

SPECIAL ISSUE 225 WINNERS
INSIDE

Richmond

magazine

25th Annual

Best & Worst



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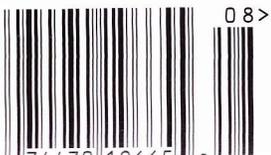
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AUGUST 2012



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Most Unusual House in Richmond:

"Igloo"/"Rock"/"Cave" house south of Willey Bridge

Known to some as Barney Rubble's house or "the melted marshmallow," the 500-square-foot section of Graham and Jennifer Gardner's home already attracts a lot of attention, but Graham Gardner has considered adding some flair. "We've thought about putting an inflatable Santa on top and a big pole that looks like the North Pole," he says.

2. Saguaro Hill on Staples Mill
3. Rice House

Best Workshops and/or Classes for Aspiring Writers:

James River Writers

433-3790, jamesriverwriters.org

Best-selling writer Tom Robbins will speak at the James River Writers' 10th annual conference on Oct. 20. The author of *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and *Jitterbug Perfume* graduated with honors from Virginia Commonwealth University and worked as a copy editor at the Richmond Times-Dispatch in his 20s.

2. Visual Arts Center
3. Valley Haggard

Best Private Golf Course:

Kinloch Golf Club

100 Kinloch Lane, Manakin-Sabot, 784-8000

This invitation-only golf club is home to Marvin "Vinny" Giles II, an American amateur golfer who is best known for winning the U.S. Amateur and the British Amateur golf tournaments. "The type of surface, the infrastructure and the staff that we have is just top of the heap," says Kinloch Director of Operations Phil Owenby.

2. (Tie) Country Club of Virginia; Hermitage Country Club
3. Willow Oaks Country Club

Best Amusement or Activity Park:

Kings Dominion

16000 Theme Park Way, Doswell, 876-5000

Kings Dominion transforms into Jurassic Park this summer, when 36 life-sized animatronic dinosaurs arrive at a 6-acre section of the park. "It's a great educational experience," says Communications Manager Gene Petriello. The exhibit includes an excavation-site replica, a kids' paleontological dig site and a dinosaur-themed gift shop.

2. Maymont
3. Byrd Park

Best Public Golf Course:

Independence Golf Club

600 Founders Bridge Blvd., 897-8641

Designed by golf course architect Tom Fazio, who has more U.S. courses ranked in the top 100 than anyone else in the business, Independence Golf Club is "very player-friendly," club director Mike West says. "It's not the kind of golf course where you hunt for a lot of golf balls."

2. Hunting Hawk Golf Club
3. Belmont Golf Course

Best Playground:

Mary Munford Elementary School

211 Westmoreland St., 780-6267

The climbing structure and the swings are the most popular features of Richmond's first fully accessible playground. "It's for the whole area," Principal Greg Muzik says of the playground that was built five years ago with help from the Munford Parent Teacher Organization and the community.

2. Deep Run Park
3. Huguenot Park

Best Local Film Festival:

French Film Festival

827-3456,

frenchfilmfestival.us

The largest festival of French films in the United States attracted 21,000 admissions in 2012. "French cinema is really rich and diverse," says festival co-founder and University of Richmond professor Françoise Ravaux-Kirkpatrick. Last year, the festival, held at the Byrd Theatre in Carytown, showed 15 features and 15 shorts.

2. James River Film Festival
3. The 48-Hour Film Project



Best Local Sporting Event or Tournament:

Richmond Flying Squirrels baseball

359-FUNN (3866),
squirrelsbaseball.com

Squirrels weren't the only airborne mammals at a sold-out game this season when a human cannonball launched himself onto home plate. "We try to bring the unusual to the ballpark," says Vice President and COO Todd "Parny" Parnell. All of the 71 home games each season have fireworks, themes, giveaways or special appearances.

2. Monument Avenue 10K
3. CAA Tournament