

Spotlight Article Featured in Regional Publications

Arts in the Middle Fine Arts Show

Northern Neck Allure Gallery Owner Jeff Cherry

Uses Social Media to Promote Arts and Sports

By Earl Simpson

Set a question before Jeff Cherry, and he goes after it with the enthusiasm of a lion after an antelope. That enthusiasm, plus considerable talent and experience, have made him a valuable component in any number of career ventures.

If you looked closely you might have seen him recently on National TV working a conference basketball tournament.

You can also see his footprints far closer to home, giving time and talent on the Northern Neck, where he owns and operates Allure Art Center, helps run the White Stone Business Association, area events, and in the Middle Peninsula where he is a resident and has worked with the Deltaville Maritime Museum and Deltaville 5K.

Currently, Cherry's diverse background makes him an asset to the Arts in the Middle (AIM) festival, scheduled this year for June 3-4 outside Urbanna. The AIM festival takes place under the canopy of oaks that tower over the lane to colonial Hewick Plantation. Approximately a hundred artists occupy the spaces beneath the trees in what is becoming one of the premier juried fine arts festival in the region.

Cherry, through his company Jeff Cherry Design and Photography, will take the appeal of this event to a wide audience through social media and more traditional marketing materials.

Cherry's experience makes him an important link between the AIM organizers and participating artists, who are attracted from all over the eastern United States. They come due partly to the incomparable venue, partly to the high quality of the other artists, and partly for the careful attention given to the festival by its organizers, among whom Cherry is a key figure.

His Northern Neck jewel, Allure Art Center in Whitestone, is an undertaking that for him fulfills the promise of decades of hard work—not as a profit center, but as a work of art itself. Cherry is an artist and comes from a family of builders, so rejuvenating the early twentieth century house in White Stone and making it a place suitable for the display of quality art – with lighting and spaces you might find in museums and the finest galleries—was the work of his own imagination and his own hands. Cherry likens the work on the old house to sculpture—his favorite art form.

Art has always been a focus of Cherry's life, and he majored in art at VCU. A series of unexpected turns took Cherry from painting class to the management of the electronic technologies necessary to support the colosseums and arenas that host March Madness.

When he was a student at VCU, an art professor challenged Cherry to produce a work of art on one of the first Apple Computers to arrive in the Art Department. The project ultimately led him to start his own business while still in college. His job was to introduce advertising companies to computers and show them how to use them to streamline their operations.

Cherry was soon working for the Martin Agency— a major advertising company based in Richmond. Eventually he was traveling around the country setting up advertising offices near operations centers of Martin clients like Mercedes and Coke.

After re-starting his old business, Cherry became a sponsor of the Colonial Athletic Association tournament. Always a sports fan, he attended games and, at one game, volunteered to take a look at a problem with some equipment. Major college basketball games require more and more complicated electronic equipment, especially when they are being broadcast. Cherry's problem-solving success led to regular jobs first checking, then managing the technologies at such events, a job he still does.

Through his second company, Jeff Cherry Associates, Cherry eventually started consulting with college conferences and coliseums to implement the technologies that enable them to host nationally broadcast sports events. His role has now grown into assisting with the management, marketing and photography involved in these events as well.

Jeff Cherry's energy and experience are good examples of the kind of talent that is making Arts in the Middle one of the premier springtime attractions in our locale.