

January 2012

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors®

VOL. 9, ISSUE 1

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

Williamsburg Then and Now

Bobby Braxton

BUSINESS

Monty Mason
Developing Business

HEALTH

Kathy Kasley
Music Therapy

HOME

Brian Johnson
Indoor Air Quality

Cover Photo by
Lisa W. Cumming
Photography

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

I've been fortunate enough to meet a good number of folks who have lived here most or all of their lives. I enjoy hearing about the way Williamsburg used to be and I know some people have concerns about the pace with which Williamsburg is changing. I can understand that. Yet, we all look at such things from our own perspective.

Before we moved to Williamsburg, we lived in Virginia Beach and later in Chesapeake. Our last home was in a small neighborhood just off Battlefield Blvd.

At night when most people had gone inside for the day, we could hear the constant humming of the heavy traffic on Interstate 64. When we drove out of our neighborhood, no matter which route we took, we were immediately thrust into bumper to bumper traffic.

While some people might refer to me as a "Come Here", I am a very appreciative "Come Here" - not so much for the way things used to be because I am not fortunate enough to have experienced this life beyond the past five years, but most certainly for the way things are now. We live in a Williamsburg neighborhood that is filled with tall trees and friendly neighbors. There are rabbits, raccoons and deer within sight at different times of the day, and I only have to take a few steps out of my backyard to access the Virginia Capital Bike Trail and shady walking paths. Best of all, when I drive out of my neighborhood onto Route 5, either way I go is a scenic drive to my next destination.

Whether you remember Williamsburg "Then or Now", I hope you will enjoy the interviews we bring to you in this issue - thoughts and memories from locals from their own perspectives. NDN



Meredith Collins, Publisher

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Robert "Bobby" Braxton

Home Again

By Lillian Stevens

Bobby Braxton is a local fixture, a fourth generation Williamsburger. He's a "been here" who at one time moved away but eventually made his way back home. He is widely recognized for his service to the community he loves, and for championing the revitalization of the tiny neighborhood which bears his family's name – Braxton Court, located just off Scotland St.

Bobby's is a story that began in a different time – some might even say a difference place – as were most southern cities and towns sandwiched in between the economic turmoil of the 1930s and the cultural complexity of the 1960s. It was a time of segregation but a place of community.

Born to Paul and Clemenza Braxton in 1937, the former member of Williamsburg's City Council grew up just a stone's throw from the campus of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg. Because there were no hospitals in town that would receive African American

patients, Bobby was born in Dixie Hospital in Hampton. At the age of one week, Bobby was brought home by his parents to "the Court".

"I was raised in that house next door," he says with a sweeping gesture to his left. "My grandparents lived in this house we are sitting in now – in fact, my grandfather built this house. When my parents first started out they lived upstairs in the room which is now my granddaughter's room."

Bobby has fond memories of a time long past. "Some people might say, 'Gee, it must have been hard growing up in a segregated town', but to tell you the truth, we were happy here on the Court," he says.

While he admits that there were people who might call him names or otherwise deliver an insult, Bobby says that Williamsburg was a bit unique in terms of the demographics because integration arrived here before it arrived at many of our neighboring cities and counties.

"Remember, this is and was a tourist town but back then people were coming here from the north, not the south. And the north didn't play that," he says.

From 1948 through 1956, Bobby attended the historic Bruton Heights School which is now an educational center owned and operated by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

"There must have been 15 children living on the Court, from the age of one to 17, and every last one of us (but the one year old) walked to Bruton Heights School," he says.

"One and a quarter miles each way," he adds. Three of the houses in the court were occupied by Bobby's cousins and the ones who weren't family "might as well have been."

Though he didn't realize it at the time, there were some pretty iconic people also living on the Court, from local brick mason legend Lisbon Gerst to Fred Crawford, the Williamsburg Inn's first chef who came to Williamsburg from



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New York City's Waldorf Astoria hotel. In addition, Dr. J. Blaine Blayton, the city's first black physician, lived on the block.

As a child, Bobby and his family and friends played in the Court, sometimes venturing down to Highs Ice Cream Store – located where Aroma's stands today – for an ice cream treat.

"The other ice cream places were segregated," he explains.

To this day Bobby can be found most any weekday morning at Aroma's, visiting with his friends and contemporaries.

He remembers, as a teenager, taking in a movie or two at The Stockade, a drive-in theatre located at the intersection of Ironbound and Richmond Road. He also has particularly fond memories of road trips up to Washington, D.C.

"We used to love going to D.C. Of course, along the way, we could only stop where they'd serve us but when we got to D.C. we could eat anywhere – go anywhere," he says with a wry smile.

"I guess you could say that we all grew up very well, very happy, and we all did pretty well too."

Bobby attended and graduated from Hampton University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electronics, and is a veteran of the United States Air Force. He met his bride, Hazel, a native of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, while in college and the couple married while he was in the service. Subsequently, they made their home in Washington, D.C. "We lived there for a year, but then the riots came and we went to Columbia, Maryland. That was the midway location between my job and Hazel's. I was working as an electrical engineer in Baltimore and she worked for NIH (National Institutes of Health) in Maryland."

Nearly 40 years after leaving Williamsburg to find his fortune, Bobby and his wife retired to the City – and the Court.

"The interesting thing is we all said 'We're never coming back' when we left here because there were no jobs. If you were African American, the only place you could work was Colonial Williamsburg. You could work for the school system or the Shipyard or Naval Weapons Station but with lower paying jobs. So when you got out of school or college there was nowhere to work."

As a result, many left. But many – including Bobby – also returned. Today, he and Hazel live with their granddaughter, Ashley, in the home which once belonged to Bobby's grandfather. The Court is also home to Bobby's brother, David, and his family. Bobby has one son, Gregory, who works locally in the landscaping business.

"I moved back to Williamsburg to be close to family but there was another reason. The Court was the reason. The housing administration had received funding to upgrade the houses because some of them had dropped in value and deteriorated and met all of the requirements for HUD (Housing and Urban Development)."

Though many of the homes in the Court have been continuously owned by the original families, some were converted to rental housing by the heirs. Over time, the neighborhood had fallen into disrepair. In 2004, the City and the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority developed a plan to rehabilitate the neighborhood. The Braxton Court Neighborhood Revitalization Management Team – with Bobby sharing the helm – implemented a \$2.1 million grant program to refurbish homes and infrastructure in the tiny neighborhood. Sewer lines were updated, deteriorating driveways replaced, streets repaved, new street lighting was installed, and utilities relocated underground.

"A new transformer is in my front yard. It is my pink flamingo signifying change!" Bobby declares.

The project is testament to four generations of people who have made Braxton Court their home for over 70 years and also the significance of the historic Braxton Court neighborhood.

"The beauty of this place – the beauty of Williamsburg – is that you can get to know people, and you can effect a change. If you have something substantial to say or some idea that might work – if it holds water, people will listen to you." NDN



Left to Right: Dr. Christopher Boquist, Dr. Thomas Hoag and Dr. Tara Khoshnaw

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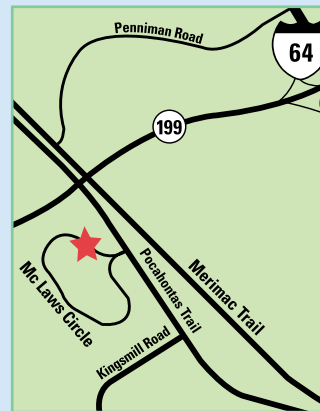
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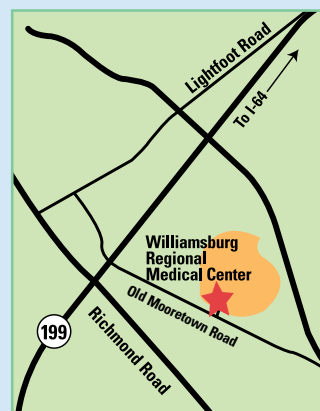
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Phyllis Kokoruda

A Williamsburg Life

By Natalie Miller Moore

Everyone needs to go to the hardware store eventually...and if you go to Peninsula Ace Hardware, you’ll likely find Phyllis Kokoruda in the aisles, wearing her diamond ACE necklace. She’s been working there for 40 years, a rarity in this day and age.

Born Phyllis Rogers, she has spent her entire life in Williamsburg, except for one (long) year she lived in Baltimore, Maryland. Her father, Fritz Rogers, was with the local fire department and he owned the Jones Tavern on York Street, which Phyllis is quick to point out as the original (and only) Confusion Corner. Phyllis is a true “from here,” born at Bell Hospital on Jamestown Road.

She fondly remembers spending time at the Stockade Drive-In on Richmond Road. “It was the only thing to do. If a train came by, you just couldn’t hear the movie. Sometimes you couldn’t hear the movie anyway because people used to always drive off with the speaker still attached to their car,” she says.

Her family lived off Bypass Road, which she describes as a quintessential small town scene: a one lane road where the trees grew together from both sides to almost make an arbor. It’s quite a different scene today,

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She enjoyed the Kimball Theater, especially when they showed new releases for just 25 cents. She also remembers buying ice cream for 10 cents on Prince George Street.

Phyllis started school in a white wooden schoolhouse on the grounds of Camp Peary but eventually graduated from York High School and finally entered the job market working as a hostess at a local restaurant and later at a Colonial Williamsburg Tavern. She even met television star Fred MacMurray, from TV's "My Three Sons" there and got her picture in the newspaper with him because he had twin daughters just like she did.

When she saw an ad for an opening at Peninsula Hardware, she applied and was hired on the spot in 1971. The place has a long history in this area, with the original store on Duke of Gloucester street in the early 1950s.

The success of a local hardware business depends on its ability to deliver customer service. Phyllis says that having an older clientele may mean employees must go the extra mile. She recalls once making a house call many years ago. "A woman bought a new gasket for her pressure cooker but couldn't put it in – she called to ask 'Is it the wrong one? It seems too big.' I knew that she just needed some help manipulating it to get it to fit. So I went out

and helped her," Phyllis says. That woman is still a customer today.

Her philosophy is that to some degree, technical ability is innate, but sometimes there's what she calls "Fix-it-tude" where you just have to be willing to take on a challenge.

For many years, she was a single mom of four and she learned she could fix many things if she needed to. She spent eight years as the manager of the store, and she still helped customers. "Everyone helps. And sometimes, if you know someone, they'll ask for you. People stick their head into my office all the time," she says.

She loved her childhood. Her four kids enjoyed growing up too. She was able to have a flexible schedule and go to a lot of their extracurricular activities. Her son and three daughters had more options in the way of entertainment in Williamsburg than she did. There were certainly not the options when she was growing up that there are today – especially with shopping and night life.

"It's changed but my kids still appreciate the town's charm," she says.

Another big change to Williamsburg is the pace. Phyllis remembers not only when most stores were closed on Sundays, but when they closed at noon on Wednesdays as well.

Over the years, she's met many Williamsburg residents and become part of the com-

munity. She's met professors, restaurant owners, real estate agents, lawyers and doctors and many of the people building things professionally in Williamsburg. She said that working at a hardware store lets you know what people are up to all over town – whether it's the 15 barbecue grills purchased for the real estate event or the 60 cases of fire logs for Kingsmill's fall season. Besides the expected building contractors and do-it-yourselfers, many community organizations come through as well.

"This is a town where people aren't anonymous. There's a value to knowing each other, and I love being able to help," Phyllis adds.

One of the most important people she met was her husband, John Kokoruda. She met him at Colony Lanes, which used to be in the location where Ace is now, so Phyllis gets to return to the scene of that blind date every time she goes to work.

Her current job is merchandising and advertising, which includes special events for the store like Ladies' Night or fundraisers for Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD).

Phyllis sees herself as part of Williamsburg and Williamsburg as part of her. Helping her neighbors in the aisles of Peninsula Ace Hardware allows her to strengthen that connection and be on the front lines of change, improvement and activity in her town. NDN



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Alain Outlaw

A Life Devoted to History

By Narielle Living

The day was cold and windy, but Alain Outlaw's infectious smile made it easy to focus on what he was saying. Pointing across the land on Green Springs Road, he said, "Imagine, if you will, a line of Red Coats advancing through here." All thoughts of cold were banished as he told the story of Lafayette and Mad Anthony Wayne, stories that are not only part of local history, but also part of Alain's life here.

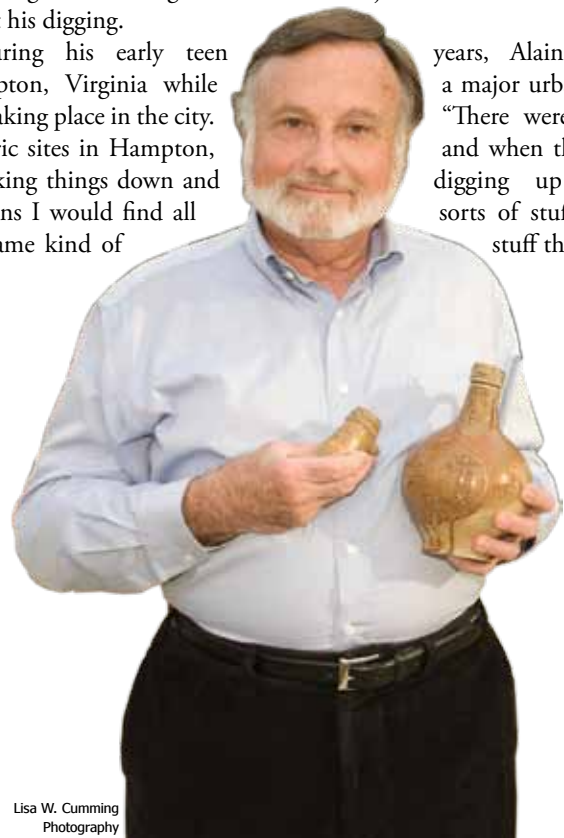
Alain was doing what he loves most, sharing narratives of an area rich in history. He has spent his time here focusing on our past through his work as an archeologist, working professionally and episodically in James City County for nearly forty years. During that time he has also seen lots of change in and around the region.

"There was only one house in the 2,000 acre development at Kingsmill when I started in 1972," he says.

Alain has spent much of his time documenting change. With ancestors rooted in America in the 1680s, generations of the Outlaw family moved from Virginia to North Carolina, into Kentucky and then Florida. Alain's circuitous route to this area included a period of his childhood spent living in France, his mother's birthplace. It was there that his love of digging and history coalesced. As a child he had systematically and methodically marked out portions of the gravel walkway to his home and started examining the different types of rocks. Unbeknownst to him at the time, this is how archeologists work. To a young Alain, he was curious about what might be in the ground and it just made sense to be orderly about his digging.

During his early teen years, Alain lived in Hampton, Virginia while a major urban renewal was taking place in the city. "There were all these historic sites in Hampton, knocking things down and sections I would find all the same kind of

years, Alain lived in a major urban renewal and when they started digging up different sorts of stuff." This is stuff that he looks



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

for today, the things that define the lifetimes lived in and around this area.

Alain's work as an archeologist defines much of who he is and fits in well with living in the Historic Triangle. After surveying over 6,000 acres in James City County, he has a unique perspective on what this area used to be like compared to today. The Church on Main is a good example of the fragments of history he has worked with, where only the outline of the church remains to give us clues about the early settlers' lives. What does he think those early Virginians would think of us now, the current residents of this place?

His answer was immediate. "I think they'd be fascinated with our materials. Look around you, we've got siding on our houses, durable plastic containers and all sorts of things that need little to no maintenance. For them, that would be amazing."

Along with a difference in how we build houses and materials we use, Alain has noted changes to this area during his own time. "Mostly I've seen an increase in things like traffic lights. With so many more people here, getting somewhere takes longer."

As a growing influx of people move to this area, sometimes people can start to feel testy about population expansion. Alain thinks having people move here is positive. "It can be a good thing to have outside perspectives moving into an area. You get new influences and you get new volunteers for projects that locals might be burnt out on."

Alain is directly responsible for some of the changes residents can see in James City County. He worked tirelessly to erect Historic Highway Markers for Freedom Park, Governor Berkeley, Grove and Church on the Main. These permanent signs now grace public areas that residents frequent and will remain for future generations to read and enjoy.

When Alain's family moved to Hampton in the 1960s, the concept of ancient history was a bit of an adjustment for him. "I spent time in France exploring an Upper Paleolithic site dating back 30,000 years and also explored the 12th century church at Montargis in Central France which had been visited by Joan of Arc. Much of what I was used to seeing and playing in pre-dated Columbus, so I had to make some adjustments to studying the past when my family ended up here."

It's clear from the way he speaks about Williamsburg and James City County that Alain loves it here. Along with his work as President of the Wheatland Foundation, he spends lots of time volunteering for various projects. He has served on Boards such as the Williamsburg Land Conservancy, the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation, and the James City County Historical Commission. He also organizes a yearly Andy's Earth Day for the Boy Scouts of America Troop 103, which has operated in Williamsburg since 1924. Much of what he does as a volunteer is to ensure that history is properly represented and that overlooked stories from the past are told.

It may very well be Alain's diligent pursuit of learning, teaching and maintaining our history that has enabled him to fit in so well here. In 1990, he wrote a book called *Governor's Land: Archeology of Early Seventeenth Century Virginia Settlements*. His current goals include writing another book about local history and recent finds as well as continuing with local preservation efforts.

Despite having worked and lived up and down the east coast of the United States, it's clear that Alain truly loves living here. "The abundance of history and nature make this a wonderful area. Plus, the weather is agreeable. It's nothing like New York state, where I had to set up a Quonset hut and dig in temperatures that were around forty degrees below zero."

Alain Outlaw has left a written legacy of history for this region, one that is quite distinct. "I'm pleased to say that I've been able to write pieces of our history on a variety of mediums, including paper, metal, stone and now electronically." Since his measure of success comes from how much awareness and appreciation of the past is generated in the public arena, it looks like Alain Outlaw has led a very successful life here in the Historic Triangle. **NDN**

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As our law firm enters 2012, we are pleased to announce the consolidation of Ferris & Associate with the well-respected eight (8) attorney Richmond law firm of Carrell Blanton Garrett & Van Horn, PLC. We will still retain our name, "FERRIS & ASSOCIATES." I will remain a partner in the new firm and will maintain my active estate and trust law practice in Williamsburg. All attorneys and employees in both locations will maintain their positions.

Both firms are excited about this consolidation since it will significantly increase the legal services the combined firms can offer to our existing and future clients. Together, these practice groups are: (1) Estate & Trust Planning; (2) Will and Trust After Death Settlement Services; (3) Elder Law; (4) Business Law; (5) Fiduciary Trust Services; (6) Mergers, Acquisitions & Securities Law, and (7) Litigation and Appellate Reviews. The law firm will maintain offices in Williamsburg, Richmond, Fredericksburg, Norfolk/Virginia Beach, and Dallas, Texas.

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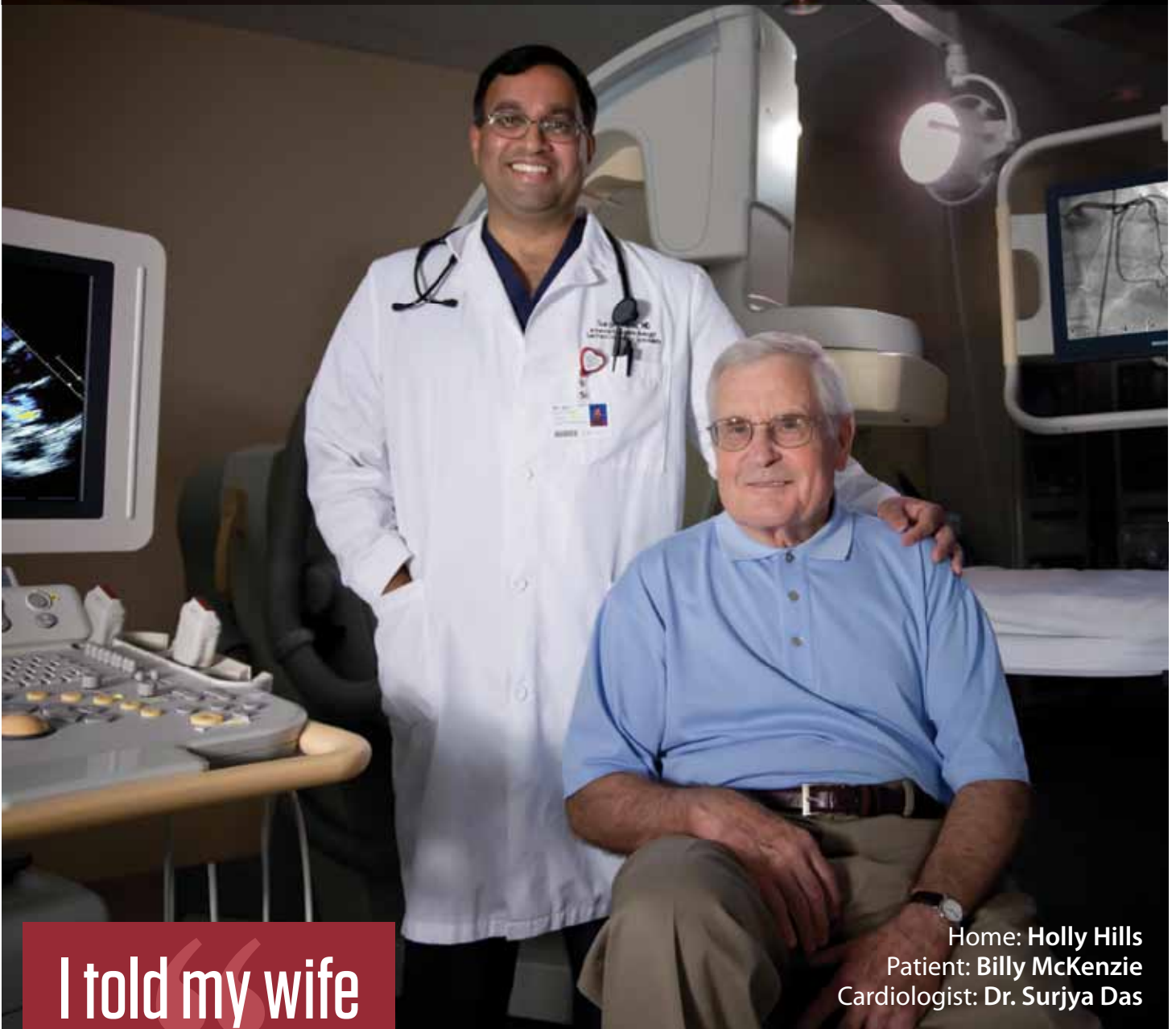
Howard W. Smith, Sr., owner of Oleta Coach Lines and pastor of The Church of God at Williamsburg, has seen many cultural and economic changes over the years. Born and raised in Williamsburg and on “the oldest laboring farm in North America,” Howard is proud to call this town his home.

His father, Okie Smith, left the Pocomo City area of New Jersey to seek his fortune. “His mother had given him specific instructions,” Howard says. “She told him, ‘When you get into Washington, D.C., don’t get into any trouble, find a good church and then stay there.’ That’s where he found my mother.”

In 1943, a job led Howard’s father and mother to a Williamsburg dairy farm owned by their church. Howard was born and raised on that farm and he started school at Bruton Heights.

According to Howard, Williamsburg never had the racial problems that other cities developed in the 1960s and ‘70s. Referring to the area from Rawls-Byrd Elementary School out to the dairy farm on the Colonial Parkway, Howard says: “We were the only black family on this road. Dad had built a very good relationship with the Waltrips, the Greens, and all of the neighbors up and down this strip here. Of course when you put kids together, black and white, that’s never been before, there’s going to be some tension. But we never really had the problems like you may have had in other places.”

In 1964, the federal government required schools to integrate but only a few students transferred to Jamestown High. The following year the school district stepped in and selected more students to integrate. “I was one of those selected,” Howard says. “I went to Mr. (D.J.) Montague, who was principal, and said ‘I’ve been with this class since first



Home: Holly Hills
Patient: Billy McKenzie
Cardiologist: Dr. Surjya Das

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not to call 911.

Good thing
she didn't
listen to me.

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Billy McKenzie was doing yard work when he felt an ache across his shoulders and assumed he'd pulled a muscle. "Could it be a heart attack?" his wife asked. He was active. In good shape. No history of heart problems. "We don't have heart attacks," he told her.

Fortunately his wife called 911 anyway. EMTs arrived within minutes. Using Web-based technology, they quickly transmitted Billy's heart information to a physician, who confirmed that it was a heart attack. The hospital's ER and cath teams prepared for Billy's arrival.

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"I didn't want a fuss, much less an ambulance – good thing my wife knew better," Billy said. "I'm grateful to the EMTs and Dr. Das and his team for acting so quickly. It probably saved my life."

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grade and I've been their bus driver. I would like to finish with this class."

Mr. Montague agreed and allowed Howard to graduate with his classmates and to continue driving the school bus as he'd been doing since he was 16. "Can you imagine a 16 year-old driving a school bus today?" Howard says. "You talk about then and now. We got paid next to nothing, but it was a job, and that was my transportation back and forth to school."

Howard drove the bus for after school activities as well. "Athletic trips like football and basketball games to Carver, Phoebus and Newport News," he says. "Every now and then we'd go across to Northampton. That was way across on the Eastern Shore. That was a long trip. We'd go across to Smithfield on the James River Bridge. Those were tough nights. When you played a game this time of year, it was dark when you came back and the bridge was not tall like it is now. You'd get waves blowing up and across that bridge."

After his graduation, Howard continued to drive a school bus for a few months into the 1966-67 school year. Then he found a better paying job at the Newport News Shipyard as a welder. "That was good money - \$2.71 an hour, and it was piece work," he says. "The more you did, the more you made."

In May of 1968, at the peak of the Vietnam War, Howard joined the U.S. Marine Corps. "A lot of my life today was structured by the Marine Corps: the discipline, how to keep things straight, how to keep things clean," he says. "The Marine Corps and my upbringing from my mom and dad structured my life. When we left home, my mom told us there are three things to stay away from. That was the women, the weed and the whiskey - those three Ws."

After leaving the Marine Corps in May 1970, Howard went back to the shipyard where a job had been held for him. He wasn't happy being assigned as a fitter on the John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier rather than his previous position as a welder. Howard explained that fitting is running a weld bead just long enough to hold a piece into place until a full weld affixes it permanently. Since there were no welding vacancies, Howard left the shipyard and returned to the family farm.

He and his wife, Towana, were married that August and moved into the big farmhouse where they stayed until 1980 when the economy declined. Then his father Okie asked if they would find jobs to help bring in money to keep the farm going.

That request led to a variety of jobs including the Howard Johnson's and Shoney's on Route 60 near the current Friendly's and Pizza Hut locations. He says, "Sometimes, to save money, Towana and I would go to Heap Big Beef...on Richmond Road, right along where the Good-year Tire place is and the old Lafayette Restaurant. We would get one Heap Big Beef (a roast beef sandwich), a large drink and fries and split it."

After working different jobs, Howard returned to bus driving until 1986 when, without owning a single bus, he saw an opportunity and bid on a contract with the College of William and Mary. His bid was chosen. With the help of a friend he obtained a bus to fulfill that contract. Using his wife's middle name, he and Towana named their fledgling company Oleta Coach Lines.

"We had six sons," he says. "Our daughter came along 14 years later." All six sons: Howard Jr., Anthony, Matthew, David, Keith and Brian help keep the family business and church operating smoothly. Daughter Kezia is in the 10th grade. So far the Smiths have six grandchildren: two girls and four boys.

Reflecting on changes to Williamsburg over the years, Howard says, "It has grown tremendously. It was predominantly black and white, but today it is a vast majority of people from just about every race, creed and color. Williamsburg today still has that southern flavor because in this area we deal with the public. We serve them. We have the southern hospitality, that feeling. People still show that hospitality." NDN

Scott Johnston

Scenes from Williamsburg

By Ryan Jones

Any chance to help this community is a pleasure. I love history, and I think the fact that people know about Williamsburg all over the world is very special.

~ Scott Johnston

Our lives are composed of a string of scenes like those from a movie; some humorous, some somber, some tender, some harsh. Some of our favorites were captured long ago through childhood eyes and no matter how good the times after that may be they are usually never as powerful and moving as those earliest memories. The vagaries in our recollections and



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the gaps between those memories often make them difficult to stitch together into one good, cogent story, but what fun it is to try!

As a self-employed video producer for over 22 years, Scott Johnston is better than most at picking out and weaving together the right scenes to tell a terrific story. As a Williamsburg resident for most of his life, Scott can tell stories and describe scenes that are particularly fascinating for those of us who live here now, regardless of where we came from or how long we have been here.

Scott can remember a time as recently as the 1970's when Williamsburg was just an up-and-coming blip on the Virginia road map. He lived in the Lakewood neighborhood, just a few miles down the road from the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry. As an inquisitive and rambunctious child he made every corner of Williamsburg his playground.

"As with most kids that grew up back then, we played outside all day long," he says. "We made bike trails and played football, basketball and soccer until mom would whistle us home for dinner. In the summers I swam for the Kingswood Clams. My friend, Mark Agee, and I would ride our bikes to practice in the mornings and hang out at the pool almost

every day. I was also a part of the first Rec-and-Travel soccer program founded by coach Al Albert. We would attend his soccer camps at William and Mary and in my later teens, I would even sign on as a camp counselor."

Times were simple then and families then, much like today, connected with one another through the activities of their children. "My dad worked at the College of William and Mary and my mom was a school nurse," he continues. "I had two brothers in the Fifes and Drums Corps, so everywhere I went, I felt like I knew someone. I can remember dad taking us out for milkshakes at the drugstore (which is now the Trellis Restaurant) after my brothers' Fifes and Drums musters on Saturdays."

Scott has many fond memories of growing up in the small town of Williamsburg and much of what he remembers reflects a time when life moved at a slower pace.

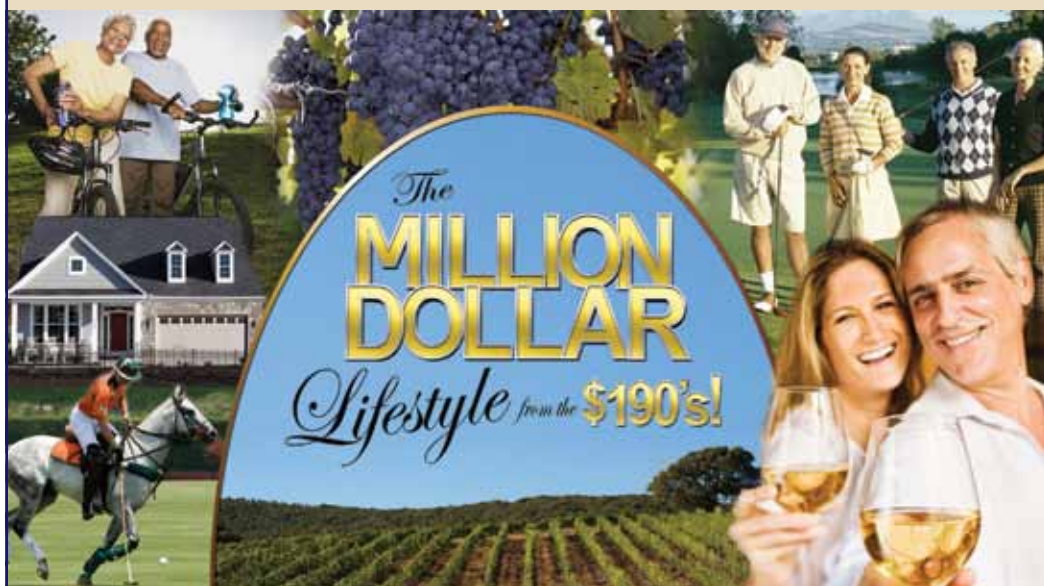
"The biggest thing I remember about growing up here in Williamsburg is how sparsely populated it was in the '70s," he says. "I could ride my bike from our house to almost any neighborhood in town and I never felt like I had to worry about my safety. Can you imagine a young person riding their bike on Jamestown Road today?"

Even with reduced speed limits, riding a bike along the more tenuous sections of Jamestown Road could end up being a harrowing experience. For long-time residents like Scott, the reduced speed limits along the southwest corridor of James City County represent the tail end of a long string of evolutions that have taken place since the 1970s and '80s.

He recalls the large, empty field that once dead-ended at the intersection of Ironbound Road and Monticello Avenue. It is now a thriving business center that doubles as a teenage hangout on Friday nights. Colonial Store, Pantry Pride, Big Star, A&P, and Be-Lo have been replaced by a myriad of modern grocers as the town's prime food retailers. Murphy's Mart and Woolco (later replaced by Ames and Roses) no longer vie for position as Williamsburg's favorite department store.

Popular hangouts of the '80s like the Country Grocery & Deli (located just down the road from Scott's boyhood home in Lakewood), have come and gone. A roadside vegetable stand now takes its place on the vacant lot in the summer. High Street is no longer a destination in Portsmouth, Virginia. Today, Williamsburg's High Street is a retail and residential development located just off of Rich-

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mond Road.

"It's so obvious that the little colonial town has grown up," Scott says. "It had to, and I don't think that's a bad thing. I think growth is inevitable. Can we do a better job of planning our growth? Yes. Are we doing a bad job of it? No."

Scott also recalls an unusual discovery he made in the woods behind his house during one of his many childhood forays into the outdoors.


"There was a big hole in the ground probably 20-30 feet across and 10 feet deep," he reflects. "We called it 'the old plane crash', but we never really knew what had happened. There was an engine in the bottom of the pit covered in mud, accompanied by old fireman boots and other things you might expect to find at a crash site. We made a fort out of it and swung on vines across it. Years later I met a Williamsburg attorney who grew up on Neck-O-Land road near Lakewood. He told me that he remembered seeing a plane crash in that general area when he was a teenager. He was lying on the hood of his car and heard the sound of a plane engine sputtering. He looked up just as the plane was passing over his head

and watched it plummet into the woods. I don't know if anyone died in the crash, but that's not something you see in Williamsburg every day."

Parts of Williamsburg and the popular culture seemed to have grown and changed with Scott as he navigated his teenage years.

"In 1978, I entered Lafayette High School, and I graduated in 1982. This put me in at the end of the disco era and into the '80s techno pop scene. My favorite band was The Police. I saw them at William and Mary Hall and at the Hampton Coliseum. We used to have a lot of good concerts at William and Mary Hall back in the day."

These days, Scott keeps himself busy by traveling to destinations across the United States on video shoots for his company, Legacy Productions, but in his heart he is never far from his Williamsburg home.

"We do work all over the country, but it is nice to have great local clients," he says. "Any chance to help this community is a pleasure. I love history, and I think the fact that people know about Williamsburg all over the world is very special." 

Next Door Neighbors

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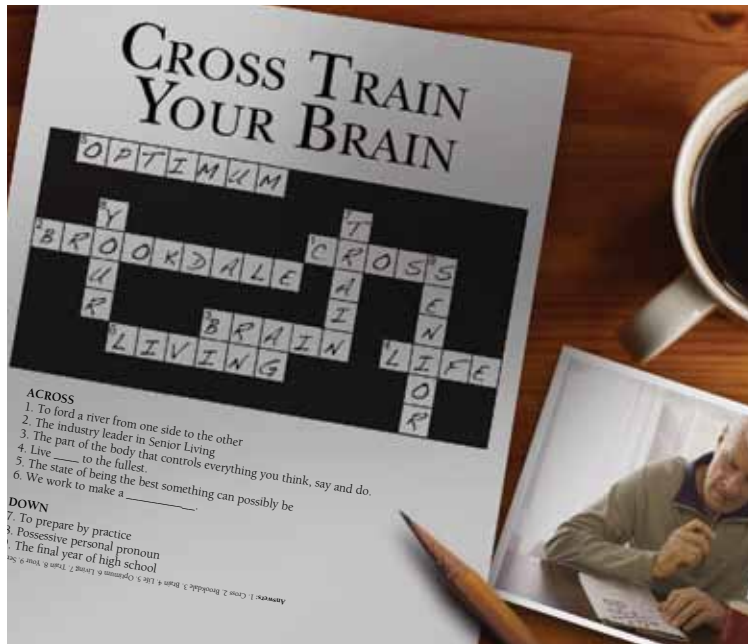
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Coming to small town Williamsburg from the busy, bustling life of Atlanta, Georgia has been a pleasant change for Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools superintendent Dr. Steven Constantino and his wife, Peggie.

"It's quite a difference to come to a place that is more quaint and more community-focused," Dr. Constantino says. "Here, there is a very defined community, which is nice."

Dr. Constantino has been living locally since last February, though this isn't the first time he's called Virginia his home. He spent eight years as principal of Stonewall Jackson High School in Manassas, Virginia helping that school achieve both national and international success.

"I enjoyed my years in northern Virginia and welcomed the opportunity to come back," Dr. Constantino says, who is originally from New York.

He and Peggie, who is principal of Coventry Elementary School in York County, have quickly grown fond of Williamsburg, particularly the historic area.

Every weekend, they pack their dog, Nico, in the car and head to Colonial Williamsburg for a cup of coffee and a stroll along Duke of Gloucester Street. Their routine includes browsing through the Williamsburg Farmers' Market. The couple also tends to frequent New Town and enjoys dining at the various local restaurants and then trying to replicate favorite dishes on their own at home.

"We just love to head out on Saturday and see all the things that we can see," Dr. Constantino says. "It's a different pace here than in Atlanta. Any time you move it is going to be different. We feel at peace here. We enjoy the area - even just walking the dog, which is something we couldn't have done before. Williamsburg makes it easy to enjoy a little bit of your life."

Dr. Constantino especially likes that Williamsburg is centrally-located.

“Williamsburg is like a hub,” he says. “If you want city experiences, you have Richmond, or if you want the beach, you have Virginia Beach. It has everything you want all within an hour’s drive. We’ve joked that we’ve done more here in three months than all of our seven years in Atlanta.”

Dr. Constantino initially planned on a career in music education. During a stint as a high school band director in New York, a band parent told him she thought he should consider a switch to administration.

“I guess she saw in me some leadership potential,” Dr. Constantino recalls. “I had never really thought about it before, but then I decided to dabble in some leadership classes to see what it was like.”

Eventually, Dr. Constantino says he became hooked, and moved on to earn his doctorate degree in educational leadership and policy study from Virginia Tech. He worked as a high school assistant principal in both New York and Virginia and also taught courses in leadership and policy study at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Dr. Constantino served as principal of Stonewall Jackson High School in Manassas, Virginia from 1995 until 2003 when he left to establish his own company, Family Friendly Schools, which was dedicated to promoting more parental involvement in education.

“I learned a great deal by starting the company,” he says. “I traveled to 40 states and to other places in the world, and it helped me garner a new perspective on education.”

He penned three books on the topic of family engagement in education and then decided to return to practice, accepting a job as deputy superintendent of the Cobb County School District in Georgia, the second largest school district in the state with a student population of 107,000.

“That was a tremendous experience for me,” he says. “I felt lucky enough to have taken that job, very fortunate.”

Dr. Constantino says he was content to stay in Atlanta but then he heard of the opening for superintendent in Williamsburg-James City County last year and started thinking about a change.

“My wife and I had had conversations about coming back to Virginia because we really loved it here,” he says. “But we decided if we went back it had to be for the right reasons. It had to be for something that I thought was interesting, for something that not only could I benefit from, but could also benefit others by what I was doing.”

After some contemplation, “I decided to put my hat in the ring,” he says. “I can remember leaving my interview thinking that I really enjoyed talking with the School Board, and I was

very grateful to get a second interview. I feel very fortunate that they have put their faith in me.”

Dr. Constantino admits that the transition to overseeing a school division that is literally one tenth the size of his former district has been an adjustment.

“It took some time getting used to, but I think this is better suited to my personality, and I like that I’ve become a part of the community that I serve,” he says.

His current role as superintendent is to help prepare a new strategic plan for the school division, one that will make it “a premiere school system,” which is a goal for the School Board.

“A school district needs to reflect its community values,” he says. “We are working to create a system the community deserves and then deliver it. This is a great school system and I hope my contributions will make it a better place.”

Dr. Constantino and Peggie feel the same about Williamsburg as a whole.

“We are still in the ‘Wow. We live in Williamsburg,’ stage,” he says. “We have met some very wonderful people through our work, in our neighborhood, and through other activities. We’ve had a lot of fun so far. Everyone has been very accommodating and helpful. We’ve come here to put down roots and hope that that will happen. We are very happy where we are at right now.” NDN

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Michele Lee has a distinct voice and personality that wraps you in a hug before you get a chance to say hello. Her broad smile reached across the crowd at the New Town coffee shop, and she says, “Don’t worry, we’ve got plenty of time before the game starts.” She is an avid Giants fan who never wants to miss watching an afternoon game with her fiancé, Brandon, an equally enthusiastic Redskins fan.

Michele grew up in Virginia Beach and spent a good portion of her life there. She currently works as a supervisor for Harris Teeter in the customer service department, a position which suits her personality well.

“I love people. I love talking to them and getting to know them,” she says. “I have so many customers that I see outside the store and they’re always so friendly. I feel like I really connect with them.”

When she initially began work with the grocery chain, a district manager noted her friendliness and strong work ethic. “I think my personality is the real reason I’ve done so well here. After high school I was offered full time work and I’ve loved it so much I stayed,” she says.

Michele's entire twelve year career has been with Harris Teeter. "I've done three grand openings for the store, and for a while I lived in Wilmington, North Carolina where I organized two of those grand openings." Although she enjoyed her stay in Wilmington, she eventually moved back to Virginia. Her father was diagnosed with lung cancer and she wanted to be closer to him.

For a while, Michele commuted from Virginia Beach to Newport News. Two years ago she was offered a position in Williamsburg. "It was obvious I'd have to move here, since the commute to Newport News was already stressful enough. But my father was doing better and it seemed like a good idea at the time," she explains.

Michele didn't know a single person in the area but she decided to accept the offer. Harris Teeter took care of the details, and now she is enjoying her life in her new surroundings.

Despite a little bit of distance and a bridge-tunnel, Michele enjoys a good relationship with both her parents and manages to visit with them every few weeks. It wasn't until she moved to Williamsburg that she met Brandon. She also gained an eight year old stepdaughter.

"I know we're not married yet, but in my heart she's my daughter, so I've started telling people she's my stepdaughter," Michele says. Brandon proposed in February of this year, and they are preparing to have a wedding 'soon', perhaps in 2012. Michele holds old-fashioned ideas of what a marriage should be, and she and her fiancé are spending some time planning their wedding, which will take place in the area.

Michele enjoys the pace of life in Williamsburg. "It's not as congested here as in the more urban areas, and it's definitely more laid back. There's an old town sort of feeling here, and a much lower crime rate. I think of this area as really family oriented, which is something I love. It's the kind of place that seems just right for me."

She laments that Williamsburg is void of nightclubs but loves the multitude of restaurants available. "I love socializing around food; it seems like such a natural thing to do. What's better than sharing a good meal with a friend? And there are so many great places here to go out and eat."

When Michele first moved here she didn't spend a lot of time eating out, simply because she didn't know anyone. Surprisingly, it wasn't easy for her to meet people, either. She'd made a decision to separate her work life and personal life, which made social options more limited.

"After I met Brandon, that all changed," she explains. "Brandon's family is kind of big, and really helped expand my social circle. It didn't take long before I knew lots of people."

The area attractions are also part of the appeal of living here. "I just love the fact that I can go to Busch Gardens or Water Country during the summer and take my stepdaughter there," she says. "They're such fun places, why not take advantage of having them right here in our backyard?"

When she's not working or frequenting the local parks, Michele likes to watch sports, specifically football and basketball. "My team is the Giants, which sometimes makes people ask me if I'm from New York. I tell them no, I'm definitely from Virginia. I just happen to like that team."

According to Michele, she's the kind of person who wears her emotions on her sleeve, so it's always easy to know what she's feeling. With her robust laughter and upbeat attitude, it's obvious that she means every positive thing she says about living here.

"When I go to work I try to leave everything at the door. If I'm having a bad day, there's no reason to be dragging everyone else down with my problems."

It's easy to imagine that customers in her store are treated to the bright wattage of her smile. "I tend to be somewhat empathic, too, and I pick up on other people's emotions really easily. I just want to say to the world 'smiles are contagious', because it's so true. Just one smile can change your whole day." NDN

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Beth Allar

NORTH *to* SOUTH

By Alison Johnson

As Beth Allar got ready to move to Williamsburg in 2009, she admits she had some jitters. Beth and her husband, Matthew, already had relocated several times for his college teaching career, but they'd always gone somewhere in the North: New Jersey, Pennsylvania and upstate New York. This time, she'd be a Northerner in a southern state, and she wondered if she'd feel out of place.

Instead, Beth felt just the opposite – almost instantly at home. Williamsburg, she discovered, was a good mix of lifelong residents and people who had moved here from all over the country, giving her a diverse group of new friends. She was struck by how clean and tidy everything looked and liked the balance of development and open space.

As Beth settled in, she noticed – and liked – how even casual acquaintances would greet her warmly during chance encounters at stores, rather than keeping to themselves as they tended to do in other places she'd lived. She found that getting to bigger cities, including Washington, D.C., was usually easy. As the first year passed, she saw that she'd still be able to enjoy all four seasons – just with a lot more summer heat and a lot less winter snow.

Her new home, Beth has concluded, is not only a place with a rich history but with plenty of endearing traditions and quirks, from old-fashioned Christmas decorations on Duke of Gloucester Street to the unbelievable number of pancake houses along Richmond Road.

"It hasn't taken long to feel at home," she says. "We've moved around quite a bit over the years, searching for a place to settle down and call home. This is a place with a real identity and character – a strong sense of community. That is what we'd been hoping for."

Beth, 33, is a Philadelphia native who landed in Williamsburg after her husband took a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Theatrical Design at William and Mary. Both were drawn to the college for its strong theatre and dance department, as well as its beautiful campus. The couple met at Pennsylvania's Muhlenberg College, where Beth majored in photography and dance. They grew close during a production of *West Side Story*; Beth was a performer and Matthew was set designer.

After college, Beth channeled a dancer's interest in the body and movement into the study of massage therapy at the Swedish Institute in New York City.

"Massage is so much more than just rubbing people," she says. "You can really make a difference in their range of motion and how well they feel." Beth now works as Office and Community Outreach Manager of Performance Chiropractic on Jamestown Road and is a certified massage therapist there, specializing in deep tissue massage for medical problems such as back and neck pain. "I see lots of gardeners and golfers," she says.

As a recent transplant, Beth has noticed the pace of life tends to be slower in Williamsburg than it was in many northern locales. "People have a certain calmness about them a good portion of the time, just in general," she says. "On more than one occasion, people have pointed out to me that I speak quickly or move quickly. I never thought about it until I moved down here."

Now happily settled into their home in The Meadows community in James City County, Beth and her husband have found plenty of favorite activities: driving the Colonial Parkway, walking Duke of Gloucester Street, shopping at the Williamsburg Farmers' Market, biking to Chickahominy Riverfront Park and eating at Tequila Rose, their favorite of the many Mexican restaurants they've noticed in town.

Meanwhile, family and friends who rarely visited the couple in their previous homes suddenly wanted to plan trips. "I'm not sure if Matt and I are the attraction, or if it's Williamsburg," Beth says with a laugh. "People get really excited about Williamsburg. It's pretty and there's so much to do. My mom especially just eats it up, because she loves the history and talking to the interpreters."

Beth wouldn't change a whole lot about her new home. Her main complaints are the traffic, especially on Interstate 64, and the summer humidity. Come winter, she wouldn't mind a bit more snow after living in Rochester, New York, where two feet of snow didn't faze anyone. She would also be happy with more businesses and original restaurants of varying ethnicities. "There are so many empty shopping centers; some areas are starting to look like they're part of a ghost town," she says. "I'm not saying I want more building, just to see the commercial space that exists to survive and thrive."

The arts scene, she has found, is fairly healthy for a small community. "There are some amazing local artists," she says. "I keep finding these little niches, and we enjoy having access to Hampton, Norfolk and Richmond too." Recently, she helped choreograph scenes for the "South East Side Story" show staged by William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg. "That was so much fun," she says. "It made me want to get more involved in local theater and find other places to volunteer."

The Christmas season is one of Beth's favorite times of year in Williamsburg. She has enjoyed strolling around Merchants Square with a cup of hot cider, going to Christmas Town at Busch Gardens, watching the annual presentation of "A Christmas Carol" and seeing the spectacle of The Grand Illumination. While Beth is still technically a Northerner, she hopes to call Virginia home for many years. "That stereotype of Southern hospitality has been proven true," she says. "Most people are so friendly. There are a lot of smiles and a lot of warmth – and that makes us really excited to be here." NDN

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Barbara Kruh

A Rhythm That Feels Right

By Sandy Rotermund

A chart etched on a kitchen wall marks a child's years and growth in a linear fashion. Predictable and consistent, the lead lines end in adulthood. By contrast, adult life passages meander and entwine with chance and circumstance, the growth recorded more abstractly on an emotional wallboard and never really concluding. For Barbara Kruh, retiring to Williamsburg just six weeks ago marks the beginning of a life with roots and a rhythm that feels right after much disconnectedness.

"That's why, in Williamsburg, I know I'm in the right place." She takes a deep breath. "Because my heart is telling me, my soul is telling me, this is the right place for me. It's the right time."

Immense, flat cardboard boxes encasing artwork neatly stack against Barbara's living room walls. The plush couch encircling the fireplace welcomes conversation and connection. Barbara points to the stairs.

"I have this area [living room] comfortable, but it's like a tornado hit upstairs!"

The flow of her day ebbs in order to unpack boxes – a routine that is all too familiar to her. Yet it doesn't stop her from welcoming friends and visitors. Two dear friends from the many places she's lived have come already. Moving to Williamsburg came after three-plus years of searching for the place she would finally call home. Barbara has lived in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts and Florida – returning to some states more than once. Virginia, though never her home before this, beckoned her for several reasons.

"I was born in Connecticut, but my mother was from Richmond," Barbara says. "My dad went to the Medical College of Virginia where he

met my mother at some event there and they soon became husband and wife. He took her up north, but my grandmother and aunts and uncles lived here so we would come back as children and visit. I have that connection.”

Her dearest friend of more than 40 years also moved to Virginia years ago. She now lives in Williamsburg. Barbara’s future home was already defining itself, but only after decades of transplanting both personally and professionally. Practicing dental hygiene in Connecticut, Boston and New York enabled Barbara to support her two daughters during a difficult life change. Then, a new life passage brought more moves and offered other career options, including financial administration, managing the import/export of maple syrup, and working in interior home design and renovation. Living in Vermont highlights her narrative.

“I was in a little magical village, called Green River, in a little historic home built in 1790. [It was] a little cape overlooking a covered bridge, historic church, and an old timber-framed dam. And that was the vista looking out of every room.” Her eyes appear distant, but wistful.

Williamsburg reminds Barbara of the magical town she loved in Vermont.

“The smells, the sounds – what I like about Williamsburg is just that,” she says. Her home in Kingsmill feels like a sanctuary. “When I came back and really started exploring Wil-

liamsburg and Kingsmill, it felt like home – like a piece of New England because you do get the four seasons.”

And it’s friendly,” she adds. “I have never met such friendly people, and I’ve lived—I’ve been around. I’ve lived up and down, you know, this eastern coast, and the people [here] are kind and supportive.”

As a newcomer to Williamsburg, Barbara feels embraced here.

“It’s home,” she continues. “I have never felt so peaceful. I have felt peaceful in Vermont, that’s for sure. But I’m a people person, and I was in a rural, isolated area. This is my natural rhythm in life to be among appreciators of a certain quality of life and nature. People, I think, who come to Williamsburg and embrace it – there’s a common thread.”

Nature’s harsher side – winters in Vermont were what really pushed Barbara to move. Though she remains awestruck by Vermont’s spectacular scenery, her outdoor nature collided with her not being a snow person.

“You go into a theme of life where you are holding your breath from November to basically May, until you can get out, because then there’s mud season. Mud season is a whole other season after winter. She recalls having been stranded in her four-wheel drive in the muddy ruts of the mountain roads. She shakes her head. “I needed a place where I could be

outside.”

Between the north’s elevated cost of living and the general temperament residents adopt there, Barbara’s disconnect to the place and to her heart grew.

“There’s a pulse. People are in a rush all the time, and you don’t matter. ‘Not my problem’ is the attitude,” she says dismissively.

A nurturer at heart and a caregiver by circumstance, Barbara attended to every detail of her often-chaotic life. Though always independent, her adopted role of life administrator dictated a pace of living she isn’t sorry to leave behind.

“I love the rhythm of my life [now],” she says. “Going at my own pace.”

Barbara harbors no regrets about the personal challenges she’s faced in her prior life passages.

“I’m almost grateful for the pain, for the difficulties, because it did push me. It made me reach deep, to really find the path that I needed to choose in life. And it is empowering. It’s free.”

It sounds like a connection has been made. The path getting here was anything but linear. But her growth as she enters this life passage is evident. Barbara Kruh’s heart and home have finally unified.

“There’s nothing like Williamsburg,” she says. “There’s nothing. I keep saying it’s magical. That’s all I can say. I feel that it is my sanctuary.” NDN

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Sheila Conrad

Age 81

Peace, serenity and strength describe 81 year-old Sheila Conrad. She's an inspiration to many for her varied interests and depth of her enthusiasm. Her focus at this point in her life is inward using the art of Tai Chi.

"A moving meditation," Sheila says describing the practice. "Tai Chi is a moving meditation. It is a significant role player in my life and [it] helps me through a lot of things. Now I've come to a

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time to share my passions, like Tai Chi, like film, like reading, like community.”

After living in New York City from her birth and through young adulthood, Sheila spent several years in Los Angeles. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Film Production from City College in New York City and her Master’s Degree in Comprehensive Health Planning from UCLA. For almost 30 years, she worked as a film editor in New York and Los Angeles, as well as a health services planning consultant.

In 2002, she and her husband moved to Williamsburg, quite a change from New York and LA. She gladly made the change to enjoy her grandchildren during their formative years.

This energetic yet quiet woman celebrated her 81st birthday on December 25th. “It’s a day for giving birth, like any other day, and already a day for celebration,” Sheila says.

Teaching three or more Tai Chi classes a week at Anahata Yoga Center keeps Sheila busy. She also shares her knowledge of film through the Christopher Wren Association. During her upcoming spring class, she plans to screen three very different films: the Marx Brothers’ “Duck Soup,” Kurasawa’s “Ran,” and Albert Finney’s “The Dresser.”

Along with film, she has an interest in the literary arts. Sheila belongs to two book clubs, one through the Williamsburg Library and the other at Temple Beth-El on Jamestown Road. The Temple group is currently reading the novel, *The Jew in the Lotus*, a story about Jewish scholars and leaders who make a trip to see the Dalai Lama.

Tai Chi pulls all of Sheila’s interests together, an accumulation of her knowledge and learning expressed with mind and body. She also teaches the long form of Tai Chi.

“One hundred and eight movements,” she explains, “the old Yang style.”

She learned the long form in Los Angeles and now teaches it to her younger students. She also has created and teaches a shorter form that she calls the Senior form. This class uses long form movements that emphasize balance and right-left coordination, which she explains people need as they age.

“The goal of Tai Chi,” Sheila says, “is physical, emotional and spiritual balance.” It is a combination of martial and healing arts. “It’s complex enough that you cannot be going through your to-do list and do Tai Chi at the same time,” Sheila explains. “You have to do one or the other. The time you spend doing Tai Chi is a gift you give yourself. Peace.”

Tai Chi philosophy maintains that stress is tied to what has happened in the past. Practicing Tai Chi is living in the present, a work in progress. “There’s no such thing as perfection or a goal, rather a discovering,” Sheila says. “My joy is in teaching. Somebody asks me a question and in the process of answering it or rethinking the



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move I discover something I didn't know. Or they discover something and bring it to me."

Music is usually absent during Sheila's classes because she feels it is distracting. "We, as westerners, tend to focus outside ourselves," she says. "I want my students to focus on their body. When they notice something doesn't feel right, the first thing they should do is pat themselves on the back. This is extraordinary progress."

Only once did Sheila use music in a class. It was a Chair Tai Chi class she developed for a friend with severe fibromyalgia and taught to that friend and others who were not moving around much or were living in a wheelchair. "The goal for them was very different from the goal for other people. It was to lift their bodies up so they were not crunching and to feel good about moving," Sheila describes. "For them I used music because it gave them a feeling of grace."

Body awareness is an aspect of Tai Chi she appreciates and finds fulfillment in developing in others. A man who suffered from Parkinson's disease was referred by his doctor and physical therapist to her class at the Williamsburg-James City County Community Center.

"Walking without picking his feet up was his security," Sheila says of the man. "My goal for him was not to learn the whole form but to stand up and walk safely."

She taught him how to do "Empty Walking", which is completely shifting weight onto one leg before taking a small step with no weight on the raised foot. The secret is to keep the knees slightly bent, engaging the thighs rather than ankle or back.

Smiling widely Sheila relates: "He spent most of the class time going back and forth in back of the studio practicing "Empty Walking". After six weeks he still walked slowly, but his foot came off the ground and he hadn't fallen. His wife was in a state of ecstasy, his doctors...everyone. He was in control. It didn't matter if he did the rest of the form."

"Tai Chi," Sheila says, "has helped me through many, many a trial, the latest when my husband died a year and a half ago. The last year of his life, we cared for him here at home. He used to love to watch me practice Tai Chi. He'd beg me to do it for him so he could watch. That was relaxing for him."

Not only did Tai Chi help her husband but it also helped her. "During the difficult times it created this minute, this space, this time that gave me the peace, the serenity, the strength to continue doing all the other things I had to do," she adds.

Sheila Conrad's inward focus, knowing her body, mind and emotions with the practice of Tai Chi, has led to a fulfilling time in her life. A time of sharing her knowledge with her neighbors that helps them achieve the same peace, serenity and strength that she enjoys. NDN

Monty Mason

A Catalyst for Business Development

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Kim Kiely Photography

“We have a variety of programs that we utilize on a regular basis,” Monty Mason says of the City of Williamsburg’s Economic Development Authority (EDA). “Part of our mission is to create the conversation and to drive ideas to City Council and the decision makers.” Monty is the Chair of the EDA’s Board

of Directors, which is made up of seven volunteers from throughout the city.

Monty and his wife moved back to Williamsburg about eight years ago. “My wife works in the Athletic Department of the College of William and Mary,” he says. “I’m a 1989 graduate of the college. When we moved

back to Williamsburg, I looked for a way to get involved in the community.” He had seen a notice in the *Virginia Gazette* about an opening on another city board and applied for that.

“Councilman Mickey Chohany contacted me and asked if I’d be interested in the Economic Development Authority,” Monty says.

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"It was really the board I had been most interested in, but I didn't realize there was an opening. I'm a businessman, so the idea of what can be done to drive business in the community, to help the community, it puts a lot of interesting things together for me."

Monty and the EDA board work with their city liaison, Michele Mixner DeWitt, Economic Development Director for the City of Williamsburg. "Our mission is to drive economic opportunity for the city," Monty explains. "We are not your standard economic development authority. We do not have industrial parks to fill and sell; we're not trying to bring in big industry. We have a nine square-mile city to work with, where the quality of life comes up in every study about the things citizens like about this city."

Because the quality of life is so important, Monty steers the EDA to balance the aspects that people enjoy about the city with economic opportunities that generate revenue and increase the tax base. "We also want to help the residents and the college students to thrive by retaining and attracting businesses that they're interested in working with."

A prominent focus for Monty has been the creative economy and attempting to generate more interest in the industries of arts and culture. "We have a great environment for that in our partnerships with Colonial Williamsburg and the college," he states. "We've recently developed an Arts District and are in the next phase of conducting an arts study to see what the local artisans need in terms of opportunities, housing, studio space, [and] show space." The creative economy is a part of the professional services industry with people such as marketers, architects, film producers, writers, publishers, painters, sculptors, dancers, musicians and software engineers. "We see them as the growth sector of the future. For the city, it's about how people can use their creativity in a professional services aspect."

Monty explains that people want to live and work in areas that have strong cultural and arts communities. "There's the small business component of creating jobs, but there's also the aspect of attracting new businesses here too." Not only will graduates of the College of William and Mary have more opportunity to stay in the Williamsburg area after graduation, but spouses of employees of the major companies and organizations in town will have a wider variety of employment prospects. "Our target industries are professional services since we don't have the industrial land."

Although there aren't many large parcels with which to work within the city, there is a large economic boost coming. "We do have the Quarterpath development," Marty says, "the new Riverside Doctors Hospital with over a million square feet of commercial and retail opportunity as well as a residential component. That's a big project."

Attracting new businesses is one aspect for Monty, but he and the EDA also focus on businesses already in place and how to help them succeed. Some of the standard programs of the EDA are: e-Commerce grants, sign replacement grants and demolition loans.

"The Demolition Loan program offers \$20,000 to knock down an existing structure," Monty explains of the redevelopment incentive. "The loan is interest free for the next ten years and paid back by whatever is developed on the property and a stair-stepped value in real estate taxes." He uses the examples of successful redevelopment at the site of the new Chipotle Mexican Grill on Richmond Road at Bypass and for the land of Tribe Square across Richmond Road from Blow Memorial Hall and next to Wawa. He states that every dollar loaned has leveraged \$70 in private investment in the city. "It's a win-win," Monty adds.

"This idea of infusing cash to get land redeveloped quickly produces a 112% annual return in direct local taxes to the city."

A program for existing businesses that is a personal favorite of Monty's is the e-Commerce Grant. "We'll match a business up to \$1500 to either redevelop their website or add a shopping cart," he describes. "We want our small businesses to be able to reach out to the country, to the entire world. We helped a local artist with that, and she made a West Coast sale her first week on-line with her new website."

Sign Replacement Grants help businesses upgrade their street signs. "For both the aesthetic qualities and to bring signs into compliance with city regulation," Monty says, "we'll pay up to \$2,000. We do about ten of those a year."

He admits these are not the most glamorous programs. "But they provide a catalyst for businesses to move ahead."

The more captivating programs that capture the public's interest are also the longer term projects like the Arts District and the Quarterpath Development.

"The Arts District was a big idea last year and will be going forward this year," Monty says. It's a long-term vision for the city. "It could be that a lot of new arts businesses develop or it could be that one or two new businesses find a place to live and work. We're at the start. It's an important part of the community that we're well-suited for. It's the type of industry we like to attract." Since February of 2011, four businesses have opened in the Arts District.

"I think people look for big home runs," he adds. "They're afraid to get involved in things unless it promises to make a big splash. A lot of what we do chips away at and continually drives toward a goal. A lot of what we do is open the conversation. What can downtown Williamsburg be?"

On the east side of town is the Quarterpath Development. "That's a big project for 2012," Monty says. "The infrastructure is going well. They have approval for one million square feet of commercial space. We have never had that type of space approved in the city of Williamsburg. Who could occupy that space? We're looking at possibilities. That's exciting."

A future project on the table for discussion is a business incubator. "James City County has a business incubator that works very closely with William and Mary's Mason School of Business," Monty explains. "We have talked about, among our groups, if it makes sense to expand that to a regional incubator. I'm not sure how far that will go, but it makes sense to us to expand that to the other jurisdictions. The key here is the vision. Trying to drive diversity in the economy, you have to prove to small businesses that you are willing to help them."

Monty enjoys his work with the Economic Development Authority. "I'm worth every cent they pay me," he says with a laugh of the volunteer position.

"There's an element of civic responsibility and engagement that you have to be part of your community," he says. "If you like where you live and believe in where you live, you need to be a part of it. Participate, be part of the decisions, know the decision makers." Along with the aspect of giving back to the community he loves, he says he's genuinely interested in economics and business development.

"As a business person, identifying and promoting good opportunities in the city I live in is a positive situation. We're involved in a lot of win-win things and that's nice to be a part of." NDN

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Steve Walsh

WILLIAM AND MARY'S HALF MARATHON

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Each year for the past 33 years, William and Mary's track and field team has hosted the Sentara Colonial Half Marathon. This year, Coach Steve Walsh says the half marathon will be one to remember with special events before, during and after the race.

"This is a unique race," Steve explains. "With the sponsorship from Sentara and other local businesses plus the volunteer efforts of people in the community, we have a sporting event that rivals none other in the region." The half marathon is a major fundraiser for the William and Mary track teams.

Steve's interest in running goes back to his college days at Penn State where he ran track. "After college, I started coaching at the University of Pennsylvania for four years and then at Providence College up in Rhode Island."

When Steve had the opportunity to take a position here, he jumped at it. "Williamsburg is a great place for runners, a great place to live," Steve says. "There are tons of trails and great parks to run in."

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Williamsburg's climate makes running all year a possibility and has made the half marathon a perfect mid-winter sporting event. "It works here," he says of the race held in February. "In other places it would be too cold. A lot of people come down for this because the temperatures are just right for running."

Steve's specialties in college track were the mid-distance races. "My main event in school was the mile, the 1500 meters," he says. "I ran cross country, indoor and outdoor track, the 800 meter, 1500 meter, 5k type of stuff. I don't run as much today. The team keeps me too busy."

The Sentara Colonial Half Marathon is now in its 33rd year and routes runners through some rarely used roads. "This is a unique half marathon," Steve states. "It starts on campus with fifes and drums leading the runners to the starting line, and then the runners go through town and out to Carter's Grove Country Road, off South England Street. During the year, that road is closed, so runners usually don't get the chance to run on it."

The route is challenging and scenic. "It's challenging in terms that the course is hilly. It's a course the runners enjoy," Steve says.

Over the years, the course has changed. Steve explains that the route used to have stretches of the Colonial Parkway in it, but now the course takes advantage of the old Carter's Grove private road.

"Usually, a half marathon is on roadways, so having the shade and change in scenery of the private road makes it special. The course begins at the college, zigzags through the community over to South England Street to Carter's Grove Country Road – almost extending to Busch Gardens," he describes. "They do a loop into Kingsmill and hop back to the Country Road, that's when most runners run past each other, looping back to town."

After the racers make their way back into town and the college campus, they run into William and Mary Hall. "The finish is really unique," Steve says, "running up the ramp into William and Mary Hall, onto the basketball court to the finish line. All the family, friends and fans will be in the stands cheering the runners. It's a spectator-friendly finish. People can sit and watch. Afterwards there will be food, and in the past, Anheuser-Busch has sponsored beer. You don't see many runs like that. They finish the half marathon – a big accomplishment – and want to hang around and get some food and relax with their families and the other runners."

With a Health Fair going on before, during and after the race, spectators and runners are able to talk with vendors and health care providers. A 5k race starts just after the half marathon runners clear the starting line.

"It's a nice, friendly atmosphere," Steve adds. "Our kids work it. They go out on the course to

set everything up. They're out there cheering on the runners during the race. We get a few professional runners to come down to run it every year that are up in the front, but a lot of it is the average runner, maybe training for a spring marathon. This makes a good transition for a later in the year marathon." He adds that this February race is popular with runners preparing for the Boston Marathon in April.

"The runners use this to get a good hard effort, something to run with a big group of people. Some just like to do their Sunday long run with a bunch of people. You get all different types: some who want to race it and others who just want the accomplishment of finishing a half marathon."

Steve likes the distance of the half marathon. "In the past, they have been hard to find," he says of the approximately 13.1 mile event. "It's not the normal distance of races, like the 5ks and 10ks that runners experience many weekends. It's nice to have something a little longer."

The 33rd annual Sentara Colonial Half Marathon is Sunday, February 26, 2012. Steve says now is the time to sign up and bring your friends to participate in the half marathon or 5k race. The Health Fair runs throughout the day for participants and spectators at the William and Mary Hall on campus. NDN

For more information about the half marathon, visit the website: www.TribeAthletics.com.

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Urlee O'Donnell

Creativity UNLEASHED

By Greg Lilly, Editor

"Something will trigger me," artist Urlee O'Donnell says of finding creative inspiration for her paintings. "I know I have to work every single day. If not, every other day. If I don't, I lose that inspiration. It's like trying to start over."

Creativity needs to be nurtured as a gardener with a delicate flower, she explains, or worked hard as a drill sergeant with a reluctant recruit – whatever makes the ideas flow, just do it.

"I've been drawing and painting since I could hold a crayon or brush because my dad was an artist," Urlee says. "He was also a church decorator. He worked for a couple of the big church decorating firms up in Cleveland. He did a lot of the gold leaf detail on things like murals."

Her father was commissioned to paint murals for an old hotel in Denver, Colorado. "He loved the West," she adds. "For a Clevelander,



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he had a fascination with the West. The economy tanked, and we moved back east to Cleveland where he worked for the church decorating companies again. He always painted.

Urlee's artistic lineage reaches back past her father to her grandfather as well. "Dad's father, my grandfather, was a self-taught artist. He was the master porcelain artist for the Laughlin Pottery in East Liverpool, Ohio," she says. "He had his own porcelain shop for a number of years with a kiln in the basement, but the Depression wiped out his livelihood."

From her grandfather and father, many artists were raised. "My dad always painted; my oldest brother was a painter; Uncle Jack, my dad's brother, was a painter; one of his children paints. It's interesting that we all did art."

She wasn't always sure she would become an artist. The social norms of the day seemed to dictate which occupations were acceptable for young women. "Back when I was in high school, the career options for girls were a teacher, a nurse or a secretary. I thought I would be a nurse. My high school art class was what turned me around. I won a prize in one of the art shows and decided art was what I wanted to do."

Urlee majored in art during college. "I knew I needed to make a living when I graduated, so I became an art teacher – but only for a year and a half," she adds with a laugh. She

married and started a family. While living in Northern Virginia, she set up her studio in the basement of their house. Some neighbors told her they had signed up for a painting class to be given by the county's parks and recreation department, but they didn't want to drive to the northern part of Fairfax County to attend it. "They asked me to teach them instead. That painting group in my basement kept me going, kept me interested and involved," she says.

"I could have gone off in many different directions," she adds about inspiration the regular sessions of the neighborhood class stimulated. "I was painting oil at the time, and there was a resurgence in watercolor then in the late 1970s. I had tried watercolor before, but felt I had never completed a decent painting with it." She started working with watercolor, acknowledging the difficulty of the medium, but determined to master it.

Her subjects run the gamut from loose abstracts to detailed historical buildings. "Crazy still lifes," she adds, "things out of the ordinary. I'm doing some bird paintings." Her use of opaque watercolors creates images with bold colors. "Pumpkins – I like pumpkins in any size, shape or form," she adds. "It's a limited thing because of the seasons, but I like them. I like gourds and things growing." Her collage work tends to go more abstract, non-representational. "I like nonobjective now – collages,

things a little different. I'm looking to do something edgy. I've done florals."

She feels that her abstract art is an extension of her earlier work. "I would say that the abstract evolves from the basics," Urlee explains. "Draw or paint what you love and the rest will develop. It grows out of that. I can see how the modernists of the late 19th century became the artists they became, why they did what they did. Of course, it was a shock at the time. These artists were looking for something different." Her creativity expands her view, moves her beyond her horizons to discover new expressions.

Ideas come to Urlee from action. "I could sit down and sketch and get ideas, even doodling," she says. "Breaking up spaces – and texture, that's what I love, trying to figure it out. I try not to be boring. I mix it up. Get the contrast, the value between light and dark and grays – get that big sharp contrast."

The actual process of working on a painting brings about creativity and inspiration for Urlee O'Donnell. "If you are not working all the time, it's easy to backslide," she admits. "Do something. That's always in the back of my mind – just do something. I'll go in my studio and putter, even clean out my paint box. I'll take out a piece of paper and sketch."

Her motto: Move the brush and creativity appears. NDN

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Health

Kathy Kasley

Soothing Patients

with her harp

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“Music hath charms to soothe a savage beast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak,” William Congreve wrote in his play, *The Mourning Bride*, in 1697. At Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, that philosophy is enacted by harpist Kathy Kasley. Kathy is a Certified Music Practitioner who helps relieve stress and worry from patients and their families at the hospital.

“I’ve always loved the sound of the harp, but never thought of playing it until I turned 55,” Kathy explains. “I woke up one morning and thought: I want to play the harp.”

Kathy studied with a Celtic harp teacher in California where she was living at the time. “I learned the basics,” she says. “My husband began to get transferred for work. We ended up overseas in Singapore for two years. I took my harp with me and continued playing on my own. When we returned to the States, we retired to Williamsburg. I found a wonderful classical harp teacher who I studied with for about a year and a half. Actually, Williamsburg



Kim Kiely Photography

is a hotbed of harping.”

As her interest and skill increased, Kathy attended conferences to learn more and connect with other harpists. “The one I usually go to is in New Jersey and is called Somerset Folk Harp Festival,” she says. At the festival, which attracts about three to four hundred harpists, they have a trade fair of harp-related vendors and non-profits. “One table had information on The Music for Healing and Transition Program,” Kathy explains. “I talked to the woman manning the table for quite a while. I knew this was one thing I could do with my music. I’m

never going to be one of the world’s greatest harpists; I’ll never be a classical harpist. But I can play beautifully and simply, and I can play something pleasant that people could enjoy.”

She decided to devote herself to the training to become a certified music practitioner, which took about two years of workshops, research papers, mentoring, playing live therapeutic music, along with the health care education of basic terminology, health care etiquette and working with clinical staff.

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I need to understand how to work within the environment, not disturb what the staff is doing and actually be helpful.”

The field of therapeutic music has developed from years of clinical study. “In the last ten years the research has really blossomed,” Kathy says. “Researchers study the effects of music and vibrations on the human body. It is interesting how music affects the body. We don’t only hear with our ears; we feel the vibration in our bones. The skin has thousands and thousands of receptors.” When Kathy plays her harp for patients, she tries to position herself as close to the patient as possible so they can feel the vibrations.

Her training included the scientific examination of the physics of sound. “How sound is produced,” Kathy explains. “How sound is perceived, as well as the effects of sound and music on human physiology. I took workshops on understanding palliative and curative care and the fundamentals of music theory.”

She continued her training with 45 hours of hospital internship. “I did that at Sentara and at Hospice House,” she adds. “I’m really grateful to Margaret Cullivan [Director of Volunteer Services] and Sentara for accepting me as an intern because they had never taken in a music practitioner as an intern.”

A typical session for Kathy is to play one-on-one at a patient’s bedside. “The first thing I do is introduce myself as a music practitioner there

to play soothing music,” she explains. “I ask if they would like music. I give them the option. If they agree, I play for them.”

The live performance has a huge advantage over recorded music. First, Kathy can personalize her songs based on the patient’s condition and reaction. “There’s the social aspect of human interaction,” she says. “Plus, live music is patient-centered, personalized for each patient. I can tell if the patient is agitated, if they’re sleepy, if they have tense body language, if they look like they’re in pain.”

She chooses her music based on what she feels would be most beneficial to the person. “If someone is agitated, I would play, for example, a melody that starts off a little faster then I’d bring the tempo down slowly to help calm them. Especially for people in pain, music is a different focus for them.” The patient can take his mind off the ache and center his concentration on the music.

Secondly, the physics of the live sound trump that of recorded music. “The actual vibration is important,” Kathy adds. “Recorded music is compressed sound. It sounds the same to the ear, but the sound wave is compressed. You don’t feel it in the same way.”

Another benefit is the emotional level. She describes how, once the patient can relax, the family members are able to calm down as well.

A memorable experience for Kathy came from one of her first therapeutic music sessions

with an older patient. “In Baltimore, where I started my training,” she says, “I went into the room of a 92 year old woman with extreme Alzheimer’s. She was very agitated and rolling back and forth in bed, vocalizing that she was uncomfortable and in pain. A staff member was in the room to make sure she didn’t injure herself. I went into the room, thinking I would try this, but not sure of the patient’s reaction. Within twelve minutes, she had stopped vocalizing and had relaxed back into the bed. She started to hum along with the music. In fifteen minutes, she was sound asleep. I played a little longer to ensure she would stay asleep and then took my harp and quietly left the room. The staff member came out and grabbed me in a bear hug, saying ‘Thank you so much. She hasn’t slept in two days. We weren’t sure what to do because the medications were not working.’ From what I heard, she stayed asleep for several hours. That was my memorable first experience.”

Using her talents to ease other people’s stress and pain keeps Kathy playing her harp in the hospital and at Hospice House. “It’s really satisfying to use what I know and my playing to help other people. I love to play.” As she sums up her work in therapeutic music, she stresses its effect. “It’s not me playing or even the harp itself, the music is the therapist.” Her goal is to relax the patient, to ease pain, to allow music to soothe the savage beast of distress. NDN

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Brian Johnson

Improving Indoor Air Quality

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Kim Kiely Photography

Keeping a home warm during the winter months with a snug and sealed house helps lower fuel bills, but the air shut inside with you may not smell or feel right. Brian Johnson from Williamsburg Heating and Air Conditioning says, “Today’s tightly built homes are great for insulation purposes, but they trap particles that contaminate air. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air quality can be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air.”

Brian’s grandfather worked as a refrigeration engineer for Armour Meat Packing Company in Louisville, Kentucky. Brian would go to the plant with his grandfather and watch him work on the refrigeration systems.

“I loved it,” Brian says of his fascination with the machinery. His grandfather had been a Navy man and encouraged Brian to follow that path too. Brian began training in HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) then

continued his education in the Navy. The Navy stationed him in Norfolk where he spent four years. After his service, he decided to stay in the Hampton Roads area and found a job at Eastern State Hospital.

“I started as a service technician and eventually became the supervisor,” he says. “I was there for ten years. That’s where I met my wife, Shanna.” His supervisory job kept him behind a desk, but what he really wanted to do was get back out in the field.

He began to perform some maintenance work at night and on weekends for the refrigeration systems of local businesses. Eventually, this side business took more and more time. He left Eastern State and began servicing refrigeration systems in restaurants, grocery stores and hotels. The 24 hour on-call needs of his commercial clients left little time for Brian and Shanna’s family, so he began to focus on residential home heating and air conditioning. “Nineteen years

now I’ve been in the residential HVAC business,” Brian says.

In the wintertime, indoor air quality depends on two major aspects: humidity levels and air filtering. “In the cooler weather, the humidity drops,” Brian says. “You want to maintain a certain level of humidity with humidifiers. When it [the air] gets dry, dust and other irritant particles become more airborne and you want to filter the air as much as possible.”

Humidity makes the air feel warmer, but heating systems rob that humidity from the air. “With a whole house humidifier in your home,” Brian says, “you can lower the thermostat and still feel warm. A house at 72 degrees feels warmer with humidity than a dry 72. Dry air acts like a big sponge pulling the moisture from everything in the house – you and your family, your furniture and even your walls and floors.” A whole house humidifier runs in conjunction with a home’s HVAC and has a dedicated water

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line supplying the system. It humidifies the warm air as it travels through the duct work.

A comfortable level of humidity in your home reduces dry skin, arid nasal cavities and chapped lips. Humidity also decreases static electricity in the house during the winter. "A lot of people also complain about the dry air's effects on wood floors and pianos – the wood cracking," Brian says. "It is important to keep the humidity in the house up to a certain level." The right humidity levels are determined mostly by the homeowner's own comfort level. Some enjoy higher moisture in the indoor air, maybe around 50%, while others like to keep the humidity in the 25-35% range.

"Typically, gas furnaces are hotter and dry the air more," Brian says of the difference in heat pumps and gas systems. Although both types of systems should use humidifiers, homeowners with gas heat probably notice the effects of low indoor humidity more than heat pump owners. "For being comfortable in the winter," Brian adds, "a whole house humidifier is the number one thing for your indoor air."

Air filtering is the other big concern for indoor air quality. "The industry calls it the 'dirty sock' syndrome," Brian explains. "An odor that says something is just not right." Everything from contaminants from carpets, pets, and your own clothes to a musty odor rising from the crawl space, your well-insulated home traps the air and recirculates it through the house multiple times day and night. "In the summertime, allergens come in from open windows, [and on] clothes and pets," Brian says. "But when you close up the house in the winter, you get a lot of those contaminants and odors still making their way in."

A home's HVAC has air filters to clean the air, but the effectiveness varies by the type of filter used. "You can buy filtration systems for a dollar, a standard one inch throw-away filter that should be tossed each month, but there are more effective filters," Brian explains. "That standard one inch filter is about nine percent effective at cleaning your indoor air from airborne dust, pollen, pet dander and mold spores. A large pleated filter that lasts longer is about 85 per cent effective. Then there are the electronic air cleaners that are in the 99 percent category that are washable and eco-friendly since you don't throw them away."

Brian cautions that a clogged filter will restrict air flow through the system. "The pleated filters can be tough on heat pumps; they're fine with gas furnaces," he says and suggests that homeowners check the system manufacturer's recommended filter type. "Be sure to change your filter regularly," he adds. "That's one thing a person can do to save money and keep the system running as efficiently as possible."

Technology innovations make HVAC systems more energy efficient every year and technology helps clean the air better and keeps it healthier. Ultraviolet (UV) light treatment systems were first developed for doctor's offices. "These are now coming into the residential home markets," Brian explains. "The refrigeration coil or the air conditioning coil, which is also used for the heating coil, is typically a moist surface area. That's a perfect breeding ground for molds and bacteria. UV light systems shine on bacteria, pollen, molds, plant spores, dust mites and alters the DNA of living organisms to prevent them from multiplying and/or kills them." The ultraviolet light spectrum is divided into three parts: A, B and C. "It's the UVC light in the lower part of the ultraviolet light spectrum that is used in these systems," Brian explains. "The upper UVA light causes sun tanning to humans; next in the range, UVB causes sunburns. UVC is the germicidal spectrum. UVC is used in dental offices to sterilize tools and in hospital 'clean rooms' to prevent the transfer of germs. This technology is now available for residential air quality. This is especially useful for allergy sufferers."

With the winter months' chill, a home's heating system warms the indoor air. To make that air healthy and more comfortable, Brian suggests humidity and filtration. "Both new homes and older homes have the same issues during the heating season," he says. "Indoor air quality makes a difference in your health and in your house. It's taking care of yourself and your house. What's more important than that?" NDN

Q & A

An Interview with Cathy
Richardson, Ed. D.

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What is the level of reliability between using the Internet to shop for homes or enlisting the services of a Realtor®?

RICHARDSON:

According to the 2010 National Association of Realtors® Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, 89% of all home buyers used the Internet as an information source. Home buyers and sellers are using the Internet as a useful tool before engaging in a real estate transaction. One advantage is that the research can be done from the comfort of your home allowing you to check out hundreds of properties from multiple websites, preview virtual tours of homes to get a feel of the interior design, investigate desirable living areas and read cultural reviews of the area. There are also websites with access to the stats on the crime rates, sex offenders and other statistics home buyers might find useful.

Before the advent of the Internet, buyers and sellers relied on various print publications to highlight homes available in the marketplace. Today, however, it is estimated that only 17% of buyers consider print media to be useful and 99% considers the Internet to be the most useful real estate information source.*

Realtors® are aware that trends in real estate marketing are evolving and changing almost daily. The Internet has created an atmosphere where Realtor's® role has changed but they are still the voice of real estate information that promotes home ownership and they provide a valuable service to buyers and sellers that simply cannot be found online.

The Internet can help people become more knowledgeable home buyers so that they can make an informed choice on their next home purchase. For instance, buyers can quickly go through multiple homes using the Internet and change their minds on criteria with a few clicks, before selecting homes of interest.

Once they decide on the home they want to buy, research shows that over 85% enlist the services of a Realtor®

to help them execute the complex real estate transaction and over 80% still believe using a Realtor® is important and the most productive way to shop for a home.*

Buyers, if you are still not convinced of the value of a Realtor®, just remember that a Realtor® has access to many current resources to assist in the selection process by providing objective information about each property of interest - helping you understand different financing options and in identifying qualified lenders, helping you negotiate the purchase price, guiding you through the closing process, and making sure the entire process is smooth.

Sellers, if you are still not convinced of the value of a Realtor®, just remember that a Realtor® has access to many current resources to assist in the selection process by providing objective information about each property of interest - helping you understand different financing options and in identifying qualified lenders, helping you negotiate the purchase price, guiding you through the closing process, and making sure the entire process is smooth.

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Realtors® have long come to the conclusion that buying and selling a home is no longer just location, location, location, because we are living in a virtual marketplace, which has altered key services of the Realtor®. Research shows that from 2003 to 2010 the use of the Internet to search for homes increased from 71% to 89%.* The objective is for buyers to make an informed decision, but using the services of a Realtor® is key to a successful transaction.

Buying a home is still one of the biggest financial investments most people experience in a lifetime. Considering the benefits of using a Realtor® it makes sense to include their professional services and expertise in your home buying or selling process - even after you have spent time on the Internet.

* 2010 National Association of Realtors® Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers

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

Hey Neighbor! DECK THE HULLS: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF CHRISTMAS

December 3-17, 2011

At the Watermen's Museum Carriage House Gallery. Explore the history of our Christmas traditions and discover how to make colonial decorations. For more information this exhibit or any other questions about the museum, contact Mike Steen at the Waterman's Museum at (757)-887-2641, email us at info@watermens.org, or visit our website at <http://www.watermens.org>.

Hey Neighbor! "PIPING HOT FOR CHRISTMAS" CONCERT TO BENEFIT RESPITE CARE

December 18, 2011

3 - 4 pm. Enjoy the magnificent sounds of Christmas featuring Thomas Marshall on the Williamsburg United Methodist Church's (WUMC) new Peragallo Pipe Organ Opus 711. A voluntary offering will benefit WUMC's Respite Care Center, which offers a supportive weekday afternoon enrichment program for adults with special needs, while providing a gift of time to their caregivers. For more information on the concert or the Respite Care program, contact WUMC at 229-1771. The Church is located at 500 Jamestown Road, and parking is available behind the church, off Cary Street.

Hey Neighbor! HANDEL'S MESSIAH CONCERT

December 18, 2011

The First Baptist Church choir presents a special concert to celebrate the holiday season - Christmas selections from the Messiah, by George F. Handel. The concert will be held at 5:00 pm at the Williamsburg Library Theatre. Admission is free and open to the public.

Hey Neighbor! CHRISTMAS FOOD PROGRAM FOR OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Through December 21, 2011

The Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency has been coordinating the Christmas Food program for over 36 years. We are in desperate need of your help this year to meet the increased need. Please help by donating cash or food to assist with a Merry Christmas. Food donations can be dropped off at WJCC Community Action Agency, 312 Waller Mill Rd., Suite 405, Williamsburg, VA 23185; and cash donations can be mailed to the same address. For more information, contact Andrea Carter or Yvonne Joseph at 229-9332.

Hey Neighbor! "AT CHRISTMAS BE MERRY"-SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENING AT HISTORIC JAMESTOWN

December 21, 2011

6:30 pm, 7:30 pm, 8:30 pm. Join friends in the Memorial Church on Jamestown Island for an evening of caroling and an audience with Governor Yeardeley and the Reverend Buck. Enjoy refreshments as you witness the firing of the Christmas guns. Advanced ticket reservations are required. Call 1-800-HISTORY for tickets and information.

Hey Neighbor! HAMPTON ROADS MANDOLIN ENSEMBLE

December 21, 2011

Williamsburg Music Club presents the Hampton Roads Mandolin Ensemble performing musical selections in the style of mandolin orchestras of the 1900-1920s. At the Bruton Parish House, Lewis Hall, on Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg. Refreshments and coffee at 10:00 am, a brief business meeting at 10:30 am and the program at 11:00 am. Free to the public.

Williamsburg's
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
photo challenge

WILLIAMSBURG
THEN & NOW

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

Enjoy!

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



December 2011
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge





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LOOKING FORWARD TO NEW BEGINNINGS?



108 JAMESWOOD

First Colony

This delightful 4 bedroom, 3 bath, 3325 sq. ft. Cape Cod nestled on over a half acre has been beautifully updated and is ready for you to move in! The expansive covered front porch welcomes you to a wonderful open plan perfect for entertaining & everyday living. Don't miss the fantastic tiered deck overlooking serene wooded privacy! \$405,000.



Charlotte Turner

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109 NORTH KNOB HILL

Elegant golf front property in secluded & private section of Ford's Colony. Extraordinary finishes throughout including great room w/ cathedral ceiling, cherry built-ins, beautiful wall of windows. Amazing kitchen with 3 sinks, dbl ovens. 1st flr MBR and 3 add'l BRs with ensuite BAs. Media rm, laundry rm, screened porch. Seated on acre. 4,812 sq ft, 4 BRs 4.5 BAs. \$984,000.



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