

She has also successfully navigated the bureaucracy of Old Colonial Williamsburg, a division of the National Park Service, to close a substantial iron sale for their blacksmith shop. “That transaction took months,” confesses Peres, whose reporter’s research abilities and tenacity serve her well.


Trade-Offs

Of course, running any business in a downturn economy is stressful. But Peres now realizes that her old life, while seemingly stable, had surprising amounts of hidden stress. “The days were long, sometimes 18 hours and there’s the deadline pressures and the feeling that you’re only as good as your last story.” She finds relief in smaller town living with its slower pace. “People here are generally friendly and polite ... People were not always friendly and polite in Chicago, let’s just put it that way,” Peres laughs.

Before making the leap from the Windy City, it was a scary time for Peres. “The last couple of months before I left [the Chicago Tribune], I had a lot of anxiety. I didn’t know how much of my personal identity was wrapped up in my job and I was afraid of going through a big bereavement for that loss,” she says of her 28-year career at the newspaper.

In her position, people recognized her name and promptly returned her calls. “People don’t always return my calls these days,” confesses Peres, “but I’ve been so busy and challenged by my new life there has been no time to miss my old life. It’s hard to be miserable when you’re having a good time.”

These good times in the Twin Ports have also included plenty of culture. “Since I’ve been here I’ve been to the ballet, the symphony and art museums,” says Peres, who only really misses the culturally diverse neighborhoods in Chicago. There she’d indulge cravings for Indian, German and Polish delicacies and “really cheap Asian food.”

The last unexpected transformation for Peres was her opinion of the austere, industrial landscapes around St. Louis Bay. The light gray silos that dot the shoreline share the same hue as the frozen water and winter sky. “I used to think it was bleak,” she admits, “but now I find it quite beautiful.” 



Above: Timber, artistically shaped by years inside a grain elevator hopper, is sought after by artisans and builders. Below: A tunnel, partially dismantled, inside one of the grain elevators.

