Peninsula. The church then looks for boxes. “The boxes have been a struggle. The church has been paying out of pocket each week for boxes from Lowe’s and other locations,” states Harris. Once boxes are collected, the team at Empowered Believers Christian Learning

Center get together and, one by one, fill each individual box with pasta, vegetables, snacks and any other food items that are available.

But there is another end goal at play ... the creation of a Senior Dog Sanctuary to provide care and homes to elderly canines. Currently there is not a dedicated space for senior dogs and their specific needs in the Williamsburg area. “We want to provide a safe place for the dogs and the community,” says Bishop Harris. Harris and Campana spoke on the powerful impact of caring for dogs, or any animals. “It can be therapeutic for veterans, those struggling with addiction, young people and those on the autism spectrum. It can be a truly powerful thing.” Bishop Harris and Dr. Campana are teaming up together to provide food for those in need, while also spreading the word about creating and opening up a Senior Dog Sanctuary. “I heard about what they were doing and I just knew I had to help,” says T.W. Taylor, owner of Williamsburg Drug Company.



” Bishop Curtis Harris

Boxes of food are available for pick up at Williamsburg Drug Company, located at 1310 Jamestown Road every Saturday beginning at 1pm. Please see Empowered Believers Christian Learning Center schedule for additional food box pick up days and times.

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they were all for it. We, our church, definitely needed it and knew it would be a great outreach program to our community.”

Elaine was diligent in checking the material online. It took several months for the local chapter to get going. “We had to find facilitators and other people to assist us. Everybody has to go through training. My husband is a big help. I couldn’t do it without him.” Elaine’s church offers two 13-week sessions a year. Elaine admits that initially she wasn’t sure of the undertaking, but “this was something God wanted me to do.” She felt called to proceed and is so grateful she did. Grief is universal and personal. With every loss, the process begins anew.

For anyone who has lost someone, “We try to be there for them. We’re always available. Our whole program is Christian-based. We give attendees workbooks. During the holidays, we discuss how to cope with obligations they might feel they need to attend.” The program encourages attendees to listen to their

needs and not overextend themselves for the sake of putting on a good face. It’s okay for someone to bow out at a party and leave early. The material gives grievors the confidence to be in control instead of people around them dictating what they should and shouldn’t do. In regards to terminal illnesses and end-of-life hospice care, “We take over after hospice has done their part and provided help. People are more apt to come to a support group a few months after they’ve lost a loved one.”

Elaine and Gerry moved to Williamsburg from Maryland just a few years ago. They purchased a home a year before retirement. “We liked it here and had visited with some friends who previously moved down. We came often and we just loved it. Now, here we are!” Elaine describes her husband as being “a very ambitious man.” For a long time, he owned a business and Elaine helped him run it. They had an accounting firm and later worked with real estate settlements. Elaine and her husband have three grown children,

two boys and one girl. One lives in West Virginia, one in Maryland, and the other in Northern Virginia. “We have seven grandkids and five great grandkids. We see them often for Christmas, Thanksgiving, or somebody’s birthday. We run up and down 95 quite a bit.”

“I don’t know that we necessarily have a tradition,” Elaine says. “One of our favorite things is to get together with our neighbors. We have a very nice Christmas party, usually at the beginning of December. And, in our ministry at church, in GriefShare, we have a special one-day seminar called Surviving the Holidays. It’s done very well.”

The seminar gives grieving people hope and helps them figure out how they’re going to cope with grieving during the holidays when everyone else seems happy and they’re sad because they just lost a loved one to death.

“Our church, except for this year, has always put on a Christmas cantata that is just beautiful, we always look forward to it.”



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A guiding principle, an anchor throughout Elaine's life, has been her Christian faith. "I've been married 59 years. [Gerry and I] got married when we were in the third year of college. We've always supported each other." The lifelong commitment of being there for one another prepared Elaine to offer support to others as a GriefShare facilitator.

Elaine enjoys good friends and everyday pleasures. "One of the things that I like is going out to eat. I'm tired of cooking," she says with a laugh. "Opus 9 is my favorite place. They're always so welcoming. And even now, during this pandemic, they're very careful. They're great. You can count on the food being good."

Elaine also gets together with a group of friends, husbands and wives, and plays cards. Her family, and church family, are very important to her. She's done a bit of traveling and fondly recalls a trip to the Grand Canyon with her daughter and son-in-law.

For those struggling with grief and feeling

hopeless and closed off, Elaine stresses how powerful the GriefShare program can be. "I have a lot of people that will call me and inquire about it. We always tell them to come and give it a try. If you don't like it, you don't have to stay. We try to encourage them to go through the first three sessions before they make up their mind to stay or leave. And that pretty well works."

A key component of the program is keeping groups small so individuals can relate to each other. If a group is too big, someone might feel like a spectator on the periphery and begin to isolate. "There are three components to our program. The video seminar portion, a group discussion, and then members go home with a workbook and are given a scripture to look up for that week." The scripture will explain how to deal with a certain emotion and circumstance. Having worked through the program many times, Elaine can't say enough about its effectiveness.

Being able to relate to others is monumen-

tal throughout the healing process. As the Williamsburg GriefShare website says, "You will learn how to recognize the symptoms of being stuck in grief and that you do not need to live in bondage to certain emotions. You will learn valuable information about facing a new normal in life and renewing your hope for the future." Despite pandemic shutdowns, the program continues with live streaming, as well as in-person meetings.

Amidst so much external turmoil, it can be easy to forget and overlook life's truisms. Helping thy neighbor bridges all faiths and all circumstances. Death may be a fact of life and seem commonplace, but Elaine Schrader knows firsthand how profound and far reaching loss can be. Being there for others is what she does best. It's a gift that needs to be given more because it imparts hope and faith to the one in pain. NDN

*If you or someone you know is grieving, visit <https://www.whbconline.org/griefshare/>.*

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Lisa Cumming Photography

## Home for the Holidays

By Lillian Stevens

The holidays are nearly upon us. This year, Christmas might look a little different from the outside. But the promise of the season and its many celebratory traditions remain steadfast, even if some adjustments are in order.

According to the Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly, Rector at Hickory Neck Episcopal Church, their church community is fortunate to include people who are cre-

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ative, resourceful and willing to experiment with new things.

“Even before the pandemic, I was so impressed with this church community,” she says. “There is such a genuine sense of welcome and care that happens here. There is this openness to experimentation which creates a wonderful environment for ministering in general, but it’s something that has been invaluable in recent months.”

Like other churches, Hickory Neck has adapted to the pandemic, moving to smaller in-person services and live streaming the primary worship service. As a place for community, the church has also found innovative ways to reach and engage people. One such example includes a daily pop-up prayer service hosted by Reverend Andrews-Weckerly.

In terms of holiday services throughout December, the rector doesn’t predict a dramatic departure from virtual modes of operation. In the Christian faith, Advent is a liturgical season that marks a time of expectant waiting and preparation for Christmas

Day.

“Advent has always been a large part of Christmas for us,” she says. “Because it’s a season grounded in preparing for that special day of Christ’s birth.”

The church’s plans for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day have formalized and Reverend Andrews-Weckerly is excited about the creative offering that has percolated. “I think our plans strike a fun balance of in-person and virtual gathering,” she says.

“On Christmas Eve, there will be two options. For those who want a taste of community or a more interactive worship experience, especially for children, we will host a ‘drive-through’ Christmas Eve service. Participants will drive by five outdoor stations where they will hear parts of the Christmas story as well as prerecorded Christmas music. They will also be able to create a small crèche, or nativity, in their cars. Before leaving, they will receive a Christmas blessing.”

For those who prefer to gather in the warmth of the home, the church will live

stream its traditional Christmas Eve service from its Chapel.

“Everyone will be able to enjoy the much-loved Christmas carols which will be performed by choral scholars from William & Mary, and we still tell the story of and celebrate Jesus’ birth.”

On Christmas Day, there will be a service pre-recorded from the Reverend Andrews-Weckerly’s home.

“We want a service that encourages a time of special prayer instead, as people gather in their own homes with family.”

It’s a special time in the life of the church and also in the life of the family. Reverend Andrews-Weckerly says that her own favorite personal traditions tend to revolve around faith and family.

“Both my father and grandfather were Methodist ministers,” she says. “So having grown up in a family of clergy, church and Christmas have always been intertwined.”

Growing up, she remembers all the church services, followed by time spent at



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home with her immediate family and then visiting extended family that lived out of town.

“I grew up mostly in North Carolina, but we have family out of state so there was always a drive to visit grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. I think what I remember most is the time spent with family, the meals we shared and the touch football games.”

When it comes time to gather around the Christmas tree, will hers be real or artificial?

“We always have a live Christmas tree,” she says. “Bringing in the smells and the nature that is a part of Christmas has always been special to me. My husband and I have continued that tradition with our girls.”

Leading up to Christmas, there’s a very special holiday tradition at Hickory Neck: the Salvation Army and its Angel Tree outreach program. “Our partnership with the Salvation Army and the Angel Tree gifts we are able to provide is something that has always been very special with our community. We have a Kensington School location on

our property and they also sponsor some of the Angel Tree gifts.”

Reverend Andrews-Weckerly believes that giving back to the community is important year-round, but especially at the holidays.

“We are in a season where secularly there is this exchanging of gifts, and we really want to push to do something special for our neighbors as well.”

While presents delight the children, there are those in the community who need comfort. Even in the midst of holiday cheer, sadness can and does creep in during these weeks.

“In the church, we recognize two realities,” she says. “There is this season of anticipation and celebration. But we also recognize that for some, things can be hard. People among us have sustained loss, whether it’s a job or a loved one.”

On December 21, which is Winter Solstice, the longest night, Hickory Neck offers a Blue Christmas Service. Designed to provide a pause for those who need it, an outlet

for personal mourning even in the midst of such a joyful season.

“It’s a safe place that simply gives people the space to be not okay. It’s a way to acknowledge someone’s grief, let them know they are heard, and that there is this promise of hope and light in what feels like darkness.”

It’s an idea that traces back to the Reverend Andrews-Weckerly’s initial impression of a church community that is big on welcoming and caring for others. Part of that sense of belonging is fostered by the fact that Hickory Neck is a multigenerational church where many members embrace intentionality about intergenerational connections.

“There is always a focus for us on bringing the generations together, something we’ve been leaning into during the pandemic because we are separated from each other physically.”

To her delight, while recently talking with the church’s youth group leaders, a pandemic idea emerged.

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“We are creating pen pals!” she exclaims. “The idea is that the youth in our community and our seniors can write notes to each other and encourage each other. We recognize that it’s a hard time and people are making hard decisions about so many things. We want our community to know that we are aware of the challenges, and we want to be a source of light and cheer them on.”

Over the past four and a half years as rector, Reverend Andrews-Weckerly has truly found her calling.

Before she went into the ministry, the native North Carolinian worked in the non-profit sector. Upon graduation from college, she worked for a year with AmeriCorps, then a food bank in North Carolina.

“We relocated to Delaware, where my husband, Scott, was doing graduate study, and I worked with a Habitat for Humanity affiliate there for almost six years.”

The couple happened upon an Episcopal church in Delaware and fell in love with it. “That’s where I experienced a call toward the

ministry.”

After attending seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, she and her husband returned to Delaware, where she served a parish as a curate, or assistant priest, just outside of Wilmington. That was followed by a time as rector at a small parish on Long Island, New York.

“That was my first experience being a rector, and it was a really wonderful and informative time,” she says.

The couple had their first daughter while in Delaware and their second in New York. By that time, Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly was starting to feel a call for something else. In 2015, she was approached by Hickory Neck.

“They were looking for a new rector. I couldn’t say no! We made the move to Williamsburg in 2016 and loved it from the start! We love the people here, and we love that it’s a university town, and also a tourist town, so there’s always a wonderful combination of things to do.” NDN

## Next Door Neighbors

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# MIRNA CUSTIS



Lisa Cumming Photography

# Feliz Navidad

By Ashley Smith

Like many Williamsburg residents, Mirna Custis is a transplant. Her parents immigrated from El Salvador, and Mirna was born after they settled on Long Island.

When she was young, the holidays were complicated for Mirna. At school, she discovered Santa Claus and the American tradi-

tions surrounding Christmas, but at home, she learned that the baby Jesus brought gifts and that the holiday was first and foremost, a celebration of family.

In keeping with Latin American traditions of her youth, Mirna's family celebrates Christmas with energy and exuberance.

Though the decorations remain the same and Christmas trees shine brightly with the colors of red and green in abundance, the timeline changes. The highlight of the holiday is Christmas Eve as the family celebration culminates at midnight. During the day on December 24th, the kitchen fills with family,



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mostly women, making tamales in preparation for the evening and the next day. Mirna recalls helping her mother as a teenager. “So many in the Latino community work in the restaurant and service industries on Christmas Eve,” she says. “From December 23rd to the 24th, my mother would make hundreds of tamales to fill orders for these families.” Even now, in Williamsburg, Mirna’s mom continues to fill orders for tamales on Christmas Eve. Throughout the day, the smell of warm, savory tamales fills the house as the family gathers.

Though she still helps in the kitchen when she can, Mirna often sneaks out to entertain the children as they agonizingly wait for midnight. To help the children stay awake until midnight, the family plays games together. Mirna and the children bake and decorate cookies, and a few years ago, she invented a new game for them. “We blow up balloons and roll up a dollar bill or a five, maybe even a twenty, to put in them. The children close their eyes and choose a balloon from the ceiling.” Whichever balloon they grab is their

prize, and her nieces and nephews are always thrilled to see the balloons waiting.

At midnight, the family opens gifts from one another and those brought by the baby Jesus, rather than Santa Claus. Though many of the children may go to sleep afterwards, the celebration continues long into the night. Christmas Day is spent resting and recovering from the previous night’s revelry. Thanks to the labor put in by Mirna’s mother and sister on Christmas Eve, no one must cook, and the family can simply enjoy one another’s company.

Mirna loves her family’s traditions, as do her children, but when her sons were younger, she often tried to give them the best of both worlds. “When the boys were seven or eight, I was still learning how to do Christmas the ‘American’ way.” She recalls the assistance that coworkers and others gave to help her navigate the unfamiliar rituals. “I didn’t understand why I needed to put out a carrot for the reindeer or produce a Santa key.” She laughs as she describes sending her boys to bed for ten minutes on Christmas

Eve. “I had to rush them to bed to ‘sleep’ at ten minutes to midnight, so Santa could come in time for them to open his presents on Christmas Eve.”

As the boys outgrew Santa, they came to appreciate and love their family’s traditional Christmas Eve celebration. Johnny, her oldest, has already expressed concern about being able to fully participate in all the activities. A sports management major at George Mason University, this is his first year away from home. “We’re planning to start decorating on Black Friday so that he won’t miss any of it.”

Mirna is still learning to incorporate some American traditions into her holiday. Since her marriage in 2019 to her husband, Aaron, he has encouraged her to save one gift to open on Christmas Day. Her mother-in-law comes to visit from the Eastern Shore, and they enjoy a family dinner that day, which is still unusual for Mirna. However, she wants her family to experience and enjoy both family traditions.

Mirna feels blessed that she can continue

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to celebrate the holidays here in the same way she did growing up on Long Island. Though she considers herself a city girl at heart, Mirna says Williamsburg has provided the best home for her family.

When her boys were young, Mirna found herself struggling with a difficult decision. As a single mom, she worked hard to provide for them, but their neighborhood wasn't ideal and the schools at the time were terrible. She still loves the city... the vibrancy and energy are unmatched anywhere else in the world. Mirna made the best decision for her children and moved to the Williamsburg area to be near her parents. Her parents had moved a few years prior, following her brother, who moved to take advantage of a business opportunity. He now owns The Vineyards in Newport News. She confesses, "Williamsburg wasn't in my life plan. My goal was to get the boys through school and then return to New York, or maybe D.C., as soon as possible."

Yet, as Mirna and her sons, Johnny and David, settled into the community, they

found a village in an unexpected quarter. Soon after they moved, Johnny began to ask to play baseball. Each time she would Google, "Baseball in Williamsburg" the WISC soccer programs would pop up. Since they were so new to the area, Mirna signed Johnny up for soccer for the time being.

She says, "As we would return to the car after practice, he would grab the fence and watch the baseball players with longing." Finally, she figured out how to get him connected to a baseball team and their lives have never been the same. The baseball families from Williamsburg have been incredibly welcoming, and Mirna could not be more thankful for them. Through travel baseball with Revolution and even Legacy soccer, Mirna and the boys felt connected and supported in the community. She also continues to be grateful for the schools and teachers that have had such a positive impact on her boys. Her children attended Magruder Elementary and Queens Lake Middle School. Johnny graduated from Bruton High School in 2020 and David will graduate in 2022.

In the meantime, Mirna finished her associate's degree at Everest. Through her classes at Everest, the Career Center recommended her for a job since she is bilingual. While she despised the cold calling at first, she has since moved on to management with the same company. Today, she is the manager of the medical device division.

In her free time, Mirna loves to host and entertain guests. Now that her eldest son is in college, and her weekends are no longer filled with ball games, she finds herself with more free time than ever before, so she is looking forward to safely entertaining this holiday season.

Despite her initial reluctance, Williamsburg has truly become an adopted home for Mirna Custis, and she cannot imagine raising a family elsewhere. She still enjoys visiting the city, especially during the winter holidays, but she has fully embraced her home in the historic triangle. Williamsburg has embraced her in return, and Mirna wants to wish the incredibly diverse, inviting community, "Feliz Navidad." NDN

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# Staying Healthy this Holiday Season

By Harmony Hunter



Lisa Lee Photography

Picture January 2nd. The champagne went flat hours ago, the confetti has settled, and almost all the leftovers from Christmas are gone. Instead of having a satisfied holiday glow, you're feeling something else: exhausted, off balance, and quite likely a little hungover. Your eyes are baggy, your pants

are tight, and you've got a fridge to clean out. Looming larger than all of that is the guilt of letting it happen again. The holiday break has raided your energy rather than rejuvenating it.

Can this dreaded state be avoided? Is there a January 2nd in an alternate reality

where you wake up rested, hydrated, fit and content? Could there be a version of yourself that took a walk every morning, read a pile of great books, savored time with family and the relaxed pace of vacation?

For Kelly Scallion, a healthful winter holiday is not just a dream. It's about sticking

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to principles around food, movement, and self-care. Kelly points out that she is not an expert. She's not a dietician, a fitness coach, or a professional athlete. She's just a person who runs a household, works a full-time job, and hustles to stay on top of email and groceries in the middle of a pandemic. In short, she is a normal human like the rest of us. If she can manage a happy and healthy holiday, then so can we.

Kelly's fascination with fitness and fun

workouts began when she was a dancer in college. Daily workouts kept her lithe and limber, but after graduation the routine of spending hours in a studio was eliminated, so she created new and interesting ways to keep herself moving. She blogs about it at [kellyrunsforfood.com](http://kellyrunsforfood.com). Her blog has grown to encompass workouts, food strategies, and travel tips.

Kelly recalls her inspiration for starting a blog. "I was involved in dance all through

college and that was kind of my main form of fitness until I left. And once you're out of college and not in a dance studio anymore, you have to rethink what being healthy looks like. I just kind of wanted to share my love of healthy living and lifestyle with other people and hopefully inspire some other people to want to be active and incorporate some of those things into their lives." It was on this blog that she began developing strategies for embracing the delights of the holidays with-

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out staggering into the new year with regret.

Food is generally the prime suspect in The Case of the Tight Pants mystery after the holiday glitter has faded. Whether celebrating Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas or Festivus, rich treats are at the center of the celebration. Suddenly, baked goods are seducing us from heavy platters. Cakes materialize. We make tiny houses from cookies and frosting and then eat them. Chase those with eggnog, wine, and the peppermint mocha creamer in our coffee, and pretty soon our daily caloric intake rivals that of a juvenile hippo.

When formulating strategies around how to select the season's delights and forego those not worth the chewing, Kelly follows some simple commandments. "I have a couple of loose rules. Generally, if it came from a box, it's not worth the calories," she says. And with the exception of peppermint sandwich cookies, this seems like pretty solid advice. "When you go to the office potlucks

or the family gatherings or the cocktail parties, you know, everybody comes with those pre-packaged cookies. But if it's not great-grandma's homemade special recipe, it's not really worth it," she says.

Looking at the role of food in celebration from another angle, Kelly notes that food is at all the gatherings, but it doesn't have to be the only name in lights. "A lot of times, people center their holiday gatherings on the food. But it's not about the food, it's about the people that you're with, it's about the environment that you're in. And I think when you kind of place more emphasis on those things, I think you tend to have a happier holiday season." When we think about the celebratory nature of the winter holidays, our joy can have as much to do with the people that we're with as the plates that we take to the table.

This is not to say that food should not be relished. It is right that we should celebrate the blessings of plentiful nourishment as our

ancestors did, and celebrate the hard work of the summer harvest, whether literal or figurative, together. Just choose wisely. "I think you shouldn't be afraid to indulge during the holidays, but make it worth it. I think some people try to make watered down or low-calorie versions of what should be a special indulgence, and then overeat that instead," she says.

Rich food takes the blame on many bathroom scales, but food is not the only factor in the dreaded holiday bulge. Movement can be a major factor in our physical and mental outlook. When time off from work, company in the house and extra seasonal duties are pressing, it's all the more important to hold to a commitment to daily movement.

"If you've got a workout routine, it's on your calendar, treat it as something that you do no matter what else is going on. If going for a 30-minute run every day is what keeps you happy and healthy and sane through all of these things, then you need to make it

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happen,” she says.

In addition, studies show that sunlight and movement have a tremendous effect on our happiness and health. When days are short and sunlight is scarce, prioritizing 30 minutes of movement outdoors can contribute immeasurably to our moods during a season that can be challenging for people balancing changes in routine or seasonal depression. A leisurely walk alone or with a friend can be medicine for body and soul.

The extra company around the holidays can be a great opportunity to bond in new ways. “Bring other people into the fold with your workouts. Do a turkey trot with your family, or go for that long walk after a big holiday meal and take in the Christmas decorations in the neighborhood. There are ways that you can incorporate fitness into the holiday festivities without just feeling like everyone just needs to sit around. I think you can bring the two together and they don’t have to be two separate things,”

Kelly says.

Physical milestones can help measure our health, but weight and waist measurements mean nothing if we don’t tend to our psychological care. In a year that has been fraught with political and public health upheavals, many of us are feeling frazzled. Kelly emphasizes this point in her blog and in her life.

“I think, especially this year, it’s important for people to mentally take care of themselves. I think there’s going to be a lot of FOMO [fear of missing out] this year with people not being able to feed their families or not being able to have those holiday gatherings that they’re used to having. I think it’s going to be hard on a lot of people this year. I think finding ways to take care of yourself and your immediate family and the people in your household can be huge. Hopefully, this time next year we’ll be able to have that annual chili cook-off that we always have in the office. All the other things that we’re

used to doing like that will come again. But that is okay to be sad about the things that you’re missing out on this year.”

This piece of advice may be Kelly’s most profound. It’s okay to be sad. It’s okay to mourn the holiday that might have been. Sitting with feelings of loss and disappointment and respecting them as the natural reaction to a really weird year can be just as therapeutic as a tall drink or a big slab of pie. While acknowledging loss, we can also look for reasons to find gratitude. Homeschool, telecommuting and restricted lifestyles have given us all new challenges to meet.

In this strange year and in every “normal” year we hope to see ahead, Kelly Scallion’s advice holds to the same tenets: embrace and indulge where it’s truly worth it. Keep moving as a commitment to yourself and as a way to connect with others. Give yourself space and grace to mourn the year you might have had. With all this advice in mind, the holidays can be a piece of cake. NDN

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Lisa Lee Photography

## Making Christmas Bright

By Narielle Living

The holiday season is rich in sensory delights: elegant bows hang on wreaths, candles and lights brighten neighborhoods, and the scent of baked goods mixed with evergreens gives an olfactory experience that defines December.

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ing LeRoy and Carol Jackson. LeRoy and Carol are the husband and wife team who bring a festive Christmas spirit to Centerville Road each year when they start selling Christmas trees. Once those trees are on display and ready for sale, everyone knows the holiday season has officially begun.

They have been settled in this area since 2005, but both LeRoy and Carol are native Virginians. "I have lived in Gloucester most of my life, since I was about six years old," Carol says. "And I'm originally a Denbigh-

Gloucester boy," LeRoy adds.

In his "regular" job, LeRoy is a quality manager for a bearing manufacturer, an industry he has worked in for 20 years. Carol had been a mail carrier for the postal service for around 35 years before she retired from that position, and now she is a real estate agent, a job she thoroughly enjoys. Clearly, this husband and wife team are well suited to run a business together, as they each bring a particular style of working to the Christmas tree trade. LeRoy describes himself as the

behind-the-scenes person, the guy who gets on the computer and runs the daily business operations. "I'm the quality guy," he says. "Remember, I'm a quality manager."

Carol, on the other hand, knows how to sell and loves interacting with people. "It really started with Carol and her family and their desire to grow trees and sell them and make people happy," LeRoy says.

The business of the Christmas tree farm began when Carol's father, John French Hughes, retired from Newport News ship-

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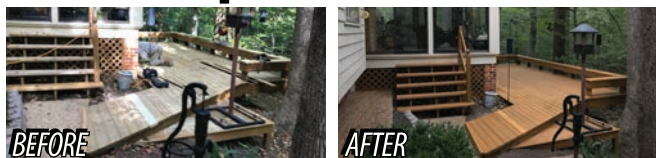
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building as a welder in 1972 and returned to the home that he had built in Newland, North Carolina. At this point, Carol's father decided to try something a little different from what he had previously done. He looked around at the area farms and realized that although his neighbors were mostly raising cattle, the meat market was not doing well. Instead, he decided to follow the lead of other farms and begin to grow Fraser fir Christmas trees. It was a lovely family business that, for a while at least, sustained the family. When her father passed away in 1997, Carol's brother, who had helped him maintain the tree farm throughout the years, took over the duties of managing the farm.

"Carol's brother helped run it in the end, and then eventually Carol's brother's son decided he didn't want to continue the family business," LeRoy says. His brother-in-law, John, contacted LeRoy and asked him if he could help sell the remaining inventory of Christmas trees. But this was no small inventory stuffed in a closet in the back room. This would be about five or six years of sell-

ing Christmas trees in order to have a zero supply in stock.

Of course, LeRoy and Carol were happy to help. They began on Thanksgiving day, 2009. While the main goal was to sell the trees, they also decided to offer delivery and tree set-up. This was a big hit with customers, and people began to return year after year. One of the aspects LeRoy has enjoyed most is being able to be a part of many family's holiday traditions, and he has watched a number of kids who visited the Christmas tree lot grow up over the years. "I used to play catch [at the tree lot] with some guys when they were four or five years old, and now they're working at the tree lot," he says.

In the end, it took seven years for Carol's family to fully exhaust their supply of Christmas trees. At that point, in 2016, LeRoy and Carol had a decision to make. Would they continue to sell trees, or were they done with the business? Obviously, the decision was to carry on with the tradition.

"It was at that time that I'd realized that the previous seven years had created a bond

not only between myself and the individuals I had hired to help me at the tree lot over the years, but I had also created a bond with the community," LeRoy says. "During the past seven years, I kept seeing the same families coming back to the tree lot year after year. The employees seemed energized to come back and work the following year."

He thought about all the families who brought their young children and took family photos of the trees that they ultimately purchased. When viewed from this perspective, the choice was clear. "This made me feel that what I was doing needed to continue."

The next question LeRoy and Carol had to address was where to find their supply of Christmas trees. When he considered his options, LeRoy knew he needed to continue to provide the same quality people had come to expect, so he turned to a neighboring tree farm in North Carolina.

"I began to purchase trees from a farm the family has known for generations, as their quality of tree was of our standard. Starting in 2016, we were still known as Hughes

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Road Tree Farm, but the trees come from the neighbor's farm."

When people buy a Fraser fir Christmas tree from him, LeRoy is careful to provide instructions on caring for the tree. First, he explains the history of the Fraser fir. According to LeRoy, the Fraser fir is one of the most popular trees to use as a Christmas tree because they have a unique combination of form, needle retention, dark blue-green color, pleasant scent and sturdy branches for heavy ornaments. The majority of these trees are grown and produced in North Carolina, where they are a native species. "It requires from seven to 10 years in the field to produce a six- to seven-foot tree," he says.

Perhaps the most important aspect of having a live Christmas tree is maintaining the care of the tree. LeRoy offers the following tips and advice to all of his customers on how to take care of the tree once they get it home:

First, when purchasing your Fraser fir, make sure it gets a minimum of 1/2" fresh cut on the trunk. This will be important to the over-

all health of the tree and allow it to drink the water provided in the stand.

Once you get the tree home, during the first 24 hours, your tree may drink at least a gallon of water and a quart a day afterwards. Try to use a stand that will hold a gallon of water, if possible. The water should be checked often, and never, never let it go dry as the natural sap will try to re-seal the trunk in order to save itself. Once that happens, it can no longer drink, which means the tree will dry out.

There are many tales of what to use to feed the tree, and LeRoy has had people ask about most of these tales, including watering the tree with ginger ale. His answer to all of this is an emphatic, "No." Instead, fill the stand with plain water at room temperature. Fraser firs are naturally sugar rich with sap. "Old tales of using sodas and aspirins in the water are just that, old tales. Plain water is what the tree drinks in its natural environment."

Of course, as all the fire departments stress during the holiday season, safety is of the utmost importance. Place trees in the home

away from heat sources like heating vents, fireplaces, wood stoves and highly sunny windows when possible, as these will prematurely dry the tree out.

Many people prefer to leave the lights plugged in throughout the night, turning them off in the morning. LeRoy says it is best to turn the lights on the tree off when leaving home or going to bed. This will reduce heat to the tree and promote longevity of the tree.

LeRoy tries to stress with his customers that with a fresh cut, plenty of fresh water and common-sense care, your Fraser fir will serve you honorably throughout the holiday season.

Both LeRoy and Carol Jackson have loved their adventure of selling Christmas trees to the community. LeRoy says, "Since beginning this project in 2009 and looking back, I am proud of what I brought to the community, providing some seasonal income for my boys, but more importantly providing a quality product and quality service to the community." NDN



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Lisa Lee Photography

# Food & Love

By Paige Brotherton

Nestled in a cozy house behind the bustle of Richmond Road is a picturesque venue. Soft lighting and painted landscapes give the interior and welcome room an elegant glow. But it's in the industrial kitchen, amidst the gleaming saucepans and shiny countertops, where Noreen Graziano, owner of Creative Cuisines, can be found.

After purchasing the catering business at the beginning of the year, Noreen has been braving an uphill climb to make a new venture flourish in difficult times. However, there has been quite a lot of sunshine along the journey. At first, it seemed that Creative Cuisines was off to a promising start with its new management.

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“Right before COVID, February was a great month,” Noreen says. “I did a Mardi Gras party at someone’s house. I did a 65th birthday party in someone’s home. Then COVID hit.”

As the pandemic swept through in March, closing doors and inducing a strict quarantine, Noreen and her husband, another member of the catering team, had to roll with the changes. “Immediately, I developed a menu so we could do curbside pickup,” she says. Though her venue had to close for the safety of the community, Noreen worked hard to turn her business around so it could still serve the needs of local residents. Even amid all the changes, her business stayed the same at its core: a group of foodies doing their best to share their favorite recipes with their neighbors. Noreen is still experimenting with different recipes to find favorites for her clients. She tries to find a balance between dynamic and familiar in the menu so her customers have a reason to keep coming back.

“Everyone loves our beef tenderloin, so

we will repeat that, but we’ll try to mix it up with the vegetable or either brown rice or a potato side,” Noreen says. Like any true food enthusiast, she is always tweaking old recipes to find an innovative twist. Sometimes the chef will discover a great dish, either through playing around with ingredients or reading culinary resources. Often, new items on the menu reflect the changing seasons and harvests. “We try to use what we have and what’s available at that time of year,” Noreen says. “Right now, you’ll see squash soup because squash is so plentiful.” Although some of the produce comes from larger farms, it’s important to her that her business support other local businesses in turn, finding fresh food whenever possible.

Since Noreen’s favorite part of the cooking process is the careful prepping of ingredients, she gets to see all the fresh produce as it comes in, and nothing compares. “Just yesterday, I was cutting Hanover tomatoes, and it was almost like you were drooling over them,” Noreen says. “Because it’s the end of tomato season, I couldn’t believe I

even had them, and I ended up incorporating them into three different menu items because they were so good.” After sharing her delight with the customers that week, Noreen was even more overjoyed to find out that the guests had loved the tomatoes as well. “They were beautiful,” Noreen says. “Things like that, you get excited about.” Her passion for all-things-food doesn’t end with tomatoes. The changing seasons always bring new produce that inspire the continued creativity behind the dishes on the menu.

Although Noreen decided to carve out a niche area of the culinary business as a caterer and venue host, it was working in the restaurant industry that she discovered her passion for both food and customer service. It wasn’t always the path she intended to take in life, but her love for and proximity to food carried her to where she is today.

“I went to school to be a psychiatric social worker, but all throughout high school and college, I always had a restaurant job,” she says. Although she enjoyed her work with

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people with schizophrenia on Long Island, Williamsburg didn't have many opportunities for growth in the same field. Instead, Noreen turned to her other interest, one she'd been working in all her life: food service. "I applied for a job in 1998 at the Trellis and stayed there for twenty-one years," Noreen says. "I went from server, to assistant manager, to bartender, to manager, to general manager. I ran their wine program for eighteen and a half years." With all these titles came experience on every level of running a successful business. Even more, Noreen enjoyed her job immensely, soaking up the smiles of tourists and locals alike. "It was always a very festive environment to work in. I was passionate about food all the time."

During her time at the Trellis, Noreen developed an understanding of the many facets of the market. "I got to travel all over the world on wine trips where, of course, incredible food was involved as well," she says. "The three owners of the Trellis were incredible mentors, [which meant] you wanted to do a good job, you wanted to learn about

food, you wanted to learn about wine."

When it came time to branch off on her own, Noreen felt confident she had the tools to succeed. "I was in the kitchen all the time. I knew what the food had to look like when it came out, and I knew what it had to taste like. So I began recreating those recipes at home." There's more to food service than just the dishes, however, and Noreen was soon faced with the question of what kind of business she was going to run. Williamsburg has a multitude of wonderful restaurants, but the flexibility and excitement of catering appealed to her most of all. "You can pick and choose the kind of events you want to do," she explains. "A lot of them are weddings, which are extremely happy occasions. They can be a little chaotic, but normally it's a really festive, happy situation."

Lately, with the lack of large and joyous social gatherings, Noreen has been focusing on making her venue a feasible spot for people to enjoy an escape while still feeling secure and being cautious. Although the tables must be spaced out and masks are

worn by all the staff, she has done her best to make the place feel comfortable and familiar for people when they celebrate a special occasion during the pandemic. "When people come, they feel like they're in their home," she says. "When we have ten or twelve people here and they rent the venue for the evening, they feel safe, but they don't have to cook or clean."

Despite a roller-coaster ride of an opening year, Noreen Graziano has high hopes for the future, from a regular wine club to a grand open house when the threat of COVID has passed. It hasn't been an easy time for anyone, least of all small business owners, but she has no regrets as she enjoys waking up every day and doing what she loves.

"Things don't always turn out like you thought were going to, and you have to move on. It is what it is," she says. "And tomorrow is another day." To other entrepreneurs she says, "Make sure you're passionate about what you're doing. If you're passionate about what you're doing, you can overcome anything." NDN



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By Narielle Living

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future.

Neil was born and raised in Utah. He went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for graduate school. After graduate school, he wanted to stay on the east coast and moved to Williamsburg in 2003, where he got a job working at the library.

“When I came out of graduate school, I was looking for a job. This was the closest place [to North Carolina] I could find an offer. It’s been a wonderful ride, and I always feel kind of blessed that it was such a happy accident that I stumbled into this library I knew nothing about.”

In high school and early college, Neil had tried his hand at being on stage. “At that point in life, I could not control my emotions on stage. I was too nervous,” he says. “So, I put it aside for about 20 years. And then my wife, who is an actor interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg, came home from an audition at the players for Stephen Sondheim’s Com-

pany back in 2010 and said, ‘You’ve always talked about getting back into this and they don’t have enough guys for the show.’”

The chance to sing musical theater inspired him, and Neil went to the audition. “I managed to get in the show, and again, I feel lucky that I connected with a group of people who I felt sympathetic with and had a wonderful time. I got the bug, and I’ve been going fast and furious with it ever since.”

Neil believes that his experience with people, and life in general, is what got him over his fear of being onstage. “There are always nerves, but I figured out as an adult how to channel that into a performance rather than letting it overcome me. Suddenly, it was just a lot of fun.” In addition to being onstage, he has fallen in love with other aspects of theater. After a few years of working with the Williamsburg Players, he decided to take a spot on their board of directors. He spent several years as Treasurer before stepping into the

role of President, a position he holds today.

To say this has been his most challenging year is perhaps an understatement. Due to the ongoing health pandemic, the theater has had to shut its doors in order to keep people safe. While Neil does not have quite as much work, he does have concerns for the future of the organization. “It worries me the most for the long-term future of the theater. We’re trying to make plans when it’s almost impossible to plan.”

The Williamsburg Players have been housed at the building on Hubbard Lane since the 80s. “Before COVID hit, we were running a pretty comfortable surplus for the first time. Due to both good business and some very generous donations from people, hopefully our nest egg is enough to tide us over for as long as we can’t do full-scale performances.”

To adapt to the new reality, Neil says that they did find a way to perform outside dur-

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ing nicer weather. “We did a magic show in October. That was kind of our test event to see whether we wanted to do something with a single performer. We put on three performances that day, and it sold well and felt quite safe. Everybody was very good about keeping their masks on and keeping socially distant from people they didn’t come with. People who were more nervous could watch from their cars.”

Due to the success of that show, they will host more outdoor performances as weather allows. For the November 14 cabaret, they had an extra level of safety they had to address. They had to find a way to keep the singers a little farther from the crowd to avoid spreading aerosols into the air.

“We’ve got to rehearse them in ways that we normally wouldn’t, where everybody’s masked but the singer, and everybody else is staying well back of them.”

While many theaters are moving their performances online, that isn’t as much of an option right now for the Williamsburg Players. “We don’t have all the equipment or the experience to do great video productions. It’s not a good time for us to go out and buy a lot of things to upgrade our technology, and we don’t want to be third rate television.”

However, Neil does have hopes that as the cooler weather sets in, the online radio show they are working on will be launched. “It will be an internet stream in the style of a traditional radio theater show,” he says. “We’ve also got online workshops to help people work on skills like auditioning or overcoming stage fright. In the spring, we’ll see whether we can do some small-scale indoor shows with very small casts and socially distant audiences, or if it doesn’t look like that’s the wise thing to do, then we’ll stick with outdoor performances, but we’re trying to keep active.” Neil notes that the challenge is not only a financial challenge, which is sig-

nificant because they’ve still got a mortgage to pay, but it’s also the challenge of keeping people active.

“Chesapeake Bank has been a very good community bank for us in giving us some

**“I really want people to think about those live arts and be ready to support them in the long run and help bring them back when all of this is over and not just start to think that we’re entirely a digital world.”**

**~ Neil Hollands**

support and some options through all of this.” However, Neil, like all the others who work with the Williamsburg Players, is a volunteer and he would like to avoid losing any of the volunteers who have put in so much of their time and heart. “The risk with volunteers is that they will drift into other opportunities if this one becomes largely quiet, so we’re trying to find ways to keep them active.”

One such outlet for the volunteers comes in the form of helping other organizations. They have actors lined up to film YouTube videos that are simulations of bullying and dating violence to benefit the Avalon Center.

“I thought that was a neat opportunity to work with another community group,” he says. “We’re trying to stay open to possibilities and see where our creativity takes us during all this.”

The Williamsburg Players has a three-term limit for positions on their board of directors.

Each term lasts for three years.


“I was just finishing my second term that was supposed to end in June and was honestly strongly considering just moving entirely to the creative side. I like the administrative part of it, but it’s always a little stressful to be the one in charge and trying to keep the organization moving forward. Sometimes, the more effort you put into that, the further you get from the creative part of it that you’re really in love with.”

Neil had begun to try his hand at directing over the past couple of years and enjoyed that aspect of the production. But for now, he will remain in his position on the board, navigating through the challenges of a public health crisis while remaining true to the purpose of the theater.

“When this started, I just felt like it was not the time to leave the organization in the lurch.”

Neil notes that his work in theater and his job at the library do have something in common. “The one thing that I have in common between my library job and my theater work is that, to me, these are both ways of telling stories and giving people ways to live lives that they don’t get to live in real life. And I think that’s a wonderful thing. You never know what’s going to happen to you as an individual, and I think adding these extra stories through reading or going out to theater allows us to see all these other ways of being and develop empathy for other people and what they go through.”

The thought of exposing people to other lives, other ways of being, is what excites Neil Hollands most about encouraging people to read books or come to the theater.

“I really want people to think about those live arts and be ready to support them in the long run and help bring them back when all of this is over and not just start to think that we’re entirely a digital world.” 



# FITNESS FIRST

By Narielle Living

Lisa Cumming Photography

For fans of local football, James Scott stood out when he played for Gloucester High School about seven years ago. His high school career was impressive. His team had 464 plays from scrimmage, and James either ran or passed on 307 of them. He also had 1,292 of Gloucester's 1,680 total yards, which works out to be 77 percent. Clearly, football was a pivotal part of his life, and after graduation, he went on to attend and play for Towson University in Maryland.

His career in football prepared him for

the next step in life. "Fitness has always been a part of my life, because I was always training for football. As my football career came to an end, I started to notice that I enjoyed the training and preparing a lot more than actual football." This realization is what propelled him into a career as a personal trainer, where he could help people not only get or stay in shape but work with them on goals, "to help people prepare for life and better themselves."

Today, James spends his time in the Wil-

liamsburg area working for GymGuyz, a fitness company that works with people in their home. He is now an ISSA & NCSF Certified Personal Trainer, which allows him to work as a personal trainer for one-on-one sessions as well as work with nutrition and group fitness.

"I love it," James says. "I think I've learned a lot about building relationships with my clients. It's much deeper than fitness. You learn a lot about your clients and your clients learn a lot about you." James

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goes on to say that as he builds a relationship with each client, he finds that he truly cares about them and their journey. “You’re hoping that they’re okay and that their families are okay. I’ve realized that I enjoy building long-lasting relationships and connecting with people through fitness.”

Most people do not know exactly what their career will be upon entering college, and the same was true for James. “Every college football player has dreams of the NFL or whatever that next level may be for whatever sport that you play. So, of course that was always the plan when I first got into college and all through high school.” As time went on and James got more experience playing football, he began to think that maybe the next level in football was not something he wanted. But when he started to explore a career as a personal trainer, he immediately knew this was something he loved. “It was an easy transition and an easy choice for me to go to personal training,” he says.

James is passionate about what he does, and his world revolves around his clients and doing what is best for them. The most difficult part of his job? Creating a habit. “I would definitely say the hardest part [of getting fit] is creating that habit of going every day.” The next difficult thing, according to James, is doing the work. “I think the biggest challenge for me, and for most people, is when you want to go [workout] but something comes up. It’s just creating that habit to get in there, whenever you can.” He advises people that even if they cannot make it to a gym or exercise that day, they find something else to do. “Do something. Even if it’s just for 10 minutes, just do something.”

That idea of staying motivated and finding time to keep healthy is an aspect of GymGuyz that separates their business from other gyms. As James knows, it’s all too easy to make an excuse not to get in the car and go to the gym. However, when you make an appointment and the gym comes to you, there are no longer any excuses. And

according to James, he’s never had anyone turn him away at the door once he gets there.

“I think once we show up, people kind of get that mindset that it’s time to get the workout in. It’s a great way to keep your motivation.”

James loves working with a range of different people, and he’s worked with clients as young as 13 to people in their mid-80s. He works with athletes preparing for a school sport and people trying to get or stay fit. For him, it’s about adapting to what each person needs, whether they are starting off working out for the first time or they are recovering from an injury. His goal is to meet people where they are and get them to their goal. In order to do that, he first does an assessment.

“An assessment usually takes anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour, and we go over medical history also do a little fitness assessment to see if they can do things like squats, push-ups, different things like that. And we just tweak and see what they can and can’t do. And then we build from there.”

But motivation can be the hardest part of a wellness journey. James understands that and is upfront with people from the beginning. “I think one of the biggest ways to keep people motivated is to be honest about the journey that they’re about to embark on,” he says. He reminds people who are trying to lose weight that they need to remember the weight gain did not happen overnight, so the weight loss will not happen overnight, either. He notes that sometimes people might even gain a bit of weight as they work to get fit. “I just let them know that it’s going to be hard work, but I’ll be here with them through their journey. I think honesty is the key to building motivation because if somebody thinks that they’re going to lose the weight in one or two weeks, and they don’t, that kills the motivation right there. So, be honest from the beginning.”

Perhaps one of the more difficult things for everyone has been staying fit during the

pandemic. With so many working from home and discovering the joy of working in comfortable clothes, the drive to exercise might have diminished somewhat. However, James said that they adapted really well to working with folks and keeping everyone healthy from the virus.

“When the pandemic first hit, we transitioned into virtual training, so people could still get their workouts.” James explains that the virtual trainings are akin to how schools are holding virtual classes. “We had great success with that, and a lot of our clients actually liked it,” he says. “Many people continued virtual training because it was a lot more convenient for them.”

Currently, James still works with people in their homes. The transition back to in-person training went smoothly, and he continues to put safety first in what he does. “For example, we have different guidelines in place, and we wear gloves and a mask at all times.” In addition, he maintains a minimum of a 10-foot distance from people, and each piece of equipment is cleaned before and after each session.

When James trains people, he brings all the equipment to their home. This includes dumbbells, a variety of mats and bands, and anything else that might be used throughout the sessions. The equipment varies between sessions depending on each person’s plan and personal needs.

James understands that personal accountability is key to getting and staying fit. But when he goes to a person’s home, there’s no avoiding that workout. “We are coming to you. So it’s really hard to skip that accountability, if that’s ever been a struggle in your fitness journeys. We’re pretty much grabbing you off the couch and we’re going to do a workout.”

If a person says no to the 25 push-ups James might ask them to do, that’s okay. He’ll do the 25 for them, as long as they give him some sort of activity. James Scott really wants everyone to be healthy, and he is willing to go the extra length to help make that happen. NDN

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Lisa Cumming Photography

# Home & Garden

By Narielle Living

*Out of clutter, find simplicity.*

– Albert Einstein

Our homes are filled with stuff. Stuff we work with, stuff we play with, stuff we hold on to, and stuff we don't need. When our lives become unmanageable because of the things in our home, it's time to call for help from experts who organize. Nina Donnelly of Orderly Konduct is an organizing expert who often hears the word "overwhelmed" from the people she works with. "Most of

the time, that's the first word I hear," she says. "Sometimes, when they get to the point where they're calling me, they have lost a great deal of time, a great deal of money, a great deal of sanity."

Originally from Pasadena, California, Nina lived there until her mid-teens when her family moved to San Diego. "I really became obsessed with organizing when I was in my mid-20s. I think it came partially from a deep-seated need to have things that made sense, that lined up, that I could count on

being where I put them."

Nina's father was in the military, but it wasn't his lifetime career so she wasn't constantly moving like most families. That all changed, however, when she met and married her husband, Peter, who was in the Air Force. "He retired in 2015 and has been working back at Langley ever since as a contractor."

Prior to going into professional organizing and finishing her Master's Degree in a Six Sigma certification, Nina owned a consignment store when they lived in New York. "I

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loved the idea of owning a business. I have worked for other companies, and ultimately, I ended up in some sort of an organizational management position because that's where my happiness was." With her organizing business, Nina was able to combine having her own business with her passion for helping people while also being able to make a living.

Before people come to see Nina, they have generally tried to do things on their own. "They've tried all of the self-help books and self-help tape series and all that stuff about becoming organized. In fact, a lot of them become so obsessed with getting organized, that it just absolutely complicates their problem. Now they have 50 bins they don't know what to do with, in 50 different places." She says people are often confused, too, wondering why they are not more organized once they have all the storage containers. "I have very few clients who call me to say, my closet looks just a little out of sorts. Those people never call me." Instead, she says, people who

desperately need to get their house under control call her, or people who have no space left to live because items have taken over their space.

When she meets with people, Nina will go through a series of questions to best determine how to help. She often finds people are embarrassed before she even gets to the home. "There's nothing I haven't seen or done, and there's nobody that I can't help," she says to her clients, and encourages them to speak freely so she can focus on what they need. When people tell her that they can't open their doors anymore, or that they have to step on two feet of stuff to walk down the aisles they made in their house, she shifts gears. "Immediately I know, this is not my client. I refer them to a friend of mine who specializes in hoarding disorders."

Nina works best with what she calls "border hoarders," people who need to get organized or have their homes redesigned to stay organized. "And in a day, a week or a month, depending on how big the house is and the

severity of the disorganization, I can really make a difference in their life and reorganize and also redesign their home."

Her process involves going into a home and literally touching every single item in a room. "I go in and I create a staging area. In the room I'm working, there is nothing that I don't touch, because if it doesn't live there forever in my eyes and the agreeing eyes of the client, it's not going to come back into that room. It's going away forever, whether it's going into the kitchen or the garbage or the donate pile." After they go through each item, the only things that are returned to the room are items that will live there forever.

Sometimes, organization is a matter of reducing. "If they have 25 black tank tops, it's possibly because they couldn't find the others that they had. Do you really need 25, or could we possibly go with five and have space for five?"

When people let Nina into their home, they experience everything from trepidation to joy. "I have experienced everything from

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somebody who was overjoyed and crying their eyes out when I walked in to terrified and crying their eyes out because they were so embarrassed.” But once they get past that, Nina gets to work. “We’re going to get done as much as we can get done.”

Nina uses her training in Six Sigma to streamline her approach to a home. She gathers all of the issues, discerns what the processes are, including the Monday through Friday schedule, the children’s and parent’s work schedules, and why things work the way they do. From that point, she can create a manageable flow to people’s lives, which changes the process of their daily organization. “I also teach why I’m changing the process and then teach them how to embrace the process and then to adapt it into their daily lives, because once they see the outcome, they never want to get back to that place again.”

Now that Nina and her family are permanently settled in Williamsburg, she says she absolutely loves it. “Landing here was due to my husband, but we could have gone any-

where after his retirement. We considered going back to California for a little while, but Williamsburg has everything I could ever want in a town, and the proximity to everything is just absolutely wonderful.”

Nina’s advice to people looking to organize their homes is to remember that every room has a unique function to a family. “Every room has its own sort of responsibility to giving back,” she says. “If you have a 3,000 square foot house, every square inch of that house should be returning to you. In other words, it should be in the form of beauty and function. You want to make sure that you’re getting as much out of your home as possible. So, if it’s a space that’s empty, but that’s a beautiful emptiness to you, then that functions for you because there is nothing there. But if it’s not functioning for you, then make it function. My overall advice would be to walk into a room and try to understand all of the ways that it functions for you, and the ways that it doesn’t. It would be like a pros and cons list.”

One of the ways that Nina has found her business has had to pivot during these times is by taking it virtual. “I have many clients who I work with virtually, and it is half the cost of regular organizing. We get on FaceTime or Skype, and we walk through the room together.” This can be especially useful, she notes, for people who are concerned about COVID and allowing others into the home.

Today, Nina Donnelly is following her dream of owning a business and helping people. When she goes to a home, she not only organizes it, but she teaches people what she does so they can maintain the sense of order. “You can teach your children how to get organized,” she says. “A child who learns to be organized young, that will pay off in benefits in the future for them because they will be much more streamlined and much more focused as a learner. Their life will not be as chaotic if they learn to organize very young, and they will be in a much more focused, stable, and calm environment.” NDN



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## Here's what's coming in 2021

### JANUARY ISSUE

#### **Caring for Family**

*Family members who take care of elderly parents at home.*

- In Home Date: December 31, 2020
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Dec. 15th

### JULY ISSUE

#### **Diversity**

*Celebrating locals from all walks of life.*

- In Home Date: July 1, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, June 15th

### FEBRUARY ISSUE

#### **Our Diversions**

*A look at the hobbies of some of our locals.*

- In Home Date: January 28, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Jan. 12th

### AUGUST ISSUE

#### **Local Music**

*Local bands and musical talent.*

- In Home Date: July 29, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, July 13th

### MARCH ISSUE

#### **Volunteers**

*Those who devote time and energy volunteering in their community.*

- In Home Date: February 25, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Feb. 9th

### SEPTEMBER ISSUE

#### **The Arts in Williamsburg**

*A look at the arts in our community.*

- In Home Date: September 2, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Aug. 17th

### APRIL ISSUE

#### **Home Sweet Home**

*The nuts & bolts of buying and selling a home.*

- In Home Date: April 1, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Mar. 16th

### OCTOBER ISSUE

#### **Health**

*Annual health issue.*

- In Home Date: September 30, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Sept. 14th

### MAY ISSUE

#### **Education**

*People involved in all aspects of education.*

- In Home Date: April 29, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Apr. 13th

### NOVEMBER ISSUE

#### **Thankfulness**

*The gratitude issue on appreciation and inspiration.*

- In Home Date: October 21, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Oct. 5th

### JUNE ISSUE

#### **In an Emergency**

*Emergency workers who respond to our needs.*

- In Home Date: May 27, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, May 11th

### DECEMBER ISSUE

#### **Let's Eat!**

*Great holiday recipes.*

- In Home Date: December 2, 2021
- Advertising Deadline: Tues, Nov. 16th

# Williamsburg's IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD photo challenges

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photograph (top) and the  
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You made it through the first  
photo challenge.

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INTERMEDIATE



*Williamsburg's*  
**IN THE**  
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**THREE SANTAS**

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Breathtaking views of Shellbank Creek Private dock, boat launch, patio, firepit & on a cul-de-sac  
Recently remodeled kitchen w granite, new appliances, & gas range  
1st floor primary BR w 2 closets, hardwoods throughout 1st floor  
Finished lower level walkout overlooking the creek • \$575,000  
Check out the website:  
3308AshView.info

**Charlotte Turner**  
Find your way home  
ASSOCIATE BROKER  
**757-784-4317**  
charlotteturner@lizmoore.com

**Happy Holidays!**  
**Wishing You a Joyful 2021!**

**Denise Fleischmann**  
REALTOR  
*passion. performance. perfection.*  
**757-846-0202**  
Denise@LizMoore.com  
WelcomeHometoWilliamsburg.com

**TWENTY TWENTY DONE!**

You helped make this a great year for me - thank you! I am looking forward to 2021 with confidence it will be even better. If you are considering selling next year, the market is in your favor and now is the time to start planning. Give me a call today!

**dianebeal**  
REALTOR  
*passion. performance. perfection.*  
**757-291-9201**  
dianebeal@lizmoore.com