

March 2020

WILLIAMSBURG'S

# Next Door Neighbors<sup>®</sup>

VOL. 14, ISSUE 3

PRICELESS

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## At Your Service

Victoria Breschel



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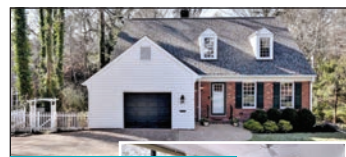
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*Meredith Collins, Publisher*

This issue's theme, *At Your Service*, is represented by stories about people providing services we might rely on from the cradle to the grave, and at many points in between. There is a nice spread on Child Development Resources (CDR), starting on page 25, a local organization that provides extensive and exceptional services for local families and their children. We invite you to take a look at the information on their upcoming auction.

This issue also includes an interview with the President of a local funeral home whose family owned business provides a delicate service to those needing help at a time of loss. We also interviewed locals who provide services relating to health, emergencies, education, athletics and more to their neighbors.

An unplanned sub-theme also emerges of families working together to help other families. There are family owned businesses, families in similar situations leaning on one another, and families who reach out for services and later give service back to other families. For a family-oriented town like ours it is really no surprise, but it is sure good to know these services are out there and these families are our neighbors. NDN

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VICTORIA BRESCHER

# Creating Connections From Behind the Bar

By Caroline Johnson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For almost two decades now, Victoria Brescher has called The Whaling Company her second home. The customers here have become friends. The owners and other employees have become like family. As a matter of fact, working with her sister, Lisa, it's safe to say it doesn't just "feel" like family! Born and raised in West Point, Victoria's life has involved bits and pieces of Williamsburg all throughout, leading up to her recent move here.

Previously a 911 dispatcher, she found herself looking for a job 20 years ago after leaving her position without much thought about what would lie ahead. "After leaving my job, I felt like it was the end of my world," Victoria says. "Pretty soon after giving my two weeks, I saw an ad in the newspaper that The Whaling Company was hiring a bartender. I thought it was just something I'd apply for as an in-between... and the rest is history!"

Interestingly enough, the last time Victoria had been in The Whaling Company prior to her interview was for her high school prom. She knew the positive reputation they had in the community and decided to give it a shot. After immediately clicking with the bartender

at the time, Victoria knew it was the right fit. They offered her the job, and she accepted.

Even with no experience as a bartender, she quickly caught on. "Sometimes it's better to hire someone without experience because you can train them to do things your way," Victoria says. "I'm inclined to be hospitable. I was familiar with bars because I had spent enough time on the other side of them and I was able to learn the way my predecessor did things." Five years into her gig, Victoria found herself in the driver's seat as the full-time bartender had to leave her position. Now, it would be her bar to run.

As she began bartending regularly, she found herself going out more and more after work. What started off as fun eventually led to nights of bad decisions that became her new "normal." "It began to hinder my life and attitude, as it put my whole day in a new perspective," Victoria recounts. "I remember wishing people would leave earlier so that I could go out with friends or make it to the liquor stores before they closed." She found herself drinking to do away with emotions and things that made her feel less than.

After a series of bad decisions, her family began to notice how dire things were getting and stepped in. "I went to a detox hospital, which was a blessing," Victoria says. During her time there, she remembers getting a call from her boss, offering to find her another position within the restaurant so that she didn't have to be behind the bar as she entered her newly sober life. "It made me sad because it felt like it was 'my' bar. But on my first night back at the bar, I was overwhelmed and had to stop. I knew that I may not be able to do it right then and there, but that I had to try." As she finished her first night back, she knew that she would be able to do it if she was dedicated to making it work. "Once I realized that drinking wasn't what I was here for, that's when everything changed."

Now, sober for nine years, she's proud to be a sober bartender. "I'm where I was born to be, and it took me a good part of my life to realize that I would never learn to drink right," Victoria says. "It's crazy to me that I get to be somewhere I love and get paid for it. I've had to learn what makes me tick and what I can and can't do." As a lover of people, Victoria finds

joy in the day-to-day interactions that make her job in the service industry so special.

Considering herself an inquisitive person, she is immensely interested in hearing the stories and life updates from people who come into the restaurant. "Because I've been here so long, I know so many people and so many things about them," she says. "It's more than just about the basic things, it's their lives and their stories."

In her role, she's seen evolutions of families who come in regularly, watching kids grow up as she serves people old and new. She always keeps an eye out for a way to make things easier and more enjoyable for the people who visit, including special requests for their food or ways to make them more comfortable like getting a seat cushion for an elderly person without being asked. "If I have the opportunity to make someone's life better, why wouldn't I do that?" Victoria says. "I know my people."

She does her best to create an atmosphere where people feel seen and welcomed. She encourages friendly conversation and steps in to help people find commonalities with others, especially if someone is new. One thing she doesn't hide is her inability to remember

names. "I gave up on trying to remember names and instead remember things about the person," Victoria says. "I acknowledge that I might forget your name, but I do my best to remember things about you, like where you're from and what you do."

When people visit The Whaling Company, it's Victoria's goal to make them feel acknowledged. "More often than not, people want to interact with other people. Society makes it hard to break the ice, but it's a beautiful thing to observe and be taught by humans on a daily basis." Though her interactions are mostly positive, life in the service industry can, of course, lead to some challenges. "My biggest realization is that everyone's expectations of things are different," Victoria says. "My main goal is to leave you satisfied, and if not, I have to feel okay that I did everything in my power to remedy a situation."

It's this dedication to service that makes Victoria so well-loved by guests who come in, whether it's a weekly occasion or a once a year treat. As a resident of Williamsburg, she understands that people have many choices when it comes to where to go to grab a drink or a meal. Because The Whaling Company is

locally owned and operated, she makes it her goal to help people enjoy themselves enough to want to come back. "If we're on someone's radar of places they love to go, then I'm doing something right."

Outside of work, one of Victoria's favorite ways to spend time is going to country music concerts. As major fans of the Zac Brown Band, she and Lisa attend as many concerts as possible, including more than 10 shows over the years, at times getting the chance to go backstage. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her two dogs and her cat as well as crafting, which is soothing to her.

At The Whaling Company, Victoria Breschel recognizes the importance of the journey she has taken to get to where she is now. "Whether I realize it or not, I'm part of people's lives," she says. "Unlike before, there's no part of me now that wants people to leave early... it's my safe space here, and it's a beautiful thing." She has come a long way in her 20 years behind the bar, and she doesn't see herself going anywhere anytime soon. "I love what I do back there," Victoria says. "Now that I'm at a place in life where I love myself, too, it's an even brighter world." NDN



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# MICHAEL POWERS



## A Life of Service

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

By Narielle Living

The large building that houses the James City Bruton Volunteer Fire Department on Forge Road in Toano is home to a large amount of equipment, including a fleet of two class-A pumpers, a squad truck equipped with a full complement of heavy rescue equipment, a 75-foot mid-mount aerial ladder, a 3500 gallon capacity tanker, two brush units as well as a water rescue vehicle and two boats. This equipment is

necessary because of the wide area the firefighters respond to and the range of situations they may encounter. Michael Powers loves working as a volunteer here and serving people during times of crisis.

Michael is very active within the organization. He serves as President, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program manager and active firefighter and has been involved in

helping people in some way or other his entire life. "I just celebrated my 50th year of being a volunteer firefighter," he says with a smile. His career began in the small town of Colonie, New York, outside of Albany, where he worked for 42 years. "I started there as a volunteer firefighter and worked my way up all the way through the ranks."

After his sons and grandchildren relocated to

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California, Michael and his wife moved to be closer to them in 2011. He served with the fire department there, as well. However, after two years, both sons moved, one to Seattle and the other back to Albany. They were then faced with another decision: leave or stay in California.

“My wife’s brother lives here in Williamsburg and they’re the only two left [in that family].” Michael’s brother-in-law told them that this area would be the perfect place to relocate as there are still four seasons but they are not as dramatic as upstate New York. They moved to Williamsburg in 2015, and prior to moving Michael emailed his application to the James City Bruton Fire Department. En route to Virginia, while driving through Albuquerque, New Mexico, he received a phone call about his application, asking him to come in for an interview the next day. “I said no, probably not tomorrow. I’m in Albuquerque.” He told them he was headed for his new home in Colonial Heritage and needed a few more days to arrive. “The rest is history.”

Once he began working with the fire department, Michael became Vice President for a year and then was elected President. He served as

President last year and is serving this year. In addition, he manages the CERT program, which educates volunteers about disaster preparedness and response. “CERT actually originated in California. I was one of their lead instructors,” he says. “So, when I moved here, naturally I got involved in the CERT program and I started helping to teach the program.”

As an instructor with the CERT program, he encourages people to go one step further and enroll in the SKYWARN program run by the National Weather Service. This is another volunteer program that teaches people to recognize incoming severe weather to keep communities safe. Because of the risk of tornadoes and hurricanes, volunteer weather spotters can help people to safety before an incident occurs. Michael considers himself fortunate to have had two good careers in his lifetime.

“Obviously, you can’t live on a volunteer fire department salary, so I managed the communications network,” he says. “I was the communications division supervisor for a local police department up north. I did that for 15 years, and then I was a transportation director for a large school district in upstate New York for 18

more years.”

While in college, Michael worked as a carpenter prior to graduating with a degree in criminal justice. His goal at that point was to join the police force, but an accident that seriously injured his hand nine days before he was due to start changed all that. “I had five other operations to put it back together. Of course, I had to give up my position as a police officer.”

About two-and-a-half years after his accident, the chief of the department called Michael to tell him they were starting a new communications division and were planning to manage it with civilians. He was offered a job in this division and accepted it. “I did that for 15 years. And while I was doing that, I drove a school bus part time.”

One day he received another phone call from the school bus transportation department. They offered him the job of assistant director, complete with a raise in salary and more vacation time. He accepted the job mainly because of his sons. At that time they were still young, and he spoke to them about this new job opportunity. “The first thing my younger son asked me was, are you going to have nights and weekends off?”



*I enjoy being here because I have the freedom to come and go as I please. I still drive at 73. I enjoy being able to help the community in any way I can. I have built the raised flower beds, various benches around the community and other things. I enjoy being able to do that and remain independent as long as I can.*

– Ed Worley , Resident of 3 years

  
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he says. When he told them he would, his sons said to take it. "They were involved in Little League and Pop Warner football. I missed a lot of that because I used to work on Saturdays and Sundays."

Michael has lived his life in service to the community. "I used to chase fire trucks around on my bicycle, and my mom and dad always had a bet whether I was going to be a policeman or a fireman first. I ended up being a volunteer fire-fighter and working for the police department, not as a patrol officer but communications supervisor. I ran their 9-1-1 Center, and that was fun." Michael notes that the first thing people generally ask him is why he does this type of work. "I just like being able to help somebody who needs it when they need it. I guess that's the personal satisfaction I get out of it whether it's good or bad."

Michael and his wife have been in this area for a little over four years and so far, they love it. "I still get the change of seasons, but they're not as drastic. We enjoy it. We live in Colonial Heritage and have become very embedded there. You can be as active as you want in that community."

One thing he stresses is the importance of public education related to house fires. "They are preventable," he says. "We have to change the perception the American public has that fires are accidents. They're preventable incidents, and with the right education, awareness and knowledge you can prevent fires from happening." Michael says that simple things can help people avoid the unthinkable. "Don't leave a candle burning when you're not there," he says. "Don't put extension cords under your carpets. And the electrical octopus is bad, too. When people have 16 things plugged into something designed to plug two things, that's not good. We've gone to houses and seen power strips plugged into a power strip, which causes problems. Please don't leave space heaters on at night. You have to keep things three feet away from a space heater; 36 inches is the safe zone. Remember, you're a combustible. And no smoking in bed."

Michael Powers has spent a lifetime in service to others, helping and guiding people through some of the most devastating moments of their lives. He is dedicated to what he does and plans to continue his work for as long as he can, helping as many people as he can. NDN

## Next Door Neighbors

Publisher.....Meredith Collins  
 Editor.....Narielle Living, [narielleliving@gmail.com](mailto:narielleliving@gmail.com)  
 Copy Editor.....Ginger White  
 Photographers.....Lisa Cumming, Corey Miller  
 Graphic Designer.....Sue Etherton  
 Account Manager.....Anne Conkling

### Writers

Linda Landreth Phelps, Caroline Johnson, Brandy Centolanza, Alison Johnson, Susan Williamson, Lillian Stevens, Melanie Occhiuzzo, Morgan Barker, Susannah Livingston, Erin Zagursky, Cathy Welch, Erin Fryer, Christopher LaPointe, Michael Heslink, Naomi Tene' Austin, Gail Dillon, Lauren Plunkett, Ben Mackin, Laura Lane, Dawn Brotherton, Elara Strand, Anne Conkling, Harmony Hunter, Wheston Chancellor Grove, Ashley Smith, Kathleen Toomey Jabs, Page Brotherton, Kristine Hojnicky and Cynthia Fellows Rich

### Advertising Information

**Meredith Collins**

(757) 560-3235

[meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com](mailto:meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com)

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

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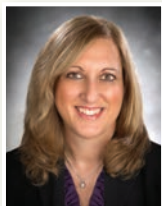
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# More Than A Job

By Linda Landreth Phelps



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

The traditional symbol of hospitality during colonial days was a pineapple, an icon still in use today. Pineapple Inn and Housing Center on Richmond Road fills a niche within Williamsburg's hospitality industry for longer stays than are typical for hotels or timeshares, and it seasonally houses international exchange visitors.

"When I was hired as manager eleven years ago, I had no idea what I was getting into," Amy Lee says. She had experience with many other hotels and timeshare companies and had even worked for a lawyer. "None of those jobs were related to my actual college degree in speech and language pathology, however," Amy says with a rueful laugh. "This is a career

I drifted into and I've loved with a passion from the very first day."

Amy lives less than five minutes from her workplace. "I'm pretty much on call 24/7," she says. "But I'm very lucky to have a great staff, and I can take time off when I really need it." It's not something she dreamed about doing when she was a child. "My dad was a

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Laura Kinsman, Owner

Navy Supply Chief, and I was lucky enough to spend all my school years in Coronado, California, near San Diego. In the seventies and eighties, it was the best place ever to live! We stayed put while Dad traveled, so mine wasn't a typical military family experience."

After high school graduation, the family moved to South Dakota, where Amy started college. "I made some great friends, heard great music and read great books during this time," she says, things she still enjoys as an adult. Amy graduated from Minnesota's Mankato State University, then rejoined the family, which was by then stationed at Yorktown. "Even though I never worked in speech pathology, I use a lot of the skills I learned in my studies, particularly with the older guests here."

When Amy began working at Pineapple Inn, she found the Exchange Visitors program was her steepest learning curve. The approximately 1,000 young college students who travel yearly to Williamsburg on a special cultural exchange visa have come a long way to learn more about America, perfect their

English skills and gain work experience. They are an invaluable source of seasonal labor for our tourist-centric town's economy, working at jobs such as restaurant servers, hotel maids or at Busch Gardens. "They act as our ambassadors when they return," Amy says, "but while they're here, we're also learning about their culture and customs. It's an amazing program, and we offer a fun, safe and comfortable place for them to stay."

Amy wears many hats over the course of a season. She functions as activity director, hotel manager and substitute mom for the 300 students who are her guests at the Pineapple Inn, but her arms encompass them all. She plans parties, programs and regular cultural exchange events for the group. "I am the point of contact and co-chair of the International Students Outreach Program (ISOP) here in Williamsburg. I was 'volun-told' to the position," she says with a twinkle. "You'll be great at this' I was told!" There are about 32 different organizations like theirs throughout the U.S. "ISOP is hoping to get even more people onboard and involved with us in our work

with the government, vested employers and the community. We want to make sure these young people have a good experience and feel appreciated. Without them, many of our local businesses would be in deep trouble."

There's a lot of logistics involved in these visits, Amy explains. "I know when and from where they're arriving and from which country, and if they need a ride to or from the airport, I can arrange it. Instead of a taxi from Richmond for \$110, I use a local company who will do it for \$50. I also try to meet requests for certain roommates when I can." For many of these students from countries as diverse as Philippines, Turkey and Dominican Republic, this is their first solo experience abroad. "I'm here to listen and help, and when a hug is needed, I provide that, too." No matter how many consonants or vowels, Amy learns each student's name. By the end of their summer here, in many cases they call her "Mom." If the day comes that Amy decides to travel the world, she'd never need a hotel; many of "her" kids stay in touch and would love to repay her kindness. "This busi-

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ness model isn't what we started with. It's something we've built here at Pineapple Inn," she says with justifiable pride.

This international hosting activity is seasonal by nature, and one day all of the college students return to their own countries, leaving 114 empty rooms to fill. "We are a business, and the owner, Greg Granger, needs to make money to stay open, but since he's a big believer in helping people, it's so much more than that. In fact, it may be the real reason Pineapple Inn is here, because for the rest of the year we're home to nontraditional, longer-term residents." They serve people who may have been precariously housed, those who find it difficult to stretch a paycheck to include first and last month's rent for an apartment. However, they can afford a week-to-week arrangement until they can get back on their feet again.

Pineapple Inn is meant to be a short-term solution for their guests. "Many of them are going through tough times, but we want them to move forward," Amy says. "Nobody wants to raise a family in a single hotel room

with no kitchen." All of the rooms have a full-size bed as well as a full-size bunk bed in them, and the goal is for everyone to have their own sleeping space. The Inn is currently 60 percent occupied, and about 50 percent of those rooms contain children. "There are 41 children living at the Pineapple Inn," Amy says. "One mom has five children. The residents here are amazing. I watch the struggles, and I'm always in awe of the parents who are making it work. We're here to assist them."

Amy coordinates with many churches and nonprofit organizations such as 3e Restoration, Inc., serving the community and breaking the chain of homelessness by encouraging, equipping, and empowering those who are affected. The first thing noticed when entering Amy's office is the well stocked and neatly organized food pantry to the left in its own separate space. Donations from generous local organizations and businesses usually keep the shelves appealingly full. There are communal kitchens here where cooking is allowed, but sometimes a pound of hamburger doesn't stretch far enough for a

growing family, so the free pantry fills in the nutrition cracks. A big bowl of fresh fruit is always available for healthy snacks on the office's counter. Upstairs, space is designated as a common room where guests can gather to socialize. It's furnished with couches, chairs, a television and several computer stations for access to the internet.

"I firmly believe that people leave here better than when they arrive," Amy says. She has a particular soft spot in her heart for the senior citizens who stay with them for a time. "There are a lot of 'elder orphans' around who have no family or close friends left. They no longer have anyone who knows their name. My staff and I work hard to acknowledge every person on this property by name daily."

There are other places in Williamsburg that house international students or long-term residents, but Amy and her staff believe they're unique in their approach.

"We're 100 percent invested in the people here. It's my job," says Amy Ann Lee, "but it's more than a job, it's a mission. I love it... every single minute of it." **NDN**

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# First Point of Contact

By Narielle Living

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Visitors to Colonial Williamsburg must purchase tickets for tours and events and often have a range of questions related to their visit. Is everything in the area handicapped accessible? Do all events run year-round or can visitors only see them at certain times? Are there different tickets? What is the best kind of ticket for each person? All of these questions are answered by guest service spe-

cialists. Geoff Hummel, the supervisor for the guest service specialists, ultimately handles the majority of issues surrounding ticket sales.

“I am the supervisor for the guest service specialists, which are the folks here at the visitor center and in the historic area who sell admission tickets, event tickets and that sort of thing,” he says. “Our staff is oftentimes the first point of contact for guests when they get

to Colonial Williamsburg so we want them to have a friendly face and experience the hospitality that Colonial Williamsburg has been known for since the very start.”

Teaching hospitality is not necessarily something that can be done, but Geoff says that the people on his team generally have a love for working with and talking to the public. “The other skills, like learning informa-

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tion about the historic area events and programs and computer skills are a lot easier to teach."

When a guest service specialist is hired, they undergo extensive training, all of which Geoff oversees. Training rooms have computers with ticket systems for people to learn how everything works, and there are discussions and tours about everything that is available to the public. In addition, there are always opportunities for the guest service specialists to learn about the ever-changing programs offered so that they are able to skillfully direct people to the events they are most interested in.

Events at Colonial Williamsburg change seasonally, so it is important that the people who work with Geoff are able to articulate the details of each new program. But not everyone, Geoff included, can keep up with the whirlwind of happenings. "Things are constantly changing here at Colonial Williamsburg, especially in the historic area. We want to keep our programming fresh for returning visitors. And so, each year and throughout the year, our agents attend programs in the historic area so that they know the latest and most exciting thing going on. Because not everyone can see every program, when our agents go out to see something they'll come back and talk with the rest of the group about what they saw and what they enjoyed, as well as what they learned from the program." In addition, the agents spend time discussing potential audiences for special events so they are able to recommend activities to a variety of guests. "The entire team knows what's going on at any given time."

Geoff was raised in New Kent, Virginia, where he attended high school, and later moved to Richmond for college. "After college, I moved to California for a few years for a change of scenery." Initially, he had not planned to return to this area, but he met the woman who would become his wife while living in California and brought her back to the east coast for visits. "We would come back to visit, go to friends' weddings, that sort of thing, and she really fell in love with the place. There's nothing like having someone experience something for the first time to remind you of what you like about it." When the time came for them to begin looking for a house, the market prices in California were astronomical. "We lived in Silicon Valley, and it's a very different housing market out there," he says. When they compared the housing prices in California to those here in the Williamsburg area, the difference was notable. "We decided to make a big change and moved back."

Returning to his roots allowed Geoff to have a fresh start, including with employment. "It gave me an opportunity to work here, specifically in the historic triangle. I'd been working in retail before that which I enjoyed very much, but this is something I'm passionate about." When he was younger, his parents had brought him to Colonial Williamsburg to visit, and he loved seeing the historic reenactors. "We met up with a reenactment group, and we started doing that for a number of years. I was a revolutionary war reenactor when I was young, and it is something I've started getting back into now that I'm in the area." Geoff's group is a private group based out of Florida. "We do early 18th century pirate living history, which is a lot of fun. We try

to do a very historically authentic thing.”

It is evident that Geoff loves his work and truly enjoys helping people. “The thing I like most is getting to talk to people from all over the country and all over the world and to see what kind of experiences they bring to us and what it is about this place that attracts them. We have so many people who come in that either have no idea what Colonial Williamsburg is and we get a chance to explain it to them, or they have stories like ‘I came here on my fourth grade field trip and I haven’t been back since’ or folks who had their honeymoon here decades ago and just enjoy returning year after year.”

Geoff’s job is focused at the Visitor Center. The Visitor Center is designed to be the first point of contact for the guest so people like Geoff’s team can interface with them and meet all of their needs. Although tickets can be purchased online and guests can use a mobile app, Geoff says that the importance of what he and his team do cannot be underestimated.

“One of the great things about coming and talking to a person is that you get your questions answered and make sure everything is very clear.” Although the internet may have changed some aspects of their business, Geoff says, “We’ll still be here, helping people, for a long time to come.”

On a typical work day, Geoff arrives at the Visitor Center as the building opens and begins getting everything set up, including starting the film that has been featured since 1957, “Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot.” He loves the fact that many returning guests are able to watch it again with younger family members. “We have grandparents bringing their grandchildren to see it for the first time, so that’s really exciting. The guests come in and purchase their tickets, and we give them all the information they need. Then they take that walking path or hop on our shuttle bus and experience Colonial Williamsburg.”

Although he does not do many direct ticket sales, Geoff focuses on resolving issues that may arise for guests. “That’s the biggest part of my job,” he says. He has worked in this position for almost five years and has quickly grown to be an integral part of the team. “I haven’t been here that long compared to a lot of folks but I am looking forward to being here for a long time. It’s a great place to be for a long time.”

In the meantime, Geoff and his wife have settled into their new home here. “We have a nice house, land, 10 ducks and two dogs. This is not something we could have in California. We’re happy to come here and get a little of that country living.”

Each day, Geoff and his team work hard to provide the most updated information available. Geoff takes a philosophical approach to his work as well. “I think the most important thing for people to understand about Colonial Williamsburg is how relevant it is in our modern environment. So many Americans can find a voice here that resonates with their experience, not just the founding fathers that we may think of when we think of colonial America, but everyone.”

In working hard to be as helpful as possible, Geoff Hummel has created an environment where his co-workers and visitors alike rely on him for accurate information. “There are a lot of moving parts, and I try to be a good point of contact for people.” NDN



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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Assisting in Life's Final Journey

By Lillian Stevens

Life's final journey is one that everyone must eventually walk alone. For those left behind, the pain of loss, while planning services for their loved ones, can be daunting and difficult.

Chris Stone understands this task well. "A couple years ago, I had to plan my dad's funeral," he says. "I've been on the other side of this, and it is tough."

Chris is president of Whiting's Funeral Home, the business his father Honorable William T. Stone ran for many years. In January 2018, when Mr. Stone passed away, Chris took up the mantle. He hopes his dad would be proud.

"My father was my hero. I remember doing assignments in



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grade school when we were supposed to write about our favorite superhero characters. While others were writing about Superman and Batman, I wrote about my dad.”

Located on Pocahontas Trail near Quarterpath Road, Whiting’s Funeral Home has served Williamsburg families since 1932. Chris is committed to honoring his father’s memory by continuing and building on that legacy. In order to fully grasp what that entails, he offers a bit of family history.

“My dad spent much of his childhood in Baltimore, Maryland, but his mother died when he was nine years old,” Chris says. “By the time my dad was 13, he decided he no longer wanted to stay there, so he traveled by bus to Newport News, Virginia to live with his Aunt Edna. She was married to McKinley T. Whiting.”

Together, the couple raised William, who would later become the family patriarch.

“When Mr. Whiting died, his wife continued to run the business as long as she was able to before passing the reins to my father.”

Chris recalls that his father was a family man who always made time for the family.

“He was a successful businessman, as well as a lawyer, substitute judge and funeral director.

It amazed me that he could do all of that and still be home to take me to the park in the evenings.”

When Mr. Stone was appointed as a substitute judge in Williamsburg/James City, he was the first black judge to serve this area and is thought to be the first black judge appointed in the Commonwealth in modern times.

“My dad’s law practice was also the first integrated law firm in the City of Williamsburg,” Chris says. “These accomplishments took place during a time of segregation.”

Chris’ mother was a stay-at-home mom who supported her husband’s efforts in the family business and remains active at Whiting’s to this day. He has three siblings, each successful in their own right.

“My sister is a partner at McGuireWoods law firm in Richmond,” he says. “My oldest brother worked in law enforcement and later retired from Anheuser-Busch and now works in the business with me, and the next to oldest brother is a food service manager for Virginia Union University.”

Chris believes that the involvement of family reinforces and enables them to better support the families they work with. Much of it is em-

pathy, some of it surely comes from being born into a family committed to serve.

“When assisting someone who is grieving, I will do anything I can to take something off of their plate,” he says. “Sometimes that just means helping them prioritize the things they have to do so it’s not as taxing on them. I can remember during the week that I planned my dad’s service, I had a splitting headache trying to make sure I put together a service that was reflective of him. It is very important to us to learn as much as we can about the families that we work with, so we can best serve them with respect and in the spirit of their loved one.”

As an Apprentice, Chris meets with every family who comes through the doors, handling arrangements alongside and under the supervision of Tyrone Jones, the licensed manager and embalmer. “I hope to be fully licensed in another two to three years. The apprenticeship involves 3,000 hours of hands-on training, as well as an educational component followed by national and state board exams.”

In addition to his work as an Apprentice, Chris’ title also includes Pastor. He says that the best part of his job comes at that moment when he sees the relief on the face of a client when



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they first view their loved one or after services have been conducted.

“When they are satisfied with the services that were provided, then I know we have successfully done our job. Being there for the families is really my number one goal.”

Some of the things that funeral service providers see are unimaginable to most people.

“People think that we are immune to or can stomach anything,” Chris says. “Personally, I have a hard time walking through an emergency room or hospital because I don’t handle live trauma very well. It disturbs me to see people suffering, but once an individual has transitioned, I know that they are at peace and no longer in pain. Death is a natural progression of life.”

Interpersonal skills and empathy are essential in this business. Unfortunately, death can bring out the not so flattering sides of families, so assisting families in grief can be a delicate matter indeed. Chris says he can discern quickly when families are together or split on the issues of making arrangements for their loved ones and quickly tries to find a middle ground that will satisfy everyone.

“Working with bereaved families and preparing a funeral service is not a simple task.

No two funerals are alike, and each individual handles grief differently. Some hold emotions in while others express their grief outwardly, or in different ways. Some who have already experienced death in their family may already have themselves prepared.”

Chris says he was fortunate to be at his father’s bedside when he passed. “I was there with him as he transitioned. He wasn’t scared. In fact, he was actually ready. It was one of the most memorable experiences in my life. Witnessing his death has helped me to be able to minister to the families we serve in a different way.”

As difficult as it is losing a beloved family member, Chris doesn’t believe it’s the end. “Yes, we will miss this person in the flesh. But I believe when you care about a person you don’t live without them, you begin to live for them and with them inside of you. I think it’s possible to be closer than ever before.”

Prior to 2018, Chris and his family lived in Atlanta where he worked as a Technical Service Manager for the city’s school district, overseeing up to 50 field technicians serving as liaison for just about anything related to information technology.

“It was interesting and fun,” he says. “But my

heart was with the funeral home. I told my wife before we got married that someday she’d be living in Williamsburg because I always knew I’d come back home and get in line with the family business.”

Relocating to Williamsburg was a pretty significant move for the family, as his wife was born and raised in Atlanta, and Chris had lived there for over two decades. Today, Alicia works alongside her husband at Whiting’s.

Chris Stone’s prayer is that his children will continue the family legacy. “Our 16-year-old daughter, Harmony, comes in after school and helps out,” he says. “She and our son, Jaylen, assist with visitations, funerals, first calls and other duties as needed. Our son is a student at the University of Georgia, but he helps when he’s home on breaks. They have a gift for funeral services. They know how to serve our families with the same spirit of excellence that they serve God. They really enjoy making sure families feel loved and supported during such a difficult time.”

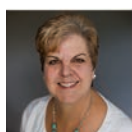
Chris and Alicia also have another daughter. “Our oldest daughter Tyana lives in Georgia with her two sons. She’s a busy mom, but she also assists with some of our print and graphic jobs.” NDN



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JANA WERTEL

# Dedicated to Her Customers

By Kristine Hojnicky



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Walk into Sportsmans Grille during the weekday lunch rush or on a weekend for dinner, and you'll likely encounter Jana Wertel darting between the hostess stand, her tables and the kitchen. Though she's only worked at the sports bar and grill for about eight months, she has settled comfortably into the rhythms of the restaurant and is enjoying the comradery she's found with her coworkers.

"There is nothing like a bond between people who work in a restaurant; the servers, the kitchen staff, the bartenders," she says.

But the most important people to Jana are her customers. Jana arrives at her tables radi-

ating warmth and positive energy, and it's immediately evident that she is passionate about ensuring her customers enjoy their dining experience from start to finish.

"I like helping people and making sure people feel good," she says. "When people go out to eat, they're looking to be waited on. They want service, and they come out for an experience."

Originally from Hampton, Virginia, Jana was inspired by her mom and two older sisters to pursue a career of service. The youngest of three, she remembers playing waitress during childhood games of pretend, and after watching one of her older sisters work as a server, she

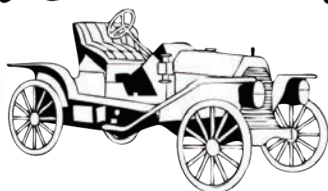
thought she too could give it a try.

But with little experience, then-18-year-old Jana found it challenging to secure a position. Eventually she landed a job with the local IHOP. As she learned the ins and outs of being a server, she discovered she really enjoyed the industry.

"Over the next fourteen years, Jana worked in restaurants across the peninsula and Richmond. The one job she remembers most fondly was working at Maxie's Delicatessen in New York City. The move north came after her parents separated. Jana's mom offered her the option to live in either Knoxville, Tennessee or New York

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City. Jana was attracted to the action of the big city and says New York was the only choice.

"It was really cool working in Times Square," she says. "[Maxie's] was known for their cheese-cake. A piece of it was \$18. It was ridiculous, but it was really good."

Her father, a frequent diner at Sportsmans Grille, recommended she apply to work there. She did and was hired.

"I absolutely love it here," she says with a smile.

Despite the positives of the job, Jana also faces some big challenges. It's not surprising that the recurring one she faces the most is managing her interactions with difficult customers. Unfortunately, Jana says it happens regularly, "at least once a shift," but she has learned how to respond positively to these situations so she can continue providing good service to all of her guests.

"A lot of stories that servers will tell are not the good ones," she says with a laugh. "To be a server, you have to be one of those people who let things roll. If I was to let the little things that people did to me bother me, I would have a terrible shift every shift."

Instead, she's adopted a philosophy that is centered around treating people well in spite of their unfavorable behavior.

"I like to put positive vibes out into the world and be as nice as possible," she explains. "Sometimes it affects the customer. They can tell you're genuinely nice, and their attitude will change."

Good communication is also vital for Jana to do her job well. She assesses each customer's mood when she arrives at a table and intuitively makes adjustments to successfully cater to their needs. She notes that not everyone is the same, and it's important to her that she provide personalized service for each of her customers.

She does however admit that sometimes mistakes happen, but she has learned that those are not a reflection of her overall ability to do her job well.

"Good service isn't necessarily about not making any mistakes. It's what you do when you make the mistakes," she says.

"I think they respect the fact that you admit it was your mistake," she says. "Communication is a major part of this industry. If you're not communicating with your tables or your guests, you're just not going to be successful."

When she's not managing tables at Sportsmans Grille, Jana is a mom of three with another baby on the way. She enjoys cooking, though she admits she's not great at it, and watching movies. But her favorite pastime on her days off is to go to the beach, which for her was an

advantage of returning to this region with its proximity to the coast.

"I like being in the sun," she says. "I try to do as many things outside as I can, especially when it's nice."

While she enjoys the flexibility that life as a server provides her, she hopes to eventually transition into a more traditional job with a predictable schedule and consistent income. She notes that the physical demands of working in the restaurant industry can be taxing, and she feels the strain more as she gets older.

"My dad taught me to be a hard worker no matter what it is that I'm doing," she says. "I'm not sure yet [what the future holds]. I may try going back to school or [do] something different like an office job. I just know that I can do things when I really try."

After a moment's thought, she says, "There's so many things I still want to accomplish. I feel like I've been through some things in my life so the fact that I have come through all of that and completely changed my life around, I am very, very proud of that. I consider that my greatest accomplishment as of now."

Until then, Jana Wertel will continue to be a source of positivity at Sportsmans Grille, serving up southern hospitality and ensuring her customers have a great dining experience. NDN

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# MEGAN SING



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

## A Team Player in the Industry

By Susan Williamson

Megan Sing likes nothing better than going out for an enjoyable dining experience, either with friends or even on her own. As team leader, waitress and bartender at Food For Thought, she tries to provide that experience, a special moment, for other diners. Megan has worked in the food service industry since she was 14, when her mother signed for her to

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work in her hometown of Chandler, Arizona.

She has worked at many restaurants and a few retail establishments, including a stint in London, England. She started with Food for Thought in 2013, went to England in 2015 and returned in 2017, when she was promoted to a management position as a team leader.

Megan describes the local restaurant as providing international cuisine with a philosophical twist. The menu is varied, including comfort food favorites, gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian offerings, seafood and more exotic fare. “We serve bread before an entrée, and we even have gluten-free bread for the diners who need it. Our kitchen staff works really well together in a very small space,” she says. “We take pride in being able to accommodate special requests. If someone is challenged by a food allergy, the kitchen manager works to prepare an allergen free meal.”

According to Megan, the specials change, but she says, “Basically we keep with what works.” Among the recent specials offered was a vegan meatloaf. Comfort foods include pot

roast, mashed potatoes and gravy, ribs and “Grandma’s meatloaf.” The general manager, owner and kitchen manager come up with the menu items with input from chefs.

The walls are covered with pictures of inventors, scientists and social leaders as well as fun quotes which Megan loves. The sign out front says, “Eat, Drink, Think.” A small box of cards for discussion sit on each table. “We want people to put away their phones and have conversations and real experiences, either in groups or as solitary diners.” She adds, “There’s nothing wrong with treating yourself to a nice meal.”

“My goal is a pleasant dining experience for every customer.” She takes it as a personal challenge to try to cheer up grumpy customers and joke with them. The owner, Howard Hopkins, says, “Happy guests, happy Howard.” Unlike many local business owners, Howard owns only one dining establishment. Thanks to his staff, he has been able to step back from the business and spend more time with his family. “Our general manager, [Ania Prochowska], is awesome,” Megan says. “She stays on top of

every aspect of the business.” The management staff hold weekly meetings to discuss profit and loss and other management issues. “We have a low staff turnover, and we often rehire someone who has been away at school or out of town.”

Megan enjoys the opportunity to connect with different people and learn their stories and the ability to do that is especially true in a tourist town like Williamsburg.

One downside to the food service business is the long hours. Megan usually works 40 to 50 hours a week, but she and her boyfriend, also a shift manager, are expecting a child in April, so she is working less. “Once I was working at another restaurant and I worked the entire month of August without a day off. I made good money, but I was very tired.” The work is physically demanding. “You must be able to multi-task. Thanks to my experience, I can unload a dishwasher in two minutes.”

Megan’s favorite position is tending the full-service bar. She likes creating cocktails and interacting with the people sitting around the

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bar. Her favorite cocktail invention consists of gin with elderflower, cucumber, lime, mint, basil and a splash of melon liqueur.

When Megan first began working as a waitress, she had wanted to be a bartender but couldn't take that job. "I wasn't legal because I was too young. When I worked at Carrabba's on my 21st birthday, they told me I could start bartender training. I was thrilled." She learned much more about crafting cocktails during her time in London.

The job can change with every shift. "It's like a lottery," Megan says. "You can have enjoyable customers and good tips or you can have a bad night with demanding customers and poor tips and there's nothing you can do about it." January and February are the slow months, but nothing is predictable.

"Most of our customers are really nice, but sometimes someone can say something that really hurts a server's feelings. I've had to comfort workers crying in the restroom because of something someone said. Servers have to learn not to take an idle comment personally." She

said she wished diners would realize that the restaurant is often busy and there may be several orders ahead of theirs. She also would like diners to remember that servers are human and like to interact with the guests.

Megan followed her then, now ex, husband to England. The couple lost a stillborn child. "Our marriage didn't recover from that trauma," she said. She returned to Williamsburg alone. Having gone through that experience, she is understandably nervous about her current pregnancy. Sometimes it's difficult to talk with customers who ask if this will be her first child. "I have learned that still births and miscarriages are more common than you think."

Megan was born in Texas and spent many of her childhood years in Chandler, Arizona, but often visited her maternal grandmother in Williamsburg. When she was 16 her parents divorced. She moved with her mother to Williamsburg where she graduated from Bruton High School before attending Thomas Nelson Community College. "I think of Williamsburg as a safe place," she says, and she looks forward

to having friends and family nearby when her baby is born. Her mother now lives in Hampton, although her grandmother has moved to Florida. Her boyfriend's parents are also local. "My best friend is also a team leader."

In Megan's infrequent time off, she enjoys art and graphic design, usually using Photo-shop and Procreate on her iPad. She would like to work more in graphic design for menus. "Often people who design menus and software programs for food service have never worked in the food service industry, so they don't always know what is needed. Menus can be hard to read if they are not arranged correctly." She enjoys designing the children's menus and likes making signs with quirky quotes.


While food service work is often a temporary job for students and others in transition, Megan Sing has spent years working and honing her craft. She is a people person who enjoys hospitality and all aspects of food service in a sit-down, service-oriented venue. She is clearly a team player in an industry where that skill is extremely important. NDN

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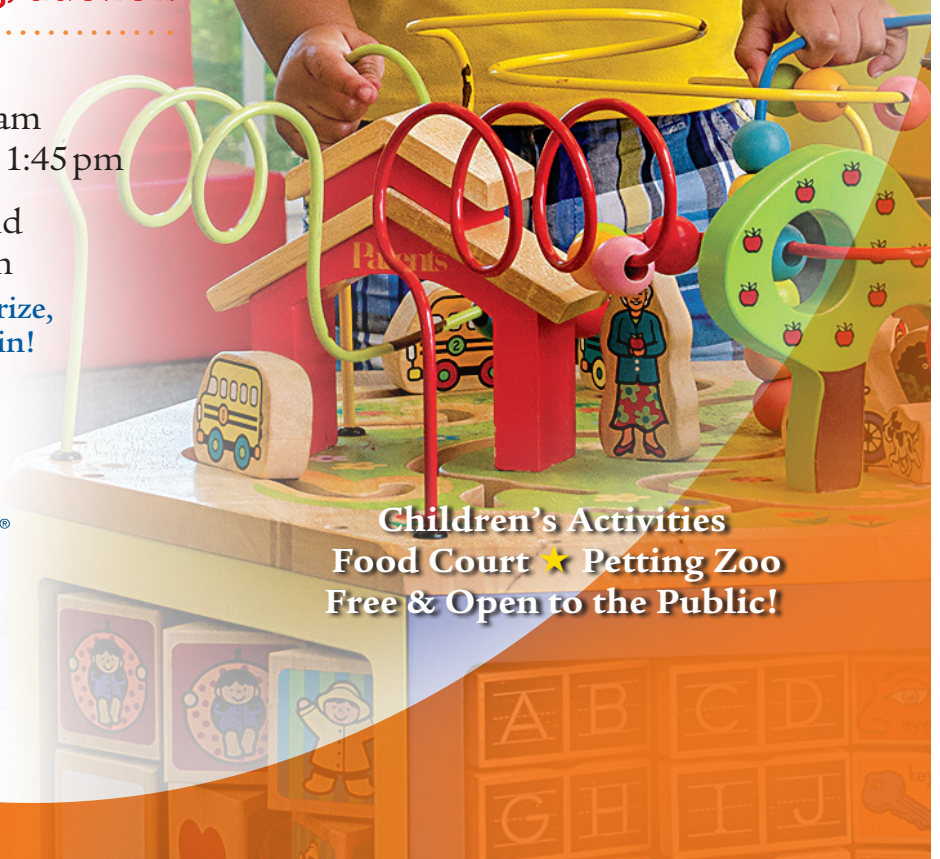
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# JADE RANGER



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

## THE MANY WAYS TO *Serve*

By Brandy Centolanza

For more than 30 years, Jade Ranger's father, Jerry, worked in the pharmaceutical industry as a district manager for Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) in Maryland. It seemed inevitable that Jade would also work in the field. Jade is now a pharmacist and co-owns The Prescription Shoppe in Williamsburg with her husband, Henry.

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As a child growing up in Bowie, Maryland, Jade initially wanted to be a doctor, but changed her focus during high school after shadowing at a small local pharmacy. She worked for two hours a day at the pharmacy during her senior year.

“I became acclimated with what a pharmacy is and what a pharmacist’s responsibilities are,” Jade says. “I really liked it. I decided to become a pharmacist. A pharmacist is still a part of the medical field, still gets to help people and still has that interaction with patients, which is what I wanted.”

Jade relocated to Hampton Roads in 2005 after high school graduation to attend pharmacy school at Hampton University. She trained for six years and gained experience by working at a Rite Aid pharmacy as well as within the Sentara and Riverside Health System before earning her Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 2012. Her first job out of school was at a Farm Fresh supermarket pharmacy in Newport News.

“I really enjoyed it,” Jade says. “The pharma-

cy was small so we got the chance to know our patients, and they got the chance to know us. It was a great experience.”

Jade met Henry in pharmacy school, and the couple settled in Williamsburg to raise a family. They have two children, Jacob and Joshua. In 2014, she took a position as a staff pharmacist at the Walmart Neighborhood Market in Settlers Market shopping center in order to be closer to home. She worked there for five years before she and Henry decided to take a leap and open their own pharmacy. The intent for opening their own pharmacy was to get to know patients on a more personal level and treat them like members of the family.

“It had been something that my husband wanted to do for years,” Jade says. “We wanted to open a place where patients could come and feel like they are really cared for and looked after. That’s what we are all about. Patient care is our specialty. We want to know what their needs are and how we can work to meet those needs.”

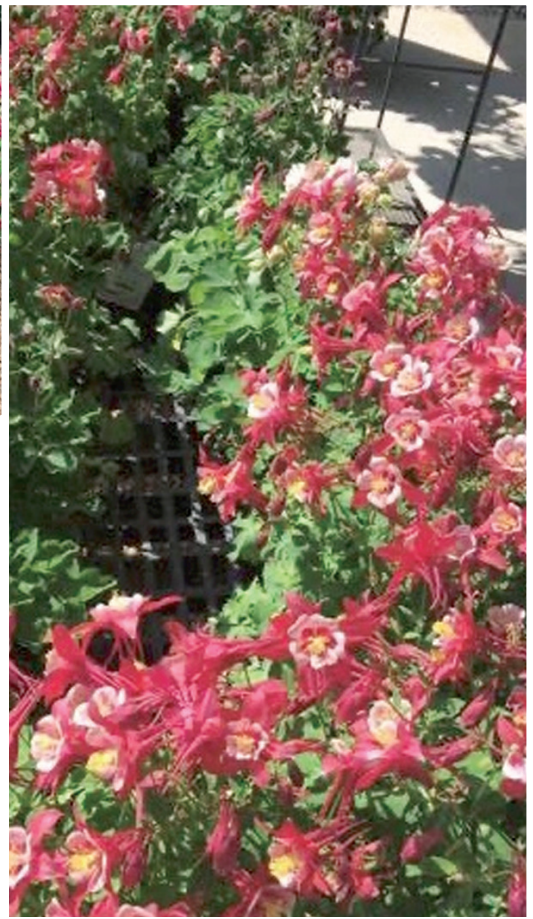
Jade and Henry stay busy filling roughly 130

prescriptions a day, “which is really good for an independent pharmacy that has been open for less than a year,” Jade says.

“It’s been an amazing experience,” Jade says of opening her own business. “It’s phenomenal to see so many people supporting small businesses. It’s going so much better than we could have imagined.”

Not only does Jade enjoy serving her family as a wife and mother and her community as a pharmacist, she is also an active member of her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. The international sorority is the first Greek-letter organization established by African American college women and prides itself on its services giving back to all mankind. Jade, who was initiated into the sorority in 2017, is a member of the Williamsburg chapter of the sorority, Lambda Lambda Omega.

“It is a true sisterhood, a network of women who are all like-minded and care about their community, and that is why I wanted to be involved,” Jade says.



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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has five main focuses, or targets, and Jade is chairwoman of a committee for Target II, which emphasizes women's health and wellness.

In February, Jade organized an event at Burn Boot Camp in honor of American Heart Month. She is also planning two open forums for women this spring. In April, Dr. Sarita Golikeri, a physician, will speak to women about stress and teach them how to handle stress holistically through diet and exercise. In May, National Mental Health Awareness Month, MPact counseling will facilitate an open discussion about mental health. They will also talk about the new suicide emergency hotline. Jade is working on confirming locations for both events.

Later in the year, the sorority will discuss campus safety with coeds at William & Mary. In addition, members of Alpha Kappa Alpha also give back by helping people register to vote as well as paying off student lunch tabs at local schools.

Breast cancer awareness is also a women's health issue near and dear to Jade's heart. Her mother, Janet, is a 20-year breast cancer survivor, which inspired Jade to join the Virginia Breast Cancer Association in 2011.

Jade is also active in her church, New Zion Baptist Church on Longhill Road. She is a part of the church's Ladies Of Virtue and Excellence (L.O.V.E.) ministry. The L.O.V.E. ministry mentors young ladies in middle school and high school, organizing monthly activities to help steer them toward a positive path in adulthood. This includes hosting lectures and workshops on life skills and college preparation as well as taking field trips to local colleges and social and cultural events.

"We help prepare them for different parts of their lives," Jade says. "We have a great group of girls."

Jade enjoys the small-town feel that living in Williamsburg brings.

"No matter where we go, we always run into

someone we know," Jade says. "That's what I like. Williamsburg is a great place to raise a family."

Her two children love to frequent Kidsburg at Veteran's Park as well as hang out at their grandmother's house and at their pharmacy.

"We are very family friendly at The Prescription Shoppe," Jade says. "This is like their third home. Grandma's house is their second home."

Jade is always there to lend an ear to her customers and offer hugs or small gifts whenever they need. She is also working on staying connected to them around the clock through an increase in social media presence by offering tips and motivation to keep people as healthy as can be for as long as can be.

"One of the things that owning a small business has done for me is brought out a love for me for public relations. I am so grateful for such a support people have here for small local businesses. This has been an incredible journey for us. We feel so blessed." NDN

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# TINA CROWE



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

## KEEPING RETAIL PERSONAL

By Dawn Brotherton

Tina Crowe knows retail and has been immersed in a small business environment most of her life. "No one who works their small business is in it to become a millionaire. Most of us do it because we love it. We just like to provide something to our community," she says.

Tina's father owned a little convenience store in Williamsburg since before she was born. "We all worked that store. If we weren't working in the store, we were outside working the

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store, whether it was going with him to auctions or picking out produce.” Then her mother started a garden to grow her own vegetables. “She would tend the garden, and my dad would take some of that home-grown produce to the store to sell because it was a better quality, and he could sell it cheaper to the people around the area,” she says.

Now she is following in her father’s entrepreneur shoes as the owner of Sweet Tea Williamsburg, a Southern-inspired boutique located in New Town that features apparel, accessories and gifts, including a large selection of Life is Good merchandise. She first opened her doors in 2016. Her father was a source of support for Tina, always giving advice and encouraging her. “[Owning a business] was in my blood,” she says.

Anyone who owns their own business knows it’s a lot of work, and you can find Tina in the shop almost every time the doors are open. If she isn’t there, she’s probably working on the financial books at home, searching through catalogs to find the best merchandise for her clients or strategizing about where she wants to take her store next. Tina is focused on the personal touches, liking helping customers find the perfect gift and providing complimentary wrapping.

But her favorite part is interacting one-on-one with the customers. “I want to know what they want. I want to talk to them,” she says. Tina has regular visitors in the store who walk around New Town for exercise. They come in for the company and conversation, not necessarily to make a purchase. That is the community feel Tina is going for.

Although for many people the terminology has shifted to small business, Tina prefers to refer to Sweet Tea as a family business. “That term just isn’t used anymore. It’s kind of lost. But we are all trying to provide for our families, and it’s not cheap to own a business.” She would like shoppers to feel more connected to the personal side of the business owner that is overlooked with larger retail stores.

Tina knows that sometimes shopping online is more convenient, but the personal touch is missing. “It’s most rewarding when somebody comes in, and they are either telling me how they loved something they bought here or that the person they gave it to absolutely loved it,” Tina says. She reports a close second is when someone is referred by a friend to come to the store looking for the perfect dress. “That’s why you do it.” She also explains big box businesses can sell something for pennies on the dollar where small business owners don’t have that luxury. “We’re not buying things in hundreds of thousands of quantities, so we just don’t have the margins to sell things at those prices.” Tina prefers to concentrate on quality products.

“A lot of my products are either designed in the United States or made in the United States. I’ve touched every single thing in the store. I try everything on. Sometimes I bring way too much of it home, as my husband will tell you,” Tina says with a laugh. “Pretty much everything that I’m wearing is from the store because I just love the products.” She is picky about the brands she brings in and most of them have a bigger mission than simply turning a profit.

Life is Good donates part of their profits to kids in need. Here for the Girls works to improve the lives of young women affected by breast cancer. Chala Handbags is an advocate of animal rights and welfare and donates a portion of profits to animal rescue. The list goes on. Tina has

a story to go along with each item in the boutique.

Because of the name, many people come into the store expecting a tea shop, but the name actually has a personal meaning for Tina. "I grew up very southern, and I grew up on sweet tea. I love sweet tea. When I was looking for a new name, it just kind of popped off my tongue." It also has a double play on words. "When I was growing up, I was always referred to as sweet, then there's T for Tina." But for those who need to get their sweet tea fix, this summer, Tina is offering Sweet Tea Tuesdays, where clients can enjoy free tea while exploring the shop for the perfect gift.

Tina grew up in Williamsburg and graduated from Lafayette High School. She met her husband, Nick, in 2011. "He was so incredibly giving and supportive and really wanted for me to excel in something he knew I would be proud of," Tina says. Nick's Life is Good t-shirt preference is what initially pointed her in the direction for her merchandise.

Sweet Tea Williamsburg is not a franchise, so all decisions and purchases are left up to Tina. "I pre-purchase, so I own everything in the store. And if I don't sell it, I don't have anywhere to send it back," she says.

There are other ups and downs with being a small business as well. "It is hard when people come in, mad at you because they ordered something online [from one of her vendors], and they want to bring it back here to return it. I have nothing to do with online sales."

With so many options, family businesses have a lot of competition, and what works for one company may not work for another. "People are conditioned to shop for sales. They see this outrageous price, and then it's slashed, so you're getting sixty or seventy percent off an unrealistic price, a price you would never pay normally," Tina says. She relayed a story where a client came into Sweet Tea wearing a dress very similar to one Tina's store was selling. The client explained what a great deal she got because it was fifty percent off. Because Tina really liked the dress, she went to the store searching for the bargain. She discovered the dress at fifty percent off was still \$10 to \$15 higher than the dresses at Sweet Tea of comparable quality.

"I know a lot of my fellow business owners. We're putting a price that is an affordable, normal price. We aren't going to have crazy 70 percent off sales, because we want our everyday price to be a price that you can come in and feel good about paying," Tina says.

With the workload, it's been hard to find time for outside hobbies, but Tina and Nick make it a point to see live music and spend quiet time together. Someday she would like to get back to yoga and walking, but for now, she is keeping busy in the store and making time to visit her son, Joshua, who graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University and lives in Richmond.

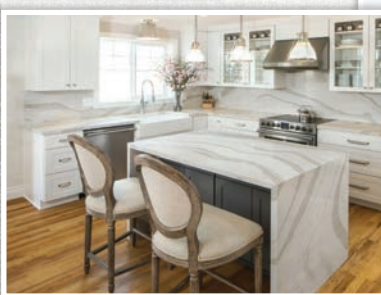
Her parting thought to share with readers is to be mindful. "I would love for people to know that they can still shop online. You can still shop big box stores; I do. I'm not going to stop. But you can still support your local businesses and restaurants. You just have to take a moment and think about it. Instead of running into a department store to get that gift, think about what small business you can support by shopping there." NDN

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# We Rock the Spectrum

By Harmony Hunter

Local resources can be scant for kids who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, but Williamsburg's We Rock the Spectrum indoor gym is a welcome option for local families. It's a space where children growing up with neurodiversity or sensory processing challenges can do something vital for their development:

play like regular kids.

"We consider ourselves to be an inclusive developmental play gym," says owner Kimberly Moore. Kimberly operates the gym six days a week, doing everything from welcoming visitors in the morning to sanitizing the place each night. "All children are welcome to come in

and use the equipment, but we specialize with kiddos that have special needs; specifically, ones who are on the spectrum or have sensory issues."

Kimberly has deep roots in Williamsburg, the town she's called home since she was born. Born and raised here, she graduated from Bru-

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ton High School and received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Christopher Newport University. After a 12-year career in local hospitality, she had the opportunity to own and operate We Rock the Spectrum gym when the former owners had to relocate. She was happy to have the opportunity to not only own a business but to continue running a space that can make a significant difference for children with special needs and their families.

Early identification and early intervention strategies for an autism diagnosis have made great advances in the last decade, and therapeutic support like We Rock the Spectrum gym is a sign of the growing recognition of the need for local support. Understanding that autism can present across a range of severity has allowed parents, educators and medical professionals to meet kids where they are and offer strategies that help support healthy development early in life. Diagnosis is now understood as the Autism Spectrum Disorder, or simply ASD, acknowledging the diversity of sensitivities and difficulties that accompany the disorder. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or

CDC, now estimates that ASD affects as many as one in 59 children.

As the parent of a young person with ASD, Kimberly knows well the particular challenges parents face at the playground. She says, "I have a kiddo on the spectrum. He's eight, and when he gets overstimulated, he's an eloper. So like, one minute, my child could be perfectly fine, sitting there playing and then the next minute, he runs off because he's just overstimulated." Losing a panicked child on an unfenced playground can have frightening possibilities, and it's just one of the many stumbling blocks that moms and dads of ASD children face when trying to provide some play time for their child.

Unstructured play itself is a cornerstone of every child's early development. Kids learn social norms like sharing, turn-taking and conflict resolution on the playground. Motor skills and coordination are practiced on swings, ladders and slides. Pent-up energy is released, imagination is engaged and friendships are formed. But for a child on the autism spectrum, these interactions can be fraught with difficulties.

Safety can be an issue for parents of children

who might seek a solitary spot to regroup on a crowded public playground. "A lot of these places have multiple access to different areas, so you really have to be on top of your child the entire time to make sure that if they do go into sensory overload that they're not going to run into a different area and get themselves hurt," Kimberly says. This is just one issue that We Rock the Spectrum helps mitigate with a single entry and exit point. "Here at our gym, we provide the space where the parents can sit down, and they can be comfortable. They can play with their kids, they can watch their kids, but they don't have to worry about that overload happening and then running off to a different section."

A little extra grace around social exchanges is another need that's fulfilled at We Rock the Spectrum. For children developing interpersonal skills on a different curve than their peers, sometimes even simple childhood interactions can be confusing and frustrating. We Rock the Spectrum is a space where adults and kids alike anticipate that some people might express themselves in unfamiliar ways.

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This accepting environment is a welcome relief to parents of ASD children. "Some children do different things that other people might say is odd behavior. But to them, it's perfectly typical, like the flapping of the arms or rocking back and forth; not necessarily paying attention to someone when they're talking. We understand those aspects, and the parents who come here know that we understand that," Kimberly says. "As a special needs parent, it's very difficult to find people that you trust and that you know will understand what your child is going through."

One of the more difficult aspects of raising a child with ASD traits is that the play interactions that should be a simple rite of youth can be disappointing and confusing for them. We Rock the Spectrum is designed to help kids build self-confidence and spend time in a happy environment where an understanding community makes successful playdates possible. "A lot of these kiddos are nonverbal. It's difficult when other kids aren't used to being around kids who are nonverbal. I have one child that I work with here at the gym who is nonverbal,

and his initiation of play is to push. That's the only way he knows how to get people's attention is to touch them. Some kids are like, 'why is he pushing me?' and it's hard to explain to them that that's how he's trying to communicate with you," Kimberly says.

A safe place to play in an understanding environment is a gift in itself, but We Rock the Spectrum goes one step further and sneaks in meaningful therapies under the guise of play. Each franchise features ten specific pieces of sensory equipment designed to promote specific areas of development. One example from their literature says, "The zip line is a great way to build upper extremity strength, muscle endurance, enhance the ability to integrate and tolerate movement and help give self-confidence as children challenge themselves to hold on long enough to make it to the other end." A trampoline, swings and play tunnel offer similar support modalities to address targeted developmental needs.

Activities that allow opportunities to rock, jump, climb and swing are all chosen to assist with balance, vestibular and proprioceptive

perception, planning, coordination and stimulation processing. The genius of this array is that to a child, it all just feels like fun. "All the equipment that you see here can be used or is actually used in actual therapy. So, like, I can continue doing therapy with my son here in the gym versus driving all the way to Newport News or Norfolk. A lot of times when you have physical therapy or OT, you only get a half an hour or 45 minutes, and then you don't have access to equipment anymore. But parents can come here and they can use the equipment and they can continue doing that therapy with some other families around doing therapy with them here. The kids don't even know what's going on: they're just having fun," Kimberly says.

Of all the things that Kimberly Moore wants people to hear about We Rock the Spectrum, the message she wants to share most is that this gym is a place for meaningful therapy and positive growth for kids that might need a little more support than a regular playground can offer. "This is not just a place to have fun on a rainy day," she says. "These kids develop so much in this gym. It's just amazing." NDN



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## Service to Country, Veterans and Youth

By Ashley Smith

Retired Commander Bill White grew up in the Adirondack mountains at a time when few job opportunities existed outside of the local paper mill or industrial corporation. Although his father and brother both served in the military, Bill's career plans focused on college. However, after only one semester at the Agricultural Tech school, he drove 150 miles to the nearest recruiting station. The picture on the wall was a

submarine launching a missile. "I told that recruiter, 'I want to do that!'" With that declaration, Bill's naval career began.

His wife and childhood sweetheart, Anne, says, "Bill's life began when he joined the Navy." From boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois to "A" School at Dam Neck in Virginia and submarine school in New London, Connecticut, Bill absorbed everything there was to know about

submarines. He enjoyed the hands-on learning that submarine school provided but returned to Dam Neck to specialize as a missile tech. "The exposure to so many new things was incredible!"

Finally, he transferred to his command, the USS Nathan Hale, homeported in South Carolina. While on the Hale, Bill spent the first two years learning and qualifying on every system possible. The final test was given by the Cap-

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tain who blindfolded Bill and tasked him with locating and identifying various valves all over the sub. Bill still recalls the most valuable advice he received as a sailor. "Chief Willy Harms let me know, "There are those who know their job and those who know about their job. You will know your job." That simple rule provided the foundation for Bill's naval career.

The defining incident that drove this wisdom home, however, occurred not on the USS Nathan Hale, but on a different submarine altogether. A week before the Hale was to go out to sea for sea trials, the USS Thresher sank during deep-sea diving exercises in what would be one of the deadliest submarine disasters in history. All 129 crewmen were lost. According to Bill, they later learned that a valve had been improperly installed. The disaster left an impact on sailors everywhere, but especially on Bill. He made it his mission to learn his job well, no matter the task.

After working on the USS Nathan Hale, Bill transferred to recruiting duty in New York City. During the late sixties and early seventies, Vietnam protesters often targeted military recruiting stations. "We had to hide our vehicles," he says.

Fortunately, a local gas station owner allowed recruiters to park their vehicles in the unused repair bays. Another time, Bill and another recruiter had given a talk at a local school and upon their return, drove right up to a protest parade. The police had to make space for them to continue on their journey.

Bill earned a commission as a Warrant Officer in 1974, returned to Dam Neck for Officer School and then transferred to the USS Leahy as the Assistant Fire Control Officer. Here, again, Bill became a student. The USS Leahy was a guided missile cruiser, not a submarine. So, he went to the most knowledgeable people on board, the senior enlisted, and said, "Teach me everything."

The most memorable part of his time on the Leahy was the ship's friendship visit to Leningrad, Russia. The ship hosted a two-day open house in which 1,300 Russian citizens visited the deck of the USS Leahy. The Russians brought World War II campaign pins and dolls to exchange while the US gave out pencils. Bill shakes his head ruefully at the memory. "Pencils! We brought pencils." Other citizens stood at the fence, watching the fanfare. The sailors

persuaded the Admiral to permit them to go to the fence. "At first, we felt guilty that we didn't have anything to give them but then we realized they were fascinated by our chewing gum." The sailors cleaned out the ship store's stock of gum and candy and distributed it as quickly as they could.

The next evening, the Norfolk band performed. As the Navy applauded each song, the Russian audience members appeared confounded. Soon, though, they imitated the clapping after every piece. He also recalls the kindness of the Russians he met on the visit. On a day trip to Leningrad, his group attempted to locate St. Peter's Basilica. When the group became lost, a shop owner attempted to give directions. After trying for several minutes to communicate, the man simply closed his shop early and led them to the Basilica himself.

Eventually, the visit came to an end and the Leahy returned to the Mediterranean. Shortly after, Bill transferred to Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach where he served as the Standard Weapons Officer. Later, he served at the Torpedo Officer at Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey. "Once again, I had a great a crew to

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learn from.” He helped to phase out the Mark 43 torpedoes, while bringing in the Mark 46. As part of the demilitarization process, old weapons were often sold to other countries.

In 1982, Bill transferred to Naval Weapons Station Yorktown as Mine Liaison. At that time, the Navy was implementing the CAPTOR Mine system, a deep-water MARK 60 anti-submarine naval mine utilizing the Mark 46 torpedo. Bill helped to implement this system and also to retrieve and refurbish mines from overseas in various locations such as Italy, Okinawa, Spain and Hawaii.

Thanks to the early wisdom he received from Chief Harms and his willingness to learn from those who know the job best, Bill became an instructor. He traveled several times a month to teach the Atlantic Fleet. “I began to teach them to plan for the ‘what ifs’ that might occur.” After a promotion to Commander of MOMAG, or Mobile Mine Assembly Group, Bill retired from 35 years of naval service but he has not stopped serving his country.

These days, Bill devotes his time to American Legion Post 39 as the Athletic Director. In this role, he is responsible for the Post’s baseball program. The American Legion’s baseball league is

open to young men between the ages of 13 and 19. Their season runs from June through August, with the opportunity for teams to compete nationally in a World Series. Currently, they fund two baseball teams, though in the past, they’ve supported as many as six teams.

“My primary responsibility is choosing a general manager for the program, and I’ve been blessed to have Tom Richardson join us. He is the greatest.”

Bill’s other duties include paperwork and fundraising to support the program. In the past, the teams relied on community donations to keep costs lower for parents and players but there’s been less support in the last few years. “We have the best parent corps there is,” Bill says. “They often send in donations marked ‘anonymous’ despite the fees they already pay.” Each player pays \$120 registration fee at the beginning of the season. The American Legion coaches are teaching more than just sports skills. Each game begins with the recitation of the American Legion creed, which reminds players to be humble in loss and gracious in victory, among other tenets. “We’re training young men and giving back to the youth of America, which is a pillar of the Legion.”

Several American Legion ballplayers from Virginia have gone on to have outstanding careers, including Ted Williams, Catfish Hunter, and even Justin Verlander. “In the last ten years, we’ve seen 50 of our kids go on to college,” Bill says with pride. The American Legion would love to see more youth join teams and play ball, but they also enjoy working with youth outside of the organization to honor veterans.

The American Legion enjoys educating young people on the history and care of the American flag, and they are always willing to visit interested schools or Scout troops to give presentations or simply talk about life in the service. Bill loves to talk to kids about their interest in his service.

“Last year, we lost 300 veterans and their stories,” he says with sadness. The loss of such a great number of veterans increases the sense of urgency he feels to connect with young people and help bridge the cultural gap between those who serve and civilians.

Bill White’s service record is long, distinguished and praiseworthy but his continual service to his country, veterans and youth is a testament to his great character. Long after his retirement, Bill doesn’t just know about service, he knows how to serve. **NDN**

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# What Students Need to Know

By Wheston Chancellor Grove

Author and educator Dana T. Johnson taught for many years at William & Mary (W&M), where she twice won the Simon Prize for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics. She has three decades of experience teaching college freshmen and is the author, with Jennifer E. Price, of *Will This Be on the Test? What Your Professors Really Want You to Know about Succeeding in College*.

Spanning her career, Dana has seen many

dramatic shifts and changes in the mindset, maturity and learning styles of students. “Things started to change significantly in the mid-nineties,” Dana says.

Dana possesses an innate joy for learning. She earned a Master’s Degree in Math Education and went on to teach middle school, high school and college. When her two daughters were born, she dropped back to part-time status, teaching adult education, SAT and GED

preparation, as well as evening classes at community colleges. It was unconscious research for the book she would later write with the culmination of a lifetime of service in education.

According to Dana, *Will This Be on the Test? What Your Professors Really Want You to Know about Succeeding in College* should be read in seventh or eighth grade. Yes, it prepares students and their parents for the inevitable transition from high school into college, but

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the change from middle school to secondary school offers a test-run. Helping students learn coping skills, personal responsibility and independence from an early age primes and makes them better able to adapt and handle the major transition from home to campus and early adulthood.

While at W&M, Dana taught an average of 140 students every semester, most of them freshmen. "I was dealing with freshman issues all the time; my background in secondary education better equipped me for dealing with them." She noted that students may experience a startling realization when they discover professors don't micromanage them. "College professors are not required to be certified to be teachers; they're certified in their content area." Many instructors don't have a background dealing with the issues high school teachers are expected to address. The latter can, and are expected to, attend in-service programs.

The difference between high school and college is "like being pushed off a cliff" even in behavioral issues. Whereas dress code in high school is monitored and you need a pass to go to the washroom, there is unhampered free-

dom in college. The tight set of rules, parental support, guidance and help for students in high school vanishes. The burden of self-care and personal responsibility is thrust upon the incoming freshman whether he or she is adequately prepared. Dana likens it to foreign travel. "It is wise to read a guidebook in advance, prep yourself for how different it will be. Talk to others."

As a supervisor for student teachers at W&M, Dana went to different high schools and conducted observations. "It's a very different environment." Another concern of Dana's is the degree to which technology has affected students.

Over the years in her college classes, Dana started seeing changes in student behaviors. One of the biggest shifts came with email. "Once students were able to communicate [electronically] they no longer had to talk to you face-to-face or call on the phone. It was a buffer for them." This changed the relationship between student and instructor. "It makes students feel they can hide out."

When Dana first began teaching, there weren't any personal computers at W&M.

"There is an upside and a downside to a lot of things; you have to be aware so you don't encounter the pitfalls [of technology]. My real reason for teaching has been service." Dana has always seen the need for good teaching. "I feel I can do that well and it helps everyone if they can do math and understand it beyond just passing the course. Students are very appreciative. For many, many students, math is a hurdle."

Technology enhances learning accessibility, but there is another dimension which is detrimental. Studies show when students use technology for non-classroom purposes, everyone within sight of the device has poorer performance. "It is distracting," Dana explains. "They know it but can't control it."

Dana recalls fondly when students used to leave a message on her office door or in her literal mailbox; occasionally she'd receive a written note at the end of the semester: "I enjoyed your course" or "thank you for the recommendation." With the advent of email these interpersonal details frittered by the wayside. Then disruptions began with cellphones chiming during lectures. Now smartphones are an

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ongoing problem, having altered the dynamics and focus of classroom time. Campus life has changed as well. Students have around the clock access to email, texting, and faceless correspondence. An increase in impatience and unreasonable expectations has been linked to smartphones. “Even a ping or vibration causes anxiety because there is the silent expectation to answer.” Dana remembers when she used to see students chatting before and after class. “Now they come in, look for the emptiest place and sit alone. They are isolating themselves.”

Dana would like to get across to parents and students these key points: The need for personal responsibility. This virtue is instilled and cultivated from an early age. “Selling books is not what I’m about. What I really want is for students to be successful. If they read this book in the context of discussion, it will be exceedingly useful!” Developing personal relationships with other students and faculty is crucial. College is not about checking off a box, a to-do list. It requires self-awareness. Many of the items addressed in Dana’s book are common sense but, Dana adds, “people are so distracted they don’t follow basic rules for success.”

Incoming students don’t understand how the system works and that it’s different from high school. Dana wants to prevent them from falling flat on their face so they don’t feel demoralized and like there is something wrong with them. Many students today “don’t know how to recover. They need to know how to get help and be comfortable doing it.”

Dana emphasizes being prepared as a person to best succeed scholastically. If you know what is expected, then everything else will follow. “Bloom where you’re planted. Don’t worry about prestige of the school. It doesn’t matter where you go. Make the best of what is available to you where you are. There’s a tremendous amount everywhere for people who are willing to be open to it. I hope everyone learns to do this and to do it with joy.”

Wisdom and maturity comes with life experience. “Many students think every little thing is the end of the world, but it’s not. There will be bumps in the road in college. It derails good students. Failure teaches you how to recover. Nothing is perfect.”

Dana’s husband, Charles Johnson, is a math professor at W&M as well. Dana misses teach-

ing, but she does not miss grading papers. She continues to love learning.

Having been a resident of Williamsburg for 30 years, Dana says the city provides “good cultural opportunities. I can always find something to do. I notice this more since coming from Clemson.” Dana taught at Clemson University located in the foothills of South Carolina many years ago. “There weren’t cultural things going on; after six months I felt like I’d met everyone there was. Here, it’s such a joy to continually meet new people from all over. It’s a very open, interesting community.” There are also many opportunities in Williamsburg for lifelong learning. “Colonial Williamsburg is such a gift; you may take it for granted when you live here. I learned more about history as an adult than I ever did.”

In looking ahead, Dana Johnson’s vision for future generations is that “they will learn the joy of learning.” Education is a gift that starts at home and with an inquisitive mind. “When you learn how to learn then you learn what questions to ask and how to wonder. It is so enriching to your life to be a learner. It certainly keeps life from being dull.” NDN



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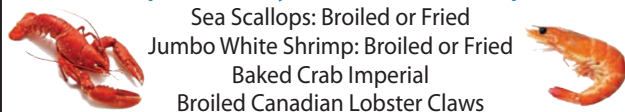
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# The Long Wait for a Kidney

By Alison Johnson

On Feb. 4, 2019, Susan Radosta underwent a lifesaving liver transplant. Her own liver, destroyed by a disease that had enlarged it to twice its normal size, had left her bedridden and barely able to eat.

A year later, Susan needs a new kidney.

Struggling with extreme fatigue, nausea and pain, the mother of three is mostly home-bound, sometimes lacking the energy to change

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out of her pajamas. Yet despite her inevitable sad and angry moments, Susan remains incredibly grateful for her life. She's also determined to educate people about the importance of organ donation.

"If I don't stay positive, it's not going to change the situation," says Susan, 50. "I am just thankful that I wake up each day. I have three children who need their mother, and I just want to keep going up from here."

Susan, a New Jersey native, was diagnosed at age 24 with polycystic liver and kidney disease. The incurable condition causes clusters of fluid-filled sacs to grow inside organs and damage them over time. Although it is an inherited disorder, Susan was the first diagnosed in her family.

Finding a living kidney donor, possibly a stranger, is her best hope. Susan's kids can't be donors because the disease is genetic; her husband, Paul, is working at both Target and PetSmart to keep the family afloat. Her siblings more than likely are not good candidates.

"Being a living donor is an incredible gift that you can give a person and an entire family," she says. "It could be your neighbor, co-worker or mail carrier who is in need. There are so many thousands of people waiting for an organ."

A Williamsburg resident since 2008, Susan has been on disability for six years since suffering a brain aneurysm linked to her illness. She credits Paul and their children Danielle, 21, Jacob, 19, and Emily, 15, for shouldering more responsibilities and picking up her spirits when she has little strength.

"My husband had many chances to walk away from me when we were dating, because he knew what the future held," she says. "He has been by my side through it all, and my kids have really stepped up. I'm sorry they've had to grow up with me being like this, but it has taught them that someone who is handicapped is just as normal as anyone who isn't."

Susan passes her time by challenging herself to make every dish in her 10-plus cookbooks,

watching old episodes of "Survivor" and taking short neighborhood walks with her hound dogs, Pickles and Toby. The family also has a cat, Cleo. Pickles, rescued from the Heritage Humane Society in 2018, has a seizure disorder.

"I wanted to adopt a hard-to-place dog," Susan says. "She is not very attractive to other families, because she isn't 'perfect'. That is what makes her more lovable and adoptable to us."

Susan is one of approximately 113,000 people nationwide waiting for an organ transplant, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, or UNOS. People can donate a kidney or a segment of their liver segment while still alive, as they can survive with a single kidney and a liver will regenerate within two months. Living donors automatically go to the top of the UNOS waiting list should they ever need an organ in the future.

Living donors can make a direct donation to a family member or friend or, if they're not a match for that person, participate in a "paired"

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donation. In those cases, their organ goes to a stranger in exchange for a matched kidney for a loved one, arranged by their recipient. Living donors also can gift an organ without naming a particular recipient.

“That means you don’t even have to be the same blood type as the person you’re helping anymore,” Susan notes. “For kidney donations, usually you’re in the hospital for two days and back to normal in four to six weeks, but you’re changing someone’s life forever.”

As anyone 18 and older can register to be a donor, Susan encourages parents to educate their children. “When your kids are getting their driver’s license, that is the time to check that box to become organ donors.” You can also register to donate online at: [donatelifevirginia.org](http://donatelifevirginia.org).

Susan grew up in New Providence, New Jersey, a small town where her father served as mayor from 1978 to 1999. Susan was considered the “town baby.” On her wedding day, authorities closed the center of town as guests drove from the ceremony to the reception.

“We had to have police escorts out of town,” Susan recalls. “Many old-timers who have known my parents for 50-plus years follow my story through my Facebook posts.”

After earning a psychology degree from Moravian College in Pennsylvania, Susan spent five years working for a program for children with emotional disturbances. She left to help take care of her father when his health began to fail and since has held various jobs in customer service and real estate. Her last position was at Target.

Doctors first discovered Susan’s disease accidentally, when she went to the hospital with suspected appendicitis. For many years, her only symptoms were high blood pressure and occasional urinary tract infections.

Before her health declined dramatically, Susan was an avid reader and knitter and, once she became a mother, an energetic fan at swimming, football, track and cheerleading events. “We’ve always tried to provide the kids with as much of a normal life as we could,” she says.

The day after Easter 2014, Susan developed a severe headache and collapsed at home. At the hospital, she had a seizure and was diagnosed with a ruptured blood vessel in her brain, which has damaged her memory and ability to focus.

After that emergency, Susan’s abdomen grew distended as her liver quickly began to fail. In 2018, she received a liver from a deceased donor during an eight-hour surgery; all she knows about her donor is that the person had been incarcerated.

“I felt like a whole different person,” she says. “My liver weighed 15.3 pounds, twice as much as my biggest baby, and it had been pushing on my lungs, stomach and bladder. Suddenly I could breathe, eat and feel comfortable again.”

Anti-rejection medications, though, suppressed Susan’s immune system and impacted her kidney function. She suffers frequent kidney infections due to burst cysts, one of which lingered from last June to November and caused her to lose 25 pounds.

To be designated as “active” on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) waiting

list for cadaver kidneys, patients must have a kidney function below 21 percent for three consecutive months, Susan explains. Regular blood work shows hers at between 22 and 25 percent, where it could conceivably stay for years.

Although not on dialysis, Susan takes two anti-rejection medications, two narcotics for pain, a muscle relaxant and an anti-nausea drug daily. She credits Dr. Marvin Levy, director of the Hume-Lee Transplant Center at VCU Health in Richmond, and Dr. Jared Harrison, her physician at Riverside Primary Care Norge, for always advocating for her.

“All either can do right now is to make sure I’m just comfortable, but they go above and beyond for me,” she says. “They’re the reason I’m still here and want to fight for more organ donors.”

Pride in her family also boosts Susan’s resolve. Danielle is a senior at Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg, Jacob a sophomore at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, and Emily, who has high-functioning autism, a student at Warhill High School.

“They’re all such kind and compassionate people,” Susan says.

This year, Susan dreams that she will feel healthy enough to enjoy Danielle’s college graduation in May. One day, she’d also love to travel back to New Jersey to visit her mother, which she hasn’t been cleared to do for five years. Susan Radosta is always careful to appreciate what she does have. “I’ve had such a great life, and I treasure the times I feel good,” she says. NDN

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# Diligence & Heart

By Paige Brotherton

Williamsburg is made up of those who have lived locally their entire lives and those who joined the community later, traveling from near and far to finally settle down. However, few have come as far as Sonia Lemley, who moved to the United States from Costa Rica and has fallen in love with living here.

Sonia grew up on a family farm as one of thirteen children. Although her mother and father greatly emphasized the importance of

practical skills like sewing, cooking and cleaning, the standard education taken for granted in the United States was not as commonly pursued by women in her Costa Rican community. But as long as she can remember, Sonia has loved English.

“I always wanted to learn English. I was always fascinated with the language,” she says. More than anything, she longed to communicate with everyone around her, seeing it as

the best way to understand others. Thanks to tourism, Costa Rica had no shortage of English-speaking visitors. “Every time friends or Americans would come to the farm, I thought ‘I wish I could talk to them!’” she says. This desire to become bilingual would lead her on a solo journey to a different country.

“When I came here, I didn’t speak one word of English. You could tell me I’m going to kill you and make you into sandwiches and I



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would be like 'yes, yes, very good!'" Sonia says with a laugh. "I don't know how in the world I was brave enough to do that." She began her studies in New Jersey, working as a live-in housekeeper for an Italian family of eight. Despite not speaking the same language, Sonia was delighted to find that she fit into the family seamlessly and instantly had a comfortable place in her new home country. By day, she used the practical skills so valued in her family to care for her clients; by night, she took classes in English. But traditional classes weren't the only way she learned the new language.

Sonia bought a music player and several English CDs a few months after moving to the states. "Every night before I went to bed, I put the tape recorder next to my ear and listened. I would let it play all night," she says. Within a year and a half, Sonia was fluent. But the end of her school days wouldn't come until 1995, five years after she arrived in the United States.

"It was my dream to become a nurse," Sonia says. "They said if you're ready, you can do it." But ready for what? Sonia had not attended high school in Costa Rica, so she enrolled in an adult program to earn her diploma. After that, she went on to acquire a Certified Nursing License, finally seeing her dream come to fruition. However, not all of her plans worked out the way she might have imagined.

Originally, Sonia had come to the United States to learn English and then return home. Although she was comfortably fluent, she still did not go back to Costa Rica. Instead, she stayed and soon met her husband.

"A friend of mine was dating his brother, and he saw how happy they were," Sonia says. Her husband begged her friend to introduce him to someone. "My friend said, 'I know a nice girl, but she's very busy.'" Sonia was still working full time as a housekeeper and was wary about adding more to her schedule. "Did I have time for dating? No!" she insists. Then she sighs.

"Well, she gave him my number."

It took many phone calls to persuade Sonia to add dating to her already busy life, but after the first double date, the rest was history. "He always supports me, whatever I want to do," she says with a smile. After meeting her husband, it became clear to Sonia that she belonged in America. "I think life is full of surprises. Everything to me is how you look at it and how much faith you have."

It was a suggestion from her in-laws that first brought Sonia and her husband to Williamsburg for their anniversary in 1998. The town she remembers visiting was very different then, full of open country land and vibrant greenery. Sonia still loves the landscape, preferring the sweeping fields over urban New Jersey. "I love the quiet. I love the fun and peace." Although her mother-in-law had suggested Williamsburg as a beautiful site for a visit, the Lemley family realized it was the perfect place for their forever home. "We loved it and have been here ever since."

Sonia put her nursing license to good use working at a retirement home. She enjoyed taking care of people, but there were other dreams she longed to pursue, including expanding her family. "I truly believe God has blessed us in so many ways: our family, our health, our friends, our jobs... there are many things to be thankful for." Sonia had a daughter and named her Faith in honor of the trust she had put in God throughout her life. "I believe that we love others best when we love God most," she says.

For many years, Sonia has been attending a local Catholic church. One of her friends from the chapel was looking for someone to assist with the housekeeping. A familiar face who knew the household well and would feel like a member of the family. Immediately recognizing an opportunity like no other, Sonia took the job. It was exactly the kind of work that felt most meaningful to her: caring for others.

Although she wanted to start her own housekeeping business for a couple years, she planned to keep her old job while she built up enough business on the side. Yet there was no need to wait. Her new enterprise took off faster than she could have imagined. "When I got home, my phone had around ten messages from all my first client's friends. In less than a week, my schedule was full." Despite enjoying her other job immensely, Sonia quit to pour all of her resources into her new business. The most important part was the flexible schedule that allowed her to be home for her daughter as she grew.

Working in the service industry has given Sonia a new perspective on just how important practical household skills are. With each generation, they seem to grow less common, but she has found them to be invaluable in both her role as a businesswoman and a mother. "When my daughter needs a dress to be altered, here comes Mom! I can do that," Sonia says with a laugh. She's tried to impart the significance of being able to take care of oneself to Faith. "I'm trying to teach my daughter to pass it on. Like when she goes to sleepovers, she should be a good example."

Sonia has found her secret to happiness lies in doing what she loves with the tools she knows best. "You can have all the degrees in the world, but if you don't work hard, and you're not an honest person, and you don't have a good attitude, those degrees don't mean anything."

With her family by her side, her business booming, and her beloved Williamsburg community, Sonia no longer thinks of moving back to Costa Rica. Although she sometimes misses the warm beaches and sunny days, she has found a second spot she belongs. "My heart is in both places," Sonia says. "I appreciate America. I am who I am because I have been here all these years. It is my home." NDN

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Concert Organist Stephen Buzard will perform "Meditations on the Stations of the Cross" (Le Chemin de la Croix) by Marcel Dupré, longtime organist at Saint Sulpice, France. This is a rare opportunity to hear one of the most significant and deeply spiritual musical works of the 20th Century. 7 pm at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road. For more informa-

tion, call (757) 229-3631 or visit [www.bedeva.org/concerts](http://www.bedeva.org/concerts).

## Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

March 7, 2020

Visit the Williamsburg Farmers Market in Merchants Square on Duke of Gloucester street Saturday mornings through December 19, 2020. 8 am – noon. This Virginia producer-only market offers a variety of local products, including fresh seasonal produce, chicken, beef, pork, oysters, fish, crabs, prawns, herbs, potted plants, baked goods, confections, honey, cheese, cut flowers, handmade soaps, and more. See website for music, chefs and vendor information. Free parking available. <https://williamsburgfarmersmarket.com>

## Hey Neighbor! HAM RADIO CLASS

March 9, 2020

Amateur Radio, also known as Ham Radio, is a popular hobby and service that brings people and radio communications together. The Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club will be offering classes for the entry level and secondary level radio operator's license. Classes will take place two days a week,

from 9 am - 12:30 pm, March 9 - April 24. The classes are free. For additional information contact [HamRadioClass@yahoo.com](mailto:HamRadioClass@yahoo.com).

## Hey Neighbor! AUXILIARY POLICE PROGRAM, COMMUNITY SAFETY

March 10, 2020

Lieutenant Steve Humphries, James City County Police, will speak about the Auxiliary Police Officer Program and community safety at the luncheon of the Williamsburg Chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. The luncheon will be held at the Ford's Colony Restaurant, 240 Ford's Colony Drive with a social gathering at 11 and lunch at 11:30. Please RSVP no later than Tuesday, March 3, to Penny Kell at [PZKell@cox.net](mailto:PZKell@cox.net). For more information about NARFE Chapter 685, contact [twkell@aol.com](mailto:twkell@aol.com) or Tom Kell at (757) 220-2093.

## Hey Neighbor! VIMS PUBLIC TOUR

March 12, 2020

From 10 am – noon, join us for a tour of VIMS! During this 2-hour guided walking tour, you will receive an overview of VIMS, a guid-

Sunday  
March 15, 2020

Jamestown HS  
3751 John Tyler Hwy.  
Williamsburg, VA



\$500  
Door  
Prize!

Free & Open  
to the Public

Children's Activities  
Petting Zoo  
Food Court

## 42nd Annual Bid 'n Buy Auction

Silent Auction 11:30 am - 1:45 pm • Parent Speaker & Live Auction 2 pm

View items at: [cdr.org/auction](http://cdr.org/auction) • *When You Win, the Children Win!*



ed tour of our Visitors Center, and you will visit two of our research laboratories where you will talk with our scientists. Space is limited and registration must be completed at least two days in advance. This is a walking tour. Please contact the Office of Advancement at (804) 684-7061 for more information. Location: VIMS - Watermen's Hall, McHugh Auditorium, 1375 Greate Road, Gloucester Point, VA 23062.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**HANDS-ON HEARTH**  
**COOKING WORKSHOP**

March 14, 2020  
 From 10 am-4 pm at Chippokes Plantation State Park. Are you interested in exploring Foods and Recipes of the past? Sign up today for this Hands-On Workshop and learn how to cook like our ancestors did! Recreate recipes from 17th, 18th and 19th century sources and taste everything you make in class! Register online at <http://17thcvirginiacook.wixsite.com/workshops>

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**LANDSCAPE LIKE A PRO**

March 14, 2020  
 In the Garden with WRL and Master Gardeners learn tips and tricks to make your yard the best looking one in the neighborhood! Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener and professional landscape designer, Peggy Krapf will share her years of experience and teach us how to avoid the most common mistakes, how to choose the right plants and materials, and how to find the best contractors to do the work to make your yard beautiful. This free program is part of the "In the Garden" series sponsored by the Williamsburg Regional Library in cooperation with the James City County/Williamsburg VCE Master Gardeners.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**SPRITUAL REVOLUTION**  
**DISCUSSION**

March 15, 2020  
 "A Spiritual Revolution: The Quest to Experience God" talk and discussion is free and open to

the Williamsburg Community at 2pm, at the Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland St. Sponsored by First Church of Christ, Scientist, Williamsburg, VA. For more information call the church Reading Room at (757) 229-3805.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**WOMEN'S DAY**

March 15, 2020  
 At the 11 am worship service, join First Baptist Church for the Women's Day celebration as we "Journey Through The Tabernacle." Guest speaker is Rev. Juanita Graham, First Baptist Church Assoc. Minister. Music by the Women's Day Choir, and special performance by Shekina Glory praise dancers. Refreshments will follow. All are welcome. 727 Scotland Street, Williamsburg. (757) 229-1952 or [www.firstbaptistchurch1776.org](http://www.firstbaptistchurch1776.org)

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**WCAC FEATURES AFRICAN**  
**AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE**  
**AND TEXTILE-WEAVING**  
**EXTRAVAGANZA**

Through March 20, 2020  
 The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center's "Untold Stories – An African American Perspective," is currently underway through March 20. This first-time exhibit features multi-media artwork by African American artists and promotes cultural understanding of their experiences in Central and Greater Hampton Roads Virginia. For more information, see [www.visitwcac.org](http://www.visitwcac.org). Hours: 11-3 Tues.-Sat.; 12-4 Sun. 110 Westover Ave.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**CASA PRESENTS**  
**"CASA COUTURE"**

March 21, 2020  
 Colonial CASA invites you to attend its 4th annual Board-sponsored fund-raising event. Our Bingo Night will feature designer handbags, retailing for more than \$500 each! Tickets are \$50 each before February 15; a table for 10 may be reserved. Each ticket includes one playing card for 12 games of Bingo, one beverage, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Tickets can

be purchased at [colonialcasa.org](http://colonialcasa.org) or by calling (757) 229-3306. CASA provides specially trained volunteer advocates to abused and neglected children in James City and York Counties, Williamsburg, and Poquoson.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**THE CHAMBER MUSIC**  
**SOCIETY OF WILLIAMSBURG**

March 24, 2020  
 The Parker Quartet will perform at 8 pm in the Williamsburg Re-

gional Library Theatre. Hailed by The New York Times as "something extraordinary" the Grammy-winning Parker is known for its inspiring performances, luminous sound, and exceptional musicianship. Renowned for its dynamic interpretations and polished, expansive colors, the group has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. For further information and tickets visit our website - [chambermusicwilliamsburg.org](http://chambermusicwilliamsburg.org)

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High Tea to benefit

*Latisha's House*

Saturday, April 4th, 2020  
 3:30 - 5:30 in the afternoon  
 \$60 per person

The Williamsburg Lodge  
 310 South England Street  
 Williamsburg, VA 23185

*"Saving one life at a time."*



Order your tickets now  
 757-346-5344  
 or  
[www.latishashouse.com](http://www.latishashouse.com)

## Hey Neighbor!

### VIMS DISCOVERY LAB- MOLLUSKS

March 24, 2020

From 6 – 8 pm. Mollusks are soft-bodied invertebrates, most of which have a hard shell. Slugs, snails, octopuses, squids, clams, oysters, and mussels are all types of mollusks. Mollusks are incredibly fascinating animals and play a very important role in the ecosystems they inhabit. Samantha Askin, graduate student at VIMS, will help us understand the importance of mollusks in the Chesapeake Bay and how human activity impacts these animals. Reservations to this event are required due to limited space. Location: VIMS - Catlett-Burruss Research and Education Lab, 7577 Spencer Road, Gloucester Point, VA 23062.

## Hey Neighbor!

### VIMS AFTER HOURS LECTURE – VIMS IN ANTARCTICA

March 26, 2020

From 7 – 8 pm. Every year since 1990 a team of VIMS scientists, led by Dr. Debbie Steinberg, has traveled to Antarctica in order to study and document long-term changes to the region's ecosystem. Join Dr. Steinberg and her team that recently returned from this year's trip as they describe their work and experiences in Antarctica. Reservations to this free, public lecture series are required due to limited space. After Hours lectures are designed for an adult audience. Call (804) 684-7061 for further information. VIMS - Watermen's Hall, McHugh Auditorium, 1375 Greate Road, Gloucester Point, VA 23062

## Hey Neighbor!

### MASTERWORKS CONCERT #5 - ROMANTICS

March 26, 2020

At 7:30 pm at the Williamsburg Community Chapel. Music includes J. Strauss, Jr.: Overture to Die Fledermaus (The Bat); Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18; Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68. Concert features music director candidate Andrés Lopera and

guest artist Eun Joo Chung, piano.

## Hey Neighbor!

### 1ST ANNUAL H-E-A-R-T 5K RUN/WALK FOR CHARITY

April 4, 2020

At the WISC. All proceeds will support H-E-A-R-T whose mission is to provide hope for victims of sexual assault through the providing essential and therapeutic support, by affecting positive change in laws influencing their lives, and by educating both the public and professionals commissioned to serve victims. Visit their website, <https://h-e-a-r-t.org/>. Fun Run beginning at 8 am is free and 5K Run/Walk beginning at 9 am is \$25. Packet pickup at event starts on race day at 7 am. Visit to register <https://runsignup.com/Race?raceId=86176>

## Hey Neighbor!

### FLIGHT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION WINDOW IS OPEN!

Through April 15, 2020

The mission of the Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program (<https://www.waspscholarship.org/>) is to create career opportunities in aviation, help build and sustain local aviation interest, and support national programs designed to do the same. WASP addresses our nation's pilot shortage by funding flight training for high school age students who desire to pursue an aviation career. Scholarship winners are fully funded to attain a private pilot license and are composed of students that have demonstrated diligence in their school work, a passion for flying and could otherwise not afford the training. Apply at <https://www.waspscholarship.org/application>.

## Hey Neighbor!

### CASA FUN FAIR FOR THE FAMILY

April 18, 2020

Colonial CASA invites our community families to participate in our 3rd annual CASA Fun Fair from 11 am – 2 pm in New Town's Pecan Square! Celebrate and honor National Child Abuse

Awareness & Prevention Month this April with a special day of free family fun. Please join us for pony rides, petting zoo, photo booth, Fun Bus, Kiddie Train, face painting, games, prizes.

## Hey Neighbor!

### GREATER WILLIAMSBURG DU BANQUET

April 18, 2020

Join the Greater Williamsburg Chapter of Ducks Unlimited in celebrating the restoration and enhancement of more than 67,535 acres of wetlands in Virginia. We will be hosting our annual banquet at the Fords Colony Swim Club. Doors open at 5:30. In addition to the buffet style banquet, activities will include raffles and live and silent auctions featuring goods and services from local businesses. Get quacking and go to [www.greater-williamsburgdu.org](http://www.greater-williamsburgdu.org) or call Brad Stewart at (757) 667-1560 for additional information and to make your reservations.

## Hey Neighbor!

### 21ST ANNUAL 2020 WILLIAMSBURG BRITISH & EUROPEAN CAR SHOW

April 18, 2020

Open the 2020 car show season by visiting beautiful Colonial Williamsburg for the 21th Annual British and European Car Show sponsored by the Williamsburg British Car Club at Revolution Golf & Grille in The Shops of High Street 9 am – 3 pm. Registration form on our website - <http://www.wmbgbrit.com/>. Featured marque is Mini to celebrate their 60th year of production. Spectators free, car entry \$25. Roy Gavilan-car show registration, [WBCCcarshow@gmail.com](mailto:WBCCcarshow@gmail.com).

## Hey Neighbor!

### ROARING TWENTIES GARDEN SOIREE

April 18, 2020

From 4 – 8 pm at Chippokes Plantation State Park, 695 Chippokes Park Rd. Surry, VA. To celebrate Historic Garden Week, The Roaring Twenties will return to Chippokes Plantation State Park during

a prohibition-era garden soiree Saturday, from 4 - 8 pm. Live jazz music by The Grace Street Seven will fill the air while guests cut a rug in a Charleston dance competition, strut their stuff in a 1920s fashion contest, delight in local food and drink and lose themselves in a bygone era as they wander the beautiful Paradise Garden. Pre-sale tickets are available for \$15 per individual or \$25 per couple by calling (757) 294-3625.

## Hey Neighbor!

### GLOUCESTER/MATHEWS HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

April 18, 2020

Hosted by the Garden Club of Gloucester from 10 am - 5 pm. Reflecting the maritime heritage of Mathews, the homes and gardens showcased are all on the pristine waters of the East River. Tour four historic homes and three guest cottages located close to each other and to downtown on this driving and shuttle tour. Advance tickets also available online at <https://www.vagardenweek.org/main/tickets>. For detailed property, headquarters, ticket, lunch, and special activity descriptions, please go to <https://www.vagardenweek.org/main/tourdetails?id=433>. For questions please contact Peggy Montgomery, Chair at (804) 516-5261 or Lynne Manning, Vice-Chair at (919) 880-2329 or [Gloucester@vagardenweek.org](mailto:Gloucester@vagardenweek.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF WILLIAMSBURG

April 21, 2020

Pianist Lise de la Salle and Quatuor Danel perform at 8 pm in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre. Both de la Salle and Quatuor Danel strive to create excitement with the traditional and the new repertoire. For further information and tickets visit our website --- [chambermusicwilliamsburg.org](http://chambermusicwilliamsburg.org)

## Hey Neighbor!

### THE AUXILIARY OF SENTARA WILLIAMSBURG SECOND ANNUAL CASINO NIGHT FUNDRAISER!

April 25, 2020

Roaring '20s evening featuring music by Good Shot Judy, food, gambling, and a glass of "bubbly" upon arrival. The event will be held at Colonial Heritage Clubhouse, 7 – 10 pm. Cash bar, cocktail attire. This event will help support the Auxiliary's projects which benefit patients and their families. Tickets are \$75 per person and can be purchased by visiting <http://www.auxiliaryswrmc.org/events> or mailing a check to ASWRMC, PO Box 6841, Williamsburg, VA 23188. Call (757) 984-7188 for more information.

## **Hey Neighbor!** 57TH ANNUAL ART ON THE SQUARE

April 26, 2020

The 57th Annual Art on the Square will be held from 10 am – 5 pm. Art on the Square is a juried show that is dedicated to providing original, high quality, handcrafted and diverse mediums of art. It is located on Duke of Gloucester and North Boundary Street in Merchants Square, Williamsburg, Virginia. The event features more than 150 artists and is free and open to the public. Proceeds from artist booth fees are donated to visual and performing arts organizations throughout the greater Williamsburg area including Williamsburg, James City and York counties.

## **Hey Neighbor!** NATIVE PLANT SALE

May 2, 2020

The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society will hold its Annual Native Plant Sale at the Williamsburg Community Building at 401 N. Boundary St in Williamsburg. The sale is for one day only from 9:30 am -1:30 pm. The plants are all Virginia natives, and many are important host and nectar plants for butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Choose from perennials, shrubs, trees, ferns, grasses and vines. You'll find plants for sun or shade, moist or dry soils. Expert advice will be on hand for information on choosing and planting. Cash or check only, please. Visit the John Clay-

ton Chapter on the web at <https://vnps.org/johnclayton/>

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

May 3, 2020

4 pm, Williamsburg United Methodist Church, 500 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg. For tickets, visit [tickets@williamsburgchoralguild.org](mailto:tickets@williamsburgchoralguild.org). Adult tickets \$20 in advance /\$25 at the door; \$10 for students; no cost for children under 12. We hope you'll join the Williamsburg Choral Guild for our spring concert celebrating the art of storytelling with a program entitled Fable. You'll hear works by Eric Whitacre (Goodnight Moon), Sam Pottle (The Jabberwocky), and Bob Chilcott (Aesop's Fables), to name a few. We will be joined by the Jamestown High School Chamber Choir, under the direction of Matthew Rapach. For more information, visit [www.williamsburgchoralguild.org](http://www.williamsburgchoralguild.org).

## **Hey Neighbor!** HIGH FIBER FESTIVAL

May 16, 2020

Join us for knitting, quilting and weaving demos, displays, kids' crafts, fiber animals, good food, and vendors in a community fair atmosphere. Free admission. From 10 am – 3 pm at Hickory Neck Episcopal Church campus. For more information, map/directions, vendor/demonstration registration forms go to [www.highfiberfestival.com](http://www.highfiberfestival.com).

## **Hey Neighbor!** MEMORIAL MILE

May 23 – 25, 2020

Williamsburg Parks and Recreation would like to honor and remember the sacrifice of our fallen military, fire, EMS and law enforcement members by sharing their fallen hero stories at Waller Mill Park. Help us remember our fallen heroes by submitting a written remembrance story and photograph to [parksandrec@williamsburgva.gov](mailto:parksandrec@williamsburgva.gov). Remembrance signs will be on display May 23 – 25 at Waller Mill Park (901 Airport Road) from 8 am – 4 pm in

Williamsburg. All are welcome to visit the park and read the stories of those that were taken too soon. Event info. at [www.williamsburgva.gov/rec](http://www.williamsburgva.gov/rec).

## **Hey Neighbor!** RELAY FOR LIFE OF WILLIAMSBURG

June 5, 2020

Events include 5 pm Survivor Reception, 6:30 pm Opening Ceremonies, Midnight Closing Ceremonies. Lafayette High School, 4460 Longhill Road. During the family-friendly event, individuals and teams will walk the track and will participate in a variety of fun activities, including live music; special theme laps around the track; the Luminaria Ceremony; food trucks; children's activities; a Survivor Reception and a Reflection Tent for Survivors and Caregivers. Benefits the American Cancer Society.

## **Hey Neighbor!** BIBLE STUDY

Ongoing

Not getting enough from your bible study or church group? Then perhaps you should join us at the Williamsburg library in Norge every Monday at 6 pm to get your biblical questions answered, such as what happened in the garden concerning the two trees, or what happened between Adam and Eve and the serpent (that is to say, the devil), or why isn't Cain in Adam's genealogy or where did Cain get his wife, or did Adam and Eve really die the day they ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge, and what was that fruit? Or such questions as what is the mark of the beast 666 and what does it mean and, oh yeah, what about the unforgettable sin and have I committed? So if you have questions such as these, bring them with you when you join us. Contact (757) 253-00172 or (757) 604-6649.

## **Hey Neighbor!** THE ARC SEEKS ARTS & CRAFTS INSTRUCTOR

Ongoing

The Arc provides an Arts & Crafts activity six times per year to adults

with disabilities. The instructor would work with our Activities Coordinator to plan the activity, theme, order supplies, and provide instruction, for up to 60 adults. This is a paid position. For more information, contact Pam McGregor at [pam.mcgregor@thearc-gw.org](mailto:pam.mcgregor@thearc-gw.org).

## **Hey Neighbor!** JAMESTOWN HERITAGE REPUBLICAN WOMEN

Ongoing

Second Wednesday of the month - Join us for our monthly luncheon and meeting at Ford's Colony Country Club. Starts at 10:30 for a visiting get-together followed by lunch and a guest speaker. Cost is \$20 payable to JHRW when you arrive. Registration must be done in advance by sending a message to [JHRW2020@gmail.com](mailto:JHRW2020@gmail.com). You may also send any questions you may have to that address.

## **Hey Neighbor!** MEDITATIONS WITH WILLIAMSBURG BUDDHIST SANGHA

Ongoing

Join us at one of our four weekly meditation groups and learn about the practice and benefits of meditation. Choose from Sundays from 5:30 - 6:45 pm at the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists church, 3051 Ironbound Rd. or Mondays from 7 -8 pm at the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists church or Wednesdays from 7:30 - 8:30 pm at Inspire Studio, 907 Richmond Rd. or Thursdays from 10 – 11 am at the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists church. Visit our website at <https://williamsburgbuddhistsangha.org/> for up to date information. Email us at [contact@williamsburgbuddhistsangha.org](mailto:contact@williamsburgbuddhistsangha.org).

## **Hey Neighbor!** HOPE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

Ongoing

Hope is a ministry that actively serves all women and their families who are dealing with the challenges of an unplanned pregnancy.

We provide material, emotion and spiritual support as our clients work for stability in their lives. Our services are free and confidential. We rely on you for donations of new or gently used maternity clothing, baby clothing up to 2T, diapers and formula. We are open Monday-Thursday 10:30 am-3 pm. Wednesdays, 6:30 pm -8:30 pm. 1315 Jamestown Road, Suite 202. 757-229-6472. Website: [www.hopewilliamsburg.org](http://www.hopewilliamsburg.org)

### **Hey Neighbor!** **COLONIAL PIECEMAKERS QUILT GUILD**

Ongoing

Meets monthly (except July) on the 1st Saturday of the month at 9:30 am at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Rd, Williamsburg. Monthly speakers and classes. Guests welcome. [www.colonialpiecemakers.com](http://www.colonialpiecemakers.com).

### **Hey Neighbor!** **WILLIAMSBURG COMMUNITY GROWERS**

Ongoing

Be a part of our healthy community food ecosystem and learn and volunteer with us! Our 10 acre teaching farm and community garden is located between Warhill High School and the stadium. We have Volunteer Work Parties monthly on Second Saturdays and weekly on Terrific Tuesdays (seasonally). Visit our website, follow us on Facebook and Instagram, find us on SignUp and MeetUp, or email [growwilliamsburg@gmail.com](mailto:growwilliamsburg@gmail.com) to find out more. Our 2020 community garden membership waiting list is forming now!

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

Ongoing

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

family, volunteer your time, or donate! Jordan Sturdivant, Director, 757-418-5274.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **GROVE CHRISTIAN OUTREACH CENTER**

Ongoing

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

### **Hey Neighbor!** **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Ongoing

Please consider volunteering an afternoon per week or a Saturday morning with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program during the coming tax season. VITA provides free tax return preparation and e-filing services February 1 through April 15 for low to moderate income taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their federal and state tax returns. VITA is a non-profit, volunteer run program supported by the Internal Revenue Service and Colonial Williamsburg locally. If you are comfortable preparing your own tax return and have basic computer skills, you have the basic qualifications. VITA will train you to complete tax returns for our clients. Please contact Al Cummins at 757-259-0739 or at [almarlene10@cox.net](mailto:almarlene10@cox.net) if you wish to join this very worthwhile community effort.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **VOLUNTEER WITH SENTARA WILLIAMSBURG**

**REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**

Ongoing

Join us. Our volunteers play a vital role in helping us provide exceptional health care. Our volunteers generously give their time to help others. The department matches individual talents and interests to the needs within the hospital as possible. New volunteers attend an orientation to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of volunteering and any specialized training their service area requires. Contact: Debi Hardin, Volunteer Coordinator @dnhardin@sentara.com or call 757-984-7195.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **WOMAN'S CLUB MEETING**

Ongoing

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

### **Hey Neighbor!** **PINOCHLE OR BID WHIST CARD GAMES**

Ongoing

Senior group of card players is looking for any person(s) who would like to play either Pinochle or Bid Whist cards. We meet every Tuesday at Williamsburg's Moose lodge from 1:30 - 4 p.m. Location: 5429 Richmond Rd, call 703-944-5107 for questions.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **NEW PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP**

Ongoing

Led by Dr. Lyzette E. Velazquez of Riverside Neurology and Sleep

Specialists. Dr. Velazquez offers a free, well-round monthly discussion featuring, in addition to herself, experts in the field, including physical therapists, dieticians, home health care workers, psychologists and more who will provide education information useful to anyone who interacts with the disease. Fourth Tuesday of each month, 2 pm, at Riverside Doctor's Hospital Williamsburg, 1500 Commonwealth Avenue, Conference Rooms A&B. Open to the general public. Parkinson's patients, caregivers, health care workers, interested community members.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **OSHER COURSES & LECTURES**

Ongoing

The Osher Institute at William & Mary concludes its 28th year of lifelong learning with nearly 178 courses, activities and one-time-lectures, ranging from the arts to American and world history to technology to contemporary issues and more. Visit [www.wm.edu/osher](http://www.wm.edu/osher) to review courses and lecture topics and signup for a membership and register for courses. Questions? Call 757-221-1506 or email us at [osher@wm.edu](mailto:osher@wm.edu). We will be happy to help, and we look forward to meeting you too.

### **Hey Neighbor!** **THE WILLIAMSBURG ROSE AND THISTLE - EMBROIDERY**

Ongoing

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

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For a complete  
listing visit:

**[WilliamsburgNeighbors.com](http://WilliamsburgNeighbors.com)**

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

**SERVICE AT  
THE DMV**

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

**Enjoy!**



INTERMEDIATE

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

FEBRUARY 2020  
In the Neighborhood  
Photo Challenge





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2059horneslakerd.info



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757-784-4317  
charlotteturner@lizmoore.com



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**6525 REVERE STREET**  
*Liberty Crossing*  
Newer townhome built in 2017. This home is open and spacious. 3 large BRs, 3.5 BAs. Upgraded espresso cabinets w/ gorgeous granite counters & island in kitchen. Upgraded flooring, ceiling fans, & master BA w/ tiled shower & floors. Owners suite has tray ceiling, dual vanities, & barn door! \$280,000.

**Rebekah BREWSTER**  
HOME IS WHERE YOU HANG YOUR HEART

rebekahbrewster@lizmoore.com  
www.rebekahbrewster.com 757-272-8981



**Colonial Heritage**  
4 BR | 3 BA | 4,389 Sq Ft.  
Fabulous floor plan & loaded with upgrades & renovations  
All NEW Kitchen with new granite countertops and new appliances | Spectacular 350 sq ft Sun Room | Lower level with media room, 2 BRs, walk-in storage and, 'flex' craft/storage room | \$475,000.



**Deelyn ROBINSON**  
a passion for home

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www.PremierWilliamsburgRealEstate.com



**4197 FOUNDERS HILL S**  
*First time for sale!*  
4 BR, 3.5 BA, 4,221 Sqft  
1st floor luxury Master LR/DR/Family Room/Bonus  
Screen porch  
Beautiful throughout  
Offered for \$675,000



**Denise FLEISCHMANN**  
Associate Broker, ABR, SRES, NER

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Denise@LizMoore.com  
WelcomeHometoWilliamsburg.com



**Under Contract in 10 Days**

**4212 BOXWOOD LN.**  
4 BR, 2.5 BA, 2100 sqft  
Offered at \$289,000

**Tim Parker**  
(757) 879-1781  
**Cyril Petrop**  
(757) 879-8811



www.timparkerrealestate.com



**WALNUT HILLS**  
130 Berkeley Lane  
4 BR | 4 BA | 3,851 sqft  
Priced below recent appraisal! Situated on almost 1 acre, this City of Williamsburg ranch style home has been lovingly maintained & updated. A flowing floor-plan, private backyard, 3 FPs, beautiful hardwood floors, and elegantly tiled bathrooms. Priced at \$598,000. WOW!



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**MANY UPDATES IN WILLIAMSBURG BLUFFS**  
4 BRs, 2 full BAs, 1 car attached garage, fenced backyard, New Kitchen Counter Tops, New Flooring in Living Room, Both BRs Updated, Priced at \$127.73/sqft. \$269,900 CALL TODAY!



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**COLONIAL HERITAGE**  
4BR | 3BA | 2817 sqft.  
Cozy, light-filled & sought after Aldrich model with room enough for visitors and guests. Beautiful entry way with hardwood floors leads to large eat-in kitchen with granite, SS, gas range, and bar seating for up to 5. Great room features dining area and windows overlooking comfy deck to catch the breeze with stairs to backyard. Offered at \$385,000.

**Sue McSwain**  
Guiding You Home  
Realtor®, MS, SRES, SFR  
908-400-1440



suemcswain@lizmoore.com