

May 2017

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors[®]

VOL. 11, ISSUE 5

PRICELESS

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Tom Rooks



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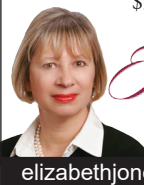


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Isn't nature great? If we want to go out every day to commune with nature, it is there for us. If our day-to-day lives take us away for a while, it will still be there waiting for us when we are ready to return. The neighbors we spoke to for this issue fall into both categories. Some have been fueled their entire lives on the serenity and stimulus they receive from nature; others found a return to nature at some point in their life to be rejuvenating and even therapeutic.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

One theme common in the stories of those we interviewed is that nature is even better when it is shared. The terms "camaraderie" and "friends" - their words, not ours - appear frequently in their interviews. Whether coaching or teaching or digging their hands into the soil together, it's clear that warm and lasting bonds are formed while mutually communing with nature. It's a call to all of us and our neighbors that is worth our while to answer. **NDN**

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Just Hard Work

By Christopher LaPointe

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“The sacred part of what we do, our culture, I’m just that much of it,” Tom Rooks says holding his fingers less than an inch apart. “I’m the head coach, but the kids establish that culture and maintain it.” He speaks of the rowing community and the ethos of the team with reverence and respect. If anyone should have reverence for the activity, it should be the coach.

Tom comes from a family of rowers. Both his father and grandfather rowed when they were younger. However, by the time he was born, his father had stopped rowing, and his grandfather was no longer the president of his local rowing association. Though Tom did not live with his father because of a divorce, he was aware of the family tradition. Neither his father nor his grandfather pushed him to join the rowing team, which might explain why he did not start rowing until his senior year of high school.

Tom admits that his basketball and cross country skills were decent throughout high school, but neither of these sports spoke to him on a deeper level. Without feeling a strong commitment to any other sport, he thought he would give rowing a try. Perhaps, subconsciously he hoped that a shared interest could bring him closer to his father. It did not take long before he found that deeper commitment

he was looking for. The first two practices were a little difficult to process with so many things going on while on the boat. “At my third practice, while out on the water, something just clicked. I could feel my grandfather, who died when I was a sophomore. I could feel him hovering above and just behind me pushing me forward. That’s still something I feel whenever I’m in a boat. I feel that push to be worthy.”

Growing up, Tom didn’t have that much interaction with his father or grandfather because of the distance between the families. He had good relationships with each, albeit long distance ones. But this newfound passion for rowing provided him with the opportunity to have a connection back to this family. Joining the team had a profound effect on Tom’s life.

“In high school, even more than in college, I pulled every stroke like I was trying to prove that I belonged. I know that I pushed myself to be worthy of the team,” he says. His drive to prove himself on the water did not go unnoticed. His high school coach, Rick Gotham, named him the stroke seat.

A stroke rower sets the stroke rate and rhythm for the rest of the team. In essence, Tom was named a co-captain though it was only his first year in the activity. The stroke works closely with the coxswain (the naviga-

tor and de facto onboard coach) to achieve the most out of the team.

“It wasn’t so much the accomplishment of being named the stroke seat of the varsity eight. It was that the other rowers thought that I was the right guy for the job.”

He went on to row in college as well. His high school coach moved up to the college level at the same time, so Tom was able to continue to row for the same coach throughout his career. Even today, he will look back to Coach Rick as inspiration to inform the decisions that he makes.

After college, Tom joined the Coast Guard where he was able to continue to be out on the water as part of his daily work routine. But the lessons he learned from Coach Rick stuck with him so much so that he still wanted to be a part of the rowing community. He became a coach and has worked with nearly every age bracket that can be imagined. He has coached both his children and even his wife at different times throughout his career. These experiences taught Tom a few lessons when it comes to how to push without nagging.

Along the way, Tom discovered a few misconceptions non-rowers have about the community. “First off, a coxswain never has to scream the word ‘Stroke’. That’s like having a

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cross country coach say ‘Run’. That’s what we’re here to do.” Another thing that people misunderstand is the strength involved in rowing. “People think that I must have really strong arms. I don’t. I have really weak arms. We have sliding seats, so every stroke is a leg press.” Tom does not blame anyone for not knowing more about the sport; it is an activity that has been partially surrounded in mystery in the United States. Even the name of the club is a bit misleading: Williamsburg Boat Club. The name falls in line with British use of “boating” to refer to “rowing.”

Tom also discovered that no great thing comes without a few challenges, and he has faced a few during his coaching career. “Every fall, I teach a 14-year-old how to navigate a 60 foot boat for about three weeks. Then I send him miles up the river, and I pray he gets it back safe. That’s the single most frightening thing I do as a coach,” he says. He is a competitive person, but his desire to win is trumped by his concern for the safety of the team.

When considering the role of a coach, Tom also notes the tremendous amount of empathy it takes to coach the different personalities that are attracted to rowing. Sometimes he has to be pretty intense. Sometimes, he has to cajole a reticent rower to reach his or her full potential. “I take pride in the fact that we provide a home and a community for every type of rower, regardless of what brought them here.” That sense of inclusion and community shows whenever Tom speaks about the activity. He loves the fact that there is a place for everyone within the rowing community.

Tom has identified three general reasons that bring people to the sport of rowing. It is frequently the appeal of friends who are on the team or who love rowing. This group joins to be with their friends. Another group shows up because they are athletes that really just did not fit in another sport. Tom believes this was his motivation to join. The third group is comprised of people just curious about the sport. Sometimes, they are people who saw it in the Olympics or read *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown, and their curiosity ran away with them.

It does not matter what brings a person to the Williamsburg Boat Club. Tom and the other coaches are willing to work with everyone. He advises people to just show up. “If you’re at the boathouse, you’re on the team. We don’t have cuts.” For the club, it’s about working hard, not about having talent. He asks each team at the beginning of the season, “What do you want? And what are you willing to sacrifice?” Some of the teams are intense and competitive. Other teams are out there for the exercise or the sense of belonging. The club boasts having rowers from ages 11 to 80. Tom is pleased that the club offers a sport that people can do until they decided they do not want to do it anymore.

Despite the numerous medals he won as a rower or the medals the teams he coached have won, the respect earned through hard work and pushing yourself is what Tom Rooks sees as the real value of the activity. One day, the stroke rower of a team that he was coaching came to him and said that most of the team thought that their friend could pull an oar better than one of the members already on the team. The kid that they were trying to remove came from a rougher background, dressed differently and listened to different kinds of music than the rest of the team. Tom thought about it for a while and decided to set up a rowing test. The young man finished second in the test. “The best moment I’ve ever had coaching was when the team lined up single file and apologized to him one by one. They all learned the lesson that day that if you’re willing to work hard and push yourself, you can earn the respect of people who wouldn’t otherwise respect you.” NDN

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Fun, Not Frustrating

By Alison Johnson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Golf has a bit of a bad reputation. The word “frustrating” often springs to mind.

Ed Teer, a professional golf coach, wants the sport to be fun. Amateur golfers shouldn’t feel pressure to be perfect, follow rigid guidelines or obsess over technique, he says. He also wants them to soak in the beauty around them as they play, listen to birds chirping, for instance, or linger to watch a sunset.

“Players have expectations that professionals couldn’t achieve,” he says. “Learn to strike the ball solid, have reasonable direction control and enjoy the adaptability required by the game. Stop fixating about the rules unless you’re a competitive player. If you don’t like your ball’s location, move it. If going over the

water is too hard, walk around to the other side. Expectations that are too high reduce enjoyment.”

Ed, Performance Golf Coach at Kiskiack Golf Academy and Women’s Golf Coach at the College of William & Mary, says developing a good golf IQ, making smart choices and maintaining mental focus, too often takes a back seat to chasing an elusive “ideal” swing. That’s the fault of both coaches and players, many of whom futilely binge-watch YouTube videos or devour self-help books on proper form.

“The professionals are very good, but not as ‘consistent’ as we believe,” he says. “Where the pros are really different is in their planning and decision making. I’ve run programs where

players have improved by 10 shots and we never touched their technique.”

Golf wasn’t Ed’s first sport, or his first career. Growing up in Dearborn, Michigan, he played football and basketball, but his size – he’s about 5’10” – wasn’t ideal for either. “For some reason, they had me playing at center in football,” he recalls. “I didn’t particularly like hitting people, or getting hit. And with basketball, I wasn’t quite tall enough.”

Golf proved to be a good athletic fit for Ed because he didn’t mind its level of difficulty. Instead, he enjoyed the slow process of getting better, as well as time outdoors and camaraderie with playing partners. Looking back, he says it took a good three years before he was

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“reasonably competent.”

“Once I started, I was hooked on improving and have continued to seek the best way to play the game,” he says. “I think that journey inspired me to help players improve their game. With the college coaching, I’m trying to help players develop as individuals and as players, to avoid the learning curve that took me so long to discover.”

Ed earned scholarship money to play golf at Wayne State University in Detroit, where he was on the team for four years. As a student, he concentrated on another of his passions, theater, and graduated with a Degree in Fine Arts, with a focus on the production side of performance. He went on to earn a Master’s Degree in Fine Arts from Ohio State University, where he also met his wife, Francie. “I was that weird theater person who always wanted everything done on time so I could go play golf,” he notes.

After graduate school, Ed and Francie moved to New York City, where for six years Ed worked in the theater business. He was production manager for a few off-Broadway shows and a project manager in a scenery construction shop, with jobs including building stage and television sets and planning props.

In 2001, Ed and Francie moved to Williamsburg to be closer to her family and start their own family; they now are parents to Ja-

cob, 13, and Sadie, 10. Ed no longer felt he could make a good living in theater unless he traveled with touring shows, which he wasn’t willing to do once he became a father. “I’m okay with being away for a few nights for a golf tournament, but definitely not with being away for weeks at a time,” he explains.

From 2009 to 2016, Ed ran a golf academy at Williamsburg National Golf Club, and in 2014 he became an assistant coach at William & Mary. Last year, he took over the women’s team and stepped into his current role at Kiskiack Golf Club, where he is one of two coaches. Now 46, Ed teaches private and group lessons at Kiskiack in the mornings during his college team’s year-round season; he keeps more full-time hours in the summer.

The team also takes an overseas trip every four years. In March, Ed and Francie went with his seven players and their parents to Scotland, where Ed checked an item off his bucket list: golfing at Old Course, St Andrews Links, one of the world’s oldest and most iconic courses. He shot a 78, six over par.

“Being there was such an incredible experience,” he says. “I was hoping for a little better score, but that’s not too bad for someone who coaches more than he plays.”

Ed squeezes in his own round of golf about once a week – not as much as he’d like. In addition to Kiskiack, he loves Kingsmill’s River

Course for its excellent conditioning and long history of hosting pro events; Golden Horseshoe, where a lack of residential development makes for a particularly peaceful walk; and Two Rivers at Governor’s Land, where sunsets at the last three holes can’t be beat. “Those holes are right on the water, and it’s magical,” he says. “When my college team practices there, we often hang around into the evening to take pictures before going home. Those are the moments you don’t want to miss.”

Working with college golfers, Ed has more fully realized the deep impact a coach can have on a player. In addition to developing their athletic skills, he aims to nurture positive lifelong traits such as a willingness to push past their comfort zones and work diligently toward a goal. He also wants his young players to improve for their own benefit, not to please him.

“It’s a delicate relationship,” he notes. “Sometimes they get the idea that if they don’t do well, they’re letting me down.” He likes team members to solve some of their own problems with a bit of guidance from him, an approach that has led him to favor similar small group instruction in the private setting. Good private training programs also will have players out on a course at least 50 percent of the time, rather than always on a driving range or in a practice facility. **NDN**

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ALLISON DRINKWATER



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Hooked on Horses

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Just like many horse-crazed little girls, Allison Drinkwater was bitten by the riding bug early on and its effect has lasted a lifetime. Born in Williamsburg, she eagerly looked forward to visiting family in Wisconsin.

"I was really excited to see the horses," she admits with a laugh. "I have pictures of my uncle and me with his horse when I was two years old. In the first picture I looked terrified as

he held me up to pet Pepper, but by the second one, I was smiling. I was hooked on horses from then on."

Growing up in the 1980s, she lived with her parents, Stan and Sissy Dykstra, in a house off Greensprings Road. Their home was situated where a new development, Drummond's Field, was built, a community which incorporated its own riding facility. That early exposure served

to feed Allison's fascination with all things equine.

Eventually, another relative ("My new favorite uncle!" she jokes) bought Drummond's Stable and renamed it Carlton Farms, where Allison remembers growing up as a true barn rat, spending every spare moment cleaning stalls, sweeping the aisles and hanging out with her first pony, Fancy.

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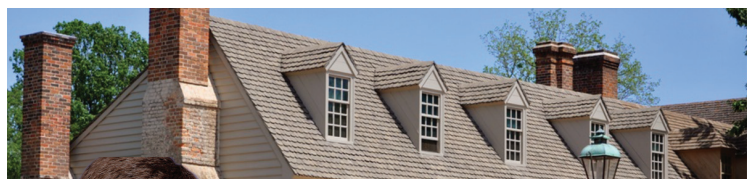
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"I am a Registered Nurse and have seen firsthand the disconnect between the instructions that we give our patients and how patients frequently interpret and follow through with what we've said. I became an instructor for the HEAL program because I believe we need to raise awareness of this communications issue both within the healthcare community and among our patients. The tips and techniques that we teach can help healthcare providers to be more effective and our learners to be more assertive in the handling of their own healthcare."

~ Pat Russo, Tutor

Soon Allison's trainer had her showing Fancy, jumping progressively higher and cleaner, winning an impressive collection of ribbons. She spent the next years learning and eventually earning the position of trainer and then barn manager at Carlton Farms. She also earned a B.S. in Biology from Christopher Newport University. "That was the closest I could come to studying what really interested me, which was, of course, horses," she says.

Allison has been busy all of her young life. She helped out at her uncle's barn as a child, but began to be paid for her work there at age 13. Allison was employed at Busch Gardens seasonally for seven years as well, but since she was working with the famous Anheuser Busch Clydesdales, she considered it more of a girlhood fantasy come to life than a job.

"They're the nicest, most well-mannered horses in the world. We'd have as many as eight geldings and always a mare and foal, so that was fun. I loved washing the feathers on their legs every day and keeping their stalls immaculate. "Looking back," says Allison, now 31, "I don't know how I did both jobs and college at once, plus showing my horse, but I was young, and I loved it all."

In the natural course of her work, she and Phillip Drinkwater, a local farrier, met, fell in love and married in 2012. Allison felt ready to strike out professionally on her own, but was thinking of a smaller scale operation than Carlton Farms' 58 stalls. The couple began in 2013 by renting a barn and establishing a client base for Drinkwater Equestrian as she and Phillip created their dream horse facility on 36 acres in the Norge area. They started with a blank slate of cornfield and woods.

"We renovated the existing house, but everything that's horse-related," she motions with her hand to the barn, outbuildings, and multiple pastures, "we designed

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and built.” As a farrier who shoes horses, Phillip travels to his numerous clients in an extended area, and Allison had visited many different operations in the course of her career. They were able to incorporate good ideas gleaned from the best barns when they planned their own, “Without blowing the budget, of course,” Allison says with a smile. They had the shell of the barn, concrete and electrical work professionally done, but the rest was accomplished with sweat equity and some smart buys. Even on a cold day, the barn seems cheerful and bright, with natural light streaming through large windows which the Drinkwaters purchased from the Habitat ReStore on Jamestown Road.

The mingled strong scents of hay and horse smell like home to Allison. Juniper, the red Labrador puppy recently added to their menagerie of horses, dogs and chickens, keeps her company as she does never-ending daily barn work. “We’re in the market for a good barn cat, too,” Allison says. She greets each horse by name. “Here’s Ranger,” she says. “I’ve had him since he was born. He was my show horse back in the day, and now he’s used for lessons. Any horse I’ve ever owned, I keep forever or find them a really great home.”

Allison and Phillip have filled the 18 stalls

with a combination of school horses and boarders. “It’s truly a family effort,” she says. “My parents help out with the shows we host here and all sorts of other things, too.” There are riding trails carved out of the lush surrounding countryside for her boarders and students to enjoy.

Allison teaches both adults and kids who are just like she was at their age: never happier than when they’re close to a horse, whether it’s in the saddle, wielding a manure fork, or applying a brush to a tangled mane. “I’m comfortable teaching beginners up to those who are able to do the lower jumps. Anything higher than three feet, I refer to someone else.”

Life lessons are a bonus when a student signs on to learn to ride. “You learn that hard work gets results, but you also learn to cope with disappointment. Not every judge, or horse, is going to like you, and that’s okay,” Allison says. Learning to care for and stay on a horse, even as they leap over fences, takes discipline, commitment and courage. In this day of devalued participation trophies, winning a blue ribbon will always bring a thrill because, like real life, the horse world is a true meritocracy.

Difficult lessons are often learned, as well, such as persistence in the face of setbacks and

sorrow. Horses expand the hearts of those who love them, sometimes to the breaking point.

Though Allison hosts events at Drinkwater Equestrian and takes her students to others on a circuit within the state, she hasn’t shown personally in several years. Allison purchased Big Red, a tall, athletic, Thoroughbred gelding, in 2014 and was working to get to know him, looking forward to years of winning many ribbons together on the show circuit. Less than a year after she bought him, Big Red fell sick. For animals that appear to be so strong, a horse’s digestive system is woefully vulnerable and fragile. Sadly, Big Red was stricken with colic and Allison had to have him put down. “He was the nicest horse I’ve ever owned, and I just haven’t wanted to start over yet. One day I will, but for now I’m fulfilled when my students do well. That’s my joy.”

Allison is literally living her dream. “I feel so lucky to be doing what I love as a career. I don’t think I could stand being cooped up inside all day long, hoping to squeeze in an hour at the end of the day to see my horse, then going home to eat and sleep and get ready for another day at the office. Owning a barn is hard work,” she admits, “but I wouldn’t have it any other way.” NDN

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KURT BRADLEY

Forging Trails & Friendships

By Narielle Living



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Kurt Bradley grew up in the Lake Elsinore region of southern California. After joining the Army and travelling the world, he and his family have settled here in Virginia. "I've seen a lot of different regions of the world and been in many climates," Kurt says. "I miss the dry heat of California, but I don't miss the congestion."

After leaving the Army, Kurt was a contractor at Fort Monroe for seven years. In 2008, he became a civil servant and began working at Fort Eustis. From childhood to adulthood, Kurt has enjoyed bike riding in some form or other.

"I used to have a little BMX bike grow-

ing up, then I had a 10 speed as most kids did," Kurt says. "After I joined the military, I bought a mountain bike and mountain biked all over the world. I did some racing and had a good time." Kurt has consistently been involved with riding trails, both with and without mountain bike groups. He spent time in a number of places helping to build or maintain trails for riding.

"I joined the Association of Fellow Road Cyclists. I've done road cycling and bicycle touring as well, and bicycle commuting."

When Kurt lived in an area that did not have a mountain biking group, he would of-

ten go out alone. His wife had encouraged him to go out with others, and once he was settled here in Virginia, he discovered the Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association, referred to as EVMA. "I think I found it via the internet or I saw a flyer. Mountain bikers by nature are usually fairly open, friendly and independent. You have to be because you have to be used to potentially getting dirty out in the elements."

One of the things he learned early on is that he had to accept the fact that he would probably get at least a little bit dirty mountain biking and sometimes he would get very muddy. "It's different than road biking where you usually

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are a little bit less connected to the elements since you're mostly on the pavement." He is quick to add that road biking has its own challenges, especially because cyclists have to deal with a combination of traffic and signals. "It's a different level of risks."

One of the things he cautions about biking is to be prepared. "It's usually beneficial to have someone to bike with or let someone know where you're going," he says. "You never know what can happen. One of the benefits of our group is that we have organized rides every month, and we also have ad hoc rides that any member can announce through our club's private Facebook site. If someone wants to lead a ride they just post what trails they will be on and ask if other members would like to join. Then the ride is open to anybody." Kurt adds that this type of event underscores the sense of camaraderie they share while keeping everyone safe out in the wilderness.

Kurt encourages others to go out and explore the trails, but he is careful to remind people of some of the safety rules. "Runners can go on the mountain bike trails but we ask that they don't use earphones so they can hear us. If it's a one way trail we ask that they run against the flow of traffic so it's easier to see them. Sometimes the trails have blind corners, and it's a dangerous situation. We try to be cognizant of others, because we encounter people who are walking or running their dogs. Some of the trail systems are more improved than others, some are more rugged than others, but the great thing is that they are all in our back yards and available to use."

Kurt's mountain biking club, EVMA, builds and maintains trails within several different areas, including local favorites Freedom Park, York River State Park, New Quarter Park, as well as Harwood Mills in Newport News, Wahrani in West Point and Indian River Park in Chesapeake. Because EVMA is a volunteer association one of the challenges they face is getting more active involvement in creating and maintaining trails. "We see these trails as community assets, and we look to be community partners to try to promote the sport and just be out in nature," he says. In supporting the localities, EVMA has held events with various parks. "We've participated in estuary days at York River State Park, we've participated in New Quarter Park events and we've supported the Newport News park event called Weekends on Your Wheels. It's really about promoting an active, fun, outdoor lifestyle."

His enthusiasm for the club stems from the fact that he believes they have something to offer everyone. They ride year round, even in winter, and they also do night riding. "You just need to make sure you have the proper safety equipment, enough lights on the bike and helmet and the proper gear. Also, for safety reasons everyone has to sign in. The only thing we encounter that hampers us is the rain. We have a policy about staying off the trails after a certain amount of rain, and if the trails are still muddy after it rains, our club policy is that the mountain bikers not go on them. We're trying to be good stewards of the land."

Steadfast in his dedication to the area trails, Kurt Bradley sees them as a community asset and believes he needs to continue to be a good steward of the trails. His passion is mountain biking, and this is something he loves to share with others. "Consider mountain biking with us," he says. "Every month we have beginner rides. You can find the details on our website. As every one of our members can tell you, we all started from somewhere. Every time we have new people come out on our rides, we make sure someone goes with them on a pace they can handle, that they have a good time and they get back to the parking lot where they started from. It's an inclusive environment." Kurt would like people to try mountain biking and see that it's a fun thing to do. "The nice thing about our trails is that there's a little something for every rider. We've got some intermediate trails, we have some technical trails and we have some nice, flowy trails for folks that are just starting out." For Kurt, mountain biking brings people into nature, forges new friendships and strengthens bonds between riders. NDN

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KALEB NEWAGO



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

EXPLORE our local parks

By Erin Fryer

Those of us who are lucky enough to live in Williamsburg know that a day at the beach or a hike in the mountains are only a day trip away, but Kaleb Newago wants us to also make a habit of exploring our own backyard.

The Williamsburg native is the Parks Supervisor for James City County Parks and Recreation and oversees several of our local parks, including the Greensprings Interpretive Trail and Powhatan Creek Park. Most of his adult career has involved parks, and he's worked in four different state and federal parks, including Shenandoah National Park.

Kaleb's interest in parks and recreation developed at an early age. Growing up in Williamsburg, he spent time exploring York River State Park and camping on the Eastern Shore. "I've always enjoyed being outdoors and that's always stayed with me," he says.

One of Kaleb's favorite activities is hiking, but he also loves both off-road and on-road bicycling and kayaking. A big runner, Kaleb loves jogging on the trails in our local parks.

"Being out in the parks and on the trails gives you a chance to get some fresh air and get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life," he says. "I am much more comfortable in the woods than I am in a shopping mall."

Kaleb says that parks are great for the mind, body and spirit. "They promote a healthy lifestyle, a healthy mind, and they let you find yourself. I like to get outdoors every day, it's where I feel the most at peace."

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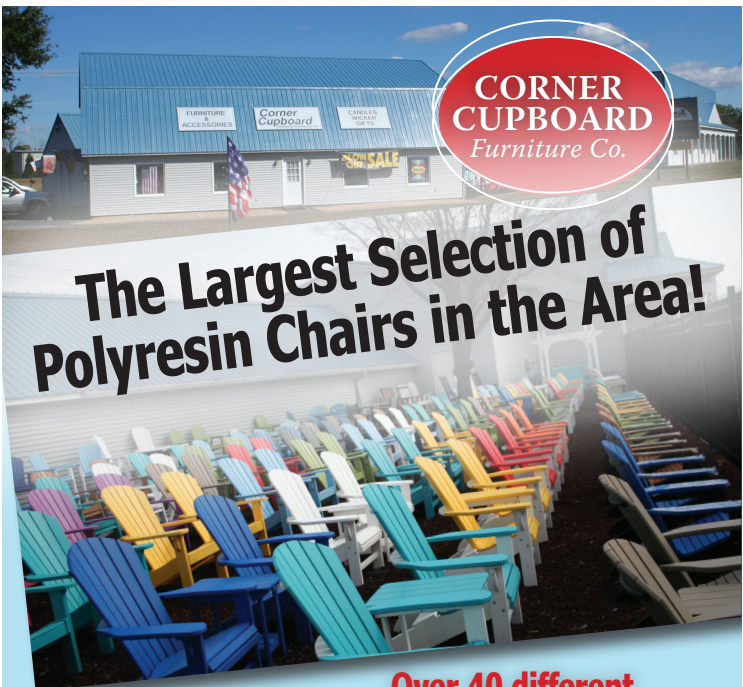
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He spends about 80% of his workday in different parks working on an array of projects. “I never do the same thing over and over again and get to work outside all of the time. Of course, it can be unpleasant if it’s really hot or really cold, but I love it.”

While visiting the parks, a lot of what Kaleb does is monitoring, overseeing and “putting out fires” (metaphorically speaking, of course). “When issues arise it’s good to have a presence at these parks. If someone is breaking a rule or if there’s an emergency, it’s good to have someone there available to help and willing to answer any questions.”

When he’s not working, Kaleb always finds himself heading to one of our local parks. While he says he can’t pick a favorite, he loves how each park in town offers something different. “Freedom Park has great mountain biking trails, whereas York River State Park is great for hiking and taking in beautiful scenery. One of my favorite jogging trails is the Greensprings Interpretive Trail. All of the trails have different personalities and different aspects that make them unique.”

Outside of Williamsburg, Kaleb travels all over the state to enjoy other parks. A graduate of Radford University, he enjoyed exploring parks in Southwest Virginia during his college years. After college, he got a job working at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, and also spent some time working at False Cape State Park.

“I like to explore and get outside,” he says. “Virginia is a unique state and everything is within a short drive. It’s a great place to live if you like to explore.”

Unless it is pouring down rain, you can find Kaleb in a park seven days a week. “On my days off I like to get out and see new things. I’ll explore the parks I don’t work at during the week, like York River State Park or Waller Mill, and do different things. There’s always something new to see at these parks.”

When Kaleb is jogging and bicycling, he usually enjoys some alone time on the trails. However, he also loves spending time hiking with friends and family. “Hiking allows you to get a chance to reflect on everything and the natural beauty that’s all around you. It gives you a really serene feeling.”

The downside and upside of his job go hand-in-hand, and that’s the population of visitors frequenting the parks. “It’s great to see large numbers of people enjoying the recreational opportunities at the parks and seeing them get outside and active, but when you get a lot of people coming in you also get more issues, like trash and people breaking the rules. We just always have to be able to keep up with the flow of people.”

In the off-season, he prepares for the busy months by hiring more staff and stocking up on necessary materials. “The biggest challenge is staying on top of the population that’s coming and making sure we maintain a safe and clean environment for everyone to enjoy.”

Kaleb thinks the parks are a huge asset to the Williamsburg area because it is such a large, diverse community. “Williamsburg boasts an important and vibrant historical community through Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown, and we add to that with outdoor recreational parks. It’s important to maintain and provide those because they’re people’s avenues of escape.”

The county offers something for everybody on its trails. “We have mountain biking, running, hiking, ADA accessible trails, trails for families and young children, pet friendly trails, horseback riding trails, we have it all.” Kaleb says the most unique trail in Williamsburg is the Virginia Capitol Trail that runs from Jamestown to Richmond.

A self-proclaimed history buff, he enjoys reading about history, especially history that happened right here in the Historic Triangle.

Kaleb hikes when it’s cold, raining, and extremely hot. “The main thing is to just be prepared for the weather conditions, but there are avenues to explore any day and any time of day,” he says.

Outside of hiking, running and biking at local parks, Kaleb spends a lot of his time kayaking and reading. “Reading is a big passion of mine, so I’ll go to a park and read a book, especially those about the history of our area.” **NDN**

Cycling in Williamsburg

By Ben Mackin



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For the president of Williamsburg Area Bicyclists (WAB), Deana Sun, her passion for cycling started about 11 years ago when an old friend asked her to meet for dinner in Mathews one weekend. She had reconnected with a friend who was living out of state. She asked what he was doing in the small town on the Middle Peninsula and he told her that he was participating in the Tour de Chesapeake.

“So we went to Mathews, and I saw a number of people who were around my age with bicycles. They were staying in tents and at local motels, and then going on these long rides of 35, 60 or 100 miles.” She began talking to people within the group and her interest piqued. “I said I have a bicycle. I’ve ridden a bicycle all my life.” Inspired by what she had seen in

Mathews, Deana set her sights on the Northern Neck River Ride in Kilmarnock scheduled for a few months later. “I went home and got my cruiser out and trained for this 35 mile ride on a bike that weighs almost as much as I do. I rode. I camped in a tent for two nights. I thought ‘I can do this!’”

With that, she was hooked. Deana began riding and training with people in the area. She heard about Bike Virginia, which is an annual six-day bicycle tour where participants ride anywhere from 15 to 100 miles a day. “Before Bike Virginia, I did a few shorter events and bought a real road bike, and the rest is history. I just got more and more involved in cycling.”

Over the next several years she joined WAB and became a ride leader. She was elected as

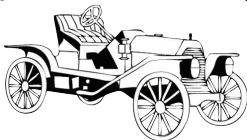
vice-president in 2014 and became president in 2015. By helping to organize rides and events year round, Deana watched the club’s membership grow to 300 and counting. She cites the easygoing personalities in WAB as one of the reasons for the increasing numbers.

“One of the comments made most often by people joining us is that we are such a fun group. Most of us don’t take it too seriously.” Deana says that most of the members average about 12-16 mph and go distances of 25 to 30 miles in a particular ride. “We’re not the hammerheads that are out there going 20 to 22 miles per hour, although we have some members that can ride at that. But we are out there to enjoy our rides.”

Deana likes the fact that there is no score in

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cycling. "You don't have to compare to someone else, and we don't do a lot of comparison. I advise new riders to find someone they are comfortable to ride with and ride with that person. The ride may start out with 30 or 40 people but after awhile it settles into smaller groups." As with any pastime the more a person comes out the better they become. "You may start out in a slower group but in a matter of months you might find yourself moving up to the next."

One of the things Deana values most is the knowledge passed from experienced riders to the new ones. She relates the experiences of one member on the kernels of wisdom he picked up since taking up cycling. "He says he didn't know he needed to carry an extra bike tube in case of a flat because he had never ridden far from home and figured he could just walk it home. If you're on a 30-mile ride and you're over 15-miles from home, that is an issue. Things like riding with tool kits and water bottles can be taken for granted, but if you're riding with other people you ask questions about what they do and what they carry on their bike."

Learning to be self-sufficient with bicycle maintenance is important especially on long rides. "When I first started cycling, I stood on the side of the road with a flat tire and looked like the damsel in distress until someone came along and helped." Deana grew tired of that quickly and took steps to learn and to continue to learn. "I had people show me how to change a tube, and I went to a class. Now when I go out there, I can fix a flat on any bike."

When it comes to the future of biking in the Williamsburg area, Deana is hopeful. The completion of the Virginia Capital Trail, the 52-mile stretch of multi-use trail between Williamsburg and Richmond, has been a big step for local cyclists. Deana praises the development. "The trail is unbelievably wonderful for us, and except for crossing a few roads and streets at this end, it is pretty safe." While the addition of the trail is a boon for the area, there is still room for improvement. In her decade plus of serious cycling, Deana has ridden thousands of miles all around the continent from Florida to Canada and has seen the benefits that towns and cyclists reap from dedicated trails connecting communities.

"From Charles City to Jamestown, unless you go buy something at a campground, there's basically nothing. The difference being, most of the trails that I have seen in places like Ohio, you might ride 10 or 15 miles and there are towns and restaurants, maybe an old train depot or maybe they built a trailhead with bathrooms and shade and water fountains. You can go out and say, 'let's ride and have lunch or ice cream along the trail.'"

Despite local cyclists lacking the options enjoyed by their colleagues in the north, Deana and her group are dedicated to improving what they have. In the past, they have raised funds for and helped build a bike repair station along the Virginia Capital Trail. They also routinely hold clinics for local riders that go over important safety measures for people of all skill levels like bike maintenance and helmet fittings. "We encourage people to wear a helmet. I am a strong proponent of helmets," she says. "There is a specific way to wear it properly and to make the best use of having it on your head." Along with community rides and classes, WAB published a book of local bike routes. "We developed and vetted about 30 routes and published information about how hard or easy a route is, maps of the routes and information on bathrooms, that sort of thing along the way. We published it because we were constantly getting inquiries from people coming here on vacation who wanted to ride." Between the guide book and the maps on the group's website, the group's focus on helping visiting and local riders to be safe and have fun is their main goal. Deana reflects on a common quip used by several members of her group. "I feel like I am 12 or 13 years old again," Deana says with a smile. "I'm out on my bike with my friends. We're laughing and having a good time. I'm away from my computer. I have my cell phone in my pocket, but if it rings, I'm probably not going to answer it." NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Four Seasons of Outdoors

By Lillian Stevens

As he approaches his 69th birthday, retiree Al Lilley's days are as chock full as ever. Whether he's hiking at a local park, navigating one of the region's many waterways, or enjoying one of several art classes he takes, Al keeps busy.

He also surfs, skis and does most all of the things he always enjoyed, but admits that for some sports, there have been modifications. For instance, Al has become quite fond of stand-up paddle boarding, and he enjoys surfing on a "sit-on" kayak called a Wave ski (or Yak board).

With spring's balmy days upon us, the Virginia Beach native looks forward to one of his

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favorite activities - just getting out there on local waters.

“What I really enjoy doing is going out early in the day in my sea kayak,” Al says. “I usually go to Diascund Reservoir, or maybe over to Mathews County to get on some of the water over there. I love early morning paddles when it’s quiet. I enjoy watching the birds, especially the bald eagles, ospreys, egrets and great blue herons.”

A sea kayak is a bigger, more comfortable, touring type of kayak that is easier to paddle than its shorter counterpart. Al’s very favorite kayak, however, is a skin-on-frame kayak that he built himself. Skin-on-frame is the traditional way the Inuit and Aleut Eskimos made their kayaks. Generally made from driftwood, the frame was bone-tied together with sinew, then was traditionally covered with seal skin. Today, the natural skin is usually replaced with polyester or nylon which is then sealed to make the boat waterproof.

“They are so lightweight. And it’s neat to paddle something that has no glue and no screws because it’s all sewn together.”

When he’s not paddling the waterways, Al keeps busy with other pursuits that span all four seasons of the year. There’s camping, snow

skiing, surfing, scuba diving and sailing, just to name a few. He has actually even lived on a sailboat.

“I love sailing!” Al exclaims. “Mine was a 40-foot Bristol sailboat. It was an older boat, but a very neat boat. I lived up in Irvington on Carters Creek for about a year and worked at one of the boat yards on the Northern Neck.”

After that, Al and his boat relocated to Little Creek (Norfolk). Soon after marrying his wife, Jo, however, he sold the sailboat. “My wife was a trooper, but she gets seasick. So, living on a boat was not the life for us.”

Over time, the couple has found plenty of other things to do in the great outdoors. “We have white-water canoed and have backpacked a lot,” Al says. “We spent our honeymoon backpacking in the Smoky Mountains.”

Nowadays, Al and Jo primarily enjoy day hikes in one of the many local parks. They also enjoy camping and hiking in the mountains.

In fact, Shenandoah National Park was the setting for Al’s one and only encounter with a bear. “I’ve seen bears, but had never had an actual encounter with one,” he says. “Well, I was camping in Big Meadows late last summer. In three days, I saw five bears, the most I’ve ever seen in my life.”

Al was hiking a trail called Dark Hollow Falls. It was early in the morning, and he was alone. “I’d gotten there first thing,” he says. “I stopped at the top of the falls, preparing to hike down to the bottom. There were two girls hiking ahead of me.”

When he noticed the girls looking up at something near him, Al turned toward their stares. “There was this female bear standing on top of a rock, not 20 feet from me,” he says. “She could have literally jumped on me. Then I saw the cub farther back, so at least I wasn’t between the bear and her cub.”

Knowing better than to run, Al just stood still, watching the bear. “She grunted at me,” he says. “And I started to slowly back away. The bear was back with her cub by then and started walking parallel to the trail. I turned and walked up the trail, stopping to wait because the girls were still down at the bottom of the trail, and I wanted to make sure they were okay.”

Of course, if you are going to spend any amount of time in the great outdoors, especially off the beaten path, you are going to see wildlife. Al has seen bobcats while camping in the mountains, and he has seen sharks in the sea. Though that bear won’t soon be forgotten,



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Al generally has no fear, just a healthy respect for the place of animals in their habitat, whether land or sea.

“Since I was about 14 years old, the outdoors was everything to me,” he says. “Growing up in Virginia Beach, there were so many opportunities to be on the water. We had the beaches, the ocean, the Bay, Lynnhaven River, Back Bay, all that water was right there at our door step.”

He calls surfing a life-changing event, one he obviously enjoys to this day. “Before surfing, I’d always participated in baseball and other community sports, but once I started surfing? That was it.”

Raised by parents who also enjoyed the outdoors, Al has many fond memories of hunting and fishing with his father, and camping with the family. “For us, family vacations meant throwing a tent in the back of the car and going to the beach or the mountains for a week.”

The family slept in their tent, cooked meals on the grill, and played board games on a picnic table. At night, they sat around watching the campfire or the stars.

After graduation from high school, Al attended NC State University, where he was exposed to another life changing sport: downhill skiing. “A couple of my college friends were

snow skiers,” he says. “I’d never tried that. So, one Christmas break, they invited me to go to ski with them in Stowe, Vermont.

Al became so enamored with snow skiing that he took time off from college to ski, starting with a year spent “ski bumming” at Mount Snow, also in Vermont. He is proud to have skied Taos, New Mexico, an actual bucket list item for him. “Taos is the toughest place I have ever skied,” he says,

These days, Al says he’s no longer first on the chairlift and last off. “I approach things a lot less aggressively than I used to. I also don’t ski as much now as I used to. I do love to ski, though.”

After college, he moved back to Virginia Beach with every intention of staying there, and he did stay for a number of years.

“I had a construction business, and that kept me busy,” he says. “Then I started working for a construction company in Newport News.”

The daily commute from Virginia Beach to Newport News proved to be a headache, so Al and Jo bought a house in New Kent. Shortly thereafter, he landed a position at James City County, working as a senior building inspector.

After ten years with the County, Al retired and quickly learned that sitting around the

house was not for him. Even so, there are times when he’s quite content to be indoors.

“My wife, Jo, is a potter,” he says. “So, she has helped me get in touch with my artistic side, especially pottery. I thought that art would be a real stretch for me, but I actually love it.”

Al says that drawing, painting and potting are all really fun, creative outlets, but pottery is probably his favorite. “With pottery, it’s really an instant gratification sort of thing, because I know what I have when I take it off the wheel. I struggle some with painting, sometimes, because composing a painting can be hard for me.”

Lately, he has also been painting portraits which he thought would be tedious, but it turns out he has a knack for it. He also paints landscapes. Like many, Al started out with watercolors, but says he is most fond of mediums like oil and pastels. “Pastels are just more portable, and will be easy to take with me when I get back to the mountains to paint some landscapes.”

It’s a safe bet that there is plenty to keep Al Lilley busy, indoors or outdoors. He finally has the time he needs to enjoy them. “Retirement is highly underrated!” he declares. “I wish I’d done it sooner!” NDN

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Is Cricket for You?

By Chris Jones

History nerds, not sports enthusiasts, that's who founded the Capital Cricket Club. "We're very much historians first, history nerds," says Luke Fryer, club president. "The club was founded to be fun, preserve history and teach."

The Capital Cricket Club started in the fall 2012. Michael McCarty and Brett Walker, two friends and coworkers of Luke's at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, kicked around the idea of a cricket club. They invited him to join, and by the spring of 2013, they were playing cricket.

"I had never picked up a cricket bat," Luke says. "I'm not really a sports person. I fenced in college and I rock climbed and I did archery. Those were my sports."

Several of the 30 members of the Capital Cricket Club have baseball backgrounds and three have played cricket. Many of its members are employees of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, or are fellow historians and members of other



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

history groups. Luke has been on the club's board since its inception.

"When we first started, I was the secretary. Then we incorporated in 2014, and I was

elected secretary. Two years ago, I was elected president and was re-elected last fall. I never intended to become the leader of a sport club," he says, laughing.

Since the men and women of the Capital Cricket Club are mostly historians, the cricket played by the club isn't what you might watch if you're a fan of the Indian Premier League or other professional cricket leagues. They play 18th century cricket, befitting for a club based in Colonial Williamsburg.

"Cricket was popular in the 18th century here in the colonies. We are the only 18th century cricket club in the world playing with the 1755 rules that we are aware of," Luke says. "And in the 18th century rules, things are very flexible."

Flexibility turned into law, what the hard and fast rules of cricket are now known as, when little nuances affected game play.

"The width of the bat could be any width, but in 1775, they made a rule change that it

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could not exceed four-and-a-quarter inches,” Luke says. “Cricket rules are evolutionary based on need.” He cites an example of a batsman who wielded a 10-inch bat in front of the wicket blocking chance for the bowler, the cricket equivalent of a baseball pitcher, to get him out. That’s when bat rules were instituted.

The club focuses on maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the colonial form of the game prior to modern laws. History nerds first, remember. The bats they use are handmade by members of the club from solid white or yellow birch. He said that while modern players call their bats heavy, they’re true to historic material and measurement.

“We make our own equipment and we make our own bats. The bats and other parts of the game start to change quite a bit in the late 18th century to the early 19th century,” Luke says.

The club has also adapted the modern cricket ball to match the colonial standard.

“We uncover modern balls, and then we stitch on a properly cut and seamed leather cover. Brett Walker is a trained shoemaker. So he used his leather working skills to cover our balls.”

It wouldn’t be complete if the club didn’t adapt the dress of colonial cricket players. Most club members make their own clothing. “The basic cricket outfit is breeches, a shirt and a hat. No shoes, no stockings, no jacket. You want to wear something that’s comfortable and that lets you move,” Luke says. “So there is no uniform, just everyday clothing.”

Dressing in 18th century duds is nothing new for Luke. He’s been doing costumed history since he was 15 years old when he began re-enacting, a hobby in which he still engages.

“I belong to an 18th century loyalist militia of people who were still loyal to the Crown. I also belong to a Vietnam War re-enactment group,” he says. “My dad is a Vietnam veteran and he thinks that’s pretty cool.”

Despite its modern obscurity, Luke maintains that cricket was a popular pastime in the American colonies. It transcended classes. Landowners played the game with their servants and it was casual—players dressed comfortably in loose clothing and playing barefoot. After the American Revolution, its appeal waned.

“After the American Revolution, we cast off everything British. We stopped making

tea in favor of coffee, we danced differently, our art was different, our past times changed, too,” Luke says. “Cricket is very English and is still played as a major sport in every colony England established except the United States. Hardly anyone cast off England like we did. Cricket is the second most popular sport in the world, right behind soccer.”

But that’s what Luke and the club hope to change. They want to educate people about early cricket, make a difference in the community, and have fun while doing it.

“We have four C’s: Civility. Charity. Conviviality. The fourth C would be cricket, but we’re in it to have fun. Charity for us is putting on a match at another historic site and driving traffic to that site. We really want to help with more community work at some point soon,” he said.

The club has taken that history on the road playing matches at Bacon’s Castle. “It is the greatest cricket pitch that we get to play on. One of our former board members was the director of the castle and invited us to come out,” he says. “They have the most wonderful lawn.”

Last summer, Luke and the Capital Crick-

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et Club shared the game with the College of William & Mary's National Institute of American History & Democracy (NIAHD) Pre-Collegiate Summer Program students.

"We held evening sessions with the NIAHD group at William & Mary, which was one of our educational outreaches. It was a group of high schoolers, and we taught them cricket."

For locals who want to try their hand at cricket, the club holds weekly practices on Market Square in Colonial Williamsburg.

"Practices are open to anyone who has an interest in history. 'Like' our Facebook page (facebook.com/colonialcricket1755). That's where we post events and practices as they come up. Our Facebook page is the best source of information on the club."

Practices are open to the general public; in order to play in games, known as matches, you have to be a member of the club or be invited by a member. It's also family-friendly and both men and women take the field together.

"We play mixed matches, and we do have children 10 years old or older on the field, but they have to have parents in the club.

Our matches often go from 10 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. That's a long day and can be a lot for a child because of the length and nature of the game. It can be rough on kids," Luke says.

Cricket is played 11-on-11 with a minimum of 7-on-7 for match play. While the club enjoys playing within itself, they actively seek opportunities to play with others. There have been people who have demonstrated 18th century cricket, but no one else has formed a club that they know of.

"We often have to put out feelers to people in the 18th century military re-enactment community or to other re-enactment groups. We would love to have another cricket club to play with," Luke says.

He hopes more people will come out to play and invariably join the club. It's a different kind of game, one that baseball-loving Americans commonly misunderstand, but Luke Fryer thinks that's all right.

"People often think it's a hard game, but it's not at all. It's a good way to get out and get some exercise. We try very hard to make people feel like they're doing well. We try to be encouraging." NDN

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DENNIS WOOL



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GARDEN IN A BOX

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“I certainly cheerlead the idea of people getting involved in gardening,” Master Gardener Dennis Wool, says. “There’s a sharing, a camaraderie, a fellowship, that happens between people who grow stuff.”

Today in retirement, Dennis is an avid conservationist and gardener. W-O-R-K, is no longer part of his vocabulary.

A native of Washington, DC, Dennis was raised in a row house with two sisters. His home allowed no space for gardening.

As a teacher, Dennis finished graduate school at Western Maryland College and then his Master’s Degree in Special Education at the University of Tennessee. He met his wife, Mary, there and was employed right out of school as principal at the Doctor Franklin Perkins School in Lancaster, Massachusetts. “They really got me turned on to working with handicapped kids,” he says.

Five years later, the couple relocated to Harrisburg, Ohio, where Dennis was responsible for 600 beds at a state-run, 3000-bed institution. He earned his PhD in Education/Leadership with a concentration in behavioral psychology from Ohio State University. He was first exposed to gardening there when he and Mary joined other couples for dinner followed by card and board games.

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“Eventually the graph paper and seed catalogs came out and people spent their evening comparing what vegetables they grew, how they were going to arrange their garden and what new varieties they were going to try,” he says. “Every month there was a big program at the County fair site which exposed me even more to home gardening and farming.”

Dennis’ career took him to South Carolina as an assistant director of a 500-bed facility in the Charleston area. “I worked rural South Carolina with community organizers and church groups in nine counties to identify developmentally disabled people living without services,” Dennis explains.

Over his career, he worked in leadership for institutions for the developmentally disabled in Massachusetts, Ohio and South Carolina. This is where his public speaking began, as he testified before community groups and local governments to garner tax contributions for their programs.

In 1983, Dennis became director of mental health and substance abuse for Virginia Beach’s Community Service Board (CSB). During this time, he represented the agency in front of public groups as an interviewee or advocate in front of city, county and state governments.

Thirteen years later, he took a position at the CSB in Waycross, Georgia’s Okefenokee Swamp area.

“It was very rural, isolated, poor and very southern,” he says. “Part of my goal there was to expand services and bring in a professionalism to add to the caring that already existed.”

Dennis first studied to be a Master Gardener in southern Georgia.

“Much like South Carolina, we had small gardens,” he explains. “In both cases, we had sandy soil.”

It was then he was introduced to a self-watering EarthBox in the late ‘70s.

In 2005, Dennis and Mary returned to Virginia when he became the executive director of Williamsburg’s CSB before retiring in 2007. Mary worked for Newport News Public Schools in the gifted education program. Today, the couple has two children: daughter, Angie, is married to Greg and works in pharmaceutical research in California; son, Josh, is a professional photographer in New York.

When Dennis came to Williamsburg, he re-certified as a Master Gardener.

“I wanted to find out more and the big issue for being involved is location,” he explains. “What I learned in South Georgia was how things grow down there in very sandy, poor

soil in 90 percent humidity all year round.”

The Master Gardner (MG) program trains volunteers in local plant varieties, soil conditions, plant pathology, pesticides, lawn care, water quality and more. “It’s a huge volume of information available for a relatively low cost to the student,” Dennis says. “It’s sponsored through Virginia Tech’s Virginia Cooperative Extension.”

In Williamsburg, Dennis met a fellow MG who had a passion for self-watering containers much like the EarthBox he purchased earlier. The two hit it off and figured out how to make their own grow boxes by purchasing inexpensive parts at home improvement centers. As part of the requirement for MGs’ commitment to give a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service conducting horticultural education programs, they sold the grow boxes at demonstrations for no profit. All sales went toward unfunded MG projects.

“We started a project called Barrels and Bins within the program,” he explains. “We would demonstrate and sell the grow boxes and rain barrels any place that invited us: garden clubs, homeowner’s associations, the Williamsburg Home Show, county fairs, and parks and recreation programs.”

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Gardeners are available at the Williamsburg Farmers Market every other Saturday in season. Periodically, the grow box is on display. They also host a plant sale annually on the last Saturday in April where Dennis demonstrates the grow boxes.

Originally, Dennis and his friend purchased food-grade plastic barrels from an olive importer in Norfolk to make their rain barrels.

"It got to be cost prohibitive," he says of having to bring barrels home ten at a time to store under his deck. "Since then, I've had knee replacement and neck surgery and can't go under the deck anymore.

When Dennis' friend passed away, he quit selling Barrels and Bins, but still demonstrates the grow boxes. At home, he puts his grow boxes on plant caddies and follows the sunlight by rolling them around on his deck. His demonstration box is crafted from small-to-medium sized storage containers with an upside down, plastic six-pack plant tray wrapped in an old t-shirt that acts as a wick to keep plants moist. The plant carrier placement leaves space for a two-inch water reservoir filled through a piece of bamboo or PVC pipe set. He cuts a one-inch overflow hole in the side of the container and adds five-to-six inches of soil.

"Soil, not dirt," he explains. "The soil is a mixture of compost and potting mix. Compost is free, has perfect nutrients and only needs three things: air, water and material, both green and brown."

His "green" material comes from a compost bin they keep in their kitchen and empty almost every day into their rich compost pile outside. "Composting has become a real favorite of mine," Dennis says. "An average family sends up to 700-pounds of garbage into the sink every year which then goes into the water filtration system."

People often ask him if he starts his plants from seeds. "Seeds require W-O-R-K and work is a four-letter word," he tells them. "I don't use four-letter words." Instead, he purchases inexpensive seedlings from home improvement centers.

Dennis has two rain barrels attached to a downspout at the back of their home. "In a normal rain you get 500 gallons of water on your roof," he says. "These only hold 55 gallons each. Some of my MG friends have them all over their house."

An inexpensive spout attached near the base of the barrel dispenses water by gravity into a watering can.

Commercial rain barrels can be purchased

for about \$140, but Dennis recommends checking Google or searching locally for less expensive food-grade plastic barrels.

His skill, love of public speaking and teaching serve him well in his MG role of teaching environmentally sound horticultural practices to area residents.

"I get a great deal of pleasure interacting with people who have a similar interest," Dennis says. "I learn something every time I teach."

"I'm amazed at how things grow," he says. "Spring is a renewal and that's a very important thing to me."

His experience in the mental health business, taught Dennis the importance of engagement that he finds in gardening. "Whether you're engaging in a vigorous activity or one that is visually stimulating, it's the participation that helps people maintain balance," he explains. "Sitting in front of a computer all day is not a healthy thing, physically or emotionally."

In recent years, Dennis has been subject to limitations due to knee, neck and lower back surgeries. But this has not stopped him from being involved in gardening and conservation. "I had to learn to adapt," Dennis Wool says. "It doesn't mean you have to stop." NDN



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There is no denying the practical importance of gardening. Aside from producing aesthetically pleasing landscapes and life-sustaining harvests, the act of cultivating a garden is robust with corollary benefits. Stress relief, recreation, and the gratification of creating beautiful, scenic views are just a few of the many benefits that Sandy Helsel discovered when she thrust herself into the practice.

"I was 50-years-old at the time, my girls were leaving the nest, and my mother died after a tough year of battling cancer," she says. "It was a very rough period in my life."

It was at around this time that Sandy received a call from Nancy, a friend that she hadn't heard from in a while. After updating her friend on what she described as the most difficult time in her life, Nancy responded by saying, "It's time to dial it back and take some time to focus on you. What are you going to do for yourself now?"

Caught off guard by the question, Sandy responded by sharing with her friend her desire to travel to Great Britain to tour the English gardens. "It was something that I had thought about, but speaking with Nancy that day was my first time saying it out loud." Unbeknownst to Sandy, in a serendipitous twist



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

ice to full-fledged enthusiast. "When I returned to Williamsburg I subscribed to the White Flower Farm catalog, The English Garden magazine, everything I could get my hands on."

The rest, as they say, is history. After applying her newly acquired knowledge and passion for gardening, Sandy, with the help of her husband, David, created and maintained a stunning English cottage style garden that has been featured in Southern Living and Virginia Living magazines. Her Governor's Land garden was also selected in 2009 as a destination on the Williamsburg Garden tour.

After her friend, Nancy, died from complications from Alzheimer's disease, Sandy halted her overseas garden tours for years and years before revving back up at the invitation of renowned landscape architect and former director of Colonial Williamsburg's Landscape and Facilities Services, Gordon Chappell.

"He was a guest speaker at one of our Herb Society meetings and spoke about how he and his wife had just returned from a trip to England to see English gardens," she says. Sandy was already well acquainted with Gordon's wife. "Sherry was the person in charge of my

of fate, it turned out that Nancy was actively involved in coordinating English garden tours for her garden club in Connecticut. The deal was sealed by the time the two women hung up the phone. By the following summer, the two women headed to England on the first of many, English garden tours. After that experience, Sandy went from nov-

Garden Herbs

By Naomi Tene' Austin

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garden when it was selected for the garden tour," she said. "She and I became good friends just through that." After a bit of nudging, the couple convinced Sandy to join them and others on a group trip to Scotland.

Since then, Sandy has made an annual tradition of these excursions, visiting some of the most beautiful gardens in the world. Eventually her husband, David, a retired dentist, even joined the group. "He goes to try the beer, to eat the food and meet the people," she says. "When we go into the private gardens, Dave will attach himself to the head gardeners and pick their brains. He's really learned a lot of things that he can use in our garden, and he enjoys it so much. It's been wonderful." Sandy says that while he may not know the scientific names of all the plants, he has good instincts when it comes to gardening. "It's really because of him that this garden is in such good shape now," she says. "We are the only people who work in that garden. It's become more difficult for me to do the heavy lifting but I will sit here and direct him." With gardening now as a mutual hobby of theirs, the couple looks forward to going to Wales next year.

While visiting beautiful gardening landscapes abroad are nice, Sandy appreciates the gold mine that exists right here in Williamsburg. As former president and longtime member of the Colonial Triangle Unit of the Herb Society of America, Sandy added to her repertoire a strong appreciation for the value of herbs. "They are so useful," she says. "You can use an herb as a dye plant. You can use an herb as a culinary plant. You can use herbs to make soap. You can use herbs to make perfume," she says. "It goes on and on, and they have so much value medicinally." Sandy takes pride in the work the organization does in Yorktown, James City County and Williamsburg. Their mission is to promote the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research and sharing the experience of its members with the community. The local chapter carries out this mission in several ways. Every year the group has a fundraiser at the Virginia Master Gardener Association Symposium. "We have a grower of herbs with whom we collaborate in Charles City County to sell beautiful herbs and lovely plants during the symposium," she says. "That's the only fundraiser that we have during the year, and most of the group works on it." In addition to fundraising, the Herb Society also maintains seven herb gardens in Colonial Williamsburg, as well as three gardens at the Hospice House. "We also give scholarship money to three horticulture students at Virginia Tech."

Even before developing into the well-versed gardening aficionado that she is today, Sandy always had a latent appreciation for gardening. "I credit my grandmother for introducing me to it," she says. "I remember her taking my cousin and me around her garden, we couldn't have been more than four or five-years-old," she recalls. "She said to me, 'Sandy, this is a calendula plant.' I remember repeating the word and much later on in life I was able to identify a calendula from that." Sandy's grandmother instilled in her a passion that remains with her to this day. "She was a really good gardener," Sandy says. "She maintained that garden well into her late 80s. I would go back to visit her, and the border that lined the back of her house would look absolutely gorgeous."

At different times in her life Sandy tried to revive that passion, but given her hands-on involvement in the academic and recreational activities of her three daughters, she struggled to find the time to see it through. "I was very involved with the church. I was a girl scout leader, and that took a lot of time, and we did a lot of camping. There was always so much going on," she says. "I would plant a garden, but I would never see it to fruition." Sandy has certainly made up for lost time. Not only is she knowledgeable in the science of horticulture, this award-winning gardener maintains a completely organic process. "That garden out there does not get sprayed," she says pointing to her gorgeous backyard landscape. "That is organic, and if stuff doesn't want to grow, or if it gets bugs or whatever, I do the things that I can do that won't harm the garden. If things get sick, they get pulled out or burned or whatever, but I don't spray," she says. "In 20 years or so, I have never sprayed." NDN

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By Greg Lilly, Editor



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

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They call themselves the ParTee Girls. Golf is only for fun, and Happy Hour at the clubhouse is filled with laughter. Patricia Luke is “The Com-mish” and started the ladies’ golfing group just over three years ago when she desperately needed “her girls.”

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Pat never thought she’d leave. Her husband, Ed, took a job with Colonial Williamsburg, and the couple moved to Williamsburg. “Ed worked for Colonial Williamsburg for ten years before he retired,” Pat says.

“When we came here, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do.” Pat and the few friends she’d made in those first months in the late 1990s eventually ran out of things to keep them occupied. “You can only shop so much,” Pat says with a laugh. “My background is in education, yet I hadn’t been a teacher for a while. For me to get recertified was going to be too complicated.” She volunteered at Colonial Williamsburg then worked in social services for the city. “After that, someone told me about a part-time position at William & Mary. I spent 15 years at the Economics Department at W&M. I called myself the ‘mother’ of 28 Econ professors.”

On a whim, Pat had entered a contest on the local radio station for a golf membership at the Golden Horseshoe. “That was ten years ago. I didn’t even own a set of golf clubs. Well, guess who won!”

Pat had played in a few golf tournaments for different causes at the college, but she would borrow a set of clubs. “It just happened that day that I was coming to the Golden Horseshoe for a tournament when it

was announced on the radio that I'd won the membership. The people at the Golden Horseshoe knew my husband, and when they realized I had won the contest, they were very excited. I took advantage of it and scheduled some lessons."

Things changed drastically a few years ago. Ed had cancer. "I retired from William & Mary a little over three years ago," Pat says. "My husband was really sick by that point."

With Ed being so sick the last few months of his life, he encouraged Pat to stay busy. "One of my lady friends said I should start a ladies golf group," Pat says. "The day my friend Dottie, the assistant Commish, talked me into starting the club, she and I were playing Spotswood. A couple of girls were playing over from us. Dottie yelled over and asked if they were part of a golf group and said we were thinking of starting one. We exchanged numbers and it all began."

Pat talked with Jeff Winters at the Golden Horseshoe about how to organize the group and the best time for them to meet. The ParTee Girls play Spotswood every Wednesday evening at 5:00. "What started out as 24 women is now 56," Pat adds.

That first year of 24 women, some weeks, maybe only 12 showed up. "I wasn't sure it would continue. We made it through, and they were asking us to do it again next season plus wanting to bring friends along." The reason the women wanted to bring friends was because Pat had made golf fun, not so competitive that the players felt bad afterwards. "Isn't that what golf is supposed to be, fun? That's what is so great about this group. Everyone is excited to see each other." In the off-season, they will meet for Happy Hours or attend events and get together during the holidays.

"Each week during the season we play a variation of the game. I try to mix them up. I make sure the players play with different women each week. I don't want any cliques. My nickname is The Commish." And Pat rules with a playful command. "I intentionally make sure that I mix up the teams. It works. You don't have a clique. People don't worry about their score. Women go two ways in golf – either very competitive so then they don't want my group, or they are like me and want to play golf and make it fun. Afterwards, we have Happy Hour."

"I try to keep things as light as possible. We play stupid games each week. We play a game called Dots. If you get in the sand, you lose a dot. If you go out of bounds, you lose a dot. Then you can earn dots, too. If you land on the fairway, you get a dot. So, some people focus on hitting the fairway just to get a dot!"

In the "Luck Be a Lady" game, each foursome rolls a die before leaving the clubhouse. That number is their "special number" for the round. Before teeing off at each hole, a person rolls the die. If the roll matches their special number, one stroke can be subtracted from the team score for that hole.

"I'm not sure if I should share this," Pat says in a low voice, "but I will. We always have the same starter each week. He requests to work Wednesday nights with the ParTee Girls. Last year, he comes in and has this thing being held on the end of a golf club. It's a bra! He says, 'I think one of you ladies must have left this on the course.' One of the girls intentionally did that and didn't tell anyone. There are a lot of pranks going on."

The women have established deep friendships through their golf group. "I know I have," Pat says. "It filled a huge void in my life. I came to talk to Jeff Winters about starting the group in January three years ago. That February, my husband died. Then we started the group in April. It was exactly what I needed." The group gave Pat a place to focus her energies, a place to connect with people. "That was three years ago. We are starting our fourth season."

She spends a lot of time organizing the group and planning out the variations of the games they play. "Yes, it's a lot to do, but I get so much back emotionally," Pat Luke says. "To have your spouse of 43 years die. There is such a void. They came in and filled that void up for me. I wouldn't trade this for anything. They've given me more than I've given them. I feel very blessed." NDN



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Smile!



By Greg Lilly, Editor

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“Flower arranging is about seeing simple things, grabbing them and putting them in your life. If it makes you happy, I think that’s a great arrangement, whether flowers, artwork, furniture, music or friends,” Cheri Mulhare explains. Cheri is participating in the Tablescapes Design Contest during the Triangle Arts & Culture League’s (TACL) art&garden fundraiser the first weekend in May.

Her philosophy about flower arranging will show in her group design at the Tablescape competition. Berkshire Hathaway has a team creating what Cheri calls “Moving Day.” She says it’s a great theme for a real estate office.

“Cardboard boxes in a new house,” she describes. “I’m a Realtor”, so I try to minimize stress in people moving and make it as fun as possible. Our plan is to construct a table setting for that first meal in the new house on big boxes.”

Cheri majored in Home Economics in college. “So, I consider myself a homemaker, which is such an old-fashioned word. I like it because it describes what I do for business. It describes what I do for pleasure. It describes flower arranging. Making my home and my surroundings feel welcoming is why I enjoy flower arranging. Homemaker is an old-fash-

ioned word, but it describes what I’ve been doing since I came to Williamsburg in 1984. I was a young bride with a six month old baby, and now I have grandchildren.”

Cheri, her husband, Drew, and the baby came to Williamsburg because Drew was part of the development team for Ford’s Colony. “We’ve watched that neighborhood grow.”

As a young wife and mother, Cheri wanted to be part of the community and one of the first things she did was join the Junior Woman’s Club. “The Junior Woman’s Club’s Art on the Square, along with Historic Garden Week, TACL’s art&garden show – that’s what makes Wil-

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Williamsburg so special in the spring and a great place to grow. I mean that for children to grow here and adults to grow here as well. That's what all these organizations are doing to improve our little town." She's a fan of organizations and volunteers helping to make Williamsburg an interesting contemporary cultural center.

"One of the reasons visitors enjoy Williamsburg and residents love living here is our diverse arts opportunities. I love the blossoming public art initiatives. Public art ensures that everyone in the community can enjoy it. For example, the sculptures in town are great. They make me smile. Some, I'm not sure what they are," she says with a laugh. "But, it makes me smile that our neighbors and organizations are improving our area, improving the space we live in. The sculptures get me to stop my busy life and look and consider them. That's the same with an arrangement of flowers – stop, relax and enjoy."

She stresses that a good arrangement of flowers is an arrangement that makes you happy. "That's how I tend to arrange flowers, arrange furniture, arrange a potted plant or arrange my jewelry. It's about what makes someone feel good and the pleasure they get in the work – that's what makes arranging special for me. That could be said for an arrangement of music or paintings or pottery. A good arrangement makes someone smile."

For neighbors planning to attend the Tablescapes Design Contest, Cheri explains that you don't have to know the technical aspects of flower arranging, but relax and feel the emotion the arrangement evokes.

"If you leave TACL's art&garden event and say, 'I'm going to pick up a bunch of flowers from Trader Joe's and arrange them in a container on my kitchen counter, just for the fun of it.' I think the event has done its job." She hopes the flowers cause people to slow down and be inspired by everything around us, to be inspired by our natural world.

Her arrangements take into account color, texture, size and height, but not in an analyzed method. "I'm not a trained florist. There are floral arrangers who are much more technical than I am. I just stick it in there! If it feels pretty to me, it's a pretty arrangement," she says with a laugh.

She sees arrangements on a larger scale, as well. Part of her services as a real estate agent is to help integrate a new family into the community, and with the composition of organizations and cultural offerings in the Williamsburg area, she finds that an exciting endeavor.

"Williamsburg is Camelot in my eyes. Williamsburg is totally energized with culture. Organizations like TACL and CultureFix and the Junior Woman's Club's Art on the Square and

Occasion for the Arts, there's so much to do. It's not that sleepy little town that used to roll up at night in the 1980s. For example, the Botticelli exhibit at the Muscarelle was incredible for our small community. We have so much to offer. Locals, our neighbors, create this! It's great for the economics of our city. Visitors come and see this as a great place to live, to raise children and to retire."

Even when local clients decide to find a different house within the community, Cheri brings up the many opportunities the area offers.

"Most people don't realize the depth of the volunteer possibilities and the cultural possibilities in Williamsburg," she says. "It used to be that people would move here with the intent of driving to Richmond or Norfolk for arts and cultural activities, not any more. We have world-class restaurants, plays, music and art. That all started for me by volunteering with the Junior Woman's Club and the Williamsburg Garden Club."

Cheri Mulhare creates flower arrangements that make her smile. She encourages her friends and neighbors to design their own arrangements, not just of flowers, but of their lives that cause them to slow down and appreciate the opportunities in our own community. "Literally, stop and smell the flowers!" NDN

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Next Door Neighbors Health

With years of working on projects in engineering and operations, Don West is involved in one at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center that he knows will make a big difference in the health of his family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. As the director of support operations at the hospital, he leads the project to introduce copper-infused linens and hard surfaces into the hospital environment.

“Sentara was approached by Cupron, Inc., a company that infuses linen with copper oxide,” he says. “Sentara Corporate saw the advantages and was remodeling Sentara Leigh Hospital. The idea was a 10-month trial there of the copper-infused linens.”

Copper is naturally antimicrobial, inhibiting growth or killing microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and fungi.

Today, the linens are used at Williamsburg Regional Medical Center. Don explains that the first aspect of the change that patients and visitors will notice is the color. “It’s a beautiful salmon tone. The feedback is that patients say it reminds them of home. We all have different colors of linen at home, and the hospital’s bed linens were stark white. Now, the rooms are homier for the patients and families.”

Don and his team built a sample room. “I had nurses come in and critique it. I thought the patients would miss the white, but the nurses said the salmon color made the room more inviting.” These linens are implemented in rooms where the patient will be for several days, taking advantage of the copper’s natural antimicrobial properties. Locations such as the Emergency Department or one-day surgery rooms will still use the regular linens because of the swift turnaround times. “Patients in those areas are in and out faster, and the linen is



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Copper Infused Linens FOR A HEALTHIER STAY AT SENTARA

By Greg Lilly, Editor

turned around quickly. In order for the copper-infused linens to be effective, it is used with patients who are here for more than a day.”

Patients may see a difference in the linens, but they won’t feel a difference according to Don. “The linen is soft and feels great on the skin. The copper is embedded in the fabric, and no one can tell just by the feel. Also, there is no difference in laundering the linen. It is washed and treated the same way as the regu-

lar linen. We even did studies to make sure the copper couldn’t wash out. It’s embedded into the fibers.”

Don’s interest in the inner workings of materials, operations and organizations came from his training as an engineer. He grew up in Richmond and attended Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). “I went into the Air Force and then back to VCU,” he says. “I started working at King’s Dominion after graduation.

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"It is obviously much bigger and stronger than what we launched roller coasters with. A company had approached us about launching roller coasters with a magnetic wave. We worked with them for several years. That was one of the projects that I was most proud of. I worked at King's Dominion for 23 years."

After accomplishing all he wanted to do at King's Dominion, Don came to Sentara as the director of support operations. "I was part of the team to build this hospital," he says of the Williamsburg Regional Medical Center. "My responsibilities were to work with corporate construction and get this hospital and the associated buildings on this property built. I went from there to taking care of the building and managing people in the support operations. I've been with Sentara for 19 years."

As part of the building and support operations, Don took interest in the remodeling of Sentara Leigh Hospital in Norfolk. "During that 10-month trial of copper-infused linens and since they were building new bed towers, the staff at Sentara Leigh worked with EOS Surfaces to install copper enhanced hard surfaces." This copper-infused material was used in the tabletops, bed rails, hand rails and other high traffic surfaces. "They did a study and saw where the infection rate had dropped tremendously over this ten-month period," Don explains. "The senior leadership, always looking to decrease infection rates at the hospitals, could see that noticeable drop in the rate. The decision was made in the early part of this year to institute the linen and hard surfaces throughout the twelve hospitals." Sentara Williamsburg switched to the copper-infused linens on March 29.

"We should have the hard surfaces by early May in Williamsburg," he adds. "My staff will install them. It should take about three days to install the bed rails and the over-the-bed tables. As we remodel the rooms, we'll add the hard surfaces to the countertops, sink surrounds and other areas." The first installation concentrates on the "high touch" areas on the bed – headboard, footboard, side rails and over-the-bed tables.

"Our implementation team included nurse managers and bedside nurses, the operational staff in charge of the linens, plus the linen company helped us introduce it to our community. We worked through every issue that might come up. It's been a great project. I can see this will make a huge difference. My own family members, friends and neighbors come to this hospital, and I know I'm making this a great stay for them, while also producing a product that helps reduce infections. It's been a really exciting and meaningful project. We have a great team here that has helped implement a smooth transition."

With his experience with the copper enhanced surfaces and linens, Don sees other applications around him. "We have introduced the Cupron linen into one of our long-term care facilities in Norfolk. I see going in that direction for other long-term care facilities to be really effective. Even for the home, copper-infused items are available. Especially in sports clothing, you can find these available at sports stores and on-line retailers." Products are in the marketplace now, mainly products used to stop bacteria from growing, items such as socks, compression stockings or sleeves, undershirts and shorts.

"This is a wonderful technology," Don says. "We're doing great work here to create the safest conditions we can for the patients, from the linens we use to staff training, from our exceptional medical staff to our high customer service ratings and low infection rates. That makes me feel good. I know, at the end of the day, I'm doing good things." NDN



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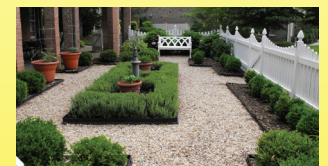
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A Legacy in Papers

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Corey Miller Photography

“Time moves on. History is made every day. It’s important to think about what we are leaving behind for our families, our community, our nation, and even our world,” explains Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee. “When historians come behind us and want to tell the story of Williamsburg, or even grandchildren wanting to know the stories of their grandparents, what will be preserved?” Dr. Elgersman Lee is an associate professor of History and Chair of the Department of Political Science and History at Hampton University.

She and research partner, Robert C. Wat-

son, are collaborating with the Williamsburg Regional Library on the African American Material Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia project. “That’s the academic title,” she says. “We use the tagline: Preserving African American Documents in Williamsburg.”

Dr. Elgersman Lee explains that paper documents aren’t saved as often as photographs or heirloom keepsakes. The project aims to save the paper documents from the trash or recycle bin during spring cleaning. “We live in a digital age and have the capacity to convert these documents from paper to a digital format.”

Documents for scanning could be a number of things: newspaper clippings, certificates, diplomas, school reports, military service records, letters or diaries. “I would love for a diary to show up on one of our scanning days,” she adds.

The project has two Digital Days for scanning documents: Saturday, May 20 from 11 to 4 at the Williamsburg Library and Saturday, June 3 from 11 to 4 at the James City County Library.

Each person will receive a flash drive with the digital image of their documents. The ad-

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vantage of having a digital image of a document, may be a special letter from a grandmother, is that it can be shared, while keeping the original stored in good condition. “Each family member can have a digital copy to pass on to grandchildren,” Dr. Elgersman Lee says. “Museums keep digital copies so that the originals don’t have to be handled. This project preserves documents, shares documents and transfers documents into a new format.”

In addition to scanning papers for family preservation and distribution, Dr. Elgersman Lee hopes that some of the participants allow Hampton University to keep a copy of the documents to help preserve the overall history of African Americans in Williamsburg, James City and York Counties.

“I think of this as a broad community history project. It’s about preserving the history of the community by preserving the history of families and informal organizations. Families are the bedrock upon which everything else is built. When we put these documents together, that creates a richer story of a family’s life. The more we can understand the experience of individuals we get a better understanding of the things that people have overcome. Virginia has a history of segregation in public education. What was that experience like for children of color? We know there’s a rich history there.” Letters, diaries, school reports, personal essays tell the story of the community. Historians, like Dr. Elgersman Lee, want to preserve and study those documents to reconstruct the African American Community in the Williamsburg area.

Dr. Elgersman Lee grew up on a dairy farm in the town of Caledonia in Ontario, Canada. “It’s just south of Hamilton on a little corridor between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. We had a large family, and being on the dairy farm, we spent a lot of time outside, developing a love of nature and green space.” Here world was a diverse one. “I grew up among people of different colors, from different parts of the world, who had different abilities. In the circles that my parents moved, there was diversity. They were involved in the Children’s Aid Society, in adoption and adoption support groups, and they were foster parents as well.”

History and education had been an interest for her growing up. “Actually, in high school, I wanted to go into fashion merchandising. I was also good at French. French is one of Canada’s two official languages. My bachelor’s degree is in French. I had perceived I would become a translator and travel the world, maybe work for the government.”

After her bachelor’s degree, she went to Atlanta to Clark Atlanta University and enrolled in the African American Studies program. “That had been a passion. I was already reading, voraciously consuming, whatever I could in terms of history, culture and literature. I was feeding a passion when I went to Atlanta. I earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in African American Studies.”

She became a faculty member at the University of Southern Maine in the history department where she had an affiliation with the African American Collection on campus. “That opened up an additional path of research for me, particularly around community history. I have, in different ways, reconstructed the history of communities using oral histories and documents.”

She and her husband, Christopher D. Lee, moved to Virginia where she taught at Old Dominion University and then she worked as the director of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia in Richmond. Then she returned to higher education and started at Hampton University in the fall of 2013.

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“When it comes to reconstructing the stories of families, the bedrock of communities, sometimes I run into scarcity. I see my work around documents, community history and families as all connected. I really want people to think about their legacy and the documentation they are leaving behind. With time, effort, networking with community members and organizations, and a lot of luck, I’m able to put together profiles of families. With enough profiles of families, we get a clear picture of a community. That’s what I’ve been doing for quite a while.”

Living in James City County, Dr. Elgersman Lee wants to reconstruct the rich history of the African American community in our area, beginning with the papers of the families.

When Dr. Elgersman Lee researches her articles and books, she looks at four categories of historical significance in family papers. “I look at migration, what I call the nativity profile. If you look at a population at a given time, where were they born? In Virginia or other states? What brought them to Virginia and to Williamsburg? I look at labor. What jobs are African Americans working in? Business owner or working for others? What’s the nature of that work? I look at institutional maturation. I look at African American institutions, like churches, civil rights organizations, schools and colleges. The last area is daily life – where people live, the types of house, who they lived next to, just the daily rhythm of life.” Papers from these categories help illustrate the family and community’s history.

“Letters, too, are important. The Black History Museum has the Colonel Charles Young Collection. At the time of World War I, he was the country’s highest ranking African American military officer. The museum has letters and postcards, written between Colonel Charles Young and his wife and children, a daughter and a son, who went to school in Europe. The Youngs were very invested in education and chose to educate their children in Europe because of segregation here. In a series of letters and postcards between these two young children and their parents, they talk about day-to-day things. You can see the children’s penmanship improving over time. Then World War I breaks out. The children are in Europe and the parents are in the United States. These letters are being posted in hope of getting to the children and finding out where they are and that they are safe.

The letters are written in French. I’m reading these as a parent of two girls and my heart is in my throat imagining how frantic the parents must have been. But then you read the beautiful innocence of children writing back about simple things in day-to-day life, about their teachers and boarding school.” The letters reveal the historic times of the writers, making the history real today, through the words of family. Dr. Elgersman Lee hopes to find similar documents for her project here.

If participants in the Digital Days give permission to share copies of their documents with the Hampton University project or not, the participants’ scanned papers maintain historical significance privately for their families. “I have letters at home that my father and mother wrote to me in graduate school,” Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee says. “I look at the handwriting. Those are priceless to me. I want to pass those on to my daughters. They never got to meet their grandfather. That’s part of my legacy that I can digitize and pass on.” NDN

Digital Day: Saturday, May 20, from 11 to 4 at the Williamsburg Library, and Saturday, June 3, from 11 to 4 at the James City County Library. For more information, please contact Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee, Hampton University, at 757-728-6853 or maureen.elgersmanlee@hamptonu.edu.

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Hey Neighbor!

Please visit www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com, go to the magazine site and click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current community announcements.

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

Hey Neighbor!

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

April 29, 2017

Williamsburg Community Chapel, 3899 John Tyler Hwy, at 3 p.m. The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra presents Carnival of the Animals, A Family Concert with Janna Hymes, Conductor. A variety of animal-themed musical pieces will enchant the audience with artist Bob Oller and dancers from Virginia Regional Ballet interpreting the music. Tickets available at www.williamsburgsymphony.tix.com

Hey Neighbor!

WALK MS - FUNDRAISER

April 29, 2017

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society will be hosting the annual Walk MS charity walk in Williamsburg on Saturday, April 29th, at Colonial Heritage, 6500 Arthur Hills Dr., Williamsburg, VA 23188. Check-in and Registration begin

at 9:30am with the walk commencing at 10:30am. Route lengths have 1 mile and 5k options and are fully assessable with on-site support from our dedicated volunteers. Register today! WalkMS.org|1-800-344-4867

Hey Neighbor!

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

April 29, 2017

The Virginia Cooperative Extension James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners are busy planning their annual Plant Sale to be held at the Historic Triangle Community Center, Waller Mill Road, from 9 am - 3 pm. There will be a large assortment of annuals, perennials, herbs and vegetables for purchase.

Hey Neighbor!

ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE

April 29, 2017

The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia

Native Plant Society will be offering over 150 species of native perennials, shrubs, trees, ferns, and vines on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Williamsburg Community Building [opposite the Williamsburg Library], 401 North Boundary Street, Williamsburg, VA. All proceeds benefit local and regional projects and youth scholarships for attending Nature Camp in Vesuvius, VA.

Hey Neighbor!

VFW POST 4639 15TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

April 29, 2017

At Kiskiack Golf Course, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM (EDT) Kiskiack Golf Club - 8104 Club Drive. Golf with local heroes and help raise funds for your community! All proceeds are go to support veterans in the Williamsburg area and are tax deductible. Please contact: VFW Post 4639, PO Box 1236, Williamsburg, VA 23187, 757-

258-9892. Purchase your Tickets online as well! Just Search VFW Post 4639 on Eventbrite.com

Hey Neighbor!

THE MOVEMENT DANCE COMPANY PRESENTS "MENTAL"

April 29, 2017

At 7:30 pm at Kimball Theatre. Opening performance by Christian Grech. Tickets are \$10 for adults, free for students and are available through the Kimball Theatre box office. Institute for Dance, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. For more information, visit www.institutefordance.org or call (757) 229-1717. This production is recommended for audience members age 13 and above.

Hey Neighbor!

54th ANNUAL ART OF THE SQUARE

April 30, 2017

10am-5pm, Merchants Square. Art on

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Jane Stein, *President of JPS Consulting*, will share what makes a board successful in the areas of mission, strategic planning, leadership, resources, and monitoring and improving itself.

This workshop is offered at no charge thanks to our Sponsor, **Drucker & Falk Real Estate!** Register at www.networkpeninsula.org/boarddevelopment.

Founded as *NetworkWilliamsburg* in 2007, the first workshop for nonprofits was held in 2008 at Legacy Hall. In 2014, we expanded to *NetworkPeninsula*. As of March 2017, we have provided 96 workshops to 1748 participants representing 275+ local nonprofits.

the Square is a juried show that is dedicated to providing original, high quality, handcrafted and diverse mediums of art. The event features more than 170 artists and is free and open to the public! Proceeds from artist booth fees are donated to visual and performing arts organizations throughout the greater Williamsburg area including Williamsburg, James City and York counties. For more information about the event and Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg, please visit <http://www.williamsburgjuniors.org/art-on-the-square>

Hey Neighbor!

P. BUCKLEY MOSS

May 3, 2017

The Williamsburg Chapter of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association is hosting noted artist P. Buckley Moss at the Spring Event. Ms. Moss will speak about her life experience of struggling with dyslexia and finding success through her art. Her artwork will be available for purchase. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and wine will be served. Time and location: 6:30 pm at Kingspoint Clubhouse, 119 Northpoint Drive. \$20 per person/\$ 35 per couple. RSVP by May 1, vtcommish@gmail.com, 757-258-4510.

Hey Neighbor!

WOMEN'S WELLNESS WEEKEND

May 5-7, 2017

Join us at Jamestown 4-H Educational Center and treat yourself to a weekend designed for women ages 18 and better. Enjoy wellness workshops led by professional

speakers in their respective fields. Join us for an active busy weekend or just come to relax and enjoy the beautiful sunsets on the James River. We take care of everything so you can enjoy a weekend of playing, laughing and learning with old and new friends. Workshop Topics and Activities May Include: Paddleboard Yoga, Fitness Classes, Nutrition Workshops, Jewelry Making, Crafts, Zumba, Basket Weaving, Cooking, Horseback Riding, Canoeing, Kayaking, and more. Call for more information 757-253-4931 or www.jamestown4hcenter.org to register.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG TOT TROT 1K

May 6, 2017

Historic Area (Palace Green) 8:30-11 am; Second annual fun run/walk for children ages 6 and under. The event begins promptly at 9:10 am. Afterwards, W&M's Griffin will lead a parade of children to the William & Mary Bookstore where they will enjoy drinks, snacks and story time. Registration proceeds benefit WCCC, an independently operated 501c3 located on the campus of William & Mary serving families and children ages six weeks to five years. For additional information and registration details: <http://www.williamsburgcampuschildcare.org/>

Hey Neighbor!

SPRING PLANT WALKS

May 6, 2017

Spring Flowers. 10:00 am, in Newport News Park. Peninsula Master Naturalist

Susie Yager will lead a walk through this lakeside woodland area to see Pink Lady's-Slipper Orchid, Partridgeberry, and numerous other spring flowers as well as several ferns. (GPS coordinates 37.181682, -76.537173); additional parking nearby along Constitution Way if needed. The round-trip walk will be about 2 miles. Contact Susie Yager to register at soozieyager@cox.net.

Hey Neighbor!

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EMPLOYEES ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW

May 6 & 7, 2017

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation employees, volunteers and retirees will once again combine their time and talents for their annual Spring Arts and Crafts Show from 10am to 5pm. This year the show and sale will be held at the Historic Triangle Community Services Building, located at 312 Waller Mill Road. Employees, volunteers and retirees come from all divisions of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to share their voluminous talents and passions outside of their jobs with the public in this very special show and sale.

Hey Neighbor!

JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT & AMERICAN REVOLUTION AT YORKTOWN

May 13, 2017

Jamestown Day, a jointly sponsored event at Jamestown Settlement & Historic Jamestowne – Mark the 410th anniversary of the 1607 founding of Jamestown, America's first permanent English colony.

Discover Jamestown's legacy through interpretive programs on Powhatan Indian and English interactions, archaeology, military and maritime displays, and traditional music and entertainment. Call (757) 229-4997 or (757) 898-2410 or visit www.historicjamestowne.org or www.nps.gov/colo.

Hey Neighbor!

THE EARTH SINGS!

May 16, 2017

Presented by Walnut Hills Baptist Church, 7:30 PM, 1014 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg. The Williamsburg Women's Chorus spring concert will feature music about nature and the abundance of our world. Tickets are \$15 for adults and are available online at www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org

Hey Neighbor!

THE SENSITIVE JOURNEY

May 20, 2017

King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, will once again host an event for the community to assist in end of life planning. Hard questions can be addressed with clear answers in a friendly atmosphere. Take advantage of hearing over 10 local businesses speak about these issues and more at 10:00 am. For a list of businesses, check the website www.kogva.com Questions? Call Event Chair, Karen Peifer 757.817.1040

For a complete list of community events, visit www.williamsburgneighbors.com

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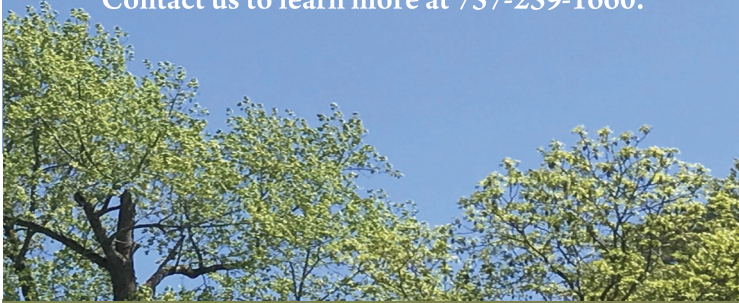
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Wisteria

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

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ADVANCED LEVEL

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in the next issue of
Next Door Neighbors

April 2017
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