



The COLUMNS

A Publication of THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

MUSEUMDISTRICT.ORG

**THE WORD
ON THE STREETS**

SPEEDING IN THE DISTRICT

COVER PHOTO BY JUSTIN CHESNEV

**THE SPEED LIMIT ON GROVE AVENUE IS 25 MPH, YET
CARS COMMONLY TRAVEL ON GROVE 40 MPH OR HIGHER.**

SEE TRAFFIC STUDY ON PAGE 6 

IN THIS ISSUE



**FREE
TOTE BAG
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**HELP SCHOOLS
IN NEED
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**STAY SAFE
THIS WINTER
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FRESH PAINT

MURALS INSPIRED BY THE STORY OF VIRGINIA
ON DISPLAY THROUGH APRIL 21, 2019



FEATURING MURALS BY

Mickael Broth
Nico Cathcart
Hamilton Glass
Chris Milk Hulburt
Amelia Blair Langford
Austin Miles
Toobz Muir
Noah Scalin
Ed Trask
Wing Chow



EXHIBITION EVENTS

ARTIST DISCUSSION
Murals of Richmond
panel discussion with
artist and author Mickael Broth
and featured mural artists
January 10, 2019
6:00 pm

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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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- Newsletter Ads** **Steve Jones**
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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

The arrival of November gives us reason to reflect on all the many things for which we are thankful. As my first year as the Museum District Association's president comes to an end, I am especially thankful for the individuals who volunteer their time to serve our organization and our community. It is to them that I would like to dedicate this column.



STEPHEN VERSEN
2018 MDA
Board President

Given the medium through which I am communicating, it is only fitting that I begin by acknowledging the major contribution that the MDA Newsletter Committee has made to our neighborhood. *The Columns* has always been a publication the MDA has been proud of, both for its content and the fact that, four times a year, volunteers deliver a hard copy to every doorstep in the neighborhood. Beginning last year, an amazing group of volunteers came together to take our *Columns* newsletter to a whole new level, making it into the full-color magazine you're now holding. This magazine informs and entertains, and it brings the people and stories of the community to you with solid writing and vivid color. In my mind, the new *Columns* not only shows that our neighborhood is full of wonderfully talented people generous enough with their time to put together such a high-quality publication, but also that its subject, our neighborhood, is worthy of such efforts.

One of the reasons that I believe our neighborhood is worthy is its harmonious mix of houses, apartments, businesses and restaurants. The MDA Zoning and Land Use Committee makes sure these buildings, and the ways that they are used, complement the neighborhood rather than detract from it. When business and property owners need special permission from the City to expand or construct, the City asks for our input on whether or not to approve the request. The longtime residents, architects, real estate agents and others who comprise this committee ask the hard questions, explore all the impacts and do the work needed to ensure only beneficial development. We are fortunate for their vigilance, as an incompatible building or use of land creates a permanent problem for the neighborhood.

ONE OF THE REASONS THAT I BELIEVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD IS WORTHY IS ITS HARMONIOUS MIX OF HOUSES, APARTMENTS, BUSINESSES AND RESTAURANTS.

The MDA also seeks to address more immediate problems, like overflowing trash, overgrown medians and public safety. The Board's fantastic new code enforcement chair is reaching out to the major landlords operating in our neighborhood to ensure they are providing adequate waste disposal for their tenants. At the same time, she is building relationships with City departments to encourage regular and meaningful enforcement of code violations. The MDA's Environment Committee helps maintain the medians of Rosemeath and the traffic circles of Floyd, while also organizing bi-annual cleanups of our alleys. Our public safety chair, along with the active Traffic Subcommittee, works with fire, police and City officials protecting our homes and our streets. Keeping our community clean and inviting benefits us all.

While the MDA values and commits significant resources to maintaining and improving the physical attributes and environment of our neighborhood, our most important role is engaging our fellow residents. We do this largely through our board liaison positions for schools, city government, the Museum District Women's Club and neighborhood businesses. To ensure we stay connected with these important constituents we host regular events that bring together residents and city leaders. We are committed to strong communication and disseminating information regularly through informative weekly emails, our website, social media and *The Columns*.

I hope you can see why I am so thankful and proud to serve an organization as varied and impactful as the Museum District Association. And I haven't even mentioned the great things we're doing around capital projects, membership and the house tour! Our organization continues to grow, and the activities we undertake continue to expand. We want you to be part of it. Please support our efforts by joining the MDA today or renewing your membership. **E**

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MDA BOARD SEEKS ENVIRONMENT CHAIR FOR 2019

Are you an environmentalist and love living in the Museum District? Now is your chance to make a difference by joining the MDA Board of Directors. Responsibilities of the environment chair include:

- Monitor the need to do alley cleanups
- Administer the Adopt-a-Tree program
- Monitor services with contracted landscape company
- Provide guidance for healthy environment initiatives for the neighborhood
- Participate actively as a member of the board of directors

Express interest and direct inquiries to Stephen Versen, MDApresident@museum-district.org. 

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




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Please pass your copy on to someone else!

THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This summer the board bid farewell to **Claire Sanderson Brukasz** who had served as membership director since 2015. During her four-year tenure, Claire was engaged to be married, earned an MBA from VCU, married her sweetheart from Virginia Tech and most recently purchased a home in Westover Hills. In her position, Claire sought to engage residents and efficiently manage membership records. We are grateful for her work identifying software most suitable to organize and integrate our membership databases. We will miss Claire's sunny disposition and smile. Best wishes to Claire and Matt in their new community.

Replacing Claire as membership director is **Lauren Nelson** of Belmont Ave. Lauren brings a optimistic vibe and an impressive resume of marketing and engagement experience. In her day job, she leads the marketing department at AGS Footwear, managing both Stegmann Clogs and Cudas footwear brands. Lauren and partner Robin ten Kate, who have lived in the district for five years, generously opened their home for the 2018 Mother's Day House & Garden Tour. It was the positive house tour experience that prompted Lauren to become involved with the association. She has already begun planning new activities and benefits for MDA members. Look for Lauren at the next MDA event! 



LAUREN NELSON

MUSEUM DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING



THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 15

6:00 P.M. - REFRESHMENTS
 6:30 P.M. - MEETING

TEMPLE BETH-EL
 3330 GROVE AVENUE


(Please enter from Roseneath Rd.)

Please respond by Monday, November 12 to RSVP@museumdistrict.org.


For more information, contact mdaprograms@museumdistrict.org or call 804-410-1632.

The guest speaker is Jason Kamras, Superintendent, Richmond Public Schools

Please join the Museum District Association and your neighbors to become informed about our public school system, review 2018 in the district and plan for the coming year. The annual meeting is open to all residents. Members will cast their vote for the 2019 board of directors. Everyone is encouraged to attend and join for 2019. You can join online at museumdistrict.org or at the door.

Child care will be provided in a room adjacent to the meeting. Reservations required. Please send name and age of child with your RSVP. 

RECEIVE A FREE MUSEUM DISTRICT TOTE BAG WITH A 2019 NEW MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

Sign up online for your 2019 MDA membership, then pick up your complimentary member tote bag at the MDA Annual Meeting on November 15. Memberships can also be purchased at the annual meeting. Bags will be available to pick up at future MDA meetings and events. Additional totes may be purchased for \$5 each. 





AS NEW PEOPLE MOVE TO RICHMOND AND MANY LONG-TIME METRO-RICHMOND RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO MOVE BACK INTO THE CITY, THE MUSEUM DISTRICT CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS IN WHICH TO LIVE.



SPEEDING IN

WORD ON THE STREETS

by CALEY CRAWFORD

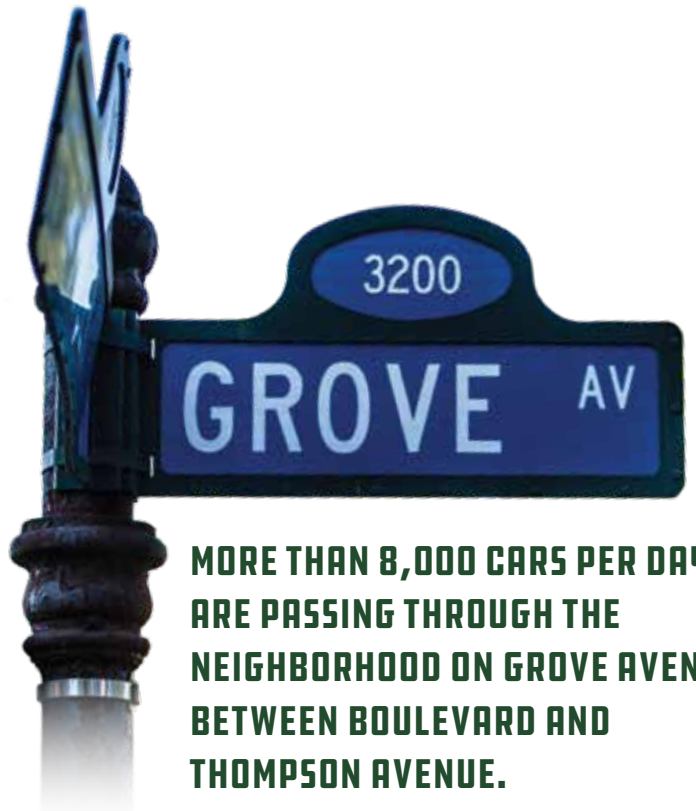
With the resurgence of city living, our neighborhood finds itself at a crossroads of increased traffic (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) and the growing pains of ensuring safety to all residents and visitors to our beautiful streets. Over the past year, a growing contingent of Grove Ave. residents banded together with the Museum District board safety coordinator, Ron Russ, in order to shine a light on the accelerated speeds of cars on Grove Ave. (more than 25 mph), as well as other major thoroughfares in our neighborhood.

The stretch of Grove Ave. between Boulevard and Thompson is unique, with its combination of residences, a school, a synagogue, a church and the acclaimed VMFA. In addition, Grove Ave. is a frequent venue for joggers, pedestrians and cyclists. The speed limit on Grove Ave. is 25 mph, yet cars commonly travel on Grove 40 mph or higher. There is a 95 percent chance of an adult pedestrian fatality when struck by a car traveling at 40 mph.

In February 2018, as a result of this attention on Grove Ave., a public neighborhood meeting convened to discuss these issues and hear neighborhood feedback. In attendance were First District Councilman Andreas Addison, Traffic Engineering Operations Manager Travis Bridewell and Third Precinct Richmond Police officers.

As a follow up to the meeting, the City conducted a traffic study on Grove Ave. to gather data to determine what actions are possible based on state and federal guidelines. Another public meeting was called in May to present the gathered data to the neighborhood. The study found that in the seven short blocks of Grove Ave., between North Boulevard and North Thompson St., more than 8,000 cars per


THERE IS A 95 PERCENT CHANCE OF AN ADULT PEDESTRIAN FATALITY WHEN STRUCK BY A CAR TRAVELING AT 40 MPH.



MORE THAN 8,000 CARS PER DAY ARE PASSING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD ON GROVE AVENUE BETWEEN BOULEVARD AND THOMPSON AVENUE.

day are passing through the neighborhood. Additionally, the study found that a high percentage of the cars traveling on Grove Ave. are traveling in excess of the 25 mph speed limit. During the meeting, the City indicated that they would need neighborhood support in order to move forward with any traffic calming measures.

Lead by Ron Russ, the MDA Traffic Safety committee (Franklin Hamilton, Bill McDonald, Denny Roberts and Caley Crawford) has taken the responsibility to conduct a survey to ascertain the majority opinion of the neighborhood on the many options intended to calm traffic. While initially looking at Grove Ave., it is the belief that other major thoroughfares in the neighborhood need attention as well. The findings of this survey will be presented to our Council representatives and the City Department of Public Works to support the Museum District Association's requests for traffic calming measures.

When you finish reading this article please take time to complete the survey www.museumdistrict.org/traffic-survey. You can also find the link to the survey in *This Week in the Museum District* email series, on the MDA website and Nextdoor. Deadline for responses is Friday, November 30. Your opinion is highly valued and needed as this process moves forward to better ensure safety on the streets and sidewalks of the Museum District. Please direct inquiries to MDAsafety@museumdistrict.org. 

THE DISTRICT



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. *Belmont now accepts credit/debit cards and offers self-checkout!*

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 *(new schedule)*

Book Babies (infant-17 months) – **Mondays at 10:00 AM**

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

Paws to Read

3rd Monday of the month 6:30-7:45.

Call 646-1139 to choose a 30-minute session. Children should be beginning readers to participate in this wonderful experience.

Chair Yoga

Tuesdays at 10:30 AM.

Museum neighbor **Linda Dunn** is the instructor for this FREE adult class. Due to limited space, the class operates on a first-come first-served basis.

Lego Club

3rd Tuesday of the month at 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 at 10:15 AM

Join our adult book discussion each month. *Five-Carat Soul* by James McBride will be discussed on October 17. This group takes a winter break and begins again in March.

GRASP

Mondays from 6:00-7:45 PM

Need money for college? GRASP provides advisors, free of charge, to answer financial questions and inform you about the FAFSA process. To receive any federal student aid, you must complete the FAFSA.

By appointment only, an advisor will be available to assist you at Belmont Library in Richmond from 6:00-7:45 pm on Wednesday evenings during the school year. (First night is October 10, 2018.) Call (804) 527-7772 to schedule an appointment.

Library Yarns

Thursdays from 10:30-Noon

If you like to knit, crochet or create other types of handwork, join this informal group at the Belmont Library. Bring your current project(s). Adults and teens are welcome.

Technology Q & A

Each Wednesday from Noon-2:00 PM

Bring your laptop, Kindle, iPad or cell phone and get individual help from staff during a 30 minute session. Call 646-1139 to reserve your space.



Richmond Public Library

**INFORM
ENRICH
EMPOWER**

HELP SCHOOLS IN NEED WITH THINGS YOU DON'T NEED

by **AMANDA SCUDDER**

Whether or not you have school-aged children, the start of the school year is a pervasive signal to our subconscious that a new season is here. The days get shorter, we spend more time inside, and we take inventory of what we have and what we need for the cold weather ahead. For many, this is the perfect opportunity to cull through closets, declutter drawers and peruse the pantry. If you need a little motivation to get started, consider this: some of the things cluttering up your space are things that our schools really need.

The three public schools that serve the Museum District – William Fox Elementary, Albert Hill Middle and Thomas Jefferson High – have a combined enrollment of almost 1,800 students. Teachers and staff work hard to ensure that these students have challenging core classes, art, music, language, sports and enrichment opportunities that will prepare them for bright futures. These schools rely on contributions of time and resources from the communities they serve to function at their very best. Here's how you can help.

CLEAN OUT

Many of the items that help these schools thrive are the exact things we have an overabundance of. Office, cleaning, and art supplies; tissues; and non-perishable treats and trinkets for student incentives are in high demand. Schools also collect new or gently used coats, shoes and clothing for their students in need. Fox's coat drive will take place in November.

Equipment for extracurricular activities is another much-appreciated category. Fox and Hill are looking for soccer gear, particularly cleats and shin guards. TJ's wish list includes softball and baseball bats, gloves, and cleats; tennis rackets and nets; and musical instruments.

TURN TRASH TO TREASURE

While you are decluttering your cabinets, keep an eye out for *Box Tops for Education*. Each box top is worth \$.10 and can be redeemed by schools for needed supplies. Just clip the little tabs that are found on General Mills products, stash them in an envelope and drop them off or mail them to Fox or Hill once a month.

EARN REWARDS

When you stock up on supplies for the winter, your purchases can do double duty. Fox and Hill participate in the Amazon Smile and Kroger Community Rewards programs and TJ plans to join soon. To sign up, visit the reward programs' websites and search for the school by name. Once you are enrolled, the companies donate a percentage of each purchase to your school of choice. Fox received about \$3,000 in Kroger rewards last year. In addition, keep an eye out for school fundraisers in the fall. This is a great way to give gifts that give twice.


MAKE TIME

Time is our most valuable resource and nothing is more rewarding than giving it to a good cause. All schools need volunteers to help

with clean-up days, painting projects, tutoring, special events and more. In addition, TJ is looking for retired engineers to work with the robotics team after school one to two days a week.

KEEP CURRENT

To stay informed about these and other volunteer and fundraising opportunities, visit the schools' web sites, Facebook pages for each school, as well as the Support Richmond Public Schools page. You can also sign up to receive emails from the PTA. In fact, you can join the PTA even if you don't have children in the school.

To arrange donation drops or to sign up for volunteer opportunities, contact each school directly. On behalf of our hardworking teachers and students, thank you for helping schools in need! 

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**BUSINESS
SPOTLIGHT**

CLEVELAND MARKET CONTINUES TRADITION

by **MA POWERS**

For as long as anyone can remember there has been a market at the corner of Cleveland and Franklin Streets in the Museum District. In fact, the store was called Corner Market for many years. Most recently, the charming convenience store located at 801 N. Cleveland St. has been dubbed Cleveland Market. The building itself was constructed in 1926 and also houses an apartment on the top level.

The current owners bought Cleveland Market in 2016 after the long-time owner personally requested that they purchase and manage the business. Dilshad and Malik Charania were already owners of another retail business in the Museum District, Tobacco & More on Sheppard St., and had been suppliers to the Cleveland Market for several years. The previous owner trusted the couple to honor the family feel of the market and maintain its identity as a neighborhood store.

Once inside, shoppers know that Dilshad and Malik are making good on their promise to serve the community. Every conceivable need seems to be anticipated inside the small, tidy, heavily-stocked space. At the front counter, regulars leave notes to request specific products and personal favorites. There are basic food and toiletry items, student supplies, bagged ice, grilling supplies, frozen treats, pet foods, and several local products including Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches, Beez Nuts Balms, Red Eye Cookies, King of Pops,

THE CURRENT OWNERS, DILSHAD & MALIK CHARANIA, BOUGHT CLEVELAND MARKET IN 2016 AFTER THE LONG-TIME OWNER PERSONALLY REQUESTED THAT THEY PURCHASE AND MANAGE THE BUSINESS.

Snowing in Space Nitro Cold Brew Coffee, Black Hand bagged coffees, Damn Yankee Hot Sauce, and several craft beers brewed in Richmond. You can also pick up lottery tickets, wines, cigars, vapes, incense, candles and last-minute affordable gift novelties. During a recent visit, Dilshad fondly mentioned several of her regular customers who use her store as their pantry, walking through the aisles to decide what to make for dinner. There are organic and gluten-free options on hand, as well.

Cleveland Market has a welcoming air and is truly a family business depending on Dilshad and a just a few part-time employees to staff the generous daily operating hours, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Dogs will find a water bowl outside if they accompany their owners on a shopping trip. Dilshad welcomes everyone and enjoys being part of the unique business community in the Museum District. Stop in soon to experience Dilshad's devotion and to check out the variety of products Cleveland Market offers. **Q**



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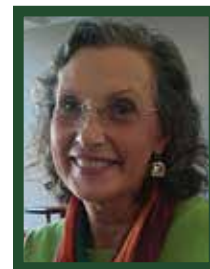
RAIN GARDENS: THE ANSWER TO A SOGGY SUMMER



As summer left you planning to build an ark? Here's a better idea -- build a rain garden.

Our garden runoff problem began long before Madame Florence arrived. Water was pouring through our front downspout, down the sidewalk and into the street. Something had to be done.

The James River Association first put the rain garden bug in my ear. Bill Street, executive director, often says, "It turns out fish really do grow on trees," meaning what we do in our own yard radically impacts our river.



JANIE WILSON

Then I took a course from the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCES) called "Landscape for Life." They made rain gardens sound easy. And, in fact, they really are. Any low-lying spot can become a rain garden -- just dig a hole, fill it in with plants and there you have it.

Well, it is a tad more complicated. You will want to do a little math to make sure your garden can handle the proposed runoff. The VCES has a paper that can help: "Stormwater Management for Home Owners Fact Sheet 5: Rain Gardens." Here's a link to it -- https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/spes/spes-13/SPES-13.pdf.

Once you know how long and low to dig, you can run to the hardware store for some pipe to route your downspout into the garden. There's a nice green, plastic bendable alternative. Then you're ready to plant. This was the intimidating part for me, but it turns out VCES is ready to help again with their paper "Urban Water-Quality Management: Rain Garden Plants." Check it out here -- https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/426/426-043/426-043_pdf.pdf.

Any knowledgeable nursery staffer can point you in the right direction. I chose hydrangea, non-invasive milkweed, coneflower and sweetspire. Siberian iris, a gardenia and a camellia grow along the edges. The pollinators have a field day in there. Everybody coexists quite happily.

We have the satisfaction of doing something good for the planet. And, we've turned a parched, nutrient deprived wasteland into a lush, inviting space. It's been a fun science project to share with the children next door. So don't be afraid. You can do this, too! Start planning your rain garden today.



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Q&A WITH CITY ARBORIST JANINE LESTER

by **STEPHEN VERSEN**

This year's MDA Adopt-a-Tree campaign ended in September and we feel it was a big success – perhaps most importantly because we streamlined the process by bringing it all online at MuseumDistrict.org/Adopt. A big thanks to all who participated! Although this year's drive is over, we are accepting applications to participate in next year's campaign.



So now that the trees have been adopted, we thought you might like to know more about the trees that will be planted, what drives the decisions on which species are planted where, and how trees benefit our neighborhood. To answer that, we sat down with Janine Lester, the Richmond city arborist, who is responsible for the urban forest of the MDA.

STEPHEN: Janine, tell us a little about your approach to urban forestry.

JANINE: A safe, healthy tree canopy for future generations of Richmonders! Avoiding monocultures helps us avoid insect and disease outbreaks, which in turn helps us to maintain tree health and capture the eco-benefits provided by larger trees.

STEPHEN: What's your method for selecting trees for the Adopt-a-Tree program?


JANINE: Bigger trees provide bigger benefits, but only if they are healthy! It takes a tough tree to survive on the streets – street tree sites tend to be very hot, very dry, and have very hard, compacted soils. In the winter, trees may be exposed to road salts and de-icing chemicals. We consider species survivability, soil volume, proximity

of sidewalks and buildings, proximity of utilities above and below ground, and the type of habitat the tree will provide for birds, insects and other animals. Of course, we want trees that are aesthetically pleasing and will not outgrow the available space.

STEPHEN: What do you think are the most important benefits the urban forest brings to our neighborhood?

JANINE: At the top of the list are cooling, stormwater mitigation, human health, crime reduction and property value benefits. Trees filter millions of gallons of storm runoff every year; stormwater mitigation is usually the largest measurable money-saving benefit provided by trees. Trees provide shade, which lowers ground temperatures and increases the durability of paved surfaces. Additionally, trees are associated with better health outcomes for people living and working within 50 meters of where they grow, and increased property values for all nearby homes and businesses.

STEPHEN: Are there any fun facts or important information that you would like our readers to know?

JANINE: Most people don't know that trees positively impact human health and contribute to economic growth and stability. Studies have demonstrated that as the number of trees decreases, human health also decreases, and economic growth destabilizes or declines. Studies have shown that people prefer businesses that have trees in front of or around them; they shop longer and spend more money per visit, and provide more favorable reviews of those businesses. Trees calm people and reduce the speed of vehicular traffic. Trees are associated with reductions in all categories of crimes. 

About Janine: Janine Lester is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist - Municipal Specialist, currently employed by the City of Richmond. She is a Richmond Master Gardener extension agent, education chair of the Richmond Tree Stewards and an avid insect conservationist. She loves spiders, snakes and public speaking.

25 YEARS! WOW!

by **BILLY POARCH**

Chair, Museum District Mother's Day House & Garden Tour

Do you remember what you were doing on May 14, 1995? I and many others in the Museum District certainly do. It was the date of the first Mother's Day House & Garden Tour.

Believe it or not, the MDA Mother's Day House & Garden Tour will celebrate its 25th year on May 12, 2019. We certainly have come a long way since we woke up to dark clouds and rain that morning. Thankfully, the sun appeared just in time for the district's first successful tour, which netted approximately \$2,000.

The 2018 tour proceeds netted \$28,000, with \$7,000 granted to the following organizations that serve Museum District residents:

- Thomas Jefferson High School Scholarship Fund
- Health Brigade
- Thomas Jefferson High School Viking Fund
- Albert Hill Middle School PTA
- Friends of the Belmont Library
- Humphrey Calder Community Center via Enrichmond

A strong committee has formed for the 2019 anniversary tour. I chaired this tour for three years during its infancy and am pleased to be back as chair for this exciting celebration. Other committee members include those from our own neighborhood, as well as some former committee members who have moved from the neighborhood but are returning to help. To volunteer your time in any role for this event, to nominate your home or a neighbor's home, please contact MDAhousetour@museumdistrict.org.

With the tour in its 25th year, we are hoping to do some more celebratory events. Look for updates and more details in the MDA weekly e-news. 

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Kathlyn and Ryan Lawless, 50 United Plates, porcelain, various sizes, 2018. Photo by EE Berger.



STAY SAFE THIS WINTER

by **LIZ BRYANT**

As we head into the winter months and are distracted by the fun of the holidays and accompanying festivities, we need to not lose our focus on safety. With that in mind, the Richmond Police Department offers solid advice on simple things we can all do to help keep our cars, our homes, and ourselves safer.

YOUR CAR

If you park your car outside and not in a locked garage, make sure to always lock it and never leave anything in plain sight. This includes non-valuable items such as phone power cords, etc. that could tempt a thief to break in to look for the more valuable items. If you're running errands between work and home and put your valuables (computer bag, etc.) in the trunk, do so BEFORE you leave work. Many times thieves will case parking lots and if you put your bag in the trunk and then head into the store, you may find your car has been burglarized when you return. When driving, even those quick neighborhood trips, keep all your doors locked. And, though we all like a warm car, don't ever leave your car running with you not in it. That quick dash into the post office could leave you standing in the cold and a criminal driving off in your toasty warm vehicle.

YOUR HOUSE

Burglars look for the path of least resistance. Anything you do to make your home less attractive to a potential thief, the better. Leaving your front and back porch lights on can be good deterrent. Have inside lights on a timer, especially in the winter months when you may be getting home from work after dark. Keep shrubbery trimmed back away from windows. If you're going to be away for a few days, either request a delivery suspension of your paper and mail or ask a neighbor to pick those up. You can also ask the police to keep an eye on your property and can request this through their website. And finally, the Richmond Police Department can conduct a security survey of your home or business at no cost to you.

YOU

When you're out and about, be aware of your surroundings. If you carry a bag, keep it close to your person. Walk in well-lit populated areas. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Move away from people or situations that make you feel uncomfortable and have your phone ready to dial 911 if necessary.

For more information on these and other safety measures you may take, please visit the Richmond Police Department's website at www.richmondgov.com/police.



NEW MEDICAID RULES OPEN COVERAGE TO VIRGINIA ADULTS

by **CHRISTINA NUCKOLS**
Media Relations Manager
Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

This summer, I went to far Southwest Virginia with a group of colleagues from the state’s Department of Medical Assistance Services. We spent two days at a temporary medical clinic at the Wise County fairgrounds sharing information about new health coverage that will be available for Virginia adults starting January 1, 2019.

On a rainy Sunday morning, a man with a volunteer badge came to our table and picked up a brochure. I offered him extras so he could share with people he was helping that day. He agreed, then added that he himself was uninsured.

It was a reminder that many people we meet each day have no health insurance. The young man who makes our coffee just the way we like it every morning. The woman who makes sure our lawn is the prettiest on the block. Many are unable to receive regular care for chronic conditions like diabetes. Others are one accident away from burdensome medical bills.

The good news is that close to 400,000 Virginia adults ages 19 to 64 will soon have access to quality low- and no-cost health coverage. For years, Virginia’s strict Medicaid rules made it impossible for adults without children to get coverage. Most hard-working parents and even many individuals with disabilities were also excluded. But those rules are about to change. A single adult with an annual income at or below \$16,750 may soon be eligible. A parent in a family of four with an income at or below \$34,600 may also qualify for coverage. The accompanying graphic provides guidance.

The new coverage will include visits to primary care doctors and specialists, hospital stays, prescription drugs, preventive care, and more. You can find out more about the new health coverage at coverva.org. Be sure to sign up on the website for regular updates so you can be among the first to know when Virginia begins accepting applications for the new coverage.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT CLOSE TO
400,000 VIRGINIA ADULTS AGES 19 TO 64
WILL SOON HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY
LOW- AND NO-COST HEALTH COVERAGE.**

FAMILY SIZE	MONTHLY	YEARLY
	\$1,397	\$16,754
	\$1,894	\$22,715
	\$2,391	\$28,677
	\$2,887	\$34,638
	\$3,384	\$40,600
	\$3,881	\$46,562
	\$4,378	\$52,523
	\$4,875	\$58,485
EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON ADD	\$497	\$5,962

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Richard Ayers, volunteer


KEEPING THE VMFA GROUNDS BEAUTIFUL

by AMANDA SCUDDER

Walking along the paths of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts one stifling morning in early September, I noticed a buzz of activity that was surprising on such a hot day. Several people were pulling weeds, one was knee deep in the pond tending the lilies and lotus, and others were sprucing up the recently expanded flower beds.

VMFA horticulturist and landscape manager **Bill Chappell** was one member of this hardworking crew. He explained that he and horticultural assistant Leila Ehtesham rely on these extraordinary volunteers to help them keep the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden and 13-acre campus beautiful. The volunteers gather every Wednesday morning, starting in February and working through November. Some of them have been doing so since the Garden Volunteer Program began in 2012.

However, you do not need to be a gardening expert with years of experience to get involved. New volunteers are always welcome and will likely learn helpful gardening tips along the way. If you are interested in participating, contact VMFA volunteer programs coordinator Kim Frola at 804-340-1461 or kim.frola@vmfa.museum to learn more.

For those who don't have Wednesday mornings free, but still want to help, contributions to the **Gardens and Greenspaces** campaign (www.vmfa.museum/support/gardens/) are greatly appreciated. 



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Hanging of the Green, Sunday, December 2 at 8:30 and 11:00 am

Join us on this first Sunday of Advent as we adorn the church sanctuary with greenery, poinsettias, ornaments and light. Choirs of all ages will lead us as we worship.

Repeat the Sounding Joy, Sunday, December 9 at 7:00 pm

Joy becomes resounding music as the Church Choir, handbells, and the youth and adult choral ensembles are joined by both a brass and string ensemble. Music of all styles will be a part of this remarkable annual concert.

Youth Pageant, Sunday, December 16 at 6:00 pm

The students of Richmond's First Baptist Church combine drama and music to present a refreshing perspective on the birth of the Christ child.

Candlelight Christmas Eve services,

Monday, December 24 at 5:00 and 11:00 pm

Worship at 5:00 pm is filled with all ages, including children and their families. The 11:00 pm service is more reflective and includes communion.



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HOLIDAY ANIMAL ADOPTIONS: HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY WELCOME A NEW FAMILY MEMBER


by LIZ BRYANT

Adding a new animal friend to the family is cause for celebration. But in our excitement over adopting a cat or dog (or kitten or puppy),



Richmond Animal Care and Control recommends keeping the following tips in mind. Especially if you're welcoming a new family member during the holidays.

- 1.** If you have children and/or existing pets, they need to be considered in the decision. It's a good idea to have children meet the potential new animal to ensure it's the right selection and a safe match. Many shelter animals come in off the street with no known history, so it's important to see how they respond to all members of the family. Existing dogs should also meet the potential new addition. If there are cats in the household, introduce them slowly at home. Cats are generally not fond of change and this transition will require patience.
- 2.** Adopting kittens and puppies is always fun, but requires even more special preparation ahead of time. Just like with small children, rooms in your home need to be assessed for potential hazards. It's recommended to restrict them to one room initially and gradually allow access to the rest of the house. Kittens, while generally litter trained, can "lose" their box in a large space. And puppies need to be monitored to prevent accidents.
- 3.** Holiday decorations can be very enticing – and very dangerous – to pets. And holiday foods frequently contain ingredients that are not pet friendly. Pets should always be supervised when around decorations to prevent injury. And foods should be kept inaccessible to animals. Remember, the countertop might not do it. Especially with cats (and some dogs) who are especially good jumpers.
- 4.** At Richmond Animal Care and Control, the adult who will ultimately be responsible for the animal will need to complete adoption paperwork. So, if you're thinking of an animal as a gift, RACC offers gift certificates, year-round. This will allow you to offer the lovely gesture of adding joy to a friend's life while offering the new pet parent the opportunity to select just the right animal companion to ensure a lifelong match.
- 5.** And finally, if you want to adopt as part of your holiday celebration, evaluate your plans to make sure the timing is good. Consider adopting at the beginning of December or in early January to account for holiday travel, family visits, etc.

Deciding to offer a permanent, loving home to an animal and taking the time to prepare and make the right decision sets you up for many years of happiness, fun and loyal companionship. 



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HOUSING BUBBLE? NOT LIKELY

W

ith the housing frenzy that we have seen in the Museum District over the past year, there have been concerns over whether or not we are in another real estate “bubble” similar to the one that we experienced a decade ago. Fortunately, most indicators suggest that a “bubble” is not likely. To begin with, the housing supply and lending policies are drastically different than in 2008. In the lead-up to 2008, lending policy had almost no constraints which led to a huge demand for home purchases. This also fed an increase in the supply of homes. When the instability of the mortgages underlying the securities that the mortgages supported became apparent, lending policy was restricted dramatically. This cut off demand for housing when there was a huge supply of homes on the market. Basic supply and demand caused home values to drop.



STEVE JONES
Joyner Fine Properties

There are some indicators to support a current stable housing market. Prices are not inflated based on historical data. Housing prices have just recently returned to the 2008 levels. Based on inflation alone, prices should be higher than they are now.

HOME AFFORDABILITY IS BETTER THAN A DECADE AGO. MORTGAGE RATES ARE BETWEEN 4.25 AND 4.75 PERCENT AS OPPOSED TO A TYPICAL 6.7 PERCENT RATE IN 2006.

Mortgage lending standards are much more stringent than they were leading up to the crash. The banking default risk index is less than half of what it was in 2008. Foreclosures were a huge factor in lower home values in 2008, 2009 and 2010. They not only added to the supply of homes on the market but sold at 20 to 40 percent discounts. Foreclosure rates are now much lower than in 2003 when the housing market began its dramatic rise.

Home affordability is better than a decade ago. Mortgage rates are between 4.25 and 4.75 percent as opposed to a typical 6.7 percent rate in 2006, so even though home prices may be higher they are more affordable, leading to less risk of default and a more stable lending/ownership environment.

All told, there is little resemblance between the housing markets of 2008 and 2018. **E**

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Also available to notify the City of concerns is the 311 Call Center accessible from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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For information on City Council meetings,
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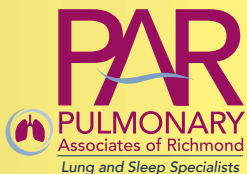
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