

November 2017

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VOLUME 11, ISSUE 11

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What does it mean to be thankful? It means different things to different people. In my opinion, being thankful means more than moments of appreciation and gratitude. Being thankful can be a way of life, making a choice to find the good in everything.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

A friend of mine just passed away from cancer. How could I be thankful about such a bad thing? I feel the loss of our friendship. I miss her. Yet, I am thankful for all of the positive moments of our friendship, for her courage and steadiness during difficult times, and the many relationships she had where she was the one who demonstrated faith by being there for others. She taught me how to be thankful for each new day and to look for the good in everything.

As you read this issue, you will learn how some of your neighbors have experienced being thankful. Perhaps you will also be mindful of choosing thankfulness as your way of life. Read on... NDN

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# CAN-DO ATTITUDE

By Alison Johnson

Growing up in Williamsburg in the 1940s and '50s, Edith Kearney Heard knows she could have had a childhood defined, and limited, by the color of her skin.

She is forever thankful that she did not.

Edith, better known by her nickname of “Cookie”, credits the Colonial Williamsburg (CW) Foundation where her father and many other African-Americans worked during that time, for creating a world where people of different races mingled much more than in surrounding agricultural areas.

“As kids, we always believed that we could do anything we wanted to do, as long as we stayed in school and got an education,” Cookie says. “I didn’t know how to pick potatoes or cotton. I was in 10th grade before I saw a tobacco field, when I visited friends in Toano and saw a whole other world.”

From that happy childhood, Cookie, now 76, emerged with an optimistic, can-do attitude that has led to a long legacy as a community leader and activist. Her story, told with frequent spirited laughs, includes becoming



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one of the first African-Americans to work in accounting at CW, fighting to organize a labor union at the company, earning a college degree in her late 40s, posing for a picture with Barack Obama and, more recently, championing the 2017 renaming of a school christened for Rawls Byrd, a former superintendent who resisted integration, to Laurel Lane Elementary School.

Asked what she is most grateful for, she says this: “John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who kept Williamsburg from becoming an agrarian society.” The philanthropist, who began financing the restoration of the historic district in the late 1920s, required white and black employees in both service and management positions to learn local history, speak to guests politely and confidently, and always wear clean uniforms.

“He set the bar high for everyone,” she says. “From my perspective, nobody was considered a maid or a slave, just a person. We had a beautiful community of people where everyone felt important.”

Segregation was a part of life, to be sure. Born in a home on East Scotland Street, Cookie grew up in a community of African-American families and went to the segregated Bruton Heights High School. However, Bruton Heights was a new school with top-notch facilities and teachers, where students also had more choices regarding classes than in other local schools.

“We got a wonderful education,” Cookie says. She remembers competing against sports teams from all-white schools and sometimes socializing with white kids. “I was 35 years old the first time I was called (a racial epithet),” she says. “My parents didn’t talk in a derogatory way about anyone. There were just not many hurt feelings. I was very lucky.”

Cookie’s father worked several different jobs at CW, including as a part-time chauffeur for Rockefeller. Her mother stayed home with her and her two brothers in a now-gone CW community nicknamed “White City” for the color of its houses. (She picked up her own nickname, Cookie, because her parents liked the cartoon strip Blondie, which featured a little girl with that name.)

After graduating from Bruton Heights, Cookie went to work at CW as well, eventually becoming a cashier in the Accounting Department. There, she rose to supervise an all-white cashiers’ staff; she also hired some black cashiers to integrate the system. Cookie later became supervisor of the night audit.

She also married a cook from Alabama, which again made her thankful for her childhood and for Williamsburg’s relatively good opportunities for African-Americans to own homes and small businesses. “I was in shock when I visited his family there,” she recalls. “People were getting up at 4 a.m. to go pick potatoes. A lot of families had no running water or bathrooms. There was nothing to do there. I got so bored, I even thought about going out to pick some potatoes.” The couple divorced after 10 years.

Still, Cookie wasn’t one to accept the status quo at home when she perceived wrong-doing. In the late 1960s, she began trying to organize a union at CW to fight for better treatment of all employees. She later successfully sued the company, citing racial discrimination, when she was let go under what was deemed a “reduction in staff” but what she feels was because of her union work.

Over the years, Cookie took on various local jobs in auditing, hotels and restaurants to support her four children, as well as two of her brother’s kids. Her career also has included 12 years as appropriation

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committee chair for the Peninsula AIDS Foundation. At 44, she decided to go to college to further her career. She originally planned to study accounting at Christopher Newport University, but she ultimately majored in history and did a year of student teaching in Mexico. She graduated in five years, in 1989. “Not bad for an old lady brain,” she jokes.

To earn money as a student, Cookie also managed to get rehired at CW, this time as a waitress and hostess. Asked if she’d worked there before, she said yes. Asked why she left, she said, “reduction in staff.” No one asked more questions. A year later, an old manager spotted her. “He said, ‘How in the hell did you get back up in here?’ and I said, ‘They hired me,’” she recounts. “He was so disgusted.”

Cookie went on to become one leader of CW’s by-then reorganized Food and Beverage Workers Union, which represented about 1,100 hotel and restaurant employees, and participated in a large union march down Duke of Gloucester Street in 1991. She retired from CW in 1999.

Always politically active, Cookie campaigned passionately for President Obama and, on one of his visits to Newport News,

was selected to take a picture with him. “I didn’t sleep for three days,” she recalls. “Me? Wow. When I met him, I kissed him on his neck and left lipstick. Then I told him not to rub it off until he got to the White House and told Michelle that I kissed him. He was so nice, and he smelled good, too.”

As for the election of Donald Trump and recent racial turmoil in Charlottesville, Cookie looks for positives. “We as Americans have gotten so complacent. I think we needed this wake-up call,” she says. “We can have a complete discussion on race now. I don’t feel we ever finished that conversation.”

Integration has forever changed the younger generations, she believes: “If you grow up with people, you know them. Our children and grandchildren do not feel divided. They have been friends for years. They will protect each other. That’s another thing I’m grateful for.”

On a personal note, Cookie says she’s “thankful for being healthy, fat and happy.” Still a night owl, she recently went back to work as a night auditor for an Embassy Suites hotel, because, she explains, “I needed more ‘eat money’. I like to go out to eat.” Her shift

runs from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., generally twice a week but sometimes up to five nights. “It’s killing this old lady,” she says with a laugh. “I used to dance all night and come to work at 6 a.m. I sure can’t do that anymore.”

Cookie, who remains single, enjoys spending time with her family, including 13 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, a German shepherd named King and a Doberman pinscher named Brutus. She travels frequently and enjoyed taking her teenaged great-grandchildren to New York City. She also meets friends monthly for brunch; her favorite restaurant is Food for Thought, but she was thrilled by a \$27 feast at the Williamsburg Lodge that featured homemade doughnuts and unlimited mimosas.

“I enjoy life,” she says. “I’m not the built-in grandma babysitter, and my kids know that. This is my time. I like to stay busy. I’ll be sitting in a wheelchair soon enough.”

While Williamsburg isn’t perfect and has changed dramatically since her childhood, Edith “Cookie” Kearney Heard will always be proud of her lifelong home. “I thank God for this community,” she says. “I have been truly blessed.” NDN

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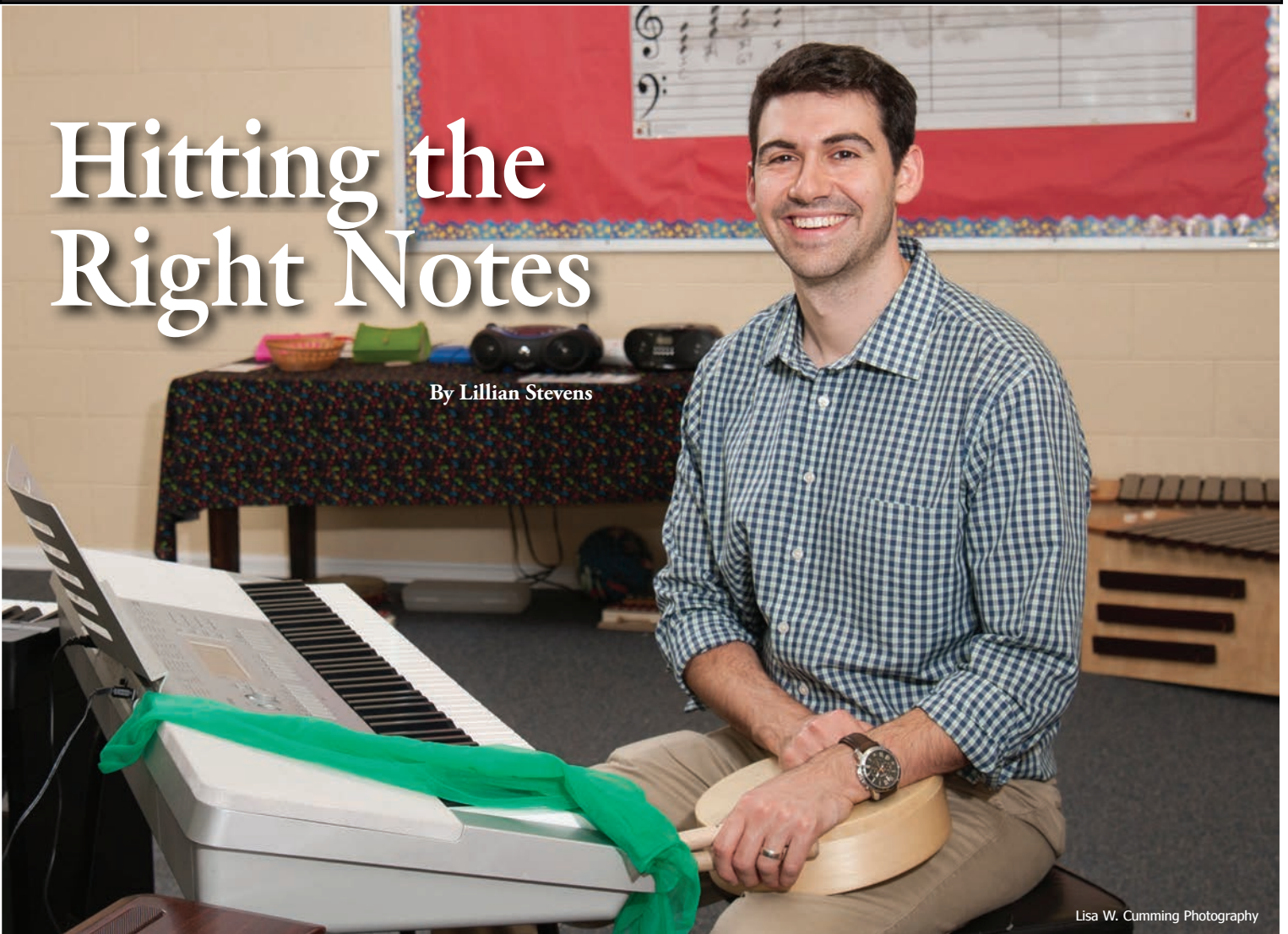
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# Hitting the Right Notes

By Lillian Stevens



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Over the span of nearly three decades, thousands of families have participated in the vastly popular Early Childhood Music School (ECMS) in town. ECMS's program of singing, moving, listening, learning instruments and even learning to read and write music is second to none in the area.

Last year, Anthony Williams took over as

director of ECMS. While the school is an outreach ministry of Williamsburg United Methodist Church, its classes are tuition-based and open to all.

When he assumed his role, Anthony was expected to fill some pretty big shoes, those of Cindy Freeman, the school's inaugural director.

"Even though Cindy has retired, I'm very

fortunate that I can go to her with any question I may have. It is a big position, so I am trying to learn how to take all that she did and build on that."

When the school was established in 1989, there were two classes of four-year-old children. Today, there are over 50 weekly classes of children aged two months through nine years,

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as well as 4 adult keyboard classes and 1 guitar class for adults.

In fact, one of the first initiatives Anthony introduced was the addition of an adult guitar class, offered in a very relaxed environment, for people who always wanted to pick up guitar.

“The guitar is my own main instrument,” he says. “So, I’m really excited about this. I studied classical guitar throughout college. I’ve always been excited about music but guitar was the platform for me.”

The very first song Anthony learned to play on guitar was *La Grange* by the rock band, ZZ Top. “My father taught me that song,” he says. Within his own family, there was always music.

“My dad played a little guitar, and my grandmother on my mom’s side was into singing and had a song for just about anything.”

Anthony’s mother is Lebanese and he recalls an abundance of Lebanese music in his childhood home.

“It’s always a big group experience when you’re Lebanese,” he says with a laugh. “My mom has 36 first cousins so she comes from a huge family. The music aspect of that side of my family is pretty strong but my dad’s father was a performer and used to play on an old-

timey radio station that broadcast into West Virginia.”

At the end of the day, whenever he feels stressed, he still picks up his guitar. He also feels thankful for his full-time job in music.

“I don’t get to play or practice music all day, but I love what I do and who I’m doing it for.” Anthony is also extremely grateful for the ECMS staff, board members and the community at large.

“I have a wonderful, supportive staff that includes nine teachers, two staff assistants and two junior staff assistants.”

ECMS employs instructors who are certified by Musikgarten. The Musikgarten approach combines music and movement, and ECMS’s philosophy is steeped in this understanding that movement and music activities are perfect for child development.

“Language development, self-expression, memory skills, concentration, social interaction, fine motor skills, listening, problem solving, teamwork, goal setting, and coordination are all impacted by early music and movement education,” Anthony says.

Because of the strong motion emphasis, students are dancing and engaging in imagination

play from an early age, as young as two months.

Anthony says research shows that unless the vestibular function of a child’s ears are fulfilled, the focused listening of their ears will not engage fully. “So we use music and motion to help them explore their balance and that in turn stimulates focused listening skills.”

Older toddlers begin listening and differentiating between various sounds, such as animal sounds.

“It’s a progressive thing and every sequence of class we have is age appropriate. The children learn to make music and engage with each other on a level that they might not get to do in preschool or school. We are very big believers in that. The goal that we have for each age is what they are able to do and be successful, so that they are excited and positive about the experience.”

Instruction is listening-oral based, and readers might be surprised to learn that it does not necessarily begin with reading music.

“If you think about it, you probably didn’t learn the alphabet before you started talking,” Anthony says. “Similarly, we don’t force the music reading process early, even at our keyboard levels. We believe if children learn how



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to listen, really hear, then that makes the reading process easier when they are ready.”

ECMS utilizes Solfege in the keyboard learning process, whereby students learn melodies by establishing recognizable relationships between pitches, and training the ear to hear patterns.

As an example, Anthony suggests, “Think of the song ‘Do-Re-Mi’ from *The Sound of Music*.”

When he was 18, Anthony had a career goal to work in a music studio, perhaps as a sound engineer. He did some work in that industry, sold some background tracks for commercials, and interned in a mixing studio.

Throughout most of his undergraduate years, he began teaching music classes and working with children through places like the YMCA. His Bachelor’s Degree in Music from Randolph Macon College, was followed with a Masters Degree in Composition from George Mason University.

“After grad school, I was teaching classes and performing a lot of gigs. Like many musicians, I was looking for work that was a little steadier. My (now) wife was living with her parents in Newport News and I was in Richmond when

I learned that Williamsburg United Methodist Church was looking for a children’s music director position.”

Anthony applied and was selected for the post, which turned out to be a great segue to the position he holds now. In addition to directing and serving as an instructor at ECMS, he heads up five groups of choirs at the church, and teaches as an adjunct faculty member at his alma mater in Ashland. With his Master’s Degree in Music Composition, Anthony enjoys writing music, including one song each year that the children get to sing with the church choir.

“The big challenge for me is organizing and prioritizing the different hats I have to wear,” he says. “I’m the director at ECMS, but I’m also a teacher, fundraiser and children/youth director. It can be a challenge just figuring out which things to do first while also making sure I’m accessible to the staff and families here.”

This profile would not be complete without mentioning Elliot’s Song, because it’s something for which Anthony is particularly thankful to be involved. Funded entirely through grants and donations, Elliot’s Song takes free music education to students at the Head Start

programs in both York County and James City County, and to some local Child Development Resources classes.

“We also reach all of the Bright Beginnings programs in WJCC,” he says.

The program is named for Elliot Provoncha (1997-2005) who was born with multiple disabilities but was a student at ECMS. According to Anthony, the Provoncha family continues to advocate for quality music education for children with physical or developmental disabilities, and believes that Elliot’s Song is their son’s finest legacy.

To sustain Elliot’s Song, fund-raising efforts are almost always underway. There’s a winter carnival in January, two benefit recitals each year, spirit nights at local restaurants, and a Christmas tree decorating event during the holidays where donors sponsor a jingle bell (similar to the Salvation Army’s Angel trees).

“This is a community that really cares about the arts as well as their neighbors,” Anthony says. “I am so grateful for that. We really have people who come through for us with funding and events, and I’m also appreciative for those who help, not only financially but with their time.” NDN



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# BYRON ADAMS



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## Life's a Marathon

By Gail Dillon

The term “Renaissance Man” just might apply to Byron Adams. The former lawyer has run more than 100 marathons, as well as countless shorter races. He is a dedicated member of the local chapter of the St. Andrew’s Society, which celebrates all things Scottish. He taught himself to play the bagpipes and can still put on an impressive showing on the racquetball court. Not to mention the fact that he and his wife, Mary, raised 4 daughters and currently have 11 grandchil-



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dren. The film-star-handsome 75-year-old emanates a quiet reserve that belies his wry sense of humor.

When asked about his initial blind date with Mary years ago, he says with a grin: "The first time that I met her, she noted it wasn't too good for me to be there." Mary tells the story a little differently. The two had a mutual friend who set them up while she was still a college student at Rider University in New Jersey (she is from Trenton). Byron was already in the Air Force and, as she explains it, "I was not terribly thrilled with the evening."

But two years later when he was passing through New Jersey, he called her. "Wow, had Byron changed," Mary says. This time the couple clicked and they were married in 1970. Byron is originally from Bath, New York, located in the Finger Lakes area, but attended the University of Arkansas for both his undergraduate and law degree before joining the Air Force and serving as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer. Mary jokes that his dreams of international travel never came to fruition in the service.

"Join the military and see the world. He

saw Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi for four years," she says, laughing. Byron ended up serving in the Reserves for 20 years, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. During his last four months in the active duty Air Force, he was joined by Mary who worked as a fourth-grade teacher. The couple eventually moved to Washington State for a year, then Roanoke, Virginia and finally Richmond before settling in Williamsburg in 1972. "We tried to find places to live that had reciprocity regarding his law career," she explains. Byron took and passed the Bar Exam four times, in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi and Washington, which is no small feat. During his long career, he mainly focused on personal injury cases and those involving worker's compensation.

The Adams' had their sprawling and gracious house built in 1987. The 8000-foot home stuns with its soaring ceilings and spacious, beautifully decorated rooms. "I'm ready to downscale," Mary says. "But we've loved it; it's been great for the kids. Their four grown daughters range in age from 45 to 34 – Janet, Hilary, Flora and Mary. The eldest three live out of town but Mary resides nearby, in New

Town. "The girls are absolutely my rock," the elder Mary says. "I have a good rapport with all the children though sometimes they tell you too much!" Their home is the perfect spot for reunions, which happen fairly regularly during holidays and in the summertime.

"It's been interesting because the last time they were all here together we managed to put most of them up. Actually, we put two of the grandchildren in closets," she says, chuckling, before explaining that these are walk-in closets with plenty of room. Their grandchildren range in age from late teens to toddlers and their photos are displayed throughout the house.

This was and continues to be an active, fitness-oriented family. Byron himself has run 129 full marathons, including the prestigious Boston and New York races. It has been documented that he has run a marathon in every state in the country at least twice. His dizzying array of medals are on display downstairs in the finished basement, and just looking at them makes one want to lie down and rest. Although he claims he doesn't have a favorite marathon, Mary chimes in with an amus-

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ing story about his first 26-miler, when he was still stationed at Keesler Air Force Base. “He ran the Boston Marathon,” she says. “Oh my gosh, the weather was miserable. It was cold, it was raining.” During the race, Byron started running with someone going his pace and the two of them got lost. “And a police car had to bring him back,” she says. “He had a good time but I thought, when is this guy ever going to finish?” Since then, he has run in all of the Canadian provinces, done the Boston marathon four times, as well as run marathons in England, Ireland and Scotland. Mary points out that he has run at least one marathon with each of his daughters, too.

He still runs but his races are less frequent and shorter now. He also enjoys playing racquetball three times a week with long-time friends. In addition, he is an ardent gardener and enjoys playing golf.

Mary was an athlete in her own right for years; she has been a Scottish dancer since she was a little girl and taught for decades. “My mother was born in Scotland. My sister and I both decided to take Scottish dance lessons,” she says. “It’s similar to Irish dancing but it’s a lot more athletic. You wear a kilt and special shoes and perform and you compete. I was very much into competition.”

She was a quick study and at the tender age of 14, started teaching in her family’s basement. “I had a real nice group of probably about 20 students. When Byron and I were married, we had 14 of my little students as flower girls.” She is quick to give credit to the many parents in Williamsburg who supported her over the years.

One of her and Byron’s proudest accomplishments was starting

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the Williamsburg Scottish Festival in 1977 and "keeping it strong for many years to follow." She continued to teach until their girls got busy with their own activities. "I think we pretty much got involved in swimming and cross-country," she says. Although all the daughters dabbled in Scottish dancing, Mary says Flora showed the most promise, going on to championships out of state. The younger Mary, on the other hand, earned a swimming scholarship and even participated in the Olympic Trials. Janet and Hilary are also avid long-distance runners and high academic achievers. Mary now maintains her fitness and relaxes by swimming with a group of ladies who call themselves the Noodlers. "We solve all the problems in the world," she says, grinning.

As a long-time member of the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, Byron has held every office position there is, except for treasurer. The Society, which began in 1968, "provides a social venue for celebration, education, and understanding of Scottish-American tradition and heritage," according to its website's home page. Celebrating Burns Night in January,

for example, is one of the group's key events. Robert Burns is widely considered the national poet of Scotland. Eating the infamous dish known as haggis, made from sheep "pluck" (the lungs, heart and liver), is often a part of the society's social events. "It tastes good to me," Byron says with a smile, describing the flavor as "meaty."

Byron speaks of his beloved black Labrador, Skye, that passed away last year with a mixture of affection and sadness. Skye was his constant companion for 15 years, often running with him and even participating in Scottish festivities. Mary recalls the dog howling at his owner playing the bagpipes while wearing her own little doggie kilt during a Burns Night party. "That was the best entertainment on the program," she says with fondness.

When asked what they are most thankful for this Thanksgiving, both Byron and Mary Adams quickly respond with "family."

"In our retirement years we face physical and mental challenges," Mary says. "But with our strong faith and support of our family, we feel we can weather most storms. Life is good and we have been blessed." NDN

## Next Door Neighbors

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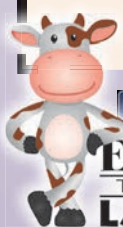
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# REVEREND CATHY TYNDALL BOYD



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## Coming Home

By Narielle Living

Although she has only been in Williamsburg for just over six months, Reverend Catherine Tyndall Boyd feels like she has come home. In doing so, she is very grateful that she knows she has found her life's work.

That is just one of the many things she is thankful for.

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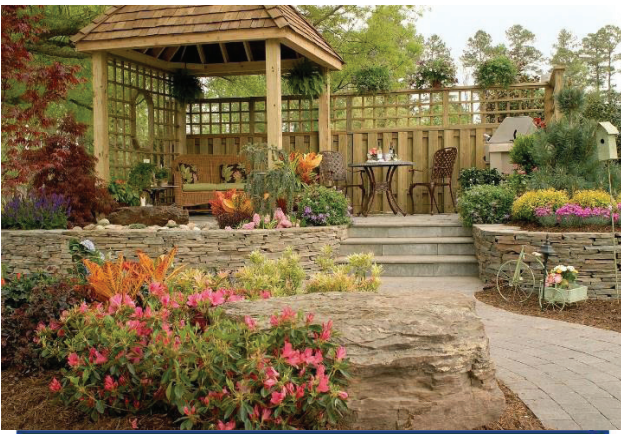


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Cathy grew up in southwest Missouri and considers southwest Missouri her home, but has lived in a number of places, including Wisconsin, Kentucky and Texas. "I'm pretty much a Midwesterner," she says. "I grew up in Missouri and met my husband in Wisconsin, and we lived in Lexington, Kentucky and then in Austin, Texas for about the last 15 years." Cathy and her husband, David, came to Williamsburg from Austin, and this is their first time on what she calls the "east side."

One aspect of her life Cathy is grateful for is having and connecting with others. "Like that John Denver song, having come home to a place you've never been before," she says. She had been searching for a position within a church for a couple of years. "My husband is a retired Episcopal priest, and when he retired I started looking for a church." In the two year period she conducted her search, St. Martin's of Williamsburg was also looking for someone to step in. "They had a search committee," she says. "Our parishes are pretty autonomous, and they set a vision for what they're looking for. Their committee was looking for me for about the same period of time that I was looking for them."

Cathy began her time with St. Martin's in April of this year. "I started on Holy Week. When they issued the call, they asked if I could start on Easter. I said yes, except Palm Sunday and Easter go together, so I asked if I could come on Palm Sunday. So, we made it happen really fast. We got the whole turnaround done in six weeks, and we were here six weeks after they called. We were all motivated."

When trying to ascertain where they wanted to live, Cathy and her husband identified what was important to them. One of the things they wanted was a place that felt like home. Then they had to figure out what that really meant to them. "Home no longer means where I grew up. Our children are in the east. Our son is in New York City and our daughter is in Staunton. Once we started thinking maybe home is towards the east everything fell into place. Williamsburg feels like home to me. In fact, I've been told that this part of Virginia and Missouri are very similar geologically so I think there's a physical reason this feels like home, which is a benefit to me. You can't take that for granted." But the important thing, she adds, is that St. Martin's is a good spiritual fit. "It feels like home in that way, too. We really got a double whammy of blessing."

Cathy says that she often expresses a lot of gratitude for everything in her life. "I practice gratitude. I spend a lot of energy and time thanking God for everything. I am particularly grateful that the St. Martin's family and I have found each other because we share a common vision for how to practice our faith." What that means, she explains, is more about following the Episcopalian text, called the Book of Common Prayer, which talks about respecting the dignity of every human being, and seeking and serving Christ in all persons.

In relation to St. Martin's, Cathy is thankful that the parishioners have a very strong heart for outreach, where they can go out into the community and make a difference where it is needed. Their outreach programs include local food and clothing ministries, interfaith homeless ministries, mentorship ministries and international food ministries. "I am particularly grateful that I have found a place where I can practice

real, hands-on Christianity. Our world needs it now more than ever.”

Cathy believes her job and the job of each of us is to do what she calls, “Stand in the breach,” a concept that refers to building the world. “We may not get it built, but it’s our job to do that. Not all churches want to do that, so I was searching for a place that operates with its heart. I found it.” She notes that she is grateful that the people of St. Martin’s practice love and service within the community. “It’s not just to love within our own walls but to serve outside our walls. That’s a practice of gratitude.”

Gratitude, as Cathy explains, can be a practice for some, a daily exercise that strengthens a person’s appreciation for everything. How can others incorporate this practice into their own lives? “In Christian tradition, the word practice means something specific. ‘I have a spiritual practice’ that is kind of almost monastic phrase, and this is something I build into my day as a discipline. First, a spiritual practice is being intentional about seeking God, seeing God, inviting God, being intentional. If one wanted to cultivate a spiritual practice of gratitude I can only offer my own experience. I try to build triggers into my day that remind me to say ‘thank you’ to God. One spiritual practice people have is keeping a rosary, or a worry doll, a stone, a cross or a key chain in their pockets. People have things so that when they stick their hand in their pocket it reminds them.” Cathy smiles and adds that there are also apps available for this. One of her own triggers is taking a shower. “When I get in the shower I will often think, ‘We thank you God for the gift of water,’ which is a phrase from our baptism service. I have a friend who prays for the safety of the people she loves when she puts her seat belt on, she’s gotten that in her mind as a reminder. It’s like any other timer or reminder that you set.”

Another way to practice gratitude is the act of saying grace before a meal. Cathy says that she noticed that her friends and people she knows have become more intentional about saying grace in recent years. “We tend to thank God not just for the food, but for the people who served it, the people who prepared it and the people who grew it, because I think in that way gratitude kind of spreads out.”

Can gratitude be expressed in the midst of tragedy or disaster? According to Cathy, absolutely. “My sister is on the front lines of hurricane repair in Corpus Christi, Texas, and she is a great model to me for gratitude. We have a choice about how we respond to something and whether we respond with our best selves. If you look at people who are looters, they are not practicing gratitude, they are practicing a greedy response and a scarcity mindset. My sister and her colleagues, and the people involved in their community, respond with ‘what can I do for you?’ We don’t have to be thankful for tragedy, but we can practice our humanity and our gratitude for our humanity.”

Reverend Cathy Tyndall Boyd says that it can be easy to forget to be grateful because it is a choice. “Everybody has struggles and we all have hard stuff. It’s a matter of intentionality, it’s a decision. I’m not talking about being happy, I’m talking about practicing gratitude which brings a deep joy with it. We’re not always going to be happy, but we are alive and we have people who love us.” NDN

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# AMY GULICK



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Her Tribe

By Narielle Living

Amy Gulick is the principal for Bright Beginnings, the early childhood education program in the Williamsburg-James City County school system. As a parent and an educator who lives and works in Williamsburg, she feels she has much to be thankful for.

Originally from Kentucky, Amy grew up in a small town. "I was raised by a tribe, if you will," she says. "I come from a large family, and as my mom finished school my aunts, grandmothers, cousins, and uncles all helped

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raise me. That actually formed the way that I think about community and raising children and doing what's best for kids, because I do feel like it takes a village. It's a community and family effort."

She attended Murray State University, not far from her hometown. While attending college she met her future husband, John, and upon graduation they decided they wanted to move. "We knew we wanted to get to the east coast but we weren't sure where we wanted to go," she says. They decided Amy would apply for teaching positions in different locations and they would move to the area that hired her. "I was first hired in Newport News, so that's how I ended up in Virginia," she explained.

They have lived in Williamsburg for 13 years, and Amy is extremely thankful to live where a priority is placed on family. "I have two sons, and when they were born I chose to stay home for a year and my husband chose to stay home for a year," she says. The boys are now in middle school and fourth grade, but when they were first born she quickly learned how supportive Williamsburg was to young

families.

"Williamsburg offers so much for families, and especially as a stay-at-home parent I was so grateful to be surrounded by a community that clearly has a priority on family. The amount of free things and affordable things make it accessible for all families coming from all backgrounds and economic status. We are never without anything to do in Williamsburg." These types of programs are vital to the community, as many young families would struggle without them. "We are lucky to have some great programs, and many of them are educational. I hope people understand the programs that are free are the programs helping families that cannot afford Busch Gardens or Water Country, but they can go to Jamestown for free or they can go to some of the theater productions that are free, or the tree lighting and holiday activities."

As an educator, she is especially grateful for the education system in Williamsburg. "I feel very fortunate, especially now as an administrator, to be in a community that values education, especially the way this community does," she says. "My predecessor did a phenomenal

job of building this program and getting the community to understand the importance of early childhood education and the importance of early intervention."

According to Amy, the Bright Beginnings program serves just under 400 students. As a preschool, they also work closely with the federal Head Start program. "Our teachers and our teams do developmental screenings for Head Start. If a student in Head Start requires special education services, our Bright Beginnings teachers go and serve those students. It's a wraparound thing. We also provide services to community preschools." Amy goes on to say that brain development research has shown that early intervention with students who are on a delayed trajectory can change a child's educational development. "I feel really fortunate to be in a place where that's common practice, because my original love from the time of being an undergrad was early childhood special education. To be in a community that values this program as much as it does has been phenomenal."

The community support reflects an attitude that she embraces. "We have an understand-

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ing of the investment that will pay off in the long run, not only for educational reasons but also for some of the social issues we deal with. We're a smart community."

Amy acknowledges that one of the contributing factors to her success in her career, and life, has been having mentors who have helped inspire her choices. "I've been really fortunate in Kentucky, Newport News and Williamsburg to have some phenomenal mentors, and I'm very thankful for the guidance they gave me. I think that's what pushed me into a leadership role, and someday I hope to be able to be a mentor for someone." Education is not easy, she adds, and public schools have to adapt and absorb most of the social issues. "Sometimes we don't always know how to handle that, but I think my mentors have been instrumental in helping me understand how to lead through those issues."

Amy recognizes that Williamsburg is a diverse and thriving area. "Beyond the amazing educational aspect of this community I feel so fortunate to be raising my boys in a community that embraces the arts and education and family engagement in general." As a family,

they enjoy nature and hiking, and have taken full advantage of their situated location to plan trips to places like Shenandoah National Park and West Virginia. "I feel really fortunate to be able to give my children those experiences on the weekend so we can unplug."

It is obvious that Amy is thankful for her children. "I'm so thankful I get to spend time with them and see the world through their eyes. Without being able to see the world through a child's eyes you can't always determine what your work should look like, or determine the 'why' of your work." She goes on to comment that children can act as a compass. "Sometimes your ethical and moral compass gets influenced by things, but if you can try to look through the eyes of a child it keeps your compass calibrated."

Taking a deep breath, a look of solemnity crosses her face. "It's interesting how gratitude shifts as things in the world happen. With all the disasters going on around us, I just feel incredibly fortunate. I look around, and I think we're so fortunate to have our homes, to have our family and community intact. My heart goes out to all those people who are just not as

fortunate as we are. Right now my gratitude is a basic one." She adds that she is appreciative of the simple things in her life that make her happy, including her family and the time they get to spend together. "My husband is also a teacher. Being in education gives us a schedule that lends itself to spending a lot of time together."

As a young mother who was able to participate in the community programs and activities Williamsburg offers, Amy became friends with a variety of people. "My husband and I have a group of people I consider to be my tribe. I don't know what I would do without them. I think I have some of the best friends anyone can ask for."

Amy is thankful that this area is as engaged and caring as it is and hopes that never changes. "I implore our community to always keep perspective. There is a wide range of backgrounds, and it's only going to change more as we welcome refugees or folks coming from some of these natural disasters. I hope that we continue to maintain our tolerance for all people and keep our eye on the things that are important." NDN

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# Secrets of a Centenarian

By Lillian Stevens



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Like many of his Williamsburg neighbors, Bernie Moritz is retired. He is devoted to Shawn, his 15-year old poodle, and he thoroughly enjoys playing Bridge.

However, unlike many of his neighbors, Bernie is 100 years old.

“At my age, I’m just grateful to get around,”

he says with a chuckle.

Joking that his home only has three steps to climb, Bernie has a quick wit. He still drives his own car, looks decades younger than his age, and insists that there is no one secret to his longevity.

“People do ask me what my secret is, and I

think independence has a lot to do with it. I am grateful for the fact that I can get around, that I am independent still.”

“Or maybe it’s just because I smoke cigars!” he declares.

Bernie hails from northern Indiana, having grown up in a town called Michigan City. Af-

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ter graduating from high school in 1934, he attended the University of Chicago where he earned his Bachelor's and Juris Doctor Degrees. After law school, Bernie was drafted into the Army where he served until the end of WWII in 1945.

"There is one interesting story from my military career," he recounts. "There I was this kid from northern Indiana who didn't know anything about the military. Despite the fact that I had a terminal degree and had co-written a book on government procurement before World War II, I still didn't know how to parlay that to my advantage."

After receiving his draft letter, Bernie wrote to headquarters for the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC), which was the military aviation arm of the U.S. between 1926 and 1941. "I notified them that I was about to be drafted as a private," he says. "They wrote back and asked for a photograph and had me answer a few questions, which I did."

Nonetheless, Bernie was inducted into the Army as a private, not realizing that his back-

ground made him eligible to go in with a commission. He served in the Army for five years before embarking on a career in military intelligence, procurement and government contracts.

He and his wife, Muriel, also a lawyer, were married in 1946. The couple had two children, a daughter and a son. They worked and raised their family in metropolitan Washington, D.C. "That's where we stayed until I retired from NASA as a deputy associate administrator."

It was 1977, and the couple chose to retire in Williamsburg, specifically the Kingsmill neighborhood.

They loved Williamsburg, the traffic wasn't bad, and the economics of it made sense. So, they sold their home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and built the ranch house Bernie lives in today.

"After 33 years in DC, I'd had my fill of traffic, so we built this home 30 years ago for our retirement years. My wife spent some time at William & Mary, so she was familiar with Williamsburg. Also, sometimes I came down here

on business for NASA, so I knew the area too."

Unfortunately, Bernie's wife passed away in 1992, so he has spent the past 25 years fending for himself and caring for his loyal canine. "He's as old as I am. That's another thing that keeps me moving – caring for my dog. When I was growing up, our household was never without a dog."

There's also the weekly Bridge games. Millions of people play Bridge worldwide in clubs, tournaments, online and with friends, making it one of the world's most popular card games. Bernie started playing at the tender age of six.

"My parents used to entertain their friends, and they'd play Bridge," he says. "When someone didn't show up, my brother and I were pressed into service. So, we learned a little Bridge when we were very young."

He continued to play through his college years but once he was married, he stopped.

"My wife didn't play cards, so between 1946 and 1992 I didn't touch a card because she didn't play. Then when she passed away, I decided to join one of the local Duplicate Bridge

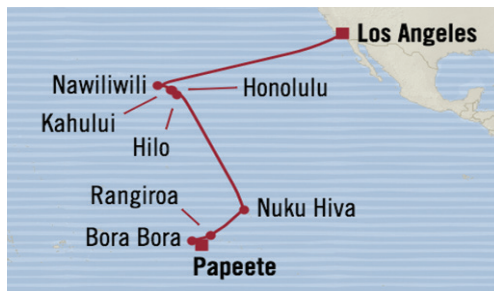
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clubs and have been playing since 1992.”

The games are sanctioned by the American Contract Bridge League.

“Duplicate Bridge players consist of millions of Bridge players across the country with Chapters in most American cities so the whole thing is organized on a national basis,” Bernie says. “I play with them twice a week.”

“One thing I enjoy with Bridge is you’ll never see exactly the same hand twice. There are 52 cards in a deck so they are distributed differently each time and there is nothing repetitive about it. It’s also interesting playing with different people because they have different abilities which you have to try and match. I think it’s the variety of the cards you hold and the objective of the game that keeps me in it.”

Bridge is a game of memory and strategy, but Bernie has been told that he is an intuitive player. “It’s not so much that I’m smart, but my instincts are good.”

Bernie plays with two different clubs in Williamsburg, one on Friday and one on Monday, health permitting. There’s a director of each

game, selected by the American Contract Bridge League, who is like an umpire.

The Friday Bridge game at Fords Colony starts at noon and lasts approximately three hours. On Mondays, Bernie plays at Queens Lake.

“There are normally 10 to 12 tables at each of the games and they have tournaments as well where there are 50 to 60 tables,” Bernie says. “I don’t play in tournaments anymore, because they last a long time, eight hours or so. I can’t leave my dog that long.”

When he’s not hanging out with Shawn, the poodle, or playing cards, Bernie also enjoys spending time with his family (although most of them live out-of-state). For the past 26 years he has hosted his entire family at an annual week-long family reunion, with the most recent gathering held at Emerald Isle.

“I’ve had my entire family at some resort where we rent a house. We always go to a different place – one year we went to Banff, Canada.”

Lately, Bernie says that his daughter plans the

trips. In addition to his two children and two grandchildren, a great-granddaughter recently joined the fold.

“There is also a nephew and his wife in Florida. So, we’re at about 10 to 12 people for the family reunions.

Bernie insists that folks who are having difficulty getting along with their own families should consider planning a family reunion. “Trust me on that,” he says. “It works.”

Among his many blessings, Bernie is most grateful for good health, family, the love of a dog, bi-weekly Bridge games and, of course, his independence. He says he’s also thankful that he came along during a time when schools focused more on American History and Civics and American life in general.

“These days, it’s more about sports, I think. There doesn’t seem to be the same appreciation for where they live, even in this community. When I was in high school, I still remember a lot of detail [by] the teachers who taught Civics and American History. I think we need more of that today.” NDN

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# HOWARD SAUNDERS, JR.



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

## AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Some call it luck, but Howard Saunders, Jr., manager of Waypoint Seafood and Grill, feels differently. “I’m grateful to God every day for guiding my life,” he says, speaking as a man who has had bold dreams fulfilled more than once.

“My mother gave me a toy fire truck with a siren and ladder that went up and down when I was a kid,” Howard remembers. “I wanted to be a fireman so bad, but back then firefighters in Toano didn’t look like me.”

As a teen, Howard’s older sister was already

busing tables at The Williamsburg Inn, and he soon followed. There he was exposed to a world of gracious living, leisurely dining, and fine food, kindling a burning ambition to experience such things for himself.

After graduating in 1974, his ticket out of

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Williamsburg came courtesy of an optimistic Army recruiter. Howard got a cash bonus if he signed up for the Infantry, even though the recruiter and he both knew his feet were as flat as a Tidewater cornfield. In Richmond for his physical, Howard told the doctor that those flat feet hadn't kept him from running track in high school. "I guess he figured if I could run, I could march, because he approved me and sent me on to basic training."

Slated for additional Airborne training, Howard and a buddy went to their sergeant and confessed a reluctance to jump from an airplane. "He told me if we didn't go Airborne, they'd send us to Germany. We thought that sounded like a fine idea."

Howard spent six years in a remote German town, guarding nuclear missiles and seeing the sights of Europe. "I was drinking my Fanta soda in a bar when a local man struck up a conversation. Using my poor German, we talked for awhile and then he invited me home to meet his wife. Before long, they invited me to rent their top floor." During the next four years they established a lifelong bond. The older couple loved Howard like a foster son. "My son needs a garage for his car!" Mr. Everett said, so he built me one," Howard says, still amazed.

Six years in, Sergeant Saunders decided to go home to Toano. "I figured if I couldn't find a civilian job that paid at least \$5.00 an hour, I could always rejoin with no loss of rank." Colonial Williamsburg (CW) paid Howard \$5.05 an hour as an armed security guard. Six cents less, and his life would have been very different, indeed. "I was working from 7:00-3:00 for CW, so I was free to make extra money by waiting tables at Kingsmill Country Club," he says.

Driving past the Williamsburg firehouse one day, Howard saw Firefighter Eric Stone standing out front, dressed in his uniform, "Eric was a black man, like me," Howard says. "Eric told me, 'If you volunteer, we'll pay for your school.'" The coals of Howard's long-deferred childhood dream began to glow again. "That fire was still in my heart!" he exclaims.

A year later, he was still working security full time at CW, plus his second job at Kingsmill, and was volunteering as an EMT on his days off. "That's a lot, but when it's something you really want to do, that's okay," Howard says.

Rumors that the fire chief really liked his work ethic made him wonder if there might be a chance to turn pro. "Eric, by then my close friend, asked the chief about me and I was encouraged to apply. One month later I was a paid firefighter, and the happiest 30-year-old kid in the world!"

Howard was doing what he had always wanted to do: help people. "I worked there for 23 years, and there was never a day that I hated to go to work," he says.

As much as he loved his job, Howard eventually realized that his true calling was the hospitality industry. Firefighters worked ten 24-hour shifts a month, so he was able to work regularly at the Kingsmill country club, then owned and operated by Anheuser-Busch. CEO August Busch III, great-grandson of the beer dynasty's founder, was a frequent visitor to Williamsburg.

"I had waited on him and for some reason he took a liking to me," Howard recalls modestly. "So, the Kingsmill general manager says, 'From this day forward, you're going to be Mr. Busch's personal assistant when he's here.' 'What's that?' I asked, and he said, 'Just do whatever Mr. Busch wants.'"

When Busch was expected, Howard's buddies would cover his shifts at the firehouse. Howard would meet the executive's jet at the airport and

take him to the corporate house in Kingsmill, where Howard managed all the details of Busch's stay. For several days running, Howard would be there to wake him and stay until his employer retired to bed, then drive back home to Toano. "My day with Mr. Busch began at 4:30 in the morning and ended at 10:30 at night," he remembers. Busch's wife accompanied him occasionally and was the one who suggested that Howard stay at the executive mansion with them while on the job.

As always, Howard took pride in going above and beyond the norm. He'd rise before dawn to check the news and stock market. "Mr. Busch would always ask me at breakfast, 'What's happening, Howard?'" Combination concierge, driver, and personal assistant, Howard knew anyone would love to have his job, so he always told himself, "I take nothing for granted. I'm only as good as their last visit." The better they got to know one another, the more Busch was impressed with Howard's wisdom and integrity. Soon Busch was inviting him to sit in on meetings with vice-presidents and to give his opinion. "That was the most incredible feeling. He trusted me," Howard says.

The Busch family was generous in showing their appreciation, too. "When I said I was taking my late sister's three teenaged boys I was raising to an NBA game in Cleveland, I was told to call Peggy in St. Louis." Headquarters arranged box seats right on the floor and a warm-up session with the players. It was a good lesson for the boys. "Mr. Busch did this because of what I bring to the table. Hard work pays off, so work hard!" he told his nephews.

When Howard was retiring from the fire department, the vice-president of Anheuser-Busch's Human Resources department called with a job offer as the company's Ambassador of Service. He would still be Busch's personal assistant, but would also be in charge of anything related to hospitality and service for the company. Life was good. Howard travelled internationally, stayed at the best hotels and dined like a prince, both for business and for pleasure.

"All good things must come to an end, and when the company was taken over in 2008, Mr. Busch shook my hand and said, 'Thanks, Howard, for everything you've done for the family. It was a good run.' And it was."

Howard had worked for Kingsmill since he was a young man, but after 30 years began to wonder if there might be something else. "Money was good, but it ain't always about the money," he says with a smile.

Hans Schadler, executive chef at The Williamsburg Inn when Howard was a busboy there, and his daughter, Tina, opened Waypoint Seafood and Grill and ran it themselves for two years. Today, Howard is the restaurant manager. "They're great people," Howard says. "I'm old school and so is Chef Hans. He's cooked for kings, queens, and presidents, so for the last four years they've both given me the tools to do the manager job and appreciated the job I do."

Howard is once again having fun. "It's fun to come to work, meet people, and fun to see them walk out with a smile and tell me they can't wait to come back." His philosophy is that anyone's kitchen can have an off night, but even when the food is superb, if the service is terrible diners won't give them a second chance.

"Seeing people happy because of something I help provide is the best feeling in the world. I'm not perfect, and things happen, but I'm grateful that God gives us another chance to get it right," Howard Saunders says. "When I look back over my life, from coming up the son of a fisherman in Toano to where I am now, I can only laugh and say, 'Dreams really can come true!'" NDN

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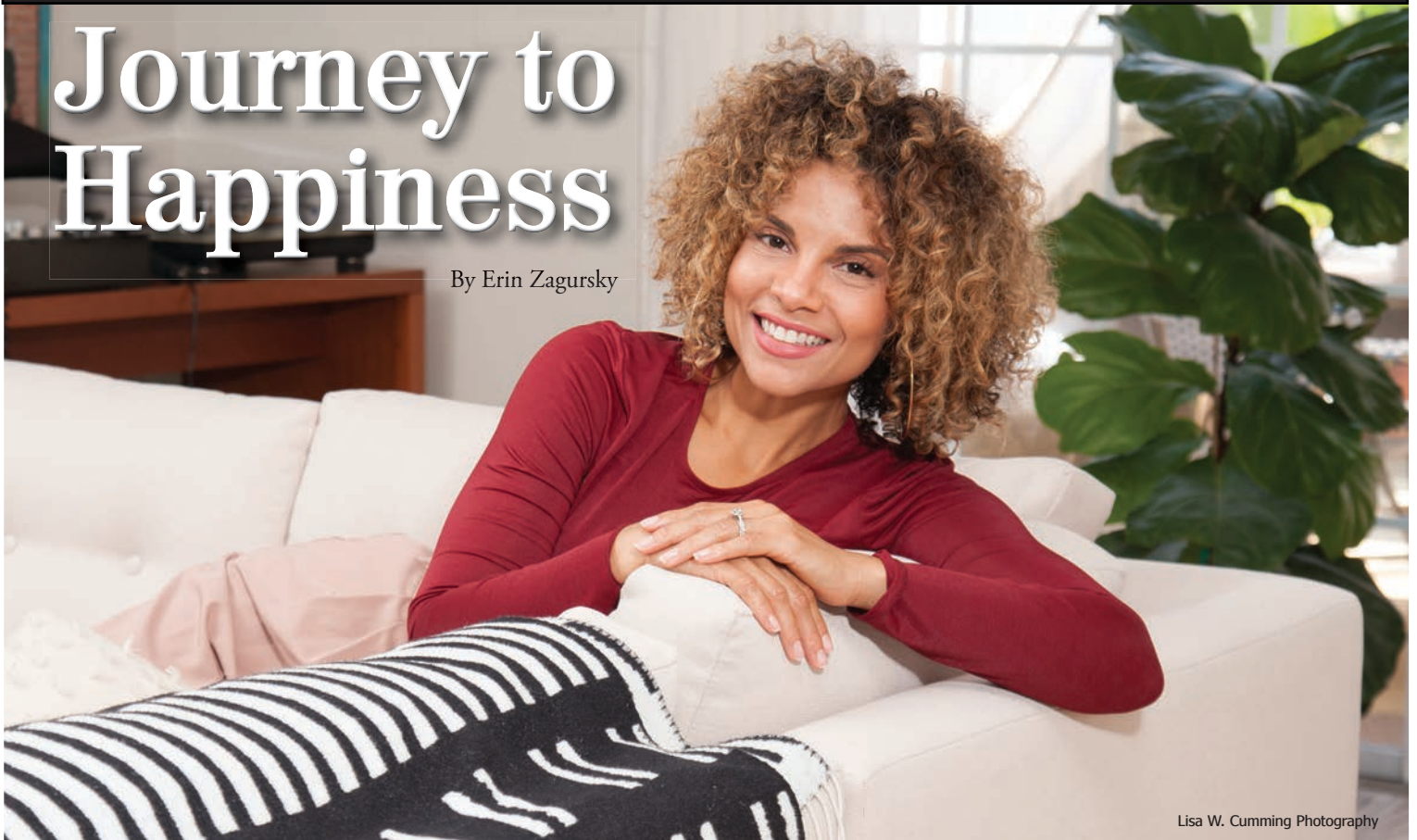


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# Journey to Happiness

By Erin Zagursky



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Comedy became a part of Isaura Ramirez's life when the issues facing her were no laughing matter.

She had retired as a captain from the U.S. Army the previous year, was running a business in Suffolk and caring for her 2-year-old daughter – all while struggling with anxiety, depression and fibromyalgia.

One day, her husband, Armando, saw a flyer in Starbucks advertising a free stand-up comedy class for veterans. Without Isaura knowing, Armando signed her up for the class after beg-

ging the organizer, who had already capped it, to let her in.

"It was at William & Mary, and they were offering a free lunch, so I was like, I could use the free lunch," she jokes, adding that she loves to try new things.

It was a decision that would change her life, offering Isaura an expressive outlet, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and the friendships and community she had been seeking.

"There's no better way of connecting with somebody than making them laugh," she says.

Isaura was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where her parents had moved from the Dominican Republic. Isaura enlisted in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard through ROTC in order to help pay for college. After she finished her degree, she went on active duty as an officer in 2006.

Her first duty station was in Mannheim, Germany, where she met her husband, a fellow logistics officer. In 2008, she deployed to Iraq where she helped train the Iraqi Army as part of a logistics advisory team.

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In a TEDx talk that Isaura would give at William & Mary years later, she revealed that while she was initially excited to be in Germany, she soon began to feel isolated and built a wall around herself in response to remarks that superiors and subordinates would make about her, such as joking about things like her accent.

She felt like she was wearing a mask every day in order to fit in and thought it was working until one day, in the summer of 2013, she ended up in the hospital for major depression and suicidal ideation. She was given medication, a treatment plan and then released. Although she had been following her treatment plan, the Army decided she should be medically retired.

In the midst of transitioning civilian life, Isaura, who had been stationed at Fort Eustis, lost a baby through an ectopic pregnancy and was told she would not be able to have more children.

It was during this difficult time, while also struggling to maintain the frozen yogurt business she and her husband had opened in Suffolk, that Isaura began the comedy boot camp

offered through the Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP), a nonprofit organization for veterans started by a William & Mary student.

She and her husband enjoyed going to some of the local comedy clubs, and comedy was always on her bucket list, but she never really considered herself funny. Still, when she found out Armando had signed her up, she decided to give it a shot.

“My expectation was that I was going to be really bad, and I was,” she says. “The first week, it was awful.”

But she was determined to stay with it and use it as an opportunity to meet new people. Although she had lived in Williamsburg for four years, she didn't know anyone because she and Armando were always working. In addition, Isaura found it difficult to fit in in Williamsburg, so the class gave her an opportunity to try to find her place in the community and the chance to meet people she could relate to. That was her main motivation, she explains.

“And then comedy was the icing on the cake.”

Eventually, round the third or fourth week,

Isaura began getting laughs in class, and she was hooked.

“I said, ‘OK, I got this. There's like a formula to this; I can make this work,’” she says. “After that, it feels so great when you write something and you get up in front of people and you get that laughter. It's like a drug. You're like, ‘That's amazing! I want to do that again and again and again!’”

When it came time for the graduation show, Isaura assumed that was the end of her comedy “career.” But she was immediately asked by the owner of the Williamsburg Comedy Club to host a show the next night.

“I was awful, horrible, but I got really good feedback, and I got emails from people who were like, ‘Hey I want to book you for another show,’” she says. “I really didn't think anything was going to come out of this. I thought it was five minutes — Okay, bye, back to selling frozen yogurt — but the opportunities kept coming and I couldn't turn them down.”

Since graduating from the comedy boot camp, Isaura has performed across the country with some of her most memorable gigs taking



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place at Gotham Comedy Club, Walter Reed Hospital and the White House. She has also given speeches to Strayer University, the 2017 National Women Veterans Summit and at the Fort Eustis Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in addition to the TEDx talk she recorded at W&M, another bucket list item, she says.

And yet, Isaura doesn't want to be a stand-up comedian.

"Although if somebody shows up and says, 'Here's some money. Do you want to do this?' I'll be writing some jokes," she says. "But for now, it's more about the service, helping others, giving back, because they helped me so much that I want to be able to share this with as many people as possible."

She not only found the community she was seeking through comedy, but she also regained some of the confidence she had lost in her communication skills after joining the Army.

"My Bachelor's Degree is in Journalism, communications, and everyone growing up was always like, 'You're a great communicator,'" she says. "And then I went on active duty to my first real job, and everybody's telling me

that what I thought was the best thing I could do, that I'm awful at it. I was like, 'Well, if I can't do this, then what can I do?' because I thought this was my calling, what I loved to do.

"So really, comedy has just given me a little more self-esteem, just realizing that everybody's different and it's good to be different."

It's one of the messages that Isaura conveys to her students now as an instructor for the twice-yearly comedy boot camp now being held in Norfolk. Since her own graduation in 2015, she has been volunteering with the Armed Services Arts Partnership, which also offers writing, music and other opportunities to veterans, but she's found that she most enjoys helping with the comedy boot camp.

And while participants may never perform comedy again after graduating, Isaura hopes they leave with some new skill, even if it's just how to tell a joke.

"I think everybody gets something different out of it. And I tell people when they come to class, we're not trying to make stand-up comedians; that's not the goal of the program," she says. "We just want to give you a skill, and we

want to give you a platform. We want to give you a way to express yourself, and what better way than doing comedy where you can say the craziest things?"

For Isaura Ramirez, she is grateful that her husband went to Starbucks that day, grateful that she gave something new a shot, and grateful for the opportunities and friendships that chance afforded her.

"I'm just glad that I didn't back away from it," she says. "I would've missed out on so much."

In addition to her continued role with ASAP, Isaura is now a certified Zumba instructor at American Family Fitness and a fellow with the Mission Continues Foundation in William & Mary's Office of Diversity & Inclusion, where she hopes to continue to make an impact on the community.

"I think there's work here to be done," she says. "I'm kind of past the stage of thinking about me all the time or chasing money or whatever. It's more about, I've been given a platform, so I want to use it to help other people." NDN

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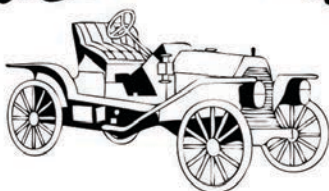
# Jeopardy!

By Brandy Centolanza

If there is one thing Nicole Throckmorton, an English teacher at Warhill High School, is most grateful for these days, it's community support, which has come from the smaller community within Warhill High School and the Williamsburg-James City County School Division as well as the Williamsburg community as

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a whole.

Nicole surely felt that real sense of community last year when she competed on the popular trivia game show Jeopardy! during the Teachers Tournament.

Nicole, who loved to play along with the game show while growing up in Surry County, took the Jeopardy! online test three times throughout the years before being asked to audition to be a contestant. She tried out for the program twice, once in 2013, and again two years later. News spread quickly when she was finally selected to be a part of the game. The Jeopardy! episodes she appeared in aired in May 2016.

"The community response was great," Nicole says. "I had students who I taught years ago who reached out to me. That was lovely. Now, we stay connected on social media. The school division threw me a party at Warhill High School for my first show. I couldn't believe how many people showed up to watch. Everybody was so supportive and so proud of me. It was nice. That is tremendously gratifying."

Nicole prepped for the show simply by watching other contestants compete. She won \$5,000 in the quarter final round of the Jeopardy! tournament and advanced to the semi-final

round, though she did not make it to the final competition. Still, she took home \$10,000 for making it to the semi-finals. In addition, Nicole received a \$2,500 award that was given to each teacher. She used that money toward the purchase of Amazon Kindles for her students. Nicole is thankful for the experience of being a part of Jeopardy! The tournament taped in two segments in California and in Washington, D.C.

"It was perfect timing because I think every four years they take the show on the road," she says. "I lucked out that they happened to tape part of the tournament at the Constitutional Hall in D.C. We also went on a tour of the White House. It was a thrill."

Nicole enjoyed meeting Jeopardy! host Alex Trebek and working with all the producers and people behind the scenes of the show.

"Everyone was so kind," she says. She still keeps in touch with some of the other contestants from the Teachers Tournament, who have their own private little community on social media. She also continues to test her trivia skills through the online trivia league, Learned League.

"I love trivia," she says. "I met some of the

best people on Jeopardy! It was so much fun." Teaching in general has been a gratifying experience for Nicole, though it wasn't her first career choice. Nicole was both an English major and a History major while studying at the University of Virginia.

"I was always interested in history and always a reader," she says. "Virginia has so much history with the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. I think my love of history, though, actually came from reading novels that were set in other time periods."

After college graduation, Nicole returned to the area, where she found a job with Colonial Williamsburg.

"I was hired as a historical interpreter," she says. "I used to give tours at Raleigh Tavern and Wetherburn's Tavern. I got to dress up. It was a lot of fun. I think the job was customized for me. It was right up my alley."

Nicole was initially hired just for a summer, but then became a full-time employee.

Soon, she began giving tours of the Capital Building. One day, after interaction with a group of people on the tour, she came to the realization that she wanted to pursue a career in education.

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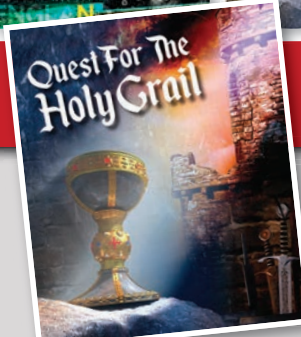
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“It just made me really want to be a teacher,” she explains.

Nicole went on to study at the College of William & Mary, where she earned a Master’s Degree in Education with an emphasis on secondary English. She was a student teacher at Jamestown High School the year it opened, and then was hired at the new high school full-time.

“Again, the timing was perfect,” she says. “The new school opened just as I was available.” Nicole spent ten years teaching English at Jamestown High School, and then transferred to Warhill High School when it opened its doors in 2007. She instructs roughly 100 students each year, most of them tenth and eleventh grade students.

“Every day is different,” she says. “Every class is different. That’s what keeps me in this job. Of course, working with the kids remains the best thing about teaching for me. I just love open house every year and meeting all my new students for the first time.”

She enjoys working with administrators and colleagues to help build a sense of school community and pride among the teachers and students, a challenge in today’s world where cell

phones and earphones are constant distractors. “Our new principal really wants the students engaged, and I appreciate that,” Nicole says.

“It doesn’t take a lot to show connection or establish a connection with each other. We want the students to be engaged. I think the most important thing is connecting with other people and helping people where they need help.”

Beyond her role as a teacher at Warhill High School, Nicole also served for years as sponsor for the Student Council Association. Not surprisingly, Nicole currently coaches the high school’s academic Scholastic Bowl team, comprised mostly of seniors. She also sponsors the school’s Chess Club and Model UN team. Model UN is an educational simulation activity in which students learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations.

“Model UN helps students see the world outside of Williamsburg and James City County,” Nicole says. Interacting with students outside of the classroom through these various activities “has been a lot of fun,” she says. “We are building a community through this school, even if the students don’t know it.”

Nicole also grateful for friends as well as her

family: her parents and a brother, who has four children she loves to dote on. But she especially loves to spoil the newest addition to her home: an American Foxhound puppy named Thelma Lou. The puppy is named after a character in The Andy Griffith Show. Nicole and Thelma Lou enjoy frequent walks after school throughout Nicole’s neighborhood, where her neighbors have grown fond of the dog.

“She’s very social,” says Nicole. “She is just delightful.”

Nicole feels the same way about living in Williamsburg.

“Two of my favorite places in Virginia are Charlottesville and Williamsburg,” she says. “They are both so dear to me. Williamsburg is just so dear to me.”

Nicole still loves to visit Colonial Williamsburg, as well as the Williamsburg Regional Library and Jamestown Beach Event Park.

“I love what they’ve done with Jamestown Beach,” Nicole Throckmorton says. “I love to be outside, and there are a lot of nice parks around here. It’s nice to see how much we really care about our community here. There is just so much to love about Williamsburg.” NDN

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# BACKYARD ECOSYSTEM

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Corey Miller Photography

Starting and being successful with a specialty retail business takes passion, knowledge, a support system, and great employees, according to Melinda Cousins, owner of Backyard Birder.

Melinda's passion for the natural world ignited at an early age. She grew up on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "I'm a diehard Steelers fan," she says. "As a kid, I was always outside getting dirty, knots in my hair, a real tomboy. Where my family lived was very wooded, and I have a lot of cousins, so we played football, softball and ran around the woods together."

Melinda attended Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. "I loved the school. It was

a small, women's college in a nice environment. They had a program there called the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL). VWIL is a leadership course. With that, we participated in ROTC. I did the Navy ROTC - Marine option and ended up getting a scholarship to go into the Marine Corps."

While at Mary Baldwin, Melinda took a three-week immersion field biology course. "We were up at seven and on the bus by eight o'clock to go out into the field. Half the course was ornithology and half was botany. The ornithology part was fascinating to me. I loved being out learning about birds, looking for them, learning their behaviors and all that went on

with their lives. That started my love of birds." After graduating, Melinda went into the Marine Corps. "I did my four years of active duty. I'm still a reservist."

She earned a Master's of Science Degree in Environmental Resources from Virginia Tech. "That was a startling experience," she says. "I learned so much about what is going right and what is going wrong in the environment. The coursework opened up my eyes to the amount of things we do to the environment and the negative effects. That was disheartening during the course, and it led me to think: What can I do to be more involved with conservation and nature?"

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Throughout school and her Marine Corps life, Melinda had been a birder. "I had bird feeders hanging outside my first apartment window. I would pull amazing birds. With every house I've had, I took my feeder systems and learned more and more about the areas' birds." When Melinda married, her family moved to Williamsburg where her spouse had an optometry practice.

Melinda knew a specialty store devoted to birding was where she wanted to focus her energies. She recognizes the people who come into her store are just like her. "I have experienced every headache and frustration from squirrels and raccoons and deer. I know what people are going through with their feeders. Not to say I'm an expert in everything, but I understand when people ask how to keep squirrels out of their feeder. I've been there and know what works for me."

The customers she serves at the store range from the casual birder, positioning a feeder near a window where they can observe bird behavior throughout the day, to the serious ornithologist, going out in the field to watch for a wide variety of birds. She also enjoys working with children to help them start with their first feeders.

"Quality in feed matters for brood success

and reduction of stress for the birds because they don't have to forage so hard," she explains. "Most of my customers see increased brood success when they actively feed year-round. You should feed year round; it is good for the birds." She says that a well-fed bird family can produce additional broods. "For the past two years, I have seen fledgling blue birds late August/early September in my yard. That's good. You can feel good about what you are doing in that small ecosystem of your backyard."

The surprising part of the store for Melinda is how much she enjoys helping people with their questions about feeding birds effectively. "They'll come back in excited by their results from their new feed or new feeder to tell me of the success. Sometimes I go on a site visit to someone's home. I'll help them reposition their feeders. They come back in and let me know how well it works. A lot of times, it's just a matter of moving a feeder to a new position or trying something new, like a new type of seed that doesn't attract squirrels."

That sharing of knowledge was a big revelation for Melinda in making her specialty shop successful. "I had never run a business before. The Marine Corps was a whole different world." Melinda's enchantment for birds spills

over onto her customers as she shares what she's learned through the years. "I want the customer to have the same knowledge that I have. Sometimes I get over-enthused. I'm afraid I overwhelm them with information. I remind myself that they don't need to know everything all at once. They can always come back and ask me at anytime!"

Another success factor she found was to have a support system, financially and emotionally. "That is huge. Opening a business is stressful. Use your resources. Talk to other business owners and bounce ideas off each other. One of the best things I did was go to Richmond and talk to the people at Yard Birds, an independent bird store. They were a wealth of knowledge."

Good employees are the key to keeping happy customers, she adds. "You can't be successful without employees who know the business as well as you. If it's birding or knitting or bicycles or outdoor furniture, you have to have people who know just as much as you because you can't be the only resource. When you are a specialty retailer, you need employees who can step in when you are out of the shop."

"You have to start somewhere. That's how I think of the store. [It's] my way of starting care for our natural world." NDN



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# FIELD HOCKEY

By Greg Lilly, Editor

In Emma Clifton's native Australia, the sport of field hockey kept everyone in town active. "I've been playing field hockey since I can remember, probably three or four years old," she says. "Both my brothers played. It's a massive sport for boys in Australia. It's one of our big national sports."

She grew up in the small, rural town of Loomberah in New South Wales. "I come off a 500 acre cattle farm. It was very remote. To get to my elementary or high school or to shops was 30 minutes by car. To get to a highly populated town was a six hour drive. It was quite isolated. But sport is massive. That's how a lot of people get out of smaller, rural towns by playing a sport, if they don't want to go into farming or agribusiness. We played a lot of sports."

Being in a remote town wasn't a problem when Emma's field hockey team wanted to find competitors. There was no reason to have a travel team. "That's a big difference between America and Australia. We had six to seven clubs in our town, so we played each other. Everybody plays. It is unusual for someone to not play. We have grade-levels. If you are really good, you would play A-grade field hockey." The levels, A-grade, B-grade and C-grade ensured people competed with the same skilled players.

Age groups didn't matter. "There are clubs

available for 60 year olds, 50 year olds, etc," Emma explains. "That's why it is split up by how good you are. If you are 15 and really good, you could play with someone who is 40 and really good. That's how we get to play a lot without travelling so far."

As Emma grew up and played more and more field hockey, she displayed a real talent

along with a vigorous work ethic. She was selected from her state to travel to Sidney to play in several national tournaments.

"At one tournament, three or four coaches sat in the stands on recruiting trips. One was from Kent State, and she asked me if I had thought of coming to America to play. I was really torn about leaving because I had started



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representing Australia at the under 16 level in Junior Australia and travelling a lot through Europe, South Africa and Singapore. I did a lot of traveling with Junior Australia. I was getting to a point I needed to make a decision. Coming from a working class family, we knew paying for the next step in my education could mean paying back college loans over the next 15 years.”

Emma was good enough that she could potentially represent Australia in the future. “But, I also had that American college opportunity,” she says of her dilemma about leaving her home. “I ended up taking an official visit with Kent State and Old Dominion University (ODU).”

She ended up at William & Mary by complete chance. “The W&M coach, Tess Ellis, who is Australian, contacted my coach. They were friends. She knew I was visiting ODU and asked my coach if I’d like to visit William & Mary while I was so close.”

A quick drive up from Norfolk for the afternoon hooked Emma. “I loved the team at W&M. I was really torn about coming to W&M because I was looking at Kent State as well. I took a coin out of my pocket. My mom was with me. I was so torn. I liked both field

hockey programs. I was into interior design, and Kent State has a massive interior design program. So, I took out the coin and flipped it. W&M won the toss.

Emma started all four years. “I played 74 out of my 75 games. The only time I didn’t start was when I rolled my ankle, and the coach said I had to stay on the sideline because I’d missed practice all week. Otherwise, I would have broken the record for all time games started. I was very honored and privileged and I worked really hard to get there. I captained my senior year.”

Today, Emma teaches and coaches at Walsingham Academy. “My mom was a teacher for 35 years. She recently retired. She visited Walsingham last year, and my class got to meet her. She was a really big influence on me to become an educator.”

Field hockey is physically demanding for the players. “It’s a lot of running, start and stopping, and hard on the players’ knees, hamstrings, quads. Players benefit from really strong hand-eye coordination.” Like soccer and lacrosse, the ability to run for an extended amount of time is essential. “We have a bunch of track girls on our team. It is very suited for them because you jog then sprint then jog and sprint.”

Field hockey is catching on in the United

States. “In Australia, field hockey is huge. In Europe, it is massive. It’s a big sport outside the U.S., but it is developing here. When I was growing up, I played against boys. It is a mixed sport until about 13 or 14, and then it is divided between boys and girls.” Anyone watching a game sees that it is a very physical sport. “But, you can be physical in a safe way,” Emma explains. “It is good for girls to show aggression and passion in that they really care about what they are doing. It is empowering for girls to have that ability.”

She hopes girls will find success in field hockey and that it will lead to other parts of their lives. “I always say that I am the most blessed person to experience everything that I have. I received a scholarship for my college education. I am blessed with that opportunity.”

The number one reason Emma wanted to get into coaching field hockey was because it was such a positive experience in Australia and at William & Mary. “I want other people to realize what a great sport it is. I like coaching the high school age group because you get to form relationships with the girls at the age that they want to do well and please the coach. They want to work hard and get better. Watching their improvement is incredible.” NDN

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# Where Dreams Begin

By Greg Lilly, Editor

“Everyone has their own path,” Tiffany Haas reflects on earning a starring role on the Broadway stage. “There were people I was with in *Wicked* who were History majors, dropped out, and then decided to move to New York. But they didn’t just get lucky; they went to hun-

dreds of auditions. They did the work.”

Tiffany’s theatrical path started in Yorktown where she grew up around dance at her mother’s three dance schools. “Her studios have been around for 37 years. Before I could walk, I was in the studio with her. I think hearing the music

all the time and so used to that culture of being on stage was all I knew. I loved it.”

Along with dance, Tiffany loves to sing. “I sang with the Virginia Opera’s Children’s Chorus for a few seasons. That’s where I fell in love with the idea of classical music.” In middle

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school, Tiffany attended Hampton Roads Academy (HRA). “Alice Herring was the head master of the middle school. I see her in the audience when I perform locally.”

Tiffany’s mother encouraged her musical and dance talents. Her father was a bit more practical about his daughter’s future, but noticed Tiffany struggle academically. “My father is a financial planner, a military guy, went to West Point,” Tiffany describes. “I was not ‘soaring’ at Hampton Roads Academy (HRA) I wanted to be in shows, I wanted to perform. I wanted to do what I felt I was good at. Alice Herring pulled my dad into her office one day. She convinced him that I should be in the Governor’s School where I could thrive. Just because finance was his path, she told him, ‘it doesn’t have to be your daughter’s.’ That made him re-think HRA for me.” She began attending the Governor’s School, which meant commuting to Norfolk every day. “That was so worth it,” she says.

“The Governor’s School is what led me to an opera program for college, the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.” While in Cincinnati, Tiffany had a shot on the national stage. “I grew up watching Miss America. I decided to compete in the Miss Ohio pageant. And I won.” She took a year off from college to compete in the Miss America pageant and have the Miss Ohio experience. When she returned to school, she switched majors from Opera to Musical Theatre, in part because she found that most of the Opera students continued in school to earn advanced degrees.

As an Opera major, she found that most of her classmates continued in school to earn advanced degrees. “I just wanted to be on stage. What I liked about the Musical Theatre program is the Showcase element of graduation process.” The Showcase event took the graduating class to New York City to perform for a select audience of theatre professionals like casting directors, talent agents, Broadway directors and music directors. “It is a ‘silver platter’ opportunity,” Tiffany says. “More and more college, university and conservatories are doing that as part of their musical theatre programs.” She describes the Showcase as a crucial opportunity for graduating theatre majors. But, just getting in front of a Broadway producer doesn’t guarantee anything. The performer has to fit what they are searching for, which changes day to day.

“I had 72 no’s before my first yes when I

moved to New York City. I counted every one. That was 72 rejections before getting cast in Wicked. That is normal, if not lucky. It’s perseverance to keep going and to believe in yourself. You have to set a goal and take the steps to reach that goal. I remember calling my parents when I first moved to New York after my third no. I was sobbing. My dad said, ‘This is the third one. If you give up after three, you are not cut out for this.’ I knew he was right. I’m very grateful to have had their support.”

Her advice to aspiring performers is to look for schools that offer a Showcase. “Talent will shine through, but it is also who you know. Being able to have that opportunity with a casting director and to have the school’s reputation behind you, that is an advantage.” From her Showcase opportunity, Tiffany had twelve agents and managers asking to meet with her. The casting director from Wicked was one of them. “That began seven rounds of auditions for the show. I was cast on my eighth audition.”

Performers are contracted for a certain amount of time on a particular show. “When I auditioned for Wicked, one time it was to play Glenda on the tour; one time it was to play Glenda on Broadway or to stand-by for Glenda on Broadway or to be the understudy on tour and also do a dance part. There are all these different positions.” Her first booking with Wicked was for the Broadway production – an understudy and to sing and dance in the ensemble. After a couple of years in that position, Tiffany left for a role in *The Drowsy Chaperone* on tour. She also sang with symphonies around the country before returning to Wicked to play Glenda on tour and then she was moved to Broadway to play Glenda.

“They shuffle us around. But once you’re a witch and the costumes are built for you, they use you where they can.”

Tiffany worked in New York City for eleven years. From touring and Broadway, she found that she constantly searched for a make-up bag that would work for her. “There was never anything that held what I wanted in one bag. I had to keep up with several cosmetics bags.” Between shows one Saturday, she went across the street to a drug store. “I bought a lot of cheap cosmetics bags and cut them up and reassembled them with duct tape to how I wanted one to be. My dresser (each leading role has their own dresser to ensure the costumes are ready and help with their quick changes) saw what I did. She said she would make one out of fabric so I could see

what it was like.” The design worked for her. She found a sample maker in the Garment District to create samples for her. “Now four years later, I have a line called FullBeat. That played a big part in my next direction.”

The name FullBeat is a theatre term. “They beat your face with a sponge getting you ready. The Full Beat is when your false eyelashes are on, your wig is on, your make-up is ready for the stage. I realized that my whole mentality has been like Full Beat, to put myself out there one hundred percent, no regrets – set a goal and achieve it.”

When Tiffany moved to New York, she never thought she would leave. She performed with symphonies and flew out of New York to the locations around the country. When she finished Wicked, she thought it was time for something different. “I didn’t want to jump to a different city. My mother has these incredible dance schools. I reconnected with my high school sweetheart, and we decided to move back here together. We married last October. We live in New Town. That didn’t even exist when I grew here. That’s a fun discovery. Everything fell into place to come back here.”

She had hit the pinnacle of musical theatre, a starring role on the biggest musical on Broadway. She was ready to achieve something new. “A lot of people in the theatre world, in New York City in particular, will say, ‘You’re not doing Wicked. What show are you doing now?’ Sometimes they are surprised that I started a cosmetic bag line and teach master classes all over the country. Their world is the next Broadway show. That’s great, but not for me.”

Along with conducting master classes, Tiffany has a summer program: Destination Broadway. “I audition students all over the country. The program is held in New York City for one week. I connect the students with Broadway professionals like the casting director who cast me for Wicked, my talent agents. Broadway performers teach the dance classes. They are learning *Cats* from the lead cat! We put the students through mock auditions. It’s a one-week intensive. Voice lessons every day, acting classes every day with Broadway professionals.”

Tiffany Haas has returned to her mother’s studios to add musical theatre classes. “Last year was our first year, and it has grown for this year. It’s fun and exciting. The kids are adorable. They have no fear of judgment. I love that I get to do this at the Academy of Dance where all my dreams began.” NDN



Corey Miller Photography

# Lifesaver

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Officer Monique Marchand of the James City County Police Department is one of the officers charged with administering the Project Lifesaver program for the county. “Project Lifesaver is for people who have such conditions as dementia, Alzheimer’s, autism, Down’s syndrome or any type of traumatic brain injury,” she explains. “It’s a program for individuals who have a tendency to wander, and if they do

wander out, they would not be able to communicate effectively who they are, where they live or provide contact information for someone to come and get them.”

The program is national, although not every jurisdiction has implemented it. “But every state has it somewhere within the state,” Monique adds. “In the four years I’ve been in Community Services, we have not had to put

out an extensive search for anyone. There are four of us in the James City County unit and all are certified by Project Lifesaver. We are also training some patrol officers to be available in the off hours to be able to respond right away.”

Clients enrolled in the program, wear a transmitter strapped to their wrist or ankle. The program requires that someone stays with the client 24 hours a day. In the event the caregiver

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discovers the client has wandered off, they are to conduct a quick search in and outside of the home, and if they are unsuccessful in locating the person they then alert the James City County Police. The Project Lifesaver database includes pertinent information about the client along with the radio frequency of the wristband transmitter. Armed with that information and a receiver, the police officers can track the person by the specific radio frequency and bring them back home to the caregiver.

“It’s not GPS,” Monique says. “Our testing found that GPS loses its signal under a structure or under trees.” Radio frequency makes locating the person fast and direct. “The quicker we can start the search, the quicker we find them.” Recently, Project Lifesaver acquired a drone if there is a need for it to assist in the search. “Typically, a search for a lost individual is completed within 30 minutes – that’s U.S. wide.”

Officer Mo (as some of the James River Elementary students call her) grew up in Portsmouth, Virginia in the Churchland section. She graduated from Churchland High School in 2000 and from there went to Penn State.

“I went to college as a business major. I found the classes not that interesting to me. I

switched to Criminal Justice, which had classes I enjoyed. I wanted to go into the FBI. When I graduated from college, I checked about applying to the FBI, they wanted people who were at least 23 and had some sort of law enforcement experience.”

She decided she needed to acquire a few years’ experience before applying to the FBI. She was hired by her hometown police department. “I worked for the Portsmouth Police Department for two years then transferred to James City County. I found that while I worked in Portsmouth, I dealt with a lot of people I went to high school with. It wasn’t good to be in that situation.”

Now Monique has a six year old daughter and the lure of the FBI life has been replaced with the contentment of a steady, quiet and friendly community.

“In Portsmouth, we were always on the go, call after call after call. Here in James City County, it can be like that, but for the most part, the call volume is not what it is in Portsmouth. Our citizens here are excellent. Many people come here to retire, and we also get a lot of tourists. People are friendly. It’s a different community personality than in Portsmouth.”

As part of Community Services for the James City County Police Department, Monique acts as a crime prevention officer. “I am in charge of the Grove area. Typically, I educate citizens on ways to not become victims of crime – how to protect their homes, stay safe during the holiday seasons, avoid scams and frauds. I do presentations for neighborhood and community groups. I also act as a school resource officer (SRO) for James River Elementary School. Our schools all have full-time school resource officers except for the elementary schools. So, we as crime prevention officers act as the SROs for the elementary schools.”

As a SRO at James River Elementary, Monique stops by when they have a program, reads to the students and acts as a mentor for the children. “My position is a lot of education, but also if there is a call on the street and I’m nearby, I go to answer it.”

Calls to the police that someone is missing, wandered from their home are what initiated the Project Lifesaver program. Established in Chesapeake in 1999, Project Lifesaver can be used even when a client is on a trip away from home, like for vacation with their family. Although the database of clients and their cor-

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responding transmitters' radio frequencies isn't nationally distributed, the local jurisdiction can share the information with the client's travel destination's police department.

"Our James City database has 43 active clients," Monique says. "We have a lot of people who visit the area, and we have our residents traveling to other locations. We tell our clients' families that if they plan to travel, let us know the address of where they are going. We can search for the jurisdiction closest to their destination that participates in Project Lifesaver and forward the information to that jurisdiction in case the client wanders while there."

She explains that it is common for people with dementia or Alzheimer's to wander. "The tendency for them is to go to a familiar place, either where they used to work or used to live. They are often drawn to water. That could be a bad situation. If they were to wander into woods, they may get stuck. Typically, they will just sit down and wait for someone to come by."

Before Project Lifesaver, the local law enforcement organizations found that locating an individual could take days. "When they were found, because it would take so long, sometimes the individual had passed away. This pro-

gram is a quicker way to find people so we can bring them home to their loved ones."

Some jurisdictions charge for the program, but James City County does not. "We do different fundraisers to help pay for the program and keep it free for our residents," Monique says. "We want our citizens to be safe and not worry about not being able to afford the program."

Monique enjoys interacting with the citizens of James City County, especially the students at James River Elementary. "Working with kids is a great place to be. When they see me in public, they say, 'Hey Office Mo, come meet my mom.' That's a relationship I wouldn't have if I wasn't in the school. That gives them a good perspective of law enforcement. When they grow up to be our next generation of citizens, they'll have had a good experience and know that the police are here to help. I want to be a role model for them."

The good days on the job are when she receives appreciation for her hard work. "Really, anytime you get a thank you from someone, that's nice. About four years ago, I had to arrest someone for a physical assault and took them to jail. We talked as I drove them down there. Later that evening, my daughter, who was a tod-

dler at the time, and I were at Walmart. Guess who I saw?" That individual had already made bail and was walking toward Monique and her little girl.

"I hoped he didn't recognize me. I went about my shopping, but I heard, 'Officer Marchand!' He said, 'Thanks for helping me out today. You didn't have to be as nice as you were.' It's not coddling people, but it's talking to them with respect. It's just treating people the way you would want to be treated if you messed up. Giving them good words, encouraging them to think about what they are doing. Just getting a 'thank you' is rewarding because we don't always get that, whether coming from a law-abiding citizen or one you just arrested."

Officer Monique Marchand knows that she helps her neighbors by being an encouraging role model for children, helping locate loved ones who wander from home, or even taking someone to jail. "That's what brings me happiness – knowing I can make a positive impact on people." NDN

For more information on Project Lifesaver, call Office Marchand at 603-6054 or the main JCC Police Department phone number 757-253-1800.

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# A Good Place for a Fun Time

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Jay and Sue Diedzic's abode is one of six homes that are part of the Green Spring Garden Club's annual Christmas Homes Tour. The house is located on Berkeley Lane in Walnut Hills. Sue and Jay say they really want people to see what a wonderful neighborhood this is tucked into the corner of Williamsburg.

"What is unusual and we like is the floor," Jay says of the smooth brick floor throughout the first level. "Originally, we weren't sure if we would like this floor, but with parties and with the dog, it's great. The house was built by Gordon Berryman for his personal residence."

The house on Berkeley is the Diedzics' fourth

home in Williamsburg, after living in two in Kingsmill and one around the corner from their current home. "One day, Sue was walking the dog and saw a 'For Sale' sign on this house. We bought it. We've been here for about three years." The couple says the house is perfect for them and their lifestyle.

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“We’re caretakers of this house,” Sue adds. “Gordon and Linda built it. We just fell in love with it when we saw it. This was all their idea. Since I like to cook and Jay likes to have people over, this is a good house for that. There are lots of houses that are bigger and more elegant, but this is comfortable for us. It’s a good place for people to have a fun time.”

Sue explains that they have lived in 15 different places over the years. Jay’s career in the energy industry has taken them around the country. He still maintains offices in many of the places where he has ongoing projects in progress.

“Energy,” he describes. “Anything to do with energy, solar, geothermal, oil and gas. I’m working locally on some solar projects. Sue asked me to try to stay close to home.”

His home office provides Jay the opportunity to at least have lunch with his wife during his busy work days. In his office, visitors on the Home Tour will see a reproduction of President Ulysses S. Grant’s White House desk. “Our decorator was a close personal friend of the Clintons’ decorator at the White House. President Clinton used General Grant’s desk. They surprised me at my birthday with a miniaturized Grant’s desk along with a picture of President Clinton at the original Grant’s desk.” “Every room has a piece that reminds us of the places we’ve lived or the people we’ve met over the years,” Sue adds. “We’re part of the Green Spring Garden Club’s Christmas Home Tour for a couple of reasons. First, we love doing it for the community; we love going to home tours, ourselves. But, the second reason is to showcase our neighborhood. We think this is the best neighborhood in town. We have always wanted to live in the city.”

Jay met Sue in their senior high school math class. “My family had moved from New Jersey to Michigan in the middle of my senior year,” he says. Sue sat in front of him in class. She helped

him with his English papers and he helped her with her math homework. After graduation and dating for a few years, Jay wanted to take Sue to New Jersey to meet some of his family. Her father agreed, and the couple headed to New Jersey, making a stop in Williamsburg along the way.

“He was travelling probably 20 days out of 30 for his job. I worked too. Williamsburg vacations were a great way to get away and relax. The girls loved it,” Sue says. “Our daughter, at about 12 years old, said she was going to William & Mary.” She did and that triggered their move.

Jay explains that Jenny’s advisor invited them to go on a W&M Christopher Wren trip to Cuba. We met all these W&M and Williamsburg people on that trip.” Their new Williamsburg friends convinced them to relocate. Jay had just sold his business in Tulsa. Williamsburg was the place they wanted to be. They moved to the area in August of 2001.

With their daughters grown and living in the New York area, Jay and Sue usually spend the holidays with them. Although, they will have a Christmas open house every other year to celebrate with their friends and neighbors. When their daughter and son-in-law bring the grandsons to visit, they plan a holiday dinner at a Colonial Williamsburg tavern. But, the grandsons are getting to an age that Busch Gardens is a competitor for their attention. “Colonial Williamsburg or Busch Gardens,” Sue says, “we’re just glad to have them here for a few days. I come from a Dutch family where every holiday, everyone came. Jay came into that when he was 17 years old. Since my mother’s sister passed away, we just don’t gather like that anymore.”

During the Christmas Home Tour on Saturday, December 2, from 9:30 to 5:30, their home will be open to tour guests. “The house

is all about the flowers,” Sue describes. “The arrangements that the Green Spring Garden Club members create are stunning. We love seeing those placed around the house. Our home is comfortable – different from others they will see on the tour because of the smooth brick floors and the trim everywhere. It’s interesting. This is one of the newest houses in the neighborhood. We want people to know how wonderful it is living in the city.”

Sue and Jay love to entertain. “I love people,” he says. “Because of what I do – my typical day is waking up at five in the morning and immediately going to work here at the home office. I’m in there all day. Or I’m travelling. For me, I look forward to when Sue says we’re going to a neighbor’s house for dinner or they are coming here or we go to an event. I appreciate the people part of non-work. Sue, on the other hand, loves parties.”

“Williamsburg is the most interesting place with the most interesting people,” Sue says. “Of all the places we’ve lived, we have more friends here than we’ve ever had. I grew up in Michigan and lived there until I was 44. I can count on one hand, the number of friends we had there. I grew up in that town, Port Huron, Michigan, a town of 30,000 people. You would think we would have known everyone. No. Here? All we have to do is go outside the door to meet our neighbors.”

Sue and Jay Diedzic have a theory why their neighbors are so friendly. “People want to live here. They don’t have to live here,” Sue says. “People choose to live here. The friendships we have in Williamsburg are incredible. We talked about moving closer to our kids, but we can’t leave our friends.” NDN

For more information on the Green Spring Garden Club’s 38th annual Christmas Homes Tour: [www.GreenSpringGardenClub.org](http://www.GreenSpringGardenClub.org)

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October 28, 2017

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### YOGA TEACHER TRAINING

November 2017

Shanti Garudasana Yoga School, a Williamsburg nonprofit, has a few openings in their 300 hour yoga teacher training program. The program is Yoga Alliance certified and proceeds of the program provide scholarships for William & Mary students. If you would like an application or have any questions please contact - Cindy Crace, Program Director at [info@shantigarudasana.org](mailto:info@shantigarudasana.org).

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6-8 p.m. at the Abram Frink Jr. Community Center, 8901 Pocahontas Trail. Bring a blanket/pillow and join us for family friendly movie nights held inside the multipurpose room. Popcorn and drinks provided. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Movies are held on the first Friday night of every month. Info: [jamescity-countyva.gov/recreation](http://jamescity-countyva.gov/recreation) or call 757-259-4200.

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### USMC BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

November 4, 2017

The Williamsburg Area Marines (WAM) will observe the 242nd Birthday of the founding of the United States Marine Corps at Legacy Hall in

New Town, from 6:30 – 9 pm. USMC Color Guard, traditional readings, guest speaker, and cake cutting. Heavy hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, cash bar. \$35 per person, \$60 per couple. All Marines and friends of the USMC invited to attend. For information call 757-879-5153.

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### BIENNIAL BAZAAR

November 4, 2017

The United Methodist Church, 500 Jamestown Rd., will hold its biennial Bazaar from 8 am - 2 pm. Funds raised will benefit both local and global mission efforts. Silent auction. Don't forget to enjoy our famous lunch by a Williamsburg chef, or snack on hot beverages and sweets in the Library Cafe'. For more information, call Fran Lane 757-508-1248.

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November 5, 2017

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**HEAD OF THE CHICK REGATTA!**  
November 11, 2017

Williamsburg Boat Club's upcoming regatta will be at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park from 8 am – 4 pm and will draw rowing teams from the Eastern Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association. All are welcome to come watch. HoC is a 5K headrace offering events for masters, collegiate, and juniors and will include both sweep and sculling events. For more information, visit our website at [www.williamsburgboatclub.org](http://www.williamsburgboatclub.org).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**11TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS BAZAAR**  
November 11, 2017

Please join us from 9 am - 3 pm for the 11th Annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Bazaar hosted by the Queens Lake Middle School-PTA, 124 West Queens Drive, Williamsburg. We will have over 60 exhibitors offering handmade crafts and unique holiday gifts for all ages! This is a fundraiser to help students and teachers throughout the year! For more information, visit our Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/QLMSholiday-bazaar](http://www.facebook.com/QLMSholiday-bazaar). You can also visit the QLMS website at [www.queenslakemiddle.mypta.org](http://www.queenslakemiddle.mypta.org)

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**THE WILLIAMSBURG CHORAL GUILD PRESENTS – “MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE – AMERICAN FOLKWAYS”**  
November 12, 2017

Pre-concert lecture at 3 pm and concert at 4 pm. This fall, the Guild celebrates folk song traditions in the Americas in both sacred and secular music. The concert will be at Warhill High School, 4615 Opportunity Way, Williamsburg.

Tickets are \$20 in advance; \$25 (\$10 for students) at the door. For more information, call 757-220-1808 or visit [www.WilliamsburgChoralGuild.org](http://www.WilliamsburgChoralGuild.org).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**MEDICINAL HERBS: MYTHS, STORIES AND HOW TO GROW**  
November 18, 2017

Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 am, open to the public. The Growers Exchange ships over 100,000 herb plants of 160 types each year. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. The program is free, although a \$5 donation to help the Garden grow is appreciated. For more information, email [bwhite@thegrowers-exchange.com](mailto:bwhite@thegrowers-exchange.com)

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**MAKE SPARKS FLY!**  
November 18, 2017

Eat, drink and celebrate with the members of Aura Curiatlas Physical Theatre as they mark their second annual campaign with an evening of fun. Festivities include a free performance, prize drawings, meet-and-greet with the artists, and more. From 5-7 pm at Triangle Restaurant, 601 Prince George Street, Williamsburg. Event is free and open to the public. Visit <https://www.acphysicaltheatre.com/> for more information.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**ALOHA! DESTINATIONS 2017**  
November 18, 2017

A travel, leisure & entertainment auction and dinner to benefit Providence Classical School will be held at 6 pm in the Ballroom of Colonial Heritage Clubhouse. Live and Silent Auction packages will include such things as a week in Hawaii, a hot air balloon ride for four, a week in Orlando, FL and gift certificates for a Taste of the Burg and much, much more! Tickets are \$45 per person before Oct. 20; after that, \$50 per person. Please RSVP by Nov.6. To purchase tickets, visit <https://www.501auctions.com/destinations2017> or call 757 565 – 2900, extension 1. Tropical or Hawaiian attire.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EMPLOYEES ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW**  
November 18-19, 2017

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation employees, volunteers and retirees will once again combine their time and talents for their annual Fall Arts and Crafts Show from 10 am – 5 pm. The show and sale will be held at the Histor-

ic Triangle Community Services Building, located at 312 Waller Mill Road.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**58TH GREEN SPRING GARDEN CLUB CHRISTMAS HOMES TOUR**  
December 2, 2017

From 9:30 am – 5:30 pm, This year's Homes Tour will feature six homes beautifully decorated with seasonal floral arrangements. Tickets are only available through Green Spring Garden Club and at each house during tour hours. More information can be found at [greenspringgardenclub.org](http://greenspringgardenclub.org).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**HERITAGE HUMANE SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**  
December 9, 2017

Join us from 9 am – 3 pm at the Bruton Parish Hall, Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg. All proceeds benefit homeless animals at the Heritage Humane Society. You'll find unique gifts and stocking stuffers for all the people and pets on your list. Your favorite pets will enjoy toys, togs and treats in their holiday "critter baskets". Try your luck at our raffles, with a chance to win exciting prizes.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**A SONG IN THE AIR HOLIDAY CONCERT**  
December 9, 2017

Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, 215 Richmond Road, at 7:30 pm. The Williamsburg Women's Chorus Holiday Concert - A Song in the Air features Sir Christēmas by Derek Holman. This large work of English carols is accompanied by piano, flute and percussion. Tickets available at [www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org](http://www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org)

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**TEA WITH KLARA AND HER NUTCRACKER FRIENDS**  
December 10, 2017

2:30pm at the Williamsburg Community Building. Tickets: \$18.00 in advance; \$25.00 at the door. On Sale Now! [www.danceVRB.com](http://www.danceVRB.com). Sip Tea and eat treats with Klara and all of her Nutcracker friends. Special ballet performance, crafts and more.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**THE NUTCRACKER BALLET**  
December 16 & 17, 2017

Presented by Virginia Regional Ballet, accompanied by The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra and Principal Dancers from Fort Wayne Ballet. Saturday, at 2pm and 7pm; Sunday, December 17th at 2pm. All performances held at Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall

at the College of William & Mary Reserved Seating. For Tickets visit [www.danceVRB.com](http://www.danceVRB.com) or for more information call (757) 229-2553

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**CHRISTMAS DREAMS!**  
December 16-17, 2017

Institute for Dance, Inc. (iDance), a local dance studio and 501(c)(3) non-profit organization presents "Christmas Dreams!" 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm, Sunday, December 17, 2:30 pm. This annual family-friendly holiday show, is celebrating 10 years and will be held at Kimball Theatre at 428 W Duke of Gloucester Street. Information at [www.institutefordance.org](http://www.institutefordance.org) or [info@institutefordance.org](mailto:info@institutefordance.org). Tickets available through <http://kimball.wm.edu>.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**SEEKING VOLUNTEER TAX PREPARERS**  
Ongoing

Williamsburg AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is looking for volunteers to assist seniors and low/moderate-income taxpayers in completing their 2017 Federal and Virginia tax returns. IRS certification training is provided during classes in early January. Basic knowledge of tax return preparation, as well as the ability to do returns on a computer, are needed. The service will be offered at the Williamsburg and James City County Libraries in 2017 from February 1 to April 14. Please email District Coordinator George Richmond at [grichmond4@live.com](mailto:grichmond4@live.com) if you are interested in becoming a Tax-Aide volunteer.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**VCE MASTER GARDENER REGISTRATION**  
Ongoing

The James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners' Program is accepting applications for the Class of 2018. The entirely community based volunteer program is under the guidance and leadership of the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech. Classes meet January 9- March 27. For application and more information, contact the VCE office at 757-564-2170 or visit [www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org).

Dear Reader,

We did not have space to list the many events that are planned for the upcoming weeks. You will find a complete listing on our website:

[www.williamsburgneighbors.com](http://www.williamsburgneighbors.com).

*Williamsburg's*  
**IN THE**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD**  
photo challenge

**HOUSEHOLD  
CHEMICAL  
COLLECTION AT  
WARHILL HIGH  
SCHOOL**

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

**Enjoy!**

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

October 2017  
In the Neighborhood  
Photo Challenge



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### JUST LISTED

### 3512 CEDAR BRANCH

*The Settlement at Powhatan Creek*

Stunning custom built house by Wayne Harbin Builders beckons you to "come home"! Exquisite airy floor plan with double sided fireplace. Master suite with its own sitting room. Lovely fenced yard with Pergola and patio overlooking the pond with a 2 second walk to the clubhouse! Many amenities in this 55+ Community!

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### CHICKAHOMINY HAVEN!

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