

A Publication of THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

The

COLUMNS



**RICHMOND'S 24TH ANNUAL
MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION**

MOTHER'S DAY HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR

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The mission of the Museum District Association is to unite, protect and advance the interests of the neighborhood in order to realize its potential and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and community.

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To reach any of our board members by phone, please call 804-410-1632 and leave a message stating the person you wish to reach.

The board meets at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of most months at All Saints Presbyterian on Grove Avenue. If you would like to make a presentation to the board, please email or call the president.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



aving grown up in the Shenandoah Valley, fall was always my favorite season – the annual show put on each autumn by the trees on the surrounding mountainsides was just breathtaking. Moving to Richmond, this autumnal affiliation gave way to full-blown embrace of spring as my new favorite time of year. Each spring our city, and the Museum District in particular, explodes into a riot of color as flowerbeds, carefully tended in the winter, deliver the goods. The trees and shrubs echo this display and, before you know it, you're in a flower show every time you take out the dog or take in an evening stroll. Add in the cool and clean breezes, the bright green shoots at your feet, and there is just simply no better place to be than outside in our neighborhood.

This spring pleasantness, this vernal Valhalla if you will, makes the Museum District such a wonderful place to live. Much credit goes to the bulb planters and weed pullers, the liriopie trimmers and crepe myrtle loppers, the master gardeners and Richmond tree stewards, and everyone who works to keep our yards, trees, and public green spaces healthy, tidy and beautiful. These include the residents, businesses and landlords who maintain the beautiful and historic buildings that define the neighborhood and frame the foliage. Our many museums with their manicured grounds punctuated with art. The city employees and our elected officials who serve the neighborhood by creating the clean, safe and functioning public spaces that tie it all together. When each of us makes a contribution to our neighborhood, small or large, whether it's trimming away branches blocking a sidewalk or rehabilitating a historic building, the whole community benefits. Together, all of these individual contributions add up to create the wonderful neighborhood we are all proud to call home.

TOGETHER, ALL OF OUR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS ADD UP TO CREATE THE WONDERFUL NEIGHBORHOOD WE ARE ALL PROUD TO CALL HOME.

Supporting and celebrating the individuals making these contributions is an important function of the Museum District Association – and this function will be on full display at this year's Museum District Mother's Day House & Garden Tour. Nine wonderful sets of property owners, supported by our equally wonderful house tour committee, are opening their doors to show the improvements they've made to their properties, and ultimately to our neighborhood. Funds raised at this event go to a number of local charities and serve as the MDA's main source of funding. So please take a moment to visit our website, buy your tickets for the event and join us in celebrating and supporting our wonderful neighborhood.

Spring is also when we celebrate Earth Day and think about incorporating more environmentally sustainable practices into our lives. One way the MDA is doing this is with the newsletter you're holding in your hand right now. We use paper with 10% post-consumer waste and soy-based inks to lessen its environmental impact – and because newsletter advertising revenues cover our production costs, it is economically sustainable, too. Even as we have switched to this new, full-color format, advertising revenues have grown to cover the slightly higher costs of publication.

Spring is also when we celebrate Arbor Day – presenting you with another great way you can support our community: helping some shady characters put roots down in the neighborhood. I am of course talking about the MDA's 2018 Adopt-a-Tree initiative! Please see the article for details. As president, I'm committed to putting a tree in every well in this neighborhood, and this initiative is an important first step. Please consider participating. Making this very modest investment of your time and money will benefit you, and us, for decades to come.



STEPHEN VERSEN
2018 MDA Board President

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HISTORIC HOUSE PLAQUES AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Properties located within the nationally registered West of the Boulevard Historic District may be issued a West of the Boulevard plaque. At the time that the Museum District neighborhood was added to the historic registry the name was the West of the Boulevard Historic District, therefore plaques reflect this historic name. Plaques are \$75 and are available only for properties within the district.



To order yours, visit the MDA website at **MUSEUMDISTRICT.ORG**. Under Resources, go to Marketplace, and you will see a link for house plaques.



Belmont LIBRARY

The mission of the Richmond Public Library is to inform, enrich, and empower Richmond's residents: to enrich lives of and expand opportunities for all citizens by promoting reading and the active use of cultural, intellectual, and information resources through a dedication to excellence and professional service.

In addition to books, e-books, recorded books, and DVDs, we offer programs and classes, meeting room use, wireless Internet access, fax service, free notary service and public use PCs.

The Belmont Library is located at 3100 Ellwood Avenue.

Hours: Monday & Wednesday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Closed on Sundays.

More information can be found at RichmondPublicLibrary.org.

BELMONT LIBRARY EVENTS

Storytimes

Book Babies (infant-17 months) -

Mondays @ 10:00 & 10:45 AM

Toddler Time (18-36 months) - **Mondays @ 11:30 AM**

Currently, there is no preschool storytime being offered at BE. Check our webpage for other times and locations.

www.rvalibrary.org

MDA House and Garden Tour

May 13 - Belmont Library is OPEN during the MDA House and Garden Tour. Please come by!

Free Basis Math Class - for Adults 20 and older

Saturday mornings 10:30-12:30 (through May 19)

The course will focus on the type of math you will actually use every day in your career and your personal life.

Spring Gardening Workshop

April 25 - Join our Belmont Master Gardener experts to explore the joys and challenges of spring gardening. Call 646-1139 for more information.

Lego Club - 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 4:30 PM

We provide the LEGOs - you provide the imagination! For grades K-6 with a parent.

Fiction Focus Book Club

3rd Wednesday of each month @ 10:15 am

Join our book discussion each month for Richmond adults age 55 and older. Upcoming titles include:

- Underground Railroad: Whitehead - April 18
- Never Caught: Dunbar - May 16
- No One Is Coming to Save Us: Watts - June 20
- Major Pettigrew's Last Stand: Simonson - July 18
- Queen Sugar: Baszile - Aug. 15
- Handmaid's Tale: Atwood - Sept. 19
- Five-Carat Soul: McBride - Oct. 17

Library Yarns - Thursdays 10:30 - noon

If you like to knit or crochet, join this fun time of creativity at the Belmont Library. Bring your portable handwork project of any kind for an informal group experience. Teens and adults welcome.

Technology Q & A

Bring in your laptop, Kindle, Nook iPad or cell phone and get help from staff during a 30-minute session **each Wednesday noon-2:00**. Registration is required. Call 646-1139.

INFORM • ENRICH • EMPOWER



Richmond Public Library

MDA WELCOMES NEW COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The Museum District Association board of directors is pleased to announce the addition of **Matt Suttle**. Originally from Texas, Matt moved to the Museum District a couple of



years ago and is excited to become involved with the neighborhood. Matt loves being a part of this community and has been looking for ways to contribute and have a

positive impact. He will be overseeing social media accounts and email correspondence, as well as offering support to the newsletter. Matt lives on Stuart Avenue and is the marketing coordinator for MEDARVA Healthcare.



INTRODUCING THE MDA'S 2018 ADOPT-A-TREE INITIATIVE

WHAT: A new MDA-led effort to dramatically increase the number of trees planted in our neighborhood, using the City's Adopt-a-Tree program.

WHERE: Right where you want it! Select the specific tree well you want to fill! Maybe there's an empty well in front of your house, your investment property, or in front of a neighbor's house! Gifting a tree could also be a great way to welcome a new neighbor to your block. The location you choose should be close enough to your property that you are able to water it by hose or bucket on a regular basis during the establishment period.

WHEN: We are accepting requests starting now through August 15, 2018. The trees will be planted in fall or winter during the dormant period.

WHO: You! It's easy! Handy email reminders from the MDA will prompt you to water your tree once a week for its first 18 months.

HOW: Adopting a tree has never been easier. Just go to the MDA's webpage (museum-district.org) and click "Resources," then "Adopt a Tree."

WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED in helping our neighborhood's urban forest? Contact the MDA environment chair at mdaenvironment@museumdistrict.org to learn about volunteer opportunities.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **THE CITY PAYS \$340 FOR EACH STREET TREE IT PLANTS.**
This price includes tree, watering bag and labor. However, the City only charges adopters \$50!
- **THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO A NEW TREE'S SUCCESS IS INADEQUATE WATER.**
New trees that aren't "adopted" and watered are almost twice as likely to die as those that are cared for.
- **THE CITY HAS A SURVEY OF EVERY STREET TREE (BY SPECIES AND LOCATION) IN CITY.**
This survey also shows every open tree well – which we hope to fill through this effort. Google "Richmond Urban Forestry" and scroll down to the "Interactive Map" to check it out!

The COLUMNS

A Publication of
THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

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Contact our Advertising Manager Steve Jones at MDAnewsletterads@museumdistrict.org.



MUSEUM DISTRICT - RICHMOND VA



THE COLUMNS is printed paper that contains 10% post-consumer waste.

Please pass your copy on to someone else!

RENTERS & CONDO OWNERS

Live in a multi-family building and want to adopt a tree? Let us know! The MDA wants to involve all neighborhood residents and property owners in the effort. Tell your landlord about the program and email us with your situation: mdaenvironment@museumdistrict.org

A CREATIVE PLACE TO HELP YOU CREATE SPACE

by **AMANDA SCUDDER**

For many creative people, crafting is a passion. And where there is a passion for crafts there is usually a sizeable craft stash. There are lots of groups set up to trade and sell supplies and hundreds of articles about how to declutter one's stash, but this is still a really tough category to get through. After all, these things represent possibilities, ideas, even our ideal selves!


While few things are as satisfying as turning ideas into reality, the sad reality is that when the stash exceeds the storage, it puts a real damper on creativity. With no room to work, we feel burdened instead of inspired. But once we do the hard work of deciding what truly serves our goals now, what inspires us today and what we can realistically use in the amount of time we have, letting the rest go feels like a weight being lifted and creativity starts flowing again.

When cutting ties with the supplies we've lovingly amassed, it helps immensely to know that they are going somewhere special. There are lots of great places to donate craft supplies, such as schools, daycares, assisted living campuses, camps, churches, and children's museums, and now Richmond is home to an exciting new resource that any artist or crafter will love!

SCRAP RVA is a nonprofit with a mission to inspire creative reuse and environmentally sustainable behavior by providing educational programs and affordable materials to the community. SCRAP RVA collects clean, reusable art, craft and office supplies. It is easy to make a donation—bring up to four bags or boxes to their location at 120 West Brookland Park Boulevard during their hours of operation. It really helps if the donations are organized by item when you take them in. More than four bags or boxes? Just give them a call at 804-525-9060 to arrange a drop-off time. You will get a tax receipt and the satisfaction of knowing that your supplies will help others bring their ideas to life!

Visit scraprva.org for hours of operation and a complete list of things they can take (including art, decorating and architecture supplies; fabric and yarn; beads; corks; frames; mat board and canvas) their current wish list.

SCRAP RVA also needs volunteers to help organize donations and to run children's craft activities on weekends and in the summer. Great volunteer hours for students!

Having SCRAP RVA in our community is a win for artists and de-clutterers alike and might even help ease the anxiety of parting with craft supplies. Instead of saving supplies for "maybe someday," you can take the tax write-off for the donation now and if "maybe someday" ever comes, SCRAP RVA has an inspiring selection of affordable supplies to choose from! 

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

MOSAIC CATERING + EVENTS

by **LIZ BRYANT**

Ryan Traylor loves his job. “Sitting across from people and learning what they want on the biggest day of their lives is so interesting to me.”

As director of catering for MOSAIC Catering + Events, Traylor says he and his colleagues work to make each of their events an experience. “It’s not just to have food there. It’s purposefully designed to make sure the food reflects what that event is, or the personalities, or the reason behind it. And our food is amazing.”

Traylor has been full-time with MOSAIC for more than 15 years. He saw them grow to the point where having more space wasn’t a luxury, but a necessity. Their decision to locate in the Museum District in 2012 was, he says, “a no brainer.” Needing a lot of square footage, but not wanting to be in an industrial area, the building at 3001 Cutshaw Ave. fit the bill. He says they love being part of a neighborhood and the half-city block-sized property enabled them to bring all of their operations – catering kitchen, sales, warehouse, administration – under one roof, greatly increasing efficiency. “It allowed us to do three times more business with the same amount of work. We have skyrocketed since we’ve been here.”

You see the MOSAIC name associated with many of the “it” events in town, from weddings to fundraising galas to high-end corporate parties. Traylor says MOSAIC is special because of their people and how they approach events with an attitude of flexibility and creativity. Because they don’t work from set menus and every event is customized, there is a lot of opportunity to try new things. And while he says great food is important, a great event is about the entire experience. “We started thinking from the guest point of view and



I think that changed the game. It shouldn’t just be about the buffet and the bars, it should be about the whole thing.”

With so many moving parts Traylor says they have to be “ultra-organized.” Every Tuesday the team sits down and goes over events for the upcoming two weeks.

“There are so many eyes that touch every single event before it leaves this building.”

“WE LOVE BEING PART OF A NEIGHBORHOOD... AND WE HAVE SKYROCKETED SINCE WE’VE BEEN HERE.”

– RYAN TRAYLOR
Director of Catering at MOSIAC

MOSAIC employs more than 40 full-time people in their operations in Richmond, Tidewater and Charleston, SC. More than 200 are on staff part-time servicing events. They pay a lot of attention to training and have a generous staff to guest ratio.

The personal touch that Traylor and his team put on events is key to client satisfaction and client retention. But he says it’s more than that. “That hug at the end of the night and the client that says, ‘oh my gosh, well done.’ Or that wrap up meeting with a non-profit when they say, ‘gosh you guys were so instrumental in helping us get to this goal, thank you.’ That is what we get more out of than anything.”

For more information on MOSAIC Catering + Events, visit their website at mosaiccateringevents.com.

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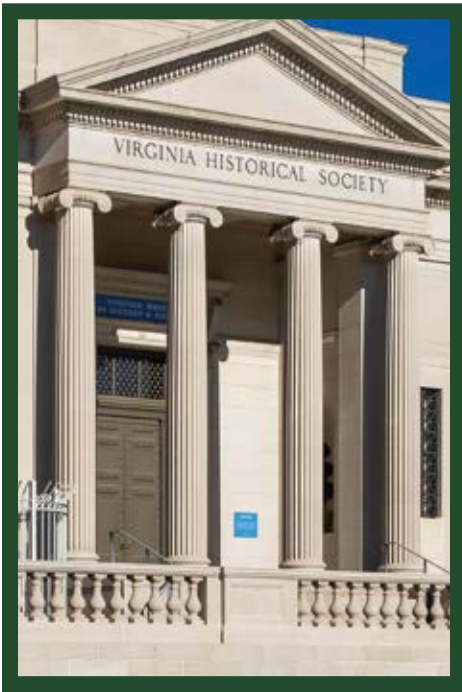
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Richmond Times-Dispatch

The image displays a print newspaper page from the Richmond Times-Dispatch and a tablet showing the newspaper's website. The print page includes headlines such as 'Syracuse a surprise entrant in Sweet 16', 'Richmond Times-Dispatch', 'Opiate recovery program seeing success in Henrico', and 'Grace Place adult center to close doors after 51 years'. The tablet shows the website interface with various news articles and a navigation menu.



VMHC REBRANDING A NEIGHBORHOOD JEWEL

After 187 years in existence, the Museum District’s renowned Virginia Historical Society, located at the corner of Kensington Ave. and N. Boulevard, has changed its name to the Virginia Museum of History & Culture.

In explaining the name change, CEO and president Jamie Bosket said, “We believe that our new museum name will encourage visitation, be more welcoming, and better articulate our chief purpose. We are an attraction that tells the story of the Commonwealth.” Bosket is also hopeful that the name change to a “Museum” versus a

“Society” will bring a more accessible aspect to those not familiar with the purpose.

Unknown to many is that the museum has a massive collection of over nine million items that makes it one of the largest collections in the mid-Atlantic region and it is a research library of Virginia history, all accessible to the curious minds of its citizens. It is also a private entity that depends mainly on membership and private contributions for funding.

Currently the museum features a commemoration of the centennial of World War I with a focus on the impact of the war overseas and at home in Virginia. **Q**

DEVIL’S TRIANGLE FEATURED IN POPULAR MYSTERY SERIES

by LIZ BRYANT

When you’re an author, story ideas can come from anywhere. For Howard Owen the idea to write the latest of his Willie Black mysteries, *The Devil’s Triangle*, “started with the name,” he said. “I knew the geography and I knew the old places from stories people had told me.”



Howard Owen

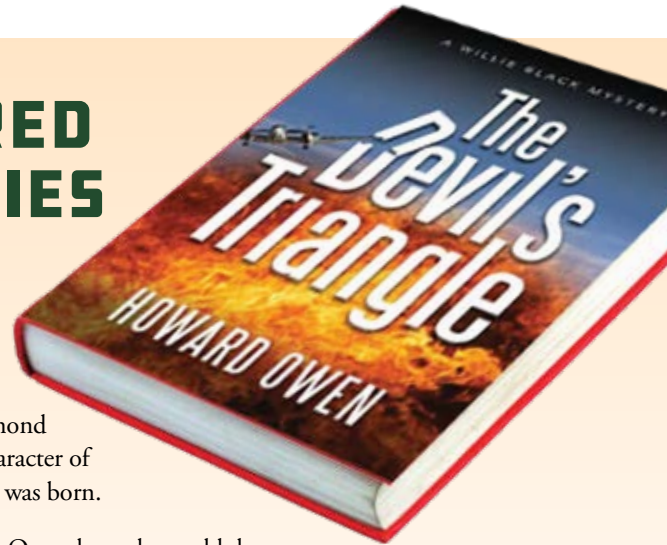
One place in particular held a personal connection for him. In the book it’s called the Shooting Star. “I used to go there when it was Café Diem. Roger Carroll and his band played there every Thursday night.”

We now know the spot as Buddy’s. In the book, the bar and an airplane have a disastrous meeting, so while he uses many other real Richmond names, Owen thought it best to change this one. “I don’t want somebody going into Buddy’s saying this is the place the plane crashed into.”

Owen didn’t set out to be novelist and mystery writer. He had a successful career in newspapers as a sports reporter and editor. But in the back of his mind, there was something more. A book. “I woke up one day when I was almost 40 and I realized I had not done this thing that I had promised myself I would do one day.”

Not having the luxury of quitting his day job, he came up with a plan to write an hour a day. That led to his first book, *Littlejohn*, published in 1992. Fast forward about 20 years. Asked to contribute

a mystery short story to a project called Richmond Noir, the character of Willie Black was born.



Immediately Owen knew he could do more with Willie than just one short story. And Richmond, with its history and character was the perfect backdrop. “In the Willie Black novels,” he said, “Richmond is as big a character as Willie Black is.”

A charmingly flawed character, Willie Black is a night-shift crime reporter for the local paper. Owen said he is a compilation of people he has known and worked with through the years. With a touch of embellishment. Readers have gotten to know Willie through *Oregon Hill*, *The Philadelphia Quarry*, *Parker Field*, *The Bottom*, *Grace*, and now *The Devil’s Triangle*.

Owen is retired from the newspaper business and focuses solely on writing books. Including the Willie Black series, he has 16 novels to his credit. But readers needn’t worry about Willie Black retiring any time soon.

“I don’t think I’ll ever run out of ideas,” said Owen. “The thing about writing mysteries is that I’ve got Willie Black and I’ve got Richmond and all I have to do is find another story. Because there’s always something crazy happening in newspapers.” **Q**

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MDA HOLDS 24TH MOTHER'S DAY HOUSE TOUR

Now in its 24th year, the 2018 Museum District Mother's Day House & Garden Tour provides a rare opportunity for guests to go inside some of Richmond's most beautiful and historic homes, gardens and institutions. Be sure to take advantage of the tour trolley that will run continuously from 1 to 6 p.m., making stops near the homes on the tour and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture.

The Mother's Day House & Garden Tour is not just about beautiful homes.



Each year, proceeds from this annual event are reinvested in our neighborhood for maintenance, beautification and enhanced safety. The tour also supports neighborhood local nonprofit organizations, and in 2017 the MDA scholarship program was established for a deserving, community-minded graduating high school senior. The first award will be made this spring.

FOR INFORMATION ON TICKETS AND TIMES, VISIT MUSEUMDISTRICT.ORG.

505 N. BOULEVARD, #1

Boni Newall

The historic Tuscan Villas condominium community on N. Boulevard has been home to Boni Newall since 2016. Honoring the original features of the unit, Boni restored the stucco walls and the brass fixtures in the main living areas. Changes that Boni made to her home include a complete remodel of the bathroom to include modern plumbing, new fixtures, and a heated floor. She also converted a hallway space into a huge storage closet that she calls her attic. This home truly exemplifies the motto "A place for everything and everything in its place!"



3017 FLOYD AVE., APT. A

Anne DeCamps

Artist Anne Hughes DeCamps saw great potential in the unfurnished rental home at 3017 Floyd Ave, when she moved into the first floor of the 1925 duplex five years ago. She transformed a two-bedroom apartment into a fashionable, bright, one-bedroom home with a full-sized art studio for her furniture restoration and painting business. A delightful surprise awaits visitors in the back yard. Be sure to allow a few extra minutes to take in the clever and whimsical features of this outdoor space.



106 N. BELMONT AVE.

Lauren Nelson and Robin ten Kate

Lauren and Robin have created an oasis on one of the Museum District's most popular side streets. In the past year the couple has completely transformed the main living areas and the back yard into a gourmet cook's paradise. The floors are new, but the owners paid close attention to replicating the original floors that served the house well for its first 102 years. There are also new, energy-efficient windows throughout. Updating and maximizing the small spaces in the house allows the couple to enjoy this urban retreat.



3113 FLOYD AVE.

Maria and John Shugars

This renovated row house has been transformed into a celebration of art deco design. The 1914 interior has had walls removed and living spaces reinvented to reflect not only the owners' taste for art deco, but also for a more open floor plan for 21st century living.

The living room opens above to the second story, framed by a handcrafted wooden and aluminum railing. The house boasts solar panels on the roof and a battery storage system in the basement. A hand-painted residential elevator connects all three levels, ensuring that each ride is a colorful experience.



3201 FLOYD AVE.

Anna and Jeff Laughlin

The 1905 house at the corner of Floyd and Auburn is a classic Victorian with a wrap-around porch, bay windows and high ceilings.



Walls are covered in children's art work and maps from world-wide travels. There are relics of trips from around the globe seen throughout the home. The dining table and foyer bench

were handcrafted from trees in Richmond by Brazilian native Roberto Pena. Every inch of this home is alive with the personality of three kids, a little dog and two highly creative parents.



3540 FLOYD AVE.

Ellwood Thompson's Corporate Offices

The 1950s architectural gem was designed as a medical office and served that purpose for nearly 70 years until it was purchased by Rick Hood, the owner of Ellwood Thompson's grocery store to be used as offices for administration and operations. Inside one will find original renderings of the building and a framed receipt from Charles Gillette issued in 1954 for his landscape design work. The preservation of this unique building will allow future generations to enjoy the architecture and take a peek back in history.

3015 KENSINGTON AVE.

Susan and Steve Jones

The 3000 block of Kensington Ave. recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. The south side of the tree-lined street is anchored by a series of three-story row houses where you find Susan and Steve's home. Many original features have been maintained such as twin fireplaces in the front formal rooms and a butler's staircase behind the main stairs. Be sure to notice the radiator covers, which Steve made by hand. In addition to an updated kitchen, the conversion of the back porch into a breakfast nook allows a continuous view from front to back, creating a spacious, bright city home.



**BE SURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THE TOUR TROLLEY THAT WILL
RUN CONTINUOUSLY FROM 1 TO 6 P.M.**

3300 HANOVER AVE.

Meredith Branch, LLC

Built in 1924 and located in the heart of the Museum District, 3300 Hanover is steeped in family history and neighborhood lore. The home was occupied by the Holzgrefe family for 60 years. At the time of his passing last year, Bill Holzgrefe was 101 and was notably the oldest resident of the Museum District. The wonderfully situated corner home is now being meticulously renovated to accommodate a new family. Tour guests are invited to view the unfurnished home in the final stages of construction and imagine life in this significant family residence.



3100 ELLWOOD AVE.

Belmont Library

The Belmont branch library, built in 1956, sits at the corner of Ellwood and Belmont. Normally closed on Sundays, the library will be open during the Mother's Day tour for reading, relaxation, restrooms, and viewing special exhibits. The library underwent a major renovation in 2011. It has 17 public computers and a small meeting room, and offers copying, fax and notary services. A variety of programs for adults, children and families are offered on a regular basis 📖



3017 HANOVER AVE.

Bosha Nelson and Peter Nash

The original floor plan of this 1921 Colonial Revival home has been retained, but the lively, modern decor is a striking contrast to traditional columns and mill work. Special features on the first floor include a new kitchen, original corner sink in the powder room, and the clever placement of a contemporary desk in the foyer. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this beautifully appointed home is the natural light that floods into every room. Even on a gloomy day, the light and colors bounce around the interior to highlight its unique character.



MURALIST FEATURED ON MOTHER'S DAY TOUR

House tour visitors will have the pleasure of seeing two original pieces of work by local muralist, **Emily Herr**. Herr is a Richmond native who creates custom hand-painted murals at home and on the road under the name HerrSuite. Emily has been painting professionally for 10 years, specializing in careful context-based design with bright and playful imagery. Painting murals is an excuse for her to explore new settings for visual art, to work closely with an ever-changing variety of people and to push her physical and creative limits. Two pieces, both available for viewing on Floyd Ave. are strikingly different. The Ellwood Thompson's foyer mural features large-scale people and plants image while the interior elevator mural at 3113 Floyd features a structured, geometric, art deco pattern. 📖

428 N. BOULEVARD

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

This is the third year that the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, formerly known as the Virginia Historical Society, will serve as the Museum District Mother's Day House & Garden Tour's anchor institute. We are thrilled to be once again located in this comfortable, beautifully restored neighborhood landmark. Ticket sales, refreshments, restrooms and parking will be available at this location from 12:30 to 6:00 p.m. the day of the tour. The complimentary trolley will stop here, as well.



MUSEUM DISTRICT RESIDENT PURSUES PASSION WITH LOCAL THEATRE GROUPS

by MA POWERS

This is the story of a VCU theatre graduate who moved from Richmond to New York City and back twice, first in the 1980s and then again in the 1990s. The elusive “big break” in acting didn’t happen in NYC, but Museum District resident Chris Dunn did discover two passions that have fueled his life for the past 30 years: love and law. While doing some acting in Richmond, Chris met his equally colorful and humorous wife Linda and through his second job as a marketing research manager, Chris was inspired to serve others by becoming an attorney.

After finishing law school in New York, Linda and Chris returned to Richmond. Law became his primary job. Chris works as a staff attorney for the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Public service is gratifying for Chris; knowing that he makes a difference for people in need results in meaningful work. However, he never stopped acting.

Chris has held a myriad of roles with local acting companies over the past 20 years. Local theatre maintains a strong presence in Richmond, with about a dozen local groups in continual production. These days, instead of scanning classifieds in the newspaper, actors are most often

informed about auditions through company websites and social media outlets. The rest of the process is fairly traditional: identify a role, show up on time, wait, audition, hope and then rehearse for many hours until show time. Chris is able to perform in two or three roles annually. Each show will have weeks of nightly rehearsals leading up to 10-20 performances.




Chris Dunn as Robert Carter Nicholas at a St. John's Church reenactment.

MUSEUM DISTRICT RESIDENT CHRIS DUNN HAS HELD A MYRIAD OF ROLES WITH LOCAL ACTING COMPANIES OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS.

Even though he routinely has neighbors laughing, Chris says he is no comedian and he doesn't sing or dance, so he prefers dramatic roles. This spring he portrayed Reverend Phelps in the Virginia Commonwealth University/University of Richmond collaboration *Blues for Mister Charlie* by James Baldwin. The play is loosely based on the notorious 1955 killing of Emmett Till. Colleges and universities often hire local actors to take on roles of the very young or middle-aged and senior characters. With plenty of thick, gray hair, Chris is able to perform the latter without wearing a wig or extraordinary make-up.

In addition to periodic performances, Chris has an on-going role as Robert Carter Nicholas in the St. John's Church Foundation historical reenactment of the Second Virginia Convention of March 1775 at its original location in Church Hill. Nicholas was the Virginia treasurer at the time and with performances running all summer long, Chris is the envy of other men who must wear wigs in the Richmond heat. The tightly-knit group of men have been performing together for a decade or longer in the show that has been running since 1976. Chris finds this work extremely rewarding. Some visitors, especially school children, have never witnessed a dramatic performance in the actual place of history. Each of nine delegates, including Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, are portrayed by professional actors in 1770s attire who engage in the debates and arguments of the Second Virginia Convention, which culminate with Patrick Henry's immortal "Give me liberty or give me death!" speech. Many visitors say that the time spent at St. John's in Richmond is the most meaningful of their historic travels.

Chris admits that he will eventually retire from lawyering, but he will never retire from acting. With his talent and the numerous local theatre companies, there are sure to be many more performances to come. **C**



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REAL ESTATE FRENZY?

With the improving national economy, job creation and the huge influx of investment in the Richmond metropolitan area, the local housing market is responding in a very positive way. The Museum District, the Fan and the near West End appear to be major beneficiaries of this upward trend of popularity in the Richmond area. Richmond has been featured in numerous national polls, publications and opinion polls as a desired place to visit, live and invest.



STEVE JONES
Joyner Fine Properties

Most homes for sale in the Museum District are receiving many offers as soon as they hit the market. This makes it very difficult for buyers to be successful, but makes it lucrative for people wanting to sell their home. Our neighborhood is a limited product in high demand. 2017 saw an increase in home value of about 9 percent in the Museum District over 2016, compared to about 5.3 percent in the greater metro area. Year to date in 2018 values are up another 3 percent with an average value of \$253 per square foot. Museum District homes were on the market in 2018 for an average of four to five days.

MOST HOMES FOR SALE IN THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ARE RECEIVING MANY OFFERS AS SOON AS THEY HIT THE MARKET.

Lack of inventory is a huge factor. There are approximately 1.7 months' supply of homes available for sale in the Richmond area based on the current absorption rate, meaning that unless more homes come on the market there will be continued upward pressure on home values. However, there is a significant increase in condo purchases as well, which may indicate people are opting for other or temporary housing options.

An obvious question, given the 2008 housing market "bubble," is that is this another bubble/nightmare that we experienced a decade ago? The evidence suggests that is not the case. Most economists are predicting continued job growth, increasing GDP and moderate inflation. There are also tighter lending conditions and more moderate and sustainable appreciation, meaning that many of the conditions that preceded the bubble are not present now. From a national perspective the Richmond market has outperformed the national averages in just about every category.

All of this means that it is a good time to live in the Museum District.

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Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at 7pm



Presented by
Jim Garrett, Esq.
Museum District Resident

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PEDESTRIANS HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY MORE THAN YOU THINK

by **JUSTIN SIZEMORE**

“**P**edestrian laws are some of the least understood,” according to Jakob Helmboldt, the City of Richmond Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails Coordinator. Under Virginia law, pedestrians have the right-of-way more than most drivers realize.

- At controlled intersections (those equipped with stoplights) the stoplights determine who has the right-of-way.
- Absent a stoplight, pedestrians have the right of way in all marked crosswalks and in all intersections where there are sidewalks.
- At intersections where there are no sidewalks, pedestrians still have the right-of-way if the speed limit is 35 mph or less.

This means drivers must yield to crossing pedestrians even at those intersections where the driver would have the right-of-way over other vehicles. For example, a driver travelling straight on Monument Ave. is not required to stop for cars attempting to cross Monument at Belmont Ave. But that driver is required to stop for a pedestrian attempting to cross Monument using the marked crosswalk.

The same rule applies to “unmarked” crosswalks located at the end of any block where the street intersects with a sidewalk. A pedestrian crossing the street at such an intersection has the right-of-way.

So a car travelling through the Museum District on Monument Ave. is required under Virginia law to yield for crossing pedestrians at all

intersections except those where the driver has a green light (the Boulevard, Sheppard St., Roseneath Rd. and Thompson St.) At all other intersections (Wayne St., Belmont Ave., Cleveland St. and Tilden St.) the driver is required to stop for pedestrians attempting to cross Monument, even though cars attempting to cross Monument at those intersections would have to yield to oncoming traffic.

Under these rules, a pedestrian attempting to cross the street at an intersection where he has the right of way is entitled to expect approaching traffic to give way. That being said, asserting the pedestrian right-of-way can be perilous given that cars have the “right of weight.” It is, to state the obvious, dangerous to walk into the path of a two-ton steel machine travelling at 30 miles per hour. It’s especially dangerous when the driver is expecting you to wait for him. This is why Virginia law also says that pedestrians cannot “enter or cross an intersection in disregard of approaching traffic.” **■**



TRAFFIC SAFETY IN THE MUSEUM DISTRICT

by **MA POWERS**

On February 15 the Museum District Association, in conjunction with **Councilman Andreas Addison**, sponsored a neighborhood meeting regarding traffic safety. Representatives from City of Richmond Transportation Engineering Division and Richmond City Police Department were in attendance to hear residents’ concerns.

The MDA is advocating for changes to ensure the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and drivers in the neighborhood. There are a number of factors that threaten safety on the streets of the Museum District:

- The neighborhood is uniquely positioned for commuter traffic passing through on the way to VCU and downtown Richmond. It appears that Ellwood, Grove and Monument take the brunt of the high volume and high-speed commuter traffic.
- The Museum District is adjacent to the Powhite Parkway, Downtown Expressway, I-95 and I-64, making Thompson St. a high-speed thoroughfare for cars exiting and entering these highways. The hazards along Thompson are numerous!
- The grid pattern of the streets, developed over 100-plus years, is unusual for visitors and commuters. Grove Ave. has several three-way/T-intersections with no markings to signify to a non-resident that he or she must slow and yield to pedestrians. The lack of designated crosswalks throughout this series of unusual intersections along Grove Ave. means that pedestrians must step into the roadway from behind parked cars to get a view of oncoming traffic.
- The Museum District has a designated “Bike Boulevard” along Floyd Ave. with bump-outs and circles that are highly misunderstood by a majority of users including pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The circle at Floyd and Auburn has lost two trees to drivers passing over the center of the circle. Because there are only two 20 mph speed limit signs on


(continued on next page)

TRAFFIC SAFETY IN THE MUSEUM DISTRICT

(continued from previous page)

Floyd Ave. in the Museum District, drivers entering Floyd at Nansmond and exiting at any street up until Belmont do not have an opportunity to see a speed limit sign and are never informed that the limit is not the typical 25 mph. Additionally, there is no signage indicating that drivers have entered into a residential area and onto a unique cycling route.

- Patterson Ave., where it merges with Kensington, will soon be an artery for the new bike lane, heading west to Malvern, creating more challenges at an already highly confusing intersection.
- The Museum District is home to world class museums that attract thousands of visitors annually who arrive on foot, bikes and in cars, adding to already crowded residential streets.
- The Museum District serves as an outdoor classroom for the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and while they learn a great deal from challenges in the area, their safety is a concern, as is the safety of the hundreds of children that attend Albert Hill Middle School, St. Benedict Catholic School, St. Gertrude High School, Richmond Prep and soon-to-be-open Cristo Rey Richmond High School.

The MDA has formed a traffic committee to address continuing concerns and advocate for improvements for safer streets. If you are interested in participating or have concerns, contact **Ron Russ** at MDAsafety@museumdistrict.org. 

Richmond's 24th Annual Museum District Association

MOTHER'S DAY HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR

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PET WASTE ETIQUETTE

by **LIZ BRYANT**

Let's face it, [bleep] happens. And how we deal with it can make or break our reputation as a good neighbor and animal parent. Here are some things to keep in mind when you head out for your walk:

- Make sure to take along a supply of pet waste bags. It's good to have extra. Your own dog might need them or you can help out someone else who gets caught bagless. You score extra points for using the environmentally-friendly biodegradable bags.
- Always pick up after your dog. Even if you see other pet waste in the same area. You don't want to be the one adding to the problem.
- Dispose of the used bags properly. This means ideally in your own supercan and definitely not in a recycling bin.
- While walking, make an effort to steer your dog away from ornamental plantings or yards that look especially well kept. Also, try to avoid children's toys. Your efforts will be most appreciated. And remember that solid waste isn't the only offender, as dog urine can damage or kill many types of plants.

If doing these things out of a spirit of good neighborliness isn't enough, know that there is an ordinance in Richmond requiring those with dogs to pick up and properly dispose of their waste or possibly face a fine of up to \$250. And your canine companion would most assuredly prefer you spend that money on dog treats or toys. **Q**

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THE WEIRD, WILD WORLD OF OVER-THE-AIR DIGITAL TV IN RICHMOND

by **BEN HOPKINS**

Digital over-the-air broadcasting has given local TV stations the ability to broadcast subchannels that increase the variety of programming they can show—and the money they can charge advertisers for your precious eyeballs. Enter niche digital TV “networks” like Bounce, Escape, ion, Charge!, DW, and others. But what are they??? Below, thanks to this writer’s chronic ADHD and mile-wide procrastination streak, is your somewhat comprehensive guide to bizzaro, off-brand, over-the-air TV in Richmond. Happy channel surfing! 📺

Station	Channel #	Network logo	Description
WTVR	6.1		
	6.2		Classic TV 1950s – 2000s
	6.3		24/7 News/Weather
WRIC	8.1		
	8.2		Family-oriented TV/movies
	8.3		Classic TV and movies pre-1980
	8.4		Comedy films and sitcoms
WWBT	12.1		
	12.2		Classic TV 1950s – 1990s
	12.3		Mystery/Crime shows/movies
WCVE	23.1		
	23.2		Cooking, Arts & Crafts, Gardening, DIY, Travel Programs
	23.3		International news and programs
WRLH	35.1		
	35.2		Recent Drama/Reality/Comedy
	35.3		Science Fiction/Horror/Fantasy
	35.4		Action/Adventure TV and films
WZTD	45.1		Spanish Language TV
WRID	48.1		Christian Programming
WCVW	57.1		
	57.2		24/7 PBS Children's Programs
WUPV	65.1		
	65.2		African-American shows/movies

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DID YOU KNOW?

Facts about the wildly popular *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China* exhibit at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The recent exhibition showcased more than 130 works of art, including 10 original life-sized terracotta figures that protected the tomb of China’s first emperor. The collection was assembled from 14 art museums and archaeological institutes across the Shaanxi province in China, and told the story of Ying Zheng (259-210 BC), who unified China and declared himself Qin Shihuang, or the First Emperor of Qin.

- Over 200,000 people visited the exhibit during the 16-week period from November 18, 2017 to March 11, 2018
- The exhibit drew the second largest attendance since the expansion of the VMFA in 2010
- The Picasso exhibit in 2011 still holds the record for greatest number of visitors
- VMFA commissioned the production of the terracotta replica warriors that were placed around RVA and other parts of Virginia; they are currently on the VMFA grounds and some are available for purchase in the VMFA gift shop.
- The exhibition is making only two appearances in the United States: Richmond and Cincinnati, Ohio

The next special exhibit at the VMFA will be *Napoleon: Power and Splendor*, June 9 to September 3, 2018. More than 200 works of art — many of which have never before been exhibited in the United States — reveal the intricacies of Napoleon’s household and the role it played in the daily life of the emperor and his family. Major masterpieces of painting as well as sumptuous decorative arts on loan from museums in Paris will be included in this international exhibition. **E**

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