

COLUMNS

A PUBLICATION of THE MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION



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The Fine Art

of

WHISKEY

Tasting

LOCAL WHISKEY AFICIONADO,
 KEITH TILL SHARES HIS
 KNOWLEDGE AND SHOWS US
 HIS STELLAR COLLECTION OF
 FINE SPIRITS

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Julia Child

A Recipe for Life

ON DISPLAY
MARCH 16 THRU
SEPTEMBER 2, 2024



Photos of Julia Child – Photography by Paul Child
© The Schlesinger Library, Harvard Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF
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VirginiaHistory.org

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Julia Child: A Recipe for Life was developed by Flying Fish and Napa Valley Museum, supported by The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts, Schlesinger Library, Harvard Radcliffe Institute and Oceania Cruises.



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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Treasurer	KAREN REDFORD MDAtreasurer@museumdistrict.org
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Capital Projects	JUSTIN LITTERST MDAcapitalprojects@museumdistrict.org
City Liaison	ROBIN GORDON cityliaison@museumdistrict.org
<i>The Columns</i>	VACANT thecolumns@museumdistrict.org
Communications	MOLLIE ANDREWS MDAcommunications@museumdistrict.org
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House Tour	DANIELLE DEL VECCHIO MDAhousetour@museumdistrict.org
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Museum District Woman's Club Liaison	CHAMPE GRANGER MDAwcliaison@museumdistrict.org
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Technology	VACANT MDAtechnology@museumdistrict.org
Zoning	KAREN HEADLEY MDAzoning@museumdistrict.org

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



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



HAPPY NEW YEAR, NEIGHBORS!

It's me again! After serving as your 2023 board president, I'm honored to serve a second term with a stellar group of both returning and new board members. I'm proud of what our dedicated team of volunteers accomplished in 2023, and I'm excited to see some of our newer projects, including our microgrants program (more on that in our next issue!), continue to grow and blossom this year.



JANINE DOYLE
2024 MDA PRESIDENT

We closed out 2023 with our Annual Meeting in November, where we recognized our Star Award winners (see page 7 for the full story) and presented Mother's Day House & Garden Tour grants to the following organizations:

- Albert Hill Middle School - Special Project Determined by Principal
- Belmont Branch - Richmond Public Library
- FeedMore - Meals on Wheels
- Health Brigade
- Humphrey Calder Community Center
- Lois Harrison-Jones Elementary School, PTA
(formerly John B. Cary Elementary School)
- Prevent A Litter Veterinary Hospital



Looking ahead, keep your eyes open for more information about our Town Hall, typically held in mid-March. This event focuses on topics that are most important to Museum District residents, so please feel free to reach out and share your thoughts, especially if you have a potential guest speaker in mind.

Thank you for letting me serve you as the MDA's board president for another year. As a stay-at-home mom to a spirited three-year-old, it's easy for me to feel detached from my own interests, so having the opportunity to connect with my community through this volunteer position is a gift I very much appreciate. **☑**



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INSIDE THE MDA

NEW BOARD MEMBER

ANNE JENSEN

MDA PROGRAMS CHAIR



Anne is thrilled to serve the board as programs chair and brings a wealth of volunteer and event planning experience to the position. Originally from Norfolk, Va., she moved to the neighborhood in April 2023 having previously spent time in Pittsburgh, Pa., where she earned her Master of Science in Public Policy & Management from Carnegie Mellon University. Anne works remotely as an analytics consultant in economic development and can be seen running, walking her Shetland Sheepdog puppy, Buddy, or cheering on the Hoos somewhere in the Devil's Triangle.

The COLUMNS

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Please pass your copy on to someone else!



WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH US?

We have some board and committee positions currently open, so we'd love to hear from you if you're interested in getting involved. Volunteering as an MDA board or committee member is a fantastic way to get to know your neighbors and feel connected to your community. Whatever your interests, we can most likely find a good fit for you! Send an email to learn more: inquiries@museumdistrict.org.



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MDA 2023 STAR AWARDS

Each year, the Museum District Association presents the Star Award to a resident and a city employee for exceptional dedication and service to the neighborhood. Let's meet this year's winners:



MDA RESIDENT STAR AWARD

STEPHEN VERSEN

Chances are good you've met the MDA's grill master, Stephen Versen, slinging hot dogs at National Night Out. But Stephen has contributed so much more to this neighborhood beyond his gift of grilling. Stephen has served as the MDA's board president and is a current member of the zoning and land use committee, and he often offers to jump in as needed for other volunteer opportunities, always with a smile. With his welcoming nature and joyful demeanor, Stephen is a great friend to many, and we are so thankful for all of the time and energy he has devoted to this organization and neighborhood.



MDA COMMUNITY STAR AWARD

LT. WILLIAM M. PHIBBS

With over 28 years of experience in law enforcement, Lieutenant Mike Phibbs became the Sector Commander of 311 in the Third Precinct in 2020, and he has since become a staple in our community. Lt. Phibbs has always been a pleasure to work with, partnering with the MDA to present helpful safety information to Museum District residents and welcoming public feedback on their concerns. We are grateful to Lt. Phibbs for his dedicated service to our neighborhood and the Richmond Police Department.



Thanks so much to our winners for their dedicated service!



STREET CRED

Have you ever wondered about the history behind our neighborhood's street names? We have! Keep an eye out for your street. We'll be featuring a new pair in every issue.

STREET NAME: ROSENEATH ROAD

DIRECTION: North-South

ORIGIN: Probably named from the farm of the same name owned by Lewis D. Crenshaw.

STREET NAME: SHEPPARD STREET

DIRECTION: North-South

ORIGIN: The street is named for the Sheppard family who lived in the area for 55 years in the late 19th and early 20th century. They owned a large tract of land on Grace Street near Roseneath that was originally purchased by Dr. Nicholas C. Sheppard (1831-1908).

Source: Facts and Legends of Richmond Area Streets by Thomas Mustian. Information is presumed factual but may be attributed to legend and lore.

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GROVE AVENUE EYE CENTER: A BUSINESS WITH VISION

INTERVIEW WITH DR. JERRY NEIDIGH, OD

by **AMANDA SCUDDER**

I discovered Grove Avenue Eye Center quite by accident 20 years ago. I arrived mid-winter for my first visit, only to find that I had, in fact, made the appointment with another practice (To this day, I have no idea where I was actually supposed to be!). In my defense, I was six months pregnant, parenting a toddler, working full-time and serving as president of the Museum District Association, so there's a smidge of a chance that I was distracted when I made the appointment. Regardless, the warm reception, the hot chocolate in the waiting room and the fact that they fit me in on that very day meant that I became a loyal patient!

It was Dr. Jerry Neidigh who gave me that first eye exam and who, 20 years later, was just as gracious about fitting me in for an interview for this article. Dr. Neidigh came to Grove Avenue Eye Center in the 90s to complete his first rotation while still a graduate student at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. He hit it off with the head optometrist, Dr. Bruce Kiraly, and had a job offer before he even graduated. Drawn by the burgeoning city, the vibrant neighborhood location and the opportunity to work in an independent practice, he happily accepted. Twenty-five years later, the practice now has a second location in Midlothian, six optometrists and a devoted following.

In the years since Dr. Neidigh came to Richmond, he has played a significant role in the evolution of optometry in Virginia. Optometrists are trained to identify and treat many eye conditions, but their scope of practice is determined by state law. By educating legislators about the depth and breadth of optometry, Dr. Neidigh has helped substantially expand the role that optometrists fill in Virginia's eye care system. Beyond eye exams and fitting for lenses and frames, optometrists can now perform minor in-office procedures and can treat many eye conditions, such as glaucoma, eye infections and dry eye. During an eye exam, optometrists look for more than 270 diseases and can even identify signs of rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. The scope of practice in Virginia is now one of the best in the nation, which benefits patients and draws talent to our commonwealth.



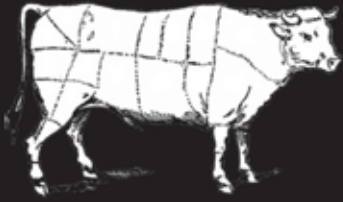
THE DOCTORS AND STAFF ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CARE AND PERSONAL ATTENTION TO PATIENTS, MANY OF WHOM LIVE OR WORK IN THE MUSEUM DISTRICT.

The advancements Dr. Neidigh has helped bring about have not only enhanced the profession but have also become an integral part of what makes Grove Avenue Eye Center truly unique. The doctors and staff are able to provide the highest level of care and personal attention to patients, many of whom live or work in the Museum District. They offer retinal photography, which can be more comfortable for patients than dilation and provides a photographic record over time. They also offer specialty lenses that help with corneal disease and bioptic telescope lenses that can enable people with low vision who are legally blind to get a bioptic driver's license, greatly improving their independence. But what really catches your eye when you walk in are the friendly faces and welcoming waiting room.

Dr. Jerry Neidigh and his team have not only redefined the boundaries of optometry in Virginia but have also created a place in the heart of the Museum District where patients can find comfort and care. Dr. Neidigh sums up the Grove Avenue Eye Center philosophy, "We strive to create an environment where, no matter what is going on in the world, patients can come in and feel well-cared for and able to focus on the importance of their vision and overall health."

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

ONE CHILD AT A TIME



by **CHRISTINA NUCKOLS**

Looking for volunteer opportunities? If you think you aren't qualified to be part of the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, take a closer look. You will discover a unique and meaningful experience that brings hope to children who are looking for a special person to be their advocate.

"You don't have to be a lawyer. You don't have to have any legal experience," said Sarah-Keel Crews, volunteer coordinator with the Program of Greater Richmond SCAN. "What matters most is you want to do this work for the right reasons, and you can make the time commitment... Spending time with the children is really fun, and seeing the growth, the progress that a lot of these kids are making. You are making a real and lasting impact on a child's life."

A Richmond native who has lived in the Museum District since 2017, Crews started her career in hospitality management, but she was drawn to nonprofits by a motivation to help underserved populations in her community. That mission brought her to SCAN, which oversees the CASA program in Richmond and surrounding counties. Crews is the volunteer coordinator as well as a court-appointed special advocate herself.

Although CASA volunteers don't need a law degree, they must pass a thorough background check and interview process to ensure they are able to handle difficult cases involving abuse and neglect.



"WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER FOR CASA, YOU ARE MAKING A REAL AND LASTING IMPACT ON A CHILD'S LIFE."

SARAH-KEEL CREWS
Volunteer Coordinator
Greater Richmond SCAN



"We are asking intentional questions because we know what challenges we're going to face, and we want our volunteers to be prepared for that," Crews said.

CASA volunteers must complete 35 hours of training and 2 ½ hours of courtroom observation to understand their duties and become familiar with the procedures of the juvenile and domestic relations court. Once they begin working with a child, they will continue to have support from case managers.

After training, volunteers typically spend 10-15 hours per month as an advocate, including at least two visits with their assigned child. One of those monthly visits must be to the child's home, but advocates may also attend necessary appointments, such as a doctor's visit.

"You are oftentimes the most consistent person in that child's life," Crews said.

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Amanda Scudder
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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But court advocates are not mentors. Their role is to make recommendations to the court based on the best interest of the child with the goal of providing that child a safe, permanent home.

“The final decision is made by the judge,” Crews said. “Even though we don’t make the decisions, it’s still a big responsibility.”

While attorneys and others involved in court proceedings may carry large caseloads, each advocate is assigned to just one case involving a child or group of siblings. For that reason, judges pay close attention to the advocate’s reports.

National studies demonstrate that children with a CASA volunteer are more likely to find a safe and permanent home, more likely to succeed in school and half as likely to re-enter the foster care system.

That research speaks to the meaningful role CASA volunteers play, but the greatest fulfillment comes from individual stories of healing. One of Crews’s most inspiring moments was when a mother’s hard work paid off and she was awarded custody of her children.

“When you look at a case on paper, it looks very black and white,” Crews said. “I think there’s this misconception that parents don’t want their children, and I can tell you from experience that is the farthest thing from the truth. It’s really beautiful to see reunification happen.”

Richmond CASA is now accepting applications for Spring 2024 training, which begins mid-March. Contact Crews at volunteer@grscan.com, call 804-646-5184 or visit the website at <https://grscan.com/programs/casa>.

CASA VOLUNTEERS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- Be over the age of 21
- Willing to commit at least 18 months of their time in order to provide consistency for a child throughout the entire case
- Have access to a computer
- Able to participate in the 35-hour training class
- Able to devote 10-15 hours each month to their case
- Able to effectively communicate orally and in writing
- Have a genuine desire to help a child in need
- Have no significant criminal history or child abuse registry findings

**Neighborhood
Easter Egg Hunt**

Sunday, March 24 | 2 – 4 pm
on the Arthur Ashe Boulevard Lawn

Egg hunts in waves by age:
K – 2nd Grade 2:15 | 3rd – 5th Grade 2:45
3 Years – PreK 3:15 | Toddlers – 2 years 3:45

Door prizes during each wave | Take-home treats for all
Egg Hunt will be moved to the Gym in the case of inclement weather.

Easter Worship
Sunday, March 31
8:45 am in the Chapel
11 am in the Sanctuary

Richmond's First Baptist Church
2709 Monument Avenue

LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM, THEY ARE OUR NEIGHBORS BY NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN.

by MA POWERS

Squirrels are one of the most common forms of wildlife we encounter in the Museum District. Perhaps you have chuckled when seeing a squirrel running along a fence or high wire with a slice of pizza hanging from its mouth, or you have been annoyed that a bird feeder was raided or a porch cushion was hijacked for its stuffing contents. Feelings toward these furry neighbors range from adoration to outrage. Some people go as far as to name them and feed them, while others view them as brazen bullies to be kept away from their homes.

You may be surprised to learn that squirrels were not originally native to Richmond. In fact, the city intentionally cultivated squirrels around 1880. A pair of Eastern Gray Squirrels was reportedly trapped and brought to the State Capitol grounds as a gift to the commonwealth. The fact that Richmond had any squirrels was something of a novelty, as most cities were void of squirrels at this time. You could say that Richmond was an urban trend setter, impressing residents and tourists with these unusual residents in Capitol Square. The squirrels lived in little wooden homes that state groundskeepers built and nailed to trees. Governors of the time devoted a portion of their discretionary budget to supply nuts in an effort to encourage the squirrels to stick around. By 1890, Richmond's squirrel colony was regularly mentioned in tourism promotions, travel journals and regular features in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

By the turn of the century, the Square's squirrel population was reported to be between 150 and 200 individuals. Richmond was then in a position to share squirrels with other localities, so a pair was sent to Petersburg, which was interested in populating squirrels in its parks. The Capitol Square colony was also being used to establish squirrel populations across parks in Richmond. Urban developers across the country were establishing public green spaces, and adding squirrels was a desirable touch to the landscape. Richmond's love affair with squirrels lasted until the 1950s, when the population was large enough for some of their shenanigans to become bothersome and destructive. Populations had spread to neighborhoods, and infatuation with the squirrels of Capitol Square had dissipated. Nonetheless, the Department of General Services budgeted for nuts until the late 1990s when they were no longer deemed

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SQUIRRELS

SQUIRRELS

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necessary. However, nesting boxes continued to be available and rocks were strategically positioned in and around fountains to provide squirrels with access to drinking water.

While there are several species of squirrels in Virginia, the most common in the city remains the Eastern Gray Squirrel. Love them or leave them, they are here to stay. How then are we to live in harmony with our furry neighbors? Understanding the personalities and characteristics of the gray squirrel may help. Surprisingly, the daily movement of a single gray squirrel is only about 200 yards, a couple of blocks in this neighborhood. You likely see the same squirrels every day. You may be able to use this to your advantage in setting up repeated deterrents or becoming tolerant of your resident squirrels. They live in masses of dried leaves in the tops of trees, and their lifespan is about six years. They nest and have babies twice a year; in the early spring and again in the late summer, producing litters of three or four pups that reach maturity within nine weeks. They do not hibernate but remain in their dens for several days during bad weather and depend on a litany of vocalizations to communicate with one another.

A single squirrel gathers thousands of nuts annually, either eating them immediately or storing them for later. They have excellent memories, which helps them locate food “squirreled away” months earlier in hundreds of different spots. They may or may not come back to your potted plant for the nuts they buried there, as researchers estimate that squirrels dig up only about 25% of the nuts they hide. Gray squirrels instinctively know the difference between white oak acorns, which sprout quickly and are unsuitable for burying, and red oak acorns that store well over long periods of time. Oak trees are a popular natural attractant for squirrel populations, as are bird feeders and some flower bulbs, such as tulip and crocus. You can surround bulbs with small gravel underground or sprinkle bone meal over the area where bulbs are planted to deter squirrels.

By the way, squirrels do not like daffodil, grape hyacinth, and crown imperial bulbs, so plant these among tulips and crocuses to discourage squirrels from digging them up and eating them. Birds are not sensitive to chili powder, but squirrels, like all mammals, are so, adding some chili powder or pieces of fresh hot pepper to your bird feeders will help deter squirrels.

Squirrels are our neighbors by no fault of their own, and, ultimately, they are simply trying to live their lives alongside us. The city has lined our streets with lovely, enormous oak trees upon which they are invited to feast and build their homes. Their abundance provides an important link in the food chain for our resident owls and hawks, and the nuts and seeds they gather and hide populate plants throughout the area. The next time you see a squirrel on your property, maybe take the time to make some observations and get to know that wild neighbor of yours. **Q**



Colorized version of “Children Feeding Squirrels in Capitol Square” by Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Journal, May 29, 1880, from Library of Virginia

LAWS REGARDING WILD MAMMALS

In Virginia, it is illegal to live trap and move any wild mammal off your property. Even for states where it is legal, it’s ill-advised and not beneficial for the animal. Mammals that are relocated away from their home area cannot easily find food, water or shelter, and they are unfamiliar with local predators. Relocated animals often die or are killed before they can acclimate to new surroundings. Squirrels cache food and, if moved, lose access to their winter stash and may starve. The use of poisons is discouraged by the Wildlife Center of Virginia, as they may cause secondary poisoning of raptors, wild scavengers and domestic pets. It is also illegal in the state of Virginia to keep a squirrel as a pet or to try to rehabilitate it yourself.

WILDLIFE RESOURCES

If you find a sick or injured squirrel or a newborn pup that has fallen from a tree, do not try to care for it yourself. The Department of Wildlife Resources indicates the only advisable step you should take is to place the animal on a T-shirt, pillowcase, or flat sheet in a well-ventilated box or container and place the box indoors in a dark, quiet location away from people, pets, sounds, smoke, and vapors, with no food, water, or liquid of any kind. Immediately contact a wildlife expert.

- Richmond Wildlife Center: (804) 378-2000
- Wildlife Conflict Helpline: (855) 571-9003
- Blue Ridge Wildlife Center: (540) 837-9000
- Wildlife Center of Virginia: (540) 942-9453
- Department of Wildlife Resources, permitted wildlife rehabilitators: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators/>



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WHISKEY



The Tills found this cabinet at Exotic Home in Norfolk. They were told it was originally a display from a barber shop in India or another country in that region.

HAVING A DRINK WITH KEITH TILL IS AN EXPERIENCE. AFTER INTRODUCING ME TO HIS COLLECTION AND OFFERING SOME EXPLANATION ON THE DIFFERENCES, HE SELECTED A MILD SCOTCH FOR ME.



ANYONE?

by MA POWERS

When I was a kid growing up in Southwest Virginia, I would often accompany my grandfather on the 30-minute drive to Franklin County to visit his birthplace. He was born and raised on an apple farm that was sold shortly before I was born. The new owners were still selling fruit, apple butter, sauces and vinegars, so every few months, we would stock up on these family favorites. When it was just the two of us in the car, we would make an additional, clandestine stop for something that always went directly into the trunk of his car. He would wink and tell me that Grandma didn't need to know about this purchase. That was my introduction to the underground world



REALIZING THAT MY NEIGHBOR IS A DARK LIQUOR AFICIONADO, I WAS EAGER TO FIND OUT WHAT I HAVE BEEN MISSING.

of Franklin County corn liquor. I was around 10 years old when he explained to me about prohibition and the secret production of moonshine. He was in his 20s during prohibition, and though he never became a big drinker, for all of his life he enjoyed a "little fire" at the end of the day. I don't recall if he ever offered me a taste after my legal birthday, but I never ventured into the world of whiskey until recently.

Realizing that my neighbor is a dark liquor aficionado, I was eager to find out what I have been missing. Keith Till grew up knowing more about beer than whiskey and was naturally drawn to dark brews. This led to an affinity for dark liquors, such as bourbon, whiskey and scotch. Prior to my visit with Keith, I knew little about the differences between these classifications of popular liquors.

Keith collects liquor the way I collect yarn. We both have stashes for sharing and for personal use. We look for unique,



WHISKEY

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independent products; travel long distances to check out something new; join others on crawls to various locations and attend retreats with people who share our craft. I have a storage system for my stashed yarn, and likewise, Keith has a storage system for his liquor. My yarn is hidden away in a craft room; his liquor is on display in a beautiful antique cabinet with lights.

Having a drink with Keith is an experience. After introducing me to his collection and offering some explanation on the differences, he selected a mild scotch for me. He poured a glass and suggested that I hold the scotch in my mouth and roll it around before swallowing. I must admit that I was stunned by the heat of the first sip. Keith added an ice cube and explained that there is no shame in adding ice or water to dark liquors. It is part of the accepted way to drink a spicy blend. We perused his stash, and I learned more about him, as well as the technical differences of bourbon, whiskey, and scotch.

I have decided that dark liquors are an acquired taste, like dry wine or black coffee. It didn't take me long to acquire the taste because, by the time I had finished my little pour of scotch, I was ready to try some more. I reminisced about my grandfather sipping from his little metal cup in the evening. Next time I will raise a glass to Pappy. **■**

VIRGINIA ABC TOP 10 SALES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

1	Tito's Handmade Vodka
2	Hennessy VS cognac
3	Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 whiskey
4	Patron Silver tequila
5	Jim Beam straight bourbon whiskey
6	Jameson Irish whiskey
7	Maker's Mark straight bourbon
8	Crown Royal Canadian whiskey
9	Grey Goose vodka
10	Lunazul Blanco tequila



FACTS ABOUT

WHISKEY

- Whiskey is a general term for an alcoholic liquor made from fermented mashed grains.
- Bourbon is the term for a whiskey made with strict guidelines: a grain mixture that is at least 51% corn, aged in a new charred oak barrel, bottled at 80 proof or higher and produced in the United States.
- All bourbon is whiskey, but not all whiskey is bourbon.
- Bourbon was originally made in Bourbon County, Ky., and Kentucky still claims 95% of the world's production of bourbon.
- Virginia has its own history of whiskey production dating back to the 1600s. George Washington was one of the largest producers of Virginia whiskey during his time, producing more than 11,000 gallons in 1798 alone.
- Scotch is single malt whiskey from Scotland. If produced in the United States, it is referred to as single malt whiskey, not scotch.
- Dark liquors are aged in barrels and stored in areas void of climate control, like a barn, so that the expansion and contraction of the wood causes the liquor to move in and out of the wood, adding to its flavor and color.
- Moonshine is defined as a homemade, unaged whiskey, marked by its clear color, corn base and high alcohol content, sometimes as high as 190 proof. Traditionally, it was produced in a homemade still and bottled in mason jars.
- Bourbon is America's Native Spirit: The country of origin distinction came from a 1964 congressional resolution that declared bourbon whiskey as "a distinctive product of the United States that is unlike other types of alcoholic beverages, whether foreign or domestic." Ever since, the spirit must be made in the U.S. in order to legally bear the name "bourbon."



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](https://www.museumdistrict.org). Under Resources, go to Marketplace, and you will see a link for house plaques.



The community of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

individuals and families of all kinds
has long been committed to inclusion,
warmly welcoming all.



Blessing of the Animals 2023

We invite You to Visit
Sundays at 10:30am
In-person and On-line

520 N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard - 358.4771

www.stmarksrva.org

BELMONT LIBRARY

All locations of Richmond Public Library are now open! We are ready to welcome you back.

Our meeting rooms and study rooms will soon be open to reserve online. While virtual programs continue online, many locations are providing onsite programs outside.

Explore our updated website <https://rvalibrary.org/> for continuing updates to programs and library access. Also check out our new, advanced, library catalog to search for items and place holds.

New to the neighborhood? Get a head start by applying for an e-card, giving you some immediate library privileges. Once you visit an RPL branch, you can convert your e-card to a physical card and check out materials. <https://rvalibrary.org/services/get-card/>

Need legal forms? Check out <https://subscriptions.uslegalforms.com/gale/forms.html> for free access to Gale Legal Forms, The Leading Online Publisher of National and State-specific Legal Documents. This is a terrific source of commonly used forms like divorce or wills in Virginia. You can access this database from any computer. You will be asked to enter your RPL library card number.

We are no longer offering curbside service because all of our RPL locations are now open to the public. And because we are no longer quarantining returned library items, library users can get their items with less wait time! Our hours at this time are Monday-Friday 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Saturdays 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Programming remains virtual at this time.

STAY INFORMED BY:

- **Reading the MDA (This Week in the Museum District) email update** – it's a terrific source of the most up-to-date information. Have you signed up for this?
- **Checking out our RPL website** reopening guide <https://rvalibrary.org/reopening/>
- **Exploring our website** to discover events, concerts and other special happenings. <https://rvalibrary.org/events/>
- **Checking out our virtual programming** for children and teens <https://rvalibrary.org/kids/online-programs/>. Here you will find weekly storytimes, crafty sessions, author highlights and classes of all kinds.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can access library resources, popular and classic ebooks and over 39,000 downloadable audiobooks through the **Libby App** (also known as *Overdrive*). Just use your RPL library card and make sure to download Libby onto your device. Check out up to 25 items at a time.

The Belmont Library is located at 3100 Ellwood Avenue.
For information: RichmondPublicLibrary.org • 804-646-1139



Richmond
Public Library

INFORM
ENRICH
EMPOWER

WHETHER IT'S GIFTING, SELLING, DONATING OR RECYCLING,
FIND THE METHOD THAT RESONATES WITH YOU.

SHEDDING STUFF: WHAT TO DO WITH WHAT YOU DON'T WANT

by **AMANDA SCUDDER**



Have you ever found yourself surrounded by a sea of possessions, wondering how it all got there? It's a common scenario—our belongings pile up, and suddenly we realize we are no longer in the captain's seat. Instead, our stuff is steering the ship!

In our last installment of the Sticky Stuff series, I shared the “F” test criteria (Form, Function, Fit, Feeling, and Financial) to help you navigate through the murky waters of possessions to find what adds value and what's just taking up space. Now the next challenge arises: what to do with the excess? On this leg of our journey, I'll show you the ropes of giving, selling, donating and recycling. It's time to get your space shipshape and find homes for the things you no longer need.

GIFTING

Gifts given with generosity and received with gratitude bring joy to both the giver and the receiver. It's a win-win when you give a neighbor, friend or family member something they can use while clearing out things that are getting in your way!

- Invite friends to choose from an assortment of options, or select a specific item for someone special. Including a note about its provenance is a lovely touch.
- Create a hand-me-down network to pass along outgrown children's items.
- Connect with our local Buy Nothing Group on Facebook to give and receive while building community.

(Note: See Part 1 and Part 2 in the Summer and Fall 2023 issues)

- Find a little library to pass books along to passers-by.
- Tuck duplicate photos or children's art into greeting cards, and send them to people who will enjoy them.

Along with any gift, give the recipients permission to pass the items along should they ever want to.

SELLING

If your object has value, check the market price by searching online for similar items. Many of the places you can look, such as eBay, Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, Poshmark, OfferUp, Mercari, Letgo and Nextdoor, are also avenues to sell your stuff. Or, skip the virtual marketplace in favor of consigning, auctioning or a good old-fashioned yard sale. Searching online for the category of item followed by "consigning near me" or "auctions near me" will give you plenty of current options. If you've accumulated a collection, look for related specialty stores.

If selling online, be on high alert for scammers, and use caution when arranging for an item to be picked up. It is also important to accurately represent the condition of items through a good description and clear photographs.

When consigning or auctioning, check ahead to find out what the business will accept, and make an appointment to bring things in.

For large items, email photos and measurements first, and find out if the business provides transportation or if you need to make your own arrangements. Hiring a truck and labor dips into potential profit and might tip the scale in favor of scheduling a donation pickup instead.

DONATING

One of the best feelings when decluttering is knowing your unwanted things will benefit someone in need. In some cases, your donation may also have a tax benefit for you, so ask for a receipt for your records. Many local charities and schools have wish lists, which you can find online, or call and ask. Nearby thrift stores include Diversity, Fantastic, Furbish, Hope and The Clothes Rack. Each has a unique mission that may resonate with you, and some can send a truck to pick up large items. There are several niche options as well:

- SCRAP-RVA takes arts and crafts supplies.
- Prevent A Litter accepts like-new pet items. Some animal shelters take used pet supplies, old sheets and towels.
- Free Foundation Richmond accepts durable mobility-related medical equipment.

- CARITAS is one of the few places that can take mattresses, and Habitat's Re-Store will accept tools, building materials, furniture, and some appliances.

Always check the charity's website for current guidelines and policies. This list is not exhaustive, so ask around for more ideas. Consider condition and desirability if you are unsure whether something should be donated, recycled or thrown away.

RECYCLING & REPURPOSING

Recycling and repurposing benefit the environment and help keep things out of landfills. There are some creative alternatives for recycling beyond our regular curbside pickup.

- The Children's Museum can often use clean containers, shoe boxes and more for their tiny creatives' artistic endeavors.
- Goodwill's E-recycling uses a U.S. Department of Defense-grade program on all donated devices to clean hard drives and erase personal and sensitive information. They can take large and small electronics, which can be dropped off at any location.
- Some pharmacies have medication recycling drop boxes. Check ahead to make sure that the location near you is accepting drop-offs, and find out about associated costs.
- Biodegradable collections, such as sea shells, can be placed in gardens to return nutrients to the soil.

TRASH

Once you have exhausted all the other options, sometimes it is necessary to acknowledge that a thing that once had use or value is now trash. Sadly, that fact will not change by keeping it in your space solely to keep it out of the landfill. If possible, let go of the guilt and the object, and take comfort in knowing your space is that much lighter. Keep in mind proper disposal methods for hazardous waste.

- The City's East Richmond Road Convenience Center (ERRCC) accepts many household hazardous waste items, including paint, solvents and fuels. The service is free to Richmond residents who provide proof of residency (ID, utility bill, etc.).

Now that we've charted the course for shedding the excess, it's time to set sail on your own decluttering adventure. Whether it's gifting, selling, donating or recycling, find the method that resonates with you. Embrace the freedom that comes with releasing what you no longer need. Smooth seas and clutter-free horizons await as you embark on this transformative journey! Check back in the spring for the fourth installment of the Sticky Stuff series, when we will talk about setting up shipshape systems for the things you keep. 📦

THE PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

The Proust Questionnaire is a series of questions about personality that became popular in the late 19th century. While French author Marcel Proust did not write the questions, his answers (and the questions) were published in 1890. Modified versions of the questionnaire have been used over the years by James Lipton as part of his show “Inside the Actor’s Studio” and Vanity Fair magazine, which features the answers of celebrities in the back pages of each issue.



MELINDA FIELDS

Manager of
Musuem District B&B

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF PERFECT HAPPINESS?

The perfect happiness comes from being at complete peace. I think this is achieved by learning to be content with the moment that you are in. Enjoying what is happening in the present without comparison to what was or what could have been.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST FEAR?

I try to avoid being filled or consumed in any way with fear. But having to provide an answer, I would say not living long enough to fulfill my purpose or to see my son, who is currently 23, have a family of his own. Watching him be a husband and father – not being able to see that would be heartbreaking.

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

My mother is an extremely admirable person. She is filled with grace and mercy, and I admire her ability to keep going no matter what the world throws at her.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

Monthly or sometimes twice a month massages. I am so thankful for the ability to indulge in a 2-hour massage once a month. I get to take a nap and not care about what is happening outside of the massage room for 2 full uninterrupted hours. It is simply amazing.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST REGRET?

My greatest regret is procrastination. I put things off too often. So not starting so many things sooner is my greatest regret.

WHAT OR WHO IS THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE?

My son. He is an amazing young man, and I am blessed to be his mother.

WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

Anything musical.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT STATE OF MIND?

I am currently blissful

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

Motherhood. It is the best and hardest job I've ever had and one that I'd never want to give up. As quoted from the movie “Other hood,” Motherhood is like an everlasting breakup...we fall in love with our sons and slowly begin a process of breaking up that never ends until death. (This is paraphrased. LOL) Childhood

begins with so much dependance on the parent, and then we begin to teach them to be independent and hate it when they no longer need us, yet we are extremely proud of them being able to take care of themselves. It is a journey I am so thankful I get to see through.

IF YOU WERE TO DIE AND COME BACK AS A PERSON OR A THING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Wow this is a hard one to answer... I love being ME... I truly don't think I'd want to be someone else because we only see what's on the outside not what they may struggle with on the inside. So, I guess to answer the question, I'd choose to be a bird. Whichever bird gets to live the longest and fly all over the earth.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

Compassion and empathy. I think I have a deep level of both. It can be a treasure but a curse sometimes as well. I must learn when to hold back so that I am not overcome with the issues of other people.

WHAT DO YOU REGARD AS THE LOWEST DEPTH OF MISERY?

I think the lowest depth of misery is the state of comparison. We live in a world where we all want more or what other people have, and we hold ourselves to some manifestation of great that we haven't created but someone else has. Being in a state of comparison does not allow one to love themselves just as they are... It keeps one thinking that they are never enough.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MOST DISLIKE?

I most dislike HATE. It promotes evil, and we all could do without it.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO DIE?

In my sleep and with all my family at the same time (LOL) – they may not, but I don't want to mourn them or have them mourn me. We could all arrive at the proverbial pearly gates together hand in hand.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

LOVE always. Trying to learn to live and always choose LOVE.

WHAT'S THE MOST RICHMOND THING YOU CAN DO?

I think currently the most Richmond thing to do is be adaptable to change. 📍



LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

CITY

Mayor Levar Stoney	804-646-7970
Citizens Assistance	804-646-7000 or 311
Public Works (<i>Leaf and trash collection, sidewalks and tree maintenance, etc.</i>)	804-646-6430
Building Permits, Inspections	804-646-4169
Property Maintenance/Code Enforcement	804-646-6398

POLICE & FIRE

Emergency	911
Fire Non-emergency	804-646-6640
Police Non-emergency	804-646-5100
Crime Stoppers	804-646-6733
3rd Precinct	804-646-1412
Animal Control	804-646-5573
	(after hours) 804-646-5123

RVA311

RVA311 is the City of Richmond's centralized format for easily reporting, filing and tracking all resident service requests.

RVA311 is a full-scale online and mobile app solution that allows residents to record service requests directly to various government entities, including the Richmond Police Department, the departments of Public Works, Public Utilities, Social Services and Finance, and the Department of Planning and Development. Requests for service cover everything from pothole reports, broken streetlights and damaged infrastructure to unlawful dumping, sanitation concerns, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and much more. The system is very user-friendly, and even includes a FAQ section to help with general questions about taxes, parking and other city-related functions.

To get started, residents can go to www.rva311.com and set up an account for reporting. Once issues or complaints are filed, they can be tracked from inception to assignment and ultimately through to conclusion.

CITY COUNCIL

Andreas Addison (1st District) - andreas.addison@rva.gov	804-646-5935
Katherine Jordan (2nd District) - katherinejordan@rva.gov	804-646-6532
Stephanie Lynch (5th District) - stephanie.lynch@rva.gov	804-646-5724

For information on City Council meetings, visit <https://richmondva.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

SCHOOL BOARD

Jason Kamras, School Superintendent - jkamras@rvaschools.net	804-780-7700
Elizabeth Doerr (1st District) - edoerr@rvaschools.net	804-929-6624
Mariah White (2nd District) - mwhite4@rvaschools.net	804-221-9389
Stephannie Rizzi (5th District) - srizzi@rvaschools.net	804-929-6930

To watch school board proceedings and meetings:

Go to: <https://goboarddocs.com/vsba/richmond/board.nsf/public>

VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Del. Betsy B. Carr (District 78) - DelBCarr@house.virginia.gov	Capitol Phone: (804) 698-1078
Sen. Lamont Bagby (District 14) - senatorbagby@senate.virginia.gov	Capitol Phone: (804) 698-7514

US CONGRESS (DISTRICT 4)

Rep. Jennifer L. McClellan	DC Office - 202-225-6365	Richmond Office - 804-486-1840
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US SENATE

Sen. Mark Warner	DC Office - 202-224-2023	Richmond Office - 804-775-2314
Sen. Tim Kaine	DC Office - 202-224-4024	Richmond Office - 804-771-2221



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION'S 28TH
**MOTHER'S DAY
HOUSE &
GARDEN TOUR**
SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024

JOIN US

To nominate a home

MDAhousetour@museumdistrict.org

To volunteer

HTvolunteer@museumdistrict.org

To sponsor/advertise

HTsponsor@museumdistrict.org

Past tour photos and more

museumdistrict.org/mothers-day-tour-md



“One of my favorite things about working with you is that, on every listing, you are determined to max out that fiduciary responsibility to every client.”

**-Johnathan Miller
JSquared Interior Staging**



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