

TEDxRVA

A PLACE WORTH SHARING

I had the good fortune, thanks to Brian Pitney & Sands Anderson, to be with 1300 RVAers at TEDxRVA last Friday, at the Carpenter Theater. Andy Stefanovich, Venture Richmond and many volunteers put together an energizing group of speakers. Topics from the NASA Mission to Mars to improving our community one meal at a time at the dinner table. If you are familiar with LMR (Leadership Metro Richmond) this was an LMR mini-camp. Bringing creatives, scientist, community leaders, educators, entrepreneurs and entertainers from around the region to inspire and share RVA treasures.

There were too many great TED talks to mention; however there were a few that will stay with me for a while. Of course you can binge watch it free at: <http://www.tedxrva.com/live-stream/>. This year's theme was UNCOMMON, and it was. Beginning with Andy Stefanovich, RVA's own TED talker and MC for this event. Andy was outstanding. His energy is infectious and his ability to distill Big Data into useable takeaways is amazing. The tribute he gave to Richmond's godfather of the creative movement, Mike Hughes, was inspiring and touching. He kept the day on track (which ironically is usually not his role as a disrupter) and kept us all in context of how these ideas can change Richmond for the better.

The speakers began with [Brig White & John McAdorey](#) who created a campaign to bring Grammy winning band the Foo Fighters to Richmond. They ignored and overcame all the norms of not being band promoters and even simple things like not knowing how many port-a-johns are needed for a huge crowd. The event was so successful it has been copied by cities around the world. The band now has changed the way they select their tour dates. They are allowing cities to decide where they go. Amazing!

Lucinda Scala Quinn Editor, Author and Love Cook describes her childhood and role as mom to three boys centered on cooking simple fresh food and bonding around the dinner table. I use the phrase "Love Cook" because of Lucinda's perspective of how food-fellowship-love-family-and community are all intertwined. Her passion for food and people helps me believe that we can change the world, our community and our families by cooking and eating together.

Ryan Abrahamsen's goal is to inspire a new generation of young people who love the outdoors through his Richmond-based website [Terrain360.com](http://www.Terrain360.com). He and his team have traveled around the globe shooting incredible video in some of nature's most pristine places. His commitment shows in the quality of his work. You can see it for yourself and then plan a trip to one of these destinations. You do not have to take a child, but if you do you will make Ryan and the child happy. <http://www.Terrain360.com> and <http://www.jrava.org>

Dr. Joel Levine spent 41 years at NASA thinking, modeling and directly involved in Mars missions. His vision and work will likely result in manned missions to Mars by 2035 almost 65 years after Dr. Levine began his career. Again, not to over use the word, but, amazing. You can see some of the future planned missions at:

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/mars/missions/beyond-index.html

If we are lucky maybe Dr. Levine will come to future TEDxRVA events to give an update.

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While the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has been a part of Virginia life since the 1960s what they have done under the leadership of Will Baker is UNCOMMON. The organization has created the greenest building in the world. Using all of the latest green technology and likely creating some of their own they built a new environmental center in Virginia Beach. Will Baker and his colleagues have proved that green construction is viable today. <http://www.cbf.org/how-we-save-the-bay/programs-initiatives/brock-environmental-center>

Micah White is a comedian with a purpose. In 2013 he started RVA Has Talent to work with inmates at the Richmond correctional center to develop job skills, business plans and receive coaching by profession entertainers. His non-profit is no joke. They are preparing inmates to have a life after incarceration. His talk was funny and animated, but left me with the knowledge that there are those who are contributing to our community in significant and meaningful ways.

To finish the day with a bang Gordon Stettinius and Terry Brown described and demonstrated their photography project gone viral. Both photographers, the two accidentally created a fun, zany exhibit that has and likely will continue to be seen at galleries here in Richmond. To describe what they did is not enough. It can't be done. This is just something you have to see and it was a fantastic way to close an incredible day.

As I said in the beginning, there were many more provocative, thought-inflaming speakers at this year's TEDxRVA event. I suggest you go to the link to see it all for yourself. *More importantly, I suggest you get your ticket to the 2016 event as soon as they are available.*