HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

CWA LEADS NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON RETIREMENT LIVING IN A COLLEGE TOWN

In its November 25 Business Section, the *New York Times* printed a story on the appeal of college towns to retirees. Williamsburg resident and Christopher Wren Association President Bill Riffer was profiled in the lead paragraph and featured in the accompanying photograph.

Donning his green and gold William & Mary muffler, and standing in front of the
Severinus Durfey Shop on the Duke of Gloucester Street in Colonial Williamsburg, Riffer shared the story of how he and his wife, Cecelia, chose to retire here.

Shortly after they finished unpacking their moving boxes, Bill registered to take classes through the Christopher Wren Association for Lifelong Learning. Not only did he enjoy the courses he took, but he also volunteered to teach classes on military history. His next step was to join the Program Committee, and he now finds himself as head of the organization of 1,500 members.

How did it happen that Bill was selected to represent Williamsburg’s “come heres?” It started when the *Times* decided to put together an article on where people move when they retire. Reporter, Amy Zipkin, zeroed in on Williamsburg, and did phone interviews with four residents. During their conversations, every one of them mentioned the Christopher Wren Association, and how it enhances their quality of life. With that, the reporter called the CWA office for information, and they referred Zipkin to Riffer.

How does he feel about his profile in “The Gray Lady?” With his typical humility and humor Bill replied, “Oh, they just needed filler!” In fact, as a board member, instructor, and student at CWA, along with his other volunteer activities which include a leadership position with the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, he is the perfect representative for all retirees who have moved to Williamsburg and ask, “How did I ever find time to work?”

Click [here](#) to read the full New York Times article.

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**Catalog Updates**

- The description for **Opera in Williamsburg** in the catalog is incorrect, however the online description is correct. Please see the correct description below.

Attend a rehearsal of Opera in Williamsburg (OiW) as it readies for performances of Mozart's entertaining and biting Marriage of Figaro. This opera, one of the most popular in the world, shows servants and wife teaching a philandering nobleman a lesson. At this rehearsal, members of OiW's international artistic team will introduce you to Marriage of Figaro, and describe what challenges that day's rehearsal will address. They will then proceed to work with the cast on music, acting, and staging. The team will take Q&A from the audience. The team includes Jorge Parodi (conductor), Laura Alley (stage director) and Naama Zahavi-Ely (producer).

**Cancelled**

- In the Footsteps of Marco Polo and the Silk Road
Southern Hospitality

Taking classes through Christopher Wren is a memorable experience. The depth of classes that are offered to our ever growing student population is certainly impressive. Our instructors volunteer their time, experience, and love of subjects and enrich our lives along the way. We are most thankful to them all. Twice a year, at the end of each semester, we host a reception to say thank you to these wonderful instructors and celebrate CWA. The Hospitality Committee is looking for individuals who are willing to give back to these instructors and our organization and volunteer at these receptions. The commitment is only a few times a year, for a few hours each reception. Our volunteer organization desperately needs your help to continue to honor and say thank you to our instructors. If you are able to join the Hospitality Committee please contact me at amycorc@frontiernet.net.

Thank you.

Amy Corcoran
Hospitality Chair

Off-Campus Venues

Without the willingness of the Williamsburg community to partner with CWA and donate space each semester for classes, it would be impossible to offer so many wonderful courses.

A special thank you to Williamsburg Landing, WindsorMeade, Williamsburg Regional Library, Brookdale, Ford's Colony, Waterman's Museum, Patriot's Colony and Shaia Oriental Rugs.
On Saturday, February 25th, 2017, William & Mary will host Virginia’s Scholastic Bowl, the academic super bowl for Virginia high schools. Like a sports bowl, this academic super bowl brings to Williamsburg the best academic teams from our Virginia high schools.

For more than 15 years, Christopher Wren Association has assisted the college to host this special event. CWA members serve as quiz masters, math/science and social studies judges, time keepers and support staff to welcome the several hundred students and their families to our college. Vast knowledge of subjects by quiz masters and judges is not needed. Quiz questions and answers are provided by the Virginia High School League. We need volunteers to help with this exciting opportunity. Please call or e-mail Don or Joyce Darnton at 564-7116 or dcdarnton@aol.com for information about how you can help.

Instructor Appreciation Reception
Fall 2016 instructors attending the appreciation reception.

A Conversation with Elizabeth White by Gordon Bratz

“It was about birds, I remember that. I don’t recall the details; maybe it was about what their plumage, songs and habitats will tell us. But I clearly recall that it was the first Christopher Wren Association course I took. That was in the Spring of 1991, the very first year they offered courses.”
So began a quarter century of sustained membership and participation by Elizabeth “Mac” White in the wide range of classes, lectures, field trips, tours, and special events activities sponsored since then by CWA.

She said, when asked during a recent interview why she pursued the opportunities offered by the Association, “I think it began when I was in 7th grade at the Matthew-Whaley school. I took a summer class in Latin. It was like an elective or an AP course today, I suppose. Well, I didn’t acquire a facility in the language of course but from that class flowered a desire to learn literally everything about the world around me. That then led me to CWA when it was founded 25 years ago.”

She added, “during the ensuing passage of time and my experiences in the Association—and the friends I’ve made among CWA participants--I’ve been the benefactor of self-discovery and the indescribable enrichment that CWA activities have brought me.”

But Mac’s life hasn’t solely been a “one-way street” for personal benefit. As early as her teen and college days here she was an aircraft spotter from atop the tower of the Methodist church (where Talbot’s is today) and, as a member of the William & Mary Girl Scout sorority, a server in the snack bar of the USO (where Binn’s is today) for sailors and soldiers from Camp Perry and Fort Eustis during the early years of World War II. She is an alum of W&M’s Class of 1948.

Since returning to Williamsburg in 1982 Mac has enriched the lives of others in paid and unpaid capacities as a costumed interpreter in the historic area of the Colonial “City” (she emphasized that word as the proper term pointing to a copy of a plat dated 1699) and as a guide-interpreter at both the Wallace Gallery and the Folk Art Museum.

Today she is a widely respected contract lecturer for the non-profit Road Scholar (Elder Hostel) organization. As well, she remains an active member of CWA. Mac said that when she joined
the Association 25 years ago “the fee was $50 a year,” and added, “that very first course I took was announced along with perhaps 11 others in a thin booklet produced on a mimeograph machine.”

Thank you

Thank you to all of the local businesses that placed an ad in our spring catalog. Your contributions through purchasing ad space help cover the printing costs of our catalog.

- Riverside
- Closets of Virginia
- Kimberly Builders
- Literacy for Life
- Mega Auto Spa
- Colonial Center for Hearing
- Watson Mowry, PC
- Waypoint Seafood & Grill
- Whiting's Funeral Home
- Williamsburg Landing

**Help us show our thanks by patronizing these businesses when possible!**

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**Name Tags**

If you have not received your name tag by January 16th, please contact the office so that we can resend to you. Your name will be printed as it is in the online registration system (including capitalization) so please check to make sure your name/nickname is correct. Yes, nicknames will be used for name tags this semester!

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**Inclement Weather Policy Reminder**

CWA will cancel courses/activities/events for weather if the Williamsburg/James
City County (WJCC) public schools are closed to students. If WJCC Schools are delayed, CWA will continue as scheduled. A notice will be on the CWA office voice mail (757-221-1506) and on the WJCC website. Please note, you will not be personally contacted.

Please remember W&M gives us classroom space for free.

If there are any issues in your classroom please contact CWA and not staff in the buildings.

CWA Board News

This year we've experienced shortfalls in the CWA operating budget. Since this is a trend we don't want to continue, the board has been discussing solutions. At the meeting on 19 December, we approved several cost cutting measures, one of which is reducing our grant distribution to William and Mary by $10,000.

Another change is that the association will no longer pay for parking hangtags. We have paid this in the past and many tags (which we had already paid for) were never picked up or used. Members will be responsible for the fee to purchase the hangtag needed to park in the student lots at W&M Hall (Kaplan Arena) and the School of Education. Historically this fee has been $10. There is a rumor of an increase but we have not been able to confirm. This move would save us $12,000. (NOTE: Hangtags are good for a full academic year, so if you have one from the fall, you can still use it for spring semester.) The total estimated savings from all this is $22,000. That's not enough to get us into the black--I still need to move about $45,000 from our cash reserves to cover remaining expenses--but it's a significant step. We are now putting together a committee to look at other ways to increase revenue. I
don't know where this will lead yet but it's highly likely that it will involve a modest increase in our rates. If so, that would most likely occur in the fall of 2017. We have empirical data to indicate that we are significantly less expensive than other lifelong learning institutes around the country and we're compiling more research about that now. My two goals are to get CWA back into financial health without adversely affecting our program and without springing any surprises on you.

Finally, I want to wish all of you a great new year as we move forward into what I am confident will be a wonderful 2017 for CWA!

Bill Riffer  
CWA President
to be on our mailing list.

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