

March 2009

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VOL.3, ISSUE 3

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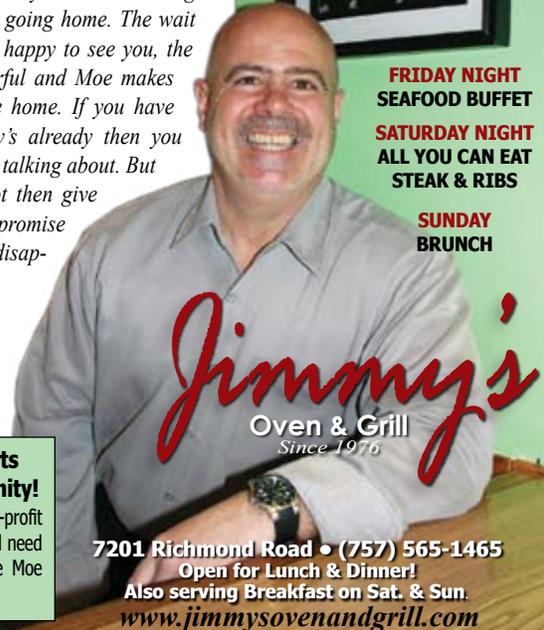
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Meredith Collins, Publisher

With this issue, I wanted to find out what young people are thinking in regards to their future. After all, they listen to the same news as we do about our economic and political woes. They may have already been impacted in some way by a family member losing a job or having to adjust to fewer work hours. With so much uncertainty in the world today, you would almost expect a bit of pessimism to creep into the outlook of those preparing to leave high school to enter the workforce or continue their education.

However, the young people we talked to for this issue are nothing but positive when it comes to their outlook for the future. I was inspired to discover just how grounded and prepared these students are. The adults we interviewed for this issue also gave us a strong report on today’s youth: they are bright and inquisitive, eager to learn and prepare themselves for adulthood, engaged in the world around them - especially when it comes to technology or some other field they are particularly interested in.

While we interviewed students who are doing well in school, I have no doubt that we only skimmed the surface of the many students in this area who are similarly poised to face the future with confidence and optimism. I hope this issue helps inspire us all and increases our optimism about our own lives and our future. NDN

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Cover Photo by Lisa Cumming

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DOMINIQUE BROWN PREPARES FOR A FUTURE THAT IS SURE TO BE A

slam dunk!

“I think I started learning lessons about being a good person long before I ever knew what basketball was. And that starts in the home; it starts with the parental influence.”

Julius Erving

By Linda Landreth Phelps

The stands are alive with cheering fans waving hand-lettered signs inspired by UPS trucks: “Big Brown Delivers!” Dominique Brown is a quicksilver flash on the court as his basketball team at Williamsburg Christian Academy (WCA) competes in the Metropolitan League. But the sweet swish of the ball through the net isn’t the only thing Dominique is delivering. He has a goal for his life, and he’s making every effort to ensure that he reaches it and his dream

becomes reality. “‘Hard work pays off’ is our family’s motto,” says Dominique, and he has taken that principle to heart. Hard work and team support is the Brown family’s game plan for success.

A love for and talent in sports was passed along with his DNA. Dominique’s parents, Chris, a former college basketball standout, and Shawnie, a high school cheerleader who now wishes she had pur-

sued her talent in track, see a reflection of their own considerable physical abilities in their three children. Chris has coached his son since he could hold a ball. “Dad’s still the high scorer in the house,” Dominique admits with a grin, “but my defense is stepping up.”

Both Chris and Shawnie hail from this area, but moved to Georgia when their first two children were young. After ten years absence, the family returned to be closer to their ailing parents. Chris’ initial job was as



Dominique Brown



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not making the same dishes every week - or even every two weeks. The menu is different every month and I prepare a variety of meals for my family that last for several weeks. My family loves this too!"

- Robin Rubenstein



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Assistant Athletic Director at Walsingham Academy, though he has since moved on to the Virginia Sports Complex in Caroline County. Shawnie is employed by Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools and is a devoted mom to Dominique, his sister, Keyana, 13, a rising soccer talent, and to his 4 year-old brother, Xavier. Family life revolves around a full schedule of school, homework, practices, and games, and summers find them all hanging with Dad at the Virginia Sports Complex. There are no lazy days at the beach or Busch Gardens for the Brown's children unless it's for a brief vacation, but they're all happy doing what they love best. In the doing, Dominique and his siblings are preparing for and moving down the road to promising futures.

The surest way to reach your destination is to stop when you're headed in the wrong direction or traveling too fast. Last June Dominique found himself at the end of his junior year at Lafayette High School and realized he was facing graduation in 2009. He had

"I think he understands better now that sports are a means to an end, and that end is education."

- Shawnie Brown

Dominique's mother

struggled with attitude and academics when he transitioned from Georgia to Williamsburg and had also bounced around to different schools due to rezoning.

"My 2.5 GPA wasn't going to impress colleges and I needed time to mature as a player, so I decided I wanted to go to Williamsburg Christian Academy and repeat the year. Because of my age - I turned 17 in September - and since it was a private school, I would be a "re-classified junior" and keep my eligibility," Dominique says. "Coach Gann and I hit it off right away, and I really liked that it's a small school. My Algebra II class only has three of us in it and it's like having a personal tutor. If I have a problem, I've learned to speak up and ask questions until I get it right. My average has already come up to a 3.2 and I like bringing home those A's and B's!"

"I'm doing great and I've made some good friends there, but the main reason I'm glad I went to WCA is that I had a big change in attitude," he says. "Religion didn't click with me before, but now I'm putting God first. I used to just be focused on what I wanted out of life, which is to be a professional basketball player, maybe in the NBA or overseas. Now, I'd still like to do that, but more than anything else I want to do God's will and follow the path He's leading me on." Now it's Dominique who requests a family prayer before leaving on any road trip.

His parents have seen a lot of progress in Dominique's maturity in the last year, both spiritual and otherwise. "His whole demeanor has changed," Shawnie says. "I think he understands better now that

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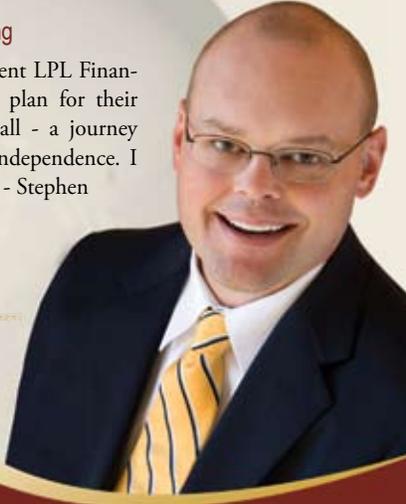
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sports are a means to an end, and that end is education. When he brought home those A's, I was so excited. I told him, "This is your ticket...right here!"

In the world of sports, a player is always just one serious injury away from becoming a permanent spectator, but the benefits of a good education stay with them forever. "I haven't taken the SAT's yet, but I plan to soon. I like history and reading, and the math is getting much better since I started at WCA. I'd like to know more

"I'm blessed that my dad is in the home with me. I want to pass that blessing along when I have a family of my own."

- Dominique Brown

about VCU, but I'm looking at Hampton University and also considering the Naval Academy. I'm not ruling anything out at this point."

Dominique knows and appreciates just how lucky he is to have two parents behind him who

put their children's futures first. Everyone agrees that Chris is the strong backbone of the family and leads by his example. He works with youngsters at Matoaka Elementary, not just coaching them to improve their basketball skills, but also stressing the importance of good grades and showing respect. "I'm blessed that my dad is in the home with me," Dominique says sincerely. "I want to pass that blessing along when I have a family of my own. I really love having a big family - I have 41 first cousins!" Dominique laughs. "I definitely see myself getting married and having kids, but not too soon; maybe when I'm 30."

Meanwhile, Dominique is practicing for his potential role as a father by mentoring his 4 year-old brother, Xavier. "He's my little buddy," Dominique says. "We just hang out and chill. He's great at football and if I'm not playing myself, I'm at all of his games - right, X-man?" Dominique asks as he tickles his brother, who squirms and dissolves in delighted giggles.

At 17, Dominique knows he still has even more maturing to do before adulthood. He's looking forward to gaining another inch or two of stature on his 6-foot frame, but he's not particularly worried if that doesn't materialize. "I may not be the tallest guy on the court, but in the end, it's what's in here..." he taps his chest twice with quiet passion. "What really counts is if you have heart."

When thinking of the upcoming generation, it's reassuring to know that young people are absorbing the essential lesson that true success in life is a matter of personal integrity and intensity of desire. As Dr. J wisely said, learning to be a good person doesn't begin on the basketball court. It looks like Dominique is being homeschooled in the very best of classrooms. With that advantage, innate talent, and hard work, Dominique's future should be a slam dunk. NDN

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A Passion For Marketing

By Rachel Apostoles
Senior, Jamestown High School

Publisher's Note

Rachel Apostoles is a senior at Jamestown High School. She is bright and inquisitive and among her many interests, she has a love for journalism. In fact, Rachel contacted me a couple of months ago to see if I would be willing to spend time with her to help her understand my business and how to publish a magazine. When we met, I asked her if she would be willing to take on a writing assignment for Next Door Neighbors in a real job setting. She did not hesitate to accept the challenge. Rachel's assignment for this issue was to interview someone from our community who has a job that she might like to have one day. Rachel selected Sally McConnell, Director of Marketing for the Product Division of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Here is her story.

- Meredith Collins



Sally McConnell with Rachel Apostoles

As a high school senior, I am constantly faced with two daunting questions: "What college are you going to?" and the subsequent, "What will be your major?" With acceptance letters not expected until early April and no sure decision on a major, I diplomatically dodge answering such questions. Instead, I opt to respond with something about which I am certain. 'I'm sure that I will discover my academic passion at whatever school I attend,' I say.

Vague but sincere, this statement reflects my current predicament, narrowing down my many academic interests. My years of schooling have fostered diverse scholastic passions within me. I love to write and study the literary greats, but I am equally passionate about Spanish language and culture. I enjoy discovering the principles of supply and demand in microeconomics class, but I similarly appreciate learning about the human body in anatomy class.

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I am forced to reflect upon the seemingly infinite realm of career possibilities and select one that synthesizes my various interests.

Coupling my love for writing and business with my burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit, marketing seems like a harmonious career fit for me.

Sally McConnell, Director of Marketing for the Products Division of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, describes marketing as a dynamic career requiring creativity, persuasiveness, and the all-important ability to listen.

"I love my job. It is so creative, so different all of the time," McConnell said. "It is wonderful to work for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and support their important mission."

Despite her contentment with her work as a marketer, McConnell began her career path elsewhere. Like me, McConnell had several budding interests, the primary of which was politics. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University with a major in

politics and government and a minor in fine arts, McConnell ventured to Washington DC to inaugurate her political career as a grass roots organizer.

"I traveled around the country doing a lot of public speaking and meeting with editorial boards of different newspapers to have persuasive conversations," McConnell said. "That, for me, was my first insight into the power of communication and how important written and verbal communication is."

McConnell noted that the basic principles of persuasion she learned in politics have aided her throughout her marketing career.

"You really had to think about how to persuasively communicate to customers, and I love that," she said. "I love writing, giving speeches, developing persuasive arguments, and in terms of what I have done in my career, it has all translated into being as persuasive as possible."

As the oldest of four children, I have come to appreciate the power of persuasion. Whether by illu-

minating the pros of watching my favorite television program to my reluctant 13 year old brother or convincing my sister to assist me in washing the dishes, I have come to view persuasion as a tool that, if used effectively, can bring about changes big or small.

Following her political career, McConnell started her own company called French Country Living, a home furnishings business that imported antiques, textiles, and accessories from Paris.

"That is where I really developed my passion for marketing and my interest in reaching out to customers and learning about what they want and then figuring out how to build my business," McConnell said.

She said that starting her own business taught her a great deal about the intricacies of marketing.

"I think that [starting a business] is the best way, as a young person to learn about how to position your product and think about how you are going to communicate it and be different from anything else on the



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market; how you are going to create a message that people will respond to, and how you are going to stand out from the crowd," McConnell said.

Taking McConnell's advice, I am currently in the planning stages of starting a small home baking business with my sister. In a short time, I have learned a great deal about planning, organization, and creating a realistic business plan. Through my failures and successes, I am sure that I will discover much of what it takes to maintain a viable business.

After 20 years, McConnell left French Country Living to pursue a career in marketing and has not looked back since. Her days overflowing with emails and meetings, McConnell strives to fulfill the marketing needs of all of the Colonial Williamsburg affiliates.

"We think about the people who run our stores and we think about all the things that they are going to need from a marketing group to support their stores," McConnell

said. "They will need ads, signs, coupons, and promotional materials. In a sense, we are meeting with them all the time to understand what they need."

As someone who loves to shop, I understand the effect that compelling marketing can have. I admit to purchasing products based largely on an advertisement. When I walk down the aisles of the grocery store, I am drawn towards products with punchy slogans and bright packaging. I even have a slightly neurotic compulsion towards fonts. I get a little thrill from choosing a font that perfectly captures the tone on my piece of writing. Though I admit that this is a slightly odd trait, I think that it would aid me as a marketer.

"When it comes to marketing, it is all about the visual, strong copy and a very strong image to tell a story," McConnell said.

A particularly exhilarating and often nerve-racking aspect of marketing is meeting deadlines.

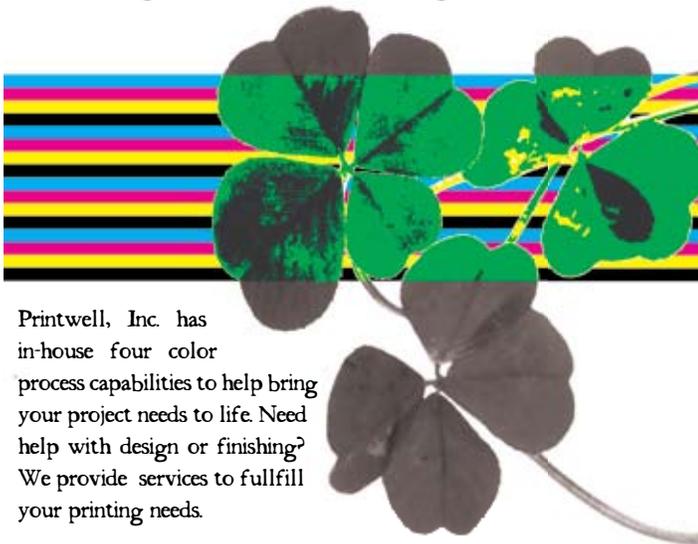
"We are always either planning ahead to do something down the road or are in the

middle of last minute deadlines for things we have to put in the newspaper, put online, or put on the air," McConnell said. "It is both planning and then trying to be very creative and being very sensitive to the deadlines that come along"

Last year, I had the opportunity to experience the excitement that deadlines bring while serving as the Features Editor for the Eagle Eye, the school newspaper. I learned very quickly the importance of managing my time wisely while still taking pride in my work. Though at times it was irksome, the pressure of menacing deadlines drove me to work efficiently.

From my brief dive into the dynamic, stimulating, fabulous world of marketing, I realize that it is a career that intrigues me. I feel like I would flourish as a marketer. I would enjoy the challenge of engaging with a customer and utilizing my skills to advance their business. I see marketing as a career that inspires creativity and business savvy, and although I am not ready to make a decision today, marketing just might be the career for me. NDN

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LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR PRODUCTIVE LIVES

*An interview with Gary Mathews, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools*

By Alison Johnson

What might surprise people about high school students today? Gary Mathews says this: They really do want to be motivated by their teachers and learn. The flip side is that if they're not – if they get bored – they're not going to work as hard as they should.

What tends to grab their attention most is technology, says Mathews, Superintendent of Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools. Students already use gadgets to communicate with their friends, and they respond to them in the classroom, too.

"Compared to when I first started teaching in 1975, today's students are much more 'active' when it comes to classroom behavior," he says. "That is, if you don't prick their interest, you don't get their attention.

The Internet has changed everything and has upped the ante for classroom teachers in terms of providing challenging and interesting work for today's students."

Instead of look-

ing at a picture of Niagara Falls in a book, students want to take virtual field trips via large screens and stereo speakers set up in their classrooms. They like hearing weather forecasts delivered live from Paris, in French, and dissecting frogs with virtual knives.

Students also see technological advances as tools for building productive lives for themselves and better relationships between the United States and the rest of the world. "A productive life is not necessarily a high paying job for many of today's students," Mathews says. "For many of our students, a job will be a means for personal fulfillment and positive contribution to society."

Technology has been one of the focuses for Mathews, 55, since he took the job as schools' chief in 2005. He also has stressed intensive staff development and literacy; for example, the district has added a reading specialist to each high school's faculty to make sure struggling students get help. Reading pass rates and other standardized test results have steadily improved, he says.

Mathews has a perspective built from observing many different school systems as a student, teacher



Gary Mathews, Ph.D.

and administrator. The older of two brothers, he grew up in Monroe, Louisiana, where his father worked as a bank Vice President and his mother manned the front desk for a cleaning business. In high school, Mathews starred in both baseball and basketball, playing second base and guard.

His career inspiration came during college at Louisiana State University, where Mathews graduated in 1975 with a degree in political science.

"I developed a love for excellent teaching and learning," he says. "As a young adult in my 20s, I felt if I could inspire young people to love learning the way that I was inspired to do, I foresaw my life as a contribution to others."

Mathews went on to earn Masters and Doctoral degrees in Educational Administration and Supervision from Loyola University in New Orleans and the University of Southern Mississippi, respectively. He became a classroom teacher in New Orleans public schools – teaching American History, Minority Studies, Sociology and Black History – and later the principal of a high school

in Mississippi.

While Mathews loved teaching, he felt he could do more for students as an administrator, which he describes as a leader of teachers. "School administrators have the ability to impact hundreds, even thousands, of students," he says.

Before coming to Williamsburg-James City County, Mathews was superintendent of schools in Missouri, Louisiana, Florida and Texas. The Texas job, which he held for three years just before moving to Virginia, involved a well-off suburban Dallas district that led the nation in many areas of academics and athletic achievement. Investments in technology, staff development and student services were often "no-brainers" – that is, they happened if the community felt students would benefit.

The Williamsburg-James City County situation isn't quite the same, Mathews says. "Given our more diverse and less affluent population, we have a bit more of a challenge when it comes to all groups of students seeking the excellence that was sought on a routine day-to-day basis in Texas, by students

especially," he says.

"So, what we must do in W-JCC is to continuously find ways to encourage, motivate, and engage all groups of students in high-quality learning," he explains. "While most challenging, this also provides the most potentially rewarding aspect of our work. Not all communities are alike. Not that one is better than another. Let it be known that 'money matters' when it comes to providing the very best for students. Money is a necessary but an insufficient variable for improving student learning. We can do a lot of the 'right' things for kids with the needed dollars to make the right things happen."

Today's students are moving into a global economy with unique challenges, which Mathews sums up as "abundance, Asia and automation." In a nutshell, Asia now has millions of well-educated, computer-savvy young people ready to serve in jobs once dominated by Americans. Automation also ended American monopolies over many fields, including law, accounting and mass-marketing.

"In short, American students of the fu-

ture must be able to: communicate, work as effective team members for problem-solving, command technology as tools for the consumption and production of knowledge, and engage in higher order processes such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation," he says.

Happily, Mathews sees many positives in the teenagers he works with, including a belief in equality for everyone. "I find today's students care about the need to accept all people regardless of race, creed, or socio-economic status more so than at any time in our history," he says. "They tend to be contemptuous of bigotry and believe that the U.S. must have a well-respected yet collaborative role in world affairs."

One of the district's visions is to create lifelong learners – students who aren't just book smart but know how to process all kinds of information and adapt to change.

That includes the ability to study and defend opposing view points and, if necessary, to change one's mind.

A lifelong learner himself, Mathews describes himself as a "voracious reader" whose interests include biographies of historical figures. He is also an avid swimmer. Mathews lives in Williamsburg with his wife, Pat, a retired middle school guidance counselor and teacher of the deaf. He has five children, ranging in age from 19 to 31.

As for the rest of his young charges – the students of Williamsburg-James City County – Mathews is generally optimistic about their future.

"I say that in terms of who I believe they are," he says. "If they fail going forward, it will be because we adults have failed to see the future adequately and prepare them for it." NDN

"If they [students] fail going forward, it is because we adults have failed to see the future adequately and prepare them for it."

- Gary Mathews

Next Door Neighbors

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Next Door Neighbors is a monthly, direct-mailed magazine serving the residents of the Williamsburg area. Circulation: 34,759



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GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE

Time to Grow

By Rachel Sapin

Regarding today's Millennials, writer and social entrepreneur Allison Fine writes: More than 20 million teenagers use the Internet daily. Eighty percent of teens have mobile phones. Three-quarters of them read news online, and more than half have accounts on social networking sites.*

Many of today's teenagers make up or at least are born on the cusp of what is loosely defined as the Millennial generation, a group whose age range is still being disputed but seems to lie somewhere between the mid-teens and early thirties. According to the Center for American Progress, Millennials are among the largest generation yet, weighing in between 80 and 95 million people.** Millennials are known for having grown up in an intensely connected age, with Internet, cell phones, and a vast array of social networking sites at their fingertips such as Facebook, MySpace, and PengSpace.

What Denise Walker - an individual who has had 18 years of teaching experience through homeschooling her six children

- admires most about today's youth is their ability to adapt to today's constantly changing

and often perplexing technology. "It's so innate to them," explains Walker. "I think it is a very positive thing that today's youth are so comfortable with technology. While members of my generation may be awestruck or apprehensive in the face of technology, today's youth are perfectly comfortable approaching it as merely a tool."

Walker is currently homeschooling her 13-year old son who is interested in stop-action animation and computer programming. "He's really interested in understanding how a computer works," Walker notes. "So he has checked out some books, borrowed some books, and he is teaching himself computer language." One of the benefits that Walker believes her children receive from homeschooling is that they learn to be self-directed in their studies from an early age.

In home school, Walker's children also receive the benefit of being able to take more time to study the subjects that interest them, a concept that stands in stark contrast to today's culture of quick and easy information afforded by Internet sites such as Wikipedia.

"The one gift that I am able to give my children in home school-



Denise Walker

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ing is time,” explains Walker. “When students are individually tutored, as home schoolers can be, they are able to cover their core coursework in less time than it would take to cover that same material in a busy classroom setting. This frees up more time during the school day for ‘usable time.’”

Walker defines usable time as any time her children are not spending on their core coursework but rather on self-directed studies. “If my son is enjoying something, we can explore it more before we move on to the next step,” she explains. “Home schooling gives me more time to spend with him in an educational mode: we can dig deeper into a science or a particular era of history.” Walker believes that because she has been able to spend more time with her children on traditional school subjects (i.e., Science, English, Math), her children have in turn developed a love for digging deeper into subjects that interest them.

As a history buff, Walker was excited about the prospect of moving her family to Williamsburg, when her husband, a retired

submariner came to the area a year and a half ago to work as an engineer. “There’s so much history in the Williamsburg area,” she adds. “I fell in love with the area and its history when I visited here as a child.”

Just as Solomon in Ecclesiastes believed that “there is nothing new under the sun,” Walker’s love of history stems from the fact that it provides her with a sense of a connected world and humanity’s continuity throughout time.

In fact, throughout her experience home schooling her six children, one of Walker’s biggest challenges has been teaching them to see the world beyond themselves. “I would say the most challenging thing about teaching youth is to help them see things from a worldly perspective,” she reflects. “I try to help my children to see how things mesh together throughout the world and how they can contribute to the world at large: with their intellect, with their hands-on assistance, and with their civic and church contributions.”

Whatever Walker is doing to engage her

children as global citizens, it seems to be working. “They’re excited to be Americans and to explore the world around them,” she explains of her kids. “They come up with wonderful ideas on how to solve world problems, and they are constantly coming up with new and refreshing ways for how to look at things.”

Given that we live in a culture of constant and incessant information-swapping through instant messaging, posting, blogging and texting, learning how to take the time to deeply investigate a subject can be difficult for today’s youth. Walker’s advice to individuals who are having trouble engaging today’s youth in learning: give them time. “I think that if you can give a child time, usable time, they will pursue their interests, and have the potential to be major contributors to the world around them,” she says. NDN

**<http://www.socialcitizens.org/paper/How-to-approach-technology>*

***http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/05/progressive_generation.html*

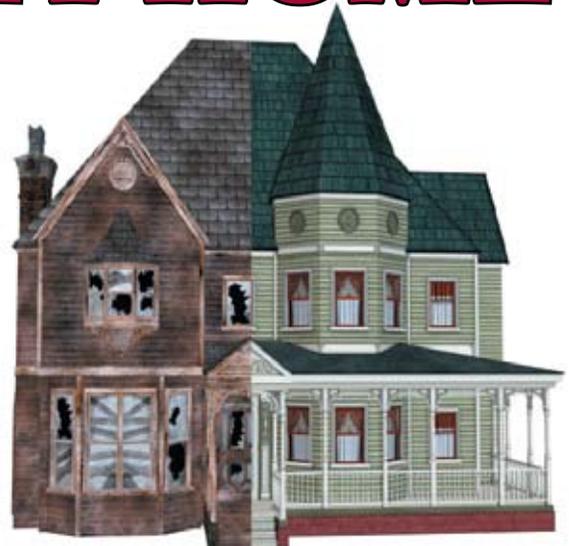
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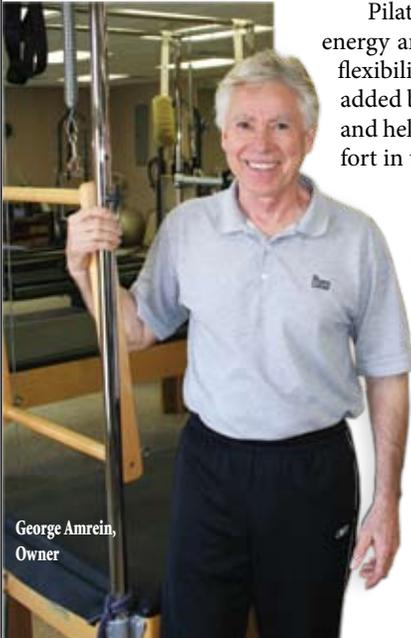
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ABBY'S GOAL

Change People's Lives for the Better

By Brandy Centolanza

Until recently, Bruton High School senior Abigail Moul was uncertain of which career path to follow upon graduation. But since becoming involved with the Student Advisory Committee for the state Board of Education, it's become clear that a future in education indeed awaits.

Abby applied for a position to the advisory committee at the recommendation of her guidance counselor, Boo Schwartz. The group, made up of eight high school students and four middle schoolers, works with board members to address issues facing students in Virginia.

"Abby is one of the most remarkable young women I have had the pleasure to know," shares Boo. "Her insight, abilities, and



Abby Moul

enthusiasm are unparalleled.”

Abby previously had experience working with a similar group, The York County Youth Commission, which is comprised of students from the county’s high schools and serves as a liaison between students and the county’s Board of Supervisors.

“I just thought this sounded like a really neat opportunity,” expresses an enthusiastic Abby of her decision to be a part of the advisory committee. “I loved working with the York County Youth Commission. It’s real interesting to be involved in community work. The relationships that I have formed have been outstanding.”

Abby’s parents were thrilled by their daughter’s appointment to the advisory committee. “We were quite elated when she was chosen to participate,” says her mother, Nancy, with pride. “This is quite an honor. It’s a great way to have a better understanding of what is going on in our state.”

Abby, an honors student, first met with other members of the committee in Richmond in December to discuss some of their issues. The students came up with three suggestions: begin offering foreign language courses earlier; broaden online class offerings; and create a way for high school students to highlight their accomplishments on Virginia’s Department of Education website.

“We just feel this is something that could be easy and inexpensive, and provide an extra incentive for students to showcase their work,” Abby says. The committee will present their ideas to the board later this spring.

Abby also wishes for more life skills classes for high school students to better prepare them in the areas of resume building, job interviewing, and handling finances - “basically all the essentials you need to know before going off on your own into the workforce or to college,” she says.

She also has other worries about what lies ahead in the education field, particularly in York County, in such uncertain economic times. “My major concern and fear about the future of education in the state is that there won’t be enough funding for field trips, updated technology, and extra programs, such as the York County School of the Arts program that I attend at Bruton High School,” she sighs. “I am also worried that not enough well-qualified people will continue to enter into the teaching field.”

In addition to her work with the advisory committee, other experiences have helped Abby lean more toward a future as an educator. Last year, she was one of ten students selected to participate in the Yorktown-Zweibrücken German Student Exchange Program. She spent two weeks in Germany, and got a feel for student life there.

“The experience was amazing,” she says. “We got to travel a

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lot. It was definitely a great experience. I'd love to go back one day and teach in their school system."

Following a conversation with Bruton High principal Kim Hammond, Abby sat down with her family at the dinner table and told them that she wanted to go into the education field when she graduates.

"Something just struck me that day, that this was something that I wanted to study," she recalls. "I think that being a teacher would be very rewarding. It would be exciting to be able to work with kids, and see their reactions as they discover new things."

Abby enjoys other activities beyond the advisory committee. Among her roles are Student Council President, founder and president of her high school's Spirit Club, member of National Honor Society, yearbook, and key club, and a volunteer through her church. Faith is very important to her.

"Another hope of mine is that in my lifetime I will positively affect the lives of many others, and I hope to help change at least one person's life for the better," she says. "My involvement in church and with mission work has instilled this passion in me, and I hope to carry it out for the rest of my life."

How does she handle everything on her plate?

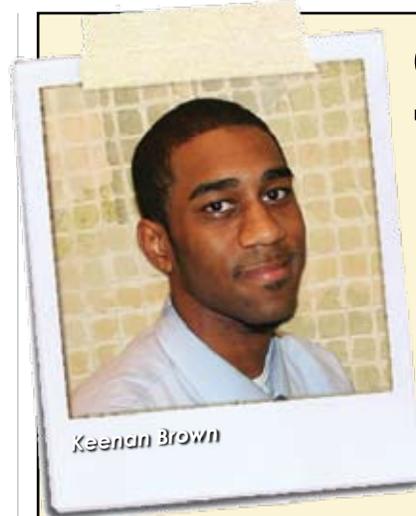
"I try to prioritize, to stay organized, and time management is huge for me," she says. "I just try to do my best."

Her balancing act will be beneficial when college rolls around. Abby hopes to attend either Wake Forest University, University of Virginia, Clemson University, or University of Richmond next year.

Though she appears full of confidence, she is nervous about the next step in her life. "I am scared that I will have a bad experience next year at college," she admits. "I'm scared that I won't pick the right school. I'm scared that I'll get stuck with a bad roommate. But I'm sure that everything will work out okay in the end. I'm a pretty easy-going person, and I try not to let the little things bother me, so I hope that I'll be able to cope well with any situation that I get put into."

She continues, "I'm a strong believer in the saying that 'everything happens for a reason,' so all I can do is hope, pray, and have faith that everything will be okay. I have a bracelet that I wear a lot that says 'If you have faith, anything is possible.' If I'm ever in doubt, I look at my bracelet and reassure myself that everything will be okay."

Wherever she ends up and whatever she ultimately decides to do, she hopes to follow in the footsteps of one of her role models, Rich Smethurst, sponsor of the York County Youth Commission. Abby says: "I hope to someday be as passionate about my work as he is with his, because, as the saying goes, if you do something you love, you'll never work a day in your life." NDN



SNAPSHOT

By Meredith Collins

Keenan Brown
Senior
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What do you think your biggest challenges will be in the near future?

Adjusting to college, being more on my own and independent. Stepping outside the box. I'm sure it's going to be a big change. Just taking that big step out the door and learning to grow up a little bit.

What is your dream job?

I don't know. I would like to do something with business, and music and sports because those are the things I like most. I'm not exactly sure how I might be able to incorporate all those things together but those are the things I want to be around.

Where do you see yourself at age 40?

Wow – that's a long ways away. I guess probably settled down, happy, family started and everything. Hopefully still having sort of an exciting life. Just trying to do my part, I guess.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life to date?

My parents. Both of them. They are very supportive. Whatever me and my younger brother want to do with our lives, as long as it is heading in the right direction, they are willing to back us and support us. That's what I love most about my parents.

How do you define success?

I think success is more of a personal thing. Success is not always about money or your caliber of job. It's more about fulfilling the things in life that make you happy. Success is your personal and spiritual fulfillment.

What makes you happy?

What makes me happy is seeing my family and friends happy.

What is your biggest achievement?

It's probably coming to this school and taking advantage of the opportunity they've given me. Finding my place in sports, making real good grades and being on top of it these last three years and giving myself a real nice head start. NDN

JOAN PETERSON

Next Door Neighbors

Health

Volunteering *Does a Body Good*

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor



Joan Peterson knows that assisting others helps your physical and mental well-being. She is the Executive Director of the Rita Welsh Adult Literacy Program at William & Mary and a board member of Volunteer Williamsburg. “Most people who come here (the Adult Literacy Program) say that they get more out of it than they give,” she says. “I think they feel like they’re doing good and connecting with other people who can use their help. There’s a sense of giving back to the community.”

Health experts agree. The Corporation on National and Community Service published a report* that states: Volunteering improves your general well-being. It not only improves self-esteem, but also reduces heart rates and blood pressure, increases endorphin production, enhances immune systems, buffers stress, and combats social isolation.

During the Community Leadership Service class held by the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, Joan and fellow classmates discussed the needs of non-profit organizations for finding volunteers. One important component that surfaced was the need to match a volunteer’s skills to the needs of an organization. “The people of Williamsburg have a wealth of skills acquired over their lifetime of work,” Joan explains. “Where some organizations need manpower to stuff envelopes or to help raise funds, other organizations are in need of specific, specialized expertise.” Volunteer Williamsburg’s purpose is to match a volunteer’s skills to the needs of a non-profit. Joan acknowledges that volunteers, who are challenged by their tasks, continue their volunteerism for longer time periods and have a greater sense of self-worth and health benefits.

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Many people find volunteer opportunities by chance, just as Joan did. "I was born and raised in Connecticut, but spent most of my adult life in Massachusetts," she says. "I went to college and had my first teaching job there, then moved to Williamsburg about six and a half years ago. I did a lot of volunteer work when I first came here since I still had a daughter in high school. I became involved in the Williamsburg Symphonia." She thinks for a moment and adds, "Which is a good example of how Volunteer Williamsburg can solve a need. I saw how getting into volunteer efforts was serendipitous; it isn't calculated. It should be more structured. The way I became involved with the Williamsburg Symphonia was just by chance. My daughter was in a youth group at our church and was doing some garden work to raise money. The woman whose house she was at, happened to be a violinist involved with the Symphonia, who knew I had an education background. She said they could use an education person, and after a lot of work and a few years, I became the vice president of education for the Symphonia."

During the Community Leadership Service class, Joan heard many stories like hers where people found volunteering opportunities by chance. That became the seed for Volunteer Williamsburg. "It gives more control when searching for opportunities; it's not just random or hearing about it from friends," Joan says.

Joan knows that the more a volunteer can contribute the more benefit both the organization and the volunteer receive. Studies show that individuals who volunteer at an earlier point in their lives experience greater functional ability and better health later in life. And to keep volunteers serving, organizations need to provide substantial, challenging, and fulfilling experiences.

"That's where Volunteer Williamsburg comes in," Joan explains. The matching of skills to opportunities is like a dating service. A person who wants to volunteer can register at the website and list their skills and interests, and then the Volunteer Williamsburg database matches those skills to available volunteer opportunities. "It's a win/win. Everyone gets something out of it," she adds.

Variety also keeps individuals involved and feeds their personal sense of purpose and accomplishment, along with enhancing social networks that buffer stress and reduce disease risk. An array of opportunities is the core of the database. "I see Volunteer Williamsburg as an umbrella that's unifying the non-profits," Joan says. "You might have one hour a week to help Rita Welsh Adult Literacy, and another hour a week for Community Action or Child Development Resources or the Salvation Army or something else." The website's matching service helps you find those agencies that need your skills and meet your interests.

Williamsburg's non-profits need your expertise to help others, and Joan Peterson has found a way to make the perfect match for you. And as she says, "you'll get more out of it than you know." NDN

For more information on volunteer opportunities visit:

www.volunteervilliamsburg.org

*http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0506_hbr.pdf



Welcoming the **Outdoors** **IN**

**Joe & Carol McCartney
Build Their Dream**

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor

Joe McCartney explains how he and his wife, Carol, took an idea for building a house and made it into an awe-inspiring home. “It’s an ‘Acorn’ home,” Joe says. He discovered the concept of custom homes engineered and architected to precise metrics with a post and beam framework that allowed endless possibilities.

Joe and Carol moved to Williamsburg at the urging of friends who knew they wanted to be closer to their children and grandchildren. While looking for a site to build their dream house, Joe found an available lot in a neighborhood they liked. “It was a lot that had a ravine,” Carol explains, “and other people said it was impossible to build on. Joe kept saying ‘You can do it, you can do it.’ And I said ‘no way.’” Guiding her down the lot’s slope to the ravine, Joe unveiled his vision: A home that would rise on a lot that was ‘unbuildable’ and have the stability and openness of an oak. “He sold me on it,” Carol says.

The uniqueness of the home is the post and beam construction which allows for incorporating the natural contours of the site, wide open interior spaces and large expanses of glass. The posts rise from deep concrete footings up through the house and, with large beams, create the foundation for the floors and roof. The posts throughout the house are load-bearing and allow the interior walls to be arranged as desired.

“We could customize it anyway we wanted,” Carol says. “I wanted to have a view from every room, and I think that’s what we achieved.” As they worked with the designers and engineers, Joe and Carol kept adding windows to the walls, so much so that the designer warned Carol that she needed to leave some wall space for her furniture. “But, we just wanted the windows and the outdoors – we wanted to bring the outdoors in.” She looks toward the bank of windows in the living room and adds, “Basically, we designed the windows and views we wanted. The light makes us happy.” As the seasons change, so does the home. The abundant



Next Door Neighbors Home

windows frame the seasons and create the sense of transformation.

They worked with the manufacturer to design the house for the site and capture the views. When the shell of the house arrived, it was all on one truck with everything needed to get the home 'under roof.' "This home was designed and manufactured in Massachusetts," says Joe, "with materials from the Pacific Northwest and Canada, exclusively Douglas fir, cedar, and mahogany."

The materials, the architecture and engineering created a custom home from scratch for Joe and Carol in a short time span. "The construction went extremely fast because the wall panels were built in a factory and brought

down here on a flatbed truck," explains Joe.

"Three or four men built this house on site in less than three weeks, which would have taken six months or more if done by conventional methods." In those few weeks the house was under roof and ready to be finished inside. The fast in-the-dry time allowed Joe to coordinate craftsmen to complete the interior at a steady pace.

"This was something that I could take a part in," Joe states, "as far as the designing, planning, and the selection of materials. I was the general contractor and coordinated the cranes, the bricklayers, electricians, and plumbers." His pride in the accomplishment shows as he points out features in the home.

"Joe knows every nail that went into this house, every brick," Carol adds.

In addition to the views and the light from the windows, Carol wanted the home to be welcoming to friends and family. "It's a wonderful house for entertaining," she says. The space is flexible enough to accommodate large parties as well as smaller, more intimate gatherings. The home embodies the lives and personalities of Joe and Carol: open, friendly, welcoming... "Eclectic," Joe adds.

For some people the experience of building a house is one that they would not repeat, but for the McCartneys, it's a different story. Joe explains that he loved the process of seeing the house come together and working with the local craftsmen to complete the home. Carol offers the advice of using a team approach for decisions. "Talk to each other and discuss things as you go," she says. "Enjoy the experience. We'd do it again. It was fun." NDN



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757-345-3064

Reneau Medical
Center for Age Management & Aesthetic Medicine
www.reneauimed.com

120 King's Way • Suite 2550 • Williamsburg • 2nd Floor of Riverside Health Care Center

Hey Neighbor!

There are more community announcements for this issue that did not fit on this page.

Please visit www.wburgndn.com and click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current community announcements.

Hey Neighbor!

GRUPO PARA PADRES HISPANOS

(Hispanic Parenting/Playgroup)

1st & 3rd Fridays of each month through June

Twice a month this group will meet in a friendly and supportive environment to openly discuss the successes and challenges of raising children. No charge. Held at: Wellspring United Methodist Church, 4871 Longhill Road from 10:00 – 12:00. To register or for more information in English please call Family Focus at 566-9777 or Para Informacion en Espanol, llame a Annie Greaves-Collins at 757-344-2488.

Hey Neighbor!

DAD'S MAKING A DIFFERENCE PLAYGROUP

1st and 3rd Mondays through March

For dads with children ages newborn to 7 years old. Come play and learn with other dads to celebrate Dad's make a difference. 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Family Focus, York River Baptist Church, 8201 Croaker Road. Planned activities will include: interactive play, music, dancing, crafts and fellowship. Please call Family Focus Williamsburg at 566-9777 for more information.

Hey Neighbor!

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

March 3, 2009

Reach for Performance Physical Therapy - 2pm to 7pm. Come out and give the gift of life and enjoy refreshments, FREE massages and screenings.

Hey Neighbor!

11TH CHILDREN'S CONSIGNMENT SALE

March 6 & 7, 2009

King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897

Longhill Rd. March 6: Noon to 7 pm; March 7: 8am to Noon

Hey Neighbor!

STORYTIME WITH THE ARTS

March 7, 2009

An Institute for Dance Community Program presenting Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tale Selections: The Little Mermaid; The Ugly Duckling; and Thumbelina at the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre at 11a.m. This is an extended narrated performance. Time: 11am and Event is FREE. For more information www.institutefordance.org or 757-229-1717.

Hey Neighbor!

SWING FOR YOUR CAUSE

March 14, 2009

NetworkWilliamsburg and The Tradition Golf Club at Stonehouse present the First 2-Player Golf Tournament to benefit the registered nonprofit of your choice! You play for only \$55 with \$15 going to your favorite cause! Events will be held once a month. First place in the overall 9 month tournament wins a 6 month golf membership! Visit www.NetworkWilliamsburg.com for schedule & registration form & a list of eligible nonprofits – and start swinging for your cause! Contact Karen Dutro at karen@networkwilliamsburg.com.

Hey Neighbor!

CELTIC FOLKTALES

March 14, 2009

Presented by Storytime with the Arts, an Institute for Dance Community Program, at Barnes & Noble's Newtown. Time is 2pm and Event is FREE. For more information go to www.institutefordance.org or call 757-229-1717.

Hey Neighbor!

31ST ANNUAL BID 'N BUY AUCTION

March 15, 2009

Child Development Resources (CDR) - Held at Lafayette High School. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. to unveil many wonderful delights including - Disney tickets, a timeshare deed, trips, bicycles, home goods, gift certificates and more! Admission is free and open to the public. For more information or to pre-register, log on to www.auction.cdr.org.

Hey Neighbor!

A CONCERT IN BLACK AND WHITE

March 21, 2009

The Greater Williamsburg Women's Association and The Williamsburg Symphonia will present a celebration of music. The event features Lisa Edwards-Burrs, Lyric-Coloratura Soprano, Georgeanne "Gigi" Paddock, Soprano and Lisa Relaford Coston, Mezzo-Soprano, as they delight the audience with diverse musical selections. The concert also features Christine Niehaus, pianist. Proceeds from the concert will benefit hunger programs of The Salvation Army, Fish, The Grove Christian Outreach Center and Operation Hope. 7:30 pm at The Kimball Theater at Merchant's Square; an "After Glow" follows the concert at Season's Restaurant (also at Merchant's Square). \$30 per person for the concert only; \$40 per person for both the concert and the "After Glow" For tickets, call Marilyn Taylor at 757-564-7288.

ATTENTION

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS!

Please email heyneighbor@cocx.net on or before Tuesday, March 10th to be considered for inclusion in the March 26th issue of *Next Door Neighbors*.

Want to Volunteer?

volunteerwilliamsburg.org

We'll match your skill sets to those needed by local non-profit organizations that need your help. Visit...

volunteerwilliamsburg.org
to find out where your talents can be utilized.

I wish...
we could find the right home.

I wish...
interest rates were low.

I wish...
home prices were affordable.

Wishes granted.

*Angela Dougherty,
Managing Broker*



It's the *right* time to buy!

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