

WE ARE WINCHESTER

MARCH 2024

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We started OldTownist to share the stories of our local businesses, non-profits, organizations, and people. After each interview, we fall more in love with Winchester. Our hope is that every issue makes you feel more connected to this community.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out offering ways to help us grow our readership and suggest article ideas. The best way to contribute is to tell others about OldTownist!

You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram @oldtownist
See you in Old Town!



*Misty Weaver
& Katie Jordan*

**WE ARE
WINCHESTER**

THE STORIES BEHIND THE BOOKSTORIES

We love covering local authors, so when my friend Sarah Tollok announced she had a book picked up by an indie publisher I had a peek into the process through her social media posts. While we appreciate the final product as book lovers, I thought it would be fun to ask Sarah about her process in researching, choosing a theme, character development and the challenges in publishing.

I love books about books. I am the first one to grab a book off the shelf that has anything like "The Library of" or "The Book of" in the title. I had ideas for short stories that all revolved around the world of reading. I thought I had a short story collection on my hands. But then I had an "ah-ha!" moment while driving home one day. They could all be connected! Seeing these stories as all part of one larger work allowed me to discover that the theme I really wanted to explore with Bookstories, which is how all our stories are interconnected and, in that sense, there are never really any endings.

Since I wrote Bookstories during the height of the pandemic in 2020, I was unable to visit the locations I wanted to use in my book. Google maps and wikipedia, as well as stacks of library books, helped me out along the way. I especially read up on the emergence of the AIDS crisis, as I have a chapter featured in that era. I consulted with my husband's coworker who is from Argentina who was able to provide me with a town to use as her hometown, and he helped with the Spanish dialogue.

I think there's a lot of me in several of my characters. My main character Dottie, is a publisher, avid reader, and a book collector. She has a gift for being able to tell things about people just from reading their writing. Jim, a young playwright that Dottie befriends, possesses a lot of my insecurities. Jessie, the bartender/manager of the Circulation Desk, a fictional bar for librarians, is the cool chick I would love to be.

Genesis Primitive Church

731 Fox Drive, Winchester

You Are Cordially Invited to Walk the Religious Path Travelled By Winchester's Founders; That Path is Historic Christianity

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Thank You, Pastor Dan Nicholson

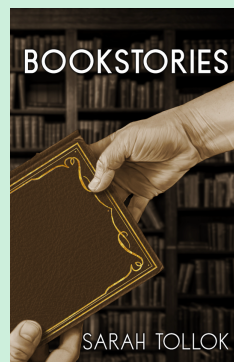
Phone: 540-327-4693

www.genesisprimitivechurch.org



Since I only had short stories and flash fiction published prior to signing my contract for Bookstories, I wasn't familiar with how intense the editing process would be. During developmental edits, I realized I needed to add new significant plot points and restructure entire chapters to make the narrative stronger and more compelling. I feel like I wrote, erased, and rewrote almost every line of the book, but the story is definitely tighter and the message is more refined because of it.

I want readers to see themselves in Bookstories. The efforts of writers, publishers, booksellers and librarians all lead to putting stories in the hands of readers. The reader is part of that magic. Without them, the rest would be for nothing. The message of bookstories is that through the sharing and experiencing of one another's stories, we are all connected. We are all woven together into a vast, never ending narrative.



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LAUNCH PARTY
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WINCHESTER BOOK GALLERY

VIRGINIA VALLEY VIPERS

When you have children, you assume they will take after you in most ways, whether by genetics, environment, or sheer will to instill our values. So I was shocked when my children asked to play basketball at a very young age. Had we ever even watched a game on TV? I grew to enjoy watching their games and cheering them on to championships as they created lifelong friends. So I found myself adding a courtside season ticket to my cart when it was announced the Virginia Valley Vipers were coming to Winchester.

The Culbreath family, consisting of Rodney, his wife Tina, and their son Rze, stand at the core of the Vipers' inception. Rodney, inspired by his son's basketball journey and the lack of professional opportunities within Virginia, saw the potential to make a significant impact on their community in Winchester. As founders of the I'm Just Me Movement, a nonprofit youth mentoring organization, they have dedicated themselves to being positive role models for young people for years, a mission they continue with the Vipers.

Walking into Shenandoah University's Wilkins Center for the first game highlighted how connected the team's Market Owners are to the community. Having chosen the viper as their emblem for its associations with rebirth and transformation, aiming to instill these values into the heart of Virginia. They believe the team is about strengthening community bonds through family-friendly entertainment and providing athletes from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to pursue their passion for basketball.

But, perhaps more importantly, it is about giving back to the community and enabling the players to build a sustainable financial future. They partner with local organizations in fun ways during games, and have a Kids Get In Free initiative with local businesses sponsoring kids tickets. Players are given access to financial literacy training, and volunteering opportunities through the community as well. Watching all of the kids pose for photos with the players as their eyes light up is a highlight after each game.

Lester Conner's addition as a coach brings a wealth of experience to the team for the 2024 season, with over two decades in coaching roles and twelve years as an NBA player. His journey from a state championship in high school to becoming a Pac-10 Player of the Year and his subsequent professional career provides a rich tapestry of experience and success to draw upon in coaching the Vipers. When I asked how Lester became the new coach Tina and Rodney shared how a chance encounter with a mutual acquaintance while having his hair done led to conversations, a very Shenandoah Valley experience.

The team's roster for the year blends seasoned players with fresh talent, ensuring a dynamic and competitive spirit. Among the returning players are Trammell Anthony, Justin Brown, Rze Culbreath, Dhonte Ford, Maleke Jones, and Jalen Melvin, complemented by newcomers Jaylin Reed, Myles Roper, Quentin Scott, Chad Simmons, Denmark Slay, Julian Washington, Mike Brown, and Derrell Armstrong. This mix promises an exciting season ahead. You'll see me courtside at the center line cheering them on!

Emphasizing accessibility and community involvement, the Vipers have made attending games financially accessible, with tickets starting at just \$5. Season tickets and courtside seats are also remarkably affordable, encouraging families and fans from all walks of life to enjoy professional basketball right here in Winchester.



Photo credits: Cassandra Lynn



Learn more and
get tickets at:

VIRGINIAVALLEYVIPERS.COM



ANTICA TRATTORIA

Most of my favorite restaurants in Winchester have become favorites due to the owners' presence and interaction from the moment I stepped inside. Yes, the food is amazing, but it's the owners who greet you and take care to go over the menu with you, ensuring your selection is the best for you personally, that set the great restaurants apart. This rule was proven true when I walked into Antica Trattoria just a couple of weeks after they opened. I knew of them before, as they operated one of the only restaurants that would deliver to those of us living in the wilderness of Lake Holiday (ahem, it's not that far), but I had never met them in person.

Piario welcomed us so warmly; we felt taken care of the entire evening. Our relationship continued to grow over the years, so Katie and I decided to learn a bit more about them while Piario's husband, Manuel, taught us how to make fresh pasta from scratch. Of course, we should have known that we'd be cared for the entire time. We enjoyed coffee and tea with homemade pastries as Piario flitted about, caring for our every need, all of us taking breaks to join Manuel in the kitchen to learn the next step and watch a master at work.

Their rapport, as we asked questions and they teased each other about their different viewpoints, fluidly moving between English and Italian as we all giggled, made us forget their actual answers. Their entire story poured out as we enjoyed the fruits of our, err, Manuel's, efforts. We may have literally gasped as we watched him add fresh tomatoes, lobster, and shrimp to the pan. Watch the video on our social media channels to enjoy the lessons with us, and if you haven't already, make reservations today! Be sure to ask about their wine dinners, they are some of the best double dates in Old Town where you can enjoy amazing food, wine, and conversation.

Visit Antica Trattoria at 25 S Indian Alley.

Anticatrattoriarestaurant.com



Warm coffeehouse with an authentic selection of espressos plus light snacks, soups and sandwiches.

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SEE *March events* BE SEEN

6 RHEA LANA'S CHILDREN'S CONSIGNMENT

Rhea Lana's of Winchester is hosting a Family Shopping Event! Get the entire family set for all things Spring & Summer!

[Facebook Link](#)

8 FLASHLIGHT EGG HUNT

This will be an evening hunt on the Preston Sports Complex turf fields with 6000 candy-filled eggs, and kids activities!

[Winchester Parks](#)

9 MINI MEMORIAL GARDENS

Families with children ages 3-17 can remember, create, plant, and share as they design mini-gardens. Plants, rocks to paint, and decorations will be included. [Blue Ridge Hospice](#)



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16 CELTIC FEST

Celebrate Winchester's Celtic heritage with food, crafts, live music, Irish dancing, and St. Paddy's brewery crawl. [Old Town](#)

29 ORCHID SHOW

Enjoy a huge display of blooming orchids, learn about growing orchids from the experts in the Lord Fairfax Orchid Society. [MSV](#)

THE EVANS HOME FOR CHILDREN



The Evans Home for Children, provides hope and support for families and children facing challenging circumstances by providing a unique model of care that sets it apart from traditional group homes. Unlike foster care, parents with children under the care of the Evans Home staff retain full legal parental rights and access to their children. This allows the parents time to deal with whatever is going on in their life whether that is time to attend substance abuse counseling, work multiple jobs in order to save money to ensure stable living arrangements, or another crisis. Under the leadership of Amy Rice, the executive director who stepped into her role nearly two and a half years ago, the organization continues its legacy of care and community support that has spanned over 75 years.

The Evans Home for Children operates on a house parent model, providing a stable and nurturing environment for boys and girls aged five to seventeen. House parent's have their own suite and rotate every 7 days. This model emphasizes consistency and familial relationships, allowing children to experience a sense of normalcy and belonging. The children, many of whom are teenagers, benefit from individualized attention and care, reinforcing the importance of education and personal development. They enjoy individual bedrooms, and grouped living areas to feel just like they are at home, an important feeling when going through change. The home's integration into the community, with children attending local schools, and being able to participate in activities and special events.

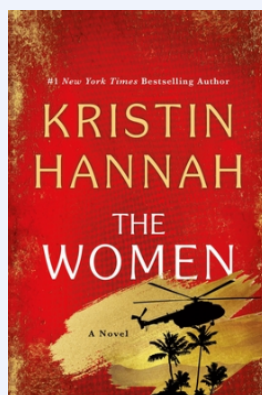
Rice's strategy extends beyond providing shelter and care; it includes outreach to families in crisis, offering them a lifeline during times of instability. The home's openness to direct communication with families is a critical component of its mission to serve as a resource and support system. This proactive approach enables the Evans Home to intervene effectively before situations escalate, ensuring that children remain safe while their families work towards stabilization. Rice was sure to emphasize that any parent can call the Evans Home themselves and discuss the issues they are having. Children can see their parents, and parents can remove their children at any time.

The challenges faced by the Evans Home, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscore the importance of adaptability and community support. The pandemic's impact on non-profits and the individuals they serve has been profound, with increased needs and changing dynamics in service delivery. Rice's leadership during this time has been pivotal in navigating these challenges, maintaining the home's operations, and ensuring continued support for children and families.

Looking forward, the Evans Home for Children, is exploring new ways to expand its services, including enhancing support for young adults transitioning out of care. This focus on the future reflects an understanding of the evolving needs of the community and a commitment to being a part of the solution.

Interested residents can reach out for donation and volunteering opportunities, and families can reach out to discuss any issues at [EvansHome.org](https://www.EvansHome.org).

Winchester Book Gallery Recommends:



Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant.

THE MANY HATS OF WILL LAWRENCE

Meet Will Lawrence, a modern-day Renaissance man whose varied interests, pursuits, and affable personality help him connect with everyone he meets. By day, he's a financial advisor at Edward Jones, board member for Access Independence, and member of the Winchester Kiwanis Club. But it's the combination of his other passions that sparked our interest.

Born in Maryland, Will came to Winchester with his family in fourth grade. Here he started drumming in school and joined the jazz and marching bands at James Wood High School. As he grew up, Will traded the school band for rock bands, most recently performing with Lesser Ape. The band provided Will with unforgettable experiences, including encounters with renowned acts like Vanilla Ice and REO Speedwagon.

For nearly a decade, he's been the voice behind a radio show all about gaming and entertainment on 100.9 The Line. You can hear the show Saturday mornings at 9am. It all started from his days of owning and operating four local video game stores. There he made connections that landed him the opportunity to provide media coverage at the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) for major players like Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo. Those connections later helped kickstart Shenandoah University's Esports program. Through his network of contacts, Will facilitated substantial donations of games and equipment, totaling nearly \$100,000, to support the university's burgeoning esports program.

In 2014, former Winchester residents Kat and Eric Latham called upon Will and other friends to invest in their vision of a brewery in Johnson City, TN. Together, the group founded Johnson City

Brewing Company, the city's first brewery. Celebrating its ten-year anniversary this year, the brewery has grown tremendously from its original one-barrel system to today's 15-barrel system and two locations. Will has deemed himself quality control for the operation. But amidst all these ventures, there's one thing that ties it all together – Will's knack for building relationships, one dad joke at a time. Whether he's crunching numbers, drumming up a beat, chatting on the airwaves, or brewing up a storm, Will has a way of creating meaningful and successful connections.



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& APRIL 9, 2024**

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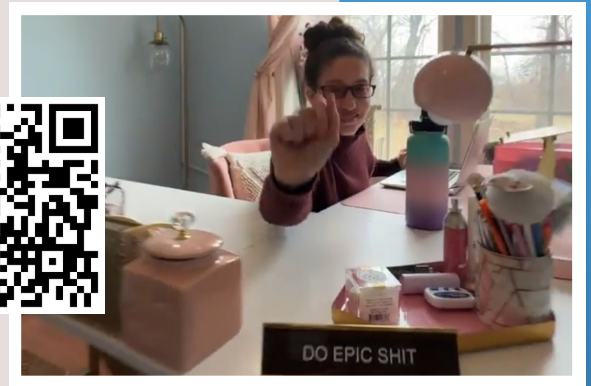
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MISTY WEAVER & KATIE JORDAN

Despite competition from two homes on the same street, by the same builder, our marketing made this home stand out. Professional video, social media reel, and 3D floor plan enticed buyers leading to the seller's desired outcome.

WATCH THE REEL!



OUR MARKETING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

- 5 showings scheduled before we went live
- Multiple offers received, over asking price
- Desired closing date negotiated for a smooth transition for the sellers

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