VIRGINIA BEACH EDITION

VIRGINIA CONNECTOR

Sharon SMITH

VIRGINIA FLOORS: LEADING A LEGACY

PROJECT ANACONDA

KARA WALKER AT THE MOCA

FIGHTING WORDS

NATURAL ARTIST

NORTH END
VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 5

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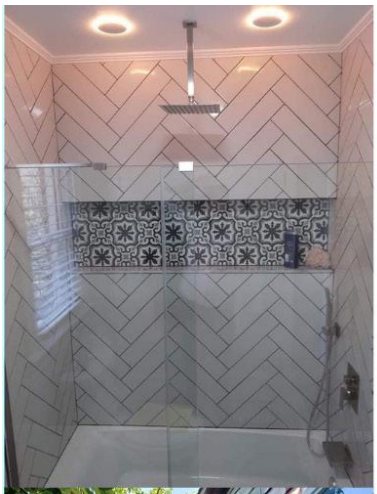

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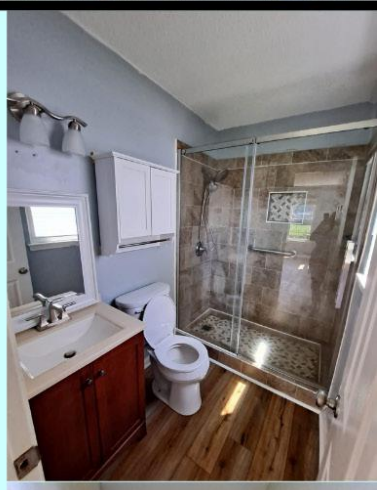

Editor's Note

May has arrived in Virginia Beach and we are setting our sights on our favorite season - Summer! With Spring reaching its peak and Summer rolling in at the end of the month, our coastal city is coming alive in celebration of our favorite time of year. With so many fun activities, events and shows- how could one sit home?

This month's cover story is about Sharon Smith and her journey to success. Sharon was kind enough to take the time to share with us how she has remained successful with her six flooring stores since 1978! Congratulations Sharon, looking forward to many more years!

We have also included some AMAZING local highlights. Project ANACONDA -a local organization that supports spouses of our fallen heroes, Mr. Barry-RET Navy Captain and one of his stories on how we remain free today. Get to know Tessa -one of our favorite local muralists who is offering summer camp for young artist, Jake Maines- host to one of the best networking events in the 757, Pet Safety- watch out for those spiders! Fighting words and respect to our fallen heroes....so much fun and love here in Virginia Beach- we simply do not have enough space or time each month to share it all.

I would like to personally thank all our contributors this month. Lots of extra work went into making sure we are keeping Virginia Beach up to date with the latest and best there is to be apart of. Please be sure to keep your stories, events and suggestions coming our way for future issues, please email to: Office@ConnectorMagazines.com

Virginia is for Lovers!

Michelle

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

ON OUR COVER

Sharon Smith. Photo by Ramone Photography

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Appreciating Appreciation

Kara Walker (American, b. 1969). *Snared*, edition PP 3/4, 2013. Lithograph on paper, 11.25 x 8.5 in. (28.5 x 21.5 cm). Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation, 2020.500. © Kara Walker

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Natural Artist

Summer Camp Hosted by Local Artist Teaching Teens to Paint Their Own Mural

TESSA HALL DUQUETTE IS A WHIMSICAL MURALIST and studio space owner based in the heart of Virginia Beach's ViBe Creative District. Tessa has an art degree from The University of Vermont, and her artistic skills shine every time she transforms a wall with vibrant colors and her love for creativity.

Tessa's murals are well-known for their connection with nature and for featuring objects that people of all ages can easily recognize. You can find her absolutely beaming while she paints shells, animals, leaves, flowers, and anything that captures the essence of beach life.

But murals are just a drop in the paint bucket. When Tessa's not working on a painting, she can be found tie-dyeing and crafting with her three young boys. Before completing her first mural in the 2022 ViBe Mural Fest, she created "Search & Find Adventure" scavenger hunts for kids and commissioned custom illustrations of cherished homes and pets.

This summer, Tessa is teaching an art camp for teens who want to learn how to paint their very own mural. They'll learn exactly what goes into planning and installing large-scale art commissions and get hands-on experience with expert guidance from start to finish. You can learn more and register your teenager at TessaHallDesigns.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Tessa's 100 foot black & white floral mural at The Garage Event Studio, Virginia Beach; Tessa at the end of painting her first Mural; Baja Coffee Co. mural, Virginia Beach; Tessa working on her first mural at the 5th Annual ViBE Mural Fest, August 2022; 40 foot beach grass mural at a Private Residence, North End, Virginia Beach; Tessa in action, painting a window mural for Gypsy Soul Boutique, Virginia Beach.

Tessa Travels

KARA WALKER AT THE MOCA

Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art Spring Exhibition Suite

The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (Virginia MOCA) presents *Kara Walker: Cut to the Quick, From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation*, a career-spanning exhibition that draws critical attention to the painful legacies of slavery, imperialism, and sexism. Presented in conjunction with *LaToya M. Hobbs: Flourish* and an artist residency program and exhibition featuring Amber Pierce, Poetry Jackson, and Nadd Harvin, *Kara Walker: Cut to the Quick* is on view in Virginia MOCA's main galleries through June 11, 2023.

A leading artist of her generation and MacArthur genius grant recipient, Kara Walker (b. 1969) mines history to deliver stirring commentary on contemporary power structures. Rendered in sharply contrasting shades of black, white, and gray, her complex and unapologetic images span a diverse range of media, including drawings, prints, sculpture, film, and the large-scale cut-paper silhouettes for which the artist is most widely recognized.

Kara Walker: Cut to the Quick originated at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, where then executive director and CEO Dr. Susan H. Edwards collaborated with poet Ciona Rouse to curate an exhibition that asks viewers to look deeper at, and not away from, the U.S. history of slavery. After its debut at the Frist, the exhibition traveled to the Cincinnati Art Museum and MOCA Jacksonville and will conclude its tour at the University of Southern California Fisher Museum of Art in Los Angeles, California, after the Virginia MOCA presentation.

At Virginia MOCA, the exhibition is again guest curated by Rouse, along with Virginia MOCA site curator Heather Hakimzadeh, in a presentation that pairs Walker's work with selections of poetry written by Rouse for the show's initial presentation at the Frist.

"Walker's work rarely shows to this extent in the South," said Rouse, "so I respect the significance of this exhibition making its way here to Virginia in this region where we recognize the systemic origins of chattel slavery in 1619 on the stolen land Tsenacommacah, and where we also recognize Emancipation Oak as the first place Black Americans learned about their freedom. In this land, the exhibition truly becomes part memorial, part mirror, and, hopefully, large part motivator to create another way forward."

"With the presentation of the art of Kara Walker, Virginia MOCA strives to give our community space to make connections past and present, abstract and concrete connections that can serve to expand our view of both human suffering and human capability," said Hakimzadeh. "Hampton Roads and the greater Commonwealth played a pivotal role in the nation's history and relationship with slavery. The Museum will serve as a site for dialogue about this history and relationship, as well as their continued impact."

Uniting over 80 works created between 1994 and 2019, *Kara Walker: Cut to the Quick* is drawn entirely from the collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation premier collectors of works on paper with extensive holdings of prints and multiples by postwar and contemporary Black, Indigenous, and artists of color.

"Kara Walker is one of the most important artists of our time from the simple cutouts, like frontier homes had on each side of their fireplaces, to the intricate figurines and videos, Kara Walker's art forces us to deal with issues of racism, stereotypes, and gender inequality," said Schnitzer. "I first saw her art in 1994 and instantly was drawn to the power of her artistic voice. We have exhibited her work in solo exhibitions at 14 museums nationwide. We have also included her art in over 30 other group exhibitions. I hope all of you are impacted as I was that moment when I first saw her work, as I still am today!"

Cut to the Quick is complemented by the concurrent exhibition *LaToya M. Hobbs: Flourish*, a solo presentation of the Baltimore-based artist's monumental mixed media relief carvings. Shot through with themes related to womanhood, motherhood, and legacy, Hobbs's textured woodcut panels celebrate the women of her community, etching their faces and figures in a manner reminiscent of traditional historical portraiture.

Also on display, *Atrium Artists in Residence: Amber Pierce, Poetry Jackson, and Nadd Harvin* showcases the work of three talented artists who were invited to participate in the Museum's 2023 Atrium Artist in Residence Program. Aiming to support and amplify the work of artists living and working in the region, the residency offers a window into their creative processes and another entry point for Museum visitors to engage with contemporary art and ideas in connection with *Cut to the Quick and Flourish*.

Free admission is made possible through underwriting from the Goode Family Foundation. Tickets can be reserved at virginiamoca.org.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

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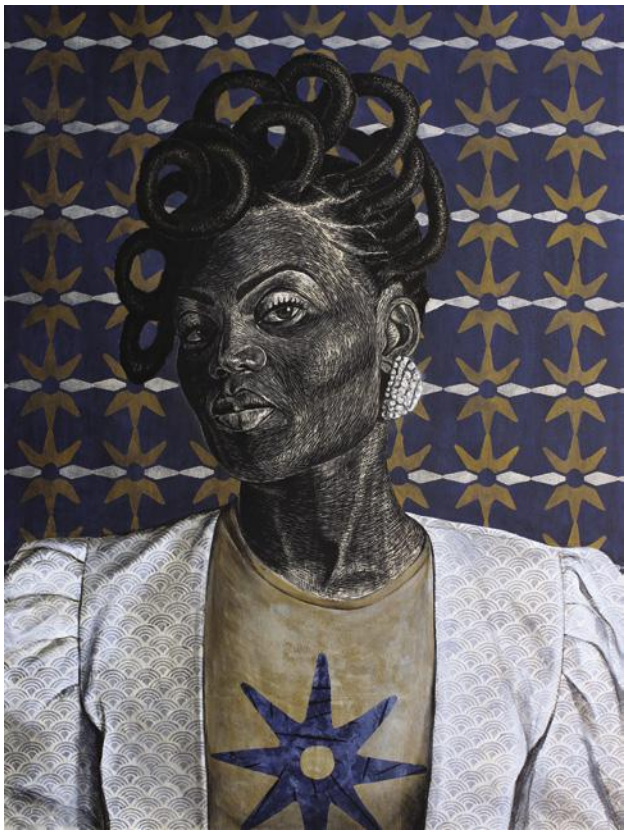


FAR LEFT: Kara Walker, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated): Exodus of Confederates from Atlanta*, edition 21/35. Offset lithography and screenprint, 39 x 53 in. Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer. © Kara Walker
LEFT: LaToya M. Hobbs, *The Founder*, 2020. Acrylic, collage, and relief carving on wood panel, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ariston Jacks

MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBERING THE **VETERANS**

ROBERTS RIDGE AND SPECIAL OPS SURVIVORS

BY NICK ROCHA

THE FIGHT AT ROBERT'S RIDGE CODE, named Operation ANACONDA was the largest combat operation in Afghanistan during the War on Terrorism that began after the 9/11 attack in 2001. In the early morning hours of March 4th, 2002, a joint special operations team aboard an Army MH-47 Chinook helicopter came under immediate fire by multiple rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and small arms fire as they made final approach to their insertion point. Standing in the door ready to take point when the helicopter ramp lowered was U.S. Navy SEAL Neil C. Roberts, who was flung out of the helicopter about 10 feet off the ground. A man SEAL team, commanded by Senior Chief SEAL, Brit Slabinski, a Virginia Beach native, and Air Force Combat Controller Technical Sergeant John Chapman, sought to rescue Neil but their helicopter was forced to make a controlled crash landing seven miles down the mountainside. Slabinski, Chapman and the team agreed to fight uphill to Robert's last location, despite the grave risks, to rescue him. Slabinski and Chapman would be decorated—Chapman posthumously—with the Medal of Honor for valor above and beyond the call of duty for trying to save their comrade under withering enemy fire. Neil Roberts broadcast his position to his comrades and apparently fought on for some time before being killed by the enemy. He is forever memorialized on that mountain and in the hearts and minds of those who knew him and loved him.

Roberts, Chapman and several other teammates made the ultimate sacrifice during the battle of Robert's Ridge. We are free because warriors like these are willing to give their sweat and blood, and if they have to, their lives. They leave behind spouses and children and countless others who loved them.

Who supports those left behind trying to pick up the pieces and carry on without their loved ones? How can we not only honor the memory of the fallen on Memorial Day but do something to make a difference?

Among those who served with Neil in the SEAL Teams was his friend Nick Rocha, who is now a Virginia Beach local. Nick was deeply affected by the passing of his friend Neil and set out to make a difference in the wake of Neil's loss.

Nick was one of only 21 to graduate from BUDS Class 201 and earn the coveted title of becoming a US Navy SEAL. Nick's first assignment was at SEAL Team Twohere in Virginia Beach where he met Neil Roberts. "I remember thinking about Neil that this is what a well-rounded SEAL looks like. He was a SEALs SEAL and everyone looked up to him." After three deployments Nick and Neil parted ways and both went to separate commands.

On the morning of 9/11 Nick was an instructor in Coronado, CA and immediately felt the call to action. Nick went to his chain of command and asked to join the fight. "I called to terminate my Shore Duty and return to ANY active SEAL Platoon going into harm's way, and I was told to stay put, that I was caller number 72 of other SEALs trying to get back in the fight, and to stand by". Essentially, he was told no.

Soon after that the first US forces were in Afghanistan taking the fight to the enemy. Word traveled fast within the Special Operations community of the first Navy SEAL to be killed in Afghanistan. It was Neil Roberts who had died, so Nick reached out to see what he could do to help. "This is real, I heard about guys dying in training before, but this is the first time that it happened in war." SEALs are told if anything ever happens to you in combat, you will be 'taken care of', but as Nick began to ask around, nobody could seem to quantify what that actually meant in tangible terms.

Nick desired answers and called the UDT SEAL Association because he wanted to know what was being done for the families of the fallen. They said, "We provide flowers up to the funeral, and we'll make sure that that funeral goes off without a hitch."

Nick asked, "Ok great, who steps in to help the family after the funeral?" His next call was to Special Operations Warrior Foundations Executive Director, Steve McLeary who said, "we provide college scholarships for children of fallen special operations warriors." was like, that's great, where do I send my donation

SPECIAL OPS Survivors
Embracing & Empowering Spouses of Our Fallen Heroes.

"Who supports those left behind trying to pick up the pieces and carry on without their loved ones? How can we not only honor the memory of the fallen on Memorial Day but do something to make a difference?"

because I think that's a really great cause." But in that same conversation Nick asked a very key question, "who will help Patty Roberts, his wife? Who helps Patty raise Nathan, their 18-month-old son to age 18 years old, to accept your college scholarship?" McLeary responded, Honestly, there needs to be something more done so that kids grow up in a healthy home and are ready to accept our funds. It's becoming a very real need."

Nick remembers saying "I was feeling like, well gosh, if it's gonna be, it's up to me. I was like, we need to do something to help these ladies get back on their feet."

Nick reached out to former Navy SEAL Greg McPartin, owner of McP's Irish Pub in Coronado, Ca. Nick organized this fundraiser raising $1,100. With a keg of beer donated by the owner, donations were accepted in an ammo can placed on the bar. Donations continued to come into the bar after the event concluded, because of flyers Nick posted around the city. A total of $2,900 was raised for Patty and Nathan.

Erik Knirk, an Investment Sales Broker from Los Angeles, heard about the fundraiser and reached out to Nick asking how he could help. A bond and the foundation were formed, originally called "Frog Friends", assisting families of SEALS. The organization grew to include all four branches of warfighters and is now "Special Operations Survivors – www.specialopssurvivors.org." This non-profit 501(c)3 now supports surviving spouses of Green Berets, Rangers, Navy SEALS, MARSOC Marines and Air Force Special Operators killed in service to our nation.

The following year, Nick and the board of directors, along with assistance from business owners, companies, and corporations invited the wives of the fallen to Coronado, CA for a four-day spouse's only weekend. It included Patty Roberts, and Valerie Chapman, along with 12 other wives. "We decided that we were going to take the money that we had raised and do something really wonderful for these widows and fly with all-expense paid weekend to give them a break from their normal reality and to show them a grateful nation really loves and recognizes you."

After that weekend, the communication with the board was, "did we really change anybody's life, did we make a difference?" Nick and the board decided that the following year outreach programs would be incorporated within the weekend to include educational workshops for the spouses. They decided that community outreach, counselors, and job training was needed.

The next year they invited 32 spouses of fallen warriors. Airlines donated miles, hotels donated services etc. They provided educational workshops, along with team building exercises. They brought in volunteers from a local organization that provided makeup and dress up tips, along with glamor shots to make them feel special.

Nick said, "we wanted the ladies to experience some of what their husbands had done. Some would probably never know what their warfighter went through in training or on a mission. Some real connections were made, and the relationships and lasting friendships built because of what they experienced between the rope climbing course or team building exercises".

In the 20 years since its inception, the organization continues to assist the lives of over 3,000 surviving spouses and their families, many from the local area. "I really wanted to make a big difference, letting the ladies know we are here to support you, to thank you, and to help you get back on your feet. The idea was and still is, we want to give you a hand up, not a handout." For the past 20 years, Special Ops Survivors (SOS) has provided College Scholarship Grants, Financial Planning Support, All expense paid Weekend Workshops and Team Building events. SOS also sends out quarterly Forget-Me-Not outreaches such as a Starbucks gift card at Valentine's or Memorial Day to remind the ladies that their Hero would have wanted them to know that they are not forgotten and truly loved. To find out more about how you can help, **contact Nick Rocha at (619)459-3333 or visit SpecialOpsSurvivors.org**

Kevin T. Moran, NCCS(SW/AW) (Ret)

REMEMBERING VETERANS ON MEMORIAL DAY

RETIRED CAPTAIN JOEL H. BERRY, JR.

BY MIA BERTELSEN

MEMORIAL DAY IS AN IMPORTANT HOLIDAY in the United States. We collectively honor the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Many families enjoy the 3-day weekend as the official kick start to the summer season. But looking more deeply into some of the stories of those who served, can give us a better understanding of the true meaning of this day to remember.

I had the pleasure to interview Veteran Joel Berry Jr. who served our country during the end of World War II to Vietnam and more. He has many memories and friends he thinks of during Memorial Day.

Mr. Berry, 95 years old, has had a long career of 30 years serving our country. He entered the Army when he was drafted to serve at the end of World War II right out of high school. He served a short time and was later discharged. Later after finishing college, he served in the Navy as a Captain. He received a Bronze Star in Vietnam and Legion of Merit Medal.

He lives a happy life in a house by a lake in Virginia Beach and reflected on some of his favorite stories. When asked about how he feels about Memorial Day, he admitted that it can make him feel sad. "For Memorial Day I sometimes think of old friends, but our ranks are getting thinner," he explained. "I don't like to think about it a lot."

Here are some of Mr. Berry's favorite memories from a lifetime of sailing on many destroyers and one aircraft carrier.

"When I first got commissioned, I graduated from Washington University and went to OSC (Officer Candidate School) and went to my first ship which was a World War II Destroyer Escort ship. In 1951 I walked on aboard and they told me 'welcome aboard we are going to Key West!' And that was wonderful. But to get to Key West we had to pass by Cape Hatteras (North Carolina) and the weather was not nice and I was sick as a dog. At dawn the grey ocean turned to aquamarine and I saw my first flying fish.

"I went to Vietnam as the commanding officer of the USS Blandy which was a destroyer. We fired 67,000 rounds into North Vietnam. And for some reason that made them angry and on five occasions they had the audacity to shoot back," he said with a smile.

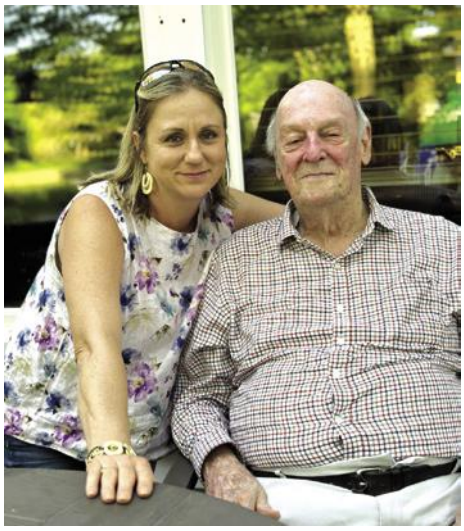
"Later on I commanded the Destroyer Squadron 15 in Japan and my wife was about to have our second son," he said. "Things just sort of bunched up on the ship in the end and she had to fly home 8 month pregnant and with a 2 year old by herself. If there was a hero in this story, it was her."

While traveling the world, Mr. Berry fondly remembers one of his favorite purchases of a grandfather clock. "The grandfather clock was made in Taipei and has German works inside," he explained. "We transported it back from Taipei to Japan on the destroyer. We strapped it into the bunk and it made the trip just fine. It is a beautiful clock and is right at the front of the stairs in my home."

He shared that life on the sea was challenging. "A destroyer is about 400 feet long and has about 4,000 tons," he explained. "It has about 300 people on it. It can be a rough-riding ship. In a seaway the bow can pitch up and down the height of a four-story building in a few seconds. You get to the point to riding with the ship. You can tell people who are not seafarers and they will fight the ship. If the ship rolls to the right, they will try to lean to the left. Once you get used to the ship, you just roll right with it."

Mr. Berry saw so much of the world traveling on the destroyers. England, France and Italy were a few of his favorite stops.

When asked to give some advice to the next generation he shared, "I think a full career in the Navy is a marvelous opportunity. Not only did I get to travel the whole world and meet a lot of wonderful people, it was very financially rewarding. I have been retired for almost 30 years and retired pay is a lot of money."



TOP TO BOTTOM: Retired captain Joel H. Berry, Jr.; Traveling on destroyers led to traveling to places like England, France and Italy; A grandfather clock from his travels; Joel and Editor Michelle Westberry.

A DAY OF **REVERENCE** AND **REMEMBRANCE**

THE LAST MONDAY IN MAY is not only the most somber of holidays it is also the unofficial start of Summer. Although the weather may not be cooperating, warmer days are surely ahead. For some it is the first chance to get out of the house and enjoy the sunshine, for others a chance to cut the grass yet again.

Arguably we know that Memorial Day is observed more so than celebrated. That is not to say that we should not gather in festive or joyous locales, quite the opposite. We do so all the while keeping in mind the more than 1 million American souls lost to the hell that is war. Whether we are burning hotdogs, traveling to visit grandma, watching the Indy 500, or doing any of the uniquely American things we do, we do so because of the ultimate sacrifice made by others.

I feel very fortunate to live in one of the most patriotic areas in the country with no shortage of sacred ground. Hampton Roads has over 1,000 historical markers and war memorials dating back as far as the Revolutionary War. While it is impossible to visit all of them there is certainly ample opportunity to pause at a few and give our respects to those who fell unable to return to the home of the brave.

The liberties we have in this country are certainly unusual in the world today but even more rare in the annuls of history. It was P. McCree Thornton who penned, "For those who fight for it freedom has a flavor that the protected will never know." The removing of hats, rising to our feet and placing the hand over the heart is but a small gesture we give to those that we will never meet but all relish in the freedom that their sacrifice helped to preserve.

Mark D. Clifford
Vet

LOSS OF A **FRIEND**

Brothers with unique artistic styles and abilities, Todd and Eric Lindbergh are a force in the mural industry. Painting 40 years and over 3,000 murals, they continue to surprise their clients with exciting and innovative ideas. Creating murals for both public and private enterprises, Todd and Eric pride themselves most on their tribute murals painted for the military, police, and firefighters.

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Virginia Floors
LEADING A LEGACY

BY HANNAH OLSON | PHOTOGRAPY BY RAMONE PHOTOGRAPHY

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

When **Sharon Smith** married her late husband, William, in 1993, she was raising two daughters and working full-time. Her husband owned a string of successful flooring stores in the area, but Sharon remained committed to her career in corporate sales.

William H. Smith, or Bill as he was known, bought his first flooring store in 1978, shortly after the rise of synthetic carpeting. Over the years and through the various flooring trends of the decades, Bill's stores flourished and Sharon and Bill began to work together. "I learned a lot about the flooring industry through virtue of osmosis," Sharon says of her career transition.

When they did work together, their management styles often clashed. "I was trained in the corporate world, and my husband came with an entrepreneurial mindset," she says of their differences. "We came from two different schools of management thought. I looked at things one way, and he looked at things a different way." Still, the pair worked together for many years, even bringing along both of Sharon's daughters, Kristin Reynolds and Holly Kerlin, to become a true family business. Kristin's husband, Ben Reynolds, was recruited into management when Bill recognized his leadership potential and brought him into the fold as well.

A NEW ERA

When William passed away in 2014, he left all six flooring stores to Sharon. With her daughters and son-in-law at her side, the family forged ahead without hesitation. "It is still somewhat of a good-old-boy network," Sharon admits of the industry. "It is always tougher for women, but I never let that stop me. I just keep killing it and do what I have to do." Although she admits many in the business did not always have faith in her, she proved them wrong and led the company into a new era that is as successful as ever.

With Ben at the helm as General Manager, Kristin working in HR and billing, and Holly overseeing the store properties, the family is working together with their team of 58 employees to carry on the legacy established 45 years ago.

THE SECRETS TO SUCCESS

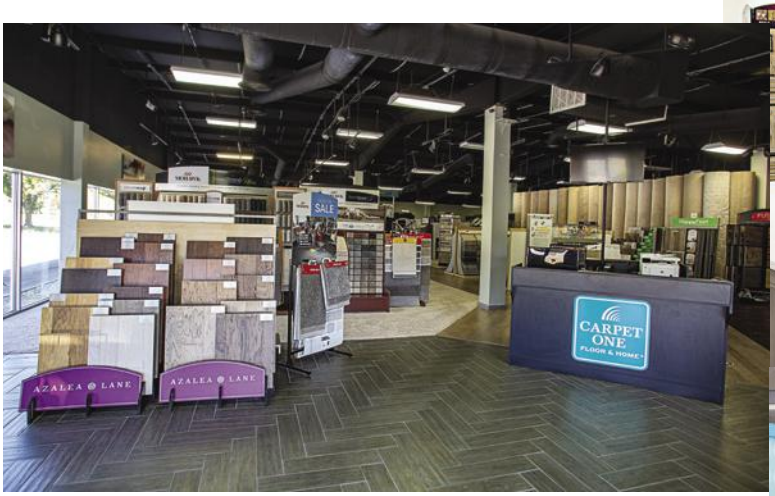
Virginia Floors stores are able to supply flooring to the region at the best prices because of their role with a global cooperative. With over over 1,500 flooring store members worldwide, the co-op has immense buying power that empowers locally-owned stores and allows them access to an immense inventory at significantly lower prices. The 6 stores also share inventory with one another, so everything is available to any customer no matter which location they walk into.

It is not just the prices and vast inventory that keeps Virginia Floors a cut above the rest; their customer service is also top-tier. "Anything that we can do for the customer, we are there to do it," Ben explains of their approach.

"The one thing that rings true is that if you take care of your people, they will take care of you," Sharon adds. Through a strong culture of loyalty and fairness, employees carry the culture of the company into their interactions with their customers.

Another priority for the company is to give back to the communities who have helped grow their success. As a frequent donor to countless service organizations, Virginia Floors is especially proud of their relationship with Habitat for Humanity, for whic they contribute supplies and support where ever they are able. The business also hosts an annual bike-a-thon to provide children with bicycles, takes part in efforts to alleviate the strife of the unhoused population through the Judeo-Christian Outreach Center in Virginia Beach, and more.

Apart from their business savvy and commitment to community, Sharon attributes the company's success to their passion and dedication. "When you have a passion for something, you naturally do well at it. If you are only walking halfway into a room and not going all the way in, then your success is going to be limited." Sharon, Ben, and the rest of the team leading the way for Virginia Floors is committed to the success of their business, their employees, and their community.



The Virginia Floors Family

With three separate brands and six stores under their umbrella, customers do not always realize the difference between each one or appreciate how their relationship to one another benefits them as the consumer.

Floor Trader | floortraderofvirginia.com
Floor Trader is your flooring supplier for installers and DIY homeowners and home flippers. Although installation services are not employed here, resources for contractors can be provided for you to book yourself. Floor Trader is a large warehouse with millions of square feet of flooring that's readily available to you at the time of purchase.
Floor Trader of Chesapeake, 1725 S Military Hwy, Chesapeake, VA
Floor Trader of Virginia Beach. 1104 Lynnhaven Pkwy A, Virginia Beach, VA

Carpet World Carpet One | carpetworldofva.com
Carpet World Carpet One is a full-service flooring retailer for the everyday customer that will walk you through each step to fulfilling your flooring needs. They handle your project from start to finish, beginning with the design and ending with the installation.
Carpet World Carpet One of Chesapeake, 669 Cedar Rd, Chesapeake, VA 23322
Carpet World Carpet One of Norfolk, 3431 N Military Hwy, Norfolk, VA 23518

Prosource Wholesale | prosourcewholesale.com
Prosource Wholesale is a one-stop wholesale distributor for all types of flooring materials, as well as everything needed for kitchens and bathrooms. These stores are for trade professionals, so you must be a contractor, designer, installer, or other trade professional to shop here.
Prosource of Hampton Roads, 1738 Lambert Ct, Chesapeake, VA
Prosource of Newport News, 301 Village Ave, Yorktown, VA

"It is always tougher for women, but I never let that stop me. I just keep killing it and do what I have to do."

Fighting Words

BY RICHARD LEDERER

KNIGHT IS A WORD THAT HAS COME UP IN THE WORLD. Descended from the Anglo- Saxon *cnicht* (sounded as two syllables), *knight* evolved from meaning "a boy" to "a servant," and, finally, "a servant of a noble." I am a freelance writer of magazine and newspaper pieces. That means that I write these articles on a fee-paid assignment basis rather than on a regular-salary basis for a single employer. Most medieval knights were committed to a feudal lord, but those who weren't could hire themselves and their lances to anyone willing to pay for their "freelance" military services. The word *freelance* is one of Sir Walter Scott's myriad word inventions, appearing first in his celebrated novel *Ivanhoe* (1820).

Writers, students, workers, and business people constantly face *deadlines*, dates when manuscripts homework, and reports must be submitted and orders filled. When such deadlines are not met, penalties result, such as lower grades or loss of business. But the punishment for passing beyond the original deadlines was more deadly.

During the American Civil War, a deadline was a line of demarcation around the inner stockade of a prison camp, generally about seventeen feet. At the notorious Confederate camp in Andersonville, Georgia, a line was actually marked out some distance from the outer wire fence. Any prisoner crossing this line was shot on sight.

Writer Douglas Adams quips, "I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by."

Most writers hope to create a *blockbuster*. That bombshell of a word originated in World War II Britain as Royal Air Force slang for a bomb of enough penetrating power to shatter whole blocks of homes and pavements. By the late 1940s *blockbuster* had come to signify a megahit play, film or book.

If adults commit adultery, do infants commit infantry? Chuckle chuckle, snort snort! But we are led to ask what is the relationship, if any, between infants and *infantry*? *Infant* was born from the Latin *in-*, "not" + *fari*, "speak" = "one who is not yet capable of speech." In Italian, *infante* came to mean "boy" or "foot soldier"; hence, our word *infantry*.

A fancy synonym for the adjective *drunk* is *intoxicated*. The Greek word *toxon* meant "bow" (as in "arrow launcher"), and the poison Greek warriors used to tip their arrows took on the name *toxikon*. Thus, the first people to be intoxicated were those pierced by lethal arrows. Ultimately that poison became embedded in our word *intoxicate*, having traveled from the Greek military through late Latin *intoxicatus* to the drunken fellow who slurs, "Name your poison." Over time, *intoxicated* took on the figurative sense of "to excite or elate to the point of enthusiasm or frenzy."

War, humanity's most destructive enterprise, is also among its most productive when it comes to generating new language. Because warfare has been a depressingly constant feature of our history, many of our words, expressions, and metaphors are of bellicose descent. *Freelance*, *deadline*, and *blockbuster* are but three such words among thousands that have entered our language through warfare and other hostilities. Here march some more fighting words, ones that start with the letters *A* to *G*:

Ambulance issues from an invention of Napoleon Bonaparte's *l'hôpital ambulant* ("walking hospital"), a light litter that served as a field hospital for wounded soldiers. We see the word *amble* in the Preamble to our Constitution, an initial walk before the longer journey through the document.

Assassin descends from the Arabic *hashshashin*, literally "hashish eaters." The original hashshashin were members of a religious and military order located in the mountains of Lebanon. These fanatics would commit political murder after being intoxicated with great quantities of hashish.

During World War I, *AWOL*, meaning "*A*bsent *W*ithout *O*fficial *L*eave," was pronounced as four distinct letters. During World War II, *AWOL* was sounded as a single word, and the meaning was extended to civilian life to identify any person absent from any job or activity without explanation.

The 1960s expression *bang for the buck* began as a frivolous iteration for how much destructive power the Defense Department gets for the money it pays.

Figuratively, a *battle-ax* is a pejorative expression for a woman, often elderly, who is unpleasantly loud and aggressive. The original battle-ax was a sharp, broad ax used by Gothic tribes. When wielded or thrown, the weapon could penetrate Roman armor and split a shield

Visit a Revolutionary War battle site such as Fort Ticonderoga, and you may see some gruesome artifacts in its museum bullets with teeth marks in them. Possessing no real anesthesia to ease the agony of amputation, long-ago surgeons offered wounded soldiers the only pain reducer they could a

bullet to bite hard on. Just thinking about such trauma is enough to make me *sweat bullets*. After anesthesia was introduced in the United States in 1844, the expression *bite the bullet* came figuratively to mean "to deal with a stressful situation resolutely," as in Rudyard Kipling's lines:

Bite the bullet, old man,
And don't let them think you're afraid.

After the Norman Conquest of England in A.D. 1066, William the Conqueror required civilians to extinguish all fires and candles and stay inside after dark. Night patrols enforced this regulation by calling out "*Couvre feu!*" ("cover the fire"), which became *curfew* in English.

A cohort was a Roman military unit, composed of one tenth of a Roman legion.

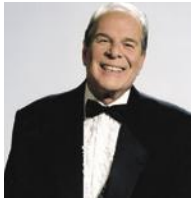
An emeritus was originally a Roman soldier who had completed his term of service (Latin emereor, "obtain by service") and earned his discharge. Nowadays emeritus refers to retired professors, clergymen, and other retired officials.

A flash in the pan sounds as if it derives from the way prospectors pan rivers for gold. In truth, though, *a flash in the pan* refers to the occasional misfiring of the old flintlock muskets when the flash of the primer in the pan of the rifle failed to ignite the explosion of the charge. It is estimated that such misfirings ran as high as fifteen percent, leading *a flash in the pan* to come to mean "an intense but short-lived success or a person who fails to live up to their early promise."

Since the eighteenth century *field day* has designated a special day set aside for military maneuvers and reviews. Through a linguistic process called expansion, *field day* has broadened to mean "a day marked by a sense of occasion and great success."

Muzzle loaders, then as now, had a half cock, or safety position, for a gun's hammer that back-locked the trigger mechanism so that the weapon couldn't be fired. The half-cock position doesn't generate enough power to make sparks to fire the pistol, so when a person *goes off half-cocked*, they are not in control of the situation.

The theory you've most likely heard that explains the birth of *gringo* is that U.S. troops marching off to the Mexican-American War (1846–48) lustily sang, "Green Grow the Rushes-O," prompting the Mexicans to construct *gringo* from the first two words of the title. In truth, *gringo* inhabited the Spanish vocabulary since the early eighteenth century, long before the Mexican-American conflict. Just as we say, "It's all Greek to me," Spanish speakers said, *hablar en griego*, "to speak in Greek," meaning "to speak in an unintelligible foreign tongue." It didn't take long for *griego* to morph into *gringo*.



Richard Lederer is the author of 60 books about language, history, and humor, including his best-selling *Anguished English* series and his current title, *Lederer's Language & Laughter*. He is a founding co-host of "A Way With Words," broadcast on Public Radio. **www.verbivore.com**

WHEN THE BUGS BITE

It's called the food chain. Dogs and cats prey on smaller creatures, and bees are no exception. Sometimes however, the pointed end of these insects contacts Fido or Fluffy's nose and pain ensues! Typically, pets paw at and remove the insect's stinger, but should you see one through your pet's fur coat (or on his nose, lip, paw or elsewhere), scrape it away with a credit card, popsicle stick or similar stiff object. The stinger is only about 1/16" long. Pulling the stinger with fingers or tweezers could rupture the poison sac allowing the toxin to enter your pet's body. With your veterinarian's blessing, administer 1 mg Benadryl (Diphenhydramine only! No pain meds or decongestion included), per pound of your dog or cat's body weight and apply a cold pack (a bag of frozen peas works well) to any swelling. Should severe swelling or any breathing difficulties develop, get to your Veterinarian at once.

Black Widow spiders terrify us all with their distinctive red hourglass marking, but rarely are they fatal. Smaller pets sometimes have bigger issues with the venom due to their size. Treat bites with ice and Benadryl as you would for a bee sting and get to the Vet ASAP. Symptoms such as redness, pain, difficulty breathing, or paralysis can develop. The problem with these bites is that unless we see it occur or find a dead spider, we do not know what is causing our pet's distress. If you have toxic critters in your yard, keep your pets away from those areas or use pet-friendly insecticides to exterminate.

Brown Recluse spiders tend to hide in dark, secluded areas and their venom is known to destroy tissue surrounding the bite. Approximately ½" - 2" long, the Brown Recluse can be identified by a distinctive fiddle-shaped mark on its back. When bitten, most dogs do not realize it, but after a while redness occurs. Clean the wound with hydrogen peroxide, chlorhexidine, or povidone iodine and seek veterinary assistance. Your dog could develop lethargy, rash, fever, chills, vomiting or diarrhea and the wound will likely become larger and drain. Talk to your veterinarian regarding the best flea & tick preventative for combating parasites in your neighborhood. Although you may not want to put chemicals on your dog or cat, the diseases ticks carry can be fatal and flea bites can be extremely unpleasant leading to lick sores. Pets that suffer from flea allergy dermatitis suffer from flea bites weeks after the flea is gone or dead, so prevent your pet from this misery. And… just because you have an indoor kitty, that does not mean she should not be protected as well. Fleas and ticks jump thresholds and come in on us, so talk to your veterinarian and develop a preventive plan. When you have a dog or cat, you have a four-legged toddler for life, and it is your responsibility to supervise where your pet goes and what dangers he may encounter.

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LIGHTING LITERACY FIRES

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA are lighting literacy fires in students' homes through an innovative program called All District Reads. ADR's simple, but powerful, model gets all elementary families in participating communities to read and discuss the same children's chapter books together twice during the school year once in the fall and again in the spring.

All District Reads builds links among families, schools, and the entire community by making reading the hot topic of discussion for weeks at a time. Better yet, the program costs only $11 per child per year, which includes two books for each child, along with support materials for schools and parents.

Founded by long-time educator and literacy advocate Gary Anderson, All District Reads is a Norfolk-based nonprofit organization whose programs benefit all students, but especially those with limited access to books. "It's a game changer!" exclaims Anderson.

Under the All District Reads model, donations from local businesses, organizations, and individuals cover the cost of the program for the first two years. Individuals can donate as little as $11/month to sponsor books for children. Donors of $5,000 or more will be recognized on labels placed in each book. "We can't afford NOT to invest in this program," says philanthropist George Birdsong. Birdsong and Frank Batten are among ADR's major donors.

Meanwhile, local civic groups such as The Noblemen and Rotary clubs typically serve as Community Champions for programs. They label books, record book chapters, and participate in kick-off assemblies, along with providing some financial support.

This spring, elementary students in Suffolk Public Schools and Northampton County Public Schools read EllRay Jakes is Magic, as did fifth-grade students in Virginia Beach City Public Schools. All three districts plan to run the program again this fall, with Virginia Beach planning to have all K-5 students participate. In addition, Norfolk Public Schools and Chesapeake Public Schools recently have signed up to participate in future All District Reads programs. At that point, ADR will impact more than 65,000 families, creating a future generation of readers across southeastern Virginia!

ADR continues to work with additional school systems interested in implementing this innovative program. Want to help? Learn more about supporting the All District Reads program at https://alldistrictreads.org. You also can contact ADR by email at info@alldistrictreads.org or by phone at 757-250-2774. For just $11 a month, you can give children the gift of reading.

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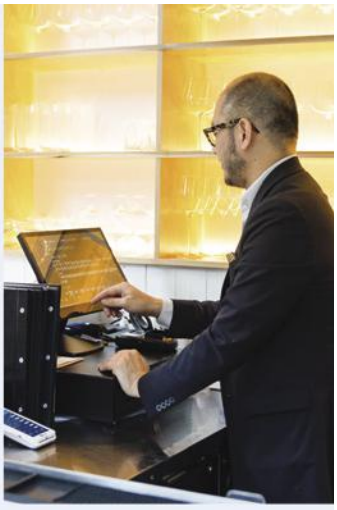

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May 25 (7:30)
TOWNEBANK JAZZ SERIES: A NOD TO SINATRA, BENNETT, MARTIN AND DARIN
sandlercenter.org
Sandler Center for the Performing Arts
201 Market Street, Virginia Beach

June 2 (4-10pm) | **June 3** (2-10pm)
VETERANS BAND AID MUSIC FESTIVAL FEATURING 38 SPECIAL AND LARRY FLEET
cacarefoundation.org
1075 General Booth Blvd, Virginia Beach
Holiday Trav-L Park

June 9 - 11 (10am-6pm)
47TH ANNUAL NORFOLK HARBORFEST: MUSIC, FOOD & MARITIME FESTIVAL
festevents.org
Town Point Park - Downtown Norfolk Waterfront
101 W Main Street, Norfolk

June 13, 21, 28 (5pm-9pm)
YNOT WEDNESDAY - FREE OUTDOOR CONCERT SERIES
sandlercenter.org/ynotwednesdays
Sandler Center Outdoor Plaza
201 Market St, Virginia Beach

June 23 - 25 (1pm -12am)
BEACH IT! FESTIVAL VIRGINIA BEACH OCEANFRONT
beachitfestival.com
Virginia Beach Oceanfront

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  2500 Shore Drive, First Landing State Park

NEW PUBLIC ARTWORKS GREET VISITORS AT VIRGINIA BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

In the roads and parking lots surrounding the Virginia Beach Convention Center and Virginia Beach Sports Center, visitors are now greeted with 22 new artworks commissioned by the ViBe Creative District in partnership with the City of Virginia Beach Department of Cultural Affairs. The digital artworks were provided by artists from Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Florida and Lithuania and professionally printed and installed by local digital printing experts at The Graphics Shop.

At the beginning of the year, a call for artists was issued publicly to garner submissions. Artists were encouraged to create colorful dynamic artworks that would attract positive attention and promote family

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VB ART CENTER
HOURS: Tues.-Fri.-10 am-5 pm • Sat.-10 a.m.-4 pm • Sun.-12-4 pm

friendly engagement with the thousands of guests that park at the Virginia Beach Convention Center and Virginia Beach Sports Center every week year-round. Artists were also encouraged to choose works that reflect Virginia Beach and our local cultural arts scene in a positive manner. In total, 144 artists applied submitting over 300 works of art reviewed by the Virginia Beach Public Art Committee.

"All around the ViBe District, we have added a variety of artwork, from painted parking meters to large scale murals, sculptures and creative crosswalks." said Kate Pittman, executive director of the ViBe nonprofit. "Utilizing the blank white side of these way-finding signs at the convention center is another new way to engage the public and share the gift of local art."

Artist Lea Craigie from Maryland submitted a digital artwork titled "Siren's Call." The artist statement notes that this piece depicts a mermaid living off the coast of Virginia with her seahorse friend. She is designed as a stained glass panel.

Local Virginia Beach artist Quanisha Hart submitted a surf inspired artwork. "The beaches' surfers are part of our area's culture every summer," said Hart. This is her first public artwork in the ViBe District.

On of the founding artists of the ViBe District, OnieTonie provided positive, colorful, & happy designs from his company OnieTonie™ Designs. His artwork featured his signature marine animals and smiling flowers.

OnieTonie's artwork is located on 17th Street, a few blocks away from two of his murals.

The new digital art wraps have been added to ViBe's growing collection of public art featured online via the ViBe Google Mural Map on their website. The google map, which has been viewed nearly 500,000 times offers images, directions and artists bios and links for more information. This project was supported with grants from the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Commission for the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, **visit www.vibecreativedistrict.org**

Local MARKETPLACE and EVENTS

JAKE MAINES

NETWORKING IN THE 757

How does that old saying go? It's not what you know, it's who you know?

In this fast-paced world, where connections and relationships play a pivotal role in personal and professional success, networking has become an invaluable skill. Networking is not just about exchanging business cards or attending social events, but it is a deliberate and strategic approach to building meaningful relationships that can open doors and unlock opportunities.

Each month, our good friend Jake Maines will be curating a list of the go-to networking events in the area. When it comes to being the attraction, Jake Maines is the standard. Whether it be attending one of his Networking Happy Hours or volunteering and raising thousands of dollars for many local 757 charities, Maines is eager to rise to the occasion.

If you're looking for a new job, growing your business, or looking for a new friend, networking offers a plethora of benefits that can propel you toward success!

CHECK OUT SOME OF THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

Networking At The Narrows: Network in a relaxed outdoor, meaningful environment while bonding with like-minded business professionals. Events take place at The Narrows in First Landing State Park. Email gina@socialsipper.com to register.

Coffee Connect: Mastermind & mingle with other professionals and business owners in the area over a morning brew. Email tim@omnicruit.us to register.

#DowntownNFKLadies: A meetup for professional ladies from different industries looking to engage, connect, and build relationships. Email hmorgan@gotechark.com to register.

Networking Happy Hour: A low-key, no agenda, meet new people/catch up with old friends-type of event. Occurs the first Wednesday of every month. Register at networkinghh.com.

JAKE MAINES EVENT

HAPPY HOUR AT GATHER VB

BNI REGIONAL EVENT

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

LIGHT THE WAY FOR MENTAL HEALTH BY GOING GREEN

NAMI Coastal Virginia and other mental health organizations, community service boards and facilities celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. This year, NAMI's awareness campaign, "Light the Way for Mental Health by Going Green" encourages people to change a porch light, a window light or even the gazebo lights green. For several years, NAMI promoted lighting public and private office buildings green. While it will continue to do this, it became apparent that a more grass route approach was warranted. When you bring this campaign to a neighborhood or small business, it helps to start the conversation about an illness that affects the most important organ in the body, the Brain. Because "There is NO health without Mental Health", we have to destigmatize this illness. Expect to see large banners and yard signs like the one below within the Coastal Virginia region with the NAMI message. Taylor Do It Center supports NAMI in this campaign so please consider getting a light at your nearest Taylor's.

THE ALEXA PROJECT

In addition to the "Lite the Way…" campaign, NAMI will introduce The Alexa Project which honors Alexa Uroskie, a vocal NAMI youth advocate who succumbed to her mental illness in February. Geared to youth and young adults, an anti-stigma video created by her brother will be aired at the Children's Hospital of the Kings Daughters', Youth Suicide and Prevention Conference May 5th and 6th. The faces and voices of young adults define stigma, explain why is significant and take the pledge to be stigma free. The video will be available to share with other youth groups.

NAMI Coastal Virginia

NAMI Coastal Virginia (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a 501c3 non-profit and part of a nationwide group of over 600 affiliates dedicated to helping people living with mental health conditions and their family members by providing, at no charge, multiple weekly support groups, continual classes, programs and mental health presentations at hospitals, community service boards, police departments, schools, faith groups, civic and social organizations. We are able to accomplish this through membership, grants, fundraising and donations. Last year NAMI Coastal Virginia assisted over 3,500 people including those who reached us by calling our helpline. Simply stated, our mission is to educate, advocate and support.

Local MARKETPLACE and EVENTS

Join the Marketplace | Contact: Michelle Westberry | michelle@connectormagazines.com | (757) 567-9354 | Submit Your Event! | office@connectomagazines.com

QUEENS GREEN 4/20 CELEBRATION

ED HOPPER @ TOWNCENTER CITY CLUB DECK

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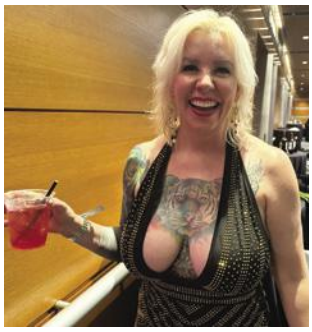

SERTOMA EVENT

SHE-CRAB EAST COAST CLASSIC: CULINARY SHOWDOWN WINNERS ANNOUNCED IN VIRGINIA BEACH

TOP CHEFS AND RESTAURANTS SHINE IN A TANTALIZING BATTLE

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY MELANIE KIM

The highly anticipated She-Crab East Coast Classic festival in Virginia Beach concluded with a culinary showdown, as top local chefs and restaurants competed for the coveted Critics' Choice Award and Sean Brickell Peoples' Choice Award. Set against the picturesque oceanfront backdrop, the festival celebrated the rich heritage of the Atlantic coastline's favorite soup: She-Crab soup.

A panel of esteemed culinary experts judged the participating chefs and restaurants based on their innovative recipes, incorporating unique approaches to traditional ingredients and various cooking techniques to create modern spins on the classic dish. Notably inventive was Entre Nous' sherry vinegar "caviar" that topped their sample cups of soup, a departure from the traditional splash of vinegar for a touch of acid tang. The contest winners for the Critics' Choice Award were as follows:

1st Place: CP Shuckers Oceanfront
2nd Place: Rockafeller's Restaurant
3rd Place: Beachhouse 757

In addition, the Sean Brickell Peoples' Choice Award winners were determined by festival attendees, who voted for their favorite She-Crab soups:

1st Place: Entre Nous Virginia Beach
2nd Place: Rockafeller's Restaurant
3rd Place: Blue Pete's Restaurant

The She-Crab East Coast Classic served as a platform for local businesses to boost tourism and the economy, featuring live music, local breweries, and local radio station promoters.

With the winners now announced, the She-Crab East Coast Classic has once again showcased the best of coastal flavors and culinary talents, solidifying its status as a must-attend event for food enthusiasts.

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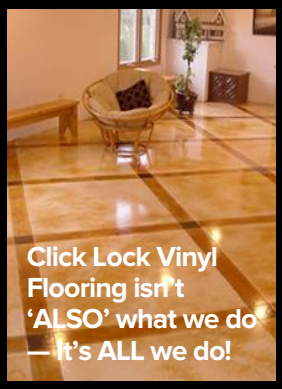
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APPRECIATING APPRECIATION

Middle-Income Homeowners in Hampton Roads Gained More Than $94,000 in Wealth Over the Past Decade from Home Appreciation

New data from the National Association of REALTORS® reveal middle-income homeowners in Hampton Roads accumulated $94,600 in wealth as their homes appreciated over the last 10 years. The data, which was featured prominently in NAR's new report, Wealth Gains by Income and Racial/Ethnic Group, speaks to the value agents and REALTORS® bring to consumers when helping buy and sell homes that build generational wealth.

"Locally, the Hampton Roads area has fared exceedingly well in home appreciation over the last decade. According to multiple listing service data, in 2013 the median price of a home was $200,000 and in 2023 the median price is $308,000. That's a 54% increase in value in our market. Compare that to the average stock market investment return and one can see that homeownership is one of the best investments a person can make," stated Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association (HRRA) Chairman of the Board, Jeremy Caleb Johnson.

NAR data also showed substantial variation and inequality in wealth gains across different income and racial and ethnic groups. Low-income homeowners in Hampton Roads were able to build $84,010 in wealth in the last decade from home price appreciation only, while upper-income households saw an increase of $74,370.

Although Hispanic homeowners experienced the smallest wealth gains among any other racial or ethnic group in Hampton Roads, these owners were able to accumulate more than $92,020 in wealth in the last decade. Black homeowners saw an increase of $105,850, White homeowners experienced $121,010 in wealth gains, and Asian homeowners gained $129,380 in wealth from their home over the past 10 years.

"This analysis shows how homeownership is a catalyst for building wealth for people from all walks of life," said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "A mortgage is often considered a forced savings account that helps homeowners build a net worth about 40 times higher than that of a renter."

About HRRA

The Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association is an organized group of real estate brokers and agents dedicated towards furthering the American Dream of home ownership through protecting private property rights, advancing affordable housing, PROMOTING a vibrant and healthy market, improving the quality of life in the neighborhoods its members serve, and enhancing professional industry standards.

About NAR

The National Association of Realtors® is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries. The term Realtor® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of Realtors® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

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