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# FIRST RESPONDERS

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## Gloucester girl makes honoring first responders her mission

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

Over the past few months, Kordelia Coyne has made it her mission to honor first responders. And, so far, the 9-year-old from Gloucester has raised thousands of dollars to shower them with gift cards as a way of showing her appreciation for all they do.

Kordelia held her first lemonade stand on June 28, and since then she's been busy making lemonade and cookies. Most recently, she held a fundraiser on Sept. 26 at Scoot's BBQ at Gloucester Point (where she raised \$1,109) and on Oct. 10 at M&M Building Supply in Mathews (where she raised more than \$1,000). As of last Thursday, her total raised is over \$3,000.

She started this fundraising project when she witnessed her neighbor being treated negatively after becoming a state trooper in March and she wanted him and other first responders to "feel that they're still loved and appreciated."

Her parents, Shawn and Mary Coyne, thought her lemonade stand was going to be a one-time thing, but people started sharing their Facebook page, Kordelia's Lemonade Stand, and the donations kept pouring in. The "Kordelia's Lemonade Stand" page has grown as well, with more than 650 people following it as of last week.

So far, Kordelia has reached out to over 200 first responders



Kordelia Coyne is raising money to buy gift cards for first responders by holding lemonade stands and receiving donations through her "Kordelia's Lemonade Stand" Facebook page. Here, she is selling lemonade and baked goods at M&M Building Supply in Mathews on Oct. 10 where she raised over \$1,000 for the gift cards.



Sid Foster of the Mathews County Sheriff's Office thanks Kordelia Coyne for her regional effort to support first responders.

ers all over Virginia and also in North Carolina, Colorado, Texas and California. Each \$10 gift card is either from 7-Eleven, Taco Bell or Subway and includes a personalized thank-you note signed by Kordelia.

Shawn Coyne said that Kordelia has always been shy, but this fundraising project has helped her come out of her shell. He also said that she has always been giving and caring.

Kordelia plans to continue

raising money for the gift cards throughout the fall and winter, but will switch from lemonade to hot chocolate and apple cider as the weather gets cooler.

She is also collecting school supplies and so far has distrib-

uted 20 book bags filled with school supplies to Mathews County Public Schools.

Kordelia is a fourth grade student, her favorite subject is history and she likes to play softball.

To any first responders

reading this, Kordelia would like to say "Thank you and you are still loved and appreciated."

To learn more about her fundraising projects visit [facebook.com/kordeliaslemonadestand](https://facebook.com/kordeliaslemonadestand).

## Training firefighters is serious business

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Training firefighters is serious business, whether teaching them how to drive a fire truck, put out a fire, force open a door, search for victims, or attend to any of the myriad other tasks required when responding to a fire, not to mention keeping themselves and others safe while doing it all.

Captain Andy Nazak, Officer in Charge of Fire Training for the Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad, heads a team of a dozen instructors who oversee training for the department. Every year, they organize a four-month-long session of classes to teach around 15 firefighters the skills and knowledge base required to obtain Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, and Hazardous Materials certification.

It takes a significant amount of time to achieve certification in all three areas—160 hours for Firefighter 1, 57 hours for Firefighter 2, and 32 hours for Hazardous Materials, for a total of 249 hours. Classes are held Tuesday and Thursday nights, with hands-on training every Saturday and Sunday, from early January to mid-May.

But Nazak said in addition to the



Andy Nazak, Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad's captain in charge of fire training, and a team of instructors provide hands-on training for Firefighter 1 and 2 candidates at this burn building in Harcum.

SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

SEE TRAINING FIREFIGHTERS, PAGE 2C



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SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

A burn prop that has a commercial stove appearance uses propane to simulate a kitchen fire for training purposes at the Middle Peninsula Regional Training Center at Harcum. A monitoring system shuts the system down if the temperature reaches 750 degrees. Special tiles line the walls and ceiling of the room to keep the heat from damaging the metal and concrete structure.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The second floor of the burn building has a metal bed-like propane structure that simulates a bedroom fire.

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TRAINING FIREFIGHTERS:

A serious commitment of time and resources

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C)

classroom and hands-on time they spend with students, instructors spend many more hours in preparation for the classes, including building props to simulate real-fire conditions. He said it's not unusual for the training team to put in 300 to 400 hours during the spring training program.

The team also offers a range of additional classes throughout the year in skill areas such as emergency vehicle operations, driver/pump operations, driver/aerial operations, and others. Each one of these classes requires the instructor to achieve separate certification. For instance, one such class, "Mayday Firefighter Down," centers around a firefighter rescuing him/herself or another person. It's a 16-hour course, but it requires the instructor to spend an additional 16 hours learning to teach it. And everything has to be taught to National Fire Prevention Association

(NFPA) standards.

Fire training center

The department's training is enhanced by a fire training facility, a Class B burn building, located at Harcum. The Middle Peninsula Regional Fire Training Center is a two-story structure, with additional attic space, that gives firefighters-in-training the opportunity to develop skills in such areas as handling a hose line, working a nozzle and practicing streaming the water, and rescuing victims under smoke and fire conditions.

Initially a Class A burn building that only allowed for the burning of materials such as pallets and hay, the building is now equipped with propane for burning so that, rather than a short training session in which the firefighters extinguish the fire and are left with nothing else to do, there is a continuous gas-fed fire. The propane equipment, including exhaust fans and temperature regulators, along with steps for outdoor access, materials to finish the roof, and other materials, were all purchased four or five years ago with a \$250,000 grant from the state.

The burn building is made entirely of concrete and met-



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Actual metal beds in a separate second-floor room are used to help teach search-and-rescue tactics. Mattresses are placed on the beds, and other pieces of furniture may be put in place, and firefighters are taught how to search for people in a smoky environment.

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SEE TRAINING FIREFIGHTERS, PAGE 3C

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GVFRS fire training officer Captain Andy Nazak, in photo at left, talks about the clothing he dons before fighting a fire. It consists of boots, pants, a coat, a hood, gloves and a helmet. At right, Nazak has donned the clothing and is ready to put on his air pack and mask.

## TRAINING FIREFIGHTERS: *A serious commitment of time and resources*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2C)

al, but the burn rooms—one downstairs and the other upstairs—are equipped with special tiles lining the walls and ceiling that contain the heat and prevent damage to the surrounding metal and concrete. The downstairs burn room is a simulated kitchen, with a \$12,000 prop that looks like a large commercial oven. During training, furnishings are brought in to simulate a real home environment, then propane is piped in to create a fire. Upstairs, the propane prop is a “twin bed” made entirely of metal. Nazak said he’s constantly searching for used/discarded metal furniture that can be used for training.

The propane props have sensors and controls that will automatically turn up the exhaust if the temperature in one of the rooms reaches 650 degrees and will shut down the system altogether at 750 degrees. The building is inspected every two years, alternating between a company the fire department hires and a state inspector. Learning to force open a door is accomplished with the help of two props the department purchased—steel doors set in frames that allow firefighters to practice using different tools and techniques for forcible entry. But the doors came at a cost—\$4,000 for the smaller one

and \$8,000 for the larger one. A couple of “cutting trees,” at \$2,000 each, allow trainees to practice using saws. “We want to give students as much hands-on as possible,” said Nazak. “My thing is to provide quality training. I want firefighters that know what to look for, how to throw a ground ladder, how to force open a door.”

**Background**

A native of Vestal, New York, and a third-generation volunteer firefighter, Nazak has been with Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue since 2006, but he has 20 years of experience in the fire service, beginning as a teenager. He joined the U.S. Air Force in 2002, right out of high school, and worked as a firefighter for four years while stationed at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton. While there, he asked around about joining a volunteer fire department and was told about Gloucester.

As life so often goes, Nazak met a young woman, Lindsay Fary, then-Fire Chief Joe Fary’s daughter, and decided that Gloucester was where he wanted to be. The two

married and now have two sons, three years old and five months old. After leaving the Air Force, Nazak got a job as a firefighter/paramedic with Fort Eustis Fire and Emergency Services, and he’s been there ever since. He works 24 hours a day, 13 days a month, and volunteers for Gloucester on his days off. For information about volunteering with GVFRS, visit gvfrs.org, email training1@gvfrs.org, or call 804-693-2148.





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Sammy Dutton, at left, and Jimmy "Bullet" Hudgins have been with the Mathews Volunteer Fire Department for about 50 years each and have seen a lot of positive changes throughout their years of service. Here, they are pictured at Station 4 in Cobbs Creek.

## Dutton and Hudgins recount their 50 years with MVFD

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

Between the two of them, Sammy Dutton and Jimmy "Bullet" Hudgins have devoted a century's worth of service to the Mathews Volunteer Fire Department.

Hudgins joined the Mathews Station when he was only 19 years old and Dutton joined the Cobbs Creek Station when he was in his early twenties. Both became volunteers because the stations were in need of new faces.

"They needed young people," said Dutton.

Throughout their years of service, Dutton and Hudgins have seen a lot of positive changes.

When they first started at the department, they would use World War II canisters to breathe through for fresh air when fighting a fire. In the 1980s, the department switched to using Scott Air-Paks.

They have also seen improvements in communication, buildings and equipment. According to Dutton, all of the stations are equipped with trucks that have good-sized tanks. This is beneficial because all of the stations have to carry their own water to fight fires because of the lack of fire hydrants in Mathews.

Many of these upgrades have been made possible by holding fundraisers in the county.

"The people of Mathews County have been good to the fire department," said Dutton. Hudgins commented that MVFD could not survive without the support of Mathews

residents.

MVFD has many high-dollar expenses. It costs \$5,000 to outfit only one firefighter in full turnout gear to respond to a structure fire. The department also has to worry about maintaining its trucks and buildings.

One downside that MVFD has experienced lately is the lack of new volunteers.

According to Hudgins, all of the Mathews stations used to have waiting lists to join. Now, they are having trouble getting new volunteers.

"It's hard to get the volunteers that you need anymore," said Dutton.

Station 4 in Cobbs Creek is the only station in Mathews that is full. According to Hudgins, each station is allowed to have three junior members but none do.

When needed, Mathews, Gloucester and Middlesex fire departments will provide mutual aid for each other. Dutton and Hudgins recounted the day MVFD received assistance

from both Gloucester and Middlesex fire departments in January 2019 when Bayside

Joinery, Cobbs Creek, caught on fire on the very cold and windy day.



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FILE PHOTOS; 1921 PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY ANN GILMAN

**Before fire protection**

Mathews Court House suffered three devastating fires in a 21-year period in the 20th century, before organized fire protection was available. Top left left, a scene from after the fire in 1921; at right, after a fire in 1926; below left, the fire of 1942. Large swaths of commercial property were wiped out in each blaze, and only bucket brigades and chemical trucks were available to check the progress of the flames.

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FILE PHOTOS

Through the years, answering the call

Abingdon fire volunteers are shown, upper left, in 1958 with a converted fire truck and pumper, outside their original station in Bena. From left are Carlyle Brown, I.R. Blake Jr., C.M. “Buck” Rower, Marion Davis and Joe Brown. Below, Abingdon Rescue’s first ambulance is shown in 1968, inspected by an unidentified man. Top right, Gloucester volunteers welcomed a new fire truck delivered in 1968. J. J. O’Connor, right, assistant chief, and fireman Wrayfield Oliver admire the new truck just purchased and put into service in April 1968 by the Gloucester Volunteer Fire Company. The \$18,000 unit arrived at the Court House fire station at 4:30 p.m. on March 30, and half an hour later went out on a call to a structure fire.





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Sept. 11 is First Responder Day in Virginia


September 11 is officially designated as First Responder Day in Virginia, thanks to a joint resolution passed last year.

During its 2019 session, the Virginia General Assembly adopted Virginia House Joint Resolution 646 that established Sept. 11 as the day to remember and recognize first responders in Virginia, according to the resolution, “for their courage and dedication to protect and aid the public during emergencies as both professional and volunteer first responders.”

The resolution identifies first responders as 911 dispatchers, law enforcement officers, professional and volunteer firefighters, professional and volunteer emergency medical services personnel, emergency management professionals, search and rescue teams, rescue pilots and divers, the Virginia National Guard and members of other public safety organizations.

The resolution was intro-

duced in the 2019 session by Del. Michael P. Mullin (D-Newport News).



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Gloucester Sheriff's Office Capt. John Schick Jr., seated, has been named the next chief of police in Canyon City, Colorado. Taking over his duties at the GSO will be investigators Steve Perry, Jamie Sharp and Michael Rice, standing from left. Schick credits Gloucester Sheriff Darrell Warren, at right, for the opportunity to gain the needed experience for the new job.

# Capt. Schick to leave GSO to become a chief of police in Colorado

BY KIM ROBINS

Gloucester Sheriff's Office Capt. John Schick Jr. is leaving his post next month for a new position as the chief of police in Canyon City, Colorado.

Schick said his reason for leaving is twofold. "If I wanted to be a chief, I would have to go somewhere else, and I've always wanted to pursue a chief's chair," Schick said. "Also, my wife and I both love to hike and we especially like the mountains."

Schick holds a master's degree in criminal justice administration from St. Leo University and is a 2016 graduate of the FBI Academy. After applying for the chief's position, Schick soon learned that he was one of four finalists for the job and he was a quick pick after his interview.

"I think the reason that I was successful with this agency (in Canyon City) is that everything that I talked about that impressed them was a direct influence of the Gloucester Sheriff's Office, especially the experience that I had that came with the opportunity to serve as a captain."

Schick was the first to receive a captain's appointment when Gloucester Sheriff Darrell Warren restructured the

Gloucester County Sheriff's Office in 2012. Four captains and a major ultimately comprised Warren's command staff, and Schick's command has been over uniform patrol and investigations.

"I've done everything in law enforcement, from crisis intervention to investigations to working with the tactical team. My professional perspective is pretty broad and I have experience in training other officers. I owe a lot to Darrell Warren for giving me that captain's opportunity and for the experience that it has brought me."

He said, being a "Navy baby," he does not really have any hometown roots. His father's last navy assignment was at the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown, which led the family to settle in Gloucester.

Schick said he joined the GSO in 1991 and served about three and a half years before leaving it for the Newport News Police Department. "The grass is always greener," Schick said, and he returned to the GSO after a short stint in the city.

Schick had reached the rank of sergeant before leaving the GSO and was soon promoted to lieutenant after he returned. He headed up the GSO investigative unit for several years before making a lateral move to lead a small team of school resource officers.

Schick was assigned to Gloucester High School where he and another officer

provided security and served as role models. After a few years, he gave up the job of working with local youth to take the captain's position.

Along the way, Schick said he has also witnessed first hand the evolution of the GSO's tactical team which has advanced from serving warrants to operating in high

SEE SCHICK LEAVING, PAGE 9C


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# While AVFR has grown a lot in his 41 years, mission remains the same

BY TYLER BASS

When Jack Whitmore joined Abingdon Volunteer Fire and Rescue almost 41 years ago, the department only had three bay doors; today it has 21. Whitmore likes to remind the younger volunteers of this fact when he wants to point out how much AVFR has grown.

Whitmore has been a member of AVFR since 1979 and has worked on both the fire and rescue crews. For the last four years, he's held the title of vice president for the company.

He said that when he joined, the volunteers didn't have enough turnout gear for ev-

eryone to have their own equipment. He said guys would get blisters from the shared old boots that were often too large for some.

When Whitmore was a kid, his father was a volunteer firefighter in York County, and would take Whitmore to the station. It was something he was always around. He said that when he moved to Gloucester, it was down the road from the old Station 5. He joined right when that station was opening.

Although he no longer responds to calls, he handles the administrative work for the company, said Whitmore. He manages the insurance and grant funding that they

apply for, which he compares to operating a small business. He also serves as the chairman to the Recruitment and Retention Committee.

Whitmore has seen a lot in his firefighting career, including getting a pet monkey out of a tree. He's also seen a lot of change.

He joked that when he first joined the AVFR, the guys were only as tough as the amount of smoke they ate. He said that there are things that they used to do that just aren't done anymore. Even the burns have changed as building materials change.

Whitmore was once a training officer for AVFR. He said what he had new volunteers do back then is different from what they do today. They have to be trained to respond to more and different types of calls than they used to, which means the volunteers have to be more knowledgeable.

Whitmore pointed out that the people who want to join as volunteers these days have to be dedicated. He said

that some of the young people who want to join aren't able to because of the time required for training. They may have families they have to support, and they can't do that while training.

To do something for four decades and to keep doing it takes passion. "I've enjoyed it. I've enjoyed the people," said Whitmore, "I've enjoyed working with the community and giving back."

Being retired, Whitmore devotes a lot of his time to AVFR as vice president. He said that some people hunt and fish, but he volunteers with AVFR. However, he doesn't see what he does as a hobby.

Whitmore said that when someone is with the company, it's because they want to be. The work is important to all the volunteers, especially the more experienced ones such as himself. Though his role with AVFR has changed through his years of service, he doesn't see himself stepping away anytime soon.



TYLER BASS / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Jack Whitmore has volunteered with Abingdon Fire and Rescue for 41 years, and is currently vice-president for the company.

## First responders get free admission to Egypt exhibit at VMFA

Health care workers and first responders can receive free admission to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond to see the exhibit "Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Sunk Cities," which is on view now through Jan. 18, 2021.

For this promotion, first responders include 911 dispatchers, law-enforcement officers, professional and volunteer firefighters, professional and volunteer emergency medical services personnel, emergency management professionals, search and rescue teams, rescue pilots and divers, the Virginia National Guard, and members of other organizations in the public safety sector.

"Our health care workers and first responders have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, working tirelessly to keep our communities safe and healthy over the past seven months," said Gov. Ralph Northam, who made the announcement along with museum director/CEO Alex Nyerger.

"We are extending this well-deserved 'thank you' from the Commonwealth and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and hope those who continue to serve Virginia so ably can experience this special exhibition," Northam said.

"VMFA welcomes first responders and all who work in health care to take advantage of free admission and this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience the wonders of ancient Egypt," said Nyerger.

Among the nearly 300 objects featured in the exhibition are 250 works recovered from the underwater excavations of the ancient Egyptian cities of Canopus and Thonis-

Heracleion. An additional 40 objects were loaned by museums in Egypt. Highlights include a nearly 18-foot-tall, 5.6-ton statue of the god Hapy, the largest stone statue of a god recovered from ancient Egypt, beautiful statues of other gods and rulers of that civilization, and fascinating objects used to celebrate the annual Mysteries of Osiris, the most important religious event in ancient Egypt.

Health care workers and first responders should call 804-340-1405 to make their reservations and show their employee IDs or badges at the Visitors Services Desk when picking up their tickets. One free ticket is available per badge. Reservations for first-available tickets to the exhibition can also be made in person at the Visitors Service Desk. Reservations may not be available on weekends due to heightened visitation on Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets are scheduled to help limit gallery capacity during the pandemic.

Visitors to VMFA will notice several measures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 with the well-being of visitors, volunteers, and employees in mind. Masks are required in the museum and disposable masks will be provided to people who do not bring their own. For complete information about the museum's safeguards please visit the museum's website at VMFA.museum/covid-19.

**Ticket information**  
For those other than first responders, tickets to see the exhibit are \$20 for adults, \$16 for seniors 65+, and \$10 for youth aged 7-17 and college students with ID.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 40,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé arts outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris, and one of the nation's finest collections of American art.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is open 365 days a year with free general admission. For more information, call 804-340-1400 or visit VMFA.museum.

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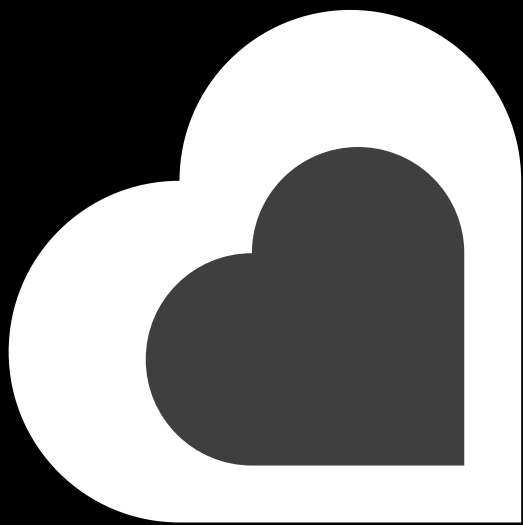




MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Paying a visit

Local first responders paid an afternoon visit on Oct. 22 to residents at Commonwealth Senior Living at Gloucester House. Pictured are, back row from left, Master Deputy Phil Lutz and K-9 "Zeus" of the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office's Canine Unit, Patrick Otteni of Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue, State Trooper A.J. Johnston and Rob Fox of Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue and, front row, residents Oscar Northern, Judy Johnston, Katherine Smith, Jean Heywood and Robert Carter.



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CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBBIE HOLADAY

### Fire Prevention Day

The Mathews Volunteer Fire Department held its Fire Prevention Day at Moughons Ace hardware on Saturday, Oct. 17, with the firefighters giving advice about fire safety, how to equip the home and ways to handle a fire emergency. They also welcomed children, showing them around a fire truck and handing out drawstring bags, fire hats and other goodies. Above right, Blake and Kenadee Custer, ages 8 and 6, get their fill of goodies from MVRS members, from left, Rob Hudgins, Steve Rife and Kenny Garrett, while little sister Raegan Custer, 2, gets some help filling her bag from her dad, Kevin. At right is Cal Holaday on the fire truck. The son of Will and Meredith Holaday. Cal is making a serious face because he was told he couldn't get into the cab of the truck due to COVID-19 restrictions, according to his grandmother, Debbie Holaday.



THANK YOU

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