



# Shore First

## 99th annual Pony Penning

A Chincoteague Island tradition continues | Preview coverage inside

# Shore First

The Eastern Shore of Virginia's  
monthly newsmagazine

Published at the beginning  
of each month  
since May 2017

A PUBLICATION  
OF CAPE MEDIA LLC

3257B Main Street  
P.O. Box 47  
Exmore, VA 23350

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# Shore First | Events



SHORE FIRST FILE PHOTO

A Saltwater Cowboy looks over the herd of Chincoteague Ponies after the 2023 swim.

## 99th annual Pony Penning set

The community is gearing up for Chincoteague's 99th annual Pony Penning, which returns at the end of July.

Each year on the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday of July, tens of thousands flock to the island to catch a glimpse of the ponies during the swim from Assateague to Chincoteague or to take home a foal after the Pony Auction. This year, the swim will be held on Wednesday, July 24, and the auction will be on Thursday, July 25.

The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, which owns and maintains the herd, has announced it will be a late swim — between noon and 1 p.m., but time is subject to change depending on the tides.

An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people attend the annual event.

Festivities kick off the Saturday before the Pony Swim with the southern herd roundup and con-

tinue through Friday, when the ponies swim back across the channel to Assateague Island.

### Gathering the herds

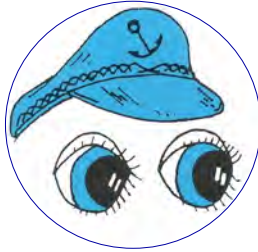
Pony Penning kicks off on Saturday, July 20, with the southern herd roundup starting around 7 a.m.

The Saltwater Cowboys — members of the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company on horseback — will ride to the southern end of Assateague Island to guide ponies and their foals into the southern corral.

The public is invited to the corral on Beach Road, where the southern herd will stay through Tuesday.

The corral is in front of the Woodland Trail parking lot, on Assateague, just off the road that

(Continued on page 4)



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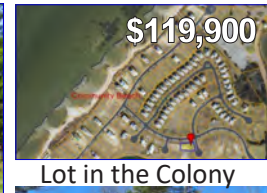
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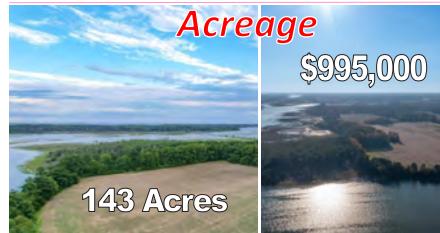
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# Pony Penning

(Continued from page 2)

leads to the beach. Visitors can park in the Woodland Trail lot or along Beach Road.

Those who park in the Woodland Trail lot will not be able to leave until all ponies are in the corral and the gates are closed.

The next Pony Penning event takes place Sunday with the northern herd roundup of more than 100 ponies. This event is closed to the public.

On Monday, July 22, around 6 a.m., the pony beach walk begins. The Saltwater Cowboys will release the northern herd from its corral and walk the ponies down Assateague beach to join the herd in the southern corral.

To watch the beach walk, plan to arrive at Assateague Island National Seashore by 6 a.m. to park. The seashore opens at 5 a.m. and guests must park before 6:30 a.m. to watch the walk, according to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge staff.

On Tuesday morning, July 23, around 9 a.m., a veterinarian will check the ponies to ensure each equine is healthy for the swim from Assateague to Chincoteague the next day.

The public can view the ponies in the southern corral during the vet checks. Parking is available in the Woodland Trail lot.

Buyback foals will also be selected Tuesday morning, ensuring enough colts and fillies return to the island to replenish the herds.

## Swim day

Wednesday morning, July 24, is Pony Swim day, when the Saltwater Cowboys guide the ponies across the channel from Assateague Island to Chincoteague, where the foals will be auctioned the next day.

The swim this year will take place between noon and 1 p.m., during slack tide, when the current is weakest and the ponies can make the swim across the channel.

The swim takes place at Pony Swim Lane, just south of Veterans Memorial Park, at 7427 Memorial Park Drive.



FILE PHOTO

## Saltwater Cowboys lead the Chincoteague Ponies from the swim site to the carnival grounds.

Attendees should prepare to spend several hours in the marsh and wear clothes they do not mind getting muddy, including close-toed shoes or rubber boots.

No seating is available at the swim site. Bring sunscreen, water, and bug spray for the wait for the ponies to arrive.

Once the ponies hit the water, the swim lasts roughly three minutes as the herds cross the channel from Assateague to Chincoteague island.

Chincoteague provides a free shuttle service beginning at 5 a.m. between various locations on the island and the swim site at Veterans Memorial Park.

Visitors coming to the island for the day should catch the shuttle at the Chincoteague Municipal Center at 6155 Community Drive.

The first foal to reach the shore af-

ter the swim each year is dubbed King or Queen Neptune and will be raffled during a drawing at the carnival grounds around 7 p.m. that evening. The ticketholder must be at the carnival to win.

Tickets are sold nightly at the carnival, which runs 7 to 11 p.m. July 4, 5, 6, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 and at Pony Swim Lane during the wait for the swim.

After a short rest, the ponies will parade down Main Street to the corral at the Chincoteague carnival grounds, 3648 Main St., where they will stay until the auction Thursday morning.

## Pony Auction

The Pony Auction kicks off at 8 a.m. on Thursday, July 25, at the carnival grounds.

The auction is the fire company's largest annual fundraiser. A

portion of the proceeds helps the company maintain and care for the ponies.

The auction provides an opportunity to see the foals up close. Plan to arrive early, as the event draws a large crowd. Bring a folding chair, hat, sunscreen, and water for the roughly four-hour event.

The auction will again be a hybrid in-person and online event, after bidding went online during the coronavirus pandemic.

Preregistration is not required for bidders at the live event but is required to bid online.

Visit the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company's Facebook page for the auction preview and to register online.

The adult ponies and remaining foals will make the swim back to Assateague Friday morning at a time to be determined.

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# Grilled soft shell scampi is a treat for the summer

If you're driving down the main drag here on the Eastern Shore of Virginia — also known as U.S. Route 13 — one of the best things you can do for yourself is to turn off the beaten path.

All roads lead to the water eventually — seaside or bayside. It doesn't matter. Chances are you'll stumble on a seafood shack in your travels.

And this time of year, they're all sure to have fresh soft shell crabs. They're a delicacy here, as well as around the world.

Up until a couple years ago, breading and pan-frying was my go-to technique to prepare a soft shell crab.

But after putting them on the grill, I fear I can never go back.

First off, it was easier and way less mess — and that's always a win. But the flavor is why I can never go



Laura Davis

back.

It is sweet, tender crab with a heady dose of smokiness from the grill.

I brush with fresh garlic herb butter while cooking, which helped them to not stick to the grill, as well as imparting a ton more flavor.

After a few minutes on the grill they plump up to pure perfection.

I wanted to pair them with pasta, so I made a quick scampi sauce using the usual suspects — butter, garlic, lemon, and white wine.

I added a few cherry tomatoes and basil for a little extra flair and color. It was just enough to make the pasta moist. It paired perfectly with the crab — making all those flavors sing a little louder.

Move over, shrimp scampi. There's a new kid on the block.



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA DAVIS

Grilled soft-shell scampi is a great way to enjoy soft shell crabs — an Eastern Shore delicacy.

Laura Davis, of Chincoteague Island, is a food writer and blogger at [www.tideandthyme.com](http://www.tideandthyme.com). Her recipes have been featured on Huffington Post and [www.craftbeer.com](http://www.craftbeer.com), among other publications.

She is a frequent guest on WBOC-TV's *DelmarvaLife* show, where she showcases her culinary talents for viewers. Her work appears monthly in *Shore First*.

# Grilled soft shell scampi

- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 cup salted butter (2 sticks)
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 large lemons
- 4 large (prime or jumbo) soft shell crabs, cleaned and prepped
- 16 oz. fettuccine pasta
- 1 1/2 cups dry white wine (like Chardonnay)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 10 leaves fresh basil, chiffonnaded
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground pepper

Fill a large stockpot with water and 1/4 cup kosher salt and bring to boil over high heat. Prepare pasta according to directions on package. Set aside.

Prepare the garlic butter for basting. Melt a stick of butter in a small saucepan. Slice one of the lemons, and add 2 or 3 slices to the melted butter, as well as half (1 tbsp.) of the minced garlic, along with the thyme and rosemary. Let cook for one minute to release flavors, then remove from heat and set aside.

Heat a grill to medium-high. Season crabs with a pinch of salt and a drizzle of olive oil on both sides. Place on grill, and cook for about 6 minutes on each side — basting with the garlic butter while cooking.

Make the scampi sauce by melting the other stick of butter in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the remaining garlic, cherry tomatoes, white wine, and the juice of the other lemon. Increase heat to high, and let reduce for about 5 minutes. Stir in half of the fresh basil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.

Place a pile of pasta on a large plate. Place a grilled soft shell on top, then pour about 1/2 cup of the scampi sauce on top. Garnish with fresh basil and the remaining lemon slices.



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA DAVIS

**Soft shell crabs can be prepared battered and fried — or on the grill.**

# Our Indian place names: A movable feast

Accomack, Chincoteague, Onancock, Machipongo — today the Eastern Shore revels in Indian place names that dot the map. But these Indian

names do not necessarily refer to the same places now as they did when the Indians used them.

As the English filled the land, what had been the names of the Indian tribes who inhabited the peninsula became at first the names of regions and

sections of the Shore, and only later the names of specific English towns and villages.

Those towns that bear Indian names today may or may not be on or even near the site of the old Indian villages, with the result that modern readers of the early history of the Shore should not assume that an Indian place name then meant the same thing as it does now.

Accomack is the most obvious case in point. The Indians of this name lived nowhere near the modern town of Accomac, or even in Accomack County, but on King's Creek in lower Northampton County, in the region of Cheriton and Cape Charles. Because they were the closest tribe when the English arrived, "Accomack" became

the term the English used to refer to the entire Eastern Shore (in the 1600s Virginia was sometimes known as "Ye Colony of Virginia and Ye Kingdome of Accawmacke").

In time the Indian name Accomack was applied to the upper county of the peninsula, not to the lower one where the Accomacks had lived.

For many years after that, Drummondtown, the county seat, was known as Accomack Court House. It was only in 1893 that Drummondtown officially took the name "Accomac" — without the final "k," to the ongoing confusion of virtually everyone who does not live on the Shore.

The result is that the ancient Indian name is preserved today, but at a location fully 40 miles distant from where the Indians of that name lived.

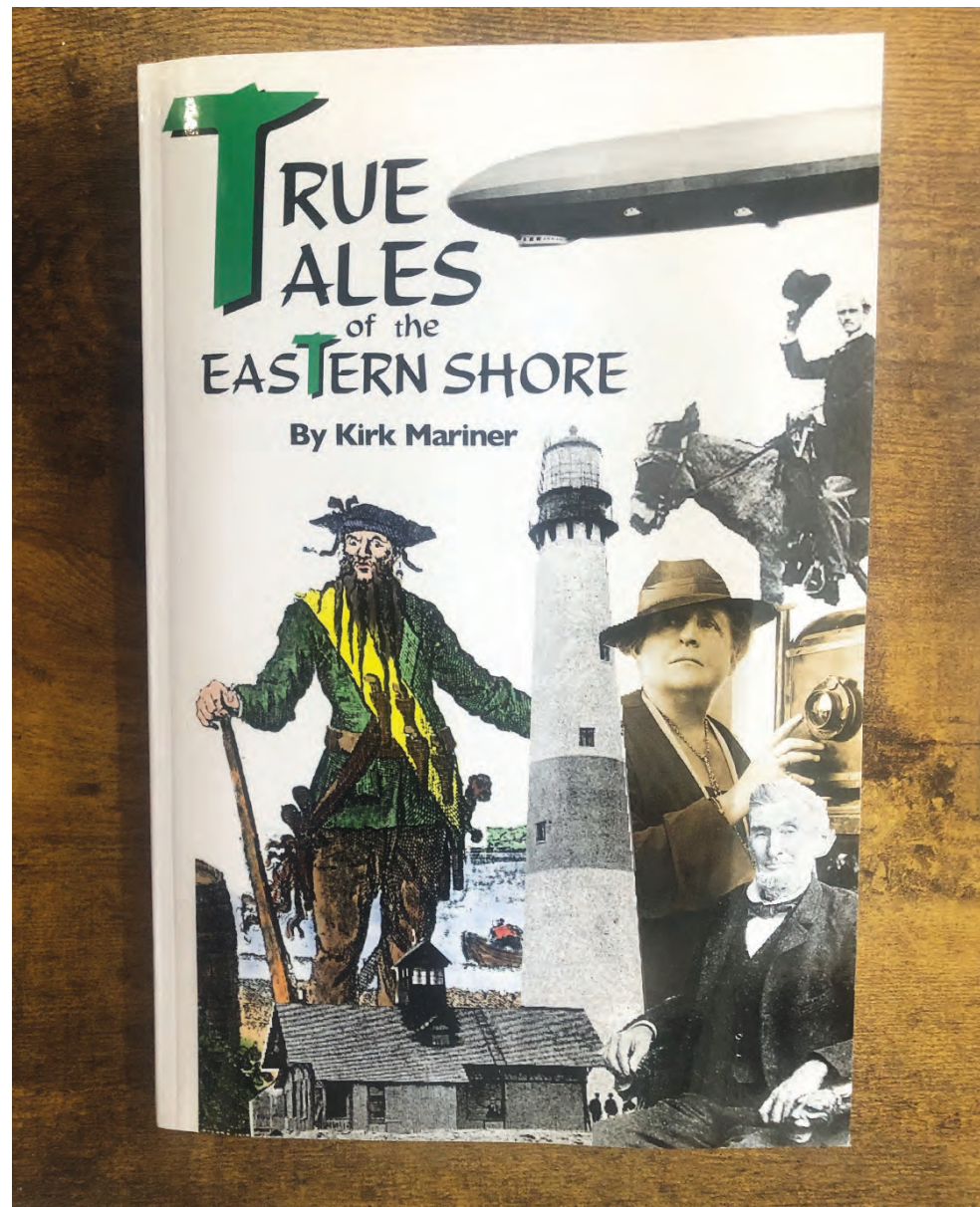
Pocomoke is a similar case. In the old parlance, Pocomoke was that section of the bayside bordering on the Pocomoke Sound and Pocomoke River. So when the Methodists established a church in this region in 1855, just east of what is Sanford, it was only natural to name it Pocomoke Church.

Newtown, up the Pocomoke River and across the state boundary in Maryland, did not change its name to Pocomoke City until 1878. Since then, the Indian name has been associated with a specific town in Maryland, though a portion of Virginia has an older claim to it.

(Continued on page 9)



Kirk Mariner



COURTESY PHOTO

This excerpt is from "True Tales of the Eastern Shore," by Kirk Mariner.

The Rev. Kirk Mariner was an Eastern Shore author, historian, and United Methodist minister whose book, "Off 13: The Eastern Shore of Virginia Guidebook," is an indispensable volume for natives and visitors alike. Mariner died in 2017. His work appears in Eastern Shore First courtesy of Miona Publications. This first appeared in his book, "True Tales of the Eastern Shore."

# Mariner

(Continued from page 8)

Nassawadox, similarly, was in the 1600s the section bordering on the creek of that name, and Nassawadox Meetinghouse, built by the Quakers in the 1600s, stood not in today's Nassawadox but in Franktown.

Machipongo was associated not with central Northampton County but with the seaside of lower Accomack and upper Northampton, near the vicinity of the Machipongo River.

Assawoman was not simply today's village but an entire region, which included the creek, the island, and the bay of the same name — and this particular Indian name is also found as far north as Delaware.

No Indian name took longer to settle down than Messongo. Messongo Creek, on the bayside in upper Accomack, has borne its name since the earliest days of English settlement and by the mid-1700s Messongo (sometimes "Messongoes" or "Messongers" in the old records) referred to the general region on both sides of the creek. When a small community formed south of the creek, near the point where it is bridged by the Bayside Road at today's "Skin Point," its post office was given the name Messongo in 1837.

Since that time Messongo has jumped on the map, not once but twice. In 1893 the original post office closed (the old village was by then declining), and when a new Messongo post office opened in 1900 it was four miles west at an entirely different

point on the north side of the creek, at Hammock's Landing between Sanford and Saxis.

This, officially, was Messongo until 1904, when this post office also ceased to function. Then in 1909 a third Messongo post office opened in yet another location, a mile north of the creek, a mile south of Grotons, about three miles from the original site. Though this post office no longer functions, the small village that clusters around it is the latest location of "Messongo."

Though modern Chincoteague clings tenaciously to the tradition that the Indians inhabited the island of that name, in fact the early records prove that the Chincoteague Indians lived on the mainland opposite the island.

In early English usage, "Chincoteague" referred not so much to today's island as to an entire region of the upper Accomack seaside. Corbin Hall, the elegant plantation north of Horntown, was "Chincoteague Farm." Chincoteague Baptist Church is to this day located not on the island but a mile north of New Church, where it was founded in 1786 when this neighborhood was known as "Chincoteague."

The post office at Atlantic on the mainland was known as Chincoteague as late as 1872 (the island's post office, in that same year, was named "Gingotig"). Though in our own time "Chincoteague" means a specific community on a specific island, one cannot make that assumption in reading the local records throughout most of the Shore's long history.

## Ladies Golf Association tournament slated

The Ladies Golf Association of the Eastern Shore Yacht and Country Club will be holding its annual charity golf tournament to benefit the Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence on Tuesday, Aug. 13.

The LGA has been supporting the ESCADV for many years and invites local golfers to join them. The

tournament is open to teams of two adult female golfers.

Participants do not have to be a member of the ESY&CC to enter.

All entries must have a GHIN number to enter. The entry fee includes a practice round on the day before the tournament for cart fees only.

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# Chincoteague's first brush with fame

Chincoteague Island is one of America's favorite family resorts on the East Coast today, but in the late 19th century the island was largely unknown and unexplored by the national media.

That changed in the summer of 1876.

Chincoteague's sudden launch to national prominence involved a railroad that no longer exists, a city long ago swallowed by the sea, and a talented young man from



Curtis Badger

Wilmington, Del., who desperately wanted to escape his family's leather processing business.

A railroad linking the Shore with northern cities opened on April 7, 1876, when the Worcester Railroad christened a spur to Franklin City to mine the great wealth of seafood being harvested in the waters around Chincoteague Island. Freight and passenger ferry service turned Franklin City into a prosperous outpost, and it linked Chincoteague with wealthy northern capitalists and vacationers.

Howard Pyle was 23 and single at the time, an aspiring artist and writer who feared a bleak future in his fami-



One of artist Howard Pyle's sketches of ponies on Chincoteague Island. Pyle, later to become a famous artist, attended several Pony Penning events.

IMAGE COURTESY CURTIS BADGER

ly's leather business in Wilmington.

When news broke of the railroad link to Chincoteague, Pyle sensed an opportunity for adventure and a chance to launch a career as a freelance writer and illustrator. That summer, Pyle bought a train ticket for Franklin City, took a steamer to Chincoteague, and booked a room at the brand-new Atlantic Hotel for a few weeks.

Pyle spent his time making sketches and interviewing local people as he explored Chincoteague and Assateague. He attended the early Pony Pennings and made numerous drawings of the roundup and branding. His article, "Chincoteague – The Island of

Ponies," appeared in the April 1877 issue of "Scribner's Monthly," along with 11 of his sketches.

The article described Chincoteague as... "an island possessed of peculiarities shared by no other portion of the eastern United States..."

Through Scribner's, Pyle introduced Chincoteague to an audience that had been largely unfamiliar with the coastal island. Scribner's was one of the most popular magazines in America at the time, and it's fair to say that Chincoteague's current status as a tourist destination began with a rail spur, a steamboat ride, and a talented and ambitious young writer and illustrator from Delaware.

Pyle successfully avoided the leather business, moved to New York City, and soon became one of the best-known illustrators in the country. Pyle is credited as a founder of the "Brandywine School" of painting, which includes the noted artist, Andrew Wyeth.

Encouraged by the success of his work on Chincoteague, Pyle expanded his range and in May 1879 published an article in "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" titled "A Peninsular Canaan," a look at what we today regard as the Delmarva Peninsula. Northampton County was featured prominently in that article.

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Curtis J. Badger is a Delmarva native who majored in English at Salisbury University and, with the exception of four years traveling as a U.S. Air Force photojournalist, has enjoyed a career photographing and writing about his native coast. His books include "Salt Tide: Cycles and Currents of Life Along the Coast," "Bellevue Farm: Exploring Virginia's Coastal Countryside," and many others. He lives in Accomack County.

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# Legends, memories of the Chincoteague Pony Penning

Every Eastern Shore kid remembers waking up to the sound of cicadas on a hot July morning.

In the good old days, air conditioning was considered a luxury. Most people just left the windows up and circulated the hot air with an old metal fan.



Barry Mears

There was always the hope that a good old-fashioned thunderstorm might roll up the Chesapeake Bay and cool things down.

My sister and I didn't usually have a hard time falling asleep. We would

spend our nights in the backyard catching lightning bugs after long days of fun in the sun. So much fun and so many memories were created with a simple Mason jar with a few holes poked in the lid.

Some summer mornings were much more significant than others. I remember counting down the days to the last Wednesday in July.

From the eyes of a child, the Eastern Shore tradition of Pony Penning was quite the adventure. Judging by the number of adults in attendance every year, it is safe to say everyone gets caught up in the magic.

The two-day event, which consists of the pony swim and auction, is the largest fundraiser for the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company. The event has a rich history

attached to it.

For generations, people have debated how the herd got on Assateague. Some contend that the ponies were brought to the island sometime in the 17th century.

Like most subjects with no eyewitnesses, the door is wide open for all sorts of theories. Many believe that the herd arrived at the beach in a much more dramatic fashion.

The Atlantic coast has been a popular shipping route dating back to the 16th century. According to legend, a Spanish galleon filled with gold and livestock sank in the waters off Assateague Island.

Numerous animals reportedly survived the event and made their way to the sands of Assateague Beach. With acres to roam and a lot of food, the herd is believed to have survived and grown despite the odds.

One truth that cannot be disputed is that the wild ponies were claimed and brought back to local farms. Sheep were also abundant on the island at the time, so they were rounded up and relocated as well. These appear to be the humble beginnings of what has since become known around the globe as Pony Penning.

While the sheep population eventually faded into the past, the pony population continued to thrive and reproduce.

The early 20th century was a dreadful time for Chincoteague Island, as a couple of devastating fires left the town struggling to rebuild. In 1922, the causeway connecting Chincoteague to the mainland was near completion. To protect the island, the residents realized they needed their

(Continued on page 13)



COURTESY PHOTO

This excerpt is from "Living Shoreborn," by Barry Mears.

Barry Mears is the author of "Living Shoreborn," which was edited by his daughter, Kamryn Mears, and published in 2023. He is also the founder of the popular Shoreborn Facebook page, which delves daily into the history and culture of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Passages from his popular book, which is sold all over the Eastern Shore, will be printed monthly in Shore First.

Mears said the name "Shoreborn" actually came from a family member who during conversations quipped as an affirmation, "as sure as you're born."

# Shoreborn

(Continued from page 12)

own fire company. This marked the start of the modern era of Pony Penning.

In 1924, it was decided that some of the herd would be sold to help offset the costs of the new fire equipment. Even then, a foal might sell for \$25 to \$50. The fire company became the official owners and keepers of the wild Assateague Ponies.

In the 1920s, crowds of over 25,000 people gathered to witness the exciting event. The swim has been an annual favorite ever since. My sister, Valerie, and I were no strangers to Chincoteague Ponies as children, thanks to my grandfather. The experience never seemed to get old.

Every boy grew up watching Westerns on television. These were real horses and cowboys from the Eastern Shore, not your typical trail-riding cowboy. These guys earned the honorable nickname of "Saltwater Cowboys." These are proud members of the fire company that mount up to help gather the herd.

I remember Pop stopping to talk to everyone as we arrived on the island. He knew all the Saltwater Cowboys, including Jack Brittingham, John Wesley Bloxom, and David Savage. All these men were on horseback and ready to ride. Their horses were well-groomed and well-mannered. They had to be,

because many of the activities take place within feet of the spectators.

As we moved closer to the channel, Harry Stanley Thornton, and Billy and Delmas Taylor were on horseback monitoring the tide. Slack tide, a brief period when the water is not moving, is the best time for the ponies to swim. When the time is right, the Saltwater Cowboys guide the ponies into the water and stay with them until the last one has safely made the crossing.

Pop used to lift me up on his shoulders to get a better view. Hanging around in the marsh in the middle of summer is not for the faint of heart. Gnats, mosquitoes, and horseflies are among the legion of on-lookers; this is all part of the charm of such an event.

Once the ponies are safely on the Chincoteague side, they are escorted down Ridge Road to the carnival grounds. The streets are lined with locals and tourists, creating a parade atmosphere. The ponies are then given the opportunity to rest and receive a checkup from a local veterinarian. Many of the herd will be returned to graze the marshes of Assateague. The events on Wednesday will now come to an end, and Thursday will bring a new crowd.

In keeping with the tradition, some of the ponies will be auctioned off. The days of a \$50 foal are long gone. As the event gains popularity, the price of a Chincoteague Pony reflects the commitment required to maintain a healthy herd.



SHORE FIRST FILE PHOTO  
Volunteers hold a foal at the 2023 Pony Auction, which raises money for the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company.

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# Billy Beebe, son of iconic family, remembered for love of island

BY JANET BERNOSKY

Shore First

Chincoteague lost a member of an iconic family when Billy King Beebe passed away on May 24, after a brief but courageous battle with cancer.

Beebe and his wife, Bonnie, could literally look outside the kitchen window of their home and see the Beebe Ranch, where Billy was raised.

In fact, their townhouse development was built on land formerly owned by Clarence and Ida Beebe, Billy's grandparents, who were made famous by the book "Misty of Chincoteague."

Looking out the window in early April, Bonnie knew something was wrong. Her energetic husband was sitting down as he gave a Beebe Ranch tour to some visitors — still one of his favorite pastimes even though Beebe and his sister had sold the ranch in 2023 to the Museum of Chincoteague Island.

He had been a bit more fatigued recently and Bonnie chalked it up to him getting older, along with busy days spent helping others.

As they sat down to dinner and talked about their day, they realized they both had repeat calls from the same number and thought it wise to call back.

It was Billy's doctor and the news wasn't good. They were told to finish their dinner, then drive immediately to the emergency room at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional Hospital in Salisbury Md. His records would be sent on ahead and be there when they arrived.

Billy was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, so rare that the oncologists at TidalHealth felt they didn't have the ability to treat him at their hospital. He was instead transferred to ChristianaCare Hospital in Delaware.

After they tried two different types of chemotherapy, the cancer was so aggressive that it claimed Billy's life in 45 short days.

His family brought him home to Chincoteague the day before he passed away.

Bonnie shared memories of her husband of 46



COURTESY PHOTO

**In a photo featured in the December 1962 issue of "National Geographic" about the Ash Wednesday storm in March of that year, Billy Beebe poses on the steps of the Beebe Ranch on Chincoteague with his younger brother, Lee, his mother, Jeanette Beebe, Misty, and her filly, Stormy. A pregnant Misty rode out the storm inside the house after the family had to be evacuated by helicopter due to extensive flooding.**

years, including how they met in March 1977. Billy, who was working in Newport News, happened to attend a local church service with his buddy. He took notice of the pretty lady playing the piano that day.

Shortly after, Billy was part of a group working on some repairs at the church, which happened to be two doors down from the home where Bonnie lived.

Over the years, Billy joked about how frequently she went in and out of the house that day trying

to get his attention.

It worked and they went on their first date that night. They were married in September of that year.

Eventually, they had two daughters, Rebecca and Danielle. Rebecca Beebe Farrell fondly remembers Billy as the "fun dad."

"He would just get down and play with us as kids. He was like a big kid himself," she said.

Billy began his career as a shipbuilding apprentice with Newport News Shipbuilding in 1971

(Continued on page 15)

# Billy Beebe

(Continued from page 14)

after graduating from Chincoteague High School.

He had attained the status of master ship-builder by the time he retired in 2013 after 42 years.

“He had so many different jobs there over the years; he knew that place inside and out,” Bonnie said. In fact, she said it was often joked that Billy could run that place better than its chief executive

“The truth is, he probably could,” she said.

Beebe also served his country as a Virginia National Guard reservist, enlisting in 1973 and retiring in 2013. He served both stateside and abroad, including in Afghanistan and at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Beebes moved to Chincoteague full-time in 2014 after Billy retired. He was a friend to a great many on the island, always lending a helping hand when he could.

“He also so loved to gather over coffee with the local folks in the morning at vari-

ous restaurants, talking and catching up on news,” she said.

Indeed, in his obituary, it was written, “if you met Billy once, you were a friend for life.”

After selling his beloved Beebe Ranch, his childhood home, to the Museum of Chincoteague Island last year, Billy took great comfort in knowing it would be preserved for future generations.

Bonnie mentioned that, as a very young child, Billy would hear the loud roar of Grandpa Clarence Beebe’s truck engine a few houses away from the ranch. He would dash outside to the edge of the road and stick his thumb out like a hitchhiker for Clarence to pick him up.

Grandpa always obliged.

■ *The Beebe family asks those who would like to honor Billy Beebe’s memory to consider a donation to the Museum of Chincoteague Island specially for the upcoming barn rebuilding project at the Beebe Ranch. Contact the museum at 757-336-6117 for more information. Checks may be mailed to the museum at 7125 Maddox Blvd., Chincoteague, VA 23336. Please list “Billy” or “Barn” in the memo section.*



COURTESY PHOTO

Billy Beebe, who died earlier this year, pets a pony. Beebe and his sister sold the famous Beebe Ranch in 2023 to the Museum of Chincoteague Island.

## Fall Classes Begin August 26th!



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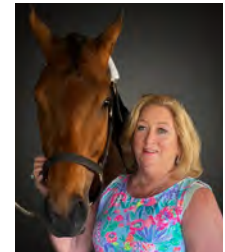
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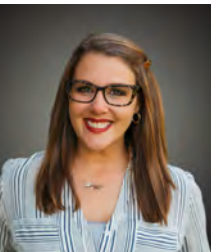
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Dana Dillon (804) 937-4102



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HAPPY

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# Weitzel named professor emeritus at ESCC

Eastern Shore Community College awarded retired Assistant Professor Paul Weitzel the status of professor emeritus during the 2024 Spring Commencement on Wednesday, May 8.

The establishment of the status of professor emeritus is recommended as a method of honoring teaching faculty for meritorious service to the college.

To be eligible, the faculty member must be retired and usually will have the rank of associate professor or professor with a minimum of 10 years of service in the VCCS and have made a significant, meritorious contribution to the college or the VCCS.

Weitzel served Eastern Shore Community College as an instruc-

tional faculty member for 25 years.

Over the course of his 25 years at ESCC, Weitzel's service to the college, its faculty, and students included: business transfer program head; chair of the business, information technology, and mathematics department; president of the faculty senate; longstanding member of the VCCS Chancellor's Faculty Advisory Committee; and chair of various ESCC standing and ad hoc committees, including promotion-retention and faculty recognition.

Actively involved at the VCCS system level, Weitzel served on various state-wide initiatives, including faculty evaluation; administrative and professional evaluation; diversity and inclusion; articulated accounting learning outcomes; and

the VCCS-SCHEV Transfer Virginia Statewide Courses Initiative.

ESCC faculty member and colleague Bill McCarter said, "For a quarter of a century Professor Paul Weitzel served Eastern Shore Community College and the entire Eastern Shore community. He traveled Virginia, chaired countless statewide committees, and guided VCCS policy; he was an ambassador for this college and a tireless advocate for academic integrity, institutional diversity, and much, much more."

Weitzel is only the third professor emeritus in ESCC's sixty-year history.

When asked why he worked at the community college level his response was: "To transform the communities in which I live."



COURTESY PHOTO

**Eastern Shore Community College President Jim Shaeffer, right, awards Paul Weitzel the status of professor emeritus.**



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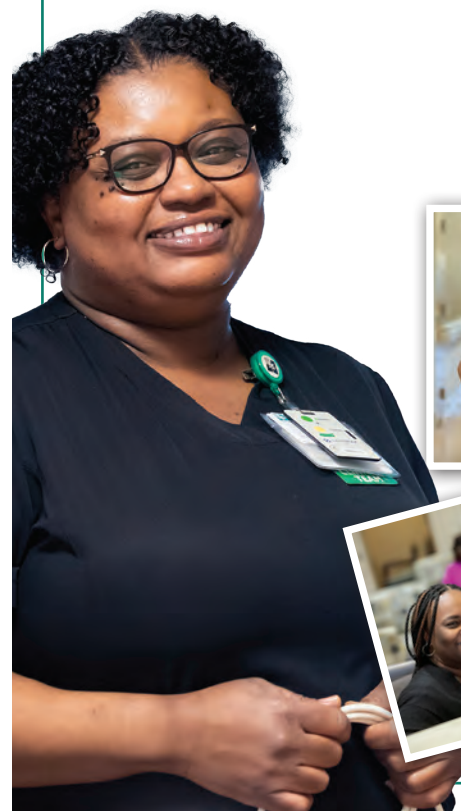
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## Library benefit raffle drawing is July 16

Tickets to win a 52" Ferris zero-turn mower and trailer will be sold in the final week of the 70th Wachapreague Volunteer Fireman's Carnival.

The drawing is sponsored by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library Foundation with partner Fairdale Farm Tractor and Equipment Co.

Only 1,000 tickets will be sold. The tickets are \$20 each. The drawing will be held on July 16.

This is the third year of the Drawing.

Tickets can also be purchased at Fairdale in Accomac, Book Bin in Onley, Jaxon's in Parksley, Rayfield's Pharmacy in Nassawadox, Eastville, and Cape Charles, and Blue Crow in Painter. The Chincoteague, Parksley,

Nassawadox, and Cape Charles libraries also sell tickets.

Tickets also can be purchased online at [www.esplfoundation.org](http://www.esplfoundation.org)

## School supply drive is slated for Arcadia

There will be an Arcadia High school supply drive in the parking lot of the school on Saturday, Aug. 3, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Supplies can be dropped off at Ocean Deli in Wallops and Matthews' Market in Mappsville.

For more information, contact 443-493-0049.

## Civil War lecture set in Cape Charles

There will be a Cape Charles Mu-

seum lecture by Kellee Blake on the Civil War Battle of Cherrystone/Two Ponds, on Wednesday, July 31, at 7 p.m. The cost is \$10 for everyone including members. Tickets are available at [capecharlesmuseum.org](http://capecharlesmuseum.org)

## Riverside Auxiliary online auction set

The Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital Auxiliary is hosting an online auction through July 10.

Proceeds from the auction will support patient care and team member continuing education at Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital.

Items in the auction include vacation weekend accommodations, framed original art, a competition-grade tandem bicycle, baked goods and more.

To join the bidding, visit

<https://auxiliaryauction.cbo.io>

The Auxiliary is a leader in supporting local health care since its inception in the 1920s even before the construction of the original hospital.

## Dog photos help at North Street Playhouse

Bring your dog to The North Street Playhouse on Saturday, July 6, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. to enter a unique competition.

The entry fee is \$20 and all proceeds will benefit the SPCA Eastern Shore. The finalists chosen for "BARK! the Musical" photos will have pictures displayed in the playhouse lobby for every performance.

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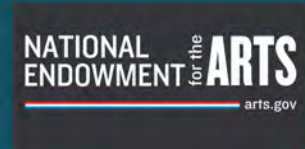


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# Feather Fund has helped 52 children purchase ponies

BY JANET BERNOSKY

Shore First

Since 2004, The Feather Fund has turned dreams into reality for 52 children by helping them purchase a Chincoteague Pony at the annual pony swim and auction, proceeds from which benefit the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company.

That year, the newly formed group helped Veronica Webb purchase a pony she named Miracle in the Making. The group has been going strong ever since, officially celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

For many years prior, Ed Suplee and his late wife, Carollynn, helped children purchase ponies at the auction, beginning with the daughters of Lois and Dan Szymanski in 1995.

That year, Ashley and Shannon Szymanski brought home a colt named Sea Feather with their support.

Carollynn Suplee's death from brain cancer in October 2003 was devastating for Ed Suplee. He acknowledged that while a chronic illness can drive a wedge in a relationship, it only brought them closer.

After his wife's death, Suplee and Lois Szymanski created the nonprofit that lives on today in Carollynn Suplee's memory.

The appearance of feathers beginning after her 1994 diagnosis and continuing around the time of the 1995 auction was an auspicious sign to Carollynn Suplee and a source of great comfort. It ultimately influenced the group's name.

This year's Feather Fund Award recipients are 13-year-old Hope Leininger, of Illinois, and 11-year-old Aurora Menges, of New York. They were chosen from a group of about 20 applicants.

They have already been welcomed into the larger Feather Fund "family," consisting of its founders, board members, past recipients, family, friends, and supporters.

"Watching the kids get their ponies is a feeling I can't describe," Szymanski said. "When the pho-



PHOTO COURTESY DCS PHOTOGRAPHY

**Veronica Webb Mayfield rides her Chincoteague Pony Miracle, rearing on command, on Assateague Island, Virginia, in July 2023. Mayfield was the first Feather Fund award recipient in 2004.**

tos start pouring in of them raising, training, and loving their foals, it makes us know we are doing the right thing."

Szymanski believes that children learn about love and respect by raising a foal, a sentiment echoed by her daughter, Shannon Szymanski Meyers.

"I was a quiet kid, but training a wild foal definitely gave me a different kind of confidence," Meyers said.

"I learned a lot about patience and responsibility working with Sea Feather."

As a nonprofit, the Feather Fund relies on donations, but its board of directors is also actively involved in year-round fundraising efforts. The monies raised are used to help award recipients purchase their ponies.

"Every year, I feel like Carollynn is sitting next to us at the auction. I can feel her smiling down," Szymanski said.

"The feeling is almost palpable. We sometimes get signs that a child has chosen the right foal."

■ For more information about the Feather Fund or to make a donation, visit [www.featherfund.org](http://www.featherfund.org).



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# Museum of Chincoteague Island gets grant for Beebe Ranch

BY JANET BERNOSKY  
Shore First

The Museum of Chincoteague Island was recently awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Foundation to kick-start its renovation of the Beebe Ranch.

“How pleased we are to support the efforts of the museum staff in this endeavor,” said Julie Badger, the foundation’s executive director, who recently retired after years in the position.

Almost a year after purchasing the ranch, located at 3062 Ridge Road, the museum is moving forward with its plans for the property, according to Cindy Faith, executive director of the museum.

“We are incredibly honored and humbled that the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Foundation believes as we do in the importance of this project to Chincoteague, the Eastern Shore, and beyond,” Faith said.

The grant award is for the first phase of the renovation project, focusing on the exterior of the ranch house itself.

Jeanette and Ralph Beebe owned the ranch and lived in the house with some of their children, including the late Billy Beebe.

Ralph was the son of Clarence and Ida Beebe, who were immortalized in the novel “Misty of Chincoteague,” by Marguerite Henry.

This is also the house where the pregnant Misty rode out the Ash Wednesday Storm of 1962.

Faith said this phase should be completed by the end of July. It will involve foundation work, new cedar shake siding, windows, and a wheelchair-accessible entrance and ramp.

The steps that Misty climbed to seek shelter in the house are also being stabilized.

Faith said that the project’s contractor, Arne Breland of Breland & Sons Contracting Corporation, totally surprised the museum staff by renovating the home’s only bathroom to make it wheelchair accessible, at no cost to the museum.



SHORE FIRST/JANET BERNOSKY

Work has begun on the Beebe Ranch project, including new cedar shingles and a ramp.

Faith said the museum didn’t have funds for the bathroom at the moment and that Breland completed the project to support the cause.

“So many, including the Eastern Shore of Vir-

ginia Community Foundation and Arne Breland, have helped in ways we just weren’t expecting ... but are so grateful for,” Faith said. “This all means so much.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pictured are the Library Friends Board of Directors, including, front row from left, Judy Malarkey, Tiffany Flores, Janet Rochester, Betsy Reich, and Sharyn McQuaid. Back row from left, Liz Bochicchio, Kate Baird, and Maureen Teague. Not pictured are Margaret Donahue Lynch and Carol Callander.

## Library Friends group helps with reading

The Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library announces that, through the generous donations of their members, they are able to serve as sponsors for the Eastern Shore Public Library's summer reading program at both the Eastern Shore Regional Library in Parksley and the Northampton Free Library in Nassawadox.

This summer's theme is "Adventure Begins at Your Library."

The program will kick off with SummerFest on Saturday, June 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Eastern Shore Community College.

There will be a wide range of activities from bouncy houses and crafts to

food trucks and community outreach tables.

Children signing up for the Summer Reading Challenge will receive their summer kick-off bag, which will contain all the information needed to participate in the challenge, including how to track minutes and activities to earn prizes.

There will also be a variety of programs at the libraries located in Parksley and Nassawadox throughout the summer.

Questions can be directed to Program and Outreach Librarian Tiffany Flores at [tflores@espl.org](mailto:tflores@espl.org) or by calling Eastern Shore Public Library at 757-787-3400.

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# Summer fun with Palace film premiere and tribute bands



SUBMITTED PHOTO

On Friday, Aug. 2, the popular Films That Move (formerly Experimental Film Virginia), will conclude its 12th two-week residency.

The first weekend of August is a very big one at the Historic Place Theatre in Cape Charles.

On Friday, Aug. 2, the popular Films That Move (formerly Experimental Film Virginia), described as an “exemplary program and pinnacle event,” will conclude its 12th two-week residency.

The residency, which begins July 21, concludes with the much-anticipated premiere of the new films that will be created this summer on the brand-new, high-resolution projector purchased through a matching grant from the Eastern Shore Community Foundation.

Films that Move focuses on the production of short films created in unique and historic small towns.

The universal language of dance meets the camera as stories are told through movement, rhythm, texture and music, made for the screen.

FTM attracts filmmakers, choreographers, visual artists, writers, actors, singers, musicians, and dancers, with opportunities for local talent as well.

Several events are open to the public, encouraging exchange, networking, and collaboration.

Contact FTM via email or social media channels to express interest in participation. All ages and experience levels are welcome.

“Small Town. Big Art,” is the slogan for the nonprofit Global Exchange Arts Roundtable, or GEAR, the driving force behind FTM.

This year an international cohort of artists hail from Italy, Japan, India, France, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil —

and the United States from Los Angeles to New York City.

## Featured FTM events

Featured FTM events include:

■ July 22, golf cart tour of the town and meet the artists to help scout locations for the films. Contact Mary Ann Roehm (team@lemontree.gallery) at the LemonTree Gallery. Meet at 5:30 p.m. at the Lemon Tree Gallery. It is a free event.

■ July 23, film screening, come check out a selection of films from the last 12 years. It will be held at 8 p.m. at the Historic Palace Theatre and is a free event.

■ July 24, jam session for movers and musicians. Get to know others through music and dance. It will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Palace Theatre and is a free event.

■ Aug. 2, Films That Move 2024 Premiere. It will be held at 8 p.m., at the Historic Palace Theatre. \$20 tickets are now on sale at the LemonTree Gallery in Cape Charles or online at Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/873070907587?aff=oddtcreator>

## Beach Boys band

On Saturday, Aug. 3, “Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute,” the most booked Beach Boys Tribute band in the world, will perform on the Historic Palace Theatre stage.

“Sail On” plays all of the Beach Boys’ classic hits, plus some treasures from the band’s brilliant extended catalog, recreating the soundtrack

(Continued on page 27)

# Cape Charles

(Continued from page 26)

to an endless summer completely live and in rich detail.

The Beach Boys are one of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful bands of all time, selling over 100 million records worldwide.

They are an American rock band formed in Hawthorne, Calif., in 1961. The group's original lineup consisted of brothers Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson, their cousin Mike Love, and friend Al Jardine.

Distinguished by their vocal harmonies, adolescent-oriented lyrics, and musical ingenuity, they are one of the most influential acts of the rock era.

They drew on the music of older pop vocal groups, 1950s rock and roll, and R&B to create their unique sound. Sail On captures that and has their audiences dancing in the aisles.

The presenting sponsor for the performance is K-Coast, which has been the soul of Delmarva surfing for over 35 years.

Since 1989 K-Coast has promoted surfing and our unique coastal lifestyle through regional surfing and skateboarding competitions, lessons and local charitable giving to bless our community.

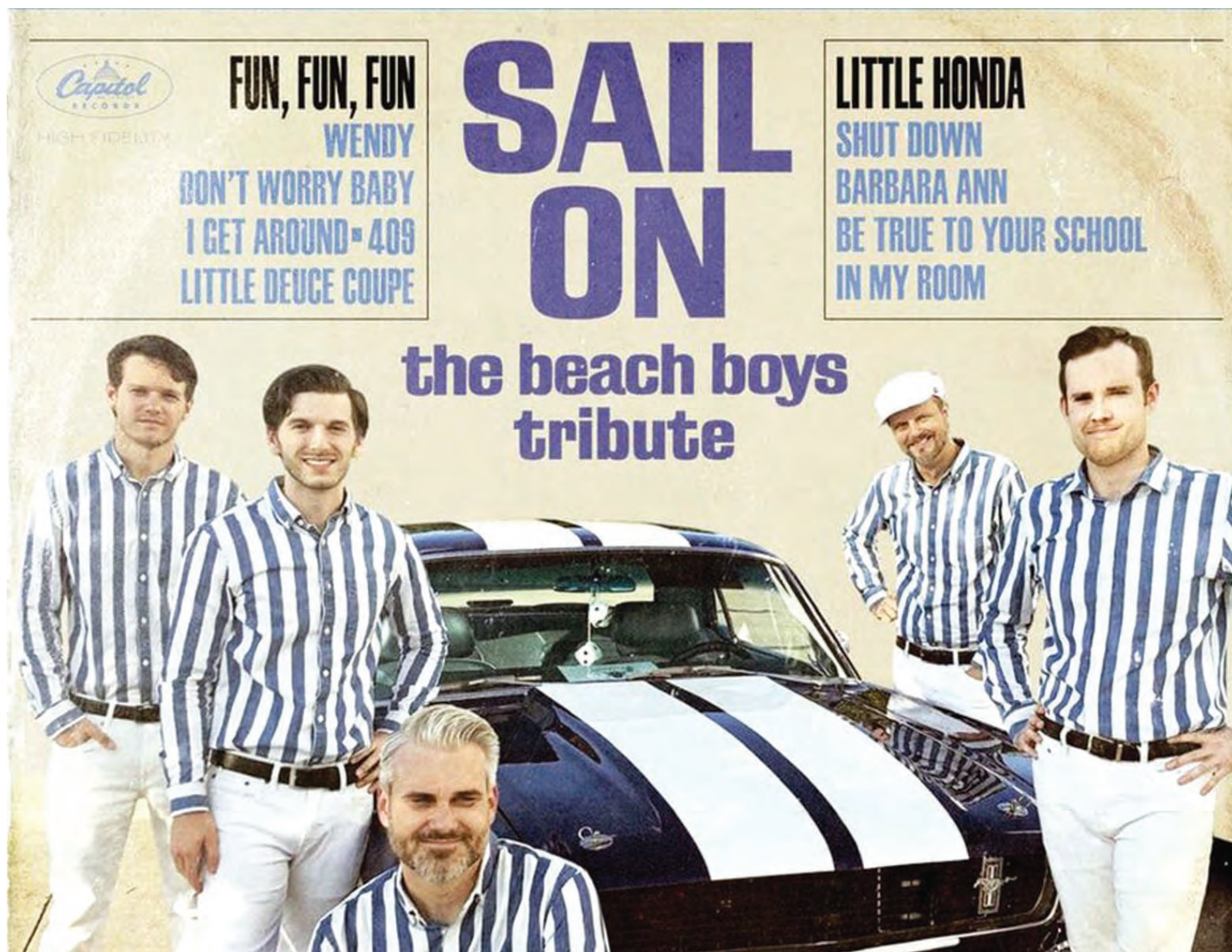
K-Coast continues this tradition of support by joining Arts Enter Cape Charles to host the iconic sound of Sail On The Beach Boys Tribute Band. Tickets are available at [www.artsen-tercapacharles.org](http://www.artsen-tercapacharles.org)

Tribute bands have been a hit this past season and Arts Enter is happy to be presenting several during the new 2024-25 season as well. Tributes to Chicago, the Eagles, Dave Matthews, and the Beatles are all in the performance schedule this coming theater season.

## Queen Nation

The summer theater season will conclude with Queen Nation, a group that will take the audience on a thrilling ride through Queen's best hits.

This tribute band pays homage to the original members of Queen, celebrating their iconic music, charm,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**On Saturday, Aug. 3, "Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute," the most booked Beach Boys Tribute band in the world, will perform on the Historic Palace Theatre stage.**

and vitality.

Songs like "We Will Rock You" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" will transport audiences to the golden days of rock.

As the Queen tribute scene grows, Queen Nation stands firm in its commitment to honor Queen's legacy with every performance.

From killer riffs to harmonious vocals, the show is a testament to the band's enduring appeal.

Queen Nation promises an unforgettable journey through rock history. Since Freddie Mercury's death, fans everywhere have tried to recreate the amazing performances that they gave.

Queen Nation stands at the forefront of this effort, encapsulating the spirit and passion for tribute band authenticity while honoring the music

of Queen.

The goal is to provide the world's best Queen tribute band experience at every live show.

The band's dedication has led to titles like "The People's Choice Tribute To Queen Champions." Queen Nation received an honor in the California Music Hall of Fame in 2020. It also won the Best Live Band award at the 2020 VCMA's.

## Summer camp

July will feature Arts Enters popular Musical Theatre Summer Camp. Thirty-five campers between the ages of 8 and 14 will learn stage presence, vocal skills, memorization, and other theater skills. The camp strives to foster personal growth for children by

providing them fun and safe educational programs, with group activities while they are at the theater. The production of "Lion King Jr." will be presented on Friday evening, July 19, at 7:30 p.m., and on Saturday, July 20, at 2 p.m.

"This camp is a memorable experience for all of us as at the end of it, we take home many important skills and lessons. This camp not only teaches many theater skills but also teaches campers to work efficiently as a part of a team," said Camp Director Megan Cartwright.

Cartwright is assisted by Morgan Garrett and Emma Philpot as well as other volunteers. Tickets for the performances are available on the Arts Enter Cape Charles website or the Lemon Tree Gallery in Cape Charles.

100 years ago  
July 1924

## Big auto is seized with half-pint corn

One half-pint of alleged corn liquor was strong enough to cause the arrest of T.B. Atherton, of Cape Charles, on a charge of transporting, and the confiscation of Atherton's high-powered, high-priced automobile. The seizure and arrest were reported to prohibition headquarters yesterday by Inspector J.N. Wood.

— *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

## 600 carloads potatoes leave Eastern Shore of Virginia each day

With almost half of the Irish potato crop yet to be dug, Accomack and Northampton counties promise to ship the largest crop of spuds in the history of the Shore. Six hundred carloads are leaving the Shore daily and if a fair price was being received by the growers, the whole Shore would have cause for rejoicing.

Though the price held around \$3.00 last week, it fell to \$2.00 and less this week, and even with the unusual yield reported per acre, this will hardly cover expenses.

The barrel shortage has grown acute. Hundreds of fields are showing the corn waist high and unless the spuds are moved soon, the corn crop will be ruined.

The barrel manufacturers were not expecting anything like the crop which has been turning up for the past three weeks. Neither barrel makers nor growers figured on more than 60 barrels of spuds to the acre, whereas many growers are harvesting 80 to 140 barrels.

Efforts are being made to relieve the barrel shortage and the country is being combed for barrel materials.

Up to the fifteenth of this month it had rained on 14 days, and between the rush to get out their Irish potatoes, clean their berry patches and sweet potatoes, the farmers have had little rest.

The steady hauling to the wharves and rail shipping points has taxed the facilities of the steamship company and the railroad to the utmost. On Wednesday of this week five steamers were busy trying to loosen the jam on the wharves and the railroad, hauling loaded cars and replacing them with empties for the following day's demands.

— *The Daily Times*

## Chincoteague Pony Penning next week

The annual pony penning on Chincoteague, an event which is largely attended by people from Wicomico County and other sections of the peninsula, will take place next Wednesday, July 30.

This has been an annual affair on Chincoteague for many years and every effort will be made to have it just as attractive as in the years gone by. The ponies will be penned and offered for sale privately and at public auction.

Besides the penning of the ponies, there will be other attractions. In the afternoon, there will be a baseball game between the Cape Charles railroad team and Chincoteague. Both teams have made most enviable reputations this year on the diamond, and a game for real sport may be expected this time. Also visitors to the island will have an opportunity to see an aquaplane drawn by the fastest boat on the coast. A large crowd is expected to attend this annual affair and large preparations are being made to feed all those who make the trip.

Clarence Beebe, who resides on the southern end of the island, and is without doubt the largest owner of ponies on the island at the present time, will have 75 ponies penned at his home. In this drove will be found ponies of all sizes, colors, and ages. In addition on that day, he will have for sale 100 head of cattle and 50 sheep.

— *The Daily Times*

## Trying to take labor away

A new kind of "bootlegging" came to light in Eastville, the county seat, a few days ago, when Archie Holland, of Onancock, Accomack County, was fined \$50 and costs by Judge Upshur when he appeared on the farm of Edward Holland Sr., in a truck, trying to induce several laborers to leave their employer to work elsewhere at higher wages, and almost succeeded in leaving with a truck load when arrested by Constable R.E. Buck. According to Constable Buck, warrants have been sworn out for several other persons for similar offenses but have not yet been located.

— *The World-News*

## Fire engine for Cape Charles

Within two weeks, Cape Charles will have one of the most up-to-date firefighting equipment of any town of its size in the state. Delivery by August 1 is promised for the new \$12,000 fire engine, with a capacity of 750 gallons per minute, together with

chemical engine, ladders, and complete equipment for the local firemen. The disastrous fire of last March, when five stores were burned, caused this action by the town authorities.

— *The News and Advance*

## Peeping bottles lead to arrest

If a man carries bottles of liquor, it is safe to see that they are well covered, as George Daniels, of Northampton County, will testify. According to a report received today at state prohibition headquarters from Inspector A.W. Rayfield, the officer saw Daniels strolling about the Eastern Shore county with two bottles alleged to contain corn liquor, in a paper bag. The neck of one of the bottles was peeping out, and this led to the arrest of the stroller.

— *The Roanoke Times*

75 years ago  
July 1949

## Chincoteague firemen open carnival Saturday

Volunteer firemen of Chincoteague will open their annual carnival Saturday for a run that will reach its climax with the traditional pony penning on July 28.

The firemen are sponsors of the pony show that last year drew approximately 12,000 persons to Chincoteague Island.

Pony penning on the island has become a special holiday featured by a rodeo.

The roundup of the ponies on the adjacent island of Assateague and their herding across the channel will begin at 8 a.m. July 27.

In recent years the firemen's organization has purchased all the ponies except herds owned by Clarence Beebe and James Powell Jr., ranchers.

— *Ledger-Star*

## Grand jurors to get Acree case August 8

An Accomack County grand jury probably will convene Aug. 8 to indict David Acree for the slaying of a Maryland crabber, Commonwealth's Attorney E. Elmer Ames said today.

That date will be a week later than originally planned — and three days after Maryland officials will argue their case for extradition of Acree before Gov. William M. Tuck in Richmond.

Ames said today that he probably will appear

(Continued on page 29)

## Yesteryears

(Continued from page 28)

in person at the hearing to oppose the extradition request, forwarded to Tuck earlier this week.

Both Maryland and Virginia claim that Acree shot and killed Earl Nelson, 50-year-old Crisfield, Md., crabber, on their side of the border in the Chesapeake Bay on July 5. Both states have sworn out murder warrants against the 26-year-old Virginia fisheries deputy, who claims Nelson was shot by accident as he struggled to resist arrest for violation of fisheries laws.

Tuck has set 10 a.m., Aug. 5, for a hearing on the Maryland extradition request. The State Fisheries Commission has not yet indicated that it will defend Acree in the case. Commissioner Charles M. Lankford said today the commission had not yet made up its mind.

The Accomack grand jury originally was to have been convened by Circuit Court Judge Jeff Walter on Aug. 1. Ames said today, however, he had been informed there had been a postponement to Aug. 8.

— *The Daily Press*

## Six fresh air kids arrive on Shore

Six smiling children, ranging in age from 5 to 10 years, arrived in Pocomoke City yesterday on the 3:06 p.m. train all set for a joyous 14-day holiday from the hustle and bustle of New York City.

A seventh child was scheduled to come but at the last moment he remained in the city.

The “Fresh Air Kids” sponsored by the New York Herald Tribune are:

Victor Hughes, age 8; Rose Christina, age 5; Josephine Vemattein, age 7; Loretta Intetmonte, age 9; Frank Cullo, age 9; and Joan Pope, age 10.

Their hosts are Mr. and Mrs. Waller Brittingham; Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Mariner; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Matthews; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Jackson; Mr. and Mrs. Quincy Blevins; Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Payne; and Mr. and Mrs. Weston Holland, all of Pocomoke City.

Other members of the committee are: Mrs. Ralph Mathief, Miss Alice Young, Mrs. George Bunting, the Rev. Kenneth Brann, Mrs. Harry Coulbourn Sr., Mrs. Dawson Clarke, Mrs. Abe Flax, Mrs. George Young, and William Hardester.

— *The Daily Times*

## Island residents ready for battle

Residents of this island village off Virginia’s coast fear they are on the verge of armed conflict with the federal government in a dispute over the adjacent wildlife refuge on Assateague Island.

Some Chincoteague residents already have threatened violence and town councilmen are so angry they have voted to shut off the city water supply to the federal compound on Assateague — just as soon as they found out how.

“We haven’t been able to find the valve yet,” one official said.

Since the dispute began in April, town officials say threats have been made to blow up the bridge linking the village with Assateague Island, and many local citizens have expressed desire to invade the federal property with guns blazing.

J.C. Appel, manager of the wildlife refuge for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, denies any threats by Chincoteague citizens and says he has had no contact with them.

But Chincoteague civic leaders, contending Appel is the reason for the problem, want him removed from his post. They say tourist-jammed Assateague Island has been crawling with FBI agents — as many as nine at any one time — and that they are armed with automatic weapons.

“We used to say we had another Wounded Knee here,” said Wheatly Watson, who takes office as Chincoteague’s new mayor in September. “Now we call it an ‘Appelgate.’”

Watson, who like most of Chincoteague’s 4,000 citizens, can trace his family back to the Indians who once called these islands home, says numbers of local people are so angry over what they see as mismanagement of Assateague that they are ready to invade the refuge for a shootout with federal officials there. Shooting feuds have erupted there before, he said.

“Right now we’ve got them under control,” Watson said. “They’ve promised me they won’t move until I can talk over things with people in Washington.”

The current furor began earlier this year when a hole was cut in one of the 20- to 30-foot sand dunes that protect Assateague Island from the assault of the Atlantic Ocean. Watson and others say the hole in the dune was ordered by Appel, but that he did not have the authority to tamper with the island’s ecology.

Nat Steelman, the area’s unofficial historian and for 43 years Virginia’s oyster inspector here, says if the hole in the dune had remained, the first Atlantic storm would have cut Assateague Island in half

and the ocean would have spilled into Chincoteague Sound on the backside of Assateague Island.

“It would have flooded Chincoteague,” Steelman said.

Watson said a delegation of Chincoteague residents appealed to Washington about the hole and it was bulldozed closed a few days later.

Appel refused to comment on the incident, saying it was “a very complicated situation. This matter has been taken up with people higher up than I, and I am not at liberty to discuss it.”

Steelman says Chincoteague residents have been at odds with the government for a number of years over federal actions at Assateague, which is a national seashore and the last truly undeveloped beach area on the East Coast.

For instance, he said, the wildlife service constructed a road across an inlet at the south end of Assateague Island, damming and destroying what once was one of the most fertile oyster grounds on the Atlantic.

But both men said the incident that has brought Chincoteague residents to the brink of warfare with the government was an Appel-issued order barring them from a small out-of-the-way beach at the southern end of Assateague. For generations Chincoteague’s citizens have landed their boats at the beach for weekend outings away from the hordes of tourists who clog the island during the summer months.

Watson says the edict from Appel came down about the same time that the hole cut in the ocean sand dune was ordered filled.

“He took his spite out on us and made us keep off our little beach,” Watson said.

A number of Chincoteague residents were ticketed for returning to the beach after Appel’s order and that’s when about 60 began voicing their desire to settle the dispute with gunfire.

Appel said he was merely enforcing a regulation that restricts access to national park areas and that the beach used for years by Chincoteague residents is not part of the public use area.

“I have no authority to modify the regulations,” he said.

Although Watson said Chincoteaguers’ threats were made directly to Appel, the federal official said he has not heard of them and has not asked for any FBI coverage of the island.

There have been FBI agents on the island, but Appel said he hasn’t the “faintest idea” how many. “Just like a lot of information you get in that town, this is subject to considerable error,” he said.

Appel said none of the Chincoteague residents has communicated with him and that “I am aware

(Continued on page 30)

## Yesteryears

(Continued from page 29)

that a certain amount of misunderstanding exists, but since no one wants to discuss the matter with me it can't be terribly important."

Watson says his efforts to talk with Appel have been rebuffed. "We don't have a communication problem, we just don't have any communication," he said.

Watson says he takes it seriously when his neighbors talk about a shooting war with the government.

"Chincoteague people are good people, but you can only push them so far," he said. "Some don't mind spending a little time behind bars. They feel like they are being pushed around. This is a question of our rights."

In the meantime, he said, before any serious trouble starts, Chincoteague officials still are looking for the water main.

"Well," said Steelman, raising an eyebrow, "I've heard some people in this town say they hope Appel has to drink salt water."

— *Martinsville Bulletin*

50 years ago  
July 1974

### Virginia man drowns in pond near Accomac

A 31-year-old Tasley man accidentally drowned about 4 p.m. Thursday while he and two others were swimming in an irrigation pond about one mile north of the Whispering Pines Motel near Accomac.

The body of Bobby Wayne Watson, an employee of Perdue Inc., at Accomac, was found after local rescue squads had dragged the pond for about half an hour.

Raymond Gould, Tasley, and Philip Belote, Onancock, told authorities Watson apparently panicked. Gould said that he and Belote tried to calm down Watson and direct him to the shore but had to give up at the risk of their own lives.

It is estimated that the pond at the point where he drowned is eight to 10 feet deep.

The drowning was investigated by Deputy Sheriffs Richard Dize and James Fisher.

— *The Daily Times*

### Virginia school board elected

Ben Kellam Jr., of Bridgetown, has been re-elected to a second term as a chairman of the Northampton County School Board here for fiscal year 1974-75, and Dr. James C. Allen, Eastville, has been re-elected vice-chairman.

Mrs. Mary Elliott, Eastville, was re-elected clerk of the board.

In other board action, discussion was made concerning a proposed action program to achieve certain measurable objectives which were approved by the state board of education and the General Assembly for the 1974-76 biennium as set forth in standards of quality.

A report was heard on the personnel status and it was revealed that only four teacher positions remain to be filled.

A status report on the various maintenance and repair projects was heard. It was learned that the Hare Valley kindergarten construction is 80% complete and the classroom addition at Northampton Senior High is about 85% complete. Both buildings are expected to be ready for occupancy in September, according to Superintendent George Willis Young.

The writing of a Title III project for the 1974-75 session for the expansion of art, music, speech, and drama on the secondary level was approved.

— *The Daily Times*

### Whisky bottle found in crash car

An opened bottle of whisky was found in the station wagon that was involved in a two-car collision which took four lives and injured five people on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel early Sunday, authorities say.

Police say Dr. T.B. Hardman, of Cape Charles, the medical examiner, said he had taken blood samples to check for alcohol. Hardman examined the bodies from the station wagon at a nearby funeral home.

Meanwhile, police identified Monday three victims of the wreck — the worst in nine years on the 17.5-mile span linking the Eastern Shore to the mainland of Virginia. The fourth victim had been identified earlier.

Bridge-Tunnel Police Chief William C. Myer said the man thought to be driving the station wagon was identified as Leroy Frank Taylor, 34, of Allentown, Pa.

Dead, along with Taylor, were his mother, Mrs. Annie Loubinia Taylor Brown, 56, of Portsmouth, and his uncle, 57-year-old Nicholas Taylor, of Norfolk.

The fourth victim of the accident was Lonnie L. Baucom, 43, of Portsmouth, who was reportedly re-

turning with his wife from Ocean City, Md., when the accident happened about 3:20 a.m.

Baucom's widow, 44-year-old Mrs. Shizoko Baucom, was listed in fair condition Monday in the intensive care ward of General Hospital of Virginia Beach.

Four others received less serious injuries in the accident.

Chief Myer said Leroy Taylor was identified by Mrs. Evelyn Johnson, of Allentown, who owned the station wagon. Myer said Mrs. Johnson told him Taylor, a friend, had taken the vehicle without her permission.

Myer said Mrs. Johnson was visiting her mother in Northampton County at the time of the accident.

Baucom, a service station owner from Portsmouth, was traveling southbound on the trestle, police said, when the northbound station wagon crossed into the wrong lane on the two-lane roadway while rounding a curve.

The two vehicles collided head-on.

— *The Capital*

25 years ago  
July 1999

### 5,000 flock to pony auction

The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company raised \$139,400 on Thursday, auctioning 86 of the 120 ponies that swam across the Assateague Channel during the 74th annual Pony Penning.

Though fire officials were pleased, long-time auctioneer Bernie Plesants said the horses did not fetch the top-dollar prices paid in previous years. However, he said the 1999 event was good for people who usually cannot afford a pony.

"There were some very nice ponies and a lot of people got to buy them ...," said Plesants, the event's auctioneer for 23 years. "The most important thing was the ponies went to good homes."

By 6:30 a.m., 5,000 or so horse enthusiasts, buyers, "Misty of Chincoteague" lovers, and journalists from around the world assembled for the bidding, which started around \$700 and climbed to more than \$4,000.

A brown-and-white filly and a black-and-white colt with a horseshoe on its forehead were the most sought after, each selling for \$4,100. The average price was \$1,621.

Chincoteague's Joe Justice bought the filly. In 1998 he paid \$6,900 for the second most expensive pony that year.

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## Yesteryears

(Continued from page 30)

Alexander and Bonnie Werner, doctors from Los Angeles, bought the colt for their stable on the West Coast. The couple said this was their fourth penning and they intend to return next year.

Still, the Werners were not the only West Coast buyers.

Tiffany and Nicole Johnson rode more than 51 hours with their parents just to buy a Chincoteague pony.

The Southern California twins saved money from odd jobs and assorted chores for two years to buy a \$2,000 palomino filly.

Butterscotch — as she will be called — is the twins' first Chincoteague pony and the first one the girls spotted.

"It had to be a gold-and-white pony," said their mother, Penny.

Of the 89 ponies sold, several were too young to be weaned from their mothers, so the buyers must return in the fall to pick them up.

Another 10 ponies were part of the buy-back program. Buyers return the fillies to the fire company, which allows the ponies to spend their lives on Assateague Island.

The unsold ponies made the return swim to Assateague.

The Pony Penning carnival continues through Saturday night and reopens next weekend.

— *The Daily Times*

## Supervisors gut Northampton school board

Northampton's supervisors have the county school board, choosing not to reappoint the chairman and vice chairman of a body that has helped the system earn three National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence awards since 1996.

Board Chairman Allen V. Sherman was passed over in favor of Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel police Cpl. Richard Bland. Both men live in District 4.

For the District 6 seat, longtime county educator Calvin Brickhouse was selected to replace board Vice Chairman Susan Jones.

Sherman was a two-term member, and is one of only three people to be Northampton's school board chairman in the last 26 years, joining Eastville

lawyer Jack Wescoat and Bridgetown farmer Ben Kellam, who died in 1991.

Jones, the wife of Northampton County Commonwealth's Attorney Bruce Jones, served one term. Two of their children graduated from Northampton High School, and two currently attend schools in the system.

All four candidates were interviewed by county supervisors. During the regular county meeting later in the day, supervisors made no comments when they voted to appoint Brickhouse and Bland. Both were 5-0 votes; supervisor Arthur Carter missed the meeting.

The motion for Bland over Sherman was made by Supervisor Suzanne Wescoat, former board Chairman Jack Wescoat's wife.

"Mr. Bland's got children in the system and Mr. Sherman does not," said Wescoat after the meeting, adding that the board grappled with the decision. "I think Mr. Sherman has served the board very well and he's got financial expertise that will be missed. But it was the board's decision, and because he was in my district, I made the motion."

Supervisor Anthony Ruffin, who made the motion for Brickhouse over Jones, said, "It was time to give Mr. Brickhouse an opportunity to also use his skills, his 37 years of public service in the schools. I think he'll add tremendous insight to the schools."

— *The Daily Times*

## Never-ending boat battle

An ailing 70-year-old waterman returned to the Northampton County Jail on Monday when a judge's deadline for Ed Bender having his sunken, rotting boat raised from Oyster Harbor passed without the boat being removed.

Bender, who said earlier that he has contracted with a Norfolk company to remove the trawler Miss Valerie from the harbor, reported to the jail at about 2:30 p.m.

Bender and his two sons were trying to repair the 65-foot trawler when she sank four years ago. Bender has battled with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission over removal of the boat since, and he spent five days in jail earlier this month for contempt of court for failing to remove the boat.

Then-Northampton County Circuit Judge Frederick B. Lowe agreed to put Bender on home incarceration for three weeks to give him time to get the boat raised.

When the boat was still in the water Monday, Bender reported to jail. He has said the Norfolk company he's contracted with to remove the boat will need a few days to do the job but hasn't indicated when the work will be done or how he will pay for it.

The job will cost about \$8,000, Bender said.

Bender said spending time in jail wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for his poor health. Northampton County agrees that its jail isn't equipped to cope with Bender's medical problems but hasn't been able to find another jail willing to take him.

Bender suffers from a severe case of sleep apnea, which causes him to stop breathing for a few seconds as many as 850 times during an hour. In deep sleep, Bender is not getting oxygen for 46 out of 60 minutes.

To help increase Bender's oxygen intake, doctors cut a hole in his throat and installed a tube. At night, Bender hooks himself to an oxygen machine so he gets a burst of straight oxygen when he does breathe. His wife cleans the tube every day.

Bender said the lack of oxygen causes "mental problems, like Alzheimer's." He wakes up disoriented.

Col. Steven Bowman, chief of law enforcement for the VMRC, said the commission has been trying to work with Bender to get the trawler removed since 1995. Sunken vessels impair navigation, he said.

Under Virginia law, the commission may order the owner of a sunken boat, wharf, pier, or other structure to remove it at the owner's expense. If the owner doesn't comply, the circuit court may take necessary steps to protect the waterway.

Bender believes he is being picked on because of bad blood between him and the marine commission. "I think they're more interested in seeing me in jail than in seeing the boat up," Bender said.

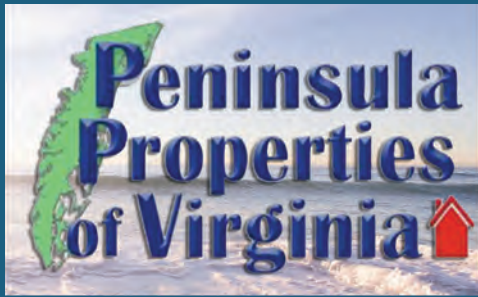
His wife, Ann, said her husband didn't receive adequate care during his last stay at Northampton County Jail.

"He was not getting his medicines and his trach wasn't cleaned," she said. "It was stopped up when I got to it."

Capt. Jack Robbins, of the Northampton County Sheriff's Department, agreed that the problem was a difficult one and said he hoped Bender could avoid jail time.

"We're not a hospital, we're a jail," he said.

— *The Daily Times*

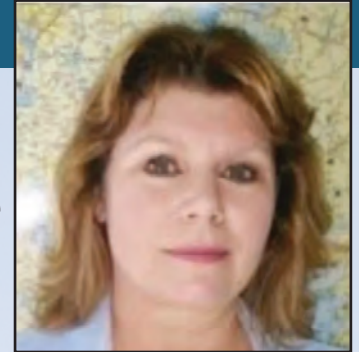


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