

APRIL 2007

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors

VOL 1, ISSUE 1

Where local viewpoints and experiences are shared

PRICELESS



Williamsburg - Still the Best Place to Live

Bob Sheeran
Sheeran and Associates Realty

**Golf Tips
from Area Pros**

**Time to Garden
Williamsburg!**

**Take a Ride with
Williamsburg Area Bicyclists**



**BayLands
Federal Credit Union**

See our Advertisement on Pg. 4 of this issue

As your neighborhood credit union, BayLands will be using this space to promote a non-profit event each issue. Be sure to check here next time to find out what's happening in your community.

Next Door Neighbors is a magazine for people who live in the Williamsburg area. It's written about locals and it's for locals. You won't find it in area restaurants or hotels or even stacked in high traffic areas like

the gears should be changed to maximize that performance. (Like downshift to 4th when you need to accelerate quickly! Who knew?) It was clear to me that he coached me because he wanted me to understand

Welcome to the premiere issue of Next Door Neighbors

grocery stores. You will find it each and every month in your mailbox, full of features and interesting stories about people you may know.

I have created *Next Door Neighbors* as a magazine for locals because I believe there is a strong sense of community here where people not only know their neighbors, they also care about them. This is what makes Williamsburg such a great place to live.

I'd like to share with you some recent surprisingly pleasant encounters I

how to prolong the life of my Saab, not to make more money. He didn't need to give me his time if he just wanted to get paid.

On another occasion I stopped in Special Somethings to find my brand of cigar. I mentioned that I liked to smoke Partagas Black Label and I hadn't been able to find them anywhere in Williamsburg. On my next visit, I found them on Ken's shelves and they stocked them for me so I would have them when I had the urge to enjoy a good stogie during my daily commute. You might think it was just a good business decision on his part, but he already has a humidor with numerous quality cigars and a varied selection that would satisfy almost any casual cigar smoker. I think he was just being plain nice.

Not long ago, I was wearing one of my business suits and noticed the collar had been pressed incorrectly. The lapel flipped up inappropriately so I stopped in Master Cleaners to see what they could do to fix it. My jacket was off, pressed and back on my shoulders in a matter of minutes and you guessed it - they wouldn't accept payment. I received a freshly pressed jacket and a smile and they ended up with no more than the knowledge that their expertise had improved a stranger's appearance.

What do these stories have in common? They demonstrate the quality of life in Williamsburg where community is important and where random acts of kindness still exist. That doesn't mean that people here don't live hectic lives or have less to do than people in other places. What it means is that despite the ongoing growth and everyone's busy schedules there is still time for neighborly ways.

That is the spirit that I have observed in Williamsburg, and that is the spirit I hope will be reflected inside the pages of *Next Door Neighbors*.

Enjoy!



Meredith Collins, Publisher

experienced with three "next door neighbors":

When my 2000 Saab was jerking and behaving as if it was in the throes of death, Gus at European Cars performed surgery on it and charged me fairly. He then took me out for a drive to educate me on the performance features of a Saab engine and how

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Next Door Neighbors

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Our Town - Growing and Still the Best Place to Live

By Karen Haywood Queen

Back in the early 1960s, when Bob Sheeran was a student at the College of William and Mary, you could drive through Williamsburg without worrying about catching a light.

“Since my student days, the town has changed rather dramatically in growth from a wonderfully historic Williamsburg to ... a still wonderfully historic Williamsburg but with growth outside the historic area,” said Sheeran, owner of Sheeran and Associates Realty. “When I was a student here, there wasn’t a traffic light in town. That’s a pretty dramatic change.”

“We’ve drawn families from the Peninsula for the quality of life.”

The appeal of our area is many-fold. There’s the College of William and Mary, “The College” to locals. The college town atmosphere and the lively debates that ensue – consider the Wren Cross and the sex workers’ show – force us to examine our beliefs and bring a vibrancy to our community that others can’t match.

There’s the cachet of living near one of the nation’s most popular historic tourist spots, Colonial Williamsburg. That explains why so many of us who live in the surrounding counties of James City and upper York give our address simply as ‘Williamsburg,’ even though we don’t live in the city proper. For purposes of this story and with apologies to the purists who truly live in town, ‘Williamsburg’ includes the surrounding area too.

Over the last 10 or 15 years, Williamsburg also has become popular as a commuter town for those working on the Peninsula and Southside to the southeast, and Richmond to the northwest and for couples trying to make a fair split of the two drives. Others are just looking for a more serene, less congested atmosphere once they leave work. Unfortunately many who work here can’t afford to live here. They have to drive long distances from home from some of those outlying

destinations whereas we locals just drive to work.

Speaking of driving, no one is saying the traffic situation here is perfect.

“We have to address the major issue of roads,” Sheeran says. “That Ironbound-Monticello intersection – the light won’t change. At five in the morning on the way to do my radio show, I’ll have to sit there several minutes waiting for it to go through its sequence. But 199 took a heck of a load off Richmond Road. And having just come back from a business trip to New York, I’ll never complain about being the 12th car in line here when you’re backed up miles and miles in the New York traffic pattern.”

Those who have left work or scaled back are flocking here to retire. We’re getting more and more of what Realtors call half-backs – retirees who first moved from northern states to Florida or other states in

the deep south, then decided they were too far from grandchildren and too close to hurricanes. Williamsburg is an ideal location for these people, within a day’s drive of family and lacking months of snow and ice all winter.

“The dynamics of the real estate market are truly driven by the number of retirees and corporate relocations here,” said Angela Dougherty, managing broker of the Williamsburg office of

William E. Wood and Associates Realtors. “We’ve drawn families from the Peninsula for the quality of life. It’s the golf courses. It’s the small town atmosphere. Compare living in Newport News with the Denbigh Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue conges-



Bob Sheeran, is the owner of Sheeran and Associates Realty in Williamsburg.

tion. You can just feel the difference getting off I-64 onto 199. Do we have more traffic than we did 10 years ago? Yes. But if you look around Williamsburg, it still pales compared to the surrounding areas.”

Growth has been visible as Kingsmill on the James has blossomed into a premier residential golf community and convention destination. It is joined by other top golf communities such as Ford’s Colony, Governor’s Land at Two Rivers and more where the first hole is a short drive or even an easy walk from the front door.

All of the factors that go into making this a good place to live have helped insulate Williamsburg against some of the economic ups and downs elsewhere in the region, state and country.

“Williamsburg has been recession-proofed,” Sheeran says. “When lots of other areas not just in the country but in the state have been up and down economically, Williamsburg has always had a sound economic life.”

Since Williamsburg and the surround-



Angela Dougherty is managing broker of the Williamsburg office of William E. Wood and Associates Realtors.

ing counties are bordered by the James and York rivers, many people are attracted to communities such as Riverview Plantation, First Colony, Skimino Landing Estates, Chickahominy Haven and again, Kingsmill

and Governor’s Land for the waterfront lifestyle.

Many of us, once we move here and unpack, would love to bar the door and

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keep out any newcomers. None of us like it when previously wooded land near our homes is cleared to provide more housing or new roads to support new residents.

The concern is that the town will lose its character, the quality of life and become more like our more congested neighbors to the southeast. As thoughtful people in the area debate density – from the number of homes that can be built on rural land to the number of units in downtown Williamsburg – Dougherty maintains that growth can't be stopped.

"That's like saying no one can move into the area unless someone dies," she says. "It will drive families apart and move the workforce farther and farther from us."

Speaking of workforce, another concern to be addressed by thoughtful minds is affordable housing or workplace housing. To buy into many of those neighborhoods referenced previously, you'll need \$300,000 and more. Few of those who wait on us at restaurants, who teach our children, who put out fires and who keep our streets safe

can afford most of the homes available here. That also has driven Williamsburg's growth as a commuter town.

But how to provide affordable housing? Sheeran puts it simply:

“As a matter of economics, your price points are based on dirt.”

That dirt, Sheeran says, is more expensive here than in other nearby communities.

"If dirt is going to be X number of dollars per quarter acre, that's going to determine the price of the home," he says. "For affordable housing to work, there must be other agencies besides the builder/developer and the buyer. A builder is not building a home to lose money. If groups get together and good citizens get together and say, 'We'll buy this land and devote it to workforce housing' – wonderful. But that's what it's going to take."

On the other hand, Dougherty maintains we need inclusionary housing, a practice in place in more than 100 cities across the

country where a certain number of homes built are required to be affordable to a moderate or low-income family. Builders aren't required to sell the same house sold on the open market for less. Instead, the inclusionary homes may be rental apartments or smaller, often attached, homes either within a proposed development or built elsewhere in the area. She is looking at areas that have adopted inclusionary zoning in their ordinances to find out if the practice is as hurtful as developers believe.

"What we're saying is anyone who lives in those kind of places is stamped a bad person or a liability to the community," Dougherty says. "It might be the young man or woman who has just graduated from college, has just gotten a starting teaching position, but couldn't afford anything here. If they have to commute, that just makes matters worse. There has to be common agreement that we're going to find a solution."

Let the dialogue remain open as we search for common ground and continue to enjoy the benefits of living here. ■

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WELCOME BIKERS!

Bike Riding in Williamsburg



By Muna Killingback

It's easy to feel a touch of envy watching the cyclists around town. Viewed from a car window, imagining the breeze in your hair and the sun on your back looks pretty good.

Those who feel ready to hit the biking trail in Williamsburg might consider spending time with members of the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists (WAB) who've "been around the block," and much farther - many times.

"First, we offer a group environment to socialize with like-minded bicyclists," Nancy Carter, WAB President, said. "And secondly, we are a tremendous resource for information about all things bicycling in this entire region, not just Williamsburg. If you have a question or an idea, someone in WAB will either have done it, know it, or know someone who has. Plus, we have lively monthly meetings at Charley's Restaurant at the airport and the food is great!"

She encourages anyone even remotely interested in starting to bike to attend a meeting. "No experience needed," Nancy explained. "If you are interested in biking, we are interested in you!"

At the other end of the athletic spectrum there is a group of high-speed dynamos within WAB who are looking for others at the top of their game to challenge each other.

"We are interested in supporting all types of bicycling and making our area a better and safer place to bicycle," she added.

Nancy says the highlight of WAB's year will be daily rides scheduled during *May is Bike Month*, which includes *National Bike to Work Day*.

"We have the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown in our sights," Nancy remarked. "One really special event is *Pedal the Parkway* on Sunday, April 28th when Colonial Parkway is closed to cars from Williamsburg to Jamestown. The care-free, relaxed environment lets everyone just pedal and take in the beautiful scenery. It is great to see families with small kids out there enjoying the Parkway."

WAB also publishes a guide listing 25 tested bike routes and maps that is available for purchase on their web site or at local bike shops.

As you spend more time in the world of bicycling in Williamsburg, you are likely to encounter Williamsburg's "First Family" of bicycling, Allen and Mary Turnbull. Avid and committed cyclists who have biked in many countries, the Turnbills

helped establish and remain active members of WAB. To promote bicycling throughout the scenic Commonwealth, Allen Turnbull began the *Bike Virginia* tour, which now draws some 2,000 cyclists each year. He later founded and currently heads *BikeWalk Virginia*, a statewide non-profit organization based in Williamsburg that educates and advocates for safer conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.

For those in Williamsburg who used to bike or never tried it, Mary's support and infectious enthusiasm will help overcome any inhibitions about coming along for a ride.

"If you are new to cycling, you might feel more comfortable biking with more

"We offer a group environment to socialize with like-minded bicyclists..."

experienced cyclists," Mary emphasized. "WAB members lead casual rides under 10 MPH, which emphasize bike skills. During *May is Bike Month*, we have a ride every day and many are casually-paced."

While it isn't practical for everyone, there are some bicyclists who even rely on their own energy to get them to work. For the past six years, Mary has been a bicycle commuter, but she wasn't always. "I had never tried to commute to work by bicycle until I saw a campaign for *National Bike to Work Day*," Mary said. "I scouted out the route one afternoon and found it wasn't as difficult as I had thought. After biking to work that first

time, I have just continued to do it. So even though I was an experienced cyclist, I was hesitant. But after that first trial run, I was hooked."

Mary bikes approximately 4,000 miles a year and only drives her car around 1,000 miles around the local area.

"With the right clothing, I am able to bike down to 20 degrees," she added. "I think more people would consider biking if all the bike paths were connected. Maybe one day that will happen."

Mary has seen how well this has worked in other countries.

"The Netherlands is the best example of a vast network of bike lanes where one-third of all trips from home are made by bicycle," Mary explained. "As a way of helping the environment and making us a little less dependent on oil-producing countries, the bicycle as an alternative form of transportation is a viable option. Plus it keeps you in shape!"

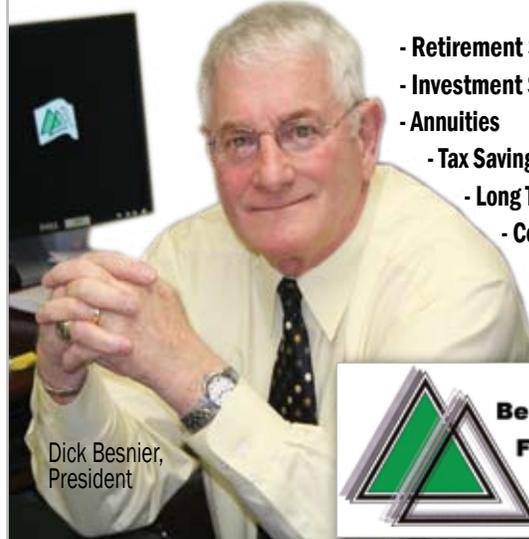
The dream of being able to safely bicycle to any destination in the area is being propelled forward by members of the Active Williamsburg Alliance (AWA),



Attracting some 2,000 cyclists a year, Bike Virginia will be coming home to Williamsburg this year, as it did in its very first ride in 1998.

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the local chapter of *BikeWalk Virginia*. The group recently led lobbying efforts to have a pedestrian/cycling crossing installed at the intersection of Ironbound Road and Monticello Avenue.

To ensure that more spaces are created for safe biking in this area, citizens can attend county planning focus meetings and voice their opinions about where they want bike trails.

This historically significant year will also be a banner year for both experienced cyclists and those who are just getting a start down that road. There are a myriad of opportunities to ride and share experiences with others, so get out to your garage, dust off your bike and "come along for the ride." ■

FYI

Pedal the Parkway

Day: Sunday, April 28, 2007

Where: Colonial Parkway, Williamsburg,

Cost: Free

Parkway is open to "bicyclists & pedestrians only" (closed to auto traffic)

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The Virginia Capital Trail

is a pedestrian and bicycle trail that connects the Commonwealth's past and present capitals of Jamestown, Williamsburg and Richmond along the Scenic Route 5 corridor. The Capital Trail traverses 50+ miles, five jurisdictions and 400 years rich in history along one of the first inland routes in North America.

For more information go to:

www.virginiacapitaltrail.org

Cycling Web sites

Williamsburg Area Bicyclists

www.wabonline.org

Bike Virginia

www.bikevirginia.org

Active Williamsburg Alliance

www.bikewalkvirginia.org/chapters_awa.asp

BikeWalk Virginia

www.bikewalkvirginia.org

Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association

www.evma.org

Bicycle Safety Check

- 1. Check the tires for wear** and make sure they are properly pressurized. (All tires have a recommended pressure rating on the sidewall.)
- 2. Ensure all bolts on the handlebars and stem are tight.** Test by putting the front wheel between your knees and try to turn handlebars - if they turn, they aren't tight enough.
- 3. Ensure the wheels are fully in the dropouts and axle nuts/quick release levers are tight.**
- 4. Ensure the seatpost is secure.** Try to turn the seat - if it turns, it isn't tight enough.
- 5. Lube Chain** every five rides or every two weeks, whichever comes first.
- 6. Inspect brakes.** If they are rubbing the rim (or disc) take your bike to your local bike shop for adjustment.
- 7. Check the suspension pressure on mountain bikes** - refer to your owner's manual or ask your local bike shop for help.
- 8. Put on your Helmet!**
- 9. Get out and enjoy the ride!!**



Want to **know more** about biking?

For Biking Beginners

- 1. Decide how you want to ride.**
 - For fun, to the farmer's market, to Yorktown for lunch?
 - For fitness, light touring or commuting?
- 2. Get properly fit.**
 - Frame size and wheel size matter.
 - The bike should be a fit for your height and inseam.
- 3. Compare frame materials, workmanship and warranties.**
 - An aluminum frame is light, inexpensive and won't rust.
 - Steel is medium weight, compliant and can rust.
 - Carbon is light, stiff and expensive.
- 4. Check the specs: wheels, suspension and components.**
 - Lighter weight wheels make a difference!
 - Front and rear suspension with adjustability and lockout?
 - What are the components? The higher the level the lighter and more durable they are.
- 5. Get the right accessories.**
 - Helmet, flat repair kit, bags, baskets, lights, mirrors, clothing (shorts especially).



An interview with... Carol Pitts Norge Postmaster

Carol Pitts has been living in the Williamsburg area since 1969 and for the past 13 years she has been working for the post office in Norge. Many of you already know her and can testify to her sunny disposition and her ways of extending herself for others.

Next Door Neighbors met with Carol recently to find out more about her - her love for her work and for people.

NDN: What have you learned about people in this job?

CAROL: For the most part, people are wonderful.

NDN: In the years you have worked here, have you had anybody come in and ask to mail something really unusual?

CAROL: Uh-huh.

NDN: Like what?

CAROL: We had a gentleman call Karen (post office employee) the other day who asked to send a duffel bag that was not in a box. And yes he can. You can mail a suitcase just as long as you have a label on it and it's secured.

NDN: No animals or anything like that?

CAROL: Yes. I had somebody who wanted to know could they send a gerbil and we don't accept live animals because it's too much of an "iffy" about sending live animals in the mail so I just told him that we just couldn't. There is a live animal acceptance center, I think, somewhere but I don't know where it is.

NDN: It's not in Norge?

CAROL: No. But we do get baby chickens in. We get baby turkeys in. We get baby ducks in. We get baby guineas in. We've had some quail. We get bees all the time.

NDN: I guess around Easter?

CAROL: Well, not just Easter. In the Spring. As a matter of fact, we have customers who order baby chickens too. I had one customer who had ordered some baby chickens and she had to be out of town and they were shipped a little bit sooner than she expected them to. Well, it was on a Saturday and at the time I had to work on Saturdays and so these baby chickens were here. Well, I couldn't leave them here. She wasn't at home so I just took them home with me.

NDN: Really?

CAROL: I stopped at the store and bought them some food, took them home and put a light over them. We know how to do baby chickens. Karen would know too. We have to take baby chickens home. You can't leave them in the post office and let them die!

NDN: What makes you happy?

CAROL: Everything. It doesn't make any difference. I wake up happy.

NDN: If you had a million dollars to donate to one good cause in the Williamsburg area - to give away to someone or something - do you have any passionate thought about who you would give it to?

CAROL: I don't think I would do it to just one thing. I think I would dole it out to people that I thought would need it.

There are a lot of people that could use some money. I don't know that I would want anyone to know that I gave it to them. But there are a lot of people that could use some money.

NDN: What do you think you will do when you retire?

CAROL: Well, I'm not going to retire until I'm 80. I didn't get this job until I was 60 so I'm not going to retire until I'm 80. Then I'll probably die!

NDN: Do you have a philosophy on life that you live by?

CAROL: Probably smile and laugh every day...if you can.

NDN: What's your favorite thing about your job?

CAROL: The people. Hands down. Hands down, the people. My customers are the best in the world. And I have customers who come all the way from the other side of Williamsburg to come to this post office. In smaller offices, we have just a minute or two more that we can devote to our customers and I know something about everybody who comes in here. Lonely is not a part of my life!

NDN: One more question. When you are no longer working at this post office, which is probably going to be when you are 80, how would you like for people to think of you or remember you when they come in?

CAROL: That I did my job... and I did it with a smile. ■

**“For the most part, people are wonderful.”
- Carol Pitts**



Green Words of Advice from Williamsburg Garden Centers

“New plants need to be established before the summer heat arrives. This means faithful, deep watering and use of the correct soil amendments such as an organic material with good holding capacity.” -*Lauren Snow, manager of Cooke’s Garden Center*

“Hydroponics is gardening without soil. It gives plants the perfect amount of nutrients and the perfect amount of light allowing a quicker growing time and greater yield.” -*Bill Mihansky, owner, Let it Grow Nursery & Hydroponics*

“As people get older, container gardening is much easier. It can be done in a small, enclosed space such as a patio or courtyard and gives them less work.” -*Joel Patton, owner, Homestead Garden Center*

“If it’s pruned correctly, the official tree of Jamestown 2007, which is the fringe tree, can look very nice and will grow well in this area.” -*Anne Goodson, tree and shrub manager of Cooke’s Garden Center*

Find out more about gardening in the
Williamsburg area on page 20!

Give us your feedback!

Email
Next Door Neighbors
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- Did you enjoy the first issue?
- What features or stories did you like? Dislike?
- What else would you like to see?

NEXT ISSUE - APRIL 26TH

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Recipe for a Spring Warm-Up

As spring approaches we all anticipate warmer days and great golfing weather. To make the beginning of the season more enjoyable, before the first round of golf is played, go to the practice area and reacquaint yourself with your clubs.

Since many players do not play or play very little during the "off" season, they lose the "feel" they had at the end of the last season.

Before heading to the first tee, take the time to practice. Begin at the putting green. Start with short putts, then move back to practice lag putts. Next, proceed to short game shots around the green. Once again, start with the shorter shots, chipping and move back to the pitches. While you are still near the green, work on greenside bunker shots--long and short.



After the short game practice has been completed, then go to the range. Once again start with the short irons and progress through the bag hitting all the clubs. Some players are able to progress faster than others. Take the time needed to feel confident in your game before going out to play. Please consult your local PGA professional if you need help with your game or in developing a good practice routine. If you do this prior to your first round of the year, you should feel more comfortable once you step up to the first tee.

Jon Sandelin, PGA
Head Golf Professional
Colonial Heritage Club

A PGA professional since 1996, Jon has worked as an Assistant Golf Professional at the River Creek Club in Leesburg. He was Head Golf Professional at the Stonewall Golf Club before becoming the Head Golf Professional at the Colonial Heritage Golf Club last summer.

TIPS FROM THE PROS



A few quick tips to improve your game from some of the area's talented Golf Pros.

The Right Preparation is Key

It's important to stretch out before playing or practicing. Many amateurs often skip this, but it's key to stretch the big muscles before hitting the course or practice range. We do this to avoid pulling or tearing any muscles.

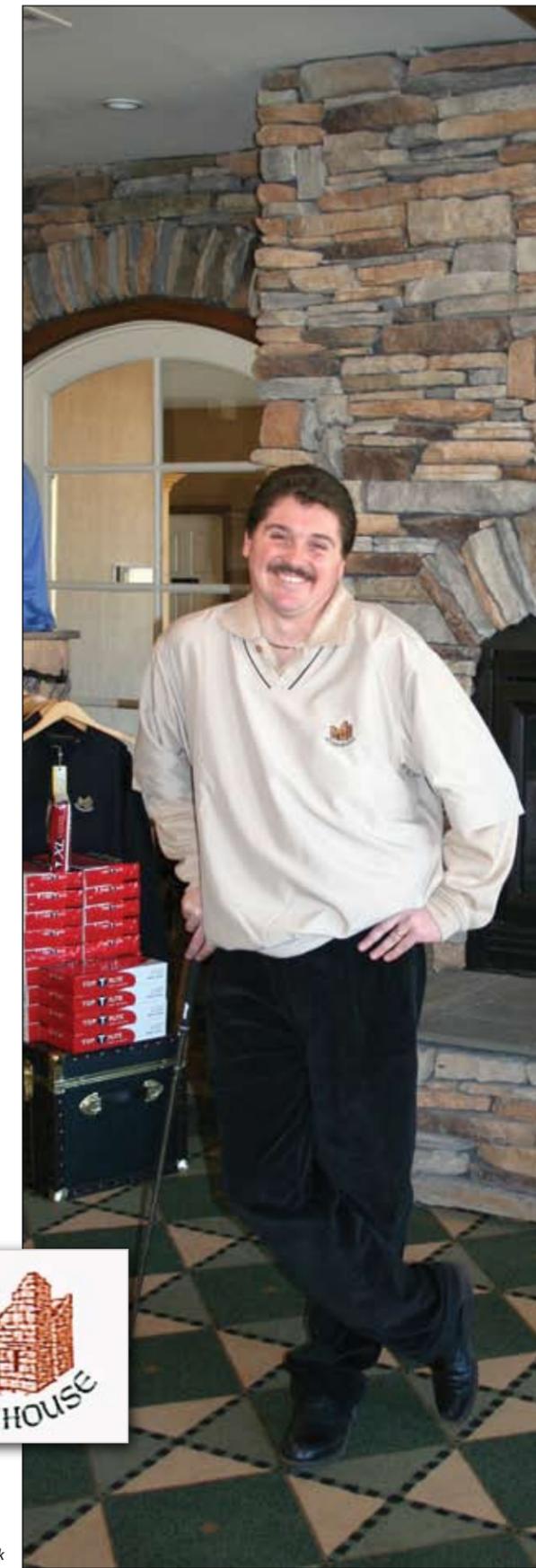
When going to the course or practice range I strongly recommend spending at least half of your practice time working on your short game: chipping, putting, pitching and bunker play. Amateurs unfortunately don't spend enough time on the short game.

I see people go to the range and swing a driver over and over, hit a few irons and off to the first tee they go. If the average player shoots 100, he will hit the driver 14 times (exclude par 3's) - that's a mere 14% of his total score. There are 18 approach shots during your round, that's 18% of your total score, which leaves a whopping 68% of shots inside 100 yards! By working on the short game you will become more consistent from inside 100 yards and that translates to lower scores. Please ask your local professional for some short game drills.

I would also tell amateurs to look at the course rating and slope of a course, not the yardage. I often see many amateurs playing the wrong tees. Just because a course may be "short" doesn't mean it's easy. If you follow these simple guidelines you'll enjoy your round and practice sessions much more.

Sean Daly
Head Golf Professional
The Traditions Golf Club at Stonehouse

Before becoming the Head Pro at Stonehouse, Sean worked under several talented professionals at the Kingsmill courses.



Focus on Fundamentals First

Paying attention to the fundamentals of the golf swing is essential each time you play. Everyone needs to start out with these. Think about how you put your hand on the golf club, and pay attention to your posture-- how you are addressing the golf ball, and your balance. Everyone should remember that golf is an eye and hand coordinated sport. Another fundamental of the golf swing is good rhythm--but the music of a golf game is not a jitterbug, it's a waltz.



A good way to practice when you go to the driving range is first loosen up. To warm up start with a short golf club, the pitching wedge, then go from that to a 7-iron to the 5-iron. With each one, hit about 10 golf balls. Then go to the 4 wood and then hit a driver. Finish with a few chip shots and do some putting on the putting green. Then you're ready to play golf.

As a golf professional, I'd like to remind everyone that our job is to make sure that you have a great time when you play our golf courses.



Del Snyder, PGA

PGA Golf Professional
Williamsburg Inn Golf Courses
Golden Horseshoe and Spotswood

Del Snyder worked as an assistant to the legendary Sam Snead before becoming Head Professional at the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club in 1976.

Don't Neglect Your Short Game

After spending numerous hours on the lesson tee as well as observing the practice habits of most golfers, the one area that can lower your score and handicap is being grossly ignored: the short game.

At one time we have all learned a trusty shot that we use no matter what the situation dictates because we do not practice or trust anything else. I always tell my students, "Would you rather have one swing and 12 different options to play a shot or one option and numerous different swings?" Let me explain. When I was first learning the game, the 8 iron around the green was the shot to play no matter what. I had to manipulate my swing and club depending on the lie, length, and overall condition of the shot. As I started to learn more about the game, I came to realize that using that thing between my ears can actually lower my score and make me a more complete player.

The short game can be broken down into two different shots, the

chip shot and the pitch shot. Each of these has a distinct swing and the ball will have a different reaction with each one. The chip shot can be

thought of as minimum air,

maximum ground time and the pitch shot is just the opposite, maximum air, minimum ground.

Which one is better? The situation you are

in will dictate which shot to choose.

Anytime the ball is on the green and rolling, the better off you are. However, there are certain times when this is not an option and you have to pitch the ball.

Before you make your club and shot selection, you

will have to check your lie, see how far you have to the flag, and observe any trouble that may be between your ball and the flag. After you have determined which shot to play, use your imagination to visualize how the ball will react with the shot that you have selected. Any in-decision at this point will ruin the shot. If you cannot visualize the shot stopping around the flag, rethink the situation and change your club selection. Being aggressive with your short game will ultimately lower your scores, unless you hit every green in regulation.



Steve Becroft, PGA

Head Golf Professional
Williamsburg National Golf Club

Steve began his career in golf at the Westin Innisbrook Resort in 1994.

Learn from the Pros

Watching a tour event in person or even on television can be a great learning experience any golfer can enjoy. Most golfers go to a tournament to see the players and watch great golf shots. To maximize the learning experience, you need to understand what to look for while the players are playing or practicing.

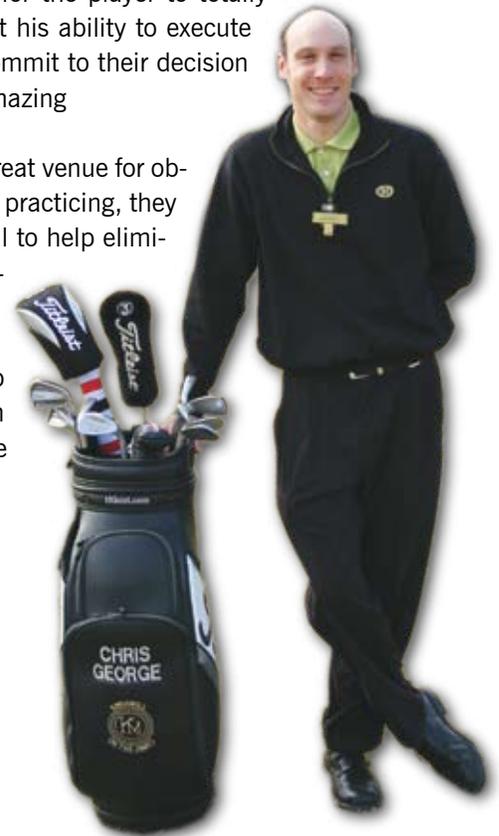
When watching a tour player, focus your attention on what the player does before he hits the shot. A tournament player's routine is the key to great golf shots. All tour players have a set routine in which they try to accomplish three objectives: visualize the target, feel the swing that will allow the ball to go to the target, and trust their ability to execute the shot. During the player's routine, you will see them stand behind the

ball. They are getting their alignment and visualizing the shot they want to execute. The player will then take several practice swings,

trying to feel the swing that will allow the ball to go to the target. The final step in the routine is for the player to totally commit to his decision and trust his ability to execute the shot. Players who totally commit to their decision and trust their ability execute amazing golf shots.

The practice range is also a great venue for observation. When tour players are practicing, they work on a specific motion or drill to help eliminate errant shots. These players understand their individual swing tendencies and work on a motion or drill to incorporate into their routine. This allows them to trust in their ability to execute the shot.

Chris George, PGA
Head of Instruction
Kingsmill Golf Academy



Chris George is Head of Instruction at Kingsmill Resort & Spa. With more than 10 years of teaching experience, Chris is also a certified club fitter for Titleist, Cobra, and Ping.

A Better Bunker Shot

One of the toughest golf shots is the long green side bunker shot. Golfers find themselves with a shot out of the greenside bunker and the hole is all the way across the green.

The problem that needs to be addressed is the distance control. Most of the time golfers hit that great bunker shot then realize it only made it halfway to the hole because the golf ball had too much spin.

To help reduce spin,

try this simple fix: Address the ball with your club head and stance both square (not open) to the ball. When you go to hit the shot release the club head at impact, similar to hitting a draw. The club head should be in the closed position and the ball will have less backspin, resulting in a lower ball flight with more roll.



Brian J. Tarrant
Director of Golf,
Kiskiack Golf Club

A native of Williamsburg, Brian J. Tarrant first began at Kiskiack in 1998 as the Second Assistant Golf Professional and has caddied on the PGA Tour for local professionals.

York River STATE PARK

By Meredith Collins

This was my first time visiting York River State Park. I must admit, it was a cold day in February and not exactly as I imagine it will be in the spring. Still, I wanted to see what kind of outdoor interests would be offered by this park since it is so close to Williamsburg and is only a short drive for those who might seek daytime recreation.

The York River State Park was historically the Taskinas Plantation. It was the site of a 17th and 18th century public tobacco warehouse where local planters stored their crops until they could be shipped to England. It was in 1980 when the park was opened to the public to preserve the environment and became a place of natural beauty for locals and tourists alike. Croaker Landing, found within the park, is now an archeological site listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As I reached the entrance to the park, I looked for indications of this history but too much time had passed to observe immediate signs of yesteryear.

Once I entered the grounds, I discovered the



drive to the river was longer than I expected but it was a pleasant drive lined by trees and an occasional bird house. I noticed identical bird houses were placed along the way every few hundred yards and I wondered if they were designed for a specific type of bird.

I had originally hoped to talk to a few

and the wildlife would be scurrying by.

When I reached the river I discovered a Visitor's Center which did not show any activity on this particular day. In the warmer months I understand there are numerous programs offered by the center that focus on history and the preservation of the York River and nearby marshes. But today it was

families - not only for its great stature, but also for its gift as a recreational outlet for boating and fishing. I took shelter from the cold in my car and drove the short distance to the boat ramp along the water's edge. It provided ample room for boating and fishing enthusiasts alike, and there was even a 360-ft. pier that stretched out across the

There are over 2,250 acres in the park and while horseback riding is not permitted in all areas there is ample room to enjoy the wooded trails and the nature that abounds.

people visiting the park who could tell me what they liked to do there and perhaps share their insight into what the park offered them and their families. But since it was not

DR. MARJORIE CHEMA

only February, but probably the coldest day we had experienced all winter long, there was only one opportunity for a chat.

That was with retired dentist, Dr. Marjorie Chema, who was enjoying a ride on Emmy Lee, a 4 1/2 year old Oldenberg Cross. Accompanying them was Georgie, a handsome fair-haired fellow who seemed quite content to be a part of the day's outing.

I asked Marjorie if I could take her picture and we chatted for a few brief moments. I was a little surprised to see her out, and even asked her why she chose such a wintry day for a ride. Marjorie told me she didn't mind the cold at all. She said that she often rode her horses in the park, year-round, and she noted the exceptional environment the park offered for those who owned their own horses. In fact, York River State Park has five bridle trails.

Despite slightly rosy cheeks from the nippy temperature, Marjorie seemed quite comfortable bundled in warm riding gear and I could tell she thoroughly enjoyed her riding time, paying little attention to the brisk weather. There are over 2,250 acres in the park. While horseback riding is not permitted in all areas there is ample room to enjoy the wooded trails and the nature that abounds - especially during the warmer spring and summer months when the leaves would be filled out on the trees

peaceful and quiet, almost as if it were resting in anticipation of the bustle of activity that would take place here in the warm weather months.

York River State Park also offers hiking trails, picnicking, and even playgrounds for children. There are shelters, but no overnight camping or places to stay. There are also six bicycle trails, two of which are exclusively for mountain bikes. One is a six mile single track mountain bike trail called Marl Ravine Trail designed for advanced riders. For those who have less experience in mountain biking, Laurel Glen Trail provides a 2-mile adventure for beginners and intermediate bikers. There

is even an amphitheater that accommodates up to 100 people.

Even on such a cold day, I could enjoy the beauty of the park and sense the serenity it provided.

The river itself was naturally a beautiful work of nature to me, and I expect it is appreciated similarly by many

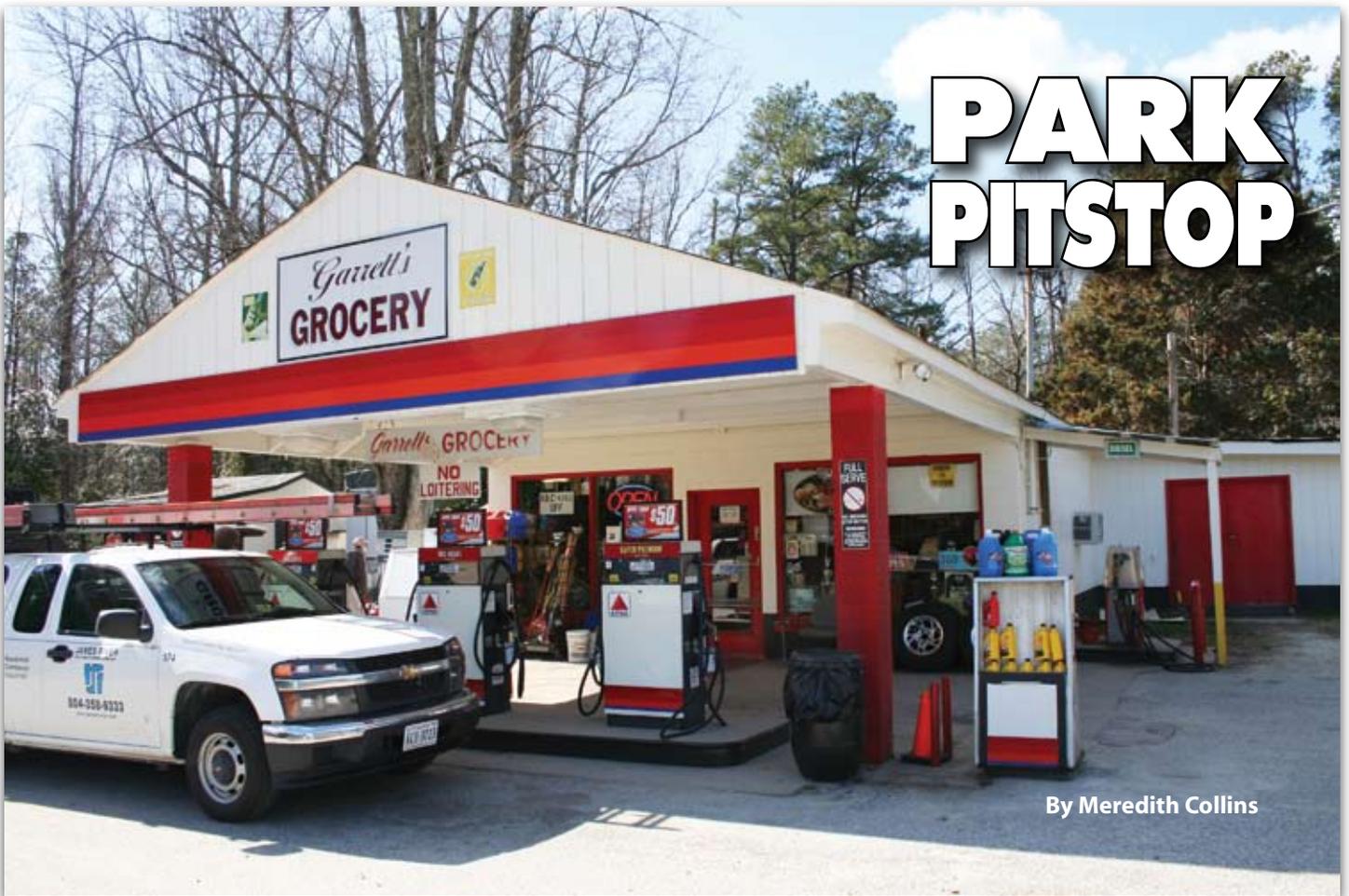
water and provided an excellent place for pier fishing. On that frigid day, I saw neither man nor fish, but even a boating and fishing novice like me could tell that the amenities were superb - an abundance of room for launching and parking, and plenty of opportunities to catch fish.

Even though the park was not teeming with visitors nor busy with the activities of spring and summer, I could appreciate the potential it offers locals. What a great place to go for relaxation or adventure - and it is almost as close as your next door neighbor.

To find out more about York River State Park, visit their Web site at www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/yor.shtml. ■



PARK PITSTOP



By Meredith Collins

"I do serve a lot of people who go to the park," Steve said. "Especially in fishing season."

I stopped in Garrett's Grocery on Rt. 607, conveniently located in close proximity to both York River State Park and the boat launch and went inside in search of warmth and conversation. I found both.

I introduced myself to Steve White, owner of the well established grocery store, and knew almost immediately I would be able to get some local insight into the park and maybe even a good fish story. I liked Steve right away. He was easy going and mild spoken with a long beard and a calming way about him. I asked him if I could interview him for my story and he did not hesitate to say yes.

Never one to be shy with new acquaintances, I started out by asking him about his beard. I was intrigued by its length and wanted to know how long it took him to grow it so long. Steve told me that he participates in the James River Batteau Festival in Lynchburg, VA each June and cuts

his beard right after that. He lets it grow all year long so that it is just the right length when he participates, and cuts it only after the festival is over. I connected with his story since I am from Lynchburg and am very familiar with this annual festival and the journey of the historic flat-bottomed boats down the James River.

It had been a long while since I had interviewed someone and I was clearly rusty, fumbling with both my tape recorder and my questions. Steve pretended not to notice my initial falters and casually answered my questions. I wanted to ask him about

the fishing and the people who stopped by his roadside store. I could see he sold a good selection of convenient items, and I expected he also sells live bait during fishing season, so I was certain he would know something about the folks who fished in the river nearby.

While I am not an expert on fishing, I reasoned I would at least be able to carry on a decent conversation. After all, I had fished in ponds and lakes, and had even taken half day fishing trips with my husband and friends on head boats in the Chesapeake Bay. Admittedly, while I could put squid bait on hooks



Steve White owns Garrett's Grocery which has been in his family since 1956.

after the head boat captain would stop the boat and tell us to drop our lines, I never could bring myself to take a fish off the hook when I caught one. (And I'm not a

State Park," Steve explained. "I'm not 100% sure what they catch down there. I would imagine the crappie, bass and other fresh water fish. They have all kinds of clin-

Steve remarked. "Whereas, from what I understand in South Carolina if you were to catch a 10-inch croaker, which would be a small croaker, less than a pound, that

The York River is excellent for salt water fishing.

"girlie girl"!)

Steve told me that Garrett's Grocery had been in existence since 1946. His grandfather took it over in 1956 and it has been at this same location in Croaker since 1961. Steve took the grocery over last year. He sees a lot of people who are on their way to the park, although typically it is not at this

STEVE WHITE

time of year. He says his business picks up with warmer weather and sometimes earlier depending on the fishing opportunities.

"I do serve a lot of people who go to the park," Steve said. "Especially in fishing season. The mountain bikers stop in during the summer. Right now not much is going on at the park because of the weather. The fishing season will start here shortly. Usually about the middle of February we start getting a catfish run that comes in and people will start catching the catfish off the pier down here."

According to Steve, the river is excellent for salt water fishing. The catfish run first, then the shad, which you can't keep. Croaker comes in usually at the beginning of April and you can catch them off the pier or by boat. By June, spot and trout will come in. The season will be all summer long and by the time the hot weather sets in fishing hours will gravitate to early morning and late afternoon.

I asked Steve about fresh water fishing and he told me the park offers that too.

"They do have a five acre pond down in the York River

ics - I do know that much as far as the kids learning how to fish down there because I contribute the worms to them."

Steve said that some of the biggest fish that are caught in the area are Rockfish. They can be in the 35 lb. range and he noted a picture displayed in his establishment of a local who had caught one that large.

"My scales only go up to 30 lbs.," Steve explained, "so I can't weigh anything any bigger than that. There are some bigger fish that are caught out there."

York River fishing isn't just a place for locals either. According to Steve, people come from as far as South Carolina and Georgia to fish when the croaker start running.

"It's not unusual to get a pound and a half to two pound croaker here,"

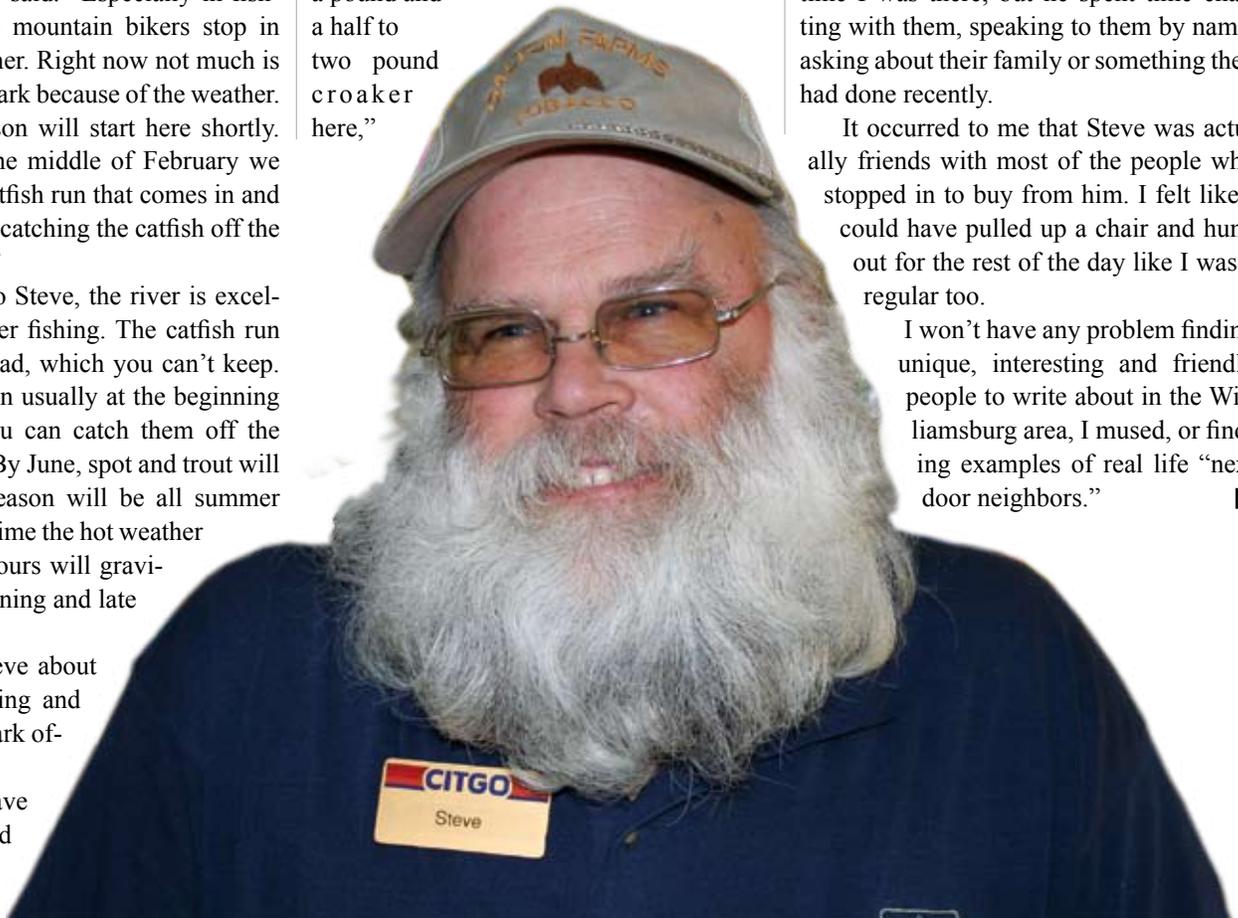
would be a very big fish for you to catch down there. So they like to come up here and catch the bigger fish." According to Steve, croaker makes a good meal since it is a mild fish.

As I stood there inside the warmth of the store chatting with Steve, I would step aside and simply observe each time a customer came in to buy a few items or fill up with gas. Where I live, I am far too familiar with cashiers ringing up a sale and hardly looking up at me as they mumble the amount I owe. They might ask me if I need a bag, or just shove my purchase toward my side of the counter.

It wasn't like that with Steve and his customers. Not only did he know each one of them as they entered his store during the time I was there, but he spent time chatting with them, speaking to them by name, asking about their family or something they had done recently.

It occurred to me that Steve was actually friends with most of the people who stopped in to buy from him. I felt like I could have pulled up a chair and hung out for the rest of the day like I was a regular too.

I won't have any problem finding unique, interesting and friendly people to write about in the Williamsburg area, I mused, or finding examples of real life "next door neighbors." ■



Gardening in Williamsburg

A Growing Community



Photo courtesy of Williamsburg Botanical Garden

By Muna Killingback and Joe Collins

Small and welcome signs of spring are starting to reveal themselves all over the Williamsburg area. Before long we will

all be able to enjoy the blossoming fruits of the hard labor our neighbor gardeners, both amateur and

professional, have invested in the many garden spots around the area. It would be hard to find a community that cherishes its gardens more than Williamsburg. James City County not only teems with beautiful patches of flowers, shrubs, and other plant life, but it also has an abundance of expert resources to both guide gardening novices and provide inspiration to experienced green thumbs.

One of the most easily accessible resources for gardening advice is the fittingly named Landscape Love program, run by the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners. Promoting healthy gardening practices, this free program sends volunteer Master Gardeners to your home to personally answer questions and provide recommendations for developing your own healthy and beautiful landscapes.

Master Gardener Sarah Dougherty has entertained a wide variety of questions and gardening challenges on the home visits she has made.

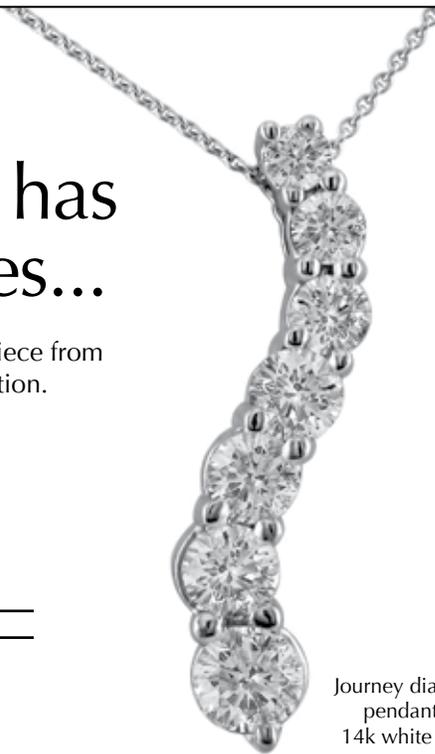
“People may ask us what to do about deer, insects, fungal infections,” Sarah said. “They may also need information about what will grow here. The summers are so hot here, if people come from other places, even from Northern Virginia, as I did, they won’t necessarily be able to plant the same

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things. In the north, you may be able to put things in the ground and they'll grow, but in this environment, it's more challenging."

If you find the warming weather inspires you to go for a nice hike, ride, or stroll head over to Freedom Park at the intersection of Centerville and Longhill Roads. There you can take in some of the most beautiful and natural forestry and fauna James City County has to offer.

Within the park you will find the luscious Ellipse Garden which is maintained by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden (WBG) and displays eight different types of plantings including wildflowers, tall grasses, patriotic colors, native plants, herbs, wetlands and woodlands. These areas demonstrate the impact and shapes of different plants through the seasons. Each plant is labeled so visitors will know exactly which plants have caught their eye.

Visit the park on the first Saturday morning of the month - any month - and you may

find up to 70 fellow garden enthusiasts participating in the free Walk and Talk programs. All are welcome to attend these popular talks and tours where a different gardening topic is covered each month. Past talks have covered herbs, butterflies and plants, native ornamental grasses, pruning, and how to attract birds to the garden.

And the educational opportunities don't stop there! "Those who would like to learn techniques from experienced gardeners or meet people with a similar interest are also encouraged to visit the garden the second Saturday of each month, which is our workday," says Karen Jamison, WBG Board Chairman. "Everyone is welcome to come and stay for as long or short as they'd like."

Colonial Williamsburg is home to over

Colonial Williamsburg is home to over 100 gardens that offer time-tested and often unusual ideas about what grows well in this area.



Lauren Snow, Garden Center Manager, Cooke's Garden Center

100 gardens that offer time-tested and often unusual ideas about what grows well in this area. While the beauty of these gardens alone is enough to draw a steady stream of visitors, some are not content to merely

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sightsee.

“Many guests come here to get ideas for their own gardens,” Laura Viancour, Coordinator of Garden Programs, said. “You can learn design, specific balance and symmetry, and how to take large areas and make them into garden rooms. You can see how to define spaces within the garden and you can see how green gardens rely on shrubs or trees for interest. You can also see a lot of native plants, that you don’t usually see in neighborhoods.

There are a lot of interesting hardscape features as well: fencing, paving, and garden structures. The geometric gardens have been used forever—way before Colonial Williamsburg was settled. They are pleasant to look at but also functional and easy to cultivate.”

The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg offer a wide variety of educational and entertaining events. A highlight of this year will be CW’s gardening symposium at the end of April that will feature keynote speaker David Howard, Head Gardener to Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

No discussion of Williamsburg’s extensive expert gardening resources would be complete without mentioning the many professional garden designers, landscape companies, and garden centers that are dedicated to continuously improving upon the natural beauty of our community. Engage one of these professionals and you will find a sincere and knowledgeable landscaping partner.

Williamsburg’s garden designers are professionals who work individually with their clients to meet each client’s particular needs. They will visit clients’ homes, study their current landscapes, listen to their ideas, preferences and needs. They also help to determine the feasibility of these ideas based on local soil, climate conditions and budget. They will then recommend specific plants and/or draw up detailed landscape design plans.

The expertise of Williamsburg’s landscape companies is drawn from years of hands on experience with the local environment. In addition to an extensive knowl-

edge of trees, plants and shrubs, landscape designers are intimately familiar with the weather, water, and soil composition and which types of plant life are most compatible. Most offer landscape design as one of their services and stand ready to help clients plan how to best maintain and improve their lawns and flower beds.

The knowledgeable staff of the local garden centers are another great source for solutions to your unique gardening challenges. Many have degrees in horticulture and/or years of experience in gardening. They can often help identify plants from just a clipping and can give specific care directions for the plants they sell.

And finally we must not forget some of the most widespread and productive green thumbs in our midst, garden club members.

This network of garden lovers is spread throughout the area, many of them based in subdivisions or housing developments, where people who share a mutual interest and passion for gardening work together to liven up the lawns and common areas on the streets where we live. These clubs provide an invaluable opportunity for socializing, educating, and sharing experiences of gardening challenges and successes. ■

FYI

- **Historic Garden Week in Virginia**
April 21 - 28, 2007
Williamsburg Area
Tuesday, April 24th 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Joel Patton, Owner, Homestead Garden Center

Sponsored by The Williamsburg Garden Club
For more information go to:
www.vagardenweek.org/

- To find out more about the Landscape Love program, visit the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener’s web site at <http://jccwmg.org/index.html>
- If you are planning a trip to Colonial Williamsburg’s gardens, a visit to their web site is a great place to start. www.history.org/history/CWLand/index.cfm

**Carolyn Bowden,
Williamsburg**



A. "I appreciate the fact there is growth. However, I feel as though the charm of historic Williamsburg shouldn't be compromised as the growth occurs."

**Andy Goldstein,
Williamsburg**



A. "I don't mind the growth so much as long as it's controlled. The shopping centers, if they're kept attractive, that's ok. I think we ought to do something with some of the shopping centers that have been kind of abandoned. It would be nice to do redo them and reopen them, not that they are actually closed."

As for the residential communities, the only thing I have against them at all is I'd like to see them more set back from the streets. A buffer zone - so we don't have to see all of the communities that are popping up.

I'd like to drive out Route 5 and have it all wooded on both sides. You know, if it is 50 yards of woods and houses on the other side, that's fine."

**Betsy Dunivin,
Williamsburg**

A. "I think the growth that has taken place over the last several years - I mean it



in the open

Q. What do you think of the growth Williamsburg is experiencing with more shopping centers and residential communities than ever before?

seems to have really picked up. I think if we could put a cap on it, it would be great.

How far are we going to go? I mean, it's still fine. You know, you can still get home in a reasonable amount of time. You can still pretty much go wherever you want to without a lot of hassle. You don't stand in line forever, but is it going to get to the point where it becomes that way? I hope it doesn't. I really do."

**Ginger Crapse,
Williamsburg**



A. "Williamsburg's growth - I think it falls into a couple of categories. What's going on in the more rural areas - I think that the people that are living out there have a pretty good idea of what they want and don't want. They don't want to see it run over and look like Northern Virginia has become. And I think in the same way but ever so slightly different you can think of the city of Williamsburg.

Right now many of us are fighting an increase from 8 residential units per acre under certain zoning to 14 or

22. And the argument that I keep hearing from the city planners and the city council is that we need the higher density. And we need to have this so the investors, of course they won't say this, the investors who paid for this land and paid far too much for it can get their money back and make money off of what they'll sell.

And the argument that you hear from the people on the planning commission and city council is that at one time we did have a very high density downtown. And I don't argue with them. Yes we did. At one time we all had outhouses and we got over that.

And we need to get over the concept that because 50 years ago, 100 years ago, 200 years ago we had tons and tons of people crammed in downtown because there wasn't anything else. And we need to look at today and today the people don't want that kind of density."

**Terry Sweaney,
Norge**



A. "I am excited about the growth because I have more options in Williamsburg to take my daughter shopping. Before we had to travel to Newport News and now I can spend the day in Williamsburg enjoying different shops. I have more options.

And as far as the restaurants, I have more options to take my son out. The residential communities give us more income levels and more options for people that are coming into the area, so I'm excited about it.

Since moving to the Williamsburg area 10 years ago, we have much better roads, we have the signs - the directional signs are much easier to navigate and I can make it across town in 8 minutes."



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