

## Gloucester's celebrating local businesses all month long

BY TYLER BASS

May is Gloucester Business Appreciation Month.

Gloucester's Economic Development Authority chose May to be the month to recognize the local businesses and their owners. In years past, the county has confined the celebration of local businesses to only a week, but after a year dominated by a pandemic, Economic Development Director Sherry Spring suggested the entire month be dedicated instead.

"I didn't hear anyone say 'poor me,'" said Spring about the Gloucester businesses who were impacted by COVID 19. She said she was proud of the business leaders who

were able to navigate the challenges of 2020.

Though heavy restrictions were place on many of the businesses in Gloucester, Spring said that as a whole, businesses were able to adapt and stay busy throughout the pandemic.

"We're as good, if not better than any city and county in Hampton Roads," said Spring who said that Gloucester experienced little economic decline in 2020. She said that it feels like Gloucester's time to come back from the pandemic and grow.

Spring said that restaurants in Gloucester have had a good amount of success in the past year. Many had to change

how they did business, but were still able to stay open. She said their success has been attracting other restaurants to the county. She said that even now Gloucester has several businesses looking at setting up shop within the county because of how supportive the community is of its businesses.

Spring said she hopes that Gloucester residents will feel encouraged to shop local this month and show the businesses of Gloucester how appreciated they are. She said that last year could have been a disaster for Gloucester, so these businesses deserve at least one month of appreciation.

## Supporting small business growth in Mathews

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Mathews County Supervisor Amy Dubois, a former small business owner herself, said the board of supervisors has a vision for small businesses that includes encouraging water-based tourism; pushing to get high-speed internet that can support innovation and work-from-home-type businesses; and being supportive and welcoming to

businesses that make sense for the county, including senior citizen businesses.

"These businesses provide jobs, promote tourism, and further economic development," she said. "They also help our young professionals and families have choices that enable them to stay in Mathews."

According to Bette Dillehay, chair of the Mathews Main Street Committee, small busi-

nesses in Mathews were innovative during the pandemic, finding ways to operate that enabled them to minimize the effect of government closures and restrictions and stay in business in spite of the circumstances.

While Main Street helped the county obtain rebates for such pandemic-related costs as cleaning, she said, "Very few said they had costs involved with COVID."

### FROM OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

## The backbone of the American economy

BY REP. ROB WITTMAN

Small business has always formed the backbone of the American economy.

After a year of hardship suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we celebrate National Small Business Week not only in recognition of their economic contributions, but also in recognition of their innovation and resilience.

Even as they suffered greatly, small businesses

throughout Virginia and the nation stepped up to serve their friends, neighbors and communities. They are truly emblematic of the American Spirit and it's an honor to recognize them this week.

But words are not enough. Now more than ever, both Washington and Richmond must enact pro-growth policies to restore the American economy and allow small businesses to rebuild.

Fortunately, thanks to vaccination efforts both here in

Virginia, as well as nationally, we draw closer to a bright new dawn for the American economy every passing day.

*Rep. Rob Wittman represents Virginia's 1st District in Congress, which includes Gloucester and Mathews counties. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, where he is the ranking member of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee.*

## Our recovery depends on small businesses

BY SEN. TIM KAINE

At the end of last year, more than 10 million Americans were unemployed, 3.7 million of whom had suffered permanent job loss amid the pandemic. It's no secret that so much of that unemployment is a result of the colossal blow the pandemic has dealt to our small businesses.

Only a few months into the pandemic, over 100,000 small businesses closed permanently, and in February, three in 10 small businesses worried they would not make it through the year unless the federal government stepped up to help.

Thankfully, the government did step up, and as a result, there's light at the end of the tunnel. As more Americans get vaccinated, we can slowly return life to the way it was before the pandemic struck; more diners at restaurants, workers commuting, and vacationers traveling will mean more money circulating in the economy and more dollars going into small businesses.

Until we are fully in the clear, though, we need to give small businesses our fullest support. That's why I was proud to vote for the American Rescue Plan in March, which built on last year's efforts to continue delivering

desperately needed small business relief. \$7.25 billion in new money for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is helping employers keep workers on the payrolls. Through two rounds of PPP, at least 114,000 Virginia small businesses and nonprofits have received over \$17.5 billion in forgivable loans. And \$10 billion in new funding for the State Small Business Credit Initiative will enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to access low-cost capital so they can create and grow more jobs.

On top of PPP and the State Small Business Credit

SEE TIM KAINE, PAGE 15A

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TIM KAINE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14A)

Initiative, the American Rescue Plan provided billions in grants—that's money in the hand that does not need to be repaid—for some especially injured small businesses.

An additional \$15 billion for the Targeted Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Advance Program is providing relief for thousands of Virginia businesses that have lost revenue (Though Targeted EIDL Advance has "loan" in the name, these funds do not need to be repaid as some other EIDL loans do). Live entertainment venues have access to the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) Program, to which the ARP added an additional \$1.25 billion. And local restaurants, bars, craft breweries, bakeries, and similar establishments can access some of the \$28.6 billion in the new Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

Many business owners have also expressed to me their gratitude for grant programs run by the Commonwealth or by their city or county, made possible, in part, by federal relief allocated to states and localities last year. The American Rescue Plan will provide another nearly \$7 billion in similar relief for Virginia, which can be used for these efforts.

It's become cliché in politics to say small businesses are the backbone of our economy, but the pressures the pandemic has exerted upon small businesses and the economic ramifications that have ensued have proven how true that statement is.

As we as individuals and families continue to do what we have done for over a year to help our community businesses—grabbing take-out, buying local, recommending vendors to friends—the government should continue playing a supportive role to help small businesses get back on their feet. Our economic recovery as a whole is inextricable from the economic recovery of small businesses.

I'm proud that the American Rescue Plan recognized that truth, and I'll be sure that future legislation reflects it as well. A return to normal depends on it.

*Sen. Tim Kaine serves on the following committees: Armed Services; Budget; Foreign Relations; and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP). He is Ranking Member of the Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee and the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia and Counterterrorism.*

Small business profile: Hayes salon adapts to COVID reality

Blown Away Salon at Hayes, like most small businesses, saw devastating impacts from COVID-19 and has had to adapt to survive. Owner Michelle Green said, "We were forced to close our doors for nearly three months after only opening the doors of our second location two weeks prior."

Heavy financial losses followed, but Green said the company stayed open and added, "We are very fortunate that we have been able to sustain during these unprecedented times." In fact the salon, while reconfiguring to meet government guidelines, has managed to grow and expand, she said. "We are so very thankful for our community for keeping our small businesses alive. You are forever appreciated," she said, noting that the safety of customers is always in mind.



Michelle Green is owner of Blown Away Salon at Hayes.

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## Small business profile: 39 years in the same location

Gus Shelton of Courthouse Antiques at Saluda, will celebrate 39 years in business this year.

Shelton has been in the same location at Route 17 (Bypass) in Saluda since the business opened. He said that he has been selling mattresses longer than anyone else in Gloucester or Middlesex counties. His shop also carries furniture, nautical gifts, flags and more.



"Come on in," invites Gus Shelton, owner of Courthouse Antiques.

## Small business profile: Staying open in a pandemic

Loree Powell, owner of The Nurtury on Gloucester Main Street, has kept her apothecary shop open daily throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, though the business did a lot more shipping in 2020. COVID-19 did not change how The Nurtury operated. Powell said that she has always promoted a healthy atmosphere and attended to habits that nurture well-being in all ways. She has noticed that people have been more conscious of physical health care as well as the psychological aspect that has been so understated in the past year.



Lori Powell's The Nurtury is all about good health.

## Small business profile: Adjusting to conditions

The Vintage Pearl on Main Street in Mathews opened in October 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the former Hudgins Drug Store building. Owner Kim Genduso said she has experienced some very good days as well as some slow days as she works to keep her business humming in very challenging times.

The Vintage Pearl is an artisan collective featuring home décor from a number of talented local people. Genduso tries to have a variety of local talent and objects on hand to appeal to a broad spectrum of customers.

And, with conditions im-



Kim Genduso opened The Vintage Pearl in the midst of a pandemic.

proving, she now plans to have a grand opening this October, as The Vintage Pearl marks one year in business.

## Mathews Republicans select Walls, Jones as supervisor candidates

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

The Mathews County Republican Committee held a firehouse primary last Thursday to select the party's candidates for the Mathews County Board of Supervisors election in November.

There are two seats up for election this year on the board and, according to Republican Committee Chair

Byron Rauch, the committee had three contenders for the nominations—Mike Walls of Hudgins, David Jones of Mathews, and Tim Doss of Port Haywood.

With 230 voters, Rauch said the results were 202 votes for Walls, 127 votes for Jones, and 95 votes for Doss, making Mike Walls and Dave Jones the Republican candidates for the November election.

Incumbent supervisor Mike Rowe sought the nomination, as well, said Rauch, but he did not submit a written statement swearing that he would support all Republican nominees in the future. Rauch said Rowe was required to do so because he has voted in Democratic primary elections in the past three years.

In a telephone interview, Rowe said he did not know

he had to submit a statement of fealty to the party in order to declare as a candidate. He said he has voted in every election for the past 50 years, including Democratic primaries.

"In a primary, you can vote for somebody—or against somebody," he said.

If there was a dual primary, said Rowe, he voted in the Republican one.

### Free health

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A community health screening for Mathews County residents will be held at Mathews Baptist Church (8284 Buckley Hall Road, Hudgins) from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday. Screening services offered will include body mass index, blood pressure and HbA1c (test for determining diabetes).

For more information, call the Gloucester Mathews Care Clinic at 804-210-1368.



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Board chair's remarks criticized; Market Days to be one day this year

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Mike Rowe, chair of the Mathews County Board of Supervisors, received a number of complaints during the board's April 27 meeting, with residents objecting to comments he had made at a prior meeting and calling for him to step down from his leadership post. One of those complaining is running for board in the November election.

Addressing the board during the public comment period, David Schlosser of Mathews accused Rowe of sexual harassment for telling women participating in a Zoom board meeting in January that they looked nice.

"All you girls look good tonight," said Rowe, as recorded for the public record. He was then told that the meeting was live on Facebook, and he continued with, "Y'all look spunky and refreshed, ready to go to work."

Schlosser said that Rowe's comments showed an "apparent disregard for sexual harassment," and asked that he step down.

Grace Van Buskirk of Mathews said that the comments reminded her of getting catcalls and that it was an example of an elected official "objectifying fellow board members." She said that glossing over such behavior allows it to happen again, and questioned why other board members hadn't objected to

his comments.

David Jones of Mathews, who addressed the board concerning a separate matter, said he was surprised it had taken so long to "bring sexual harassment to light." He said Rowe should step down both as chairman and as a board member.

Jones was selected by the Mathews Republican Committee to run for a seat on the board of supervisors in the November election. Rowe is up for reelection.

Supervisor Paul Hudgins then made a motion to remove Rowe as chair, and supervisor Jackie Ingram seconded the motion. It failed, however, on a 2-2 vote, with Rowe and supervisor Amy Dubois dissenting. Supervisor Melissa Mason was late to the meeting and did not take part in the vote.

The failed vote didn't end the matter. During the second public comment period near the end of the meeting, Melissa Rauch of Mathews told board members that she was upset by the "blatant nonchalance" of those who voted against Rowe's removal. She spoke extensively and tragically of her own experience as a victim of rape, and of its consequences.

Rowe said during a telephone call on Tuesday that he had been the only male in the Zoom meeting and he was making pre-meeting conversation by trying to say some-

thing nice to everyone.

Market Days

Mason, the board's liaison to the Mathews Market Days Committee, told fellow supervisors that the festival will be held this year, but just one day, on Saturday, Sept. 11, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. She said there will be no street dance and no children's area. No main stage will be set up either, she said.

There will be a 5K race, a car show, vendors and food booths, with COVID-19 restrictions in place.

Broadband Advisory Board

Also at the April 27 meeting, Broadband Advisory Board Chair Judy Rowe told supervisors that Atlantic Broadband workers have been out in the community over the past few weeks measuring roads for the upcoming broadband installation project being funded by the \$4 million Virginia Telecommunications Initiative grant that was awarded to Mathews and Middlesex, Lancaster and Caroline counties. She said the contractual phase of the project is underway. In Mathews, the grant will fund broadband availability for over 400 homes.

In addition, she reported that a second VATI grant, awarded to Gloucester, Mathews and Middlesex, will begin soon. That grant will fund broadband availability for 180 Mathews households.

Aids to navigation

Mike Walls told the board

during public comment period that channel marker 4 at Hole in the Wall, a private aid to navigation now owned and maintained by Mathews County, is not marking best water and is difficult to see during the day. He said he had told Mathews County Planning and Zoning Director Thomas Jenkins about it on three occasions over the past year, and nothing had yet been done.

"Myself and plenty of taxpayers are tired of the inaction," he said. "It's high time you start listening."

Walls was selected last week as one of two Republican candidates for the county board in the November election.

During his monthly presentation to the board, Jenkins said that funding for a replacement floating channel marker would be \$3,000, but that it might not be needed if the Virginia Port Authority approves funding for a dredging project at Hole in the Wall. He said the marker should be purchased anyway, however, because it can be used elsewhere after the dredging project is completed. The board unanimously approved the purchase of the marker.

Gwynn's Island bridge

Joyce McGowan, VDOT's Saluda Residency Administrator, told the board that an upcoming project on the Gwynn's Island bridge will require a four-month closure to boat traffic. The project includes rede-

signing and redoing all the mechanical parts and components of the bridge, she said.

Because of this, VDOT will pay for the cost of the permitting fees for dredging Hole in the Wall, should the project be approved by the Virginia Port Authority. She asked the board to allow County Administrator Mindy Conner to enter into an agreement with VDOT to help facilitate the process and make it move along quicker.

"It's a good opportunity to partner," she said. "Impacting that many mariners is not good. This is a good way to help everyone."

The board unanimously agreed to allow Conner to enter into the agreement.

Court Green project

The board thanked Mathews Main Street Committee Chair Bette Dillehay for the committee's work on the Historic Court Green and presented Dillehay with a floral arrangement in appreciation. The committee provided the funding to improve drainage and create rain gardens, making the green "a beautiful, scenic space for the public to use," said Dubois.

Dillehay said the cost of the project was nearly \$65,000, with all of the funding donated by members of the committee. She acknowledged Sandy and Anne Wilson for planting the gardens and Dennis Baker for "finding the money."

"Our challenge is to support

the maintenance," she said. "It's a privilege to be able to serve."

In other matters, the board: —Unanimously adopted the Six Year Secondary Road Plan for Mathews County's FY 2022-2027 after a public hearing at which no residents spoke. The allocation for Mathews is \$163,299 for six years, with \$17,217 earmarked for unpaved roads. The plan prioritizes cleaning outfall ditches, with \$146,082 applied to the program. Route 692, White Point Lane, was approved for future construction, and Route 618 was approved for resurfacing;

—Unanimously approved the following requests by Schools Superintendent Nancy Welch: an additional appropriation of \$245,000 in cafeteria funds to the schools from the current budget, at no additional cost to the county; appropriated a CARES Act award for the schools' operating budget as follows: \$76,000 to technology, \$5,674 for Chromebooks, and \$7,506 for instruction; approved the transfer of school funds among categories;

—Unanimously approved appointing Willie Love to the Economic Development Authority and Alexis Foster to the Mathews Memorial Library Board of Trustees, and

—Changed the time and date for the May meeting to 6 p.m. on Monday, May 24 at Mathews High School.

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## Gloucester board approves amendment to trash disposal contract

BY TYLER BASS

Following a closed meeting Tuesday night, the Gloucester Board of Supervisors voted to approve an amendment to its contract with Waste Management of Virginia, Inc.

The amendment was approved by a 5-2 margin; board members Mike Winebarger and Phillip Bazzani were the two against.

The amendment allows Waste Management to begin charging the county for some solid waste collection and disposal services that were previously done at no additional charge. The new charges are for waste pickup at Gloucester County's volunteer fire and rescue squad locations and at charitable organizations.

Prior to this amendment, the contract did not require services to those locations.

The amendment also requires Waste Management to collect waste from special county events that are open to the public, and changes the tonnage of the collection limit from 2,000 tons a day to 660,000 tons a year. The amendment also absolves Waste Management from having to collect recycling from locations other than the landfill and convenience

centers.

### Public hearings

Supervisors unanimously approved two matters following a pair of public hearings. The first was to consider an ordinance to amend the zoning map to reclassify 1.85 acres in the Ware District from B-1 Business to B-2 Village Business. The building on the 1.85 acres is a vacant medical office located along Meredith Drive, owned by Dr. Robert and June Klink. The rezoning will allow the Klinks to remodel the office into a residence.

The second public hearing was to approve the proposed secondary six-year plan for fiscal year 2022 through 2027 and the secondary system construction budget for FY22 through FY27 that the county has with the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The six-year plan included five paved projects and one unpaved project. The paved projects included Pedestrian Improvements on Greate Road and the construction of right-turn lanes on Fiddlers' Green, Meredith Drive at Route 17 and 1019, Providence Road and Brays Point Road. The unpaved project is on Belleville Road. The paved road projects are es-

timated to total \$1,050,000 and the unpaved project will cost an estimate of \$102,000.

Also during the meeting, a request for a public hearing was made to obtain input from Gloucester residents for a proposed agreement with Open Broadband, LLC. The agreement will have wireless broadband equipment placed on county-owned properties. Using the existing structures will eliminate the need for any construction, which will reduce the time and cost of the project.

The county was awarded a Virginia Telecommunications Initiative, or VATI, grant recently and in order to proceed with its use the Telecommunications Committee has to hear public input. The board approved holding the hearing later this month.

### CARES Act funding

The board also appropriated \$70,058 in CARES Act funding to various eligible expenses. \$27,614 was given to Parks, Recreation and Tourism for COVID-19 related duties. Unemployment gained \$1,560 while the Sheriff's Office received \$40,884 for COVID-19 related duties. Gloucester has \$472,126 remaining in CARES Act funding.

## Amy Pierce declares candidacy for Gloucester Circuit Court clerk

BY KIM ROBINS

Amy S. Pierce of Gloucester, has announced her candidacy for clerk of Gloucester Circuit Court. She currently serves as the clerk for Mathews and Middlesex General District Courts. Pierce said she is seeking the Republican nomination for the Gloucester office.

Pierce has over 30 years of experience working in offices supporting attorneys, law enforcement and courts. A graduate of West Point High School, she first worked for the King and Queen Commonwealth's Attorney in 1989 before going to work for the Virginia State Police in the VSP West Point office.

Pierce joined the staff of the Gloucester General District Court Clerk's office in 1995 then worked for the King and Queen County Administrator for two years. She then rejoined the staff of the Gloucester General District Court in 1998 and was elevated to clerk of that court in 2007.

Last year, Pierce success-

fully sought the job of clerk to both the Mathews and Middlesex General District Courts. Although general district court sessions are held in Mathews, that court's paperwork and its official clerk's office have been in Saluda at the Middlesex Courthouse.

"I wanted the challenge of two courts, and I have helped to get a full-time general district court office in Mathews. I am still in the process, but a Mathews General District Court Clerk's Office is expected to open in the county on July 1," she said.

Pierce said she had always thought she would seek the Gloucester Circuit Court Clerk's job when former clerk Margaret Walker retired. Walker's last term was slated to expire in January 2024, but she announced her retirement in December 2020.

Cathy Dale, who had been serving as Chief Deputy Clerk in the office since 2008, was sworn in late last year to serve as interim clerk. At that time, Dale declared her



Amy S. Pierce

intent to run in November in the special election for the remainder of Walker's term.

"That happened sooner than I thought," Pierce said, but friends and acquaintances urged her to seek the position. "I have a lot of great ideas to bring to the Gloucester Circuit Court office with my primary focus being on customer service. The number-one priority is to make sure that all Gloucester citizens are served."

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HOOPER: Mathews man receives life sentence in federal court

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A)

ed children before. In addition, McKeel said that Hutchens had been in a dominant/submissive relationship with the defendant, causing her to submit to his demands.

"The whole goal was to go after Jane Doe," said McKeel. "Thankfully, her [Jane Doe 1's] sister came forward before it could get any worse."

Hooper argued that his poor health should be taken into consideration during sentencing, but McKeel said that the Department of Justice can offer him any medical treatment he needs. She said that Hooper's offenses "can't get much worse, other than murder, when it's regarding children." She said Hooper is a dangerous person who deserves a long sentence.

"Child predators don't stop after a certain age," she said. "They should be put away ... The sentence would protect the public from further crimes."

In his own defense, Hooper said that he didn't know why he didn't come across as believable to the jury.

"It seems like today in our society it's not innocent until proven guilty," he said.

He said he had read in a transcript that a third girl had stated that Jane Doe 1 had told her that none of it had happened, that it was just a way for her to get close to another girl.

"I haven't done any of these things," Hooper said. "I sit

here today innocent ... I will continue to claim my innocence."

In handing down his verdict, Judge Novak said that Hooper's offenses were "horrific" and that the evidence was overwhelming, "as strong as I've seen." He said Hooper had perjured himself and that his testimony "was not in the realm of believability." He said Hooper had no feeling of responsibility, and that his sentence needed to reflect the seriousness of his offenses and provide deterrence.

Not only did Hooper molest a child and manipulate a woman so he could have access to her child, said Novak, but he wanted other children, and "the younger the better."

"I can't think of a more serious crime other than murder," he said. "He is a predator, a manipulator, a fraud, and a liar, and now justice has caught up with him. His sentence is well deserved."

The judge told Hooper that he has 14 days to file an appeal.

**Officials comment**

After the hearing, Mathews Sheriff Mark Barrick, who attended the proceedings, along with Major John Williams and Investigator April Edwards, said he couldn't be more thrilled with the verdict.

"He couldn't be more deserving," said Barrick. "And I couldn't be more proud of the people in our office who worked on the case."

Mathews Commonwealth's Attorney Tom Bowen, who handled the case until turning it over to the federal government for prosecution, said in a text message that Hooper is "a despicable specimen of a human being."

"His crimes deserved the greatest punishment the law allowed," he said.

Bowen commended Edwards "for a thorough investigation into these crimes," as well as the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office, the Mathews County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office "for the roles they played in bringing Hooper to justice."

with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but that the disease itself is "far, far more dangerous" than any of the vaccines. He suggested that people do their own research by visiting the websites of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

**Cases, hospitalizations, deaths**

The number of new cases in the area was low again this week, with just 12 new cases identified in Gloucester, for a total of 2,185 cases since the pandemic began; two new cases in Mathews, for a total of 596; and two new cases in Middlesex, for a total of 569.

Gloucester recorded one death from the virus during the past week, for a total of 48 over the past year, but there were no new deaths in Mathews, which stands at 12 deaths, or Middlesex, which remains at 20, and there were no new hospitalizations in any of the three counties, leaving those numbers at 59, 22, and 24, respectively.

Across the Three Rivers Health District, 9,918 cases of COVID have been identified since the pandemic began, 69 of them during the past week. Five district residents were hospitalized during the past week, for a total of 400, and two district residents died, for a total of 184 since March 2020.

Statewide, 6,384 people were diagnosed with COVID during the past week, for a total of 663,538; 417 were hospitalized, for a total of 28,688; and 109 died, for a total of 10,844.

**Support group to hold Zoom meeting**

A Zoom family support group meeting for family members or caretakers of persons with mental illness will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 12, by the Mid-Tidewater Affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

A notice said the group is free and confidential; to attend, call 804-684-1480 or email namimiddtewater@gmail.com.

CircleUp to host panel discussion on hate crimes

CircleUp Middle Peninsula will host a virtual panel discussion on "Hate Groups and Hate Crimes in Virginia" will a special focus on the Middle Peninsula, from 7-8:30 p.m. next Thursday, May 13.

Three panelists will participate in the discussion. They are: Dr. James Nolan, chair of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at West Virginia University; Mathews County Commonwealth's Attorney Tom Bowen, and Gabriel "Gabe" Morgan Sr., who is currently serving his fourth term as Sheriff of Newport News.

Nolan will discuss the causes and consequences of hate-motivated violence and the reasons we have not always been effective in stopping it. Bowen will discuss what legally constitutes a hate crime in Virginia, recent updates to hate crime laws, and how individuals charged with hate crimes can be prosecuted. Morgan will discuss the challenges faced by law enforcement officers when responding to possible hate crime situations and the strategies they use to counteract them.

This event will be presented live on CircleUp's Facebook page (facebook.com/CircleUpMidPen). For those who do not use Facebook, email circleupmidpen@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

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