

HISTORY • REAL ESTATE • FOOD • FUN • ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

Shore First

February 2025
Vol. 8, No. 10

**FREE
TAKE ONE**



A bayside beachfront sanctuary goes on the market | Page 10



Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas focuses on fresh, creative | Page 8



It's time to **DANCE**

Shore ballroom dancing lessons arm up the winter | Page 6

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29 | **7:30**
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Saturday, Feb. 8 | Chincoteague Birding walk

BIRDING WALK: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Tom's Cove Visitors Center, 8586 Beach Road, Chincoteague. The Eastern Shore Master Naturalists group will have a birding walk. Birders can walk around Tom's Cove and Assateague Island and can expect to see snow geese, swans, ducks, loons, and other birds.



Feb. 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22 | Chincoteague "Dream Girl" performances

THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE: 7 p.m. on Feb. 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, "Dream Girl," presented by the Chincoteague Island Theatre Company at 6309 Church St., Chincoteague. Maria Burns, pictured, is Georgina Allerton. \$15 tickets can be purchased at H&H Pharmacy with cash or check, or online at ChincoteagueCA.org. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 15 | Belle Haven Heather and Nathan perform

LIVE MUSIC: 7 p.m., ESO Arts Center, 15293 King St., Belle Haven. Nathan and Heather perform live. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For tickets visit <https://tinyurl.com/tcm6y5rx>



Friday, Feb. 7

■ **VALENTINE'S DAY EVENT:** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Morphosis, 33 Market St., Onancock. Enjoy live music by Jackie and Bill and sample delicious treats.

■ **BINGO:** 6 p.m. doors open, 7 p.m. first game, The Chincoteague Center, Chincoteague. For \$25 play 20 games of bingo, including a blackout game at the end. Food and drink will be available for purchase.

Saturday, Feb. 8

■ **LOW COUNTRY BOIL:** 4 to 9 p.m., Cheriton Volunteer Fire Department, 21334 South Bayside Road, Cape Charles. For \$60 per person enjoy all-you-can-eat shrimp, coleslaw, corn, potatoes, and sausage.

■ **VALENTINE'S DANCE:** 7:30 p.m., Historic Palace Theatre, Cape Charles. Enjoy complimentary champagne and chocolates while dancing to the sounds of The Shoal Shakers. A cash bar will be available. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at <https://tinyurl.com/2emrkt9>

Thursday, Feb. 13

■ **INTERNATIONAL MOVIE:** 7 p.m., Roseland Theater, 48 Market St., Onancock. This month's film is "Ezra." Tickets are \$8.

Friday, Feb. 14

■ **PANCAKE SUPPER:** 6 p.m., Historic St. George's Episcopal Church, 15389 St. George's Circle, Pungoteague. The church is hosting a Valentine's Day Lovefest pancake supper and celebration.

Saturday, Feb. 15

■ **LIVE MUSIC:** 7:30 p.m., Historic Palace Theatre, Cape Charles. The Deloreans perform live. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$15 for students. To purchase tickets visit <https://tinyurl.com/mrydjrhr>

Shore First | Entertainment calendar

Monday, Feb. 17

■ **DOCUMENTARY:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Northampton Fire and Rescue, 10239 Pine Ave., Nassawadox. See a screening of the documentary “Braver Angels: Reuniting America” and learn more about the Braver Angels organization. This event is free. To RSVP visit <https://tinyurl.com/3kwk2mp3>

Wednesday, Feb. 19

■ **KIDS ACTIVITY:** 10 a.m. to noon, Delmarva Discovery Museum, Pocomoke City. Kids can enjoy a hands-on learning experience with the museum’s ambassador horseshoe crabs. Kids will learn about horseshoe crab biology, the history of the ambassadors, and get to handle horseshoe crabs. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/2ssz3a6b>

Saturday, Feb. 22

■ **DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT:** 8:30 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. tee off, Indiantown Park, Eastville. The Ice Bowl is a charity disc golf tournament to raise funds for the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore. The cost is \$20 and includes two rounds.

■ **ART FESTIVAL:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Eastern Shore Community College, Melba. Browse works showcased by local artists. There will be live music and food trucks on site.

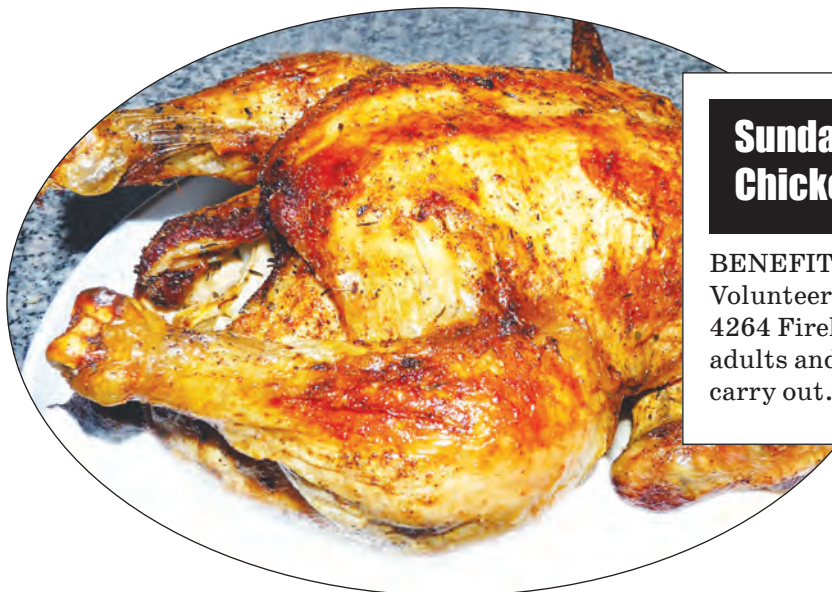
■ **FUNDRAISER:** 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., Mallards at the Wharf, 2 Market St., Onancock. Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital Auxiliary’s Fire and Ice is an indoor/outdoor event featuring fire pits, hearty food, and drinks. For an extra purchase, partygoers can visit the bourbon tasting bar. Tickets are \$80. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/48bn2z8b>

Sunday, Feb. 23

■ **COMEDY SHOW:** 3 p.m. doors open, 4 p.m. show starts, Par 4 Bar and Grill, 9480 Lankford Highway, Temperanceville. Tickets are \$30. To purchase, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bddbc46k>

Friday, Feb. 14 and Saturday, Feb. 15 Chincoteague’s Death by Chocolate

DEATH BY CHOCOLATE : 3 to 7 p.m., on Friday, Feb. 14, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 15, the 19th annual Death by Chocolate scavenger hunt returns to downtown Chincoteague. Visitors can pick up a scavenger hunt card and visit downtown shops while sampling treats. To learn more visit <https://tinyurl.com/sxjwuxxp>



Sunday, Feb. 16 | New Church Chicken and dumpling dinner

BENEFIT DINNER: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., New Church Volunteer Fire Company chicken and dumpling dinner, 4264 Firehouse St., New Church. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$7 for children 12 and under. It is dine in or carry out.

Friday, Feb. 21 and Saturday, Feb. 22 Habitat for Humanity fundraisers

FUNDRAISERS: 4 to 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 21, at Cape Charles Brewing Company, 2198 Stone Road, Cape Charles, Eastern Shore of Virginia Habitat for Humanity is hosting BBQ and Brews. The event features wine, beer, barbecue, and live music by the Phun Doctors. At noon on Feb. 22, at Cape Charles Beach, the annual Freezin’ for a Reason benefiting Eastern Shore of Virginia Habitat for Humanity.





SHORE FIRST/JIM RITCH

Smiling and encouraging, Dr. Alex Schult, center left, guides Ebba TinWin, far left, through a rumba during a ballroom dancing class at the Oyster Farm in Cape Charles.

Ballroom dancing lessons: Don't sweat your two left feet

Duo creates local niche with weekly classes — and fills void

When you go

- **WHAT:** Ballroom and More on the Shore ballroom dancing classes
- **WHEN:** 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 13 and Feb. 27 at the Oyster Farm in Cape Charles; and Feb. 17 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Onancock
- **COST:** Classes are \$5 per person

BY SARAH BARBAN

Shore First

The slower pace of life on the Eastern Shore takes a weekly, up-tempo turn under the instruction of avid ballroom dancers Kelly Harris and Dr. Alex Schult.

A year ago, the two began collaborating to offer Ballroom and More on the Shore, a weekly series of dance classes alternately presented in Onan-

cock and Cape Charles.

Harris and Schult, both avid dancers, moved separately to the Eastern Shore, but jointly found a dearth of opportunities to dance or learn to dance.

Both had spent months decrying the lack of dancing opportunities to friends and family.

In late 2023 Schult was bemoaning the lack of opportunities to dance to a friend, who told him there was some-

one he needed to talk to. That's how Harris and Schult were first introduced to each other.

"We both had done ballroom dancing for several years before coming here," Schult said. "We wanted to find a way to make it happen. The only places we know of that did ballroom dancing were either across the bay or in Salisbury. We wanted to start something to see if there was an interest and enjoy ourselves at the same time."

Harris relocated to the Shore from Lexington in November 2023 and lives in Onancock. In addition to being an avid dancer, she's also a massage therapist, a ventriloquist, a piano teacher, and performs as K.C. the Clown.

Schult relocated from Charlottesville two-and-a-half years ago and works as a pulmonologist at Riverside Health Eastern Shore. He found that his former home was lacking something he needed.

"There wasn't a whole lot of water in Charlottesville and I grew up on the west coast of Ireland, so I was used to having big water," Schult said.

Harris and Schult began teaching dance classes together on the Shore in February 2024 and have carried on almost every week since.

The first classes were held through the YMCA, but Harris and Schult wanted those without a Y membership to be able to participate, too.

They relocated the classes to Indigo Studio in Nassawadox and eventually started charging \$5 per class.

Now, they're offering classes at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Onancock and The Oyster Farm in Cape Charles.

Neither of them claim to be professional dance teachers, but having danced for years they felt confident enough to teach basics and introductions to different steps. So they decided to share their knowledge.

"I know that Kelly and I needed to dance," Schult said. "As a result we said, 'OK, let's try to teach people if there's an interest.'"

The response has shown that residents of Accomack and Northampton

(Continued on page 7)

Ballroom

(Continued from page 6)

counties have an interest in dance.

Harris and Schult have offered classes at the Eastern Shore Yacht and Country Club, Ballroom and More held a social dance during the holidays, and there are now dancers who regularly attend classes — including a couple in their late 80s who attend regularly.

All skill levels are welcome in Ballroom and More classes, including those who claim to have two left feet.

“Bring both left feet and expect to step on the toes of others,” Schult said. “It’s a new skill, so come with an open mind and don’t expect too much out of yourself in the first lesson.”

Not having a partner to dance with doesn’t have to be a roadblock, either — dancers in Ballroom and More classes will either dance with an instructor or a fellow student.

In addition to being a fun activity, dancing also has mental and physical health benefits.

“Dancing brings fellowship, fun, fitness, smiles, there’s no ceiling, and it teaches people good emotional and physical touch that we lost, especially during COVID,” Harris said.

Dancing also helps to improve balance, mobility, coordination, and is good light cardio, Schult said.

Ballroom and More on the Shore’s dances typically begin at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays. In February, there are dances scheduled on Feb. 13 at the Oyster Farm, when dancers are encouraged to dress up or down or for Valentine’s Day; on Feb. 17 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Onancock; and on Feb. 27 at the Oyster Farm. There is a \$5 fee to participate in classes.

A few tips for attending a class include bringing a bottle of water, refraining from eating a large meal beforehand, wearing shoes that are easy to dance in, and keeping an open mind.

“The idea is to enjoy yourself and maybe learn something along the way,” Schult said. “When you come more often you’ll feel more comfortable in a social dance situation to dance with skill.”



ABOVE: Dr. Alexander Schulte, right, guides Kim Starr, left, through the steps of a rumba. Studying the moves in rear are, from left, Rory Kassner, Sarina Hrubesch, Cindy and Norm Mitchell, and Tony and Joanne Regalbuto. **LEFT:** Rory Kassner, left, enjoys a turn with Tony Regalbuto as the class mixes partners.

SHORE FIRST/JIM RITCH



Asian sticky ribs



Flank steak with chimichurri



Grilled swordfish

Joe Bass, left, and Dave Filipic Jr., the owners of Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas, stand at the bar at the restaurant, located at 7085 Maddox Blvd., Chincoteague Island.

SHORE FIRST/
TED SHOCKLEY



Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas: Where flavor and freshness win

Chincoteague eatery combines traditional tastes, creative takes

When you go

- **WHAT:** Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas
- **WHERE:** 7085 Maddox Blvd., Chincoteague Island
- **HOURS:** Open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday; open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday.

BY TED SHOCKLEY
Shore First

It is the offseason on Chincoteague Island — the streets aren't as busy, the pace isn't as hectic, and a trip to the famous beach at Assateague Island requires a coat instead of a bathing suit.

Some of the eateries are closed for the winter. But Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas Lounge, at 7085 Maddox Blvd., is open six days a week, bring-

ing freshness and inspiration to ward off the short days and cold nights.

Blackfin, once housed in a food truck down the street, for a year has occupied a spacious building that owners Joe Bass and Dave Filipic Jr. have completely remodeled.

The dining rooms have a casual elegance, not unlike the cuisine Bass and Filipic are known for.

"I enjoy people's reactions to the food and the service," said Filipic,

adding that ownership includes a personal satisfaction and an insistence on high standards.

"There is a sense of pride when it's yours," he said.

Blackfin's offerings cater to all tastes — for example, it has a breakfast buffet on weekends but also an extensive wine list that pairs with its fine dining options.

There is also a full bar — Bass and Filipic plan to expand bar seating in the months to come.

Menu offerings for lunch and dinner include flatbreads (including margherita and jerk chicken versions), tacos (including fish and soft crab options), and baskets (including fish and clam strips as offerings).

During the summer, when fresh produce is in season, Blackfin is known for its poke bowl — a Hawaiian dish filled with rice, vegetables, and seafood.

Daily specials offer surprises — on a recent day, a massive and flavorful fried shrimp po'boy came with perfect fries.

But it is in the evenings when Blackfin offers its revolving tapas menu, which changes every couple of weeks.

Beginning at 5 p.m., small plates offer a variety of tastes, while customers still have the option of ordering off the menu.

Recently the small plates included Asian sticky ribs, shrimp scampi dip, potato and cheese pierogies, roasted beef bone marrow with a baguette, crispy hot honey oysters, smoked salmon carpaccio, and more.

(Continued on page 9)



At top, Blackfin Island Grill and Tapas on Mad-dox Boulevard, Chincoteague. At right, a fried shrimp po'boy with a helping of fries was a recent special.

SHORE FIRST/
TED SHOCKLEY



Blackfin

(Continued from page 8)

Blackfin's cozy spaciousness lends itself well to family functions and corporate events.

"We've done a lot of private events and parties," said Bass, who like Filipic, is no stranger to the restaurant business.

He started working in the industry at the age of 14. He began as a busboy and years later ended up as a

bartender.

Today, Bass and Filipic are living a dream they didn't imagine — their own restaurant and their own ideas are working together to create a reputation that extends beyond Chincoteague.

"I enjoy it," Bass said.

But he said it couldn't happen without "our staff, both front and back of the house. They bring so much success to our team." Bass and Filipic said they appreciate their staff's dedication and commitment.

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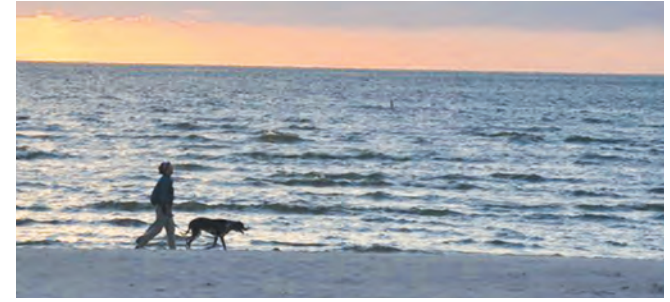
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There is plenty of room for entertaining at 2118 Bayview Point, near Cape Charles.



The large, bright kitchen at 2118 Bayview Point, near Cape Charles, provides space and sunlight.



Montaigne Cree calls the area “the nicest walking beach on the entire Eastern Shore.”

This home, a five-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath, 5,944-square-foot beachfront haven on a 4.5-acre lot, is located at 2118 Bayview Point, in southern Northampton County. It is listed for sale at \$1.895 million.

COURTESY
PHOTOS



At Bay Ridge, a private sanctuary on a beach that is getting wider

‘Superior craftsmanship’ highlights home for sale on beach

About this series

This is part of a monthly series on the Eastern Shore’s most captivating and unique homes for sale. This property at 2118 Bayview Point, south of Cape Charles, is listed for sale at \$1.89 million. The listing agent is Montaigne Cree of Blue Heron Realty in Machipongo.

BY TED SHOCKLEY
Shore First

The Chesapeake Bay community of Bay Ridge, between Cape Charles and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, is unique in that the beachfront isn’t washing away. Instead, the sand collects, broadening the beach.

“So many people on the Eastern Seaboard have issues with erosion,” said Montaigne Cree of Blue Heron

Realty in Machipongo.

“Bay Ridge is one of the few areas where the beach is building up,” she said.

So it is a rare place for the rare home Cree has listed for sale — a five-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath, 5,944-square-foot beachfront haven on a 4.5-acre lot.

The elegant home at 2118 Bayview Point, in southern Northampton County, is listed for sale at \$1.895

million.

Like other fine waterfront homes on the Eastern Shore, it is not one easily seen from the highways and back roads that carry motorists.

It is tucked away from the public, a private sanctuary among the tall pines and bay breezes.

One could live for years on the Eastern Shore and not encounter such a grand residence.

As Cree put it, the home is “a testament to meticulous attention to detail and superior craftsmanship.”

“This is a very substantially built home and all of the rooms are very spacious and sizable,” said Cree.

Still, the home is close to shops, restaurants, and amenities. It’s a quick drive from Cape Charles. Driving to Virginia Beach won’t take much longer than a half hour.

Fronting the bay, there is a wall of windows providing breathtaking views. There is a modern kitchen with plenty of room for entertaining.

There are two fireplaces and a multi-car, attached garage.

It is also landscaped to perfection, Cree said — a perfect complement to such a fine home and unique property.

“There’s a lot of mature vegetation,” she said.

But the rare characteristics of the beachfront location are what draw onlookers.

The property includes 200 feet of Chesapeake Bay beach — a sizable portion.

In addition, Bay Ridge and an adjoining beachfront neighborhood include a provision that, although

(Continued on page 11)



Fronting the bay, there is a wall of windows providing breathtaking views.

Home

(Continued from page 10)

owners own the property to mean low water, there is a pedestrian easement for the benefit of everyone who lives in the communities.

All told, they provide for a mile and a half of private beach walking. Cree calls it “the nicest walking beach on the entire Eastern Shore.”

So while nearby beaches at Cape Charles and Kiptopeke State Park might be busy during the summer, the Bay Ridge beach is a slice of private paradise.

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Blood orange yogurt cake invokes images of spring

By this time of year, I'm ready for spring to come. However there's one thing that I look forward to — the arrival of all kinds of delicious and exotic citrus in the stores. Things like meyer lemons, sweet Cara Caras, plump Tangelos, and of course, blood oranges. With their mot-

tled color orange and red skin, along with the deep red-colored flesh, they make for such a special treat that I can never pass up when I come across them in the store.



Laura Davis

Yogurt cakes are one of my favorite baked goods on the planet. There is so much moisture and they love to take on the flavor of whatever fruit you want to throw into

them.

Here's a case in point — blood oranges. The cake itself is studded with plenty of fresh zest and juice and then topped with a gorgeous glaze simply made from some confectioner's sugar and a bit of additional juice from the orange. Can you believe that color? No red dye here. It's so gorgeous.

I topped with candied orange slices for a garnish that is almost too pretty to eat. Almost.

So, if you've seen these funny looking oranges in the store, but weren't quite sure what to do with them, this easy cake is a great place to start.

It's wonderful for dessert, or a slice with your tea or coffee in the morning.



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA DAVIS

Blood orange yogurt cake is wonderful for dessert or with coffee or tea in the morning.

Laura Davis, of Chincoteague Island, is a food writer and blogger at www.tideandthyme.com. Her recipes have been featured on Huffington Post and 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.

Preparing the blood orange yogurt cake

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- zest of two blood oranges
- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed blood orange juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

For the glaze:

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2-3 tbsps. freshly squeezed blood orange juice

For the candied orange slices:

- 1 blood orange
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour an 8.5 inch x 4 inch loaf pan and set aside.

In a small bowl combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Whisk to combine.

In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment combine the yogurt, sugar, eggs, orange zest, orange juice, and vanilla. Whisk to combine. With the mixer running on low, add in the dry ingredients until just combined. Then pour the vegetable oil into the batter and mix until it's combined well.

Pour batter into loaf pan and bake in preheated oven for about 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

To make the candied orange slices, wash and dry the orange thoroughly. Cut the orange in half lengthwise, then use a sharp knife to make very thin slices of orange. Poke out any seeds using a toothpick. Combine the sugar and water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Heat the mix-

ture until the sugar dissolves. Add the orange slices to the mixture so that they are in a single layer, reduce the heat to medium-low and let simmer about 20 minutes, turning the slices at least once so both sides are candied.

Remove from the heat. Let air-dry on a cooling rack (place some paper towels underneath the rack to catch the syrup drips) until ready to garnish.

When the cake is completely cool, combine the confectioners' sugar and orange juice in a small bowl and whisk to blend until smooth.

Adjust the consistency as needed with additional juice or confectioners' sugar. Drizzle the glaze over the top of the cake and garnish with the candied orange slices. Let stand briefly until the glaze sets. Slice and serve.

Cake can be stored in an airtight container for up to three days.

Saturday, February 22nd from 10am-2pm!

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Chincoteague's own amusement pier recalled

Like Atlantic City and Virginia Beach and other resorts larger and more famous, Chincoteague Island had a fun pier

If you had traveled to Chincoteague in the days before bridges joined the island to the mainland, if you had taken the train to Franklin City and boarded the steamer for the five-mile journey across the bay, you

would probably have landed at the Railroad Dock, behind the restaurant at the foot of Church Street.

And if you had come to Chincoteague for vacation or relaxation, as a number of people did in those days, chances are you would

have noticed, as your boat was about to dock, the unusual pier that jutted into the bay just north of your landing.

For like Atlantic City and Virginia Beach and other resorts larger and more famous, Chincoteague Island also, briefly, had its own amusement pier.

On May 13, 1905, S. Burton Dennis and Nathaniel S. Smith Jr. opened a new business on a pier on the waterfront at 4153 Main St.

The site was owned by Smith's father, who lived at the corner of Main and Smith streets in a big house (now part of the Island Manor House) that enjoyed an unobstructed view of the bay, for in those days the water

ventured, at high tide, almost up to Main Street itself.

The new business was unlike any other in Chincoteague, and the islanders did not know quite what to call it: the "amusement palace," the "playhouse," the "entertainment hall." Mostly they called it simply "the Pier."

Chincoteague at the turn of the century was a town of many amusements: a dozen ice cream parlors, 10 milkshake stands, a race track, a merry-go-round, and an auditorium that hosted concerts, plays, and — a major form of entertainment in that day — speeches.

As popular as these establishments were, none had as much to offer as the new pier. At the end of the pier was a small playhouse, roofed but open on all sides, where minstrel shows and vaudeville played nightly.

The pier itself served as a bowling alley, around which clustered food stands with "refreshments in abundance."

But its crowning glory sat on the shore's edge near the street: a merry-go-round with handsome wooden horses that circled to the tune of a steam calliope.

The pier was well into its second successful season when it was struck by fire on a Sunday night in July 1906. Flames spread from the playhouse towards the street, destroying everything above the pilings, sparing only the merry-go-round. The owners began rebuilding im-

mediately, and in less than a month re-opened an enlarged and improved establishment.

When the third season began on May 18, 1907, they added a roller skating rink. By 1908, the fourth season, Smith and Dennis were offering not only plays, a skating rink, a merry-go-round, and refreshment stands, but also moving pictures, the first on record on the island. One of the last events of that season occurred in October, when local Republicans used the pier to host a speech by former Congressman John S. Wise.

In March 1909, Smith traveled to Philadelphia to book "songsters and vaudeville artists" for the pier. The entertainment season of that year opened not at the pier but just down the street at Redmen's Hall (where the Methodist parking lot is located today), when the two-act live comedy "Three Hats" played to "a large and enthusiastic audience" in April, starring local actors O.M. Jones, Asa Conant, and Alice Burton.

The pier opened the following week with an orchestra from Philadelphia, and thereafter the acts changed almost nightly. In May players from Bloxom presented "Brookdale Farm," a "medley of action and fun," with admission between 15 and 35 cents.

The other performers of that season included pianist Professor Schemmerhon, of Philadelphia, the Chincoteague Cornet Band, the singing and dancing Delmar Sisters, and

a child duo known as the Hanges Sisters.

When there was no live entertainment, there were moving pictures. "The entertainment appeals to all who can enjoy a clean, wholesome, and amusing hour of solid fun," commented the Accomack News, which assured the public that the comfort and pleasure of the patrons, especially that of women and children, was "uppermost in the minds of the management."

Yet competition for the entertainment dollar remained keen on Chincoteague. Across the bay, on the shore just east of Signpost and in full view of Chincoteague itself, the summer crowds at Red Hills sometimes numbered as many as 3,000 a day, lured by something the island waterfront could not offer: a beach. Smith and Dennis moved their merry-go-round from the pier to Red Hills outright, offering merry-go-round rides and movies to crowds larger than the pier could attract or accommodate.

By that year there was new competition back on the island itself, where James T. Powell had opened Chincoteague's, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia's, first movie theater early in 1909.

The pier's sixth and last season was brief. In March 1910 Smith and Dennis advertised the merry-go-round for sale — "good as new, a bargain for a hustler" — probably because they were dissolving their partnership. The pier opened on schedule

(Continued on page 15)



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 14)

on April 2, but thereafter all mention of it drops from the newspapers. That summer Dennis operated the merry-go-round not at the pier but at Red Hills. That fall he brought "Madam Mora, Queen of Clairvoyants," to the island, who performed not at the pier but at his home.

In April 1911, Smith's parents sold the waterfront where the pier was located to William C. Bunting for \$1,500. For a number of years afterward, Dennis continued to operate the merry-go-round and moving

pictures but never again in partnership with Smith and never again at the pier.

Today no sign of the pier remains. In fact, the site is now dry ground, occupied by a number of buildings, for here as in many other places on the island, the land west of Main Street has been built up artificially over the years.

A warm night no longer brings the sounds of orchestra or calliope, and it is hard to imagine of a site so prosaic that it could once be said: "If you were in Philadelphia, you would be eager to drop in and see the same pictures and artists that are nightly exhibited at Dennis & Smith Pier."

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Soul Shakers, Deloreans set for Cape Charles

Beat a cold February with two hot bands performing on consecutive weekends at the Historic Palace Theatre

Dance the winter blues away at the annual Valentine's Day Dance Party with the popular Shoal Shakers on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the Historic Palace Theatre.

In the mood to dress up and have a good time? The evening includes complimentary champagne, chocolate, and lots of dancing.

The Shoal Shakers have been entertaining Cape Charles with upbeat dance music since early 2021.

The group has had lots of performances at the Lemon Tree Gallery, at the Palace Theatre, and with block parties on Strawberry Street.

Featuring Motown, rockabilly, rhythm and blues, and rock tunes, the Shoal Shakers keep the audience moving all evening.

The current lineup for the Valentine's Dance Party features Josh Fulam (drums), Clara Cooper (vocals), Vern "Train Man" Wheeler (vocals), Rob Cowart (bass), Steve Elliott (sax, vocals), John Sheppard (keyboards, vocals) and Jeff Gray (guitar).

Tickets are \$25 and are available at www.artsentercapecharles.org

To continue with the dance theme at the Palace, step back in time with The Deloreans, the popular electrifying 1980s tribute band that will transport audiences to the era of neon lights, big hair, and iconic music on Saturday, Feb. 15, at 7:30 p.m.

Composed of six versatile vocalists, the seasoned showband brings to life the most memorable artists and nostalgic tunes of the '80s with unmatched flair and energy.

Since their inception in 2007, The Deloreans have captivated audiences across the East Coast, from intimate weddings to citywide events drawing



COURTESY PHOTO

The Deloreans, the ultimate 1980s tribute band, will be performing at the Historic Palace Theatre in Cape Charles.

tens of thousands.

With a repertoire spanning over 10 hours of music, they tailor their performances to suit any setting and cater to diverse crowds.

This high-energy show is also backed by an incredible display of dazzling lights, powerful sound, and even an LED video wall.

While the music and the colorful neon costumes will take audiences

back to the past, the production has all the awe and excitement of a modern concert.

What sets The Deloreans apart is their commitment to variety. Each band member takes center stage throughout the show, ensuring a dynamic and engaging performance every time.

Donning authentic '80s costumes, the group will ignite the stage with

unstoppable energy.

Tickets are \$30 and available on the Arts Enter Cape Charles website.

Watch for the details of the other theatrical events at the Palace Theatre presented by Arts Enter, the 28-year-old nonprofit fine and performing arts center based in Cape Charles.

Call 757-331-4327 for more information.

Onancock parade is set for March 15

On Saturday, March 15, the Onancock Business and Civic Association in Onancock, will present the 10th annual O’Nancock St. Patrick’s Parade.

It is a day filled with small-town America celebration, including the widely anticipated annual parade,

shopping, dining, and music. Visit Onancock restaurants, galleries and shops all day. This year’s theme is, “Lucky Onancock.”

The always popular Classic Car and Tractor exhibition will precede the parade starting at noon. The Parade starts at 3 p.m. on Market Street. St. Patrick, his color guard, Pipe and Drum Corps, floats, and more are part of the parade.

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ESCC hires new soccer coach

Eastern Shore Community College is proud to announce the hiring of Chase Baxa as the head coach of ESCC's newly formed soccer program. Baxa began in his role on Feb. 3 and will proceed with student recruitment for the men's and women's teams. This will include recruiting existing ESCC students and high school seniors from every high school on the Shore. The college is extremely excited for the enthusiasm existing Shore-wide for these upcoming opportunities.

After a naming campaign held in the community and online last fall, final choices were posed to ESCC students in January. With the final say for the team name, the campus spoke definitively and voted for the "ESCC-FC" (Eastern Shore Community College Football Club) with a nod to popular and dominating outfits worldwide. Logos and branding for ESCC-FC will be forthcoming.

A program budget was developed based on the experiences of other Virginia community colleges that have athletic programs and presented to the Accomack and Northampton boards of supervisors. Both boards, along with the ESCC Foundation, have provided funding to enable the launch of the program.

Coach Baxa is from western Pennsylvania and moved to the Eastern Shore in 2021. A graduate of Geneva College, he played four years of Division III soccer there. He currently teaches science at Northampton High School and coaches the boys soccer program. He credits an incredible team

and many coaches to help bring his overall coaching record to 43-14, including one state championship and one state runner-up.

Baxa also directs a travel soccer program, Shore FC, for players looking to play at a higher level. He says his passion for both science and soccer has led to incredible opportunities. At Northampton he has taught grades nine through 12, including environmental science, Earth science, ecology, anatomy, marine biology, and his specialty, physics.

He said that, "My goal for the men's and women's Eastern Shore Community College soccer teams is simple: to showcase the talented and devoted student-athletes that come from the Eastern Shore and create a team that the entire community will be proud of."

In the coming months there will be multiple opportunities to play soccer and showcase talents. This includes a student intramural league and weekend pick-up games starting in March. In April, the first ESCC Soccer ID Camp will be conducted to take a closer look at the students interested in continuing their soccer careers.

Open tryouts will then be held at the beginning of the fall semester to finalize the team before the season. Additional information and updates will be available on the ESCC website at es.vccs.edu and through the college's social media channels. Coach Baxa's contact information is cbaxa@es.vccs.edu.

Capt. Orris Browne and Cedar Island Guano

One of the more colorful characters in Eastern Shore history, Confederate serviceman entered the fertilizer trade

One of the more colorful figures of Eastern Shore history during the late 19th century was Captain Orris Applethwaite Browne.

Browne was born on Aug. 8, 1842, into a prominent Accomack family. His father was a physician, Dr. Peter Fielding Browne, and his mother was Sally Cropper Bayly Browne.



Curtis Badger

Browne distinguished himself as a young man by serving in the Confederacy for the duration of the Civil War.

When he was 17, he served in the army during the John Brown insurrection of 1859. He enrolled in the Naval Academy, but when war broke out, he joined the Confederate Navy and saw active duty.

He served until Nov. 6, 1865, when he surrendered aboard the cruiser Shenandoah, the last ship to fly the Confederate flag.

When the war ended, Browne returned to Accomack and began farming on the seaside on Folly Creek. Browne was a progressive farmer, constantly in search of new techniques and new processes to increase yield.

After the war, farmers began using fertilizers to amend soil, and Browne was a pioneer in the process.

Fertilizer was being made from the droppings of seabirds, and ships were sailing to the Caribbean islands to mine bird waste, which is called guano.

The birds fed on fish and their droppings were rich in nutrients that stimulated plant growth.

The problem was, it was expensive and dangerous to send ships and crews long distances to collect bird waste. Technology was developed to bypass the



AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MUSEUM

Orris Browne, center, is shown during his military days. A progressive farmer, Browne later became manager of the Hollywood Farm, now the site of Bay Creek. A street in the community bears Browne's name.

birds' digestive system and make guano directly from fish.

Fish guano became a growing industry on the Eastern Shore, with guano plants popping up in many waterfront communities, from Chincoteague to Tangier.

Browne built a guano plant on Cedar Island, and

when the railroad opened in 1884 he began selling the product not only to local farmers, but to markets up and down the East Coast.

Browne promoted his Superior Cedar Island Guano in newspapers, advertising it for \$40 per ton, delivered to a rail station near you.

Browne had his guano analyzed by a chemist with the state department of agriculture who pronounced it "as good or better" than the expensive imports.

In an ad in the Peninsula Enterprise newspaper, Browne claimed, "More than 140 different brands of fertilizers have passed through the hands of the state chemist, and none can compare in cheapness and quality with Superior Cedar Island Guano."

It was perhaps an unfortunate choice of words regarding the chemist's hands, but Browne got his point across.

Browne was a tireless promoter not only of guano, but of Eastern Shore agriculture in general. In 1888 he became manager of the Hollywood Farm near Cape Charles, today the site of the Bay Creek community.

The farm was owned by William L. Scott, developer of the NYP&N Railroad, and had 250 acres under production, making it at the time the largest truck farm in the United States.

Browne used his position as manager not only to promote his products, but to serve as an ambassador for Eastern Shore agriculture. He served on numerous committees and traveled widely to promote progressive farming techniques.

According to the MilesFiles genealogical website, Browne married Nannie Bruce Howard and they had one daughter, Elizabeth Josephine Browne, who died in 1987 in Clarke County.

Orris Browne died on Sept. 28, 1898, at age 56 and is buried in Mount Custis Cemetery in Accomac.

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.

100 years ago
February 1925

Practical joke gets him job with H.K. Thaw

There are various ways of securing employment, but J. “Buck” Vincent Burton, aged 21, an athlete weighing 190 pounds, of Nassawadox, is now private secretary of Harry K. Thaw as a result of a practical joke.

During Christmas week while Thaw was in Baltimore, he advertised for a private secretary who was “big and strong and could fight if necessary.” Some of Burton’s friends around Nassawadox answered the advertisement, applying for the position in Buck’s name. Nothing was heard from the application until the last week of January, when Mr. Burton received a letter in long hand, supposed to have been written by Thaw, enclosing a check for \$15 and requesting a personal interview in Washington, D.C. Burton left for D.C. Jan. 31 and met Thaw and after a short interview received the job.

Since the first of February, Burton has been heard from several times by both friends and his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Burton, of Nassawadox. He writes of having a good time, traveling in Pullman cars, reading stock tickers, and hiking. He has been heard from while in Washington, Pittsburgh, Winchester, N.Y., and New York City. He writes that his mail is all censored and that there is but little use for his friends to write him.

— *Ledger-Star*

Illinois grants first two raw oyster permits to Virginians

At a meeting held on Chincoteague Island Monday and Tuesday nights under the auspices of the state board of health, plans were discussed for procuring a supply of water from the mainland and announcement was made that two Chincoteague shippers had been granted permits to send raw oysters into Illinois.

The oyster permits are the first issued by the state of Illinois to Virginians. They are signed by Dr. Isaac D. Rawlings, director. Permit No. 1 was issued to the Seatag Oyster Corporation, and No. 2 was issued to Forrest H. Hill.

At the meeting Monday night, Joseph Baker, a member of the town council, presided, and the need for a water supply was pointed out by representatives of the board of health. Figures as to the cost of piping water from the mainland were presented by Dr. H. Wagner, sanitary engineer. A committee was appointed, and the meeting on Tuesday night was

for the purpose of further discussing these plans.

— *Ledger-Star*

Man injured by bus gets \$10,000 verdict

An award of \$10,000 for personal injuries alleged to have been received while riding in a bus operated by Avery D. Truitt, of Snow Hill, Md., was made to Forrest H. Hill, of Chincoteague Island, by Judge Morris A. Soper and a jury in the United States District Court this afternoon.

The defense was not represented. The trial was in the form of an inquisition by the jury to fix the amount of the damages Hill deserved. He sued for \$25,000. The alleged accident occurred on Feb. 19, 1922, when the bus struck a tree through careless driving, Hill said.

In the course of the examination, Hill, referring to treatment he received at the hospital for the injuries, said, “They removed everything but my appendix, and they would have taken that if they had had time.”

— *The Evening Sun*

75 years ago
February 1950

Ferry plans new village at terminal

Plans of the Virginia Ferry Corporation on developing 300 acres of land six miles south of Cape Charles, where its new ferry terminal is nearing completion, were brought into closer focus yesterday by Capt. L.H. Garrison, general manager of the corporation.

He envisages a new town, which will be known as Kiptopeke Beach, a name approved several days ago by the Northampton County Circuit Court.

Some phases of the project are beyond the planning stage, including a 40-unit California-style motor court with dining room, which is geared for completion in the late summer, and bath house facilities on the section of the waterfront formerly known as Nottingham’s Beach, which has been a favorite rendezvous for Eastern Shore residents for more than 40 years.

The \$2,750,000 estimated cost of the terminal project does not include the motor court development, approximately \$175,000, an undertaking of a separate corporation, nor does it cover a projected large truck center to cost \$200,000 or more, which also would be privately operated.

There are other features of the development that are not speculative, including a 100’x12’ fishing pier connecting with the main structure but at a lower level, and a yacht basin in protected waters to attract boating enthusiasts along the Eastern Seaboard.

In addition to approximately 330 home sites, the subdivision plans also call for a large shopping center bordering the highway approach to the terminal, a modern hotel with ample space reserved for playgrounds and recreation areas, a school, and a church.

The motor court, construction of which should begin in the next few weeks, will be located on a 13-acre tract fronting the highway for 1,000 feet with ample space to add at least 300 units to the project. Space is being reserved on the tract for a swimming pool and a recreation field.

Captain Garrison said he does not expect the town to spring up overnight but expressed confidence that the area will develop gradually in conformance with the long-range plans now being made.

He explained that the real estate phases will be handled by the Kiptopeke Beach Land Corporation, a subsidiary of the ferry corporation, and will be under the direction of R.J. Hitch as general agent.

Captain Garrison said the transfer of terminal operations from Cape Charles to the new location will be effected May 1, when the corporation plans to withdraw one of its four vessels from service and hold it in reserve for emergency purposes.

Incident to the development, the corporation has obtained permission of the Circuit Court to move the 11 or more bodies in an old cemetery on the property to a new resting place at Cape Charles.

The pier structure, although practically completed, is yet to be paved, along with a new 24-foot highway extending for about a mile to a public road that the State Highway Department has agreed to improve from that point to a junction with United States 13, just east of Cape Charles.

Eventually, Captain Garrison said, a dual highway separated by landscaping will extend across the company property to the new terminal.

— *The Virginian-Pilot*

Body of plane victim found

The body of Lt. Cmdr. Wynkoop Kirsted III, missing in a plane crash on the Eastern Shore more than two months, has been recovered.

Waterman George Stavy, of the Eastern Shore, found Commander Kirsted’s body Sunday afternoon at the mouth of Nassawadox Creek, near Jamesville.

Northampton County Sheriff George Turner identified the body through identification tags and the remains of a parachute still on the body.

The naval officer, who was assistant projects officer and public information officer at the Naval Aviation Ordinance Test Station at Chincoteague, was flying a fighter plane on Dec. 2 when the aircraft went into two

(Continued on page 21)

Yesteryears

(Continued from page 20)

spins and crashed into the Chesapeake Bay off Onancock. Immediate efforts to find the body were made difficult by high winds and rough seas.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1942, Kirsted is survived by his wife and two children. His home address is Scarsdale, N.Y.

A Fifth Naval District spokesman said the body has been removed to the Naval Hospital pending funeral arrangements.

— *Ledger-Star*

Conductor sues PRR for injuries on train

Earl S. Marsh, a Cape Charles railroadman, this afternoon brought a \$100,000 damage suit against the Pennsylvania Railroad for injuries received in a train mishap in the summer of 1947.

It is alleged in the complaint filed in United States District Court that Marsh, a conductor on a freight train between Cape Charles and Kiptopeke, was checking train numbers as a freight train passed. He said the train stopped suddenly and the door of a refrigerator swung open and struck him in the head.

Marsh did not realize the seriousness of his injury and after a little while resumed his duties. He was bothered by headaches and in October 1947 began feeling a numbness. He is now paralyzed along his entire left side.

The suit was brought by Attorney R. Arthur Jet.

— *Ledger-Star*

Two sentenced for trapping Shore ducks

Two Accomack County men have drawn Federal reformatory sentences in U.S. District Court on charges of trapping ducks in the Wallace Beach section of Chincoteague.

In passing sentence Tuesday, Judge Sterling Hutcheson recalled that one U.S. game warden had been shot and wounded in performing his duties in that area and that other wardens had been shot at.

“The people of that section have got to learn that firing on game officers will not be tolerated,” Judge Hutcheson remarked.

George T. Clark, 25, drew the maximum sentence on the charge, six months in a reformatory and a \$500 fine. The second, Mark Daisy, 34, was handed three months and a \$250 fine.

They were charged specifically with baiting duck traps with corn.

Tinsley H. Cunningham, a U.S. game warden, said the men were apprehended from an airplane.

When the plane landed, he testified, he found several sacks of the grain, which he destroyed.

Leon B. Cool Jr., pilot for the game official, said when Clark was accosted, he picked up a bolt-action rifle and declared, “I’ll never be taken alive.” Clark denied he ever made the statement.

Daisy offered no resistance, Cool said.

— *Ledger-Star*

50 years ago February 1975

Exmore athlete named all-star

For the second consecutive year, Navy Petty Officer Third Class Norman W. (“Stormin’ Norman”) Lyons II, of Exmore, has been named one of the 10 All-Stars in the Commander in Chief Atlantic Basketball League, earning the right to play in the Fifth Naval District All-Star Tournament to be held Feb. 3 through 7.

Lyons, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman W. Lyons Sr., of Exmore, is assigned to the Naval Administrative Command at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk.

Playing on the Staff College team, Lyons averaged 21.9 points per game during the season and was selected from a field of more than 100 regular-season players.

Unable to participate in the All-Star Tournament last year because of an injury, Lyons this year faces the top players from throughout the Fifth Naval District. The District is composed of all the naval units from Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia.

At the Staff College, he is responsible for the maintenance of the medical, pay, promotion, and administrative records for all the Navy enlisted men and women to the joint-service school.

The Staff College, operated under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, annually conducts two 21-week courses that prepare mid-career officers from all services for assignment to joint and combined commands, attaché and advisory duty to foreign nations and defense management positions.

The upcoming tournament may well be just the start for Lyons. Depending on his performance, he may be selected for the South-Atlantic All-Star competition held in Charleston, S.C., the second week in February, according to the public affairs office of the Staff College.

— *The Daily Times*

Dulany shutdown set for Feb. 28

Shutdown of the Dulany Foods Inc. operations on the Delmarva Peninsula is proceeding according to schedule, and as of Feb. 28 will be practically phased out, a spokesman for the food processing firm said today.

The Salisbury sales office and plants in Exmore and Bridgeville are affected. Except for a small crew in Exmore shipping out merchandise in storage and a storage and distribution in Trappe, the closing will be complete.

Approximately 80 persons on Delmarva lost their jobs in the shutdown and a \$2 million a year payroll was eliminated. In addition Dulany formerly purchased \$2 million of raw products and \$1.5 million in supplies. While only 25 worked in Bridgeville, 12 in Salisbury, and 43 in Exmore, during peak production 300 to 450 were employed processing food.

United Foods Inc. is Dulany’s parent company. The Exmore plant is for sale and the Bridgeville facility was leased from American Consumers Industries, which are seeking a buyer for that property.

— *The Daily Times*

Virginia Shore shares in big tourism trade

Accomack and Northampton counties played a significant part in Virginia’s posting of a record-high \$1.3 billion travel year in 1974, according to a study released by the Virginia State Travel Service.

Expenditures by all tourists in the two Eastern Shore counties amounted to \$8,634,000, or 16.7% of the Eastern Shore of Virginia’s retail business.

Total sales for travel businesses here amounted to \$21,912, or 41.6% of retail business.

According to the Virginia Travel study, prepared by Dr. Lewis C. Copeland of the University of Tennessee, there are 400 active firms on the Eastern Shore of Virginia involved in the travel and tourism business, with 940 owners and employees. These businesses include lodging, food, recreational services, and gasoline and auto services.

Statewide, the \$1.3 billion in expenditures recorded by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s travel industry represented an increase of \$250,000,000 over receipts in 1973, an increase of 14%.

Dr. Copeland noted that although Virginia’s growth was 1% greater than the national average, the cost of travel also increased 14% during the same period, resulting in an even break for the industry.

“While travel traffic and the number of visitors showed no significant increase,” Dr. Copeland said, “there was an increase in the length of stay and

(Continued on page 22)

Yesteryears

(Continued from page 21)

spending. The 49 million out-of-state travelers who visited or passed through Virginia in 1974 contributed to the \$584,890,000 collected in all tax revenues, provided jobs for 160,260 Virginians, and helped maintain tourism's position as the second-largest industry in the commonwealth, behind all forms of manufacturing."

— *The Daily Times*

Tangier Island shooting victim listed as 'fair'

A 46-year-old Tangier Island waterman remained in Peninsula General Hospital in Salisbury today, the victim of a Thursday night shooting.

His accused assailant has been released from the Accomack County Jail after posting bond.

The victim, Willie T. Crockett, was moved from the intensive to the special care ward at the hospital this weekend and was listed in fair condition today. He received a wound in the stomach from a .32 caliber handgun, authorities said.

Accomack County Sheriff Adair Matthews said 79-year-old Austin Daley, an island crabhouse owner, was released from jail after posting a \$1,000 bond. He is accused of shooting Crockett in front of Betty's Apparel Shop on the west end of the island Thursday night.

Daley was arrested on the island after being taken to McCready Hospital in Crisfield, where he was treated after suffering a heart attack following the shooting.

Both men were transported by boat to the mainland for hospitalization.

Sheriff Matthews said the shooting is believed to be the result of a feud between the two men that stems back to "35 or 40 years ago." The sheriff said the elder man once "spanked Crockett," when he was a young man in a dispute over property damage.

— *The Daily Times*

25 years ago
February 2000

Watermen seek repeal of crab rule

Watermen on Tangier Island are hoping Virginia regulators will repeal a new regulation designed to allow undersized crabs to escape from crab pots.

The regulation requiring two escape hatches in every

crab pot will pose "too much hardship" on watermen in the Tangier and Pocomoke sounds because it will reduce the catch of mature female crabs that are otherwise legal game, said waterman Jeff Crockett, president of the island's watermen's association.

Typically, these female crabs remain small even after their final molt.

At Crockett's request, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission voted 7-0 yesterday to revisit the matter at a public hearing at its next meeting on March 28.

The commission approved the requirement in November in its latest attempt to ease rising fishing pressure on the resource that is the prime economical target for bay watermen.

The commission's staff, however, cast a dim light on the request. Jack Travelstead, chief of fisheries management, pointed out studies showing a drastic decline in the number of spawning-age female crabs in the bay.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science says the number of female crabs has plunged 70% during the past decade. "If that [decline] was on any other species, we'd be thinking about a moratorium," Travelstead said.

The commission has not entertained a crab harvest ban because the extraordinary fertility of the crab places it apart from most other commercially harvested seafood.

Crockett said the cull ring requirement puts watermen who work on Tangier and Pocomoke sounds at a disadvantage. Both areas in the northern portions of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay typically harbor female crabs that remain small even after reaching their final molt, when they are deemed legal game.

Studies involving Tangier watermen several years ago showed up to 12% of legal crabs were able to slip from cull rings and escape, Crockett said.

Virginia regulations previously allowed watermen in the open waters of the bay and on the Eastern Shore seaside to close the bigger of the two cull rings specified in the regulations.

In November, however, the commission struck that exemption from the books. The regulation requires each pot to be fitted with two cull rings that must be left open. One must be at least 2 5/16 inches in diameter. The other must be at least 2 3/16 inches in diameter. The larger of the two rings may still be closed when the pots are used on the seaside of the Eastern Shore.

Crockett said Tangier watermen did not have a chance to speak to the proposal the same day the commission voted to require bay watermen to leave the cull rings open.

The Virginia crab pot season runs from April 1 to Nov. 30.

"The crabs we're going to save are going to go to Maryland to be trapped" and be lost to the spawning population anyway, Crockett reasoned.

Commission member Chad Ballard called the Tangier complaint "a legitimate concern" that should be addressed.

The commission has spent much of the past several years hashing out ways to protect blue crabs, which rank as the Chesapeake Bay's richest seafood prize. The average yearly crab harvest, about 40 million pounds, makes Virginia one of the nation's leading commercial fishing states.

A recent series of lackluster catches, however, has focused public attention on the commission's management of the crab population.

— *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Fire destroys a piece of Accomack history

Firefighters from seven companies in two states responded to a fire Monday that destroyed one of Accomack County's most historic homes.

Corbin Hall, known in literary circles as one of Virginia's finest Georgian homes, was gutted by fire that collapsed the roof and leveled part of an attached wing.

Accomack County fire investigators are looking at several heaters used to dry water damage from a pipe that burst last week.

The caretaker who lives nearby reported the fire shortly before 5 a.m. after barking dogs woke him. However the caretaker went to nearby Horntown to report the blaze because his phone lines were downed by the fire. The building's alarm system failed to activate, firefighters said.

Firefighters and equipment from Greenbackville, New Church, Atlantic, Bloxom, and Wallops responded along with Maryland crews from nearby Girdletree and Stockton.

Corbin Hall, also known as Chincoteague Farm and Rowley Farm, dates to 1725, according to Katharine B. Pennebaker's book "Homes and Harbors on the Eastern Shore."

Ralph T. Whitelaw, who wrote "Virginia's Eastern Shore," called the house "one of the outstanding dwellings now on the Shore." It is also listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

"Corbin Hall was so sturdily constructed that little basic restoration has ever been needed," Pennebaker said.

Before the fire, much of the original woodwork remained, including a paneled parlor and a Georgian stair.

The home is owned by William C. Roland, who does not live in the area, firefighters said.

— *The Daily Times*

Q I'm new to the area. I have found many drivers wave when they pass in vehicles. It seems very friendly. Other times, I'll wave, and nobody waves back.

What are the unspoken rules for waving and not waving on the Eastern Shore?

A We wave on the Eastern Shore. Most of us do, most of the time, as I see it.

Maybe we don't wave if we are busy chewing on a problem of some sort, or something stressful has developed and thrown us into a swivet. Stuff like that happens around here.

Like if someone just hacked us off and we are grinding our teeth about it, slamming the car into gear, stomping the gas pedal, snatching on the steering wheel, and grumbling about the day's events.

On the Eastern Shore, the courtesy of waving while driving can be temporarily suspended when we encounter some aggravating [redacted] who gets us riled, or some other trifling situation happens, like when we work our [redacted] off and stuff still turns into liquid [redacted].

Sometimes the stupid [redacted] [redacted] is just too much, or some motherless, miserable [redacted] cur who is full of [redacted] manages to seriously [redacted] us off.

Or when we are speeding down a two-lane road because we have to use the bathroom and some [redacted] driving an Audi with Ohio plates has come to a complete stop in the roadway to get a closer [redacted] look at a [redacted] house for sale. Then we might not wave.

I mean, what the [redacted]?

(Sorry about the rants. But you know the feeling.)

Bottom line: Waving can be secondary when we get a sudden case of the green-apple quick step and are in dire need of a bio-break, or are ruminating on a bad situation and planning to get it handled, or get even.

You might be passing us on a road, and throw up your hand, friendly and smiling, and we just glower back under the brim of a dusty ballcap.

Just keep driving and don't take it personally. After we take care of whatever problem is afoot — or after we use the restroom — we will probably wave to you when our minds or bowels are at ease.

Other than those situations, Eastern Shore folks wave. We are friendly, although some of us can get ornery.

Back to the waving:

Among menfolk, there aren't many full-hand waves around here.

You might get a raised index finger over the steering wheel. That's the customary male wave.

A male waving at a familiar female may give the "flutter wave," during which the fingers rise and fall in a semi-flirty way.

I've found women give a friendler, whole-handed



SHORE FIRST/JIMMY SHOCKLEY

This piece was written by Ted Shockley, pictured here on his prized Honda three-wheeler. Every month in this spot, he will offer tips for new arrivals and vacationers on how to best assimilate into the culture of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

wave, especially when waving to other women.

Then there are folks oblivious to anything else while they drive. They don't wave and they don't see waves.

They just look at the road. You can wave your arms off, both hands in the air, as if trying to signal a helicopter to a landing zone. They won't see it.

Taylor Swift herself could be hitchhiking on Lankford Highway in Gargatha and they would never notice, ever, much less wave.

I wave at them anyway. In the rare event they see me, I don't want them to think I'm snotty, ornery, uppity, or anything of the sort.

Besides, they might be new to the Eastern Shore, and we aim to be welcoming and congenial, so we wave.

Just forgive us if [redacted] happens, the whole day has become a [redacted] dumpster fire, and everyone seems to have a burr up their [redacted], and a friendly wave isn't top of mind.

■ Do you have a question about Eastern Shore of Virginia habits and hangups? Email your questions to editor@easternshorepost.com

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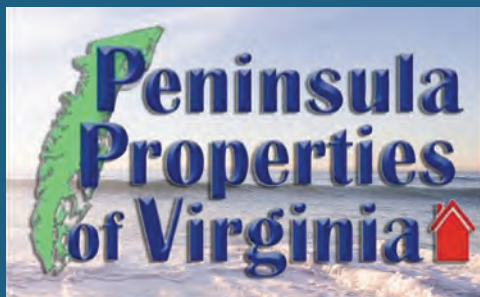
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