

December 2013

WILLIAMSBURG'S

# Next Door Neighbors<sup>®</sup>

VOL. 7, ISSUE 12

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## Williamsburg Holidays Seth Farrell

TURN TO PAGE 36  
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Williamsburg Holidays is brought to you by Collins Group, LLC (publishers of Next Door Neighbors) and the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce. Our goal is to give you some great holiday stories while also giving you plenty of ideas to have a good time during the upcoming weeks ahead.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

We interviewed locals who are a good fit for each of these five categories: Events, Family, Parties, Travel and Food.

Plus, we have given you several pages of local events and happenings that are sure to be memorable. The listings we have included are only the tip of the iceberg. For a complete listing visit:

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

Read on and enjoy! NDN

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**CORRECTION:** In October's issue the first place winner in the Photo Contest was stated incorrectly. The first place winner was Jenna Maye, age 13, daughter of the person we cited as the winner. Next Door Neighbors regrets the error and any inconvenience it may have caused.

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# A History of Hospitality

By Natalie Miller Moore

Seth Farrell, Director of Food and Beverage at Colonial Williamsburg, has a long history with the historic triangle. His parents, who met in Newport News after World War II, dreamed of living in Williamsburg and eventually built a colonial-style house in the Queens Lake neighborhood.

Seth remembers standing on the steps of the Courthouse on Duke of Gloucester Street as a youngster watching the Fife and Drum Corps go by.

“I thought, ‘I want to do that,’” he says.

Seth joined the Fife and Drum Corps in 1970 at age 10, and it became one of the most important things in his life at that time.

Being a member of the Corps was a great experience for Seth. He formed solid friendships, many that continue to this day.

“The Fife and Drum is the sound of Colonial Williamsburg. We’ve got sights and smells, and that is the sound of it,” he says. “It’s kind of the mascot of CW [Colonial Williamsburg]. Everyone who sees it, knows it’s us.”

Although Seth began playing as a drummer, he discovered he had a natural inclination for playing the fife. He worked his way up the ranks so that he could play that instrument.



ret Thatcher, French President Francois Mitterrand, and President Ronald Reagan joined with other leaders for what was then known as the G7 Group, which consisted of leaders representing the seven wealthiest developed nations.

Seth also has a rich history with the College of William and Mary where he earned his undergraduate and master’s degrees. He attended school at Virginia Tech for two years, but came home to Williamsburg to complete his education.

He landed a job at Colonial Williamsburg’s Cascades hotel working in the store-

room on the weekends. That experience led him to a job at The Williamsburg Inn working for Chef Hans Schadler. Seth ordered food and wine and managed the inventory.

During the 1970s, a number of international dignitaries came to Colonial Williamsburg - many on their way to Washington D.C. The Fife and Drum Corps entertained them at CW. Seth was fortunate to perform for Japanese Emperor Hirohito, Russian novelist Alexander (or Aleksandr) Solzhenitsyn and President Gerald Ford, among others.

Seth also met dignitaries during the 1983 World Economic Summit held in Williamsburg, where he helped serve breakfast and drove the room service van from the Williamsburg Inn. British Prime Minister Marga-

ret Thatcher, French President Francois Mitterrand, and President Ronald Reagan joined with other leaders for what was then known as the G7 Group, which consisted of leaders representing the seven wealthiest developed nations.

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they wouldn't be getting in before closing," Seth says.

In the 1980's, as part of a management training program at CW, Seth rotated through many positions including dishwashing and staffing the front desk.

"It gave me a good understanding of what each person does and I appreciate everyone's role," he explains. "Today, it's like being the conductor of an orchestra and knowing how to play every instrument. It helps me do a better job. I have the best team. They really complement each other and work toward our common goal."

Although Seth left Colonial Williamsburg for more than a decade, what he learned working at golf courses, country clubs, and local restaurants served as valuable learning experiences for him.

"One of the things I learned is that I don't like working at a desk. I like to be out doing things and seeing people. My job draws me out and I have a good time with it, even though I'm an introvert at heart," Seth says.

Seth was happy to return to CW as the supervisor of Christiana Campbell's Tavern, working closely with the executive chef there. Today, Seth supervises four tavern sites: Christiana Campbell's, King's Arms, Shields and Chowning's Tavern, as well as cafes in the Visitors Center and the DeWitt Wallace museum and small "grab and go" sites sprinkled throughout the historic area.

Colonial Williamsburg has a unique situation of being a historic setting, but having to provide modern amenities for guests. "We have to provide amenities to keep guests comfortable. When it's over 100 degrees out, we want to make sure we have water and ice cream easily available," he says.

Being in a historic setting also works to their advantage. "You can't compare (our restaurants) to other restaurants. You are eating in a reconstructed 18th century building, with food served on china dishes based on archaeological dig findings, [and] with live Colonial music," he explains. "You can dine in the places where George Washington and Thomas Jefferson ate. George Washington has more than 90 entries in his diary about eating at Christiana Campbell's Tavern."

Seth's favorite experience is how Colonial Williamsburg becomes a tradition for guests. "People who came here for their honeymoon come back for their 50th wedding anniversary, and we welcome them back with our sincere Southern hospitality."

The holidays are the time of year when many people revisit their family traditions at Colonial Williamsburg. Kicking off the first full weekend of December is the holiday parade down Duke of Gloucester Street with Grand Illumination on Sunday night. "I think that the Christmas season doesn't start until Grand Illumination, when the candles go in the windows. That's CW, and now everyone does it. It's a sign of hospitality. We build traditions here. The people who work in the hospitality business enjoy the sense of community, fun and spirit of being part of this for our guests," he says.

One thing Seth never misses is the holiday parade. He helps feed the volunteers who staff it and arrives at 5 a.m. to make sure the coffee is brewing and the muffins are ready. He is always excited to see the Fife and Drum Corps and the alumni crew.

"Hearing them sends a chill down my spine still, even now. At 53, I feel the same way I did as a 9 year old." NDN



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\*June 2013 issue of the American Journal of Roentgenology

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# Christmas Town!



By Erin Kelly

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Picture it. The evening is quickly approaching in December at Busch Gardens' Christmas Town. The gradual setting of the sun can be directly equated to the lights dimming just before a theatrical performance. It's show time.

Lance Mier, Manager of Entertainment Operations and Event Producer for Busch Gardens Williamsburg, has always loved Christmas. From the excitement of the first fallen snow, to the magic of twinkling lights donning front porches all over town, it's safe to say that Christmas is his favorite time of year.

In his position at Busch Gardens, Lance works year-round on the various events held at Williamsburg's famous theme park—from the colorful glow of Illuminights in the summer, to the dark fright-fest known as Howl-O-Scream in the fall. But it's his love for the holiday season, and its theatrical potential, that leads him to eagerly await the opening of Christmas Town each year.

"I love my job all year, but there is something so fulfilling about the look on our guests' faces when the sun begins to set during Christmas

Town," Lance says. "It's like a show is about to begin. Then, as the millions of lights begin to twinkle on the thousands of Christmas trees throughout the park, you see the utter amazement on their faces and it's such a fulfilling feeling. That is definitely my favorite part about my job."

Lance moved to Williamsburg in 2006, just one week after he graduated from Oakland University. A native of Michigan, he majored in theater production with a focus on stage management.

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During his college years, Lance worked at Cedar Point, a theme park in Ohio. "I've always loved theme parks," he says. "Growing up, my family and I would always go to theme parks, and they always struck me as a big production, like a show every single day. I fell in love with theme parks at an early age, and my love only grew after gaining a background in theater."

In addition to the theater-like aspect of theme parks, Lance has always enjoyed taking care of people and making sure they are having a great time. "I love to host people at my house, and in the park it's no different," he explains. "I constantly want to make sure people are having fun."

Now in its fifth season, Christmas Town - along with the various other seasonal events at Busch Gardens - is something that's thought about and planned year-round.

"I think about Christmas Town all year," Lance says with a laugh. "I'm always keeping my eyes open for new trends in the industry, or anything that might inspire me and make me think it would be a good addition to Christmas Town and its various shows and performances. We try our hardest to keep it fresh and exciting."

Lance explains he has two unique duties in his day-to-day job. As entertainment manager, he pays close attention to the operations side of the shows and its actors, dancers and stage managers. "We're always making sure the shows are running smoothly and maintaining the quality Busch Gardens has always exhibited with everything we do," he says.

On the production side, Lance is constantly involved in event production meetings where he and his colleagues gather creative ideas and come up with strategies for the various events throughout the year, and then share them with other departments in the park.

"Whether it's park operations or our culinary team, we all work together to make sure we're be-

"Just a few weeks ago, Rita first saw a Next Door Neighbors ad about Literacy for Life. She set up an appointment for the following day. Since then, Rita has been attending classes and working with her own tutor. Her whole outlook on life has changed, and she confidently says that nothing will stop her from achieving her goals of earning a GED and re-entering the workforce as a nurse's aide. Rita has also been attending Literacy for Life's HEAL classes where she has

been inspired to improve her diet and exercise regularly. She has also learned when to go to Urgent Care versus the Emergency Room, which will save her time and money, and how to use the first aid kit she received as part of the class. She feels passionate about getting the message out to any adults who could benefit from attending the wide variety of classes offered by Literacy for Life. She says she has never felt so proud and so good!"

*Katie Watson, HEAL Coordinator, with Rita Smith*

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ing cohesive,” he says. “We do a lot of talking and working side-by-side which is really fun.”

Lance is also involved in the operations standpoint of the auditions for the various performers selected to star in the park’s Christmas shows. Auditions are held in both New York City and Williamsburg to decide who will be cast in the holiday performances.

Though not an actual performer at Busch Gardens, Lance stays on top of every detail in each show, making sure they run without a hitch. “When I was growing up, I was very involved in our community theater and drama club, so that set the pace for what I am doing now,” he says. “I started to work back stage and got more interested in scenery and those types of details, so having that first-hand knowledge and realizing that was something I wanted to do, set me up for what I am doing now.”

This year, guests at Busch Gardens can see Lance and his team’s hard work first-hand in three returning holiday shows during Christmas Town - Miracles, Deck the Halls, and Gloria - along with some other holiday favorites like carolers, a brass band, Santa’s workshop and much more.

Christmas Town has come a long way since its inception in 2009, and Lance has been there every step of the way to aid in its progress. “When we first opened Christmas Town, we didn’t even open Italy which is where Miracles is located. Deck the Halls, which is held in the Fest Haus, has been there since the beginning, but has a new spin put on it each year.”

“It’s our goal to deliver something unique for whoever is seeing our shows,” Lance says. “We don’t want something generic. Gloria covers the true meaning of Christmas, while Deck the Halls is a more traditional, old-fashioned Christmas story. Miracles is more inspirational and modern. Each of the shows provides a different viewing, but there is something in all of them that make them exciting and that definitely conveys the Christmas message.”

Lance - a self-professed lover of the holidays - says he first became enamored with the Christmas season as a young boy. “Being from Michigan, my Christmases were always filled with snow, and we would have big family get-togethers so it was, and still is, a very special time of year for me.”

Lance’s current position at Busch Gardens enables his love of the holidays to blend with his love of the entertainment industry, which he says couldn’t be any better for him. “Working on the various events at Busch Gardens has always been a good time, but when the opportunity for Christmas Town came around I was enthralled. There isn’t anything more inspirational than Christmas for me.”

Overall, Lance confesses his favorite aspect of his job is just the look on the guests’ faces. “People can be really stressed out and worried about whatever happens to be going on in their lives at that time, and Christmas is such a special time to be able to provide a unique experience that takes them to a new place, even if it is just for a few hours,” he says.

Outside of Busch Gardens, Lance doubles as a graduate student at the College of William and Mary, working towards his MBA. “I am trying to fine-tune my business side,” he says with a laugh. “It’s a big commitment, but with the college so close to Busch, it is a lot of fun.”

Lance confesses that Christmas Town has to be his favorite aspect of Christmas in Williamsburg, but he still finds time to take part in some of the other seasonal happenings the town has to offer.

“When I’m not at Busch Gardens, [or] in class or studying, I like to find time during the holidays to go to Merchants Square - even if it is just to grab a drink or a bite to eat,” Lance Mier says. “The town has so much to offer. The shopping, the decorations, it’s just the best time of year - especially in Williamsburg.” NDN

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## FAMILY: RICKY & FRAN RAHN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For the first 25 years of marriage they were the couple with no children to pack up, and no trunk full of Santa's gifts to transport. Fran Rahn and her husband Rick's long-standing Christmas tradition was to drive for hours to celebrate with their distant families. "It was logical that we be the ones to travel," Fran says. "We didn't have kids." Up until five years ago, before they became new parents in their mid-50s and their world changed forever.

The Rahns now observe two holidays in

their own happy, child-filled home. First comes an old-fashioned, traditional American Christmas on December 25th, followed by another celebration on January 7th, which happens to be both Fran's birthday and Russian Orthodox Christmas Day. Fran and Rick try to honor the Ukrainian heritage of their three children, daughters Yana, 20, Rita, 18, and son Kolya, 17, in their holiday plans. Fran remembers how this seismic paradigm shift began.

"Our church, Williamsburg Community

# Two CHRISTMAS Holidays

By Linda Landreth Phelps

Chapel, sponsored a choir of 40 orphans who came here for a Christmas concert series, and I hosted the adults who accompanied them," she says. That led Fran to Nancy Hathaway's non-profit ministry, Heart for Orphans, which supports Ukrainian orphanages and adoptions, both international and domestic.

"Since I had once worked at a small, family-sized group home for teenaged children when we lived in upstate New York, I went to Berdiansk, Ukraine with Nancy to help set up a



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similar program there." Something more unexpected happened as well.

Fran says, "I called Rick back in Williamsburg and told him, 'I've fallen in love!'" There was a silent pause on his end then a whoosh of relief as Fran clarified her statement.

"There's a girl who's captured my heart, and we either have to adopt her or move to Ukraine to be with her!" she said.

"Can we talk about this when you get back?" Rick asked.

"Sure, just as long as you say yes!" Fran replied.

As it turned out, although this girl ultimately chose to stay in Ukraine, Fran says that she was the catalyst for the family that was being divinely planned for them.

Yana had been one of the children in the visiting choir and had been tentatively matched with an American family for future adoption. During her mission trip to the orphanage, Fran had snapped Yana's picture, and when she returned had displayed it on her refrigerator to remind them to pray for her.

"Every time Rick passed by, he would touch it and say, 'This girl's heart jumps out at me,'" Fran says.

Yana's adoption stalled and she was getting ready to turn 15, one short year away from the birthday that marks "aging out" of the system, when the state releases orphans to make their own way in life.

"God orchestrated it all. She was meant to be ours!" Fran says with a big smile.

Fran and Rick spent seven weeks together in Ukraine during the holidays as part of their adoption process, so they experienced what a typical Christmas in the orphanage was like. The children had a decorated tree, acted out skits, and on the 25th received a colorful shoebox, this year from Germany, stuffed with school supplies, gloves and hats. Orthodox Christmas Day was spent in prayer and feasting, but Ukrainian custom is to enjoy fireworks and exchange gifts on New Year's Day. Yana was fortunate and unusual in that she had a cousin who had always insured she had a personal gift to unwrap.

Almost all possessions are communal in an orphanage. When clothing has to be laundered, unless a child washes the item by hand, there's no guarantee they'll get the same garment again. After five years as an orphan, Yana would never spend another Christmas without a family of her own.

Yana may have been the first to travel to her forever home from Berdyansk, but she was not to be the last. "Weeks after we brought Yana home, we got word that Yana's brother, Kolya, who was 12, had been placed in the orphanage. We started praying and asking God what we should do. When we originally started the paperwork to adopt, it was suggested we request two children at once in case one fell through, which is, sadly, exactly what happened. A girl we wanted to bring back with Yana had to be left behind because of a mistake in the paperwork," Fran says. All the funds for another child were still in place, so within a matter of months they were able to bring Yana's brother home to be reunited with his sister after seven years of separation.

"But God wasn't finished yet," Fran recalls.

Fran and Rick had been in Berdyansk to adopt Yana when a quiet little girl named Rita momentarily broke free of both her shyness and

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the language barrier to laugh and give Rick an impetuous hug. That brief hug left a permanent impression on his heart. They had kept her photo displayed and prayed for her throughout the years

"If I were ever to go back to Ukraine to adopt again, I'd go for Rita," Rick would say. Three years ago, just before she turned 16 and would become ineligible for adoption, Rita joined her new parents, brother and sister in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The Rahn family is now thriving. Yana is a beautician and her main interest is hairstyling. "Even before Yana could speak English, if you went into her room, you'd come out with a new hairdo!" Fran laughs. She's living at home with her parents' encouragement. "She is enjoying family life too much to want to give it up yet," Fran says. Kolya and Rita are working at part-time jobs, learning English, studying at Lafayette High and enjoying being American teens. Rita loves animals and wants to go into the veterinary care field.

The Rahns look forward to being together to celebrate family holidays. "Rick and I didn't

decorate much in the past," Fran remembers. "It wasn't important when we were just going to leave anyway, but I gave little parties and we always looked forward to Christmas services at church." Gifts to each other weren't elaborate, but Fran was heavily involved with the popular Angel Tree ministry. As evidenced by her tireless work managing the Chapel Cafe, Fran's natural gift is hospitality, so she threw a big party at church for all of the Angel Tree children and their caregivers. Rick and Fran's emphasis was always outward, their greatest joy was giving. It still is.

For the last several years, Rick and Fran's kids wake up on Christmas morning to ample evidence that Santa has come. It was a difficult transition for the children, almost overwhelming at first.

"It was hard not to overbuy, because they needed everything from underwear to toys. Kolya came to us with one small plastic bag clutched in his hand. Rita's first Christmas was spent holding on to a single gift, reluctant to move on to the next," Fran says. Rita's next holiday was much easier, and by now her mother

says she's made the mental switch to American-style Christmas. "Kolya definitely has the Bible story of Jesus' birth in his heart and gets better at the 'giving of gifts' part with experience," Fran says with a smile.

The siblings are busy establishing Christmas traditions of their own. "They like to build the artificial tree together," Fran says and shrugs. "I wanted to get a fresh one, but they like fitting the branches in their sockets."

On Christmas morning, the Rahn family lingers over breakfast then talk and laugh as each one in turn unwraps a gift. Fran usually prefers to include others at her holiday dinner table, but last year it was just the five of them gathered there, savoring the gift and blessing of a closely knit family.

"It feels so natural to be where I am today," Fran Rahn says. "I was meant to be the mother of these children. The journey has been so incredibly rewarding, and I would adopt again in a heartbeat. My dearest hope for my children is that they remember their roots without dwelling on their past, and as they grow, to have a passion for the least, the last and the lost." NDN

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# Making New Memories

By Narielle Living



The holiday season is replete with tradition for everyone, regardless of religious background or ethnicity. For Lara and Jonathan Skuza, the holidays have always been a time of family, friends and holiday activities. This year, however, things have changed for both of them with the addition of their infant, Cora, to the family, and they are looking forward to beginning new traditions.

Lara recalls, with fondness, her childhood holiday memories in Ohio. For her, Christmas was an exciting time filled with family and anticipation. “My entire family would gather at

our house,” she says. “When I was a kid I was lucky to have four grandparents in my family and aunts and uncles. My sister and I loved seeing everyone.”

When she was growing up, Lara’s father worked as the general manager for a local country club, a position he still holds today. Her father would make arrangements over the holidays for their relatives to stay in the country club hotel, as



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there were too many people to accommodate in their house. "This was such a fun time because the hotel was actually closed to outside visitors," Lara says. "My sister and I got to stay overnight in the hotel with our relatives, and we would have a blast because we had the place to ourselves. We'd run up and down the halls and check the roof for signs of Santa. This was very exciting to us."

In Lara's family, certain traditions were observed from year to year. She was allowed to open one present on Christmas Eve and also received her Christmas pajamas that night. On Christmas morning, her family started by opening the presents in the stockings, and Lara always received a piece of fruit in her stocking. Dinners on Christmas Eve varied, but they always had a honey baked ham on Christmas day. "My dad got the ham as part of his bonus at work," Lara explains. "It was a tradition for us to have this for our Christmas meal."

Another tradition in Lara's family consists of sharing Christmas crackers at Christmas dinner. Christmas crackers are brightly wrapped

cardboard tubes that two people pull from each end. When pulled, the crackers make a popping noise. Inside the tube are silly jokes, small toys and a paper crown. According to Lara, anyone who shares the cracker tradition in her family ends up wearing the crowns and telling the bad jokes.

Jonathan's Christmas traditions were a bit different than Lara's, mostly because his family lived within closer proximity to each other. "We went to our aunt and uncle's house for Christmas Eve and most of the family would be there," he says. "Christmas day was spent at my parent's house, and everyone would come over." The food that was served at Jonathan's house was a bit different, too. "We would have ham for Christmas dinner, but I don't like ham," Jonathan says. "My grandmother always made me a small chicken so I didn't have to eat the ham. She also made kolaches and pizzelles." Kolaches are a pastry, usually filled with fruit, and pizzelles are sometimes known as wafer cookies.

Of course, both Lara and Jonathan were af-

flicted with the typical childhood Christmas Eve insomnia. "I definitely couldn't sleep," Jonathan says.

Lara and Jonathan met when they both attended Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and they began their relationship talking with each other over Christmas break. After getting engaged, they found themselves splitting their holiday time between the two families. "We'd go to one family's house for Christmas Eve and the other for Christmas day," Lara says. They married in June, 2007 and moved to Williamsburg in August of that same year.

"Jonathan was working on his PhD at the time, and his advisor transferred to William and Mary. We decided to make the move, too," Lara says. Jonathan received his PhD and now has a position at Norfolk State University, and Lara works as assistant branch manager at Old Point National Bank in New Town.

"We've lived in Williamsburg for just over six years, and in that time we've started to develop new traditions for the holidays," Lara says. These traditions include the festivities



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hosted by Colonial Williamsburg, such as the Christmas homes tour, Christmas tree lighting, Grand Illumination and the firing of the Christmas guns. "Williamsburg offers a lot during the holiday season, and we've had fun exploring the area."

Jonathan adds that Christmas is his favorite holiday, and he enjoys everything the area has to offer. The one thing he truly misses, however, is having family nearby for the season. "It would be great to have my family visit Williamsburg for Christmas," Jonathan says. "I haven't spent Christmas with my family since 2006, and I miss that. I'm hopeful that they'll visit this year, though."

For both Lara and Jonathan, the holiday season has changed significantly. Four years ago, Lara lost her sister, and more recently a grandparent. "Losing a loved one definitely alters the holiday season," she says. "You miss the ones that are not with you, and it's never quite the same."

Instead, they are focusing on their first Christmas with the newest family member,

their six month old daughter, Cora. With a baby in the house, Lara and Jonathan know they will be creating new holiday traditions.

"I think that our traditions will develop over the years, but I also know there are some things we're going to do right away. For example, Cora will get her Christmas pajamas to wear on Christmas Eve," Lara says. Lara and Jonathan will also give her one present to open on Christmas Eve, just like Lara used to have when she was a child.

"I'm looking forward to sharing the usual fun stuff with her," Lara says. "I love watching all the Christmas shows, like Charlie Brown and Rudolph. That will be fun to watch with Cora."

"I know that she'll have the most fun with the wrapping paper," Jonathan says. "She loves things that make crinkling noises."

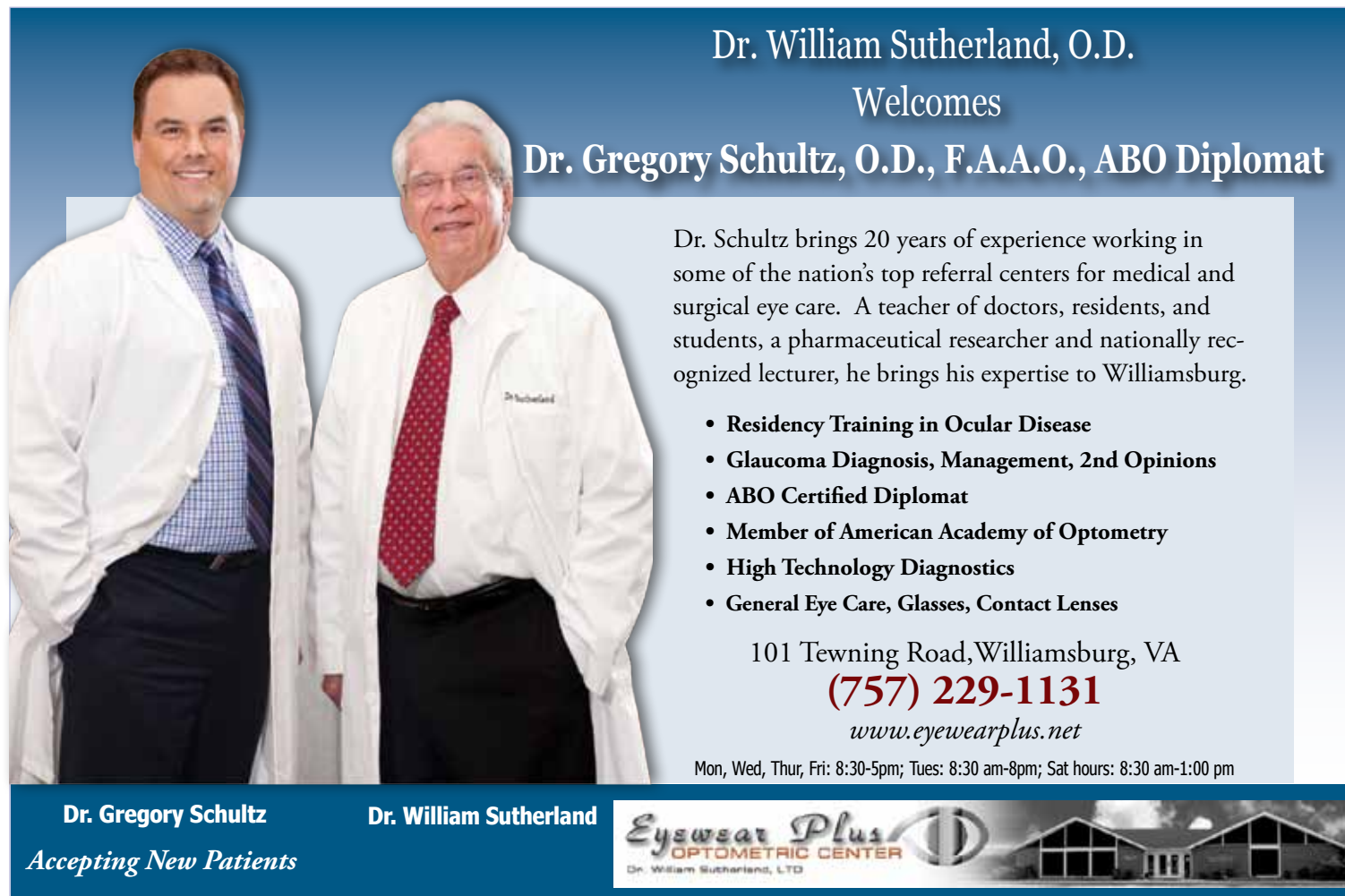
They plan to have a Christmas tree and will be attending Williamsburg's Christmas tree lighting ceremony. One new tradition that will be added this year is pictures with Santa. "We're going to have to pay special attention

to where Santa is going to be having pictures done," Lara says. "That is not something we did in previous years, but we are definitely doing pictures this year." Lara also plans to start traditions such as baking cookies, an activity that she and Cora can share as mother and daughter when Cora gets a little older.

Although snow for Christmas would be nice, neither Lara nor Jonathan expects to see any. "Snow was great when we were kids," Lara says. "And it actually did snow a couple of years ago, when my parents visited for Christmas. That was really nice."

With a new baby in the house, Lara and Jonathan's holiday traditions are expanding. "We'll probably stick with what we did when we were kids," Lara says. "Cora has really focused everything for us and reminded us of what is important: family. We want to be able to share everything she does with our families."

"Hopefully we'll have lots of family visiting this year," Jonathan says. "That would make this a perfect Christmas and would be the start of a tradition we'd like to keep." NDN



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# Party Time!

## MINIMIZE KITCHEN CHAOS

By Alison Johnson

By age 10, Carmen F. Alves had learned that cooking was one way to express love – especially for a hungry older brother on a visit home from college.

Whenever Carmen knew her brother, Raymond, was on his way, she sat at the window of her family’s Massachusetts home, waiting impatiently to ask her regular question: “What’s your favorite dinner now?”

Once Raymond, who is eight years older, told her she scurried into the kitchen to make it. Pork chops with mashed potatoes became her signature dish while she was still in elementary school. For breakfast, Carmen served her brother in bed with bacon and eggs or French toast.

For Carmen, now a professional chef at Elite Cuisine, a local catering business she started in 2001, the best cooking has always been personal – not unnecessarily complicated, nor bound to what “everyone else” does. That’s the philosophy she advises for any family during the busy holiday season, especially if they’re hosting gatherings.

“So many people stress themselves out over



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

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food,” Carmen says. “The whole point of having holiday get-togethers is to spend time with people. Yes, the food needs to be edible but if you’re in the kitchen the whole night fussing over everything you and your guests are all going to miss out.”

Items that don’t require a lot of fussing, such as trays of chips and dips, cheese and crackers or fruit and vegetables, are ideal. Casseroles are a time-saving way to combine proteins, starches and vegetables without feeling pressure to make three separate dishes. And while homemade cupcakes are great for dessert, a sheet cake can be just as tasty and doesn’t require individual frosting.

“You can frost that all at once, put on some sprinkles to make it look festive, cut it into pieces and have it all on plates before the party starts,” she says. “It’s so simple, but people love it.”

As for easy drinks, Carmen’s pick is a big bowl of punch (a gallon-and-a-half should be plenty for most parties). While she mixes her “Endless Punch” with lemonade, ginger ale and grapefruit juice, there are many different recipes online.

In addition, Carmen likes to keep her refrigerator or freezer stocked with ingredients for quick but personalized meals, whether for family members or pop-in visitors. One of her go-to dinners is quesadillas. With flour tortillas, cheese, a few veggies and some type of meat – items she buys when she spots them on sale – most anyone can whip up a custom-built dish within 30 minutes.

Mainly, she says, families should focus on creating their own food traditions rather than trying to conform to any preconceived ideas. “Just because Susie down the street makes pumpkin pie doesn’t mean you have to,” she says. “Make something your family loves. Don’t get too lost in preparation or try to be everything to everybody. Just enjoy yourself.”

Carmen has always enjoyed the creativity of cooking, of designing recipes and meals by looking for items that go perfectly together. One of her specialties, for example, is “Seafood Pleasure”: shrimp, scallops, lobster and crab in a white sauce flavored with Swiss cheese and bacon bits to give it a smoky flavor, and served over pasta.

Because the dish is very filling, she pairs it with a grape and broccoli salad. “I don’t believe in skimping on the rich stuff,” she says. “I think that if you’re going to be ‘bad,’ be bad. You just need to find a side that’s lighter.”

Carmen’s original inspiration in the kitchen was her grandmother, who – like all of her grandparents – was originally from Portugal. Her grandmother loved to experiment with recipes. Rather than measure in precise quantities, she’d dole out ingredients in coffee mugs or even by using her fingers and knuckles.

“She could take a can of Franco-American Spaghetti, and by the time she was done with it you’d never have known it was Franco-American Spaghetti,” Carmen remembers. “She’d add stuff like ground beef, onions and peppers and put some cheese on top. It was a magic thing.”

Carmen, the middle of five children, honed her own kitchen skills by cooking regularly for her two younger siblings; she often was in charge not only of their meals but of overseeing their homework and baths. She also excelled in home economics classes at school.

By age 24, Carmen had earned a degree in data systems manage-

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ment from Johnson & Wales University and was married with two sons, Carlos and Jerome. That year, she decided she wanted to sell the pies she'd been baking from scratch, so she took one over to a local hotel and offered up her services. "I was pretty bold, but it worked," she remembers with a laugh.

With the pies due Friday, Carmen went to an apple orchard on Wednesday to pick her fruit, which she peeled by hand and layered into homemade crusts. She usually stayed up all night Thursday to finish the job, working with an oven that held two pies at a time. "It was nothing for me to make 30 pies over a couple of days," she recalls. "Each one was a little piece of me."

Carmen moved to Williamsburg in 1992 with her now ex-husband. While working a full-time job for the federal government, she also helped with her husband's business building custom-made furniture. "I learned how to finish wood, and how to use power tools," she says. And she cooked constantly for her boys and their friends.

Elite Cuisine handles many types of events, large and small, including romantic dinners for two, family reunions, outdoor barbecues, corporate gatherings, baby showers, formal rehearsal dinners and wedding receptions. Carmen also offers meals-to-go and personal chef services, when she handles all the cooking and cleanup at a customer's home.

Clients can custom-make menus or select from her choices, which generally have a Portuguese flair. Holiday packages include turkey, gravy, ham, mashed potatoes, candied sweet potatoes, creamy butternut squash, cranberry sauce and homemade desserts. Year-round, her crab and artichoke dip is a customer favorite.

With one part-time employee to answer calls and do some scheduling, Carmen trains all of her contract workers herself and helps with everything they do on a job, including cleaning tables and washing dishes. She still pulls the occasional all-nighter to get everything prepared before an event.

She doesn't mind, though, noting, "You know when you're doing what you love because you don't get tired." The hardest part of her work, she says, is timing the arrival of each dish to ensure the best taste, temperature and visual presentation: "You have to be very scheduled and sequential."

Now living in Toano, Carmen likes walking outdoors, traveling and reading – mostly cookbooks – in her free time. She still cooks for Carlos, who lives in Richmond, and Jerome, who lives in Williamsburg (no grandchildren to spoil yet). Tuna casserole is Jerome's favorite, while Carlos likes pretty much everything as long as it doesn't have cheese in it.

As the holidays approach, Carmen encourages everyone to keep kitchen chaos to a minimum, whether they hire a personal chef (a surprisingly affordable option, in her view) or head to the oven solo. Holiday gatherings, she says, should never be a negative experience – and love can shine through even the simplest of foods.

"Food is fellowship, and when you think of fellowship, you think of family, love and all the things that make you feel comfortable and warm and fuzzy," Carmen Alves says. "The focus should be on feeling safe and happy that you're around people you love, laughing and enjoying life." NDN

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## It's in the Details

By Cathy Welch



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Williamsburg resident and Certified Meeting Planner Lee MacLeod discovered her life's passion in the field of hospitality at a very early age. How does an eight-year-old girl go from a small part in a holiday celebration to a career as head of her own event planning business in partnership with Colonial Williamsburg?

"A fellow (Girl Scout) Brownie asked me to be one of the Colonial Williamsburg children

who threw the yule log," she says. "I got my first colonial outfit. The magic of Christmas in Williamsburg is something people remember for the rest of their lives."

Born in Roanoke, Virginia Lee moved to Williamsburg at the age of five along with her family when her father, Don Bentley, became general manager at WMBG radio.

"We were very much involved in commu-

nity activities. Dad would have his radio remote bus there and we handed out hotdogs, cokes and balloons," Lee explains. "Dad did the broadcasting for William and Mary's football games and we traveled with the basketball team."

While involved with her family activities, Lee continued working for Colonial Williamsburg. She sold tickets at the Governor's Palace

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and went on to work at several area hotels.

"My father was the youngest of 14, so I became the 'Bentley Tour Guide' for all my cousins who came to town. Growing up here, the thirst for knowledge and history was something we lived every day. You have the progress part of Williamsburg and then you have the historical part which is very unique."

Lee earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Georgia. After graduating, she took a job as social director for Richmond apartment complexes. Jobs in Williamsburg were scarce at the time. Within six months Colonial Williamsburg called her to come back to work.

Lee gained experience in conference sales and service while working for Colonial Williamsburg. She worked for Kingsmill Resorts as well. "It taught me so much about how to deal with people, how to deal with repeat customers and how to make every time they come more exciting," she says. She learned food and beverage, how to work the front desk, and all the different aspects of running a special event. With the help of her father, Lee opened Ster-

ling Event Planners of Williamsburg, Inc. in 1990. "I wanted to do this and work with everybody in Williamsburg, not just one particular hotel." She hired some of her coworkers from Colonial Williamsburg to create a successful team that put into practice all they had learned.

"Our big mission is to create memories," Lee explains. "Our approach is personal. Our clients become friends and because of this, we are capable of hitting the mark so much better when planning events."

Her company employs four full-time professionals, a travel team that deploys when needed and Williamsburg tour guides. "I was just a little girl from Williamsburg, Virginia, and 23 years later I have my staff who grew up with me."

From organizing a trip to Williamsburg for a woman who just went through chemotherapy to planning corporate outings for BFGoodrich, Lee says, "I want everybody to come away from Williamsburg saying, 'What a great place.'"

Lee's husband, Ewen MacLeod, was banquet manager for Kingsmill Resort. Once they were

married, they had a son shortly afterwards.

"We realized someone had to have regular hours, if we were going to have a family," Lee explains. Ewen went back to school to become a child psychologist and works with the Williamsburg-James City County school system. "My father and mother also helped tremendously in raising my children."

The couple has three children, now ages 15, 21 and 23. "They love the fact that they had the benefits of travelling." Fortunately, her work keeps her home for the holidays as most of the Christmas season events are local.

"I got to go around the world and see what other people were doing and bring back those ideas to Williamsburg," Lee says. "We keep reinventing different ways to create a party; little touches that don't cost a lot of money and make it personalized." She brings these ideas into planning successful events for her clients and for her own celebrations.

Lee recommends to begin planning an event by thinking about its objective for the host. "What is the outcome this person is searching for?" she asks. "All the elements within that

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event should speak to this message through the invitation, the food and the décor.” She feels strongly about creating a relaxing atmosphere where people can have open communication and feel like they belong.

Next, she says you need to find the spirit of the party host(s). “You really need to help find the essence of whoever’s having the party, whether it’s through the food, the invitations or the aroma when you come in the house. All those things create image. The food should speak to your eye. It should speak to your nose and be a pleasure to your mouth.”

Lee suggests elevating foods on a buffet and using serving pieces that are different colors, different sizes, interesting shapes and using cool family pieces. “All this makes people start talking to each other and fellowship begins.” She says using personal pieces creates excitement and can make things taste better. Guests remember these special touches and may use something similar at their next party.

“You’re inviting people to have fellowship with you,” she explains. “You want to have things that are warm and inviting and show a

little bit about yourself.”

Visual impact makes a great statement at a party. “Things like having a lighted first course,” she says. “I love excitement and surprise. You usually have the flaming baked Alaska at the end of the meal. I like to start with a ‘pop’ by having a lighted first course, such as LED lights in a martini glass with shrimp cocktail.” She adds that people don’t realize that the salad is where you can really surprise somebody. “Make it an artistic statement by putting it on a large, square plate with pears and cranberries. Just hit them with color. It’s not any more expensive, it’s just beautiful.”

Lee recommends creating menus when you’re hungry. “When friends and associates call me to assist in menu planning, if I have just eaten I ask them to call me back in two hours.”

She claims she is not the best party planner for herself. “My children and husband love my parties once they start, but that two hours before is a really hard time,” she admits. She prepares the turkeys for her extended family’s Thanksgiving at her aunt’s house in Richmond every year. She cooks for her Bunco group and

prepares ham for her own Christmas parties. “I have to do the ham,” she explains. “I can’t stand if there’s not enough food and if it’s not good. My mother was a fabulous cook, and I try to be as good a cook as she was.”

Lee’s neighbors are well aware of her party hosting talents. “They say, ‘Please come and bring enough for everybody to eat.’ They know that everything is going to match and it’s going to be great.”

She has a lifelong love for her hometown. “I love Williamsburg because it’s beautiful. It’s all my childhood memories. I’ve seen the growth and progress. Having said that, the history of all we have makes it a magical place.”

With all that fills her life, what does Lee do in her free time? “I like to read travel magazines, party magazines and bridal magazines. I love walking out in Colonial Williamsburg and enjoying the area. I love bringing business to local restaurants. I love chefs and recipe books.”

Lee MacLeod’s event planning philosophy directly applies to celebrations in the home. “No detail is ever too small,” she says. “As I tell my staff, everything adds up.” NDN



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# EUROPEAN HOLIDAYS

By Lillian Stevens

Imagine the Williamsburg Farmers Market on Duke of Gloucester Street. In Europe, that is how the open air markets are most of the time – and the European Christmas markets are famous the world over. Dee King, Assistant Manager of Warwick Travel in Williamsburg, loves the experience of just walking through the Christmas markets.

“From the smell of cider, spiced cookies and

cakes to savory cheeses and breads,” Dee says. “And it’s not just food but handcrafts too, and all sorts of decorations.”

Though it’s special to experience the holidays here, it’s also fun to spend holidays abroad and take in different traditions and customs. Originally from Turkey, Dee and her family have called Virginia home since 1992. She started her travel counselor career in 1994 and

has been with Warwick Travel since April of 2009.

Having lived nine years in Europe, she loves helping clients plan trips anywhere in the world, but especially to Europe and the Mediterranean. Dee is also a Caribbean Destination Specialist (which means that she knows more about the Caribbean Islands than we do).

“I call myself a travel counselor – not a travel

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agent,” Dee says. “The general misconception is ‘I can do this myself and save money’ but the tour organizers we work with service tens of thousands of customers and so they are able to get us the better deals.”

In terms of taking a trip this time of year, many think of holiday travelers as childless couples (or empty nesters) with nothing to tie them down. That’s not always true.

“We have arranged trips for entire families,” Dee explains. “I’ve seen people make their plans and then pack up the clothes and the gifts and head off for holidays away from home. You can take traditions with you wherever you go.”

Dee grew up in Turkey, predominately a Muslim country. She points out that “Dee” is not a Turkish name. “Dee is my adopted name. My Turkish name is ‘Duygu’. All Turkish names have a meaning and Duygu means ‘feeling’ – but I didn’t want to impose this on everyone when we moved here. So I picked my first initial ‘D’ and it turned into Dee.”

She and her husband, George, celebrate Christmas every year but to them, family is at the heart of the season – no matter how or where it is celebrated. Still, it is great fun to

experience the holidays through the lens of another country’s culture. For those who want to experience Christmas (or a portion of it) abroad, Dee believes that land tours are especially appealing.

“Land tours provide a terrific opportunity for travelers to see the sights and enjoy the cultures – by connecting you with local people and their traditions. And it is entirely possible to do that in November or early December and still be home in time for Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever you are celebrating.”

Dee loves telling friends, neighbors and customers about the holidays in the European places she’s lived and what they might experience on their own holiday trips.

“I lived in Europe for nine years, first England, then Holland and Germany – but my family and I celebrate holidays with an American twist,” Dee says. “And, of course, many of this country’s Christmas traditions originated in Europe.”

Beyond the religious component of the holidays, most cultures’ traditions are also informed by the foods they eat, the songs they sing and the stories that they pass down from

generation to generation.

“I think that this might be felt and understood better in Europe because it is simpler there and not as commercialized as it is here.”

No artificial Christmas trees?

“No!” Dee exclaims with a laugh. “In this country, Christmas trees are patterned after the original Christmas trees that came from Germany – and those were decorated with real candles. And, you might think of Christmas colors being red and green or gold – but in Germany, the original colors are blue and white.”

In fact, when preparing the holiday meal for her family in her home, the china Dee selects is from a set that she bought in East Berlin. It is white with blue flowers.

“That is what my children want to see on the table. I lived in Berlin for three years and it was there that I spent my favorite holidays – aside from those spent here in the United States – because of family memories from that time.”

In Germany, the home and Christmas tree decorating does not start until the day before Christmas.

“The tradition is a family dinner on the

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evening before Christmas and then, while the women are cleaning the kitchen, the men go and decorate the tree," Dee says. "Since the tree doesn't go up until the day before Christmas, it's not unusual to see Christmas trees in German homes well into February."

In Holland, gifts arrive on the fifth of December – and Santa Claus is always tall and slim, and he doesn't come from the North Pole.

"He comes from the sea," Dee explains. "He arrives on a boat! And, in Germany, Santa Claus is Saint Nick; in Holland, he is Sinter Klaus – and instead of elves they have a black man named Black Peter. Sinter Klaus and Black Peter sail all the way from Spain to Holland. The children leave their shoes and sacks in front of the door and if they have been good, Sinter Klaus and Black Peter will fill up their sacks with gifts – and if not? It's coals and sticks by your shoes."

Hence, the coal tradition.

"Also, they don't lavish each other with gifts. Instead the main focus is on family," she says.

Since Dee is from Turkey, she is especially interested in the Turkish tradition.

"There is a very beautiful city on the Medi-

terranean coast called Antalya – and this is recognized all over the world, especially by Europeans. St. Nick was born there! So there is always a big festival there and a lot of Europeans go there. I have visited the site and the museum so St. Nick is special to me and though I have never spoiled it for my own children, to me – Santa Claus comes from the sea!"

"Of course, I don't think the children care where he comes from as long as he brings them something," she says with a laugh.

Dee's first trip abroad – ironically enough – was to the United States.

"I had just graduated from college in 1976 and my aunt and uncle invited me to travel with them to the United States, specifically to Niagara Falls. The Bicentennial celebrations were going on so that was exciting."

When she married George, his military career brought the couple to the U.S. from Holland. He was stationed at Langley Air Force Base, where he served in the Comptroller's Department. Dee and George enjoy traveling back and forth to Turkey and to Europe but they have loved raising their three daughters – now grown – here in Hampton Roads.

"Our eldest is a captain in the Air Force," says Dee. "She is an electrical engineer and she's married to a Navy Lieutenant and they are both stationed here. We also have another daughter who is married and just had a baby – and our youngest is engaged to be married."

It never occurred to Dee that she'd wind up building a career in the travel business. It was her husband's idea. "He thought I would enjoy learning about careers in travel. Our children were young and I didn't want to go to work right away. I had a lot of banking experience but I wanted to do something different."

One day, George came home with an application for Dee – a travel school application.

"So, I went to travel school, graduated and started working here in this office."

The company was known as Sue Mayberry Travel at that time and Dee credits Sue Mayberry with being a wonderful teacher and mentor. Dee has worked at the company – and at the same desk – for 19 years. One of the reasons she has stayed so long is because she enjoys her customers – and that's the best part.

"A lot of the people I've done business with have become friends over the years." NDN

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## CRUISING DOMESTIC & ABROAD

By Lillian Stevens

Allyson Harris is a local expert on cruises, both ocean and river – domestic and abroad. With the holidays just around the corner, we sat down to talk about holiday travel and destinations.

“There is such a wide range of excellent cruising opportunities for every kind of traveler, fitting every kind of budget,” she says.

Perhaps you see yourself yacht cruising in the Hawaiian Islands aboard a yacht that carries less than 100 people. Maybe you'd rather sail into the Caribbean aboard a larger ship that accommodates 300-700 passengers – or a 5,000 passenger cruise ship offering everything from roller skating to zip-lining – all aboard.

Or you could book a steamboat cruise on the Mississippi River.

“A Victorian Christmas cruise is available that sails out of New Orleans up to Memphis,” Allyson says. “As you cruise along the river banks, you will witness Cajun bonfires and carolers singing. Everyone is sipping on homemade eggnog (or other beverages of choice), and the atmosphere is alive with the Christmas spirit. You can just imagine the festive feel of that. This particular cruise is typically a 9-night excursion, including one pre-trip night in a hotel.”

Allyson's personal favorites, though, are the European river cruises. Travelers have the op-

tion of exploring the Northern region, including the Netherlands and northern Germany; the central region, including Bavaria and Austria; or the southern region, including Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

“To me, that is the epitome of Christmas,” she says. “There are no words to do it justice. The camaraderie of the onboard staff combined with the fairytale appeal of what you are seeing from the ship – it's just majestic. As you cruise, you are going through an absolute panorama of scenery so beautiful you'll have to pinch yourself to believe it's real.”

These ships cruise at 12 to 15 knots (under 20 MPH) past the towns that dot the Rhine

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River, past medieval castles and prehistoric fortifications. The Rhine is a European river that begins in the southeastern Swiss Alps. Along the legendary river, there are castles on Germany's riverbanks, all the way to Cologne which is called the jewel of the Rhine – and the lush landscape of the Black Forest region. The Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers flow from the North Sea all the way to the Black Sea which separates Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

“There are so many itineraries from which to choose that it's difficult to select a favorite,” Allyson says. “I've been fortunate to have cruised most of the rivers of Europe more than

once and each time there's a new opportunity to see something that was missed before. I do love sailing from Amsterdam to Basel, Switzerland, incorporating the Moselle which flows through France, Luxembourg and Germany. I love the landscape of vineyard-clad hillsides, as well as the castles and small villages that dot the countryside. It's picture-perfect even in the dead of winter.”

“Besides, five countries in 13 days without having to repack is perfection to me!”

The shore excursions which are included are fantastic and abundant – as is the ability to take walking tours directly from your river

“home.”

“From your berth in Paris, a short stroll will lead you to the Eiffel Tower,” Allyson explains. “Or perhaps a short drive into Vienna and a guide will take you on an afternoon tour.”

Upon your return to the ship from the day's adventures, hot cider (or gluhwein) awaits.

Another must-see is a European Christmas market.

“The little towns have these fabulous Christmas Markets – or Kris Kringle markets as they are called locally. You may have heard of the Nuremberg Christmas Market because thousands visit on the weekends – but the smaller

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ones are more intimate, while still offering many unique, often handcrafted gifts.”

The Christmas markets originated in Germany, Austria, South Tyrol and Alsace but are now held in many other countries. The history of the markets dates to the late middle ages. Generally held in the town square and adjacent pedestrian zones, the food, drink, and seasonal items are sold from open-air stalls, accompanied by traditional singing and dancing.

“Colonial Williamsburg does a beautiful job of recreating the Old Country at Christmas but actually visiting the Old Country during the holiday is a ‘must’ on your bucket list,” Allyson says. “These traditions are thousands of years old – the rituals combined with the beauty of it all – it’s just the most heartwarming, lovely experience.”

Snow is not guaranteed but the holiday European river cruises will be cold – a fact that Allyson says just adds to the festive feeling.

For holiday travelers who would rather stay on American rivers, the Mississippi River cruises are very popular and take travelers through some of the South’s great historic cities and towns.

“Your journey might begin in Nashville with visits to the Country Music Hall of Fame

and the Grand Ole Opry,” she says. “Then, in Memphis, you could board the paddlewheel steamboat American Queen to set sail for your Mississippi cruise. Excursion choices range from Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley to the National Civil Rights Museum in the former Lorraine Hotel, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.”

Along the Mississippi River, beautifully restored antebellum plantation homes are abundant and Allyson says that you will “feel like you’ve stepped right into the pages of a Mark Twain adventure.”

Travelers pass by towns rich in Civil War history, stopping in river towns to enjoy historic sites and charming restaurants. The cruise ends in exciting New Orleans, an American city unlike any other.

From the big cities to the quaint river towns, the Mississippi River cruises are sure to delight. As you plan your holiday travel – or any travel – note that there are different kinds of inclusive vacations. The all-inclusive cruise is just that – your flights to and from, all beverages (soft and hard), even gratuities.

“We try to steer people towards all-inclusive opportunities when appropriate because they often turn out to be more affordable in the

long run,” Allyson says. “Often, the more inclusive a cruise, the better value you are getting for the most part.”

There are obvious differences between the large ocean liners and the smaller river boat cruises. For one, just a few steps and you are aboard a river cruise boat – as opposed to traversing a long gangway on the larger ships.

And while all cruises are known for the abundance and variety of cuisines, Allyson again gives the nod to the smaller river cruises.

“I have to say that the dining facilities on the river cruises are just outstanding,” she says. “You might be offered a grand buffet for breakfast or lunch but you can rest assured the dining experience is fabulous on most ships.”

Also, there is great attention to detail; food allergies or special needs are attended to with the utmost care.

Allyson has been in the business for 45 years, having opened The Travel Corner 27 years ago. “It is by God’s grace that I have been able to turn a childhood dream into reality,” she says.

“I never would have thought in a million years that I would be able to have my own business, while having the honor of helping to turn my clients’ travel dreams into affordable reality.” NDN



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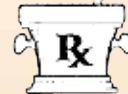


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# What's the Shape of Your Cake?



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

By Brandy Centolanza

Tawanda Hammond, owner of Cakes by Tawanda in Norge, first became interested in baking thanks to her grandmother, Delores.

"My grandmother was blind, so she would measure her ingredients by using her fingers," Tawanda recalls.

Tawanda baked her first cake from scratch at age 11 for her new baby brother. It was in the shape of a baby wearing a diaper.

"I was so amazed by the way it turned out," Tawanda remembers. "It was the first cake I ever decorated, and I thought it turned out really nice."

Tawanda, who grew up in Maryland, took

culinary courses in high school, and then went on to study culinary arts at Johnson & Wales University in South Carolina.

"I love to cook, and I love to eat," she says with a laugh. "It's my passion."

In 1994, Tawanda made her way to Virginia, opening up her first bakery, 3-Delites, in Virginia Beach. Later, she co-owned another bakery, Cake Suite, in Norfolk. Her specialty was decorating wedding cakes.

"The wedding cake is the first thing people see when they come to the reception and the last thing people taste before they leave, so it should be good," she says. "I was so busy that

I made up to 14 cakes in a single weekend."

Tawanda prepared the wedding cakes for former NFL football player Aaron Brooks, a native of Newport News. His groom's cake was designed to look like a pair of Nikes.

"What I love about this business are all the people that you get to meet and work for," Tawanda says.

In 2006, Tawanda entered her first cake decorating contest in celebration of Wolfgang Mozart's 250th birthday. She placed in the top 10 in a competition with 40 other designers and her cake was featured on display at the Harrison Opera House in Norfolk.

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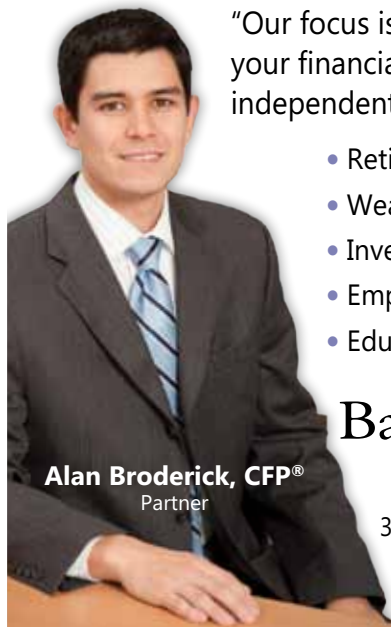
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"It was a baby grand piano, and it had a 3-D whimsical three-tier cake coming out of the top of the piano," Tawanda recalls proudly. "It was awesome. That was my first competition that I entered, and it was an amazing experience."

A year later, Tawanda moved to Williamsburg so that her husband, Corwin, could be closer to CBC World Ministry in Toano, where he serves as pastor.

Tawanda took a little break from the cake industry and started working as a cafeteria manager for the Williamsburg-James City School Division before opening Cakes by Tawanda.

Tawanda calls her shop a "cake boutique" where she does custom designed cakes for all occasions, as well as cakes by the slice and cake pops, all by appointment only. She also specializes in vegan cakes as well as allergen-free cakes.

"I did a lot of work for PETA and also worked in a kosher bakery, so I learned how to bake without using any animal products," Tawanda says. "There have been so many unique cakes that I've done. Right now, I'm doing a cake with a bass fish on top of it that looks like an actual bass. I made a cake that looked like a helicopter for another gentleman for his 50th birthday. His wife said he never had a birthday cake before."

Among her favorite designs was a cake she made to support the Ronald McDonald House, a cake that looked like a Big Mac, fries and a shake that served 400 people. It took her about six hours to complete.

"That was great," she says. "It was for a gala that they were doing, and it was just one of those fun cakes to do."

The time it takes to finish a cake varies, depending on the details, though she asks for at least two week's notice when preparing a cake. Some of her clients also like to be involved.

"They usually bring me a picture of what they want, and all I have to do is take a look at it and I can figure out how to make it work," Tawanda says. "Kids get real excited when they come in to talk about their birthday cakes because they feel like they are creating it, and they feel special because they are the birthday kid. Super Mario has been very popular for birthday cakes, and of course, Spongebob Squarepants. Mickey and Minnie Mouse are big cakes for first birthdays."

Through the years, Tawanda has had the opportunity to work with many famous chefs and cake designers, including the Food Network's Pastry Chef Keegan Gerhard, Pastry Chefs Ewald Notter and Susan Notter, internationally known cake designer Toba Garrett and TLC's Cake Boss himself, Buddy Valastro.

"I've gotten to meet some really amazing people and learn some really amazing techniques from them and that has been my teacher in this business," says Tawanda.

During the holidays, Tawanda especially likes to get creative with her cakes. The three most popular cakes she sells are a pumpkin spice cake with cream cheese frosting, a sweet potato cake and a peppermint white chocolate cake.

"I'm actually not a big cake eater myself, but my favorite is the caramel candy pecan with caramel drizzled on top," she says.

Holiday specialty cakes that Tawanda makes include gingerbread houses, gingerbread sleighs filled with cake pops that are shaped like presents, custom-made gingerbread ornaments with children's names for the Christmas tree, as well as a cookie Christmas tree with tiered stars.

"That makes a real nice centerpiece," she says.

There are simple recipes families can try at home that preparing together could make special holiday memories.

"You can try a pineapple upside down cake," Tawanda suggests. "It's simple but it's good. I love it. It's a great cake."

To make, simply spray the pan, line it with pineapple rings, add a cherry to the center of each, pad it with some brown sugar, pour in the batter of a regular yellow cake recipe, and bake it according to the recipe.

"Then you dump it out and you have a beautiful presentation for a cake," Tawanda says. "Another popular cake for the holidays is a butter rum cake. You can use a bundt pan for that and bake a yellow cake about a week before you want to serve it, then brush it lightly with the rum for four days to really let it soak in."

Moms and dads with young children will enjoy creating a snowman cake. Bake two 8-inch round yellow cakes, then place them vertically on a dish. Frost them with a regular butter cream icing, cover with some coconut flakes and use a fruit roll up for a scarf.

"You add cherries for the eyes and a candy cane for a nose," Tawanda explains. "It's really fun and easy. You can also make a yule log cake with the kids."

Tawanda is looking forward to experiencing Williamsburg during the holidays.

"I love all the lights," she says. "It's very welcoming."

Soon, Tawanda hopes to expand her business, possibly opening up another shop in Newport News.

"I love this job because I never do the same thing, and there's always something different and unique," Tawanda Hammond says. "I also like the challenge and the feeling of conquering the challenge. That's what keeps it interesting." NDN

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# THE SWEET FACE OF Chocolate

By Susan Guthrie

Known as the “Chocolate Lady,” Mary Griffith has been making chocolate personal in Williamsburg for over 20 years. Mary was in high school in Newport News when she attended a cooking class that sparked her love of chocolate making. The class inspired her to make unique chocolate gifts for friends and family and to serve her delicious treats at parties.

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Mary says, "I loved the personalization you could do with chocolate and really got into doing things for different holidays, mostly for family events."

Mary majored in management and marketing at Christopher Newport University in the Small Business Institute. An assignment to create a business plan was the perfect catalyst to launch Mary into the chocolate business. Market research for the business plan led her to identify ways that she could help businesses use chocolate to promote their products and services.

She realized that she could individualize her marketing efforts to her client's target audience and stay within a set budget. Her work for the business plan also resulted in an opportunity to make personalized golf ball chocolates for open houses to promote a new subdivision within the Kiln Creek community.

Mary is not the only one in the family with a passion for chocolate. Her 14-year-old daughter, Sydney, has grown up along with the business. Sydney provides an artistic influence to the business and loves to make her own chocolate designs. "Her favorites are the salted caramels," Mary says. As a goalie for Walsingham Academy's varsity field hockey team, Sydney helped inspire her mother to create sports related chocolate. Mary found that chocolate shaped sporting equipment makes a fantastic favor for awards receptions. Combining the love of sports with the love of chocolate makes a fun reward for all types of athletes. Therefore, Mary creates chocolate for a variety of sports including golf, football, baseball, basketball, hockey, soccer and running.

As Sydney's scout leader, Mary developed creative ways to use her knowledge of chocolate to help the girls get more than just their cooking badges. She found that chocolate was a sweet way to help the girls acquire badges in small business, finance and marketing. Mary also discovered that she could use chocolate to teach children geography, history, agriculture, manufacturing, art, health and, of course, cooking.

A chocolate camp, Mary decided, would be a great way to provide a chocolate education, but make it fun so it did not seem like work. Sydney helps her mother run a four-day Summer Chocolate Camp for children between the ages of five and 13. At the end of the camp, the children take home their delicious creations, are photographed in a chef's hat and earn their Junior Chocolatier certificate.

With her life immersed in chocolate, Mary runs Virginia's Finest Chocolates out of her home creating unique and delicious gifts for a wide variety of personal and corporate occasions. Just because you will not find Mary's creations in a store does not mean that they are more expensive. "There's no substitute for chocolate," she says several times with a smile. However, the difference between store bought chocolate, especially mass-market chocolate, and Mary's chocolate is quality and freshness. Retail chocolates are generally made during the summer months, so they contain a large amount of preservatives for storage until Christmas. Freshness can be tasted.

Mary is Williamsburg's expert on gifting and serving chocolate, so she has some helpful advice for the holidays. Although she is not aware of any allergies to chocolate, she warns that many people have allergies

to the products that can go into chocolates, including nuts, wheat, soy eggs and milk. Therefore, she recommends, "If you want your goodies enjoyed, you better label it or it may be thrown out." Or worse, it could make someone sick.

Mary personalizes everything about a chocolate gift. "It really has extra meaning when personalized – it's not just 'Here's some chocolate for you.'" With an endless variety of fresh and delicious chocolate flavors, designs and sizes, Mary is well known for creating memorable gifts and events. For the holidays, for example, Mary decorates chocolate gifts inside cookie cutters, so that there is something left even after the chocolate is enjoyed.

When storing fresh chocolate, Mary warns that chocolate absorbs smells, so it should not be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Chocolate will not spoil quickly and should be served at room temperature. "There are lots of pretty ways to display chocolate, as it can be individually wrapped or arranged on a serving dish."

In addition, she reminds us that chocolate should be served out of the reach of small children and pets, as it can make them very sick.

She recommends avoiding fondue when hosting a party because it is time consuming and messy. "Chocolate hardens after a little while and has to be reheated or stirred constantly when over a flame."

While discussing her love of chocolate, she adds with a giggle, "I wouldn't trust a skinny chocolatier." She tries not to eat her own creations. "I'd just have to remake it." However chocolate is not just delicious, people are beginning to understand that chocolate has health benefits. The cacao (pronounced ka-cow) bean originates from a large pod and then is dried to resemble almonds. Cacao beans contain vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and healthy doses of potassium and copper to support cardiovascular health. Iron, calcium and magnesium are also found in cacao beans.

"The darker the chocolate, the healthier it is for you because it contains more of the pure cacao bean and has fewer additives and less sugar," Mary says. "Anything over a 60% cacao is going to have a lot of health benefits. Higher percentages (of cacao) satisfy your cravings so that you're not going to feel the need to eat the whole bar at once."

In the chocolate market, the higher the percentage of cacao, the more expensive the chocolate, so fancy store bought chocolates are required to be labeled with a percentage of cacao. Mary works with a large variety of chocolates. "But, I still find that the majority of Americans like milk chocolate more than dark chocolate, but that is balancing out as the years go on."

Anyone who has attended the annual Chocolate Affair in the last 10 years has seen Mary's beautiful creations and tasted her delicious chocolate. "I've gotten to know this community and people have gotten to know me through networking and my involvement in the community." Mary recently modeled for the Heritage Humane Society's annual Puttin' on the Dog Fashion Show. She is proud to donate her gift baskets to help raise money for a variety of local charities. Mary loves to network by staying involved with women's groups, volunteering and being active in the Williamsburg community, as she truly believes: "We live in a great place." NDN



**Turn the page to find a partial listing of holiday events and happenings that you can enjoy right here at home.**

From Grand Illumination, to Christmas Town, to First Night...throughout the holiday season there is so much to see and do right here in Williamsburg. We've included a calendar of events on the following pages to provide you with a handy guide to the happenings that will lift your spirit this holiday season.

**For a more extensive list of holiday events and details visit...**

**[www.ChristmasinWilliamsburg.com](http://www.ChristmasinWilliamsburg.com)**

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## HOLIDAY CALENDAR



You and your family can enjoy the magic of the holidays by experiencing many of the wonderful things there are to do right here at home. Enjoy this convenient sampling of holiday happenings. Please visit the website above to discover all of the things there are to enjoy during the holidays!

### Williamsburg Area Events

#### Gingerbread Luncheon at Yankee Candle

Nov 16, 2013 to Nov 23, 2013 at 11:00 am & 1:00 pm. Enjoy quality time with Santa & Mrs. Claus during the luncheon in the Towne Square. Pictures are a wonderful keepsake. Remember your day with a complimentary 4x5 photo from Colonial Photography. \$6 children. \$10 adults. Reservations suggested. Please call (757) 258-1002.

#### Christmas Town™: A Busch Gardens® Celebration

Nov 22, 2013 to Dec 31, 2013. Joy, laughter and cheer are in the air at Christmas Town™: A Busch Gardens® Celebration. This one-of-a-kind event combines the magic and merriment of the season with stunning Broadway-style shows, unique gift ideas and millions of twinkling lights. Plan to share your holiday wishes at Santa's workshop and to see the park's 50-foot tall, light-animated Christmas tree for a memorable Christmas Town experience. Opens Nov. 22 and continues select days through Dec. 31. 757-343-7946

#### Colonial Williamsburg Employee Annual Fall Arts & Crafts Show

Nov 23, 2013 to Nov 24, 2013 at

10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Since 1983 the show is a valued holiday tradition. Employees, volunteers and retirees come from all areas and divisions of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to share their talents and passions which include handmade jewelry, textiles, woodcrafts, photography, jams, birdhouses and holiday decorations and gifts. Historic Triangle Community Services Building, 312 Waller Mill Road.

#### Williamsburg Holiday Farmers Market

Nov 23, 2013 at 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. The popular Holiday Farmers Markets feature a great selection of foods, fresh greens and holiday decorations from our local farmers. Outdoors in Merchants Square. Duke of Gloucester Street

#### Ne'Qwa Signing at Yankee Candle

Nov 23, 2013 at 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. Join us for a signing event with Ne'Qwa artist, Trieste. Ne'Qwa artists create every design by using the centuries-old tradition of painting on the inside of mouth-blown glass. An artist signature and the Ne'Qwa logo, etched into the glass, authenticate's every piece. 877-616-651

#### The Nutcracker Suite

Nov 23, 2013 at 11:00 am & 1:30 pm. Get in a holiday mood with the Concert Ballet of Virginia production of The Nutcracker Suite. Tickets not required. Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland Street

#### A Christmas Carol Street Theater Dress Rehearsal

Nov 24, 2013 at 12:30 - 1:00 pm. Back for the 6th year! Catch a sneak preview of this year's take on the classic! The dress rehearsal will take place in the parking lot behind the College of William & Mary Bookstore, 345 Duke of Gloucester St. Enjoy a hilarious 30 minute street theater production of the Christmas classic from the Virginia Theatre Machine.

#### Turkey Pardoning/Food Drive

Nov 27, 2013 at 11 am. For the fourth year, the Virginia Living Museum will celebrate the long and healthy life of its wild turkeys during the annual Turkey Pardoning, Wednesday, Nov. 27 at 11 a.m. The ceremony will be held on the outdoor trail beside the Turkey/Deer Habitat. The event is included in regular admission. 757-595-1900

#### Star of Wonder: Mystery of the Christmas Star

Nov 27, 2013 to Dec 31, 2013

Experience the journey of the Magi around you in the Virginia Living Museum's state-of-the-art digital planetarium theater! The show was completely revised in 2008 to offer a truly immersive look at the journey of the magi while examining the latest clues and seeking once more to understand the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem. Days and times vary. \$4 in addition to museum admission. Detailed schedule at thevlm.org. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Dec. 24 and 25. 757-595-1900

#### Laser Holidays at the Virginia Living Museum

Nov 27, 2013 to Dec 31, 2013. Get into the holiday spirit with the music of the season and dazzling laser effects! This delightful program is fun for the whole family. It's an animated Christmas light display like no other you've ever seen! Days and times vary. \$4 in addition to museum admission. Detailed schedule at thevlm.org. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Dec. 24 and 25. 757-595-1900

#### Foods & Feasts of Colonial Virginia

Nov 28, 2013 to Nov 30, 2013 at 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Colonial Virginia foodways are featured during this three-day event beginning on Thanksgiving Day. At

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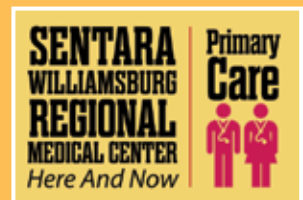
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### **Thanksgiving in Colonial Williamsburg**

Nov 28, 2013 at 11 am - 4 pm. Enjoy a three-course meal in a historic tavern with traditional 18th-century trimmings or bring the entire family together for elegant contemporary cuisine in one of our hotels. Celebrate this special meal together and leave the stresses of cooking to us. 888-965-7254

### **Thanksgiving at artcafe26**

Nov 28, 2013 at 11:30 am - 6:30 pm. Our Thanksgiving Menu includes: Pumpkin or Mushroom soups; Roasted Medallion of Turkey on Mushroom Baconsauce, Cranberry Compote & Corn-Cake, Filet of Beef in Mushroom Baconsauce, Green Bean Cassolet & Corn-Cake, OR Arctic Char roasted in Herbs, Pumpkin Risotto; and Homemade Apple Strudel with Liquid Nitrogen frozen Vanilla Ice Cream. Cost is \$37.50 per person plus tax & gratuity. Wine pairing available. Reservations only. Please call 757-565-7788 or email us at [artcafe26@aol.com](mailto:artcafe26@aol.com).

### **After Thanksgiving Sale**

Nov 29, 2013 to Dec 1, 2013 at Beginning at midnight on Friday, November 29. Join us at Williamsburg Premium Outlets for its annual After-Thanksgiving Weekend Sale featuring Midnight Madness! 757-565-0702

### **Midnight Madness at Yankee Candle**

Nov 29, 2013 at Midnight. Come dressed in your PJ's for a

night full of shopping madness! Ne'Qua artist will be in Yankee Candle Village signing Ne'Qua ornaments. 757-258-1002

### **Holiday Seafood Feast**

Nov 29, 2013 to Dec 20, 2013 at 5:00 - 9:00 pm - Weekly Recurring. Enjoy a sensational Friday Night Seafood Feast, an evening buffet highlighted by a variety of delicious seafare with seasonal sides. Reservations required. Williamsburg Lodge. (757) 220-7976

### **Wine Wit and Wisdom – Tapas and Riojas**

Nov 29, 2013 at 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Enjoy an interactive tasting of the Temperanillo grape while sampling small plates and delicious bites. Williamsburg Lodge (757) 220-7976

### **Milk & Cookies and Stories with Santa**

Nov 29, 2013 at 9:00 - 10:00 am. Santa brings special treats to the young early birds! Visit Santa between 9 and 10 am on November 29 and December 14 in the William & Mary Bookstore and Cafe Enjoy milk & cookies and a special story time upstairs in the café.

### **Father Christmas Strolls the Square**

Nov 29, 2013 at 2:30 - 5:00 pm. Feel the spirit of the past with Saint Nicholas who will stroll the streets of Merchants Square until Christmas. Find him at the large Christmas tree outside of The Precious Gem between 4 and 5 p.m.

### **Music for Black Friday: Songs and Tunes from Thanksgiving and St. Andrew's Day Celebrations**

Nov 29, 2013 to Nov 29, 2013 at 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm. Take time out from shopping to enjoy some music from America and Scotland with Colonial Williamsburg. Discover Scottish fiddling tunes

that have become American folk classics and learn about the celebrations recognizing traditional music in contemporary Scotland. Programs and exhibitions at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum are supported by the DeWitt Wallace Endowment Fund. 1-800-447-8679

### Winter Wonderettes

Nov 29, 2013 to Dec 2, 2013 at 7:30 pm. This seasonal celebration finds the girls entertaining at the annual Harper's Hardware Holiday Party. When Santa turns up missing, the Wonderettes must use their talent and creative ingenuity plus some great holiday tunes to save their holiday party. Directed by JJ Rodgers. Produced by ShowStoppers Productions. "The perfect Christmas revue! Crackles with energy and joy!"—LA Weekly. Kimball Theater.

### Williamsburg Lodge Gingerbread Village

Nov 30, 2013 at 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. Gather round as the Williamsburg Lodge chefs and their pastry elves construct the Williamsburg Lodge's gingerbread village. Watching can be thirsty work, so stop by the Williamsburg Lodge Lounge for a warm cup of cider or hot chocolate to sip. Williamsburg Lodge. (757) 220-7976

### Wine, Wit & Wisdom – Holiday Treats & Traditions from Rioja

Nov 30, 2013 at 2:00 - 4:00 pm Join Ana Fabiano, celebrated wine expert and author of "The Wine Region of Rioja," as she shares her passion for one of the most celebrated wine regions of Spain. Taste the depth, terroir, and history of Spain as it is expressed in these incredibly food-friendly wines. Williamsburg Lodge. (757) 220-7976

### A Colonial Christmas

Dec 1, 2013 to Dec 31, 2013 at 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Holiday traditions of 18th-century Virginia are recalled through special interpretive programs. 757-253-4838

### Christmas in Yorktown Exhibit at The Gallery at York Hall

Dec 1, 2013 to Dec 31, 2013. Come and enjoy the Christmas in Yorktown Exhibit by the best of our artist, featuring the Senior Center of York, at The Gallery at York Hall. Relish in our revolving exhibit of fine art in all media by local artists for display and sale. Open April-Dec. Tues. – Sat., 10 am to 4 pm; Sun. 1 - 4pm. York Hall, 301 Main Street, Yorktown

### A Christmas Carol Street Theater

Dec 1, 2013 at 12:30 - 1:00 pm. Enjoy a hilarious 30 minute street theater production of the Christmas classic from the Virginia Theatre Machine. Back for a 6th year! Exclusively in Merchants Square.

### Holiday Tree Lighting at Yankee Candle

Dec 1, 2013 at 10:00 am - 7:00 pm. Tree Lighting with Santa at 5pm: Join us for a festive start to the holidays as Santa lights the wondrous Yankee Candle Christmas Tree! William and Mary holiday carolers and Santa will sing along to your favorite holiday songs to the joy of FREE hot chocolate and Christmas cookies! Meet our Visual Design experts and learn how to decorate the perfect tree. Workshops will be offered at 11, 1pm, 3pm. Yankee Candle Williamsburg, 2200 Richmond Road

### Dean Shostak's Crystal Carols

Dec 2, 2013 at 1:30 - 2:30 pm. In this popular Christmas concert, discover the unique sounds of holiday favorites played glass instruments. Dean Shostak show-



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cases his skills on the glass armonica, invented by Benjamin Franklin, and a variety of new and antique glass instruments from around the world. Kimball Theatre

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Dec 2, 2013 at 4:00 - 5:00 pm

In a rousing Christmas show filled with humor, anecdotes, and singing, multitalented musician Stephen Christoff performs holiday music on an assortment of unique instruments from the 18th century including the musical saw, Jew's harp, Spanish guitar, trombone, comb and paper, bottles, spoons, and mandolin. Programs and exhibitions at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum.

### Christmas Decorations Walking Tour

Dec 3, 2013 at 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 3:15 - 4:15 pm. Enjoy a guided look at Colo-

nia Williamsburg's picturesque building exteriors and streets decked in their holiday splendor. Learn about the materials, construction techniques, and traditions of Colonial Williamsburg decorations. Greenhow Lumber House

### A Revolutionary Holiday: Victory Ball at the Raleigh Tavern!

Dec 3, 2013 to Dec 17, 2013 at 2:00 - 2:30 pm, 2:30 - 3:00 pm, 3:00 - 3:30 pm, 3:30 - 4:00 pm - Weekly Recurring. Imagine yourself in Williamsburg on December 15, 1781. Congress has proclaimed it a day of celebration in honor of the victory by the allied American and French forces at Yorktown earlier that fall! In Williamsburg a special mass is held and the "Te Deum" is sung. Soldiers parade and fire musket and cannon salutes. Though wearied by war and longstanding hardships, the people of Williamsburg gather

with their honored French and American soldier guests for an emotional celebration of the victory many had lost hope of seeing. Raleigh Tavern Apollo Room

### A Christmas Concert for Williamsburg

Dec 4, 2013 at 7:30 - 9:15 pm.

The Sound Investment proudly presents "A Christmas Concert for Williamsburg," the second in its series of "Music to Remember" concerts. The Sound Investment will once again feature Williamsburg's favorite vocalist, Lywanda Carroll, in a festive, holiday Christmas setting, singing the most classic, enduring, and memorable Christmas songs. Kimball Theatre.

### First Thursdays: Tacky Sweater Party

Dec 5, 2013 at 5:30 - 8:30 pm Looking for something fun to do after work on the first Thursday of every month? First Thursdays

is a free social event featuring live music, a 50/50 raffle and food & adult beverages for purchase. As an added bonus, there will also be a select gallery or exhibition open during each event at no charge. Mariners' Museum 100 Museum Drive, Newport News.

### Christmas Tree Lighting

Dec 6, 2013 at 07:00 PM to 08:00 PM. A tradition that began in 1945 continues with the Yorktown Christmas Tree Lighting. Evening highlights include a 7 pm performance by The Fifes and Drums of York Town at the Victory Monument, festive music at Riverwalk Landing, the procession of lights through the historic village, and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. Free. Yorktown.

### String Wind's Williamsburg Christmas

Dec 6, 2013 at 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 4:00 - 5:00 pm. Enjoy the dy-

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Join us for an exciting journey back through time to experience Williamsburg Christmases of the past. Discover our colonial traditions and customs, find out about the first Christmas tree in Williamsburg, and learn how Colonial Williamsburg's Christmas traditions came about. Greenhow Lumber House

### A Christmas Carol Street Theater

Dec 6, 2013 at 5:00 - 5:30 pm

Enjoy a hilarious 30 minute street theater production of the Christmas classic from the Virginia Theatre Machine. Back for a 6th year! Exclusively in Merchants Square.

### Yorktown Lighted Boat Parade

Dec 7, 2013 at 06:00 PM to 08:00 PM. Festively decorated sail and power boats compete for "Best in Show." The Yorktown waterfront is bedazzled with holiday sights and sounds, including a spectacular floating parade of lights starting at 7pm, caroling around a roaring beach bonfire, musical performances and complimentary hot cider. Yorktown Waterfront. Free. 425 Water St., Yorktown.

### Christmas Market on Main

Dec 7, 2013 at 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM. The market features arts and crafts, demonstrations, roasted chestnuts and hot cider, entertainment, and much more.

Historic Main Street. Free.

### Around the World with Santa

Dec 7, 2013 at 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. Bring the family and participate in make-and-take crafts and learn about traditions from around the world plus a special visit from Santa! On Saturday, December 7, he's inviting children to The Mariners' Museum to "travel" with him as he makes his annual dry-run of his trip. For more information, please visit our website at [www.Mariners-Museum.org](http://www.Mariners-Museum.org) or call 757-596-2222.

### 54th Annual Christmas Homes Tour

Dec 7, 2013 at 10 am - 6 pm. Presented by the Green Spring Garden Club, features private residences beautifully decorated with holiday floral arrangements; some are open for the

first time for this year's tour. For detailed information on houses and to order advance tickets (through Nov. 20th), visit the Garden Club's website: <http://green-spring-garden-club.org/>

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# SUCCESS

Through Independence and Flexibility

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Growing up in Williamsburg, Doug and Doris Bryant, now husband and wife and owners of Victoria's restaurant, have seen the business scene change from mostly independent eateries to an abundance of corporate chain restaurants. Their business model is to cater to the local clientele, make the customers feel at home and keep alert to changes with the times while keeping favorite neighborhood dishes.

"I was born in Charleston, West Virginia,"

Doris says. "Daddy was stationed at Fort Eustis during World War II. The family story is that Momma ran away from business college, came down here, knocked on the door at Fort Eustis and said 'I need to see Sergeant Evans.' They ran off to Richmond and got married and honeymooned on Richmond Road at Matthews Tourist Home, about where IHOP is now. He was shipped overseas, and she went back home. The dream was to move to Williamsburg. In

1967, when I was nine years old, we moved to Williamsburg."

Doug explains that his family relocated to Virginia from New York in the early 1960s. "We grew up here and attended the schools here."

Doris and Doug rode the same school bus. "I grew up in Skipwith and so did he," Doris explains. "But, we didn't have the same friends. I recognized him from the yearbooks. I was the

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geek in the front of the bus, and he was the one opening the emergency door in the back.” She laughs.

“Our roots are very similar,” she adds. “We opened up Lafayette High School. I was in the second graduating class from there in 1975. We had the opportunity to go to all the schools. We were here when the schools were integrated.”

Doug left town to attend Virginia Tech. “When I came back to Williamsburg, the hospitality industry was the biggest industry in the area.” He had studied engineering at Tech and began working at the Newport News Shipbuilding. “But the shipyard wasn’t appealing to me,” he says. “I worked during that same time in a restaurant and enjoyed that. It intrigued me.”

Doris’ mother was an educator, and Doris became one too. Doug worked in the restaurant industry. “My mom tutored one of the Greek families on Richmond Road and I was a tag-along,” Doris says. As Doris hung around the restaurant, she and Doug became reacquainted. “That’s how our worlds came together: restaurants and education. That was 26 years ago.”

Doug confirms the number of years. “Yeah, that’s been awhile. Back then the local Greek families owned most of the restaurants in Williamsburg, and they were all along the main thoroughfare, Richmond Road.” When McDonalds opened on Richmond Road, it was one of the first chains to locate there. “It was the exciting new restaurant,” Doris says. “It opened near James Blair High School. The seniors had senior privileges that they could leave and go to McDonalds. We didn’t get that when we were seniors because Lafayette was too far out in the country.”

Doris recalls the beginning of their dream of opening their own restaurant. “December 13th of 1987, I had been out to some holiday cocktail parties and dropped by where Doug was working at the Seafare to see if he wanted to take me out for a drink.” Even though Doug had been working all day and was tired, his boss encouraged him to go out with Doris.

They went to the Holiday Inn lounge. Doug told Doris he was working really hard in the restaurant business and if he was going to work that hard, he felt he should be working for himself.

“I said I would help,” Doris says with a laugh. “I was still a teacher then. That was December.” In June, they married. By the end of the summer they had bought a Subway Station in Denbigh.

They saw the sub shop as a way to take “baby steps” into restaurant ownership. They learned from the experience, but knew they wanted to operate a different type of establishment, and they wanted it to be in Williamsburg.

“We had been looking at this shopping center (Williamsburg Crossing) since it opened,” Doug says. “We developed a space in the shopping center and started Courtyard Café in 1990.” The restaurant grew over the years and expanded into a neighboring storefront.

The Burger King building at the Crossing became available, and Doug wanted to have the space for a larger restaurant. “We changed the name. The café concept made people think the restaurant was smaller than it was,” Doug says.

The name Victoria came from the pet dog, “Holly Victoria,” Doris explains. “No one in the family would complain because we didn’t use their name since they all loved Holly Victoria.”

The business model for the new restaurant was a continuation of what

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they had started with the Courtyard Café. “We had a strong local clientele,” Doug explains. “Our whole concept was to cater to the local people. Seeing John and Jimmy every morning for breakfast gives us a great feeling. That warm feeling from seeing friends come in on a regular basis is what it’s all about.”

Both Doris and Doug see flexibility as being the biggest advantage of an independent restaurant. “We can do anything we want,” Doug says with a grin. “We can make modifications to meet the needs of our customers.”

“Flexibility in our operations,” Doris adds, “with consistency in our food. People will have their favorite dishes here when they want it.” William and Mary alumni return to the restaurant looking for their favorite spaghetti from the Courtyard Café and are surprised and happy to find it still on the menu.

“A lot of people find a plate of food they like and stick with it every time they go to a restaurant,” Doug explains. “When they want that dish, they go to that restaurant. A go-to place for a certain food you like.”

Flexibility extends to the way they celebrate the holiday season. “I love the nutcrackers. It’s a toy. It goes back to when I was in college at Virginia Intermont College (Bristol, Virginia),” Doris describes. “The Bristol Concert Ballet company was housed there and my suitemate was part of the company. The first ballet I saw was ‘The Nutcracker.’ I wanted a nutcracker. In 1979, I received one for a Christmas gift.”

Her collection of Christmas nutcrackers started. “On my teacher’s salary, I would put them on lay-away in the summer.” She loved the authentic German nutcrackers, but also collected whimsical ones she found. “As the years have gone along, I’ve received them as gifts and my collection grew.”

She started using them at the restaurant as centerpieces for the holiday. Doris and Doug are known to have fresh flowers on all the tables throughout the year. “I put poinsettias on the tables between Thanksgiving and Christmas last year,” Doris says.

“Closer to Christmas,” Doug says, “the poinsettias started looking a little ragged. I thought maybe this Christmas we should put a nutcracker on each table.”

“Well, that was my license to shop for even more of them,” she says.

“Big mistake on my part,” he adds with a laugh.

The attic in their home has the nutcrackers ready to go. “Thirty ready to roll and others for around the restaurant,” she says. “That’s not a big number. My personal collection is about 125.”

Doris and Doug close the restaurant the week of Christmas. “So I don’t put a lot of energy into converting the restaurant into a winter wonderland because we take our break that week so the staff can be off to be with their families,” Doris says. Closing Christmas week is another aspect they love about being independent and flexible.

Doris loves sharing her collection. “Nutcrackers are easy and I love them. It’s amazing how much people enjoy seeing them, especially the kids.”

Doris and Doug Bryant have found their independent restaurant has all the flexibility to make it appealing to them, their employees and to their local clientele. Plus, Doris can share her growing collection of Christmas nutcrackers with her restaurant family of Williamsburg neighbors. NDN



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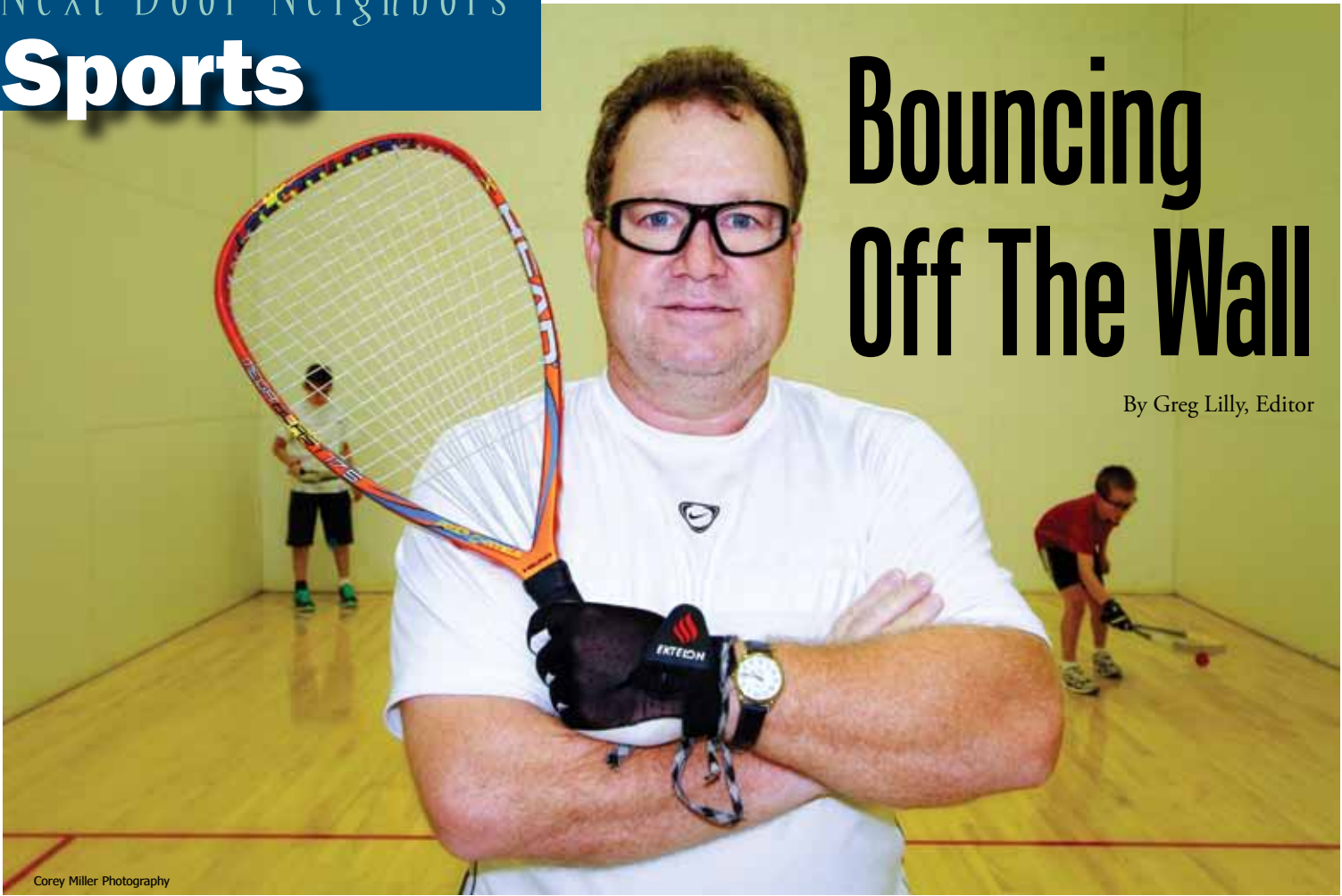
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# Bouncing Off The Wall

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Corey Miller Photography

“It’s a simple game with simple rules. You can get on the court as a novice and have fun,” Reed Johnson says of racquetball. Reed teaches racquetball to kids and adults at the James City County Recreation Center. “In the 1970s, racquetball was a huge sport. It has fallen off in popularity so now it’s a lot of retired military people keeping it going.”

That’s how Reed learned the sport: from retired Lt. Col. Jim Albrecht. “At church, I’d met Jim Albrecht. Racquetball is still a very popular

sport in the military and for the retired military guys. Jim had asked me to play racquetball with him and some of his friends.” Reed learned the sport and had fun with the racquetball players. “That was about 17 years ago, and we still play today.”

Reed and Jim began to play double tournaments throughout the state. They did okay, by Reed’s evaluation of their success. “We weren’t the best at the tournaments, but we weren’t the worst, either. We had fun. Through that, I be-

gan to play at the James City County Recreation Center. A group of guys would get up at five o’clock in the morning and be there at six to play before work. It was always the same set of guys – a social thing.”

He says the regular racquetball players would get together for other activities like poker or to take their wives out for a group dinner.

Williamsburg, in part because of the population of retired military, has a thriving racquetball community. “The courts are full on the

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weekends and before and after work," Reed says. "Sunday afternoons are 'open court' at the JCC Rec Center. Anybody who shows up can play. There's always someone here wanting to play."

Reed was born in Tennessee. His father worked in the furniture industry and the family moved to Thomasville, North Carolina and then in the 1970s to Appomattox, Virginia. He laughs and says "What brought me to this area was I went to Virginia Beach on vacation and never went home."

He put himself through college and met his

wife, Julye, at Old Dominion University. They moved to Williamsburg in 1993 when Reed took a job with the James City County Service Authority. Today, he and Julye have 15 year old twins, Jacob and Abby.

"I started my son and daughter on racquetball when they were about ten. They don't play as much as I'd like. My son is a freshman baseball player at Lafayette. He's also running cross country. My daughter is running cross country, too." They still play racquetball when they can fit it into their schedules.

"I like racquetball, but I love baseball," Reed

says. "I was a high school baseball player, and for baseball players, racquetball gets you into aerobic shape. Pitchers need to run all the time. If you are serious about baseball, you need to run all the time. Racquetball keeps you moving."

For baseball players in the shortstop and the base positions, playing racquetball helps with lateral agility. Reed adds that the swing is similar as well. "I think swinging a baseball bat is the same as the racquetball swing. Low and drive with your hips."

Racquetball started as a combination of

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handball, squash and paddleball. "It originally was played on tennis courts – one wall. People in California still play with one wall," Reed explains. "It transformed to utilize the four walls, ceiling and floor."

He adds that the game is fairly simple to learn. "Basically, you have a service box where you serve the ball against the front wall. It has to come back to a certain point, and the opponent has the opportunity to hit the ball, before it bounces twice, back against the front wall. That return can hit any wall or the ceiling, but it has to hit the front wall before it bounces on the floor." That's when the fun and speed take over as the ball ricochets around the enclosed court, bouncing off the walls and ceiling.

"I've been hit in the face with a racquet," he says of the potential hazards of being one of two people, swinging racquets, in a small enclosed room with a rubber ball travelling at high rates of speed. "People have been hit in the eye, in the side of the head...the ball is coming at you fast." Aggressive as the game can get, Reed says at the Rec Center, they play "Gentlemen's Rules – we try not to hit each other."

Physically, a player needs to be fast on his or

her feet. "You have to be fast, to move laterally and get low to the floor," Reed says. "It is imperative you learn the proper way to swing the racquet, otherwise you will hurt your shoulders and elbows – just like you would with a tennis racquet."

Once a player learns to serve and return the ball, the next level of skill is strategy. "Anticipate where the ball is going to be, not where it was. The ball is moving very fast. After a while, you learn when the ball comes off a certain area of the wall, where you need to be standing. Chasing the ball...you will not win. You have to be out in front of it, thinking ahead," Reed advises.

"In advanced racquetball, it becomes a chess game. You determine your opponent's weaknesses, and you select shots that take advantage of those weaknesses. You hit the ball away from your opponent, keep them moving."

The biggest mistake beginning players make is hitting the ball down the middle of the court. "Advanced players will take you out every time if you do that. The key is the four corners at the floor."

Strategy is the easiest advanced skill to learn.

"Young players are surprised by the strategy of the game. They have been hitting the ball down the middle forever. When they start to learn the different shots and approaches to making a pass shot or a pinch shot, that's what the students really gravitate to."

The concept of strategy may be the key skill, but the biggest challenge is in the bounce. "Knowing where the ball is going to be, that's the hardest part to learn. Anticipating where to hit the ball and where it will go."

Reed enjoys teaching kids the basics of racquetball. "I love hanging out with kids and watching them learn the game. I get a lot of satisfaction from their success. It's the same as when I teach baseball to kids or the satisfaction from helping kids in scouting. My son is in Boy Scout Troop 103. I'm on the scout committee."

Reed adds, "Racquetball is a bit like Boy Scouts. There are a lot of kids who don't fit in everywhere in life. They don't fit in on the baseball field, or may not be big enough for football, but they want to do something. This is an individual sport that any kid can pick up and learn." Plus, it's a lot of fun bouncing off the walls. NDN

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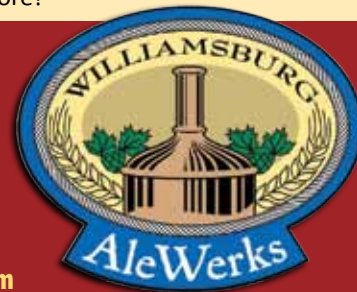
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“I hope to create an emotional response,” Mike Jabbur says of his porcelain pottery. “If I can encourage a person who uses my mug, cup or tea pot, to experience certain emotions such as intimacy, generosity, loneliness, isolation, camaraderie, then I have begun to shape experience.” That opportunity for a person to slow down and be in the moment brings Mike’s work beyond utilitarian and adds a layer of artistic expression to his pottery style.

He focuses on the function of his pottery. “I make functional form for use. Not every potter does. Within that idea, there is a spectrum: from people who make work solely driven for use to pottery that is almost impossible to use.”

For a time, he explored the more expressive/less functional end of the spectrum. “Until about two years ago,” he says, “it became a goal to work utility in and open up my forms.” Opening up his forms was literal. He had been making shapes that closed in on themselves or had tight restrictions. “The idea was the exploration of how to use it. The form made using it a meaningful experience in the day. You had to slow down and reflect on the coffee or tea you consumed from that particular cup.”

Today, his award-winning work has evolved into more of a practical utility with the creative designs of fine art. “As a studio potter, my research focuses on the relationship between handmade objects and their role in everyday life. I make objects for daily use in a domestic setting, impelled by my belief that interesting and beautiful functional objects transform otherwise monotonous activities into meaningful life-affirming moments.”

Mike spent his childhood in Sacramento, California. His family moved to northern Virginia as he started eighth grade. That’s when he started taking art classes. “I wouldn’t say I came from a particularly art-oriented family.

# Function & Emotion in the arts

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Corey Miller Photography

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My mom is an elementary school teacher, and my dad is an engineer. I took a lot of drawing classes in high school. In Fairfax County, they had a strong graphic design program.”

Graphic design appealed to Mike and he enrolled at Virginia Tech to study it. “At Virginia Tech, there were two tracks in art: graphic design and studio art,” he explains. The shared prerequisites introduced him to the different art mediums offered. “Life drawing, sculpture, painting and ceramics,” he lists. “I took the Ceramics 1 class and something clicked. I was really interested in the idea of functional art. There’s somewhat of a connection to functional art and graphic design. In graphic design, you’re creating for a client. There is a clear purpose to communicate in a certain way.”

Making pots, cups, bowls and platters to heighten the domestic experiences of eating and drinking clicked for him. “Really, more so than the visual part of pottery,” he admits. During his summers at Tech, he worked in a pottery studio and a pottery retailer. That was a conscious switch. “I wasn’t pursuing graphic design, but going toward pottery. I followed through with the graphic design degree. But somewhere around my junior year of college,

I realized I wanted to be a potter.”

The arts program was small at Tech so Mike and his fellow potters worked closely with the faculty and each other. “When I was coming through the program, there were about four of us that have gone on to be professional potters on the national scene.” The collection of talent sparked a valuable dynamic in that particular place and time. Nationally-known, widely-collected and worldwide-exhibited potters David Eichelberger, Dara Hartman, Andrew Gilliatt and Mike learned together and encouraged each other. “There were a lot of nights in the studio and synergy comes from that creative interaction.”

One of his Tech professors connected Mike with the owner of Red Star Studios in Kansas City. After graduation, he started as an intern and then became a resident artist at the studios. “I stayed for two years. Stephen Hill (the owner of Red Star Studios) was a mentor for a long time – he still is. That took me to grad school applications.”

Mike enrolled in the Ohio University’s MFA in ceramics program in Athens, Ohio. “They had strong faculty, grads and facilities. I wanted to work with Brad Schwieger, who is

the chair of the program. His work is different from mine, but has an architectural movement that is similar to the figurative movement I was interested in.”

Along with learning from some of the top potters in the country, the MFA program would allow Mike to teach at the college level. “I wanted teaching to be a component of what I did.” He had academic teaching experience along his way at Virginia Tech and at Ohio University and enjoyed it. From grad school, he moved to New Mexico to be the studio manager at Santa Fe Clay for three years. He applied for teaching positions during that time and found a fit at William and Mary.

“My grandfather graduated from William and Mary,” Mike says of the attraction to the area and the college. “My mom attended William and Mary. I knew Williamsburg. I wanted to get back east. It seemed like the perfect fit for me. The liberal arts’ style of learning art worked well for me. All those things came together here. This is my third year at the college.”

His work is distinctly his, in both form and finish. “I work in porcelain and stoneware with mostly Chinese glazes – celadon type glazes,”

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Mike explains. "These are fired in a gas kiln with an excess of gas that creates a reducing atmosphere or a reduction firing. This basically starves the kiln of oxygen. The small amount of iron in the glaze turns the finish somewhere between a pale blue to a pale olive green. It also turns the porcelain to an icy blue-white." He uses those glazes because of the calming quality of the colors.

"I see a relationship to water and tranquility in the colors. The glazes create a subtle hue. They also pool and break – break away from sharp color edges and flow to a white, really almost transparent edge. Then they puddle in recessed carvings, or any kind of mark-making, and that becomes richer." Mike creates spiral marks on the form while the piece is on his potter's wheel. The glaze then puddles in those marks and gives a highlight to the detail created on the wheel.

"Making form and glazing are not two separate ideas," he explains. "I like glazes that don't just fit, but accentuate what I do on the potter's wheel through gesture and mark-making."

Another feature of his style is that he leaves part of the porcelain unglazed. "Porcelain fired to that temperature is really tight and vitreous-

ness (glass-like). So forms like mug handles, teapot handles and spouts, and the bottom third of the forms are left unglazed. I do a lot of sanding at every stage to give it the look and feel I want."

He explains that with most potters, style evolves from a layering of information and a layering of influences. "Most potters aren't inventing every element of their work to something that is 100 percent brand new. It's often combining different elements in diverse ways to make something that is yours. This kind of porcelain and Chinese glazes, the bare clay, the way I handle the clay on the potter's wheel, the gestural marks make my style."

He throws his forms very clean and precise. "It's a very tight set form for every shape I make. Then I make a mark that is fairly aggressive." He stretches the pot from the inside. "That's where the gesture and volume come into the form. What I do on the wheel, the way I handle the clay has become a signature. I'm not the only potter who uses unglazed surface, but the way I break up form with glaze and no glaze is becoming my own."

A black line and dot ring the bottom of his pieces. "It isn't on all of my work. It was de-

veloped in the classroom, and I've moved it into my work because so much of what I do is drawing on a three-dimensional form with a mark. Lines become really important – both in the contour of the profile and the way the line moves up and across the form, hitting an area of the form and springing a handle. This line became a point of contrast, something to make the pot interesting from the bottom as well when you see someone drink from it or even in the dish rack."

His sketch book is handy and he's always trying different forms. He looks to historical shapes and to his own work, layering different histories to create something new.

"There isn't any form in my body of work that doesn't change, to a degree, every few months," Mike Jabbur says. "Everything is changing – part of that comes from hyper self-criticism. Every time I unload a kiln, if it's a good firing, there's a part where I look at it and appreciate it, but there is always criticism. I think: 'next time that foot should be a little taller' or 'that handle should push up more.' That critical eye keeps me excited to get back into the studio." NDN

See Mike's work at [www.MikeJabbur.com](http://www.MikeJabbur.com)

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# Routine Disruption = Holiday Anxiety

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Eric Carlson Photography

"I hiked the Camino de Santiago in Spain this summer," Dr. Johnston (John) Brendel says. "One of the reasons I did that was to confront some of my own fears. I came back with a renewed appreciation of fear and anxiety and how that plays out in my clients' lives. I'm in a new phase of filtering that into my professional work."

John spent over a month with two friends walking the Way of Saint James – the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. "We struck out from France, in the snow,

on a day in April and continued to walk for the next five weeks. I'm a homebody, a small town person. Here I was in a foreign country where I don't speak the language; I'm carrying everything I'll need for the next five weeks on my back and trusting that the yellow painted arrows along the Way will lead to the destination."

Anxiety from being out of a normal routine can be a major factor for people during the holidays, just as it is for a Williamsburg "homebody" like John during his walk across Spain.

John is a full-time faculty member in Counseling at the College of William and Mary's School of Education. He also has a part-time private counseling practice, Blue Sky Center for Counseling.

"One of the strategies to minimize anxiety is to manage your environment. By having your environment in a certain way allows you to relax," John explains. "During the holidays, routines go out the window. Sleep gets interrupted. Diets get interrupted. There are more social events. Kids are out of school."

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John explains that the clinical definitions of anxiety can vary. “Anxiety comes in a number of flavors like: panic, obsessive/compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, phobias,” he lists. “The way a person knows they have anxiety to a level that it needs treatment is when it becomes intrusive in their life. It is a fear-based disorder with very primitive underpinnings – back to the fight or flight instincts.”

Anxiety is a widespread condition. “The lifetime prevalence is 25 percent of the population will have an anxiety disorder,” John says. “The National Institute of Mental Health says that in any given year, approximately 18 percent of the population will have an anxiety disorder. That’s the bad news: it is common.”

The good news is that it’s very treatable. “We live in a time when there are a lot of good treatments.” John prefers to avoid medications for his clients when possible. “A lot of anxiety can be treated with basic lifestyle changes, starting with the way a person thinks. Although the research is clear that in the moderate to severe anxiety, the best combination may be anti-anxiety meds with talk therapy. Sometimes the anxiety is so severe that the person cannot slow down enough to analyze what is happening.”

Anxiety almost always has a thought that triggers it. “People dealing with anxiety are often creative and imaginative. They become good at terrorizing themselves with their own thoughts. Part of counseling people with anxiety is to deconstruct that narrative, break down those thoughts, look for distorted patterns of thinking and then reconstruct those into a more healthy light.”

Harboring the “what if...” scenario pervades many thoughts that lead down a spiraling path to anxiety. “That is sometimes called ‘awfulizing.’ People will go to the very worst thing they can imagine, even though the chances of that happening are tiny.”

Look for changes as symptoms of anxiety. John lists changes in sleep, appetite and/or levels of irritability and worry.

“Anxiety can also have physical symptoms like muscle soreness. People often walk around their shoulders tight, their jaws clinched. It becomes confusing for people because they wonder if they have a physical malady.” Anxiety is a mental disorder with physical symptoms accompanying it. With the physical symptoms, anxiety becomes more frightening. “If my heart beat is racing all the time, do I have a heart condition? Am I having a heart attack?” John asks. “Many people on their first panic attack will end up in the emergency room because they feel like they are having a heart attack. The other classic reaction is that they are ‘going crazy.’ After they get the once over at the emergency room, they come away very frustrated because the doctor says there is nothing physically wrong. Yet, they know their heart is beating fast, they’re sweating profusely, and they’re seeing colors in their vision. It’s not a physical ailment, but a mental one.”

Even with all the social advances, there remains a stigma about mental health. “Some people have shame seeking help for anxiety because there is an internal storyline that says: ‘I should be strong enough to do this on my own.’ This is especially true for men in our society. From what we’ve learned about anxiety in recent years, especially in how the brain works, we can see the scientific basis of this in the neurons and their connections,” John describes. “We can work with that. It is not that someone is weak and can’t handle their problems. It’s just that at this particular

point in their life, the stress and anxiety are greater than their capacity for handling whatever is going on.”

Counseling helps manage the anxiety. “Medication is a last resort,” John says. “The first thing I look for is: are you putting anything into your system that can cause the anxiety? There’s a slogan in the anxiety community: No C.A.T.S. (Caffeine, Alcohol, Tobacco and Sugar). We know those four products, for people wired for anxiety, can exacerbate the anxiety.”

C.A.T.S. are categories that are relatively easy to identify and work on. The next step is to analyze the stressors. “What are the sources of stress? What is being done for stress relief? We have to target both of those. Is stress coming from the job, children, parents, holidays, etc.? What are you doing for it? Activities like exercise, meditation or something to quiet the mind helps alleviate the anxiety.” It is unrealistic for most people, John explains, that anxiety goes away completely.

“You don’t eliminate it; it’s learning to manage it. There will be peaks and valleys of anxiety across a person’s lifetime. Look for the things that trigger it and for the signs it is coming on. When it starts, let’s try to de-escalate it at that point. If it does escalate then we have to deconstruct it. What is the progression of thoughts? What is the self-talk that goes on in their head? I help people deconstruct that thinking.”

John has been at William and Mary since 2005 when he returned to Williamsburg to be closer to his parents. “I grew up in Williamsburg. I’m a product of Walsingham and Lafayette High School,” he says. “I went to Virginia Tech for my undergraduate degree in mass communications and then came back to Williamsburg.” He started studying counseling in his late 20s when he enrolled at VCU to earn his master’s degree.

“I had kicked around a number of different careers in my twenties. I had worked for the Virginia Gazette, performed a number of jobs in the Colonial Williamsburg taverns, really a variety of different things in Williamsburg. I hadn’t felt like I’d found my calling. I went to the career counseling center at William and Mary to take a career inventory. A few areas came up for me: lawyer, funeral director and counselor. Apparently they have similar career profiles. My father was a lawyer and he advised against that. Undertaking didn’t appeal to me. I decided to take a look at counseling.”

The first night after starting the counseling graduate program at VCU, John knew it was the right fit. “It took my previous interest in communications and expanded it in a different way, into a helping field. Counseling was my niche.”

He began school counseling, as the first part of his counseling career. “I earned my doctorate from William and Mary. Then I spent nine years on the faculty of Texas A&M in Corpus Christi, before returning to Williamsburg.”

Following the painted yellow arrows that mark the Camino de Santiago trail, Dr. Johnston Brendel walked across Spain. “It’s a mind-boggling concept,” he says with a laugh. “You sleep in albergues (hostels) with up to 300 people in a room – once again, not my thing. Five weeks... It’s a real test of physical endurance. I trained walking up and down Jamestown Road with my dog. That was nothing in preparation for the Pyrenees. It was a once in a lifetime sort of adventure.” A challenge and exploration that showed John a way to deal with fear and anxiety that comes from a disruption of our comfortable life routines. **NDN**

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# Ready, Set, Shop!

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Months in advance of Black Friday, Jo Slack works with her team at Williamsburg Premium Outlets to make the shopping experience fun and exciting for everyone involved. Jo is the director of marketing and business development at Williamsburg Premium Outlets and has some insider tips for her neighbors on making the most of the biggest shopping weekend of the year.

“Planning for our After Thanksgiving Weekend Sale featuring Midnight Madness begins by brainstorming on how to enhance our marketing outreach as well as ways to make this year better than last,” Jo says. She

works with various James City County service agencies as well as the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure the weekend runs smoothly from an operational perspective. “It’s an exciting event, and we work hard to make it run well and be a fun experience for shoppers.”

Jo is a native of Poquoson, Virginia. “I went to Thomas Nelson Community College and received my Industry Specialist certification from Indiana University through the American Business Association.” She worked in the hotel industry around the Peninsula in the late 1980s, first as a sales coordinator and worked her way up to director of sales and marketing.

“In 1991, I moved on to Host Mark Hospitality Group in Williamsburg.” After about ten years, Jo decided to change career paths and joined the Williamsburg Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Now, it’s called the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance,” she says, “and I promoted Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown to the visitor market and AAA Clubs throughout the United States and Canada.”

In 2011, Jo began working for Simon Property Group’s Williamsburg Premium Outlets. “It has been an incredible working experience. My position as allows me to work with over



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**The Next**

**BUSINESS INSIGHT**

**Is Nov. 20th.**

**See Page 53 for details.**

135 designer and brand name stores, all of which employ incredible management and sales personnel.” She also oversees the property’s customer service team. “I continue to work closely with all visitor agencies in our market. We are so fortunate to be in a well-known destination with deep roots to our early American history. Our customer service employees are well-versed in the area, and we provide complimentary distribution of area collateral. Working together with the State of Virginia and our regional visitor organizations, we will continue to grow visitor traffic into the area.”

Running an After Thanksgiving weekend sales event takes more planning and manpower than people realize. In addition to the planning that most retailers do for the weekend, Jo has to think about the logistics of traffic – both people and cars. “Planning ensures the event runs as smoothly as possible, from coordinating vehicular traffic control and signal lights to off-site parking,” she describes. “We see a huge volume of shoppers throughout the entire weekend, and we work with the James City County Police Department who assist us to keep everyone safe. We also spend time working on how to better communicate the sale to potential shoppers, both those who live here and visitors to the area. Additionally, significant time is spent communicating to the stores, requesting that they provide the best possible offers to the shoppers when they arrive.”

The shoppers’ arrival time seems to happen earlier and earlier. “Yes,” Jo agrees. “Every year we see more and more shoppers come out before our stores open. Thus, we decided to expand our hours to meet the demands of our excited shoppers—some who will want to shop on Thanksgiving evening and others who will join us on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.” Earlier opening times, before midnight on Thanksgiving, are optional for the Premium Outlets stores and are decided upon by each store’s corporate office.

Keeping local Williamsburg shoppers and out-of-town visitors informed of opening times is important to Jo and her team. “We display signs on each storefront for those stores opening earlier, post that information on our website and communicate this information at our Information Center,” she says. “Shoppers can always visit our website for the most up-to-date information on individual store hours so they can plan their after Thanksgiving shopping.”

With the trend of stores opening earlier for the Black Friday events all over the area, Jo says the outlets really ramp up the savings to attract customers. “It’s the biggest shopping weekend of the year, and this year, some of our stores will open as early as 8 p.m. on Thanksgiving, and all of our stores will be open by midnight.”

Shoppers are savvy and always looking for extra bargains, she explains. Besides the usual outlet savings, shoppers can save even more on this holiday weekend. Jo’s insider tip is to snag additional savings as a member of the VIP Shopper Club, from complimentary coupon books to AAA/CAA members and from discounts for current or former members of the military with a military or veteran ID.

Her top three recommendations for planning the After Thanksgiving weekend shopping excursion to the outlets are:

1. Take the shuttle. “Park in our complimentary off-site parking lot conveniently located at Warhill Stadium. The lot opens at 8 p.m. and the first shuttle bus departs at 8 p.m.” There will be eight motor-coaches making continuous loops from the parking site to the outlet center. The off-site parking shuttle will make easy arrival and departure for shoppers. “As a special perk for parking there, Tommy Hilfiger store will supply complimentary coffee and hot chocolate at our off-site parking,

provided by the Williamsburg  
Association of REALTORS®

## what’s up in real estate



Christmas music is playing on the radio. State and local elections are over. And we survived the government shutdown. Looks like this might be a good time to recap some of the real estate related issues of the past year, especially where it involves us as members of both the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) and the Williamsburg Association of REALTORS® (WAAR).



by **Sam Mayo**  
President  
**Williamsburg  
Area Association  
of REALTORS®**

The short version is that REALTORS® remained in the forefront in the work to promote home ownership and protect property rights in three basic arenas: Government backed securities of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as it relates to the re-proposed Qualified Residential Mortgage (QRM); retaining the Mortgage Interest Deduction (MID) in the tax code; and, extending the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The long story addresses NAR’s successful work on the re-proposed QRM rule to back safe reliable loan products such as 30-year fixed-rate mortgages with a government guarantee and reasonable down payments for home purchases. In fact, QRM as re-proposed should do precisely what the Dodd-Frank regulations intended: Help avoid another meltdown in the mortgage-backed security market by prescribing product underwriting and documentation standards that ensure sustainable lending and protect investors and consumers.

“Our goal is to help Congress, and our industry, design a secondary mortgage market model that will serve America’s best interests today and into the future, and ensure a strong housing market and economic recovery,” says NAR President Gary Thomas.

Protecting the MID in the tax code has been an ongoing battle. While arguments are strong on both sides of the aisle, MID helps many families become home owners by reduc-

ing the carrying costs of owning a home. The ability to deduct the interest paid on a mortgage can mean significant savings at tax time. NAR remains at the table as discussions continue in Congress on changes to the tax code.

The last big national issue is that of the flood insurance program, which was scheduled to go into full implementation in early October. This has been a particularly troubling situation since the program has been losing money due to the heavy losses incurred from disastrous weather events in recent years. But a bipartisan effort in both the House and the Senate has resulted in the “Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act” and NAR is urging its immediate consideration.

“We look forward to continuing our work with Congress to protect homeowners and taxpayers and create a responsible and sustainable flood program,” adds Thomas, noting the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 enacted an unintended consequence that could hurt millions of homeowners who are facing extreme increases in flood insurance premiums.

As you can see, the world of a REALTOR® is often more than the obvious of providing professional real estate services and I wanted to take this opportunity in this, my final *Next Door Neighbors* article as president of WAAR, to let everyone know. This will be incoming president Andrew Nelson’s corner next month and I’m sure he will do his best to keep you up to date as our quest to protect home ownership and private property rights continues.

For additional expert information and guidance, consult a REALTOR®.  
For a complete and accurate listing of homes for sale, visit [www.WAARealator.com](http://www.WAARealator.com).

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and we will have our parking attendants handing out discounts and our Shopper's Guide."

2. Investigate extra discounts. "Sign up on-line at our website in advance for the VIP Shopper Club. You'll get a voucher for a free VIP Coupon Book and access to online coupons." Most retailers have loyalty shopper clubs that can give you additional discounts.

3. Plan your shopping strategy. "Map out your preferred stores beforehand. With over 135 stores, it is easy to get sidetracked. Make a list of what stores you want to hit and plan your route with a map you can print from our website."

Jo's tips are for the Williamsburg Premium Outlets, but can be used with any holiday shopping destination. Know where to easily park, especially during the popular sales days; take advantage of frequent shopper clubs and discounts; and plan your trip to get those hard-to-find presents first and at the best price. "Some of our stores will be open as early as 8:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving, so come early," Jo adds.

She adds that customer service departments are wonderful places to find a gift for those people on your list that you have no idea what to get.

"Our customer service department can assist you with purchasing gifts for those on your list that are hard to buy for, including American Express gift cards and Ticketmaster tickets. Take advantage of this service!"

Pricing is always tempting on the big sales weekend. Jo says those who wait may be empty-handed. "If you see something you like and the 'price is right' it makes sense to scoff it up then – this is true especially at designer apparel or accessory stores where some best-sellers are simply gone if one is indecisive!"

Jo says she loves to shop and tends to holiday shop all year long. "Especially when I come across an amazing deal," she adds. "Every year during the After Thanksgiving weekend sales, I see deals that are too good to pass up so I'm sure I will find time to do a bit of shopping myself."

Working during the After Thanksgiving sales doesn't bother Jo Slack. "I love being in the midst of the excitement. It's like a big party. Shoppers are having fun with family and friends, walking off Thanksgiving dinner... and the stores are excited to see the crowds! The energy that surrounds this sale is very uplifting." NDN

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

# Next Door Neighbors

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Go to the magazine site and click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current  
community announcements.

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

## Hey Neighbor!

### SHEPHERDS CHAPEL TYPE BIBLE STUDY

#### Ongoing

If you have questions about the Bible that no one can seem to answer to your satisfaction then perhaps you or should join us for Bible study every Monday evening at the Williamsburg Regional Library in Norge from 6 -9 pm. We teach chapter by chapter and verse by verse in order to fully explain God's word and its intent. If you are interested, call 757-253-0172 or contact bobcango@cox.net.

## Hey Neighbor!

### 4-H MAKING WAVES TEEN LEADERSHIP CLUB

#### Ongoing

The Making Waves 4-H Teen Leadership club is designed for youth ages 14 -19 interested in developing citizenship, leadership, and life skills. The club uses a peer teaching model in which teens teach teens through hands-on interactive leadership activities. Making Waves holds a monthly meeting and participates in additional service learning projects through the year. In 2013-2014, the club will meet on the first Wednesday of each month (October through May) at the James City County Recreation Center from 6:30 - 8 pm. For information, contact Sandra Kee, Virginia Cooperative Extension, 757-564-2170.

## Hey Neighbor!

### FREE STREAMING MOVIES AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS

#### Ongoing

Williamsburg Regional Library offers a new digital collection of streaming movie and television content made possible through a grant from Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library. The Freegal Movies and Television Service allows WRL users access to thousands of video selections from major content suppliers through the convenience of their personal computer or portable device. Free mobile phone and tablet apps are available in the AppleR App Store and Google PlayR. Adult WRL cardholders can stream three videos per week from the Freegal Movies and Television Service. Visit <http://www.wrl.org/movies> to get started. Call the library at 757-259-7720 with questions.

## Hey Neighbor!

### PLAY CRIBBAGE

#### Ongoing

We are always looking for new players to join our group to play this 400 year old card game. Come play and meet new players. We meet every Tuesday at Colonial Heritage clubhouse between 10 am - noon. For more information, contact Bill Whiting at 757-532-1405.

## Hey Neighbor!

### MOMS IN PRAYER INTERNATIONAL

#### Ongoing

Do you worry about your children? Replace your anxiety and fear with peace and hope by praying with other moms for our children and schools. Join us for

a powerful time of prayer every Wednesday from 1-2 pm at Calvary Chapel Williamsburg, 5535 Olde Town Road. Contact information: Jeanne Hallman, 757-220-8400 or [Jeanne4J@cox.net](mailto:Jeanne4J@cox.net). Visit [www.MomsInPrayer.org](http://www.MomsInPrayer.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH November 2013

November marks the 30th anniversary of President Reagan declaring the first National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. Recognizing early signs of Alzheimer's is one of the first steps people in Virginia can take to create awareness and provide help for those facing this deadly disease. We offer support groups, classes, care consultations, and more! Visit our website, [www.alz.org/seva](http://www.alz.org/seva), or call 757-459-5405, Kristy Wynn-garden, Communications Coordinator.

## Hey Neighbor!

### ADVENT WREATHS November 16, 2013

In the Freedom Park Interpretive Center, Genrose Lashinger will show participants how to construct beautiful wreaths for the advent season using natural herbs. Many of these herbs are growing in the Botanical Garden. In Freedom Park Interpretive Center or Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Time 10 - 11:30 am. Free and open to the public.

## Hey Neighbor!

### THE WILLIAMSBURG SYM-

### PHONIA MASTERWORKS CONCERT #2

#### November 18 - 19, 2013

The Williamsburg Symphonia's 30th Anniversary season continues with a program featuring music by Mozart, Theofanidis, Bach and Schubert/Mahler. Masterworks concert performances are conducted by Music Director Janna Hymes, who is observing her 10th year on the podium, and are presented at the Kimball Theatre in Merchants Square at 8 pm. Single tickets are \$54 and \$44 and may be purchased by calling 757-229-9857. For more information contact us at [info@williamsburg-symphonia.org](mailto:info@williamsburg-symphonia.org) or visit [www.williamsburgsymphonia.org](http://www.williamsburgsymphonia.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB 50th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

#### November 20, 2013

The Williams and May Early Music Ensemble will perform chamber music featuring authentic instruments of the Baroque period, under the direction of Ruth van Baak Griffioen. The program, free and open to the public, begins at 11 am in Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish in downtown Colonial Williamsburg preceded by coffee and conversation at 10 am. For more information contact Sylvia Lynn 757-741-0006 or [www.williamsburgmusicclub.org](http://www.williamsburgmusicclub.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### NORTH AMERICAN ORCHIDS PROGRAM

#### November 21, 2013

The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society will meet from 6:45 - 7:45 pm at James City County Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Road in Williamsburg. The meeting is open to the public. Refreshments will be served. Guest speaker is Dennis Whigham, Senior Botanist at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.

## Hey Neighbor!

### CATCH THE VISION TOUR

November 21, 2013

Williamsburg Christian Academy invites you to a one hour captivating glimpse of the Academy. WCA is a pre-school through 12th grade Christ centered, interdenominational, college preparatory jewel in our community. Tours are both 8 am and 2 pm, 101 Schoolhouse Lane, Williamsburg. Call 757 220-1978, ext. 113 for more information.

## Hey Neighbor!

### AARP TAXAIDE TRAINING

November 21, 2013

Williamsburg AARP Tax-Aide

is looking for volunteers to assist seniors as well as low-to-moderate income taxpayers in completing their 2013 tax returns. Training will take place at the e-Clic computer lab at the James City County Library beginning in November. Contact Jane Alcorn, District Coordinator, [mjanealcorn@yahoo.com](mailto:mjanealcorn@yahoo.com) for more information. Or visit the website [www.aarp.org/tavolunteer](http://www.aarp.org/tavolunteer) to complete the Prospective Volunteer Form.

## Hey Neighbor!

### INFANT MASSAGE CLASS

November 21, 2013

Free, from 5:30-6:30 pm at Pediatric Associates of Williamsburg, 119 Bulifants Boulevard. Expecting and new parents will learn simple infant massage techniques designed for infants from birth to 6 months. Register online at [www.chkd.org/classes](http://www.chkd.org/classes).

## Hey Neighbor!

### ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL

### SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY

November 23, 2013

Williamsburg is among more than

300 cities participating in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's International Survivors of Suicide Day. The 15th annual program features a panel of individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide and mental health experts. The day allows those who have are bereaved after a suicide loss to connect in their local community and online in a supportive and healing environment. Location: Riverside Doctors Hospital, 1500 Commonwealth Avenue, Williamsburg (off route 199 and I-94). Time: 1-2:30 pm, Main Conference Center. To learn more, please visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### FESTIVAL OF TREES FUND-RAISER FOR THE YMCA

November 23, 2013

The Festival of Trees has been the R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA's annual fund-raising event since 2002. The funds we raise through this event offers opportunities to those who might otherwise be unable to enroll, and helps make our community a better place to

live and work. The R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA is hosting our annual Festival of Trees event at Miller Hall on the William and Mary Campus at 6:30 pm. The fun-filled event will include heavy hors d'oeuvres from local caterers, music and a silent/ live auction. Call 757-229-9622 to buy tickets or for more information or go to <https://www.501auctions.com/festivaloftrees/>.

## Hey Neighbor!

### COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EMPLOYEES ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW

November 23-24, 2013

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation employees, volunteers and retirees will once again combine their time and talents for their annual Fall Arts and Crafts Show 10 am – 5 pm. Show and sale will be held at the Historic Triangle Community Services Building, located at 312 Waller Mill Road. Admission and parking are free and open to the public. Several media are represented during the show and sale, from jewelry and



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**The Next**

**BUSINESS INSIGHT**

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**See Page 53 for details.**

textiles to woodcrafts and photography. Since 1983, the Colonial Williamsburg Employee Arts and Crafts Show has been held a widely regarded and valued tradition as one of the best shows locally. Employees, volunteers and retirees come from all areas and divisions of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to share their voluminous talents and passions outside of their jobs with the public in this very special show and sale.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**GIVING FROM THE HEART OF THE ACADEMY**

November 26, 2013

All are welcome to attend an outreach assembly at Williamsburg Christian Academy on at 2 pm, focusing on the school's "Giving From The Heart Of The Academy" project. This school-wide Thanksgiving outreach project in partnership with ten local churches will provide 100 Thanksgiving dinners to less fortunate families in our area. Enjoy the uplifting and encouraging ceremony, as our community unites at this time

of Thanksgiving. Call 757-220-1978, ext. 113 for more information. 101 Schoolhouse Lane, Williamsburg.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**HERITAGE HUMANE SOCIETY FUR TREE**

December 2013

The annual Fur Tree will once again stand proudly in front of Mermaid Books in Colonial Williamsburg. Ribbons are available to honor pets past and present. All proceeds benefit the animals awaiting adoption at Heritage Humane Society. Visit us online for more information [heritagehumanesociety.org](http://heritagehumanesociety.org).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**TRINITY ORGAN CONCERT**

December 4, 2013

The free concert will include a variety of classical works performed by violinist Wanchi Huang and Saint Bede's organist Aaron Renninger. 12 noon at Saint Bede Catholic Church, 3686 Ironbound Road. For more information, call 757- 229-3631 or visit

[www.bedeva.org/concerts](http://www.bedeva.org/concerts).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**54th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HOMES TOUR**

December 7, 2013

The Green Spring Garden Club, Inc., features houses beautifully decorated with holiday floral arrangements. Tickets are \$25 if purchased in advance by mail, \$30 if purchased on December 6 or 7. For detailed information on houses and to order advance tickets (through Nov. 20), visit the Garden Club's website at: [green-spring-garden-club.org](http://green-spring-garden-club.org). For questions contact Rita Grove, Tour Chair, 757-564-9134 or Marijane Harper, Club President, 757-565-7855.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**LADIES CHRISTMAS TEA**

December 7, 2013

At 11 am, hosted by Calvary Chapel Williamsburg. Come and be blessed by sharing great food, fellowship, a fun tea cup exchange, and an uplifting message for this special time of year. Please bring

a pot-luck dish or a dessert item to share and a tea cup for the exchange. To reserve your space, RSVP by November 29. Contact Jeanne Hallman at 757-220-8400 or [Jeanne4j@cox.net](mailto:Jeanne4j@cox.net). Web site: [info@calvarywilliamsburg.org](mailto:info@calvarywilliamsburg.org).

**Hey Neighbor!**  
**WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONIA HOLIDAY POPS**

December 7 - 8, 2013

The Williamsburg Symphonia, conducted by Music Director Janna Hymes, will present its 2013 Holiday Pops concert at the Kimball Theatre during Grand Illumination Weekend. The show dates and times are Saturday, December 7 at 2 pm, and Sunday, December 8 at 1:30 and 3 pm. General admission tickets cost \$25 and may be ordered by calling 1-800-HISTORY or visiting the Symphonia's website ([www.williamsburgsymphonia.org](http://www.williamsburgsymphonia.org)) and clicking on the link to Colonial Williamsburg's ticket ordering site.

**Hey Neighbor!**  
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## CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

December 14, 2013

Williamsburg's favorite holiday tradition, the annual Christmas Bazaar, kicks off from 9 am – 3 pm at Bruton Parish Hall (Duke of Gloucester Street). Enjoy the most unique holiday gifts with proceeds benefiting the pets at Heritage Humane Society. Jewelry – Gift Baskets – Bake Sale – Attic Treasures – Pet toys & Treats – Hand-Made Crafts – Holiday Decorations – Exquisite Raffle Items – and much more. Don't miss our famous Gourmet Soup Kitchen with offerings from outstanding Williamsburg restaurants and chefs. Arrive early for the best selection.

## Hey Neighbor!

### “THE NUTCRACKER” BY VIRGINIA REGIONAL BALLET

December 14-15, 2013

With special guest artist from the Pennsylvania Ballet, at 2:30 and 7 pm on December 14, and at 2:30 pm on December 15. Performances are held at Phi Beta Kappa Hall at the College of William & Mary. Reserved Seating. To purchase tickets online, go to [www.danceVRB.com](http://www.danceVRB.com) or call the PBK box office at 757-221-2674.

## Hey Neighbor!

### AT CHRISTMAS BE MERRY

December 14 and 21, 2013

A Special Holiday Evening at Historic Jamestowne. Sir George

Yeardeley, Virginia's Governor in 1620 invites you to a very special evening program in the church at Historic Jamestowne. Departing from Colonial Williamsburg's Visitor Center, you will travel along the Colonial Parkway with your guide who will offer insights into early English Christmas traditions and what Jamestown settlers expected during their Christmastide. Upon arriving on Jamestown Island, you will be escorted along a cresset lit path to an early Virginia Christmas celebration. After a welcome by Governor Yeardeley and singing carols in the historic church, you will herald in the season by the bonfire as you witness the firing of the Christmas guns in the shadow of the old fort. Tickets are required and go on sale in November 2013. FMI: 757-229-4997. Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown, VA. For more information call: 757-229-4997 or visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG CHORUS WINTER CONCERT

December 17, 2013

At 7:30 pm at Walnut Hills Baptist Church on Jamestown Road, a featured work is Michael Haydn's setting of Psalm 112 accompanied by string quartet. The guitar, flute, strings, and the piano artistry of Christine Niehaus will add to the festivity. The Williamsburg Youth Choral and the Berkeley Middle

School Treble Choir will perform several pieces and combine with the Chorus singing the exuberant Look to this Day ! by Bob Chilcott. For ticket information contact Dianne, 757-903-4602, [Mdianne510@yahoo.com](mailto:Mdianne510@yahoo.com) or visit [www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org](http://www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CLUB 50th ANNIVERSARY

December 18, 2013

“A Holiday Concert Survival Guide” presentation by Dru Stowe. This is the 4th event of the Williamsburg Music Club's 50th Anniversary year monthly celebrations. The program, which is free and open to the public, begins at 11 am in Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish in downtown Colonial Williamsburg, preceded by coffee & conversation at 10 am. For more information contact Sylvia Lynn 757-741-0006 or [www.williamsburgmusicclub.org](http://www.williamsburgmusicclub.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### LORNA LUFT AT THE KIMBALL THEATRE

December 21, 2013

ShowStoppers Productions presents Lorna Luft on at 2 pm and 7:30 pm at the Kimball Theatre in Williamsburg; all seats are \$40. Come and celebrate the Christmas season with Broadway, film and television actress Lorna Luft singing her favorite Christmas songs

with a mix of all the “Songs My Mother Taught Me.” A celebrated live performer, stage, film and television actress, best-selling author, recording artist and Emmy nominated producer, Lorna Luft continues to triumph in every medium with critics labeling her one of the most vibrant, versatile and exciting artists on stage today. Born to legendary entertainer Judy Garland and producer Sid Luft, music and entertainment was an integral part of her, and her sister's (Liza Minnelli), childhood. From her early work with her mother to spectacular concert performances, acclaim on Broadway, and in television, Lorna proves again and again that she's a stellar entertainer, proudly carrying the torch of her family's legendary show business legacy.

## Hey Neighbor!

### WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN: THE RIGHT CUT

January 18, 2014

In Freedom Park Interpretive Center or Williamsburg Botanical Garden, 10-11:30 am, open to the public, \$5 donation accepted. A tree and shrub pruning workshop in the Freedom Park Interpretive Center. James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners will discuss the basics of pruning trees and shrubs and will demonstrate the proper use of pruning tools. Contact Barb Landa 757-259-2079, [barb@landa.org](mailto:barb@landa.org).

# About Hey Neighbor!

- **Hey Neighbor!** is a free service for non-profit organizations, churches and civic groups. Please submit short paragraphs (as you see on these pages) to communicate your needs or planned events. Flyers, PDF files, etc. will not be included.
- Send your submissions in a Word document or as part of your email to: [HeyNeighbor@cox.net](mailto:HeyNeighbor@cox.net).
- The **Hey Neighbor!** inbox is checked only once during each month during production. If you have questions that need to be answered in a timely fashion, please email: [meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com](mailto:meredith@williamsburgneighbors.com)
- Due to limited space, there are times when all announcements are not available for viewing in print.
- To see a complete list of Hey Neighbor listings, please visit our website: [www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com](http://www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com). Then click on **Hey Neighbor!** to view all of the announcements.

## 2014 MONTH/THEME

- JAN** Resolutions
- FEB** Our Diverse Community
- MAR** Welcome
- APR** Got Game?
- MAY** The Great Outdoors
- JUN** Lessons Learned
- JUL** The Way We Were
- AUG** The Arts in Williamsburg
- SEP** Teachers & Mentors
- OCT** Our Health
- NOV** Businesses 50+
- DEC** Williamsburg Holidays

## IN HOME

- Dec. 12
- Jan. 30
- Feb. 27
- Mar. 27
- Apr. 24
- May 29
- Jun. 26
- Jul 31
- Aug 28
- Sep. 25
- Oct. 30
- Nov 20

## DEADLINE

- Nov. 26
- Jan. 14
- Feb. 11
- Mar. 11
- Apr. 8
- May 13
- Jun. 10
- Jul. 15
- Aug 12
- Sep. 9
- Oct. 14
- Nov. 4

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

**BOB KNOWS  
CARS**

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

**Enjoy!**



BEGINNER LEVEL

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

November 2013  
In the Neighborhood  
Photo Challenge





Real Estate. Reinvented.®

# HEARTH & HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



3,574 sqft., 4 BR, 2.5 Bath. Unique layout with wonderful living space. Completely redone! Hardwoods, built-in cabinetry and speakers, screened porch, deck, 2 large BRs up, office, sunroom, Huge bonus room w/ tons of storage, w-in attic, mud room/laundry, large garage w/ workshop space, low maintenance yard. Tons of natural light! \$550,000

**Andrea Pokorny**  
757.291.9119  
andrea@williamsburghomefinder.com



**105 WILLIAM RICHMOND**

*Kingsmill*

Waterfront Colonial with 6 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, 4,900 square feet, \$895,000. With stunning panoramic water views, this extraordinary home features quality craftsmanship brimming with Colonial character with an open floor plan. This well-maintained charmer has been all updated.

**Tim Parker**  
(757) 879-1781

**Cyril Petrop**  
(757) 879-8811

www.timparkerrealestate.com



**105 CAMBRIDGE LANE**

Charming Colonial in mint condition. First owners. 4 BRs, 3 BAs, 2,329 sqft. Large deck w/automatic awning, beautiful lawn w/lots of dogwood, fish pond, 2 fenced garden areas. Garden shed. Pella windows & sliders. Extensive HW, kitchen w/bright bay breakfast area & built-in bar, gas FP, room over garage. Additional 18x20' insulated & heated workshop. \$375,000

**Susan B. Smith**  
757-876-3838  
susansmith@lizmoore.com  
www.lizmoore.com/susansmith



**GOVERNOR'S LAND**

Beautiful golf lot, with a wonderful view of the 2nd hole. Level, cleared and ready to go. Easy walking distance to Club house, pool. Reduced to sell \$119,000 Call Elena 757-508-5019.

**Elena Chando**  
Realtor®, ABR  
757.508.5019  
lizmoore.com/elenachando



**530 THOMAS BRANSBY**

*Kingsmill*

4 BR, 3.5 BA beauty with spectacular views of the 5th green of the Plantation Course. Tasteful, neutral & recently updated interior include hardwoods, new carpet, ceramic tile, quartz and solid surface countertops, appliances, freshly painted interior and so much more. One Year Home Warranty. \$545,000.

**dianebeal**  
(757) 291-9201  
dianebeal@lizmoore.com



**25 BRAY WOOD • Kingsmill**

Stunning home tucked away on a quiet street has been beautifully renovated from top to bottom with ALL NEW interiors! Spacious kitchen with keeping room opens to sun drenched great room w/cathedral ceiling, FP & built-ins. First floor master with adjacent office or 'flex' room. Second floor master plus a bonus room with BA. Move in ready! 4 BRs, 4.5 BAs, 3,767 sqft. \$509,000.

**Deelyn Neilsen**  
757-503-1999  
Deelyn@lizmoore.com  
www.PremierWilliamsburgRealEstate.com



**148 EASTBURY**

*Ford's Colony*

Cul-de-sac location with expansive Blue Heron golf course views. This fabulous 4 BR, 4.5 BA, 4,383 sqft. transitional offers an open floor plan flooded with natural light. Spacious Main Level Master suite. Large Rear Deck and Screened porch. Bonus room or 5th BR. 2007 Hallmark Home. \$799,000.

**Lorraine Funk**  
757-903-7627  
www.lizmoore.com/lorrainefunk



**297 LITTLE TOWN QUARTER**

*Kingsmill*

A precious gem from every angle, inside and out! Vaulted ceilings in the large living area, wall of windows that open to back patio, double sided gas Fireplace. Updated kitchen appliances, maple cabinets, granite counters, ceramic tile floor with 2 light filled windows. One level living. Move right in! 2 BR, 2 BA, 1,328 sqft. \$240,000.

**Charlotte Turner**  
757-784-4317  
charlotteturner@lizmoore.com • www.homesbycharlotte.com