

March 2011

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors

VOL. 5, ISSUE 3

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NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS MARCH 2011

When we think of "self-improvement" most of us think about ways we can change ourselves physically, mentally, spiritually or emotionally. We believe that if we lose weight, get fit, give up bad habits or read the right books we can "be better" and therefore we will "feel better". While looking in the mirror from time-to-time to reflect on ways we can improve as individuals is important, it is only one way to a better life.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

I have found that during challenging times in my life looking inward for long periods of time would only rob me of what I really needed to feel better. Extending ourselves for others in whatever way we can, no matter how we feel, almost always yields more than one set of positive results. First, doing something good for another person will ultimately be beneficial to that person and generally results in good will and positive outcomes. Second, the "giver" oftentimes becomes the "recipient" too. Good deeds have a way of rewarding the giver even when that is not the intent. Positive energy flows when we can get outside of our own heads and focus on the needs of others.

In this issue, we bring you stories of some folks we believe are practicing this type of self-improvement. Our community is full of people who give to others in many ways and we could have interviewed any number of your neighbors to uncover ways they are improving lives - including their own - through service to others. In this issue, we bring you seven with interesting stories we hope you enjoy. NDN

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HEY NEIGHBOR!

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PAM FRAZIER

Feeding the Children

By Brandy Centolanza

Pam Frazier, Title I Parent Outreach Facilitator for Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, can appreciate the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged students she serves. She's seen it before, and she was once homeless herself.

Pam traveled frequently with her family in her younger years. Her father, Raymond, served in the Army. Her family encountered people from all walks of life as they lived a military lifestyle. She first learned of the struggles of homelessness as a child in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania the city where she was born, and where she made numerous trips during her

childhood. There, she noticed homeless people in the subways, on buses, and sleeping by storefronts after hours.

"At that age, I vaguely remember being curious as to why people were living that way," she recalls. "It bothered me because I wanted to help but did not feel like I had the means to make an impact."

She encountered folks in similar situations later while living in Oklahoma near Indian reservations and in Texas near the Mexican border.

"At [age] 20, I was able to travel and hang out with friends, so we crossed the border

many times," she remembers. "It was very painful to see how some of the Latinos were living in cardboard boxes, especially those with young children and babies."

As an adult, Pam moved from Texas to Newport News. At that time she was a single mother working three jobs. Due to unforeseen circumstances, she suddenly found herself without a home. She sought assistance from Hampton Ecumenical Lodgings and Provisions (HELP), Inc., a shelter in Hampton. Within a few months she found the means to move out. During her stay she had made an impression on those who had helped her. She

later returned when shelter management asked her if she would be willing to come back as the assistant resident manager. She worked for the shelter for two years, paid her debts, and attended both Thomas Nelson Community College and Christopher Newport University.

"Homelessness is not prejudiced," she says. "It can prey upon anybody. I don't believe if you ask a child what he wants to be when he grows up that he'll say he wants to be 'homeless.' It can come about as a combination of many factors such as abuse, lack of quality relationships, lack of or poor education, emotional or mental disabilities, or a sudden crisis, like a death in the family, the house burned, a devastating illness, or a significant financial loss."

Pam's close experiences with those less fortunate than her touched her emotionally.

"My experience with the homeless population while growing up in the military as well as my personal experience of being homeless burned many images of disadvantaged and hurting people in my heart," Pam says. "It gave me the motivation to further my education so that my sons could have a better quality of life, and so that I could possibly assist disadvantaged people more effectively."

Pam joined WJCC Schools three years ago, following stints with Child Protective Services in Portsmouth and in Newport News, where she worked with juveniles on probation and parole. Her duties include overseeing three programs: Stop & Read; the Feed the Children Backpack Program; and the Food 4 Kids Backpack Program.

Through the Stop & Read literacy program, donated books are placed in bins in public places where children are often waiting while family members are otherwise occupied, such as the Division of Motor Vehicles, local rec-

reational centers, medical facilities, and other buildings. Children have the opportunity to read during those lull periods, and then take the books home.

Last year, Pam began the Food 4 Kids Backpack Program in collaboration with the Food Bank of the Virginia Peninsula. Food 4 Kids provides backpacks on a weekly basis filled with food for the school division's neediest children to help supplement their meals over the weekend. Roughly three hundred bags are packed each week and distributed to children here as well as in Gloucester.

A separate backpack program started this school year. Feed the Children, an international organization, donated brand new books as well as close to 2,000 backpacks full of healthy snacks, hygiene products, and school supplies to assist the homeless children in the school district. WJCC was the only division in the state that received the items, though Pam has ensured that extra backpacks were passed along to surrounding school divisions.

These programs have evolved over the past few months, leading to the opening of the Erase the Need Center last summer. Initially, Pam worked out of Warhill High School, but quickly ran out of space and began storing items at home. Officials at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center heard about Pam's plight and offered an extra warehouse behind the hospital for storage. Volunteers assemble there to help fill backpacks. Among the most dedicated is Pam's husband, Darryle, whom she met at church three years ago.

"He is very supportive of what I do," she says of her husband. "He is one of my biggest cheerleaders and most committed volunteers. I love and appreciate him very much."

Local businesses and churches have also

stepped up for the cause, donating money, clothing, hygiene items, household items, and more school supplies.

Pam feels blessed to be able to assist those in need.

"I just feel good helping people, respecting people's dignity, and helping educate them to get them to the next step, whatever that may be," she says. "And it's the littlest things in this job that really make me happy, even if it's just a smile. It really makes a difference."

Almost daily, she meets someone who makes an impact on her life.

"Some people just want somebody to talk to," she says. "I really try to do whatever I can to help, even if it's just a phone call."

Pam is also proud of the way the community has united to help the school division in its efforts.

"Another thing I've learned from working here is that everyone has something they can contribute," she says. "Everyone has something to offer. You just have to work to find their skills, and then go from there. It really is such a blessing to see the greater good that is coming out of individual efforts."

During down time, Pam prefers to read, write, worship, and spend time with her husband and four children. "Family time is really important to me," she says. "Whether it's playing games, going to the movies, we like to be doing something as a family."

Though she wishes she had more time to pursue other hobbies and interests like bodybuilding and photography, for now Pam remains focused on providing food and necessities for the division's underprivileged students.

"If students go hungry, they can't concentrate; they can't work," Pam says. "We are working to help these students to be successful." NDN



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Aspiring to Inspire Others

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Charlie Marcotte thinks and dreams big. His vision extends far beyond his own business, American Pride Automotive, and its involvement with his brainchild, *Family Service Day*. He's just waiting for the right catalyst to kick this community service project into a higher gear.

During a typical *Family Service Day*, if asked what he's doing, an American Pride service tech might hypothetically say, "I'm changing sparkplugs for Julie, a mom of three whose husband has deployed to Afghanistan." Charlie's answer would probably go a lot deeper. He might tell you: "We're trying to change the world."

Charlie's original concept of *Family Service Day* (motto: Keeping Cars Kickin'!) was to provide free basic car maintenance for struggling single parents. Usually closed on weekends, every six weeks Charlie and his staff arrive at their shop on the corner of Richmond and Airport Roads on a Saturday for a full day of appointments. They are donating their skill and time to perform routine safety and maintenance jobs such as oil changes, tire rotation, or swapping worn windshield wipers for new ones. They'll check out belts and

"Hands-on involvement means leaving some skin on the field. That is life transforming." ~ Charlie Marcotte

hoses and keep an eye out for any potential problems, all free of charge. Meanwhile, refreshments are offered along with special activities to keep the kids happy. A terrific service project, Charlie thought as it grew, but limited in scope. After all, how many sparkplugs can one business expect to change?

Although he's a Christian, Charlie's charitable philosophy is in line with the Jewish belief that a good deed, or mitzvah, is a blessing to both the giver



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and receiver. Charlie's actions originate from a strong conviction that it's not the government's job to take care of its citizens, nor does it take a millionaire to be a philanthropist. Everyone possesses unique skills or resources, and sharing them with others affects not just the recipient's circumstances, but the character of the giver. People are robbed of an opportunity to grow in compassion and self-respect if Uncle Sam always steps in.

"I feel the responsibility to care for each other should more often fall on the shoulders of family, friends, neighbors, churches, businesses and communities," Charlie says.

The seed of a great idea often starts small and grows. Realistically, there are just so many people Charlie's *Family Service Day* can reach personally without overwhelming his staff. If his example can energize others, however, he feels the concept will spread - especially given the big hearts and strong tradition of community service in Williamsburg. That single mom with three kids and a skimpy paycheck may not be able to afford an oil change, Charlie figures, but she could pay it forward in some other way with a little imagination. The same applies to businesses, even in a tough economy.

"Time, talent, or treasure, whatever your circumstances, almost everyone has something to bring to the table," Charlie says. *Family Service Day* benefits from sponsors such as First Advantage Federal Credit Union and The Colony Group, who pay for the oil, filters and wiper blades used. Kathy Howell of Howell Creative Group contributes many hours of her marketing skills, and Chick-Fil-A donates coupons for a free family meal.

"My particular contribution," Charlie says, "is in organization and providing the place where my employees can use their skills for the good of their community. Hands-on involvement means leaving some skin on the field. That is life transforming."

Looking beyond the finite boundaries of his own company, he sees that *Family Service Day* could have applications for countless individuals and businesses, but a forum is needed to incubate ideas for creative ways to serve. Charlie has already purchased rights to a FamilyServiceDay.org domain, and is waiting for someone with the ability to take it to that next level. Given the chance, he's sure this concept could grow to be so effective that other corporations, communities, states, and even countries would jump enthusiastically aboard.

Charlie's personal desire to help others began at home when he was very young. His parents divorced and his father moved to Virginia, leaving Charlie and his three sisters behind in New Hampshire. Although he has many memories of fun and laughter as he grew up, Charlie also remembers how difficult it was to stretch his mother's salary as a dental assistant from week to week. Everyone pitched in and worked hard; Charlie's summers were spent chopping and splitting enormous logs into firewood to keep their home warm. These challenges, plus his mother's patience, wisdom and perseverance, helped to form Charlie's character.

"One winter our car died," Charlie recalls. "Mom didn't have money to fix it, so she walked to work through the cold and snow until she saved enough for the repairs. I really wanted to help her, but I didn't yet know how."

His mother started taking in student boarders to supplement their income, and by then a teenaged Charlie had learned more about cars. He was the only one who could coax a start from one girl's balky Chrysler on

frigid, single-digit New England mornings.

"I would lie in my warm bed and listen to the starter grind, waiting for the knock on my bedroom door. Once it came, I'd throw on my clothes and grab my trusty screwdriver," Charlie remembers. "Before long, I was frozen but the car was running."

At 17, Charlie left home to join the Army and see a little of the world. He was just 20 when he and his 18 year old bride, Diane, left military life behind. The newlyweds moved to Williamsburg in 1988, with plans for Charlie to join his dad, Chuck, in the real estate business.

"For some reason, people were not interested in buying homes from a pimply-faced 20 year old," Charlie says with a wry grin, "so I went with my first love, cars." It was a natural fit.

"I remember when I was just a little kid hanging out with my dad, poking around with a screwdriver while he worked on an old VW dune buggy motor," Charlie says. "Suddenly it coughed and came to life. 'You fixed it, Charlie!' Dad said. I can still recall that powerful feeling of pride

"I feel the responsibility to care for each other should more often fall on the shoulders of family, friends, neighbors, churches, businesses and communities."

~ Charlie Marcotte

and accomplishment; I was convinced I was a magician."

Charlie and his father opened their first automotive repair shop in 1990. Today, American Pride Automotive (now owned solely by Charlie) has locations both in Williamsburg and on Route 17 in Yorktown. Charlie is hoping his son, Andrew, a former Lafayette High football star and present business major at Virginia Military Institute, will join him one day as a manager who will keep the company ahead of the technology tidal wave. He and Diane have two other children still at home, Charlie, 16, and Allison, 10, whose activities keep the family very busy.

Charlie will tell you that his ultimate purpose is to model his faith through action, integrating it into every aspect of his personal and business life. He considers his role at American Pride Automotive to be not just an employer, but a counselor and mentor. Growing from his initial idea of doing something to help his community, *Family Service Day* has had a transformational effect on Charlie's business. For him, success is now measured in a different currency than mere dollars.

"Serving others has changed how we see ourselves," he says. "It has renewed pride in our company and changed our mission. Auto repair is what we do, but *Family Service Day* has become who we are."

Charlie's motivation is simple: "When I die, I'd like to hear, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,'" he says. But until that day comes, Charlie will continue to do his best to serve his community, hoping to change the world one sparkplug at a time. NDN

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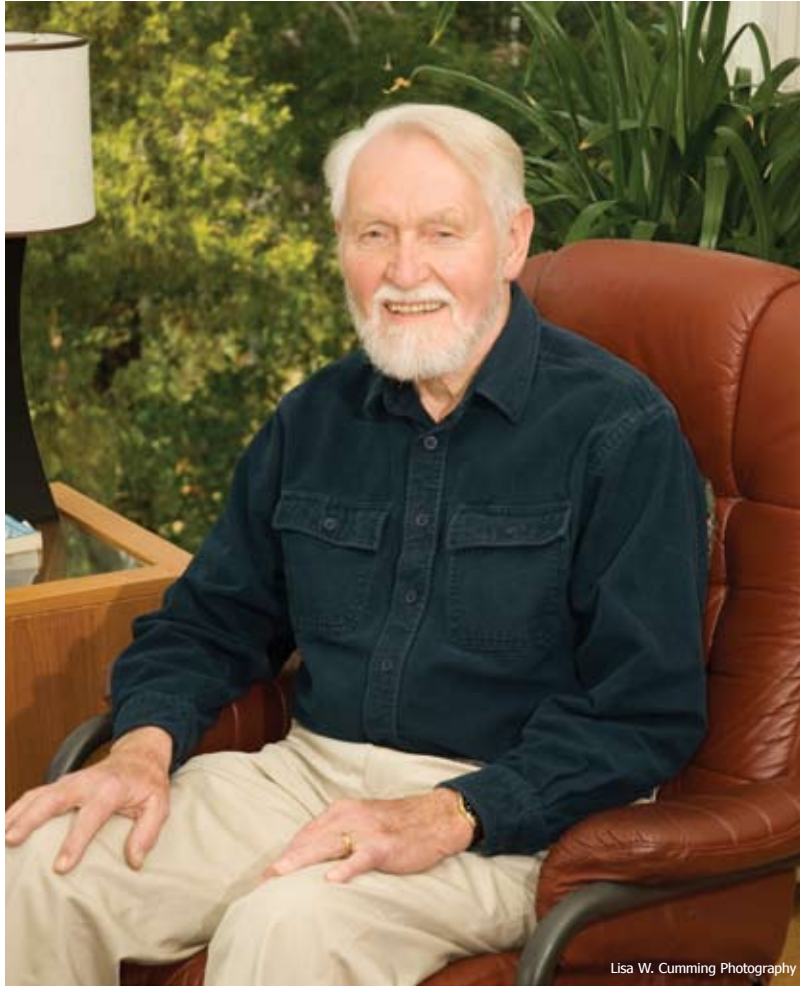
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HARLAN SCHONE

A Gifted Leader

By Alison Johnson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Here's one truth about growing up on a small, family-run farm: you learn how to fix and build things. Amidst the corn, soybeans, hogs and cattle on his parents' farm in central Illinois, Harlan Schone certainly did.

"I put up a lot of sheds for sows," Harlan remembers. "You just pick up skills each time you do something."

Harlan, who turns 79 in February, left that farm years ago, becoming the first person in his family to graduate from college before going on to earn a doctorate. He also taught at the College of William and Mary for 35 years and conducted research in condensed matter physics, a complex field that includes the ways metals and other materials conduct electricity.

But through it all, Harlan never stopped fixing and building. For more than 25 years – and counting – the Williamsburg resident has volunteered with Housing Partnership Inc. (HPI), a local nonprofit organization that constructs and repairs homes for elderly, low-income and disabled residents.

By Harlan's own estimates, he has helped

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build or extensively renovate about 10 homes, often serving as project foreman, and worked on “a few dozen” smaller projects such as painting, installing cabinets and building handicapped-access ramps. Harlan, however, is a modest person: HPI puts that “few dozen” figure in the hundreds.

Most recently, Harlan led a group of William and Mary students who built a new home for an elderly woman living in a crumbling single-wide trailer.

The team constructed the framing, siding and roof in the middle of a field on campus before finishing the project at the home site on Little Creek Dam Road in upper James City County.

Friends and colleagues describe Harlan as soft-spoken, kind, patient and persistent. Despite his gentle demeanor, they say, he is a natural leader for people of all ages, including students easily young enough to be his grandchildren.

“Generations of students have learned from Harlan’s teachings,” says Drew Stelljes, Director of Community Engagement at William and Mary. “Through his actions he teaches about construction, but the larger life lesson that he imparts is long-term commitment to commu-

nity and to working with humility and compassion.”

In conversations about his work, Harlan is adamant that credit goes to others who have volunteered alongside him. His list includes leaders at HPI, a United Way agency; members

knows a task better than I, I let him run with it (with some refereeing). I spend most of my time in working, not supervising.”

Harlan generally has two favorite moments during home-building projects: the start and the finish. Getting the initial floors and walls in

“The work and the people I’ve worked with have enriched my life. I’ve learned a lot on every single project I’ve done.”

~ Harlan Schone

of his church, St. Stephen Lutheran; William and Mary students; and even one individual, Bob Richardson, who has joined the St. Stephen group many times even though he belongs to a different church.

“The work and the people I’ve worked with have enriched my life,” Harlan says. “I’ve learned a lot on every single project I’ve done.”

The professor emeritus also downplays his role as a foreman: “All of our group are amateurs and work well together. My volunteers tend to be self-starters who can see what needs to be done and where they can contribute. My job is to coordinate: to make clear the nature of the task and that the necessary materials and tools are in hand. When a particular volunteer

place is “enjoyable, because things go up very fast and it looks great going up.” And seeing the completed product is “just a great feeling.”

While Harlan hasn’t formed many close personal relationships with owners of the homes he’s built, he knows the poor conditions that many of them had lived in before: unsafe, dilapidated structures with collapsing porches, roofs and floors and a lack of indoor plumbing, heat or air conditioning.

“I just feel happy for the owner,” he says. “I feel like I’m doing something meaningful, which is especially important to me now that I’m retired from teaching.” Sometimes, Harlan will drive by homes he has worked on in the past. “It’s interesting to see how people



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have changed and added to them and enjoyed them,” he explains. “I am grateful that I could have a hand in that.”

Harlan also is grateful where his life has taken him. As one of four siblings, he helped his father tend crops and raise livestock while attending a one-room schoolhouse through the eighth grade. A single teacher was in charge of about 20 students; she also had to fire up a heat stove before electricity came along sometime during Harlan’s school years (electricity reached his parents’ farm when he was about 8). Outside was a graveled country road, a water pump and two outhouses.

“The students came from the area farms and were always respectful to [the] teacher, whose job, in retrospect, seems overwhelming,” Harlan recalls. “We helped the younger students and each other.”

Naturally gifted in math and science, Harlan received regular encouragement from that teacher and from the staff at his small high school in Bluffs, Illinois. He was the only person in his graduating class to go directly to college, where he did extra work in his first year to make up for some gaps in his formal education. After earning a Bachelor’s Degree in Science from the University of Illinois, he served for two years in the Army and then used GI

benefits to pay for additional education including the doctoral program at the University of California, Berkeley.

Out of school, Harlan took a job as a staff scientist for Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle, Washington where he worked for five years. But teaching was his true calling, and he was in classrooms at William and Mary from 1965 until his retirement in 2000. He still enjoys having young people on his HPI projects.

“Students are always fun and full of ideas,” he says. “They do a great job. We may have to redo some of the things they do, but that’s OK. I like that they are learning.” His background in experimental physics, meanwhile, gave him the ability to be patient, switch gears and try new approaches when necessary.

Harlan, a married father of four and grandfather of five, credits the hard physical work with helping him stay healthy; a friend once told him he’d never need to join a gym. He has had to slow down in recent months, however, and has taken precautions such as not going up onto roofs (at least, not often). But he would like to continue volunteering with HPI for as long as he’s able.

“It’s very satisfying work,” Harlan says, “and to me, it’s also just fun.” NDN

Next Door Neighbors

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REGINA LEIGH

Helping Others Discover New Beginnings

By Rachel Sapin

There have been a plethora of reports in recent months on the state of the country's unemployed, even as we slowly make our way out of a recession. However, we don't have to look to the media to understand the financial and emotional distress that a job loss can have on an individual. Even those of us who have been fortunate enough to remain gainfully employed at least know someone - a neighbor, friend, or family member - who has experienced a job change during the current economic downturn.

"When someone loses their job, they feel very broken," explains Regina Leigh, who leads a job transition group that meets weekly at the Williamsburg Community Chapel.

Regina speaks from experience. She closed her Norwalk Furniture franchise store in the fall of 2009, after a change in the franchise's management coupled with the economic

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downturn made it unfeasible to keep it open.

“When I closed my store, I wasn’t just losing my business - I was losing my relationships with my employees, and I was losing the opportunity to provide for my family,” she notes, the pain still palpable in her voice. “I was struggling emotionally with the idea of closing the store in a bad economy where people were losing their jobs and unemployment was so high. That was weighing heavily on my heart.”

Other matters weighed on Regina as well, including fears about what she would do next. Regina initially opened the Norwalk franchise to get her feet wet in running a business. Her previous experience included years of working in corporate accounting, governance, and operations.

A native of Rochester, New York, Regina moved to Williamsburg in 1996, and brought the job she had working for a broker dealer in Rochester along with her. “I considered myself one of the only computer commuters in the early ‘90s when we were still trying to grasp technology, and what it was doing in terms of connecting people across miles,” she jokingly recalls. Regina stayed with that company for

10 years, but found her position defunct after the 9/11 tragedy.

“After 9/11 hit, the biggest concern in the industry was calming the fears of the masses,” she explains of the company’s eventual move from being that of an introducing broker dealer to a company more focused in providing 401k platforms to businesses.

Regina continued to work in the financial sector for a few more years at an investment firm, but found the move to be a step backward rather than forward.

“When I came across Norwalk Furniture as a franchise opportunity, I had dabbled in interior design and decided to own the Norwalk store because I loved the creativity, and what interior design represented,” she says. “As the owner, I was going to be running the store and managing its operations. It was something where I could use both my left-side and right-side brain.”

Losing the store as well as an engaging career was made all the more arduous by the process of tying up the business’s loose ends. “I was in a special circumstance,” Regina reflects. “I didn’t just lose a job; I was closing a store. There was

a lot of aftermath like closing the books, and piling up the boxes of records that needed to be kept for future reference.” Little did Regina know at the time that her difficult experience would later pave a path to a new career.

As she closed one chapter in her career, Regina remained uncertain as to how to begin the next. “That was one of the furthest things from my mind,” she says. “Because I’m human, I was thinking, ‘No one is going to want to do business with me now.’” It was a friend from church who encouraged Regina to attend a local job transition support group meeting. “I went to one of their meetings and I immediately felt a sense of support, that I wasn’t alone,” she remembers. “I saw that there were other people who were in my situation - who had companies that weren’t able to weather the storm, or other people who had lost their jobs that were adult professionals like myself.”

As Regina opened up to the group about closing her store, she began to receive a lot of questions about the process, and not just from members. “With the connections that I was making in that group, there were other business owners that were coming to me looking for my

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advice on what I had done prior to closing the store,” she explains. “They would ask me questions such as, ‘What did you learn when you were closing the store that might help me make some hard decisions?’ They were looking to me for guidance.”

Not long after she joined the support group, another member came to Regina asking for her advice on a business he was starting. Realizing that her time was valuable, and even sought after, Regina started her own venture, Leigh Management Consulting, where she now helps emerging and established businesses create roadmaps to success. “I love to help people, and my greatest satisfaction is watching a business implement something that’s going to make a change for the better,” she says. “I thrive on being able to help businesses isolate what their weaknesses are, and then put the necessary improvements in motion. I can think like a CEO because I’ve not only worked for large corporations in a capacity where I’ve had to marry the major facets of a business together, but I’ve owned my own business where I have had to do that.”

Regina continued to attend the job transition group meetings even after finding success

with her consulting firm. “I stayed with the group because it really helped me make that transition emotionally,” she says. “I felt I had a responsibility to maintain a support position within the group, to help newcomers know that they weren’t alone, and to offer them hope in some way.”

When Regina was asked to take over the job transition group last summer, she couldn’t refuse. One of her goals as the group’s current leader is to inspire what she calls “aha” moments in others, the kind that help someone look at his or her situation in a completely different light.

“I know this is going to sound silly,” she says, “but this is the truth. One day after a job transition meeting, I went home and placed value on all of the things I did throughout the day - such as all of the chores in the house that I could not have done if I had the store or a job. I started making a list of things I did that were of value, and assigned myself an hourly rate as if I were paying myself.” It was through this simple act that Regina began to see herself differently. “I started to feel valuable again,” she reflects with a laugh. “I probably would not have had that epiphany had I not joined that

support group.”

Being able to change her perspective helped Regina focus on her future, rather than dwelling on the past. “Being in the support group during that dark time kept me focused on hope,” she says, “and kept me focused on getting the things done that I could control at the time.” It was with this renewed focus that Regina was able to carefully examine her skills and appreciate the time she was given to re-invent herself. It’s something she hopes to pass on to others in the group as they too look to reinvent themselves in a brave new economy.

“We try to teach being happy,” she notes of the group’s mission. “One thing that going through a job transition often allows you is time - time to spend with your family, time to focus on something else other than being on the fast-track to a high-profile career, time that might help you realize the important things. I think that is one thing most people walk away with when they attend our meetings. They learn to reset their priorities.” NDN


The Job Transition Support Ministry meets every Wednesday at 7am at the Williamsburg Community Chapel.

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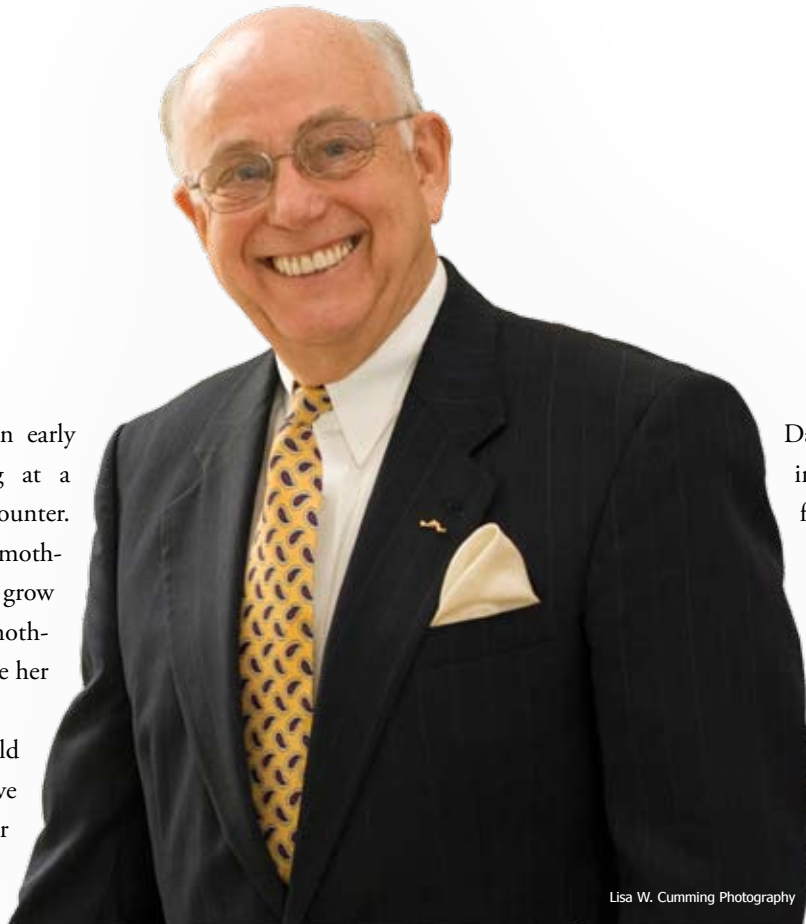
DAVID FORREST

A Friend to The Forgotten

By Linda Landreth Phelps

David (Dave) Forrest has an early childhood memory of sitting at a downtown Hampton lunch counter. He clearly recalls turning to his mother and announcing, "When I grow up, I want to be a priest!" His mother laughed fondly but didn't take her small son's statement seriously.

"I don't think she felt it would be a good choice for me," Dave says today, "but that desire never really went away." Although a lifelong devout Episcopalian,



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Dave's working career was in banking management. After 40 successful years in the business world, he believes he heard that priestly call again.

"I noticed something very strange going on. The number 444 kept cropping up, over and over. I'd notice the time on the television display and it would be 4:44. I would buy something and the change would be \$4.44, or wake from a sound sleep to

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find the clock reading 4:44. It was a real mystery," Dave recalls. "I even called a friend who knows his Bible very well to ask if there was some biblical significance to the number, but he said there wasn't."

Dave had been trying to make the decision to retire for quite a while, but one day he just felt that it was the right time. A feeling of peace came over him and he turned in his paperwork. A little later, he noticed the date: April 4, 2004, or 4/4/04.

"It was clearly time for me to start my ministry," Dave says, "in gratitude for all God had done for me."

He thought about entering seminary, but realized that would take a long time, years during which Dave felt he could serve God just as well as a lay person. Today at the age of 70, Dave's "attitude of gratitude" is reflected through his service with Kairos Prison Ministry International, an organization that counts over 30,000 volunteers throughout the U.S. and eight foreign countries.

Dave's personal mission field is far from his Toano home, at Nottaway Correctional Center in Burkeville, Virginia, a men's facility west of Richmond. Some of the men he serves there are those virtually forgotten by society.

"We don't ask why they're there or what they've done. We meet them on the common ground that we're all sinners and saved only by the grace of God." ~ Dave Forrest

Twice a year, Dave is part of a large group of trained Kairos ministers who lead a spiritual retreat within the razor wire boundaries of Nottaway. It's an intense, three day course of introduction to Christianity, above all else dedicated to reflecting agape love and reaching out in a personal way. Love and trust are often unfamiliar, even dangerous, concepts in prison, but it is soon apparent to the men that there is no "catch" with Kairos, nothing that is required of anyone in return. This kind of love can't be bought, sold, or coerced; it's a free gift.

Dave's eyes sparkle with animation and enthusiasm as he speaks about his time with the

inmates.

"We ask the warden to send us their toughest cases, the troublemakers," Dave explains. "Some have been incarcerated for 15 years or more and never had a visitor or a phone call;

those are the ones we especially want. They'll tell us they only come for the tasty homemade cookies we bring, but I've seen hardened men tear up when they see messages of love and forgiveness written on placemats made for them by children from our churches."

Kairos is an ecumenical group drawn from different denominational backgrounds and they welcome anyone, no matter their belief.

"We often have Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Wiccans and Atheists at the seminars," Dave says. "We don't ask why they're there or what they've done. We meet them on the common ground that we're all sinners saved only by the

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grace of God.”

While Kairos presents the incarcerated with an opportunity to express belief in the person and deity of Jesus, that step is not pushed on them and converts are not always expected. While conversion is certainly hoped for, the ministers are satisfied if their efforts result in increased tolerance and respect among faiths.

A well-organized follow-up plan means that there is ongoing support for the men and women who have made life-changing decisions during the retreats. A separate branch of the Kairos program is in place for those who have been released and for the families of those still behind bars.

Dave's wife, Joan, is involved with Kairos, too. A former school teacher, she ministers at a women's prison. Dave and Joan met through a Christian singles group that Dave belonged to in the Kiln Creek area of Newport News.

“Someone in that group asked if I'd like to meet a very nice lady who lived in Toano,” Dave remembers. “On our first date, we went to The Whaling Company for dinner and we hit it off immediately. As a matter of fact, we talked so much that we closed the place down!”

When Dave took her home, he noticed a broken brick in her walkway. The next time he came, he brought a new one to fix it. “I held it up, showed it to her, and said, ‘Upon this brick we will build our relationship,’” Dave says.

Twelve years later, they are united in service as well as marriage. Joan and Dave are privately mentoring several men who have been released, helping them through the sometimes frustrating and often lengthy process of earning a G.E.D. and finding a job. Clearly, Kairos' benefits extend far beyond the spiritual.

How effective is this ministry in the secular sense? Simple figures tell the story best. The Kairos website informs us that the incidence of recidivism, or return to prison, is typically 55% of those released, but only 16% of those who graduate from Kairos return. As a bonus, correctional facilities with active Kairos programs enjoy an atmosphere of increased cooperation and lessened stress, making the lay ministers and clergy very welcome visitors.

“Chronos” is a Greek word meaning time as it is measured by the clock and calendar, but “kairos” signifies time as a correct or opportune moment. The men Dave reaches in his ministry have lives that are measured in “chronos”, or the days, weeks, months and years of their sentences. They are doing hard time. Dave brings these inmates a message of hope and escape from the consequences of their sin.

“We tell them that this is the ‘kairos’, the opportune moment to take hold of redemption and forgiveness,” Dave says.

As a lay minister, Dave feels that he is at last able to experience the vocation to which he was drawn as a child. He feels fulfilled in a way that is uniquely different from his previous life as a businessman.

“When I'm there behind the walls of the prison, I can only describe it as an out-of-body experience. I'm no longer Dave Forrest,” he says. “I feel as if I become the feet, the hands, and even the outstretched arms of God.” **NDN**

For more information on Kairos Prison Ministry visit:
<http://www.kairosprisonministry.org>

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Helping Haitian Students



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

By Erin Kelly

While many college students are tackling spring semester and looking forward to summer vacation, Danny Yates is about to raffle off an Oprah Dream Vacation cruise in hopes of raising scholarship funding for university students in Haiti who were displaced by last year's massive earthquake.

Danny is also entering the second semester of his sophomore year at William and Mary. With a double major in Government and French, he is on track to graduate a year early. He dreams of going to

law school and hopes to pursue a career in federal law enforcement.

Danny, who is a native of Richmond, Virginia was encouraged to become active in his community as a volunteer and an informed citizen from an early age.

"My family has always provided me with a strong set of values to which I try to adhere as much as possible," Danny said. "Growing up, I was fortunate enough to come from a household of relative economic security, which has permitted me to pursue and concentrate on my academics. Now I am trying to help some displaced Haitian



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students who never had that chance.”

This time last year, Danny had just returned from Haiti where the catastrophic earthquake

were really bad.”

In Port-au-Prince, he witnessed firsthand the unparalleled scope of the tragedy. He was

dents who have lost everything to America to further their education.

The Hinche Scholars Project has partnered with the *I Have a Dream Foundation* of Richmond, the town of Hinche, Haiti and with Barber-Scotia College located in Concord, North Carolina. Danny’s vision is to provide

funding for eight displaced Haitian students from Hinche, Haiti to study at Barber-Scotia College.

For their efforts with the Hinche Scholars Project, Danny and the President of the *I Have a Dream Foundation* of Richmond were invited to The Oprah Winfrey Show this past October, for a show that aired in November.

“We got an email from one of Oprah’s staffers asking us to be in Chicago the day of the show and we did not know if we were going to be on the show or not, but we ended up being in the audience during her ‘Favorite Things’ portion,” Danny explains.

“We received prizes and a large sum of money. We’ve been raffling off the prizes and plan

“My family has always provided me with a strong set of values to which I try to adhere as much as possible.”

~ Danny Yates

ripped through Port-au-Prince and forever changed the lives of an estimated three million Haitian people. Measuring a whopping 7.0 on the Richter scale, the quake leveled the island nation’s capital and largest city.

Danny has been making the trip to Haiti with his home church mission group from Richmond for several years now. Fluent in French, Danny has also picked up some Haitian Creole which he has put to good use, having served as a volunteer guide and translator in Haiti.

“I was actually in Hinche, which is about 50 miles north of Port-au-Prince, the day of the earthquake,” Danny explains. “I went to Port-au-Prince the day after – that’s where things

astonished by the level of catastrophic loss – and confused by the attention he was getting while there.

“Everyone thought I was a doctor because they could tell I was not Haitian. That was a very sobering experience,” Danny says.

In addition, some of Danny’s friends were in the University in Haiti at the time of the quake. Their colleges were destroyed and many of them lost friends.

“If they had been in class ten minutes later they would have been killed themselves,” he says.

As a result of the tragedy, Danny founded a relief project called the Hinche Scholars Project, which is designed to bring Haitian stu-

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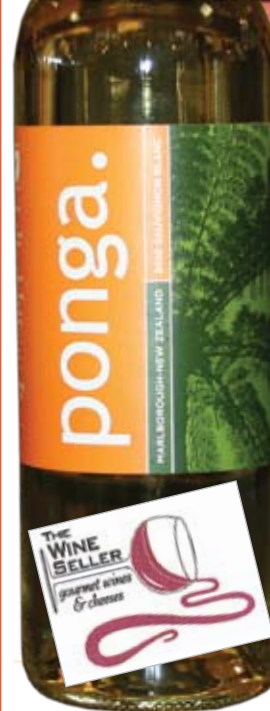
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to dedicate those funds to scholarships for the Haitian students.”

The Oprah Dream Vacation cruise is one of the final prizes.

“All of the proceeds will go toward bringing the Haitian students to America,” Danny says.

Over the years, Danny has made many friends in Haiti and is amazed at the strength of their character and the extent of their patience. He says that they are an inspiration to him.

Knowing the people and the culture as he does, he was particularly disappointed to watch the news coverage of the earthquake and the negative light in which the Haitian people were being portrayed.

“When I returned home, I was watching news footage and they portrayed the disaster differently from how I had witnessed it,” Danny says.

“They were speaking about the Haitians looting and they just kept harping on it. For the most part, people were very resilient and remained calm under such a dire circumstance.

The things they were looting were things like toothpaste to put under their nose to block out the smell of the dead. Whereas, when you look at Hurricane Katrina and you see people looting things like televisions just hours after the hurricane hit, well, that is a bit different.”

Danny is impressed and inspired by the strength of the people in this Caribbean nation.

“If this had happened in an American city, perhaps the death toll would have been lower because of better construction codes, for instance. Nonetheless these people deal with so much. They have earthquakes, hurricanes, political strife, and the recent cholera epidemic. It is so inspirational to me that they remain so strong.”

their Visas and that’s preventing them from traveling right now. Their patience is such an inspiration to me. Every day when I get a text message from them, or when I speak to them on Facebook chat, or even when I talk to them over the phone, they are just waiting and being so patient. I cannot imagine myself down there waiting day in and day out to hear from the State Department about my Visa.”

As their Visas get worked out and as Haiti continues to pick up the pieces, Danny firmly believes that higher education is the key to Haiti’s recovery.

“The happiest day for me will be when the students arrive – but also when they can eventually return home to Haiti and fill leadership roles and help their country rebuild.” NDN

“The happiest day for me will be when the students arrive - but also when they can eventually return home to Haiti and fill leadership roles and help their country rebuild.” ~ Danny Yates

Haitians don’t sweat the small stuff.

“The students who have been selected to study in the states are having some issues with

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BENJAMIN CONNER, Ph.D.

Learning About Life at Capernaum

By Erin Zagursky

When Williamsburg native Benjamin Conner went to college, he planned on becoming an architect. But now, he finds himself doing a different kind of building – the building of relationships.

Benjamin is the leader of Capernaum Williamsburg, a branch of the Christian organization *Young Life* which seeks to bring the gospel to children with special needs. Though Benjamin has provided much to the children and families he has worked with, they have in return provided him much, including unique insight, which he is now sharing with church leaders throughout the world.

After graduating from Lafayette High School in 1987, Benjamin went to Virginia Tech. One year into his studies, he took some time off to care for his father, who had been diagnosed with cancer.

“A number of things happened that year.

One of them was I decided I didn’t want to be an architect,” Benjamin said. “I didn’t like the lifestyle. I’m an introvert in a sense, but I get energy from people.”

That same year, Benjamin began volunteering for *Young Life*.

“I thought given the experience of helping my dad die – that was kind of a spiritual experience – and volunteering with *Young Life*, I thought some kind of ministry I was more suited for,” he said.

Benjamin returned to Tech and graduated with a degree in visual communications.



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He and his wife, Melissa, also a Williamsburg native, then moved back to the area where he became the second youth director at Williamsburg Community Chapel.

After a year there, Benjamin completed a two-year training program and then moved to Fredericksburg, Virginia to serve with *Young Life*. Five years later, Benjamin moved back to Williamsburg to serve as the area director of *Young Life*. At the same time, he began pursuing his master's of divinity degree at Union Theological Seminary.

"In Fredericksburg, I started realizing it would be nice to be able to articulate the things I am learning in these relationships, theologically," he said. "So I decided to try seminary to see if that's the place where I could learn how to put words to these things that I'm experiencing."

Benjamin's hard work at Union Theological Seminary resulted in several awards for his scholarship and some key connections, which led him to pursue a Ph.D. at Princeton Theological Seminary.

When Benjamin was studying at Princeton, two important things happened that would lat-

er influence his decision to pursue Capernaum. One - his son, Tommy, had a seizure, and the family found out that he had had a stroke at birth. It turned out Tommy was fine, but it was while in the hospitals and waiting rooms that Benjamin saw the unmet needs. Two - his wife began volunteering at Dream Catchers, a therapeutic riding program in Williamsburg where she is presently the Operations Manager.

Benjamin returned to Williamsburg in 2006 after fulfilling his Ph.D. program's required two-year residency.

"The next couple of years, I was writing and researching for my dissertation, but, because I'm a person who can't just sit alone and because of my experience with Tommy at these different places and because of my encounters with kids with disabilities at Dream Catchers, we decided together there needs to be a ministry for and with kids and adolescents with disabilities," he said.

Benjamin and his wife were getting ready to start their own non-profit program when they remembered that *Young Life* had begun something similar to what they wanted to do. The couple approached the Williamsburg area di-

rector and received permission to start Capernaum to reach out to teenagers with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities.

In June 2007, after a few months of preparation, Benjamin took his first group of participants to Williamsburg Airport for Capernaum Williamsburg's inaugural event.

Now, four years later, the group provides opportunities for participants to get together about four times a month, as well as training sessions for volunteers, who range from high school students to working adults. The student leader training includes students with disabilities.

Capernaum's events have included numerous birthday parties, a 1950s dance, a Valentine's Day dance, trips to Dream Catchers, trips to a *Young Life* camp, and trips to Great Wolf Lodge.

Although the events are a big draw, Benjamin said the really important stuff - the texts, the Facebook messages and general building of friendships - happens between events.

"The community is the most important thing, not the program," he said. "The program creates the space in which the community can

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be built.”

Benjamin said that his interaction with Capernaum changed the way he thought about theology. His dissertation focused on how actions impact the way people write and think about theology and vice versa.

“This theology that I thought I had set pretty well in this book then became informed by my practice of ministry to kids with disabilities,” he said.

He noted that people often explain religion and God in terms of rationality. For instance, faith is often defined as an ability to understand truths about God and agree with them.

“Then you exclude a lot of the kids I hang out with because they can’t do that,” he said. “Their faith is more intuitive. So if you are going to help them develop their faith, you aren’t going to have them do technical Bible studies.”

Instead, what Benjamin does is create “spaces in which an encounter occurs.” For instance, to teach about hospitality, they share meals with the kids and then give them the opportunity to have people over and share their homes.

“I’ve learned that experience is the way that you learn – by doing and feeling and sensing,

so we do a whole lot of tasting and smelling and feeling and drawing,” he said.

While the participants are learning, so are the Capernaum leaders and volunteers.

“It’s a shared experience,” said Benjamin, recalling an instance when one of the participants was very upset while on a trip and could only be comforted by other kids with disabilities.

“So (I’ve got a) Master’s of Divinity, Ph.D., written books and articles, and I can’t calm this guy, but a kid with an intellectual disability can go and provide him with the calm that I can’t. That’s a gift that this kid has that I don’t have, so I need this kid. He needs me, but I need this kid, so it’s a community thing,” Benjamin said.

Benjamin said his Capernaum kids have also taught him that everyone has a contribution to make and how to not be judgmental in friendships.

“I’ve never met a kid with Down Syndrome who didn’t welcome me,” he said.

Now, Benjamin is trying to share what he’s learned with church leaders around the world. In December, the peer-reviewed International Journal of Children’s Spirituality published an article he wrote: “Affirming Presence.”

It was the first article to appear in that journal “that took seriously the faith of people with disabilities,” said Benjamin.

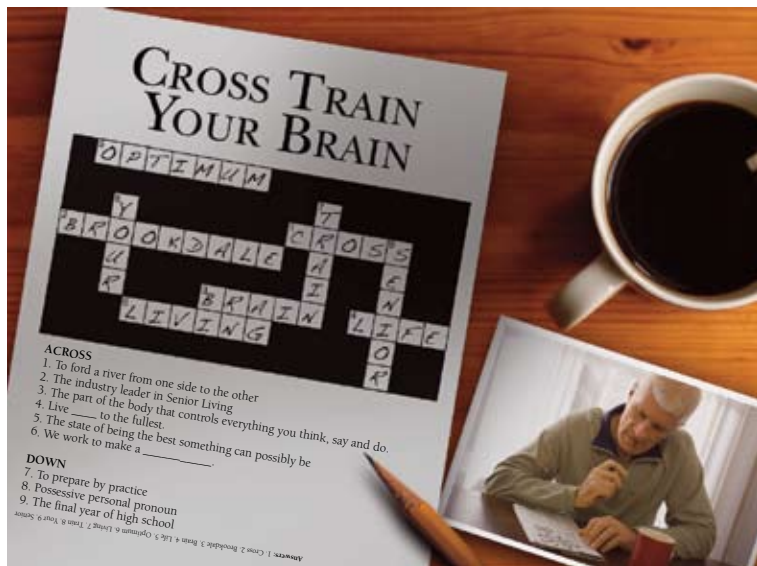
His dissertation-turned-book, *Practicing Witness*, which will come out this year, includes an introduction and conclusion that features stories about the children he’s worked with.

“It’s introducing people to conversation and it’s setting up the next book, *Amplifying Their Witness*, which is all about ministry in terms of three As: Affirming presence, Amplifying what they have to offer, and Advocacy,” said Benjamin.

Although Benjamin, who now also teaches at Union Theological Seminary and Memphis Theological Seminary’s Center for Youth Ministry Training – sought his Ph.D. so he could become a professor, he said it will take something very special to get him and his family to leave Williamsburg and the Capernaum community they’ve built.

“It will have to be the perfect kind of job to leave this,” he said. NDN

For more information on Capernaum Williamsburg, please visit: www.capernaumthrutheroof.com



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JILL WHITTEN



ON WILLIAMSBURG AREA LEARNING TREE

Jill Whitten is the program director for Williamsburg Area Learning Tree (WALT), a Public Service Project of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists. This not-for-profit education program brings you and your neighbors together to share in the excitement and fun of learning. Individuals in our community have stepped forward to offer their knowledge of a subject that they love so that others can learn from them. Classes are offered to everyone in the community from teenage years to seniors.

Jill recently gave Next Door Neighbors an interview to help us learn more about WALT.



How did WALT get started?

In 2001, Roy Snyder used the model of the Mt. Airy, Pennsylvania Learning Tree to organize WALT as a community outreach program for the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists with the purpose of bringing people together to share their talents and interests with others.

How is WALT funded?

WALT is a self supporting, non-profit program that covers all



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of its operating expenses through fees paid by the participants of the classes.

What are the fees for taking classes in the WALT program?

Fees for WALT classes vary based on the class, the instructor and our need to make just enough to cover WALT operating expenses. We strive to keep the fees affordable.

How long has WALT been offering classes in the Williamsburg area?

WALT is beginning its 11th year offering classes twice a year and is currently registering for its 21st catalogue of courses.

How do you decide what classes will be offered each year?

I am open to offering any type of class because it is exciting to see the talents and interests of people interested in being WALT instructors. There is no way to predict which classes will be of interest to others in the community; they all have so much potential and I don't try to guess which classes will be popular because it changes each session.

How do you find instructors for the classes?

Anyone is welcome to submit a course proposal form. We encourage people to teach what subjects they are enthusiastic about because that love of their subject is what makes them good WALT instructors. Most often people are teaching a class about their avocation and not their vocation. People are always welcome to call me to discuss teaching a WALT class. At times we have posted signs in the library and announcements in the newspaper inviting proposals. WALT instructors are great at telling their friends. Some instructors are our former participants, and sometimes when I talk to people I discover new people interested in sharing.

Are there any restrictions on who can take WALT classes?

No, WALT classes are open to everyone - young and not so young.

When and where are classes held?

Classes are held around town at a variety of wonderful locations that make their spaces available to WALT. We select different dates and times hoping to be able to accommodate people's different schedules.

How long does the average class run?

WALT classes can vary depending on how long the instructor needs to cover their information. We may have classes that meet once and others that may meet 4 to 6 times. There is no set time-frame for a WALT class.

In addition to learning or improving a skill, what are some

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of the other benefits of taking classes through WALT?

WALT classes are a wonderful experience because of the people. Our instructors are fascinating and bring so much experience with them and not just in their course topic but from their whole life. Our participants are curious and enthusiastic people who appreciate the opportunity to expand their horizons and try something new. The reward for taking a WALT class is that great feeling of satisfaction you get when you share the joy of learning something new.

What are some of the new classes you have scheduled for the Spring 2011 session?

Every session brings the return of some favorites and an assortment of new classes and new instructors. This spring people will have the opportunity to be introduced to Conversational Hebrew; Exploring the Natural History of DOG Street; Making Their own Perfume; taking popular cooking classes including Greek Cuisine and BBQ Boot Camp for Backyard Grillmeisters; Scrapbooking made quick, easy & fun; and Paper Crafting such as note cards. Classes will also address issues like Avoiding Identity Theft and Building a Solid Financial Foundation. Wow! There is something for everyone.

Do you have any new plans for WALT in the upcoming months & years?

We are always looking for ways to improve WALT. Most recently we added to our website the ability to pay online through PayPal so now people can register online. We are also looking at modernizing our web-pages. In addition, we are looking at more ways to be a good community member by working with other organizations to host joint programming.

What do you like most about working for WALT?

I enjoy the opportunity to meet so many different people and learn about their experiences and interests. I have been able to learn so much from the many people who are a part of WALT. I love to talk and WALT provides me a chance to interact with some of the most interesting people in Williamsburg.

What would you say to readers who have never taken a WALT class about this opportunity?

You are missing out on some great experiences! WALT classes are about trying something new. Look at the great list of classes and pick one. Add to your fun by bringing a friend to share this great activity with you.

For more information about WALT visit:

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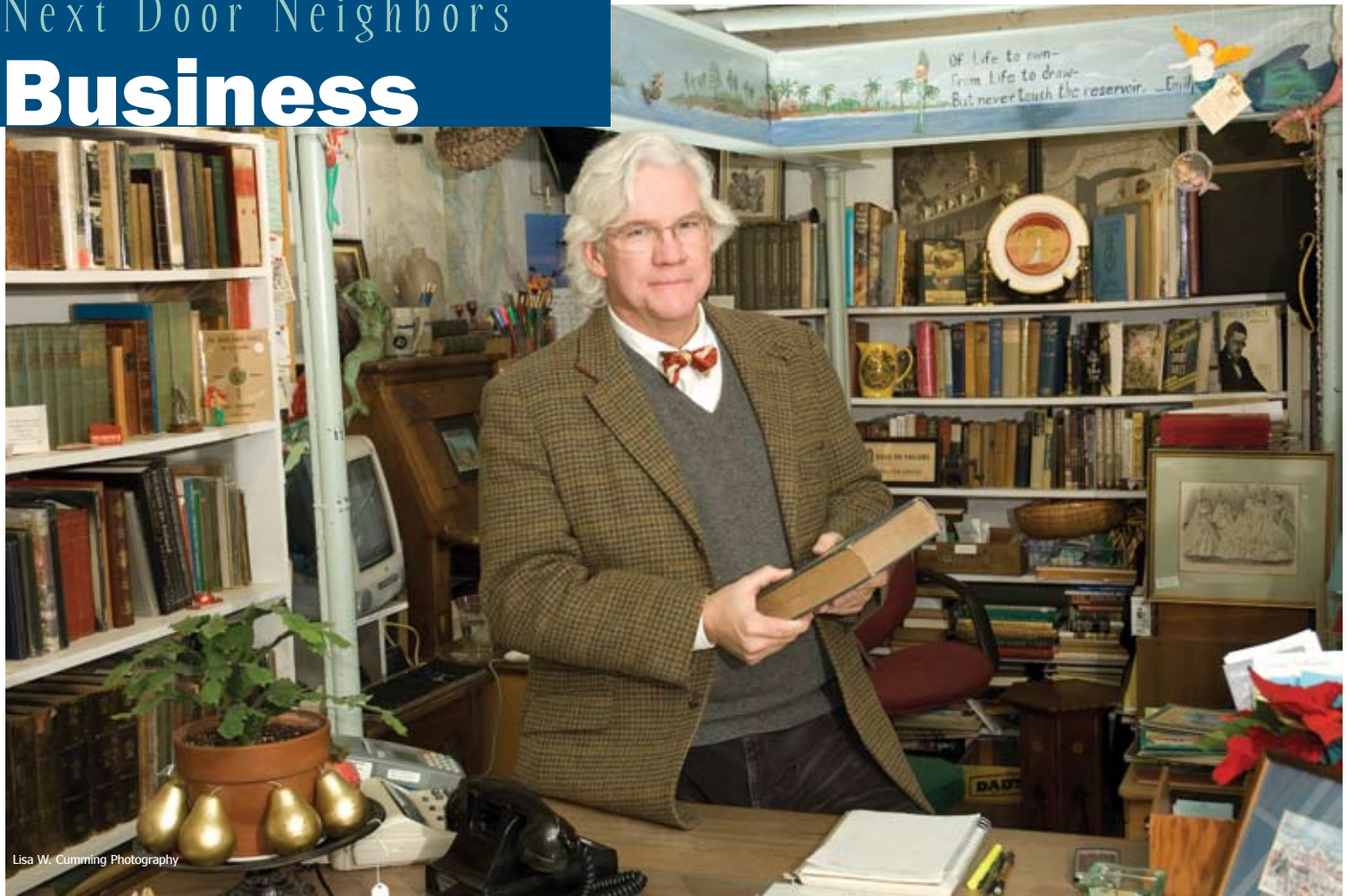
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Hatley Mason

Setting Sail in a Turbulent Recession

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Hatley Mason spent his childhood summers in Gloucester, Virginia and the surrounding rivers. “My family and I would come to Williamsburg all the time during the summer because I had a great-aunt who lived here.” His grandmother, Frances Norton Mason, wrote the book *John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia*, and it was a source for the restoration of Williamsburg in the 1920s and ‘30s.

“It’s a transcription of letters and actual shipping invoices from the company from 1750 to 1795,” Hatley says. The items shipped to Virginia to stock the shelves and furnish the homes of the colonists are listed in the records

of the family’s company.

Today, Hatley continues the family tradition of merchants in Williamsburg. He is the owner of Mermaid Books, bravely taking over the store in the midst of the recession.

“John Hatley Norton,” Hatley says, “operated in Yorktown, and he had a store on Duke of Gloucester Street, at Market Square, near the Courthouse. It’s now called the Roscoe Cole House. Up until the mid 1970s, it was called the Norton-Cole House.”

When Hatley was a child roaming the streets of Williamsburg, the thrill of seeing his ancestor’s building could only be eclipsed by watching the craftsmen making their wares. “They

sold them right there in the shops where they made them,” he says. “When I first bought this store, I was very in tune to that need of visitors to take home something special found only in Williamsburg.”

Hatley started his professional career at the *Richmond News Leader*. “I had this really wonderful mentor Jeff MacNelly, a political cartoonist,” Hatley explains. “I wanted to be a political cartoonist too, so I worked at the newspaper until 1979 when I was asked by the *Washington Post* to create a comic strip called Dupont Circle – a political satire strip along the lines of *Doonesbury*.” He worked for several years for the *Post* creating illustrations and

cartoons for the newspaper.

"Then I decided I wanted to live in California, the California Dreaming thing," he says with a laugh. "I went to work for the *Sacramento Bee*. I worked there for 13 years, doing lots of illustrations, courtroom drawings, that sort of thing." During this time, Hatley expanded his creative outlets with fine art painting, which was featured in several shows, and he also played in a blues band.

"I went to the *LA Times* and worked there as an artist," he says of his next phase. "I lived on a sailboat – a 49-foot, old, mahogany sloop. That was the only type of real estate I could afford in Southern California."

When he returned to Richmond to work at the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Hatley ran into a classmate from his old high school days. "Jackie and I re-met," he describes. "We had grown up in the same school in Richmond." They married, and he and Jackie kept a sailboat at Gloucester Point. "We would spend our weekends on the sailboat in the summertime. We both have a love of this area. Jackie's family

had a place on Mobjack, just around the bend from Gloucester Point."

Williamsburg was always a stop on their trip to the York River since they preferred driving down the Colonial Parkway. "We discovered Aromas about ten years ago," he says of the coffeehouse and café on Prince George Street.

"You have to take responsibility for your direction and not just let life push you along or coast through it. You need to take the helm and steer." ~ Hatley Mason

"We would stop at Aromas to get something to eat, and I would always come down here to Mermaid Books."

One April day in 2009, Hatley went into the store, and the owner Aurise Eaton informed him she was closing the shop. "She had tried to sell it, but hadn't found a buyer," he says. "I was shocked and said she couldn't close the store."

Hatley had always collected and loved books, but had no retail experience. In addition to that, the country was in the middle of a recession. So, what did Hatley decide to do?

He bought the store.

He spent a month working at the bookstore under Aurise's supervision. "To learn the ropes," he says. "I would come home to Jackie and say what a crazy idea it was, except I always asked her: 'But, what if we did this...or did that..?' It was one of those things when you keep looking, the answer always comes up that

you could do it. I would get more encouraged the more I thought about it."

The philosophy that has guided him through the rough times is simple, but effective: "My basic model is three things: quality product, right price, convenience." Hatley says those items are his compass. "The store should have what you want," he says, "at the price you want, and it's right here, right now."

Some customers come to him on a quest. "Lots of times," Hatley says, "people have a favorite book. They come in and want a really nice or rare copy of that book." Other times a person may not know exactly what they want.

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The lure of used bookstores, consignment shops and other resellers of used merchandise is the thrill of discovery. He recounts the customer who stumbled onto an out-of-print cookbook her grandmother had used and another customer who found a favorite childhood book that he hadn't thought about in years; they each purchased the books to give to their children or grandchildren. "It's like they recover a memory from their own childhood," Hatley says.

His customer demographic spans the range of Williamsburg: locals, William and Mary students and visitors. "The locals," he says, "come in looking for the classics, history on the area and of the Revolution, Civil War, WWI and WWII. Students find inexpensive hardbacks of the classics they need for class, and tourists like to search through the stacks for past and present books about the local area."

His idea on price is to have merchandise spanning from a dime up to hundreds of dollars. "One thing I really want for the store," he adds, "I want a price range so everybody can find something within their budget at the store."

The discovery process is a magical experience for some, and taking the treasure home with them adds to the thrill. "People can buy books on-line, but you have to wait," Hatley says. "For old or rare books, you never know what you are getting. People like to hold it in their hands before a purchase."

His underlying optimism for a business venture in a recession comes from four directions:

Self-Reliance – "The essential element for me starting out in business, even starting out in life, is self-reliance," Hatley explains. "You have to take responsibility for your direction and not just let life push you along or coast through it. You need to take the helm and steer."

Honesty – "Secondly, the important thing is to be honest with people," he says. "Give a fair price when you buy from them and sell at a reasonable price. I don't want to take advantage on either end."

Hard Work – "The third thing is that you learn this is a tremendous amount of work," he adds. "You have to work hard and persevere and do your research. Part of that is figuring out what people want. Provide something that is really worthy – that's what appeals to me about books."

Courage – "Finally, the main ingredient is courage. You have to have faith that things will get better in the future. Serving people in the community and providing value to them, you have to believe they will return and support you."

Hatley says he's in Williamsburg retail for the long haul. "Hopefully for the rest of my life," he says. "I have roots here, ancestors who walked these streets. I'm so honored to be part of the Williamsburg experience."

Just as the first colonists arrived in Jamestown as entrepreneurs, today's business people are navigating the waters of the unknown.

"That's the great American spirit that kept Jamestown and Williamsburg going," Hatley says. "I'm honored to have even a small, little part of it today." NDN



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Megan Sloggie

Reclaiming the Stage

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Watching Megan Sloggie perform today with her band *Dharma Initiative*, you wouldn't necessarily believe that stage fright kept her away from audiences, but she says she didn't sing or play piano in front of people for several years.

"I was born here in Williamsburg," Megan says as we talk near the front windows of Squires Café, a venue where she and the band perform. "I've lived in Newport News and Virginia Beach as well, but I moved back here when I was fifteen because my dad lived here." Megan's father is Williamsburg Police Chief,



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David Sloggie.

While Megan attended Lafayette High School, she played the piano and sang at a local restaurant. "I played at JM Randall's a couple of hours a week, for the dinner crowd," she says. After graduation from high school, Megan headed to college to pursue a degree in music. "Music education and voice," she clarifies. "I fell off performing for almost a decade."

The halt of her performances seems to have come from one traumatic incident. "I definitely had stage fright for a long time," Megan says. "When I went to CNU [Christopher Newport University], I somehow got by for about three years without having to perform in front of people, and I would just do the assigned projects in front of teachers who were judging me." The instructors gave her assignments and she would complete them in a closed room with the teacher grading her.

Eventually, the need to perform in front of an audience of her fellow students arrived. "Word got out," Megan explains. "People said they couldn't wait to hear me sing because they were wondering how I got into the school, what my talent was." She had created an enigma. Many of her fellow students wanted to see Megan's performance style, hear her singing voice and experience her as a performer.

"I cracked," Megan says. "I sang three lines then walked off stage. That's how much stage fright I had."

From that moment on, she avoided singing in public. "That was not something I was planning on doing again, ever," she adds. "It wasn't something I was comfortable with - I don't know why. I guess some people have stage fright." She wouldn't sing in front of her friends, although she continued to play the piano and sing at home. Then she met Zach Moats.

Zach played music around the Newport News and Hampton areas. "Not to get sappy," Megan says, "but Zach is so comforting and his energy is so reassuring that I just tend to let my guard down with him." They would sing and play music together. "Because I was able to sing with him, I got less embarrassed," she explains. "We heard about the open mic at Aromas in Newport News and started going there weekly. Creating a version of a cover song and doing that for fun. I was able to go to these small coffee shops and do open mic. I built it up slowly."

Along with her singing, Megan never thought she'd play piano in front of an audience again. "Singing is one thing, but the piano is even scarier," she says. "You would think I would be more intimidated because Zach is an amazing, award-winning piano player. The band has two pianos, I play while he plays, but he puts me at ease. I play rhythm piano while he plays the intricate stuff."

After her musical steps into coffeehouse performances with Zach, Megan ventured into writing songs. From the time she started piano lessons at the age of eight, she never thought she could write a song. "I was a poet," she states. "I always had words, but I couldn't do melodies, I couldn't write songs on the piano." As soon as she and Zach talked about composing songs, a comfortable collaboration developed. "He would approach me with a chord progression or some type of piano music he had in mind," Megan explains the process. "Somehow inspired by his piano

writing, I was able to come up with melodies and add both of our lyrics to it. Each time we've written a song, it's been the same process. He works alone on the piano music; he introduces it to me; I come up with a melody; we put words to it. Then we usually both work on the chorus together. They're not similarly structured songs, but it's been the same structure to write them." She admits that about half the time, they end up in a completely different place than where they had originally headed with the first strains of the song.

Musically and lyrically, the band *Dharma Initiative* (Megan, Zach and drummer, Michael Harvey) allowed their growth to be unencumbered by labels or genre distinctions. "It's hard to define our style. It's all so different," Megan admits. "We laugh when someone asks us what our style is." She starts listing different genres as components of what the band

"It's hard to define our style. It's all so different. We laugh when someone asks us what our style is. It's kind of folk, jazz, pop, experimental, jam, whatever - it's a little bit of everything."

~ Megan Sloggie

plays: "It's kind of folk, jazz, pop, experimental, jam, whatever - it's a little bit of everything." Megan says her vocal influence has always been Nina Simone, and her influence to make music is Tori Amos.

Now that she's back to enjoying performing in front of a crowd again, Megan says her ideal audience reaction is a group of people on their feet having a great time. "We feed off a dancing crowd." The band also plays at restaurants while people are dining. "Then, we do a low key version, more mellow, so people can enjoy their meals," she explains. "We like the mellow times, but we really feed off an active crowd."

Megan's future plans include creating a CD of the band's original songs. She, Zach and Michael are in the studio now recording the tracks. "We've been practicing and writing non-stop," she says. "We're going to do the original songs that Zach and I have written for the band." With the new album in hand, the band plans to tour the spring and summer music festivals and to play locally as much as possible. *Dharma Initiative* performs at venues like Squires in Williamsburg (March 4), Red Star Tavern in Newport News (March 5), Oceans & Ale in Williamsburg (March 12) and Marker 20 in Hampton (March 18). "We enjoy that," Megan adds.

A supportive partner, creative energy and local encouraging crowds have helped Megan Sloggie take the stage again. NDN

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“What?”

Dr. Jude Liptak
Helps You Hear Better

By Greg Lilly, Editor

She tells him about their neighbor’s new kitchen remodel. He advises that chickens aren’t allowed in backyards. Is this selective hearing or a true hearing problem? Dr. Jude Liptak says that even though husbands and wives sometimes only hear what they want to, there is a possibility that what you don’t hear may be a medical issue.

“The biggest red flag,” Dr. Liptak describes, “and this is the way it starts - every single person mentions this - the patient will say: ‘I can hear people; I just can’t understand what they are saying.’ That is the number one complaint.” He says that people guess at words that they can’t hear clearly. They lose consonant sounds or the high frequency sounds like the beep of the microwave oven.

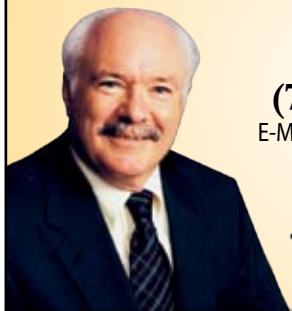
Dr. Jude Liptak first took an interest in audiology (the science of hearing) when some of his relatives had hearing loss. “I have family members who are hard-of-hearing, and I’ve always been interested in little gadgets like hearing aids and cell phones and things like that,” he says. Growing up, he and his family moved around but his later school years were spent in northeast Ohio and western Pennsylvania. He earned his bachelors and masters degrees from Kent State in Ohio and his doctorate degree from the Pennsylvania College of Audiology in Philadelphia.



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“At first I was going to go into physical therapy,” Dr. Liptak says. “I found I didn’t really enjoy it. I thought about going into aviation, but the costs needed to pay for fuel had me re-think that. I wanted something medical, something I could look at, something black and white that I could treat with assurance. The more I looked at audiology, the more I liked it because of the ability to help people and the rapid development of technology.”

His years in Ohio and in Pennsylvania also helped shape his future on the personal side. “Hockey? Oh, yeah,” he says with a smile. “I played high school hockey, travel team hockey, and played at Kent State. I was a goalie for four years. I love hockey. I know a lot of people in the NHL (National Hockey League).”

Dr. Liptak’s wife, Lucia, is originally from Slovakia. “She grew up with a lot of the players. At the Olympics, we knew most of the guys on the Slovakia team. They beat Russia, which was really cool.”

He says that hockey helped him meet Lucia. “I met her here in Williamsburg,” he says. “She

was doing a work abroad program.” They met in a local restaurant when he started talking about - hockey.

“What else?” he says with a laugh. “I knew her town in Slovakia,” he adds. “I knew all

“My patient can be anyone. The youngest patient here is 20 months old. The oldest patient I have is 103.” ~ Dr. Jude Liptak

about the Slovakia hockey players and their stats.”

Dr. Liptak had moved to Williamsburg because he saw the need for an audiology practice in the Hampton Roads area. “I thought it would be a great place to live,” he says.

When asked who his patients are, he says it’s a wider spectrum than most people think. “My patient can be anyone,” he describes. “The youngest patient here is 20 months old. The oldest patient I have is 103. We have a huge range.” Hearing issues and hearing aids, he states, are not just a condition of the elderly and are just as common across the population as vision issues and eye glasses.

He describes different types of hearing loss. “Conductive is when something is wrong with your middle ear,” Dr. Liptak says, “something structurally wrong. It could have to do with the bones in the middle ear or the eardrum;

you could have an ear infection or wax in your ear.” This type may be treated by an ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat doctor). A doctor of Audiology can perform the tests to determine the cause and, if fixable, send the patient to an ENT for treatment.

Another type of hearing loss is called sensorineural. “This has to do with the auditory nerves,” Dr. Liptak explains, “the little inner hair cells that may be damaged. High frequencies can be lost. That’s the most common type of hearing loss and can be caused by a lot of different things: heredity, medication, loud noises, or even viruses.” This type of hearing loss is usually corrected with a hearing device.

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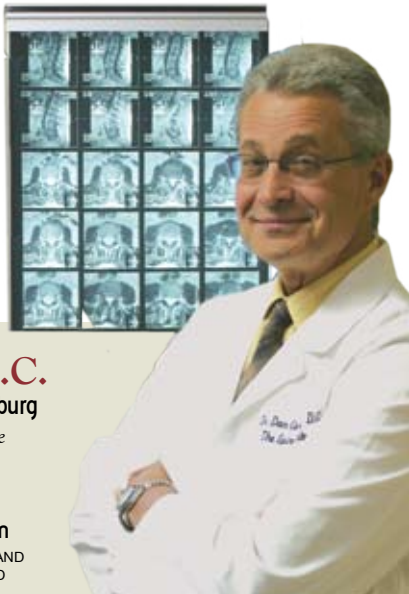
Travel?
(tried it - big mistake)

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(I wish)

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(had to give them up)

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"If it is sensorineural hearing loss, it is permanent," he states. "That is the most common type I see. If the patient has a certain base percentage word recognition score, the only thing we can do is treat the loss with hearing aid technology. That's all we can do. We can't re-grow nerves."

Audiologists also test for balance and dizziness problems possibly caused by ear issues. "Vertigo," Dr. Liptak labels it. "Used to be, we had to refer people to Richmond for vertigo – that's a long way to drive if you're dizzy." There were no other VNG (Videonystagmography) centers nearby to run the series of procedures needed to diagnose a person's dizziness or balance problems. "We started the Vertigo Dizzy Clinic," he says. "It's a redundant name for the clinic, but a lot of people didn't know what vertigo was. We do a lot of that testing here in Williamsburg now. It helps us isolate the cause of the dizziness, whether it's the central nervous system or in the inner ear."

Another common type of hearing problem is tinnitus, which is sometimes described as a ringing in the ears. "The nerve endings twitch in the inner ear," Dr. Liptak says, "creating phantom sounds. Some say it sounds like ringing, crickets chirping, low hissing, the ocean's roar and even clicking." There are many different types of possible treatments depending on the exact type of tinnitus the patient experiences.

The technological solutions for hearing loss have changed dramatically from the squeaky, squealing, putty-colored apparatus in your grandmother's ear twenty years ago. The hearing aids of today have many options and few visual clues that other people would notice. Digital technology has allowed hearing aids to become significantly smaller and smarter in the past several years.

Technology moves fast in audiology, and Dr. Liptak stays on top of the latest advancements. "This is really cool – high frequency transposition," he says. "We can move the frequencies where you hear things. Say your hearing is normal in the mid-frequencies, but falls off the table on the high frequencies. We can shift those over so that, for example, the 'st' and 'th' sounds can go to other frequencies. Not a lot of people know about this. A lot of ENTs (Ear, Nose, Throat doctors) don't know about this yet." This ability to shift frequencies has Dr. Liptak excited. "I never thought this would happen," he says.

For the future, Dr. Liptak wants to see assistive listening technologies employed in public spaces. "Induction loops, t-coils – they are really big in Europe, like in Sweden and Norway," he says. "All the state buildings and public buildings are looped for people who are hearing impaired. You can hit a button on your hearing aid and pick up the t-coil. It would be like having head phones on. This technology is in some places like museums and airports and here in Williamsburg at some churches."

Dr. Liptak has donated inductive loops to several local churches, but that has slowed recently with the birth of his and Lucia's son. "He's six months old," Dr. Liptak says. "We do well to get to work and back home these days. The baby has decided he doesn't want to sleep through the night."

Whether a baby's cry or a complaint from a spouse, we need to hear clearly. The old clunky hearing aids of the last generation are gone, replaced with smaller and smarter technology. If you find yourself withdrawing from conversations or having to guess what is being said, it may be time for a hearing evaluation. Don't let vanity keep you from participating in life. "A hearing loss is more noticeable than a hearing aid," Dr. Liptak adds. NDN

WHAT'S YOUR PET'S STORY?



The April issue of *Next Door Neighbors* publishing March 24th is called **Animal Stories**. We'll be interviewing some of your neighbors who have great animal stories to tell. We also want your pets to have the opportunity to tell their own story. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words. If your pet has a good photo to share, ask them to send it to us with a short caption. We'll make room for as many "pet stories" as we can!

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Next Door Neighbors

Garden *Now* INDOORS!

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Hydroponics loosely means working water (from the Greek hydro “water” and ponos “labor”) according to Crystal Mihansky. She and her husband, Bill, have employed this ancient and eco-friendly method of growing plants for years. Six and a half years ago they opened a local hydroponics store and nursery called Let It Grow to help introduce hydroponics to the region.

The basic concept of hydroponics is to recreate the growing environment indoors that plants usually have outdoors, but with less



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“We take away the soil,” Crystal explains. “The soil has two purposes: an anchoring system and the nutritional base for the plant. We take the soil away and apply the nutrition through the water, which recycles, and we use a different medium to anchor the roots, like rocks or sand.”

This method can work for most plants and is only limited by a gardener’s imagination. “And space,” Bill adds. “You can grow anything from herbs to tomatoes and peppers, but you need to consider the height of the plant and how much room you have to work with.”

Crystal agrees. “If you can grow it outside, you can recreate the environment and grow it inside too,” she adds. “We’ve grown banana trees inside, pineapples, and other tropical plants.”

Bill and Crystal met when he was working in Florida and she was on vacation there. The romance blossomed, and Crystal moved south to be with Bill. “We started our family in Florida,” she says. Even though they resided in a tropical climate, the young couple lived in apartments and didn’t have the outdoor space to raise fresh herbs and vegetables. That started their interest in hydroponics.

Their son was the first grandson for both sides of their family. Bill and Crystal wanted him to be closer to the grandparents. “Bill is from New Jersey originally,” Crystal says. “I’m from North Carolina. Virginia seemed like a midpoint. Everything we read about Virginia pointed to Williamsburg – family-oriented, tourism economy.” Both of them had been working in the restaurant industry at that time and knew Williamsburg had job opportunity.



Q & A

An Interview with Nan Piland

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What is home staging and why do Realtors® recommend it?

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Whether you are currently in the real estate market or not, you have probably heard of home staging. Within the past several years it has become a commonplace term in the real estate industry. Many people think of it as a way to prepare your house for sale, but it is much more than that.

Home staging is about creating the most positive first impression possible about your home and creating a positive feel or perception about it in the mind of the person viewing your home. Professional home stagers are highly skilled at their craft and are experts at recommending ways you can improve the odds of selling your home.

Home staging can make a difference too. In a recent national survey based upon *Today's Market*, non-staged homes stayed on the market an average of 145 days while staged homes stayed on the market for an average of 29 days. (www.stagedhomes.com/mediacenter/stagingstatistics.php)

When you list your home for sale you typically want to put your best foot forward by cleaning it thoroughly, making minor repairs and de-cluttering it.

Home staging takes it one more step - and that step is important. A professional home stager will evaluate your home and make recommendations that may include some very basic tasks: removing personal items from bathrooms, removing evidence of pets, turning all the lights on in the home, having the home furnished rather than empty (if you have already moved out), removing garbage cans, removing personal photographs, painting walls neutral colors and more.

Additional recommendations may be to arrange sparse pieces of furniture in an attractive vignette, showcase soft fabrics such as silk, satin or lambs wool, add unique items to shelving, bookcases and other areas of the home to draw attention to those areas. Home stagers will provide you with other creative ways to make your home fresh, open and appealing while removing your personality and tastes in decor to

allow the viewer to project their own personality on the home being considered.

Home staging is smart to consider anytime you want to sell your home but it is especially valuable in a competitive marketplace where there are a number of homes on the market similar to yours in the same price range. Just as an artist can visualize what to put on a blank canvas to bring it to life with color and beauty, a home stager can visualize opportunities to bring out the best visually in your home so that the presentation to a potential home buyer is the very best it can be.

Similar to other professional service, not all home stagers are alike. Your Realtor® is a good person to consult with to help you select the right home stager to help you accelerate the sale of your home. Costs vary depending on the professional you choose and the depth of services provided but like most expenses, the cost is relative to the return on investment. If a professional home stager can help you sell your home sooner that's money in the bank!

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“The nursery came about from us being hobby hydroponics growers,” Crystal explains. “There were no hydroponic stores in Williamsburg. The closest one was in Virginia Beach. To drive to Virginia Beach and back on your day off while taking care of your family and other day-off errands was a chore.” At that time, a couple of local nurseries shut down and there seemed to be an opportunity. “I don’t know where the revela-

“Start your plants from seeds indoors then move them to the garden as the weather warms. Or use hydroponics through the plant’s whole life cycle.”

~ Bill Milhansky

tion came from,” she says, “but we decided to open a nursery/hydroponics store – before we knew it, in six months, we had our doors open.”

A popular use of hydroponics that Bill sees this time of year is starting seedlings. “Start your plants from seeds indoors then move them to the garden as the weather warms. Or use hydroponics through the plant’s whole life cycle,” he says. “Some people like to start things indoors and some like to finish them indoors also. Indoors makes it good when it’s really hot out, you don’t have to deal with heat or insects. Later in the year, your season doesn’t end come winter. You can garden year-round.”

Another benefit is for people with limited mobility. Outdoor gardening requires bending and stretching, weeding and digging, activities that may be difficult for some people. “You can grow a garden on a table,” Crystal says.

Bill and Crystal say that plants grown hydroponically are 30 to 50% larger, produce more and grow longer since the season can last year-round. “No dirt, less mess,” Crystal says. “It’s less maintenance for you. Really, it is more observation than actual work.”

That observation aspect makes the method popular with school children learning about plant growth. Since the environment is created and monitored by the gardener, the students get to participate in the elements needed to make the plant grow. Lights take the place of the sun; nutrients mixed with the water feed the plants; rocks or sand anchor the roots of the plants. Pollination is performed by the gardener. “Sometimes that is as simple as putting an oscillating fan to act as a small breeze,” Crystal says. “Other times we have to tickle the flowers and blow the pollen around. It really depends on what you are growing; some plants are easier than others.”

Bill says that tomato plants tend to be simple to pollinate. “Pepper plants need a little more bee-like action,” he adds. “Lettuces and herbs don’t need any of that – the green growth plants. They don’t flower. You get a big return on lettuce and herb growth.”

A big advantage for a plant in the hydroponics environment is how the plant can focus its growth. “Your plant puts more energy into its

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upright growth instead of underneath growth,” she says. Usually a plant grows roots in proportion to its branches, reaching for water and nutrients in the soil, she explains. The hydroponics model delivers water and nutrients easily to the plant. “You give it everything it needs so it can grow faster and longer. This herb garden,” she points to a tray of green plants, “can keep going as long as we take care of it.”

An important part of indoor gardening is the light. “That’s the main ingredient,” Bill says. Whether growing hydroponically or in soil, the “sun” is still needed. “We have people who grow indoors, but in soil,” he adds. “They still need a light.”

Bill is excited by the new technology in lighting. Like other light applications, LED (Light Emitting Diodes) is making its mark in indoor gardening. An extremely energy-efficient technology, LED grow lights eliminate the heating byproduct of incandescent bulbs. Getting an older incandescent light too close to tender sprouts could do more harm than good. “The LED technology will eventually take over the market,” Bill says.

March is a perfect time to start your vegetable seedlings indoors, and Bill and Crystal advise getting a healthy start for your April planting. They suggest trying hydroponics to boost the growth and vitality of your plants. NDN

HYDROPONICS 101

What is hydroponics?

Hydroponics is the method of growing plants without soil. Plants thrive on a nutrient solution which contains the minerals that the plants need - similar to what plants need when they grow naturally in the soil. Rather than searching throughout the soil for minerals, plants are able to get nutrients easily, directly from the nutrient solution. Grow media - such as gravel, peat, vermiculite, Perlite, coco, old rubber tires, rockwool or expanded clay aggregates - is often used to support the plants and their root systems.

What’s good about hydroponics?

- Hydroponic gardening is an easy, environmentally sound way to grow a wide variety of healthy plants.
- Plants grow up to 50% faster than in soil because they have easy access to food and water.
- It is possible to grow plants indoors all year round.
- Little or no pesticides are necessary. Therefore, plants start out in a disease-free medium.
- Hydroponics does not require a lot of space. Smaller containers can be

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used because the roots can grow without being rootbound.

- Gardening is possible where it may not be normally - where there is poor soil, rocky areas, even no soil at all. With the use of artificial lighting it is even possible to successfully garden in a spare room or garage.
- No digging or weeding is required.
- The increased control over growing conditions makes it easier to provide the best possible environment for plants, leading to better quality produce and higher yields.
- Fast growing healthy plants grown by hydroponic methods are more resistant to pests and diseases.
- Hydroponically grown fruits and vegetables typically have improved flavor and texture over those grown in the soil.
- No soil means no weeds and no soil-born pests or diseases.

What kind of plants can you grow with hydroponics?

Just about anything, although some plants are more delicate or require more space than others. Suggested vegetables are: tomatoes, sweet peppers, cucumbers, squash, snow peas, beans, spinach, lettuce, chard, hot chilies, and broccoli. You can also grow herbs, flowers and house plants in a hydroponic garden.

How does the flavor of hydroponic produce compare to vegetables from an outdoor, organic garden?

Don't be surprised if your hydroponic vegetables taste better than the ones from your garden. Because hydroponically grown plants get everything they need, when they need it and without stress they are able to grow much healthier than their organic cousins. With soil, important micronutrients are often "locked away" where your plants cannot take full advantage of them. That's why hydropon-

ics is so great. You have complete control over the type and quantity of minerals your plants are feeding on. This advantage often produces fruits and vegetables that are far superior to organic produce in taste, color, size and even, nutritional value. You will also get more than you ever have before!

Summary

Hydroponics is simply the growing of plants without soil. Plants are grown in an inert medium and fed a solution containing a perfected mix of primary, secondary and micro-nutrients. Hydroponics makes it possible to grow plants in locations where it has not previously been possible, for example on rooftops, or in rocky, barren locations. With the appropriate lighting, it is even possible to grow successfully indoors.

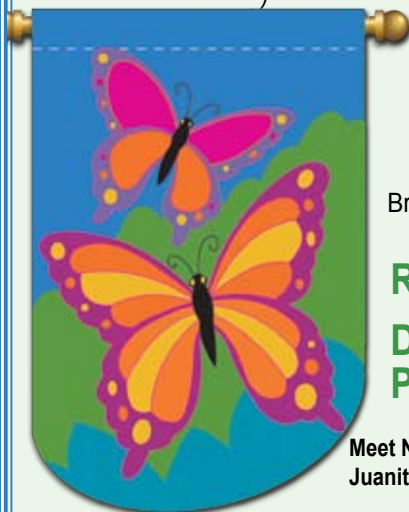
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To submit your non-profit event to Hey Neighbor! send a paragraph with your information to: heyneighbor@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

REWINDING THE HISTORY OF WESTERN ART LECTURE SERIES

5:30 pm 3rd Thursdays

Dr. John T. Spike, Andrews Hall Room 101, Free and Open to the Public. Sponsored by: Virginia Company Bank. **February 17:** Live and in Color: The Sixties Turn Up the Heat. Young American painters like Ellsworth Kelly, Andy Warhol, Robert Indiana, and Roy Lichtenstein responded to the hot colors and hard edges of the new mass media. **March 17:** The Hand of Rodin. Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) renewed the ancient art of sculpture, boldly bringing it into the twentieth century.

Hey Neighbor!

FREE TAX PREPARATION

Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency. Keep 100% of your tax refund instead of giving part of it to a tax preparer! Families and individuals with an income less than \$50,000 may be eligible to claim the earned income tax credit, which can reduce the amount of income taxes owed. If you need additional information or would like to schedule an appointment, please call John Smith at (757)229-3316 or (757)229-9332.

Hey Neighbor!

WALNUT HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH LEARNING CENTER

Walnut Hills Baptist Church Learning Center is now accepting registrations for the 2011-2012 school year for ages 2 1/2 - 5 years old.

We offer a non-denominational, Christ-centered focus, experienced, loving teachers, a beautiful facility, and a curriculum that focuses on the whole child. For more information call 220-5903 or visit 1014 Jamestown Road or www.whbconline.org.

Hey Neighbor!

CARS AND COFFEE

3rd Saturday of each month

8am to 10am. Are you a sports car enthusiast looking for an event to attend right here in Williamsburg? From American Muscle to European Super-cars, to Asian Sport Compacts bring what you are proud of because we're open to the public. Come out, make some new friends, have a cup of coffee and enjoy the conversation. 5625 Richmond Road.

Hey Neighbor!

GREATER WILLIAMSBURG VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Through April 15th

Free tax preparation and filing of federal and state income tax returns is provided by IRS Certified VITA Volunteer Preparers trained to prepare all ordinary returns. This service is available to all, even though we especially hope to assist those for whom the cost of a paid preparer might be burdensome. Volunteer tax preparers will be available through April 15th at the following locations and times: (1) James River Community Center, 8901 Pocahontas Trail: Mondays during February only, 2-6 p.m.; (2) CW Bruton Heights Education Center, 301 First St.: Tues-

days and Thursdays, 2-6 p.m. (3) JC-W Community Center, 5301 Longhill Rd: Wednesdays 2-6 p.m.; (4) Quarterpath Recreation Center, 202 Quarterpath Road: Fridays 2-6pm: Saturdays 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Please bring drivers license, social security cards, W-2s/1099s, bank account information, and last year's state and federal tax returns.

Hey Neighbor!

AUCTION & MARDI GRAS PARTY

February 20, 2011

Williamsburg Choral Guild presents an Auction & Mardi Gras Party Annual Fundraiser. from 4:00 until 8:00. at the Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Oak Ballroom, 549 E. Rochambeau Dr. The event features a live Dixieland Band and a dinner buffet offering New Orleans cuisine. Live and silent auctions. All proceeds benefit the Choral Guild. Tickets: \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door. For more information, visit www.williamsburgchoralguild.org, call (757) 220-1808 or contact us at info@williamsburgchoralguild.org.

Hey Neighbor!

"SWING IN THE AFTERNOON" DANCE AND RAFFLE

February 26, 2011

12 - 4 pm. An afternoon of swing dancing and a raffle with great prizes. Held by Christian Home School Fellowship at Williamsburg (Indoor) Outlet Mall, 6401 Richmond Road. Costs \$10 to participate. Entrance fee is good for the duration of the event and puts you in

the raffle drawings that will be held periodically throughout the day. All proceeds will directly benefit Grove Christian Outreach Center Building Fund!

Hey Neighbor!

MUSIC TOGETHER - CROSS PURPOSES BENEFIT CONCERT

February 26, 2011

7:30pm - 9:30pm. An evening concert by Cross Purposes. This event is free and open to the public. Cross Purposes, a contemporary Christian band under the leadership of Gail Scullion, Music Director of Well-spring, and has been praising God together for over 12 years. A love offering will be taken for the Grove Christian Outreach Center Building Fund! St Martin's Episcopal Church, 1333 Jamestown Rd.

Hey Neighbor!

SELECTED TOPICS IN ARCHITECTURE LECTURE SERIES

1st Tuesdays

6pm. Muscarelle Museum of Art Free and Open to the Public **March 1:** Dr. Isabelle Hyman, Professor Emerita, Department of Art History New York University: The Architecture of Marcel Breuer and Mid-Century Modernism. **April 5:** David Brashear, Architectural Historian and Architectural Photographer: The Laboratory Buildings of Louis Kahn: Representation and Function

Hey Neighbor!

4th ANNUAL NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM - AUCTION!



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Sunday
March 13, 2011

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March 5, 2011

From: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm; Hosted by New Town United Methodist Church Preschool, 5209 Monticello Ave. Come and bid during the Silent & Live Auctions full of great items from local and national businesses. Enjoy children's artwork and a "Taste of New Town" that offers delicious food samplings. For more info, contact Gretchen Tisone 258-1072 or see www.newtownumc.org.

Hey Neighbor!

BUNNYBUCKS FOR CHILDREN'S GAUCHER RESEARCH FUND

March 5, 2011

The parents of the late (infant) Josephine Rose Lampitt of Williamsburg are sponsoring the sale of "Bunny Bucks" at Bassett's Christmas Store on Bypass Road. Bunny Bucks are a novel gift item for \$3.50 each which consist of a genuine US \$2 Bill with a (removable) Easter Bunny sticker affixed to the front. Bunny Bucks will be available at the register through Easter. 100% of all proceeds go directly to the IRS recognized non-profit "Children's Gaucher Research Fund". To read Josephine's story, log onto www.CGRF.org and click on "family sto-

ries". Thank you for your support.

Hey Neighbor!

SPRING FAMILY FUN AND FITNESS FLING - OLD TOWNE MEDICAL CENTER

March 5, 2011

9:00 am at the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex (WISC), 5700 Warhill Trail off Longhill Road. Laser Tag will be available to children 8+ and adults. A bounce zone will be available for children 7 and under. Plus there will be many other activities to keep the whole family busy. Various screening tests will be offered and a demonstration of nutritional snacks. Food to keep you going will be available from the Lion's Club. For ticket information, call (757) 259-3250 or contact us at oldtownemedicalcenter.org,

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD CONCERT: EXPERIENCE THE JOY

March 6, 2011

4:00 pm. Williamsburg United Methodist Church, 500 Jamestown Road. For the winter concert of its 35th season, the Guild presents outstanding works by Haydn and Mozart. For ticket information,

call (757) 220-1808, contact us at info@williamsburgchoralguild.org, or visit www.williamsburgchoralguild.org.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG MONTESSORI SCHOOL AUCTION AND GALA

March 12, 2011

The Williamsburg Montessori School cordially invites you to enjoy "The Luck of the Irish," a silent and live auction event with proceeds to benefit the Williamsburg Montessori School and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Festivities begin with an afternoon silent auction, free and open to the public, 1 - 3 p.m. at the Williamsburg Community Center. The evening gala is a ticketed event, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and music plus a LIVE auction! Call (757) 565-0977 for tickets or visit www.williamsburgmontessori.org for information and to preview auction items.

Hey Neighbor!

JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUB REVERSE RAFFLE

March 19, 2011

6:30pm. The Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg presents the 4th

Annual Reverse Raffle at Trinkle Hall on the campus of William & Mary. Tickets are \$125 and get TWO people in the door, ONE entry into \$5,000 grand prize drawing, heavy hors d'oeuvres, complimentary bar drinks, and chances at additional prizes. Only 200 tickets sold - drawing begins at 7pm. Tickets purchased day of event will be \$175 -no tickets sold once drawing begins at 7pm. Ticket holders must be 21 years of age or older. Proceeds benefit local area charities. Visit www.williamsburgjuniors.org for tickets and information.

Hey Neighbor!

MUSIC IN THE GALLERY - MASCARELLE MUSEUM OF ART

Sunday Afternoons at 2:30

Included in price of Museum Admission of \$10.00. **March 20:** W&M Jazz Combo - William & Mary's student jazz combo performs for the first time for Music in the Gallery. The combo is under the direction of Woody Beckner.

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March 26, 2011

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Grafton Middle School. Explore tough issues like modeling, discipline, anger, and your role as father or father figure. Food provided. Presenters: Larry Nesselrodt and Nick Corsi. Registration required at 757-566-2831 or dad365@cdr.org.

Hey Neighbor!

AKEMI TAKAYAMA & DAVID STEWARD WILEY – THE WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONIA

March 31, 2011

The Williamsburg Symphonia League proudly presents Akemi Takayama, violinist and David Stewart Wiley, pianist in a Violin – Piano Duo Recital at the Williamsburg Regional Library beginning at 7:30 p.m. For tickets or more information contact Marie Knuettel at 757-259-2313, by email at marieknuettel@gmail.com or go to www.williamsburgsymphonia.org. Tickets are \$20 for Williamsburg Symphonia League members and \$30 for non League members.

Hey Neighbor!

5TH ANNUAL BENEFIT GALA & AUCTION – CATHOLIC

CAMPUS MINISTRY

April 2, 2011

Join us at Walsingham Academy at 6:30 pm to benefit the College of William and Mary Catholic Campus Ministry's Endowment Fund. Live entertainment. Dinner provided by Carrabba's Italian Grill, as well as the opportunity to bid on one-of-a kind items such as a Pittsburgh Steelers football autographed by Steelers Coach and William and Mary alum Mike Tomlin. Tickets are \$65 pp before March 20, and \$75pp thereafter and can be purchased at Saint Bede Catholic Church on Ironbound Road or at CCM's office at 10 Harrison Avenue. Black tie optional. Questions/donations, please contact Marisa Cirenza at mccirenza@gmail.com.

Hey Neighbor!

YORKTOWN VICTORY RUN

April 9, 2011

This is an eight mile Colonial Roadrunner Grand Prix event, presented by the William & Mary Mason School of Business. The course starts at Newport News Park and follows the bikeway to Washington's Headquarters on the Yorktown Battlefield. The run continues through

Surrender Field leading you to the finish line at the Yorktown Victory Monument in the Colonial National Historical Park. Registration is \$30 in advance or \$35 on race day. All proceeds from the race will be donated to KIDZ'N GRIEF. www.yorktownvictoryrun.com.

Hey Neighbor!

ORIENTAL AFTERNOON FASHION SHOW

April 9, 2011

The Woman's Club of Williamsburg GFWC is hosting an "Oriental Afternoon" Fashion Show and Luncheon at Crowne Plaza at Fort Magruder at 11:00 a.m. Fashions by Ann's Dress Shoppe of Waverly. Door Prizes, Raffle, Silent Auction and 50/50. Proceeds will benefit the club's scholarship fund. \$40.00 per person. For reservations or additional information call Reservations Chair Jean Migneault at (757)220-0036 or jmigneault@cox.net.

Hey Neighbor!

COMMUNITY OF STARS FUNDRAISING BANQUET

April 28, 2011

The Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency

will hold its eighth annual Community of Stars fundraising banquet at Crowne Plaza Williamsburg at Fort Magruder. Proceeds from the banquet will go toward the agency's programs and services, to include Head Start pre-school, youth, family and emergency services. The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$50 per person, \$90 for two and \$450 for a table of ten. To purchase tickets, contact Yvonne Joseph at 229-9332. The evening is semi-formal and includes a silent auction and cash bar.

Hey Neighbor!

RUN FOR THE DREAM HALF MARATHON

May 21 – 22, 2011

Run for the Dream Half Marathon; Fit to Run, Fit to Dream 8K Run/Walk; and One Mile Fun Run. The first 3,000 registered half marathon runners receive a free ticket to Busch Gardens. The Run for the Dream benefits An Achievable Dream and the military's Wounded Warrior programs. To register and for more information, see www.RunForAchievableDream.com

Email your non-profit event to: heyneighbor@cox.net

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