

# NORTH OF THE JAMES®

"Truth and facts, no alternatives."

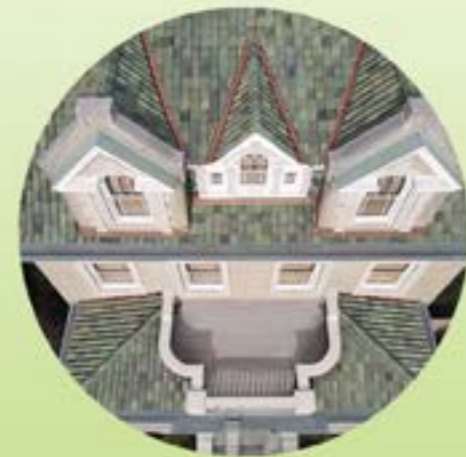
A close-up portrait of a woman with long, dark hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing large, gold, star-shaped earrings. The background is a soft-focus green and blue bokeh.

# MEGAN SLAY

# Saunders Roofing

Quality and Service Since 1942

*The Roofing Experts*  
*Serving Richmond For 81 Years*



Saunders sets the standard in roofing from copper to asphalt shingles. Our skilled roofing craftsmen know that the smallest details can greatly influence the life of your roof.

Whether it's a brand-new roof, a historical renovation or repairs we will guide you every step of the way.

Our estimators provide written estimates and offer as many options as possible. We are Richmond's Trusted Roofing Experts.

For free estimates, email: [estimating@saundersroofing.com](mailto:estimating@saundersroofing.com)

Copper • Slate • Tile  
Asphalt Shingles  
Standing Seam Metal  
Low-Slope Roofing



CERTIFIED • INSURED • CLASS A CONTRACTOR  
(804) 353-9919 [www.SaundersRoofing.com](http://www.SaundersRoofing.com)



## TABLE of CONTENTS

- 4 HIDDEN HISTORIES A History of Defiance**  
The Supreme Court doesn't have an enforcement arm. In fact, it's up to either the executive branch or the legislative branch to enforce the court's ruling.
- 6 RESTAURANT REVIEW Ellie's Hot Dogs & Ice Cream**  
There was Ellie's, a milkshake and hot dog place with a big, lighted OPEN sign clear as day. If there was ever a call for a clandestine milkshake thrill it was that afternoon. I felt compelled.
- 8 DIVERSIONS Summer Peach Salad**  
This summer I sat under my peach tree, plucking one after another. It was very Huckleberry Finn. I sat in the shade with my sticky fingers, dripping chin.
- 10 ZONING PRRs and STRs**  
A lot of Richmonders were surprised that the Planning Commission is considering changes to the Primary Resident Requirements (PRRs) on Short Term Rentals (STRs). After all, if it ain't broken why fix it. Northside civic associations oppose changes to the zoning ordinance.
- 12 COVER Megan Slay**  
Master of the Keyboard Music flowed through the house for as long as she could remember. Every cell of her being had been informed by these sounds from the time she was an infant. Sometimes it fell gently as a spring rain, and other times it pelted the very air with a soaking downpour, accented with thunder.
- 17 ART September Art Events**  
Tilt and Sway at Eric Schindler, Cy Twombly at the VMFA
- 18 WHAT'S NEW PopLife To Your Good Health**  
Dr. A. J. Soucy operated a successful OBGYN practice for many years in upstate New York, but sensed something was missing from the allopathic approach she was trained in.
- 20 FROM THE ARCHIVES Nina Kilian Peace: In the Name of Justice**  
Nina K. Peace was a force of nature and a brilliant litigator and judge who was crucified by a gang of petty men in Virginia's General Assembly. Seven years after this story appeared, Nina died suddenly and Hanover has never been quite the same.
- 22 BOOK REVIEW Finding Joy on Spaceship Earth**  
"The broken world is a yearning world," writes Marjolijn van Heemstra, who was living with her fiancé and two children during a heat wave in the Netherlands when she found a photo of earth taken by the Hubble telescope.

COVER image art by Rebecca D'Angelo

### NORTH OF THE JAMES

Independently owned and operated.

NORTH of the JAMES® magazine is published every month. Letters to the editor are welcome, but become the property of NORTH of the JAMES magazine. Letters may be edited for clarity and length. Although we invite unsolicited manuscripts, we cannot be accountable for their return. The publisher is not responsible for errors.

Copyright 2020® by NORTH of the JAMES magazine. All rights reserved. Views and opinions by our writers do not necessarily represent those of NORTH of the JAMES magazine. NORTH of the JAMES magazine is not responsible for claims made by our advertisers.

For media kits and ad rate information, write or call:  
NORTH OF THE JAMES MAGAZINE

PO Box 9225  
Richmond, VA 23227

(804) 218-5265

editorial: [charlesmcguigan@gmail.com](mailto:charlesmcguigan@gmail.com)  
advertising: [charlesmcguigan@gmail.com](mailto:charlesmcguigan@gmail.com)  
[www.northofthejames.com](http://www.northofthejames.com)

editor/publisher

CHARLES G. MCGUIGAN

art director

DOUG DOBEY at Dobby Design

contributing photographer

REBECCA D'ANGELO

web manager

CATHERINE MCGUIGAN

contributing writers

DALE M BRUMFIELD  
ALANE CAMERON FORD  
ORION HUGHES  
JACK R JOHNSON  
ANNE JONES  
BRIGETTE KELLY  
CATHERINE MCGUIGAN  
CHARLES BR MCGUIGAN  
FAYERUZ REGAN  
REX SPRINGSTON  
FRAN WITHROW

# HOBNOB

eat. drink. socialize.

Tuesday-Friday 11am-11pm  
Saturday 5pm-11pm, Sunday 9am-3pm

Lunch, Dinner  
Sunday Brunch  
To-Go Orders

6010 Hermitage Road  
Richmond, VA 23228

[hobnobrva.com](http://hobnobrva.com)

804.264.7400



## Check Your Recycling Day

Enter your address at [www.cvwma.com](http://www.cvwma.com)

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.



Central Virginia Waste Management Authority

# A History of Defiance

by JACK R. JOHNSON

“T EXAS WILL see you in court, Mr. President,” snapped Governor Greg Abbott of Texas in July of this year. He was making clear that he would not comply with a justice department request to remove floating barriers in the Rio Grande. And Abbott is not the only Republican governor in open revolt against the Court’s decisions. In May, Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida signed a bill allowing the death penalty in child rape convictions despite the Supreme Court banning capital punishment in such cases. Earlier in July, Governor Kay Ivey of Alabama signed into law a redistricting map that ignored a Supreme Court ruling ordering the state to draw two Black-majority congressional districts.

That Supreme Court decision was especially unexpected because in striking down a substantial part of the Voting Rights Act in his 2013 ruling, Chief Justice Roberts argued that “things have changed dramatically” in the South, and so the Voting Right Act protections could be disregarded. That was naive at best, as Alabama has helpfully demonstrated.

A little history might have clarified Robert’s view of things. After all, it’s not first time the state of Alabama defied a Supreme Court ruling. Former Alabama Governor George Wallace made the cover of Time magazine by declaring “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever” in his inaugural address as Governor. He proved to be a man of his word, later defying the federal courts in 1963 when he stood in front of the University of Alabama, flanked by state troopers, and literally blocked the door of the enrollment office.

He got away with that because-- interesting fact --the Supreme Court doesn’t have an enforcement arm. In fact, it’s up to either the executive branch or the legislative branch to enforce the court’s ruling. So on June 10, 1963, President John F. Kennedy did exactly that. He federalized National Guard troops and deployed them to the University of Alabama to force desegregation. The next day, Governor Wallace yielded to the federal pressure, and the two Black students, Malone and Hood were able to complete their enrollments. In September of the same year, Wallace again attempted to block the desegregation of an Alabama public school—this time Tuskegee High School—but President Kennedy once again employed his executive authority and federalized National Guard troops. Wallace had little choice but to yield. Note again, it was the executive branch which operated as the enforcement arm for the Supreme Court decision. The judiciary alone was impotent.

Those familiar with the history of the high court might remember President Andrew Jackson’s response to the court’s decision in *Worcester v. Georgia*, one of the foundational rulings enforcing tribal sovereignty in the United States. “[Justice] John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it!”

President Jackson did not agree with the *Worcester v. Georgia* decision, which involved a group of white Christian missionaries, including Samuel A. Worcester, who were living in Cherokee territory in Georgia, advising the Cherokee about resisting Georgia’s attempts to impose state laws on the sovereign Cherokee Nation. Georgia state authorities arrested Worcester and several other missionaries and they were convicted at trial in 1831 and sentenced to four years of hard labor in



prison. Worcester appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that Georgia had no right to extend its laws to Cherokee territory and contended that the act under which he had been convicted violated the U.S. Constitution, which gives to the U.S. Congress the authority to regulate commerce with Native Americans.

The Supreme Court agreed with Worcester, ruling 5 to 1 on March 3, 1832, that all the Georgia laws regarding the Cherokee Nation were unconstitutional and thus void.

Georgia, however, ignored the decision, keeping Worcester and the other missionaries in prison. President Andrew Jackson also declined to enforce the Supreme Court’s decision, thus allowing states to enact further legislation damaging to the tribes. In fact, in an act of stark defiance, Georgia held a lottery that allocated parcels of the Indian reservation to ‘qualifying’ local white settlers. Later, after Jackson signed his Indian Removal Act, the U.S. government began forcing the Cherokee off their land in 1838. In what became known as the Trail of Tears, some 15,000 Cherokee were driven from their lands and were marched westward on a grueling journey. Four thousand died in route. All of this was a direct outcome of Jackson

allowing Georgia to defy a Supreme Court decision with impunity.

Of course, the largest example of state’s openly defying the Court and Federal law came about 30 years later when southern states believed that they had the right to nullify federal laws and secede from the Union if their slave holdings were threatened. It took four years of civil war to correct that error.

As Daniel Ziblatt, a political scientist at Harvard University, noted: “The major breakthroughs in American democracy have come when the federal government has either passed national legislation – think of the Civil Rights Act or the Voting Rights Act – or had to intervene.”

“Major moments of backsliding have happened when the federal government turns a blind eye to what’s happening in the states.... So in a way the confrontation between the states and the federal government is a confrontation over democracy.”

For the ‘law and order’ party, it’s worth remembering that in Alabama today, in Texas, and in Florida, the GOP is openly defying the court’s rulings again, just as the South did in fomenting our bloodiest war over 150 years ago. 🇺🇸

Your Local Full-Line **STIHL**® Dealer  
Since 1969!



**Arthur’s Electric Service, Inc.**  
8910 Brook Road • Glen Allen, VA 23060 • 804-264-2513



*PBW now focusing on our functional medicine-based health and weight loss programs*

*which can include oral or injectable medications when indicated*



**5606 Staples Mill Road**  
(804) 525-5039

**TEXT (804) 404-6544 for pricing, information or appointment**



AJ Soucy, MD

**#POPLIFERVA**

## RESTAURANT REVIEW

# Ellie's Hot Dogs & Ice Cream

by ANNE JONES

**I**T WAS A THURSDAY AFTERNOON like any other. Work ended at 4, errands had to be done, dinner was a distant mystery, and it was a steamy 97 degrees in the late afternoon. One of those days when a walk was out of the question, the car was as cold as I could get it, and outside seemed almost dangerous with heat. I'd dropped my pup off at home to lie on the couch in the ac, and had set off down Arthur Ashe Boulevard towards Broad Street with Lowe's in mind.

And there it was. On the right. Ellie's. I'd seen the ad, and I knew the little building that sits right next to the old Kitchen 64, now the Brick House in its place. But there was Ellie's, a milkshake and hot dog place with a big, lighted OPEN sign clear as day. Milkshakes! Not just ice cream but featuring milkshakes. Say no more. If there was ever a call for a clandestine milkshake thrill it was that afternoon. I felt compelled. Lowe's-schmoze. Plus, there was just a piece in the Atlantic about how ice cream is good for you. I didn't actually read it, but I knew it was there, and true.

So, I strolled up to the take-out window and ordered a fairly specific milkshake - "mild chocolate, extra thick" I know my milkshakes, and while I've never really had a bad one, there's a wide range of possibilities that can happen, from heavenly perfection to just acceptable. Why waste all those calories and expectations on just acceptable? I'm a big chocolate lover, but I don't want the flavor too strong in a milkshake; I like it somewhere between vanilla and chocolate, reminiscent of a swirl soft serve. And extra thick is an absolute must; I want it just barely passable through the straw. I don't want to look at anything resembling milk, and not too creamy-rich. I'd like a semi-creamy base with some peaky chunks of ice cream in there. As you might imagine, I'm used to happily settling for somewhere between perfection and mediocrity, because who in the heck could get



Ellie's on Arthur Ashe Boulevard on the Northside.

it just right? Ellie's could! Ellie's did! It was close to perfect - creamy (but not too), chunky, lusciously mild delectable chocolate flavor, smooth but slow-sailing through the straw. Ah-hhh. Heaven. YUM, yum. I sat in my cold car, all alone, at peace with the afternoon.

I had to go back, this time with friends, for the rest of the Ellie's experience: the hot dog. I'm a pescatarian so I made sure they offered a veggie dog before I went. Of course they do - they know what I like. There is every combo of hot dog and toppings you can think of- chili, slaw, nacho, kraut, onions, relish, spicy or non-spicy mustard, even a steak & dog - thinly sliced steak, cheese and onions. There are also lots of lone toppings - the usual ones, plus crushed tortilla chips, bacon - pretty much whatever you could want. But all classic, simple old-school hot dog combos for under \$6.

What makes these hot dogs especially good?

For one, the toppings were freshly prepared -my cole slaw was shredded cabbage style, not the overly creamy chopped kind with that not-so-fresh taste. The dogs are grilled-to-order, as they should be, and they're good dogs, slightly plump and tasty. The veggie ones are a little shorter, I was informed as reassurance that mine was meatless. Another big bonus: the rolls are potato-bread and extra nice. These

are hot dogs you'd make for yourself at home with top-notch ingredients, but what's the fun in that? If it's a hot dog you're craving, you won't find or make a better one than Ellie's. I should know: I've tried them three times in as many weeks.

Oh, the ice cream! It's the delicious venerable Hershey's brand with almost 20 flavors—everything everything from your standards to birthday cake to cappuccino crunch, with one no-dairy raspberry sorbet. My mint chip was perfect. Next trip I'll sample a sundae. One suggestion for the menu, from a friend I ran into on the patio as we shared our high praises for the place: this would be a perfect venue for a root beer float.

Speaking of the patio, it's shady and cool with plenty of fans, and a pleasant, not-too-noisy view of Arthur Ashe Boulevard out the end. The staff have been extra friendly and polite at every visit, and it's always felt hassle-free and easy. 🍷

### Ellie's Hot Dogs and Ice Cream

Mon-Thurs, 11:30-8; Fri & Sat, 11:30-9; Sun, Noon-6

3312 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard

Richmond, VA 23230

(804)502-2024

elliesrva.com

# My Outdoor Project

Let Victor Make Your Outdoor Project, His Outdoor Project



**HARDSCAPING** patios, walkways, raised beds, stairs  
**LANDSCAPING** no job too large, or too small  
**CUSTOM-FENCING** and **MULCHING**

Contact  
**VICTOR AYALA**  
master mason and landscaper

**804 912 9789**  
**my\_new\_project@outlook.com**

## Northside Grille



Open 7 Days  
a Week

11am - Close

September and October  
Live Music Line-Up

September 16 Gayle McGehee & Debra Dean

September 17 Susan Greenbaum

September 21 Dirty Mansion

September 22 Soulful Groves of Armistead's Army

September 23 Poison Ivy League

September 24 Mike Lucas

September 28 Rump Thumpin' w/The Party Favors

September 29 Mike Gales And The Warriorz

October 1 Carmen Ann & Jimmy Catlett

October 5 The Hitchhikers

October 6 First Karaoke w/Nard's

October 7 Northside Comedy Review

October 8 Caroline Vain

October 12 Musical Hijinks w/ First Animal Response Team

October 13 Mike Lucas

October 14 Flannel, X-Suckas, Beex

October 15 Mackenzie Roark

1217 Bellevue  
Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23227  
(804) 266-4403

## DIVERSIONS

# Summer Peach Salad

by FAYERUZ REGAN

“ I COULD EAT A PEACH for hours.”

It's one of the most memorable one-liners in cinema history, uttered by Nicholas Cage. Double-entendre aside, I feel the same way. This summer I sat under my peach tree, plucking one after another. It was very Huckleberry Finn. I sat in the shade with my sticky fingers, dripping chin and, while this indulgence may not have lasted for hours, I had to change my shirt afterward. It was covered in juice.

It was a good year for peaches. The weight of the stone fruit took perfectly upright branches and bent them down to the ground. And when I have a good year, neighbors know about it. There are baskets for them, cobblers for my family, and when I entertain, I trot out a guest favorite – peach salad. I have to workshop that name.

See, back in the 60's, people had cool recipe names, adding the words “Delight” or “Surprise” at the end of them. “Tuna Surprise” or “Tomato Delight.” It was kitschy, but not very descriptive. Well, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction now, and in modern cooking magazines, my peach salad would be called “Herby Peach Salad with Jalapeno and Pistachios.” Sure, it's more descriptive, but it sounds like I'm rattling off a list.

Regardless of the name, this salad is delectable and fires up every flavor profile. You can substitute ingredients and play with measurements as you go. Though the recipe is very simple, it may not seem like it with all my text below. Like Julia Child, I like to empower people by explaining everything. It takes the mystery out of cooking and builds confidence.

Let's get started!

### INGREDIENTS

Arugula (1 package - or finely chopped kale, as spring mix would get too soggy with the fruit)

Cucumber (1)

Peaches (2-3 - cantaloupe works in a pinch, but peaches have a sweeter punch)

Crumbled goat cheese, feta, or cotija (a couple handfuls)

Jalapeno (1 or 2)

Garlic (1 or 2 cloves)

Limes (2 limes or 1 lemon could work)

Scallions (1 or 2 stalks)

Basil (or mint, or both – a couple handfuls)

Honey (a little drizzle)

Olive oil (4 tablespoons – to start, depending on taste)

Salted pistachios (a couple handfuls)

### INSTRUCTIONS

First, make sure all the produce is washed thoroughly.

Layer arugula in a wide salad bowl or deep tray. Use the whole bag.

Second, peel a cucumber. Slice thin lengthwise so they resemble ribbons, either with a mandolin or spiralizer. If neither option is available, slice as thinly as possible into long strips.

Lay the cucumber atop the arugula, preferably a little upright, to show off the ribbon design and not completely coat the arugula, as if it were lasagna.

Thinly slice peaches and place them around the salad. You needn't peel the peaches, but you can if you'd like.

Thinly slice 1 or 2 jalapenos and remove all seeds. Spread around the salad.

Chop one or two stalks of scallions (or spring onions) finely. Spread atop salad.

Finely chop the herbs (however much you'd like – I prefer a couple heavy handfuls) and spread atop the salad.



Fayeruz made this salad with both cantaloupe and peaches.

Sprinkle the crumbled cheese of your choice around the salad

In a separate bowl, mix the juice of 2 limes, (or 1 lemon) and shave a little lemon or lime zest into the bowl as well. Add a dash of honey, salt, pepper, and olive oil to the mix. Taste the mix, and adjust seasonings as you see fit.

Lightly drizzle this mix over the salad.

Finally, grab a healthy handful or 2 of shelled, salted pistachios (salt and pepper pistachios are my favorite), and place them into a sandwich bag. Seal, and pound lightly with a mallet. Be sure not to do this directly on the countertop, as you may damage it. You can do this on a wood chopping block, heavy cutting board, or even the kitchen floor. Once the pistachios are crushed (not into a powder, just into pieces) sprinkle this atop the salad

And there you have it! Summer in a bowl. What more could you ask for? Peach cobbler? Happy to share my recipe next summer! In the meantime, if you can think of a cool name for this salad, email me suggestions at fayeruz.com!

## DECATUR'S GARAGE

Round the Car Service

Bellevue's Full-Service Auto Repair for 25 Years

Bobby Shore

4031 MacArthur Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23227

(804) 262-7582



Christian Lorraine  
Oriental Rugs

WE SPECIALIZE IN HAND  
CLEANING AND REPAIR OF RUGS  
AND SALES OF RUGS AND RUG PADS

214 East Franklin St  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
Phone (804) 344-0081  
clrugs.com

Do you have POTS, Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia or Other Health Challenges?  
Join us for Mindful Motion - A Supportive Yoga Workshop to Help You Thrive  
Offering in partnership with Buffalo Firefly Wellness Center on the Northside.  
<https://buffalofirefly.com/pages/classes-events-mindful-motion>  
\*If you are interested in personalized coaching to get your energy back & thrive, book a free consultation today: 804-420-8810

Guide 2 Resilience

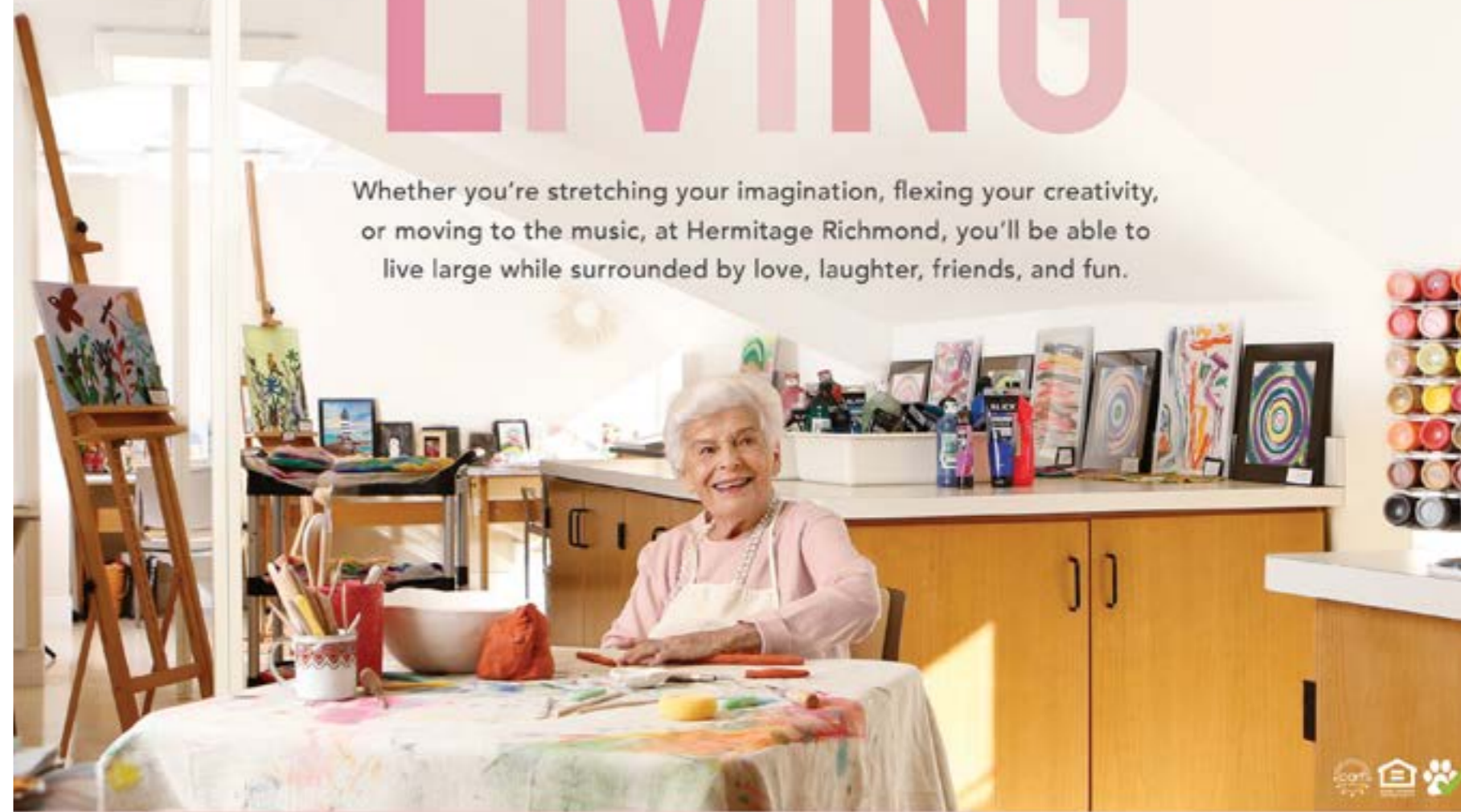
### ASSISTED LIVING

HERMITAGE | RICHMOND

Here, the focus is on

# LIVING

Whether you're stretching your imagination, flexing your creativity, or moving to the music, at Hermitage Richmond, you'll be able to live large while surrounded by love, laughter, friends, and fun.



GET STARTED LIVING TODAY

VISIT US [hermitagerichmond.org](http://hermitagerichmond.org) | OR CALL 804-531-6471



## STIR CRAZY CAFÉ

4015 MacArthur Avenue  
Richmond, VA

**We are now open for  
dine-in service**

Open 7 days a week from  
7:30am to 3:00pm!

Baked goods (muffins, scones, cookies!)  
now available for purchase online!

ORDER ONLINE at [StirCrazyRVA.com](http://StirCrazyRVA.com)

Delivery now available exclusively  
through LoCo - a locally owned delivery  
co-op! Order via our website or  
download the LoCo app

[locorichmond.coop](http://locorichmond.coop)



Please stay safe and healthy! We will  
continue to keep you posted with all the  
newest info here and on our Facebook  
and Instagram!

Be safe, be kind, and we look forward  
to serving you!

**804 864 0264**

**[StirCrazyCafeRVA.com](http://StirCrazyCafeRVA.com)**

[facebook/stircrazyrva](https://facebook.com/stircrazyrva)  
[instagram/stircrazyrva](https://instagram.com/stircrazyrva)

## ZONING

# Primary Resident Requirements And Short Term Rentals

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**A** LOT OF RICHMONDER-  
were surprised that  
the Planning Com-  
mission is consider-  
ing changes to the  
Primary Resident Re-  
quirements (PRRs)  
on Short Term Rent-  
als (STRs). After all, if it ain't broken  
why fix it. Northside civic associa-  
tions oppose changes to the zoning  
ordinance.

"We see the principal residence re-  
quirement as the best safeguard  
against hundreds and potentially  
thousands of housing units no  
longer being available to renters  
and homeowners in our residential  
neighborhoods," Tim Pfolh, Belle-  
vue Civic Association president,  
wrote. "We see the SUP (special use  
permit) process as a viable recourse  
for those STR operators wishing to  
operate on R (residential)-zoned  
property that is not their principal  
residence. We urge you to vote to  
include the PRR in R-zones, to pre-  
serve future housing opportunities  
in our neighborhoods."

A local realtor penned the following:  
"Removing the PRR will encourage  
investors to buy in our communi-  
ties to operate STRs purely for profit.  
This will have profound impacts  
on our neighborhoods, and on the  
availability and affordability of hous-  
ing across the City."



On behalf of the Ginter Park Resi-  
dents Association, Stephen Weisen-  
sale wrote this in an email to City  
Council and the Planning Commis-  
sion: "I wish to express our support  
for requiring the principal residence  
requirement (PRR) in the proposed  
revised regulations affecting op-  
erators of short term rentals in all R-  
zoned neighborhoods in the City of  
Richmond."

Like many others Stephen was  
somewhat taken aback that the  
Planning Commission at its August  
21 meeting had asked Planning Staff  
to explore options other than the  
PRR for STRs.

"This came as a significant surprise  
to us, since the City's own extensive  
engagement for over more than a  
year showed overwhelming support  
for retaining the PRR," he wrote.  
"Removing the PRR would mean  
STRs can be owned and operated  
by investors. We have been in con-  
tact with other nearby neighbor-  
hood leaders including Bellevue,  
Sherwood Park, the Fan District,  
Rosedale, and other associations."

He added: "As you know, Mayor  
Levar Stoney recently declared an  
affordable housing crisis in Rich-  
mond, as the price of housing (both  
owner occupied and rental) contin-  
ues to rise faster than our residents  
wages due to a combination of lim-  
ited supply and high demand. In  
many cities, the lack of a PRR has  
allowed property investors, many  
of which were not local, to buy large  
numbers of for sale homes, and use  
them as short term rental invest-  
ment opportunities. This will impact  
the availability and affordability of  
housing in our communities, as in-  
vestors out-bid homeowners for real  
estate. This pattern only serves to  
exacerbate the shortage of affordable  
long term rental and for sale units."

Stephen, who is a senior associate  
and architect with Commonwealth  
Architects, concluded the email with  
these words: "Like many other as-

sociations here in Richmond, we  
see the principal residence require-  
ment and stepped up enforcement  
of STR regulations as the best avail-  
able safeguards against hundreds  
and potentially thousands of hous-  
ing units becoming unavailable to  
renters and homeowners in our resi-  
dential neighborhoods. For those  
STR operators wishing to operate  
on R-zoned property that is not their  
principal residence there are other  
available methods including Special  
Use Permits, which will allow Plan-  
ning to control the over-saturation  
of STRs in various neighborhoods.  
We therefore urge you to vote to re-  
quire the PRR in all R-zones to pre-  
serve current and encourage future  
long-term housing opportunities in  
our neighborhoods."

Second District Councilwoman  
Katherine Jordan recently wrote this  
about proposed zoning changes:  
"I strongly believe that this is a step  
backwards... the primary residency  
requirement helps limit speculative  
purchasing of long term housing,  
and mitigates the impacts of short  
term rentals on our housing afford-  
ability crisis. Support for maintaining  
the requirement was overwhelm-  
ing in the public feedback received  
over the past year of engagement on  
the three big proposed zoning ordi-  
nances."

But Ann-Frances Lambert, who  
represents the bulk of Northside,  
had a different take. Speaking at a  
recent Planning Commission meet-  
ing, here's what she had to say: "Not  
only am I the Third District Council  
representative, I'm also a business  
owner, I'm a land owner, property  
owner, also Airbnb host in a com-  
mercial building. I ask you guys that  
we can have some more time to re-  
ally look at this STR proposal. The  
simple fact is that like some folks  
have said there's some answers we  
don't have. Especially on how we  
operate this STR, especially full-time  
STR operators."


"I do not agree that this is taking  
away from the housing stock. I be-  
lieve that it is helping the housing  
stock," she went on to say. **■**

BOB KOCHER REQUESTED THAT THIS AD APPEAR UPSIDE DOWN

4009 MACARTHUR AVENUE  
CALL 804 726 9463

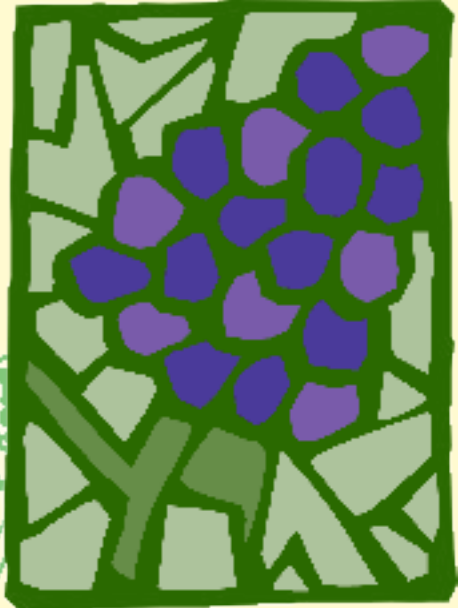
WEEKLY! THANK YOU FOR VOTING FOR US!  
WE WERE VOTED AS THE BEST WINE AND BEER STORE BY  
THEIR PATIENCE  
WE THANK ALL OF OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR LOYALTY AND

TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR GERMAN CLUB OKTOBERFEST  
AT RIR CASH OR CHECK ONLY



OKTOBERFEST AND PUMPKIN BEERS ARE HERE!  
JOIN US FOR WINE AND BEER TASTINGS  
EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT FROM 5PM-8PM  
SUNDAY-THURSDAY, NOON-7PM  
FRIDAY, NOON-10PM SATURDAY, NOON-9PM

Once Upon a Vine



# MEGAN SLAY

## THE MYSTERY OF MUSIC

### MUSIC FLOWED THROUGH THE HOUSE FOR AS LONG AS SHE COULD REMEMBER.

Sometimes it fell gently as a spring rain, and other times it pelted the very air with a soaking downpour, accented with thunder. Every cell of her being had been informed by these sounds since she was an infant. As she grew older, Megan Slay would often watch her mother's fingers move across the keys, fingers with a secret knowledge of every note they could coax from this grand piano. And then her mother would raise her head and begin to sing along with the music, and sometimes this would bring tears to Megan's eyes, and she began to understand the meaning of each syllable of this transcendent language called music.



A very young Megan Slay at the keyboard.



Grand Piano Celebration, Center for the Arts, George Mason University.

"When I heard Mozart's 'Requiem' for the first time, it made me cry," Megan Slay tells me. "I think I was around eight years old. It had a profound effect on me."

Megan grew up in the big white house on Hermitage Road, the one with the black shutters, and a pair of dormers on the third floor. She has two older brothers—Patrick and Andrew. Her father Joe, a partner at the Martin Agency for many years, was on the team that developed the award-winning tourism slogan Virginia Is For Lovers. And Megan's mother, Martha, possesses the voice of an emphatic angel, and as a mezzo-soprano has performed in operas from Cincinnati to New York, from Wolf Trap to the Carpenter Center (since renamed). Although voice was her passion, Martha was also an accomplished pianist.

Virtually every day Martha would practice, and the house would ring with music. Megan would often join her mother on the piano bench, and watch her fingers tickling the ivories and tapping the ebonies. Martha began teaching her daughter piano when the girl was just six years old. "She just worked me through those beginner skills and I kept going," Megan tells me. "Richmond is just a great place to grow up if you are into arts and music. It's everywhere." Like many a Richmonder, Megan grew up with the seasonal tradition of at-

tending the annual performance of The Nutcracker. "That music to me is still some of the most beautiful music I know," says Megan.

Along with her brothers, she attended Collegiate, and through those years wherever she went Megan carried her Sony Walkman with headphones clapped to her ears, and she would listen. "I would listen to any kind of music growing up," she says. "But Mozart was definitely my go to."

And one of the very first songs Megan learned to play on the piano was Mozart's Turkish March. "I just loved playing," she says. "It was a kind of escape for me when I was little, but I did have a lot of encouragement from my parents to play, classical stuff like Chopin."

After finishing high school, Megan attended Virginia Commonwealth University where she would earn a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance. It was there she encountered a very important influence, an instructor named Ruta Smedina-Starke. "She came from Latvia and studied here, and she really pushed me to the limits," she remembers. "The education at VCU I got was just really life-changing. It challenged me in a lot of ways. The faculty provided good experiences to their students and they are focused in what they ask of you. And that was the start of performing for me."

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**  
photos by **REBECCA D'ANGELO**

Megan performed solo programs all over town. "I always loved performing at retirement communities in the area," she says. Among them were Imperial Plaza and Hermitage Richmond.

After graduation from VCU, Megan applied to the master's program in music at George Mason University. She auditioned for and had trial lessons with Dr. Linda Apple Monson, the director of the school of music and the piano department there.

"We just clicked," Megan says. "I liked her teaching style, which was very enthusiastic. She always said to us, 'Make it happen, make it happen.'"

Megan received a generous scholarship and would soon become friends with a man who was something of a legend. He was a founding member of one of the largest engineering firms in the country, and was extremely generous with his wealth. In his mid-seventies he began taking piano lessons at George Mason and was appalled by the in-



Harris Theatre, DMA recital, George Mason University, June 2023.

## NORTHSIDE'S NEWEST OLD SCHOOL DINER

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Monday through Saturday, 8am till 3 pm

Sunday, 8am till 2pm

Daily Specials  
Daily Soups



Breakfast Served Till 11am,  
Monday through Friday  
And All Day on Sundays

3336 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard  
Richmond VA 23230  
804-358-0064

<https://www.brickhousediner.com/>



struments being used in the classrooms and studios. “We can’t be having uprights, we need real pianos here for the students,” Sid said. So he stroked a big check and replaced every single upright with a brand new Steinway and overnight the School of Music became an all-Steinway school, a prestigious title.

His name was Sydney “Sid” Dewberry and he passed away last summer at the age of ninety-five. George Mason’s music school is called The Reva and Sid Dewberry Family School of Music.

As with Dr. Monson, Megan struck up an immediate rapport with Sid Dewberry. Turns out Sid was from Gretna, just a hop and a skip from Chatham, where Megan’s grandmother grew up. “So he loved that and we clicked on that,” says Megan. “We would even correspond, and I miss him because he was like a grandfather to me. It was an interesting friendship. He’s the reason I went there because of the funding he provided. He developed those

scholarships that helped me and many others with our music education.”

The program that Dr. Monson created at Mason challenges the students. “We played at different venues,” Megan says. “We did chamber music.” She recalls her performance of Charles Gounod’s “Faust Waltz”, a very complicated piece. “It’s an eight-hand arrangement; so two pianos and two people on both pianos. It’s a lot to coordinate.”

After receiving her masters, Megan began working on her Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance at Mason, which she should complete this spring. As part of that program, and to defray costs, Megan has taught keyboard skills as well as music appreciation to freshmen in the school’s bachelor’s program. All the while she has been performing and honing her skills, and to great effect. She has won award after award in piano competitions. Just this past summer she won the Bronze in the piano solo category of the Carles and Sophia



Megan playing Ravel’s “Scarbo” from Gaspard de La Nuit, which features hand crossings of repeated notes and the broad range of the piano.

International Piano Competition; the Silver in the Glory International Competition; and the Platinum in the Franz Schubert International Music Competition.

After listening to several of her performances on line I was absolutely stunned by the precision of her work on the keyboard: It is flawless. This sort of expertise requires a lot of hard work, and just the right amount of encouragement. “My mom was obviously a very big mentor, because she always encouraged me to practice, and she taught me originally,” says Megan. And my piano teachers have always been more than piano teachers, they’ve been life mentors.” She mentions her very first piano teacher, Ann Davis. And then Ruta Smedina-Stärke, Dr. Linda Apple Monson, and Magdalena Adamek, an assistant professor of Collaborative Piano Megan studied under at VCU.

“I’m thankful to the people who pushed me,” Megan says. “You have to prepare. That’s a big part of music. Be there and work hard and try your best. Practice every day.” For Megan that’s often four hours a day, depending on what she’s preparing for. But too much practice is not a good thing. “Time away is equally important,” she says. “It’s more important to expose yourself to life. I’ve learned that, finding that bal-

ance. Just be a human being, not a robot. Music is about expression and sharing something with others, and if you can’t identify with others you can’t share with them.”

Megan considers some of her favorite composers. “I love French music,” she says. “You can’t put your finger on the emotion it evokes because it’s more of an impressionistic sound. That’s why I’m a huge fan of Ravel and Debussy. Gaspard de la nuit was one of the hardest pieces I ever worked on. It is an amazing sound.” She also listens to a fair amount of jazz and hip hop, and has grown very fond of the music of a lot of Latin music out of South America.

“I would like to live somewhere abroad, maybe Brazil, and have a chance to perform,” Megan says. “I’m really interested in the music of Brazil. I love samba and the rhythm of Brazil. I’m also very impressed with music coming out of Argentina.” She recently had the opportunity to perform Danzas of Argentinas by the late Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera. “This music was inspired by the Africans that lived in Argentina, and the native people living in rural parts of that country,” says Megan. “I love the driving rhythm. It’s in the accented six eight beat. It’s just really exciting music to me, it’s hot blood-

**DOT'S**  
**BACK INN**

4030 MACARTHUR AVENUE ★ 266-3167

Monday thru Wednesday 10 am to 10 pm  
Thursday thru Friday 10 am to 11 pm  
Saturday 9 am to 11 pm  
Sunday 9 am to 3 pm

NOW SERVING  
SUNDAY  
BRUNCH

**DEMI'S**  
MEDITERRANEAN KITCHEN

4017 MACARTHUR AVENUE  
RICHMOND, VA 23227

804 525 4576  
INFO@DEMISRVA.COM

TUESDAY-THURSDAY, 5PM-9PM  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY 5PM-10PM

**HERMITAGE RICHMOND**  
**INVITES YOU TO OUR**  
**Renaissance Faire**

**Saturday, October 7th**  
**12:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

**1600 WESTWOOD AVENUE**  
**ON THE FRONT LAWN**

**Live Performers**  
**Live Music & Dancing**  
**Food Trucks & Meadery**  
**Merchant Market**  
**Petting Zoo**  
**Face Painting & Fairy Hair**


**THIS IS A FREE FAMILY & PET FRIENDLY EVENT**

**PERIOD ATTIRE ENCOURAGED!**





ed. It's called bi-tonal you have the left hand coming in on all the black keys, and the right hand on the white keys." I watch Megan's hands wandering across an imaginary keyboard on the table top she sits before. "You're using both the black and the white simultaneously so it has that dissonance," she says. She feels more than a deep kinship with music, it is part of her and always new, and she relishes this. "I feel like it's a mystery of life itself,"

Megan Slay says. "And you're trying to dig to discover the treasure trove of answers. But you're never really done. I mean that's the thing that's interesting for me. Even for one single piece of music, there are a million angles and different feelings. One day you feel one way when you listen to a piece, and the next day it's another emotion altogether. It is a mystery." 

**W**  
**WILLARD PAINTING**  
From the Berkley Hotel  
to a Single Bedroom Wall  
47 YEARS EXPERIENCE  
No Job Is Too Big Or Too Small  
**743-8237**  
GREG WILLARD  
Licensed & Insured  
Quality Painting  
Guaranteed Results  
FREE ESTIMATES

**ART**

# Tilt and Sway At Eric Schindler

**N**EW PAINTINGS AND sculpture by Tracey St. Peter at the Eric Schindler Gallery from September 22 through October 21.

Of his work, the artist writes: "Utilizing the papier-mâché process, I create forms, with strips of paper from topical headlines and stories, clipped from pages of the New York Times. The flimsy strips of newsprint become structure though repeated layering. Further in the process, these forms are covered in encaustic wax, smoothing and sealing the surface, preserving these objects, as if in amber.

"The core materials in use here are discarded, and organic. These sculptures are an intervention that gives these materials a second life and purpose. Mirrors and rhinestones serve to both attract and reflect, light and color, beyond the pieces, in a dazzling display that changes with the external light. Mirrors place the viewer in the work, no longer a safe passive observer, you are implicated. We are all implicated."



Cy Twombly

**Eric Schindler Gallery**

2305 East Broad St, Richmond, VA

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

[ericsschindlergallery@gmail.com](mailto:ericsschindlergallery@gmail.com)

(804)644-5005

Hours Wednesday through Saturday,  
Noon till 5

**CY TWOMBLY**

**AT THE VMFA**


The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts proudly presents Cy Twombly, Morocco, 1952/1953. Currently its only US venue, VMFA brings the exhibition to Virginia from the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Marrakech, where it premiered in February 2023. This pioneering exhibition charts the early pilgrimage of one of the most influential figures in 20th-century American art. Cy Twombly, Morocco, 1952/1953 captures the artist's enduring and style-defining fascination with archaeology and the historic landscapes of Morocco through the pages of his sketchbooks, photographs, and two paintings. Archival



New sculpture by Tracey St. Peter.

materials from VMFA's Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library add depth, contextualizing the artist's travels and interest in North Africa and the broader Mediterranean region. Its incarnation in Richmond will include a rarely exhibited painting lent exclusively to VMFA by the artist's son, brought directly from his residence in Italy.

This exhibition is a homecoming of sorts and a by-product of VMFA's Visual Arts Fellowship Program. Since its establishment in 1940, the program has fostered the creative talents of Virginia's finest and most promising artists. One such recipient was a young Cy Twombly, a native of Lexington, Virginia, who received funding in the fall of 1952 from a VMFA Fellowship, which he used to support his travels.

Exhibit runs through January 7. 

**VMFA**

200 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard

Richmond, VA 23220

(804) 340-1400

**MAIN STREET LAW**

**John G LaFratta**

**Criminal Law  
Traffic Violations  
Estate Planning  
Family Law**

**EDUCATION:**

University of Richmond,  
TC Williams School of Law, JD  
University of Richmond, Robins  
School of Business, MBA  
North Carolina State  
University, BA

**PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS AND  
MEMBERSHIPS:**

Richmond Criminal Bar  
Association  
Virginia Bar Association  
Richmond Juvenile Bar  
Association  
Caroline County Bar  
Association

[john@mainstlaw.com](mailto:john@mainstlaw.com)

**804.355.1800**

## AXSELLE AUTO SERVICE

FAMILY OWNED AND  
OPERATED FOR 73 YEARS

*Fair Price,  
Done Right,  
On Time*

**YOUR FULL SERVICE  
NEIGHBORHOOD AUTO  
SERVICE CENTER**


MONDAY-FRIDAY 7-5:30

5519 LAKESIDE AVENUE  
RICHMOND, VA 23228

**266-3574**

AUTOSERVICERICHMOND.COM

**Pet Sitting  
Services**   
**DONNA DUFFIELD**  
**(804) 397-6720**  
*Loving Care where your  
pet is most comfortable-  
their own home!*

**BERRY'S  
PRODUCE**  
  
*Hanover's Best  
Homegrown*  
Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers  
*plus*  
Dutch Kettle & McCutcheons  
Jams, Jellies and Pickles  
Montana Gold Breads  
9592 Chamberlayne Road  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
**569-9005**  
10-7 everyday

**ELLIE'S**  
  
**HOT DOGS & ICE CREAM**  
**YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD HOT DOG AND ICE CREAM SHOP**  
**MONDAY-THURSDAY 11:30AM-8PM**  
**FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11:30AM-9PM**  
**SUNDAY 12PM-6PM**  
Here at Ellie's Hot Dogs & Ice Cream, we don't take any shortcuts when it comes to your food and our service. That's why we're able to offer our customers high-quality food on-the-go at reasonable prices. Satisfy your taste buds with a wide selection of hotdog toppings, and gratify your sweet tooth.  
**3312 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard**  
**Richmond, VA 23230, USA**  
**(804)502-2024**  
**brandon@elliesrva.com**

# PopLife To Your Good Health

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

**D**R. A. J. SOUCY operated a successful OBGYN practice for many years in upstate New York, but sensed something was missing from the allopathic approach she was trained in. One of the benefits of working in the OBGYN field is that the doctor gets to know her patients very well over the course of a lifetime.

“One of the great things about OBGYN is the continuity,” A.J. tells me. “So once women are done with their child-bearing years, you get to see them every year for their annual exam, and you get these long-term relationships going, and that’s when you really get to know people.”

Over the years, A.J. noticed certain health risks that many women experience as they age. “Something that always bothered me when I was practicing in New York was that my patients would come back for their annual exams generally a little bigger and a little sicker every year,” says A.J. “It is a generalization, but it is definitely the rule not the exception. It’s very, very common. They gain some weight, they tell me about their pre-diabetes, and their blood pressure the doctor (primary care physician) is watching.”

And things can get worse with the passage of time. “A couple years later they’re even heavier and dealing with chronic illnesses,” A.J. says. “And they’re getting more and more depressed. I felt helpless to help people. Here’s the kicker: not only was I not helping these people, but I was getting bigger and bigger myself.”

A few years back, A.J. decided to close her practice in upstate New York, and begin something com-

pletely different. “I faced a crossroads in my career where I wanted to make this change,” she says. “I began to look at other fields and I came across the concept of functional medicine where they purport to have an answer for common chronic illnesses.”

The more she learned, the more excited she became, yet she still had reservations. “I started taking classes, but I was skeptical of the whole thing because these people were talking about curing chronic illnesses, not just managing them,” A.J. recalls. “And they’re very, very focused on nutrition and lifestyle which was different than anything I have ever been taught, or what I was used to. Plus, I was shocked that I didn’t know anything about this whole deal.”

The deeper she delved into this new discipline the more she began to understand it was all based on sound science. “And so my skepticism went away,” says A.J.

When she applied these newly acquired methods to her patients, she was pleasantly surprised. “I saw patients getting well, over and over, which is a reverse of what I used to see practicing traditional medicine,” A.J. says. “So now I’m not skeptical and I understand the root causes of some illnesses, and what we do about them.”

Days after Covid shut the world down, A.J. and her husband moved to Richmond, and she slowly began to open up her practice on Staples Mill Road. She was learning new skills and began working with partners. “I have health coaches and I put people through a curriculum where they’re learning,” she says. “Traditional docs also coach lifestyle as part of the standard of care for early hypertension and diabetes, but



Dr. A. J. Soucy

as a traditional doc you don’t expect your patients to actually make those changes. In the alternative world we really, really focus on it, and flesh it out and show you how to do it.”

Along with lifestyle changes, PopLife also addresses hormone balancing. “After the peak of physical life, we start getting deficiencies and imbalances which can also be the basis of chronic illness, and we need those hormones whether we have symptoms or not,” says A. J.

Her patients tend to already have an understanding of what they need to do to become healthier. “When anybody is motivated to fix things,

they’re a lot more compliant,” Dr. A.J. Soucy says. “So usually people who seek out a doctor like me for help are ready to accept lifestyle changes and take supplements and listen more carefully.”

*PopLife Balancing and Wellness LLC*

5606 Staples Mill Road

Henrico, VA 23228

(804)525-5039

poplifebalancingandwellness.com

Established 1959

Fin & Feather Pet Center, Inc.

www.fin-feather.com

**Open Seven Days a Week**

**5208 LAKESIDE AVE**  
Convenient to I-64,  
Powhite & I-95 interchange  
Just off Exit 80, across  
from Franco's

**262-6681**

Est. 1959

---

**Pond Center Open Year Round**

**ALL PONDS AND POND SUPPLIES \$50 OFF**

\$50 OFF any purchase of \$300 or more  
\$25 OFF any purchase of \$199 to \$299.99

**Hikari PONDMASTER MICROBE-LIFT Tetra PondMAX**

For use in Pond Center only. Not valid with any other discounts, with other coupons, discounts, sale items, cat litter and dog or cat food. Expires 10/14/23

**FREE TROPICAL FISH**

Buy One at Regular Price, Get One of Equal or Lesser Value Free

Limit \$5.99 value. Not valid with sale items, other coupons or discounts. Expires 10/14/23

---

**\$8 OFF GROOMING**

**THE BARKING LOT**  
at Fin & Feather

**262-1801 New Customers Only**

With coupons only. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 10/14/23

**15% OFF REPTILE SUPPLIES**  
With Purchase Of A Reptile

Not valid with sale items, other coupons or discounts. Expires 10/14/23

---

**DOG & CAT FOOD**

**Natural Balance Earthborn CANIDAE PRO PAC**

**\$2.00 OFF** DOG OR CAT FOOD up to 8 lbs  
**\$3.00 OFF** DOG OR CAT FOOD 12 to 25 lbs  
**\$5.00 OFF** DOG OR CAT FOOD 26 lbs or more

Valid for Precise, Earthborn, Natural Balance and Iams brands, only. Not valid with sale items, other coupons or discounts. Expires 10/14/23

**Save on Pet Supplies \$10 OFF**

**\$10 OFF** any purchase of \$60 or more  
**\$5 OFF** any purchase of \$35 to \$59.99  
**\$2 OFF** any purchase of \$15 to \$34.99

Not valid with sale items, other coupons or discounts, cat litter, dog or cat food. Not valid on Frontline or Advantage. Expires 10/14/23

# Nina Kilian Peace In the Name of Justice

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN, originally published 1997

*Nina K. Peace was a force of nature and a brilliant litigator and judge who was crucified by a gang of petty men in Virginia's General Assembly. Seven years after this story appeared, Nina died suddenly and Hanover has never been quite the same.*

**W**E WALK INTO a place on 301 within throwing distance of the courthouse that's part general store and part antique dealer and part deli. Nina picks up a bag of Fritos from a wire rack, pulls a diet Coke from a glass-fronted refrigerator then orders her regular, an Elsa Gray sandwich, named from the clerk of juvenile court. We sit on stools before a small round table surrounded by antiques.

First and foremost Nina is an advocate. She goes to bat for damned near anyone—abused spouses, children, the disadvantaged and the detritus of society who filter down through the cracks in life into a sort of limbo where they are crushed by the system, seldom able to get back to the light of day. For more than 20 years she's represented all these people in Hanover courts for reduced fees at best. A lot of her work has always been pro bono.

Nina's heart is in the practice of the law. She has compassion for those she represents and understands that all human beings are capable of doing wrong. "My philosophy is that most people are good, but capable of doing bad, there but for the grace of God go I," she says. "And that's why we should judge actions, not people. There is really only one judge of people. I honestly love people and believe that by helping others you help yourself."

Her beliefs in part were formed by her upbringing in Washington, D.C. Nina's mother, Katherine, was a social worker. Her father, Clifton Himmelsbach, was a physician. Her biological

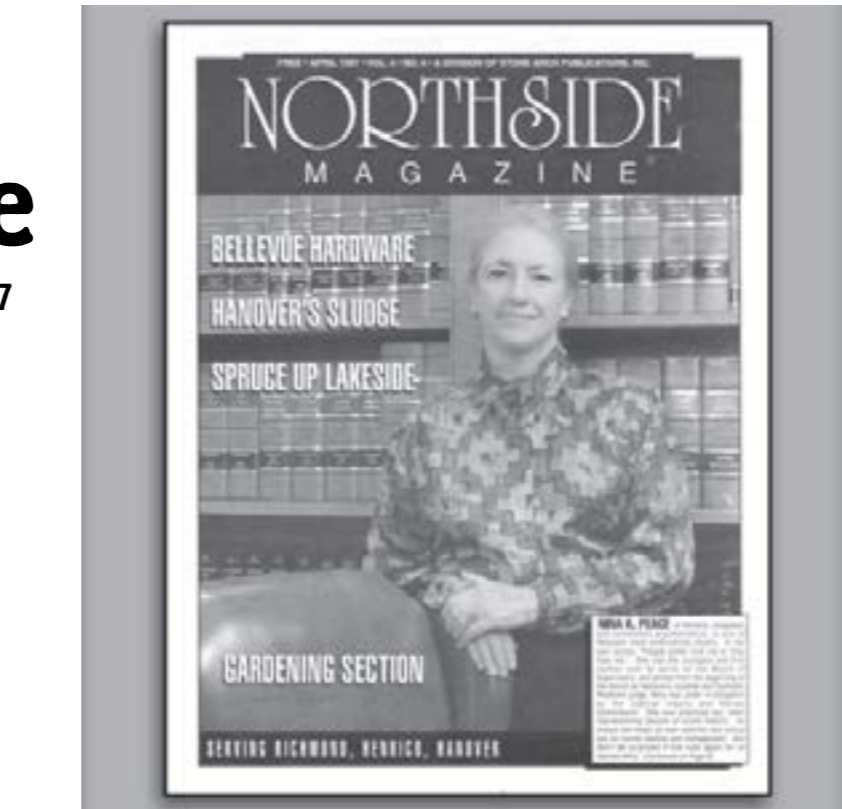
father, U.S. Army Colonel James Kilian, died when Nina was eight.

"I learned about tolerance and acceptance very early," she tells me as she sips from the can of diet Coke. "I attended public schools in an area that was very cosmopolitan. My mother always reminded me—and still does—that material things are not the end-all of life. I will say that Jesus Christ has been a very great influence on me. His teachings that our rewards are not received here, that bad things happen to good people, that forgiveness is a way of life."

After high school, Nina attended Goucher College where she studied to become a teacher. During her junior year, while she was doing a political science internship, a member of the General Assembly took Nina aside and said, "Why don't you become a lawyer working with kids instead of a teacher."

Nina went to law school at Georgetown for three semesters then enrolled at T.C. Williams at the University of Richmond. At the time she was married to a professor at Randolph Macon in Ashland. "The commute to D.C. was just too much," she tells me.

For Nina Peace, 1975 may well have been the most eventful year of her life. She took on more responsibility than anyone twice her age could, and Nina was just 25 years old. She graduated law school that year, and if that wasn't enough she won the Democratic primary for the Ashland District seat on the Hanover County Board of Supervisors. That same year she was made assistant to the dean at T.C. Williams. And then in the fall Nina became the youngest and only



woman ever elected to the Board of Supervisors in Hanover.

She had found her home in Ashland and absolutely adored the county and was bound and determined to protect it. As the only liberal, and a woman at that, on the good-old-boys board of supervisors, Nina had her work cut out for her. It was a joy to watch her debate, running circles around the men who often looked confused at the end of it all. She employed her acid wit and dagger tongue and gladly locked horns with fellow supervisors. Nina's voice always kept the board in check and it was a gray day when she stepped down. Actions of the board since have so favored development that it appears politicians, at least in Hanover, can be bought.

Nina, on the outside, is self-assured and confident, strong-willed and independent. "People see me as a strong woman," she says. "But being the strong one isn't always easy. I was dating this guy in college and he was dating someone else. So one day both of us showed up at his apartment and he said to me, 'Oh God, what's Beth going to say?' And I said, 'What's Beth going to say? What am I going to say?' As a strong person you always end up taking care of yourself."

Later, at her office on England Street, Nina sorts through stacks of file folders, looking for something. "I question everything," she says. "I can always see the speck in the apple and always want to get rid of it. Some people think that's a fault. I don't."

Carter Redd enters the office and he and Nina start planning ways Democrats might gain strength in Republican Hanover. "The staff is running the show," says Nina. She then characterizes the board of supervisors as puppets. I leave the two so they can sort out the county's problems.

The following Saturday at her home in Ashland, Nina grabs a diet Coke from the refrigerator and talks about some of her most important influences. She mentions Emion Smith, a former teacher and principal at Beavercreek Elementary School. "She was very smart and outspoken and she knew every kid and what their problems were," says Nina. "She would even stoke the school's furnace."

Then she invokes the father of our country. "George Washington knew who he was and he was not tempted by power," Nina says. "When the people wanted him to be king, he declined. He put his money where his mouth

was. He had his feet bleeding on the battlefield at Valley Forge. He risked everything, and if the Revolution had gone the other way, he would have had nothing. Lord Fairfax, when the Revolution began, said to Washington, 'I'm going home to England.' Washington said: 'I am home.' He was not afraid to fight."

This eve of Palm Sunday is one of those rare, early spring days when the sun shines strong and bright and the wind gusts with controlled fury. Everything is distinct and separate in the sunlight, even the distant redbuds on the high limbs of the trees that encircle Nina's back yard. Everything seems to be awakening and on fire with its own life, impatient to start the tour of life. This is burning sentience in every blade of emerald grass.

Nina tells me how certain parties manipulated the press and the system to oust her from the bench where she sat as Juvenile and Domestic Relations judge. Even friends betrayed her, sold her over, powerful men who feared a powerful woman out of their ignorance and insecurities.

All complaints lodged against Nina stemmed from lack of judicial demeanor. She was accused of eating M&Ms on the bench, allowing someone to drink a Coke in court. And, of course, for being outspoken.

"I got in trouble for being too me," she says. "Social services during one case told me they didn't know they could look into a mother's criminal file on child abuse. I couldn't believe it! I was good with the people who came before me. But I was hard on some of the staff when they didn't provide services properly. As a judge I had little tolerance for people who didn't do their job. I'm not in the least sorry that I was hard on social services. We're talking about peoples' lives here."

Nina strolls over to the fish pond that was installed last year and

tugs on one end of the tarp that covers it. Some of the stones that hold the tarp in place plunk into the water and drift in slow motion to the bottom. "I think some of the people who got rid of me on the bench hoped that I would leave the county," she says. "I'll never leave Hanover and I'll never not say what's on my mind. I'm the only person I know who attended her own funeral and lived to tell about it."

She quotes a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay. "Love is not all," Nina says. "It is not meat, nor drink, nor shelter from the storm. It can't cleanse the thickened lung. But yet even as we speak, men are dying from lack of love alone." The words fall from her mouth hard and real as stones.

As a cloud blocks out the sun and a shadow falls on the fish pond and the bloated lily pads and the wrinkled tarp, Nina recites from memory a portion of verse from one of her favorite poets—the Welshman Dylan Thomas. "Do not go gentle into that good night," says Nina Peace. "I don't want to die, but I'm not afraid of dying. You know, if there's nothing you're willing to die for, there's nothing to live for. Well, I have things I'd die for and I have a lot to live for."

She pulls the tarp away from the edge of the pond and slabs of rock spill out of it onto the ground. Some of the rocks slip into the pond. Nina folds the tarp and begins to stack the rocks on the edge of the pond. She kneels before the pond and thrusts both arms into the cold water until they're elbow deep. She searches the bottom without her eyes, using her fingers to seek out and claim a stone slab that she then brings up to the surface. Nina uses both hands to bring the stone up. It is a heavy stone. ☐

**Classic Touch Cleaning**

SERVING RICHMOND SINCE 1984

OLD ENOUGH TO TRUST, SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE

RESIDENTIAL CLEANING  
1229 Bellevue Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23227  
(804) 262-6979  
E-mail: [brenda@classictouchcleaning.com](mailto:brenda@classictouchcleaning.com)  
Website: [www.classictouchcleaning.com](http://www.classictouchcleaning.com)

**WILLARD PAINTING**

*From the Berkley Hotel to a Single Bedroom Wall*

47 YEARS EXPERIENCE

*No Job Is Too Big Or Too Small*

**743-8237**  
**GREG WILLARD**

Licensed & Insured  
Quality Painting  
Guaranteed Results

**FREE ESTIMATES**

**Ready for a NEW Beginning?**  
Call Rebecca




**Rebecca D'Angelo**  
REALTOR®

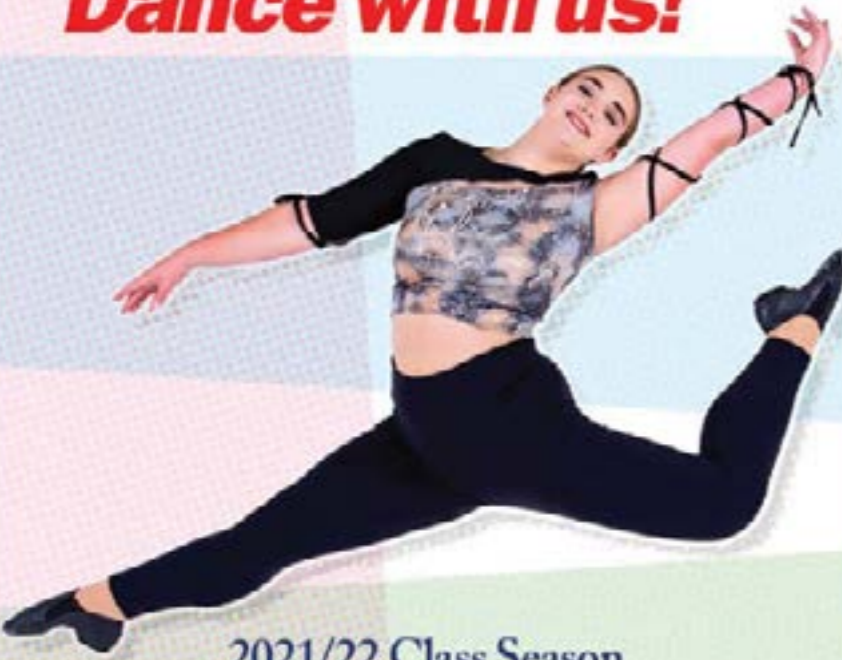
Creating Community  
One Home At A Time  
**804 874 9709**  
Virginia Capital Realty  
1106 N Thompson Street  
Richmond Virginia 23230



Instagram Facebook dangelorVArealtor

LICENSED IN VIRGINIA

**Dance with us!**



**2021/22 Class Season**  
Covid 19 prices

"Nutcracker" opportunities,  
ballet, pointe, jazz, variations, lyrical, contemporary,  
conditioning, creative movement, belly dance, tap

Scott Boyer | Lindsay Rhyne Hudson | Lucy Smith

**Diane Hale School of Dance** joins  
**Scott Boyer Teaches Dance**

Let us send you more information, class schedules, and prices  
call: 804 264 6725 | email: scottboyerteachesdance@yahoo.com

**BOOK REVIEW**

# Finding Joy On Spaceship Earth

by **FRAN WITHROW**

**M**OST OF US FOCUS on the everyday things of life: fixing meals, getting kids off to school, going to work. The yard needs to be mowed, we have to buy groceries, the next door neighbor is annoying, and the laundry never gets caught up.

If we do stop to take a breath, it is only to read emails, scroll through social media, and peruse the never-ending dismal news about climate change and politics. There is grief everywhere.

But "the broken world is a yearning world," writes Marjolijn van Heemstra, who was knee deep in this kind of life herself. She was living with her fiancé and two children during a heat wave in the Netherlands when she found a photo of earth taken by the Hubble telescope. This photo introduced her to the overview effect: a way of looking at the world as astronauts do, which in turn led to her lovely book, "In Light-Years There's No Hurry."

As astronauts view earth from afar, many of them realize how beautiful and how vulnerable it is. That love follows them back home and imbues them with the desire to protect and care for this planet. Seeing ourselves on a "colorful, compact ship through space" can help us change the narrative about what is important and how we can live lives of joy and meaning.

The overview effect allows us to see how connected we all are; how there is more that unites us than divides us. We are all together on this little planet, hurtling through space, but most of us are oblivious to the big picture because we can't see earth from afar.

So how can we non-astronauts experience the overview effect? Van Heemstra says that looking at the night sky can help us realize how vast and awe-inspiring the universe is. Light pollution means most of us can't see enough stars to experience the overview effect, but there are alternatives, like the moon.

The moon is full of magic, but van Heemstra realizes that it may eventually become the object of a turf war as countries try to claim parts of it for themselves. This leads her to talk with experts about Mars exploration, the search for extraterrestrial life, and galaxies and planets that are light-years away. She realizes that the further we zoom out from this planet, the deeper our connections with it become.

Van Heemstra responds to all this in part by organizing a Night Watch, so her neighbors can come together to walk at night and experience darkness (and therefore space) in novel ways. The beauty of darkness encourages them to work to reduce light pollution, to search for stars and constellations, and to experience with gratitude the joy of being in this world. To find connections where there were none before. To explore the idea that in light-years, there's no hurry. And to feel deep awe for this planet that sustains us, that we so easily take for granted, that is just waiting for us to wake up and take notice. **NB**

*"In Light-Years There's No Hurry: Cosmic Perspectives on Everyday Life."*

By *Marjolijn van Heemstra*

\$26.00

W.W. Norton & Company

192 pages



**VIRGINIA GROWN**  
LAKESIDE

**FARMERS' MARKET**

**Open Year Round**

More Info at [www.LakesideFarmersMarket.net](http://www.LakesideFarmersMarket.net)

**WELCOME TO THE FIFTEENTH SEASON AT LAKESIDE TOWNE CENTER**  
**6110 LAKESIDE AVENUE | HENRICO/RICHMOND VA 23228**


**OFFERING FARM RAISED PRODUCTS, BAKED GOODS, FRESH SEAFOOD, AND PLANTS AND FLOWERS**

**YEAR ROUND FARMERS' MARKET**

**THE FARMERS' MARKET WILL BE OPEN SATURDAY MORNINGS AND WEDNESDAYS. FOR MARKET HOURS VISIT US ON FACEBOOK.**



**QUICK AND EASY**  
**FREE PARKING FOR CARS AND BICYCLES—ALL ON A FLAT SURFACE AND VERY HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE**

Visit us on **FACEBOOK** for the latest seasonal hours 



A beautiful time to update your kitchen with GE Profile rebates up to \$2000.



Update with smart technology.  
GE Profile Rebates up to \$2000 on packages.  
From the latest Appliances to Parts and Service,  
Beautiful Virginia homes are created at  
Appliances on Lakeside.

5418 Lakeside Ave, Richmond 23228 • AppliancesOnLakeside.com • (804) 266-7621



No. 1 for Appliances in Virginia