



GLOUCESTER-MATHEWS GAZETTE-JOURNAL

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CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Alyssa Curko holds her dog Chief close as the two ride in Saturday's parade. They were part of the entry for Turtle Transit, a bus company available to rent to take customers to events or parties.

Perfect weather for 'Elf on a (Half) Shell' parade in Mathews

More than 50 entries, many with multiple vehicles (as well as individual walkers, horses and dogs), took part in Saturday's Mathews Christmas Parade, "Elf on a (Half) Shell."

Sunny skies and unsea-

sonably warm temperatures prevailed, as people lined the parade route from Thomas Hunter Middle School all the way to Chesapeake Bank, eager to see the next float and maybe get a piece of candy.

"We were very pleased with

the parade—the weather was beautiful, the turnout by both participants and viewers was wonderful, and everyone had a festive time," said Kat Larkin, executive director of the

SEE **MATHEWS PARADE**, PAGE 7A



CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Salem United Methodist Church youngsters Daphne Williams, Colten Hellebrandt and Earl Dye, from left, set sail in the church's float. Also seen, in back, is Colten Haywood.

Holiday fun continues

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

More holiday fun is to be had in Gloucester and Mathews counties through the weekend and into next week.

Tonight, Thursday, Dec. 14, Mathews Memorial Library will hold its Sounds of the Season event from 7-8. Celebrate the season with an evening of light classics and holiday music. The enchanting sounds will ring through the library, putting visitors in the perfect mood to enjoy traditional holiday pudding and wassail.

On Saturday, Mathews Outdoor Club will hold its "Grinches Gallop," a 5K and one-mile fun run/walk beginning at 8 a.m. at Mathews High School. Enjoy hot chocolate/cider at the finish line. The cost is \$50 to race. This event is a fundraiser for the MHS Athletic Boosters.

Flat Iron Crossroads, Gloucester, will hold its Holiday Blues-A-Palooza Saturday night from 6:30-9:30. Kelly Bell Band and Jenny Langer & Moonshine Society will perform. Special guests include Ron Holloway and Carly Harvey. Ticket prices

range from \$30-\$55.

Arts on Main, Gloucester, will have a Snowman Paint Night Monday from 5:30-6:30. Students will paint a snowman using acrylic paint on canvas. Instructor Kelly Richards will provide all materials. This class was designed for children, but Richards welcomes all ages. Cost is \$25.

Visit the Mathews library again Tuesday for its "A Gift of Sharing" cookie exchange from 11 a.m. until noon. Local bakers are invited to share cookies, recipes and memories. A prize will be awarded for the best holiday recipe.

Monument property transfer not expected to be considered

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

While there has been recent speculation in Mathews about whether the county's board of supervisors would vote to transfer ownership of the Confederate monument and the portion of the court green where it stands to a Confederate organization during next week's board meeting, the board chairman indicated he doesn't expect that to happen.

The Mathews County Board of Supervisors will hold its final meeting of 2023 at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the his-

toric courthouse.

"I don't know how many times I have to tell people I'm just not gonna vote to give the monument away," chairman Dave Jones said during a telephone interview. Jones said that two other members of the five-member board had told him they would not vote for it either, and he did not intend to include a discussion of the matter on the December agenda.

"If somebody throws a motion out there under supervisors' reports, my vote will be 'nay,'" he said.

Jones said that last year

the board asked the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy for written proof of their ownership of the monument, but "they had no ownership of the monument because they had no paperwork," he said.

"I said that means the citizens of Mathews own the land and the monument," he said. "So that's where I stand. It's not mine to give away."

Supervisor Mike Walls proposed last year to trans-

SEE **MONUMENT**, PAGE 7A

VDOT continues work on RCUT design

BY RUBY WILLIAMS

The Virginia Department of Transportation intends to continue its plans to place a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) at the intersection of Route 17 and Woods Cross Roads following the Gloucester Board of Supervisors' Dec. 5 meeting. The

project is currently scheduled for the fall of 2026.

"VDOT is working urgently on the project's design and preliminary engineering phase to accelerate this date so that the safety needs at the intersection can be addressed as soon as possible," said VDOT Fredericksburg District Communications

Manager Kelly Hannon.

There is currently no approved design as VDOT is still working on that part of the project, but it will be presented to the public when available.

Hannon said that "the public will have an oppor-

SEE **WOODS X ROADS**, PAGE 7A



MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Cookie contest

Gloucester County Public Library held its first-ever Yum Yum Cookie Baking Contest, judged on Friday afternoon by Library Chef Chris Thomas, at left, and his cookie enthusiasts, from left, Quinton Sheppard and Robert Kelly. Learn more about the baking contest on page 2A.

Outgoing members, Clemons honored at meeting

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

At Tuesday's regularly scheduled monthly meeting, the Gloucester County School Board honored its four outgoing members, as well as recently retired superintendent of schools Dr. Walter R. Clemons at the T.C. Walker Education Center auditorium.

The board adopted resolutions of appreciation and presented plaques to outgoing school board members Randy Burak (Abingdon), Robin Rice (At-Large), Dar-

ren Post (Ware) and Nicole McPherson (At-Large) for their service. During public comment, several community members expressed their appreciation for these board members' service, particularly Post.

Also at the meeting, Del. Keith Hodges (R-Urbanna) presented a resolution from the Virginia House of Delegates to Clemons commending his work in public education.

"I truly had a wonderful experience," said Clemons

about his career. "And it's all because of the wonderful community in which we serve."

Student Advisory Council representative Clara Dodier-Fernandez updated the board on happenings at Gloucester High School, particularly the new career and technical education course on independent living that is in the works.

"Students would build life skills, focusing on creating

SEE **GLOUCESTER SCHOOLS**, PAGE 7A



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Budget concerns

The Mathews County School Board took a preliminary look at next year's budget Tuesday amid concerns over state funding and the desire to increase staff pay to retain and attract teachers. See story on page 11A.

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Y M C K





Gloucester County Public Library held its first-ever Yum Yum Cookie Baking Contest. The winners were announced on Saturday. Winners are pictured, from left, Claire Ryan, Gray Ryan, Elliott Polston, Jennifer Roahrig, Charlotte McLean, Addison Brundage, Charlotte Hogge, Library Chef Chris Thomas, Chayton Shall, Willow McLean (behind), Sophia Morrice, Jes Smith (behind), Cindy Holland and Samantha Holland. Not pictured are Fett Kutch, Reese Miller, Tamme Durant, Laura Hughes, Kelly Williams and Augustine Walker.

Library cookie contest draws large participation

Gloucester County Public Library's first-ever Yum Yum Cookie Baking Contest received a big turnout for its three categories: chocolate chip, decorated and baker's choice. The contest was open to contestants in three divisions, which included third through fifth graders, sixth through 12th graders and adults 18 and older.

The winners were announced at the library's Holiday Open House Saturday. They are as follows:

—Chocolate chip: first place, Tamme Durant (adult), Samantha Holland (grades six-12) and Chayton Shall (grades three-five); second place, Jes Smith (adult), Elliott Polston (grades six-12) and Fett Kutch (grades three-five); third place, Laura Hughes (adult), Gray Ryan (grades six-12) and Charlotte Hogge (grades three-five);

—Decorated: first place, Cindy Holland (adult), Willow McLean (grades six-12) and Addison Brundage (grades three-five); and

—Baker's choice: first place, Kelly Williams (adult), Claire Ryan (grades six-12) and Charlotte McLean (grades three-five); second place, Jennifer Roahrig (adult) and Reese Miller (grades six-12); third place, Augustine Walker

(adult) and Sophia Morrice (grades six-12).

For next year's contest, the age divisions will remain the

same but the cookie categories will be gingerbread and baker's choice.



MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Holiday Open House

Gloucester County Public Library, Main Street Center, held its Santa Visits and Holiday Open House over the weekend. Gloucester Daffodil Festival Little Miss Kate Hunter dressed up as Holiday Barbie, pictured here with Gloucester Daffodil Festival Queen Ella Hensley.

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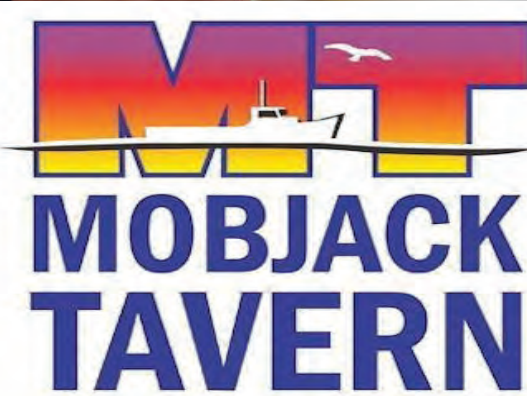
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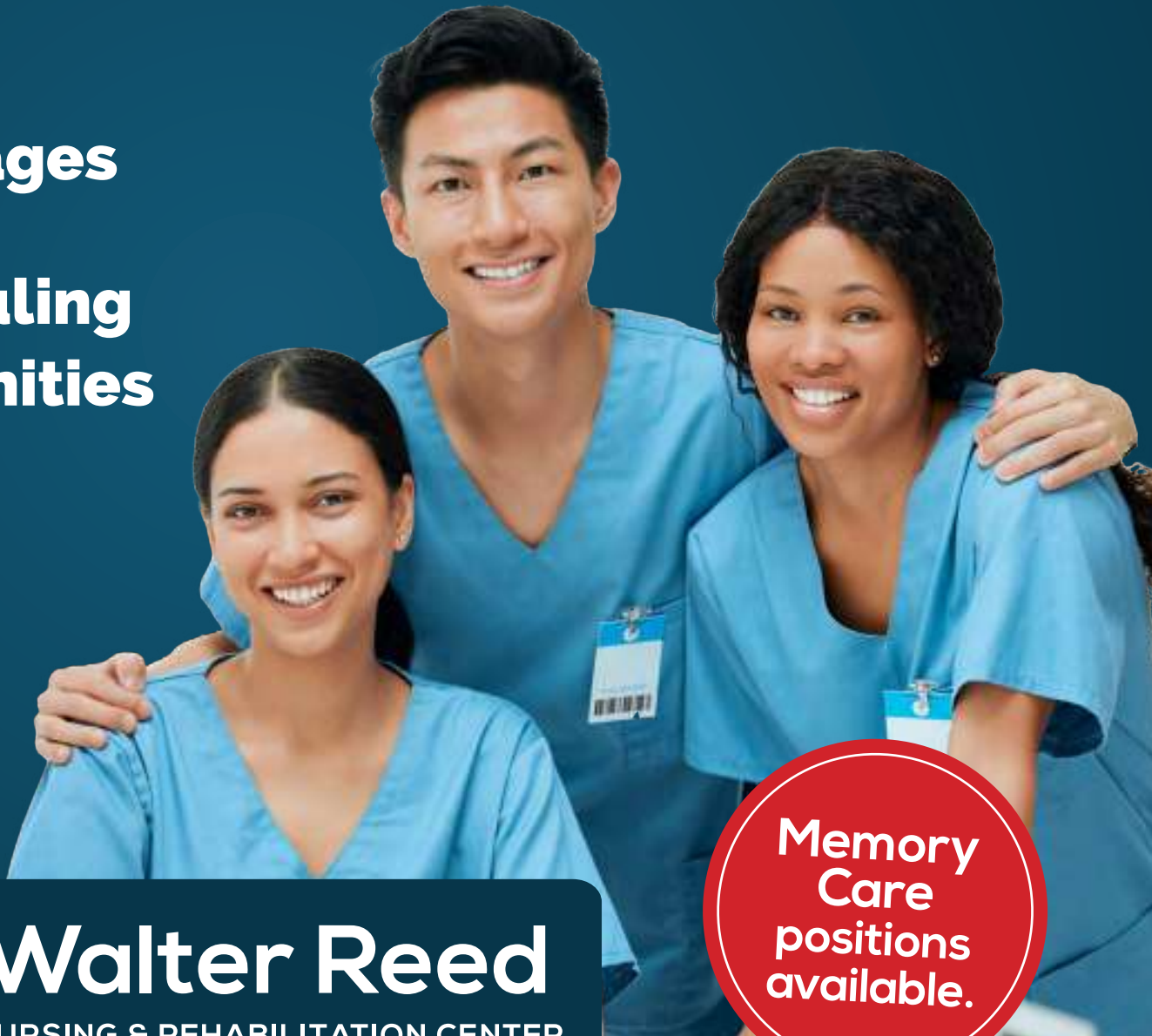
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Lions Club donation

The Mathews Lions Club recently donated 11 bicycles to the Mathews Christmas Store. Here, Christmas Store coordinator Bernadette La Casse, at right, accepts the donation from Lions Club members Bill Houser, Eric Grandon and Doug Grandon, from left.



Mathews blood drive

The American Red Cross Mathews community blood drive was held on Dec. 5 at the Piankatank Ruritan Club building in Hudgins, resulting in the collection of 68 units, according to Nan Cross. A total of 69 potential donors took part; four were deferred for various medical reasons and three were unable to give a sufficient quantity. However, they were offset by 13 donors who provided double-red donations. Six made their first donation in Mathews: James Burcher (left), new Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Daniel (right) and Carolyn Lynch, James Nolan, Laura Simpson, Jane Werner. Gallon pins were given to Bill Crowe (three gallons) and Kathryn Putt and Raymond Fleischer (five gallons).



Lighted boat parade

Horn Harbor Marina, Port Haywood, held its annual lighted boat parade Saturday night. Here, one of the workboats is all decked out with lights, a snowman, Santa Claus and his reindeer. Photo is by Laura Smith.

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ELSA VERBYLA / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Holiday sing-along

Performers played to a full house Sunday at the Mathews Homemakers' annual Christmas concert and sing-along, held at Central United Methodist Church. A number of guests, including Tyrone Hudgins, left, and the Men's Chorus of Ebenezer Baptist Church, provided Christmas music of all varieties, and the audience filled the spaces between by singing Christmas carols and songs, under the direction of Tom Robinson, master of ceremonies.

Planners support food truck text amendment

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

The Mathews County Planning Commission quickly voted its support of a text amendment to the zoning ordinance on Tuesday night following a joint public hearing with supervisors at which no one from the public raised any concerns.

The text amendment, if approved by the Mathews Board of Supervisors at its meeting this coming Tuesday, would make food trucks by-right uses in the Village Mixed Use District as well as in the waterfront and non-waterfront business districts and the industrial district. It would also establish regulations governing them.

The regulations would include defining food trucks and requiring permits, setbacks, and trash receptacles. It would place restrictions on signage, lighting, liquid waste, seating, and portable toilets and would prohibit parking in handicapped spaces.

The ordinance would not apply to the operation of food trucks in conjunction with special public events such as Market Days or those operating at privately catered events not serving the general population.

CIP discussion

After the public hearing, the board of supervisors adjourned and the planning commission held its regular meeting, first discussing next year's Capital Improvement Plan requests.

The six members of the commission voted unanimously to deny a request by Mathews County Sheriff-elect April Edwards for additional funding for security cameras because the request was not submitted by the Nov. 1 deadline.

Supervisor Paul Hudgins, who serves as liaison to the planning commission, said he was glad to see the commission holding everybody to their deadlines, and board chairman Billy Cook emphasized that "Miss April is new and (the vote) is certainly nothing against her."

Cook established two committees to reach out to facilities maintenance, the schools, the sheriff's office, the rescue squad, and the fire department about their requests for funding from next year's CIP budget.

A discussion then ensued about the issue of accountability of funds that are allocated to entities whose budgets are outside of the county's purview, such as the schools and the fire department and rescue squad. Commissioners expressed concern that funding is sometimes awarded for one purpose, but the receiving entity uses it for a different purpose. There was consensus that those entities need to account for such funding. Planning and zoning director James Knighton suggested that in future years the commission could possibly ask for information on the application form about the amount previously awarded and what that funding was spent on.

Commission member Donald Morgan suggested that, instead of allocating funding directly to an organization, the county oversee the funds itself, paying for the purchase or work directly from county funds.

"The checkbook holder gives the money to the contractor fixing the roof and not to the library," he said, as an example.

Election of chair, vice chair

The meeting became con-

tentious after the nominating committee, consisting of commission members Frances Minor and Doug Wilton, announced that its nominee for chairman for 2024 was the current chairman, Billy Cook.

Commission member Byron Rauch questioned why Cook had been nominated to serve for another year, and Wilton explained that Cook had done a good job under changing circumstances in the county. "We did not discuss personalities," he said.

Rauch then objected to the process of selecting the nominating committee, saying that the chairman should consider a three-person committee in the future rather than a two-person committee in case there's a disagreement. Wilton responded that when the committee was formed, then-member Tricia Stall was on it, but she had since resigned.

"Perhaps we should have gone back," he said, "but in the case we had, there was no disagreement. If you want another nominee, make it known tonight."

Commission member Harry Meeks weighed in, saying that he was supposed to have been nominated as chair, but his wife is not well and they've decided to spend the winter in Florida.

Morgan then corrected Wilton, saying Stall had not been appointed to the committee. He said he had overheard a conversation at the beginning of the meeting that suggested

to him the nomination was done at the last minute.

"It's something that should get a little more effort," he said.

Cook responded, "God bless me for making a mistake. I apologize."

Rauch then nominated Morgan as chair, and a series of confusing votes followed that ultimately ended in Cook being elected chair on a 3-2 vote, with Cook abstaining and Morgan and Rauch voting against.

Meeks was elected vice chair on a 4-1 vote, Rauch voting against and with Meeks abstaining. Meeks said he would attend meetings via Zoom, but if Cook were to become ill and unable to attend a meeting, he would return to Mathews.

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Mathews Ruritan Club



Some of our Club members look forward to getting the parade started.

Ed Clayton is the driver; to his right are Joe Arnold and Dan Reno.

Throughout the years, club members have always proven their dedication to making Mathews the best place to live and work by promoting Ruritan goals of fellowship, goodwill and community service.

The Mathews Ruritan Club welcomes new members, at the Active, Associate, Corporate and Teen levels.

Will you help us keep a good tradition marching forward?

Contact us by email: RuritanofMathews@gmail.com, write to: Mathews Ruritan Club, PO Box 1237, Mathews, VA 23109-1237 or call 434-987-3275.



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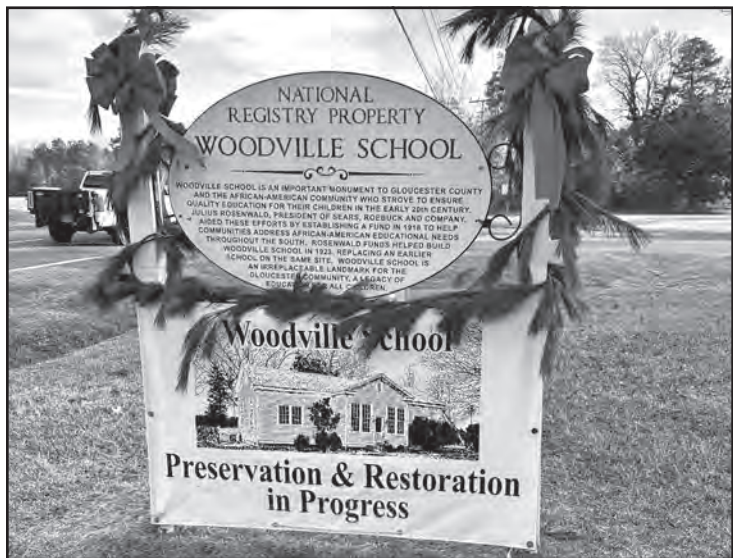
Christmas in Guinea

Buck's Store Museum, Bena, welcomed the community to its annual Christmas in Guinea celebration Saturday, where a free lunch was enjoyed by many (pictured above). Below, Tommy and Glenda Shackelford welcome people to the holiday fun.



Woodville School

The Woodville School's soft opening has been rescheduled from later this month to February 2024, during Black History Month; date to be arranged. The delay will provide the additional time needed to complete the renovations currently underway to prepare the historic schoolhouse for use by the community, according to a release from the Woodville Rosenwald Foundation. Renovations are nearing completion at Woodville School, which is located on Route 17 in Ordinary.



Timberneck paintings

Artist P. Buckley Moss has created two paintings of Timberneck for the Fairfield Foundation, which is restoring the home. Moss, left, is shown with Fairfield president Tom Karow, exhibiting an original, bottom, and the print from another view of the historic house. Both are for sale to benefit Fairfield's archaeology education and historic preservation programming, a release said. For more information, email fairfield@fairfieldfoundation.org, call 804-815-4467, or stop by the office at 6783 Main Street, Gloucester.

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Holiday Marketplace

The final two days of the Steamboat Era Museum's 10th annual Holiday Marketplace will be held on Saturday (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) and Sunday (1-4 p.m.) at the museum, 156 King Carter Drive, Irvington. All proceeds support the museum. Above, visitors look through items at the sale.



Photographer Harold Burnley received first place in the RAL Art Center's Photography Show for his entry "Survival of the Fittest."

RAL Art Center announces photo winners

Photographer Harold Burnley received first place in the RAL Art Center's Photography Show for his entry "Survival of the Fittest." The show's judge, photographer and owner of the Yours Truly Studio Steve Kancianic, commented on the photo's beautiful composition, sharpness, and how it is evenly lit. Winners of the RAL show were announced at the First Friday reception on Dec. 1 at the RAL Art Center, 19 Main Street, Kilmarnock. The members' artist show is on display on mobile display units. The show includes 34 original photographs. This exhibition opened Nov. 28 and will be on display until Dec. 30. Because he was unable to attend the award ceremony, Kancianic videotaped his comments about each photo in the show to share

with the artists. Second place went to "Live Oak-Brook Green Garden, S.C." by CarolAnne Taylor. Kancianic noted that the photograph has a beautiful composition and good detail. Third place was awarded to "Copper Mountain" by Jeff Barsky because of its "beautiful color," Kancianic said. Honorable mention went to two photographs by Annie Barsky, "Wet All Over" and "After the Rain," Carolyn Flowers's photograph, "Sea Fog at Daybreak," two photographs by Tom Martin, "Red Bucket" and "Let's Beach," as well as Bob Sutherland's "Veil in the Heavens." The RAL Art Center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., as well as the three Sundays, Dec. 3, 10, and 17 from noon to 4 p.m. The Holiday Shop is open.



Erik Demario

CCS to present 'Festival of Lessons and Carols'

Christchurch School will present its 43rd annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday in St. Peter's Chapel on the school's campus in Middlesex County. The service will include performances by Cantorion, student and faculty soloists, and special guest performer Erik Demario, a 2018 CCS graduate.

Originally from Kilmarnock, Demario is a tenor pursuing a professional career in opera and classical singing. He is a graduate of VCU and an alum of the VCU Opera Program. His most recent performances include singing backup for Sarah Brightman on her Christmas Symphony Tour and performing as Tamino in Mozart's "The Magic Flute."

Demario performs regularly with several Richmond-based companies including the Richmond Symphony Chorus, Commonwealth Concert Opera, Classical Revolution, and more. He is set to sing with the Virginia Opera Chorus in its touring production of Moravec's "Sanctuary Road" in January/February, and as Rodolfo in Puccini's "La Boheme," with Commonwealth Concert Opera in May. There will be two seatings—one at 4 p.m. and the other at 6:15. If you are interested in attending, contact Jennifer Tietjen at jtietjen@christchurchschool.org.

RCC welding program expands to New Kent

Rappahannock Community College will offer welding classes at its New Kent site, located at 11825 New Kent Highway, beginning Jan. 6.

The cafeteria in the old New Kent High School has been transformed into a state-of-the-art instructional welding facility.

Students will learn Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW), Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW), Flux Cored Arc Welding (FLUX), Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) and ASME IX Pressure pipe welding. Successful completion of each of the classes will earn the student an American Welding Society (AWS) welding certification.

The facility will have all new Lincoln 300C multi-process welders, Lincoln Prism welding extractors and Miller Dynasty 400 water cooled TIG machines. Class sessions are scheduled from January through August. There are Monday through Thursday morning or evening classes lasting four weeks, as well as Saturdays for nine weeks. A variety of tuition assistance and financial aid resources are available to help students afford the costs.

For more information on this program, contact RCC at 804-758-6730 or email advisor@rappahannock.edu.



Rev. Dr. Tyron Williams

NNO concert to feature classic Christmas poem

Saturday's Northern Neck Orchestra's holiday concert will feature a musical arrangement of the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas" narrated by the Rev. Dr. Tyron Williams, Senior Pastor of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Wicomico Church.

The concert of Christmas carols, classical works and popular music of the season at the Lancaster Elementary School Theater (formerly the Lancaster Middle School), 191 School Street, in Kilmarnock will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will be preceded by a pre-concert talk by the orchestra's Music Director Michael Repper at 6:45.

Tickets are \$40 and may be purchased online at www.northernneckorchestra.org or at the door. Students are admitted free.

The orchestra will be hosting a holiday food drive at the concert on behalf of the Healthy Harvest Food Pantry to help it provide healthy meals to local individuals who struggle with hunger. Attendees are encouraged to bring food donations of non-perishable canned goods and packaged foods (no glass containers) to drop off in the lobby.

Fire danger elevated until drought conditions lift

During this year's fall fire season, which ran from Oct. 15 to Nov. 30, the Virginia Department of Forestry responded to 156 wildfires that burned nearly 25,000 acres and damaged 13 structures.

Suppression efforts by DOF and the agency's fire-fighting partners are credited with saving 224 homes and 268 other structures, with an estimated protected value of \$46.8 million. For comparison, 89 wildfires burned 2,654 acres in the 2022 fall fire season.

"With 35 consecutive days of suppression efforts, this fall fire season provided tremendous challenges," said State Forester Rob Farrell. "Our wildland firefighters once again answered the call to protect Virginia's communities and natural resources. These successes would not be possible without our local, state and federal partners, as well as supporting resources from other states."

Drought conditions combined with seasonal factors such as low humidity, high winds, and dry leaves and grass, allow wildfires to start easily, spread quickly and be difficult to contain. Although the fall fire season has ended, the threat of wildfire is always present,

and many parts of Virginia are still in a drought, DOF said.

"Until drought conditions lift, fire danger will remain elevated," said DOF Director of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "Even if no fire restrictions are in place, we encourage those in drought areas to delay all outdoor burning until the drought is lifted."

Follow these tips when burning debris:

—Check with local officials before burning;

—Avoid burning if your locality is in a drought;

—Avoid burning on dry, windy days;

—Keep your burn pile small;

—Stay with your fire until it's completely out (drown, stir, drown again, ensure it's cool);

—Have a rake or shovel and charged water hose on hand, and

—Have a phone ready to call 911 if a fire escapes your control.

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Teamwork

When things go wrong, news travels fast and everyone seems to have an opinion, and everyone seems to be not exactly shy in sharing it.

When things go right? We rarely hear the praise that should follow.

Late last month, on Wednesday, Nov. 29, the alarm came from Abingdon Elementary School.

Abingdon Fire and Rescue responded, and personnel were evacuated into the first really cold air of the season; fortunately, most children were still on buses.

Abingdon called for help from Gloucester VFR, which rolled quickly. Teams worked together to isolate and subdue the emergency.

Abingdon identified the location, quickly said the fire (if any) seemed to be out, and called for more backup to be sure.

Before long, all was determined to be safe, the children were able to get inside, and the firefighters traced the alarm to a spark in a heating unit. All was well.

The teamwork did not end there.

Dr. Anthony Vladu, superintendent of Gloucester Public Schools, made a telephone recording sent to school patrons describing the situation and reassuring parents that all was well. No one should have been left with questions.

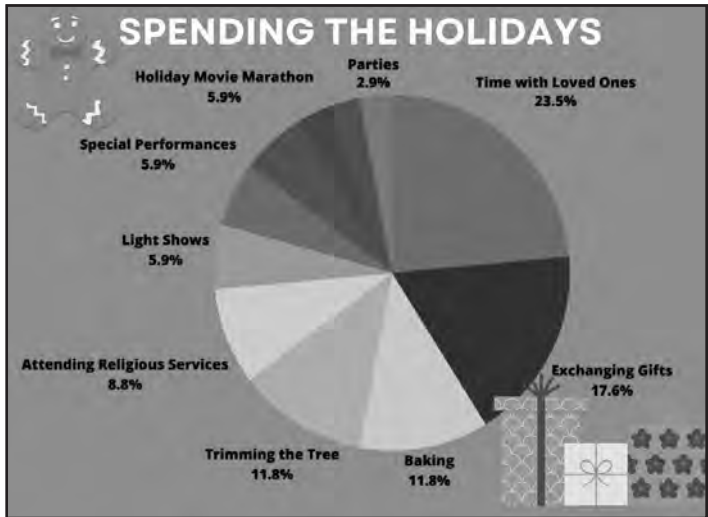
Things went right, and the day went on as usual.

We tend to take the professionals serving us for granted. We trust that they will respond when called, and will do their best to fix a problem quickly and effectively. We trust them, because the fabric of fire and rescue response has been woven into our rural lifestyle for generations now.

The first responders are such a part of our daily life, their responding equipment so familiar, the life-altering situations they address and often relieve so frequent, that we may not stop to ask ourselves one sobering question: Where would we be without them?

When our local first responders ask for help, we owe it to them to dig deep and to help them provide the equipment and training that will protect us to the last need.

Without them, we would be a much, much less desirable place to live. That’s a fact. Things would go wrong quickly, and often.



How do you spend the holidays?

This question was posed on our Facebook page last week. The most popular answer by far was spending time with loved ones, which received 23.5 percent of the vote. Exchanging gifts came in second with 17.6 percent, followed by baking and trimming the tree (11.8 percent each); attending religious services (8.8 percent); light shows, special performances and holiday movie marathon (5.9 percent each); and caroling, travel and parties (2.9 percent each). Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for the next survey, which will be available today. This survey was conducted on Facebook through Google Forms. The chart was made using Canva.

Letters To The Editor

Letters to the Gazette-Journal on any subject of public interest are always welcome. Letters should be 300 words or shorter, and all submissions must include the writer’s complete home mailing address, email and phone number should we need to reach you (this information is not published).

We favor letters that thoughtfully respond to or offer perspective or content published in the Gazette-Journal, and on local or state issues. The Gazette-Journal will not accept letters which comment on articles published in other periodicals. We do not accept letters that are primarily broad endorsements or attacks on political candidates or parties. Also, space limitations often prevent publication of thank-you letters.

The right is reserved to edit letters for length, accuracy, clarity, tone, style and other considerations. The newspaper requires a physically signed copy for our records. That can be accomplished by sending a digital image, such as a JPEG, to the editor.

GLOUCESTER-MATHEWS
GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Elsa Cooke Verbyla | Publisher

Charles E. Koenig | Editor

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A CHRISTMAS PARABLE

BY BRUCE WESTERDAHL

‘I done it for love’

In 1980, the day before Christmas, Richard Bal-lenger’s mother in Ander-son, South Carolina, was busy wrapping Christmas presents, and she asked her seven-year-old son to shine her shoes.

Soon, with a proud smile, he presented the shoes

to mom for inspection. Richard’s mother was so pleased, she gave him a quarter.

That evening, when she put her shoes on to go to the Christmas Eve service, she noticed a lump in one shoe. She took it off and found a quarter wrapped in Christ-

mas paper.

Written on the paper in a child’s scrawl were the words “I done it for love.”

God’s gift to us arrived in a stable 2000 years ago. It was wrapped in swaddling clothes and it was lying in a manger.

And somewhere in that

manger crib, we can imag-ine a wadded up note that explains why it was given to us.

“I done it for love.”

Bruce Westerdahl, a re-tired Lutheran clergyman, resides in Mathews County.

READERS WRITE

Thank you, Gloucester

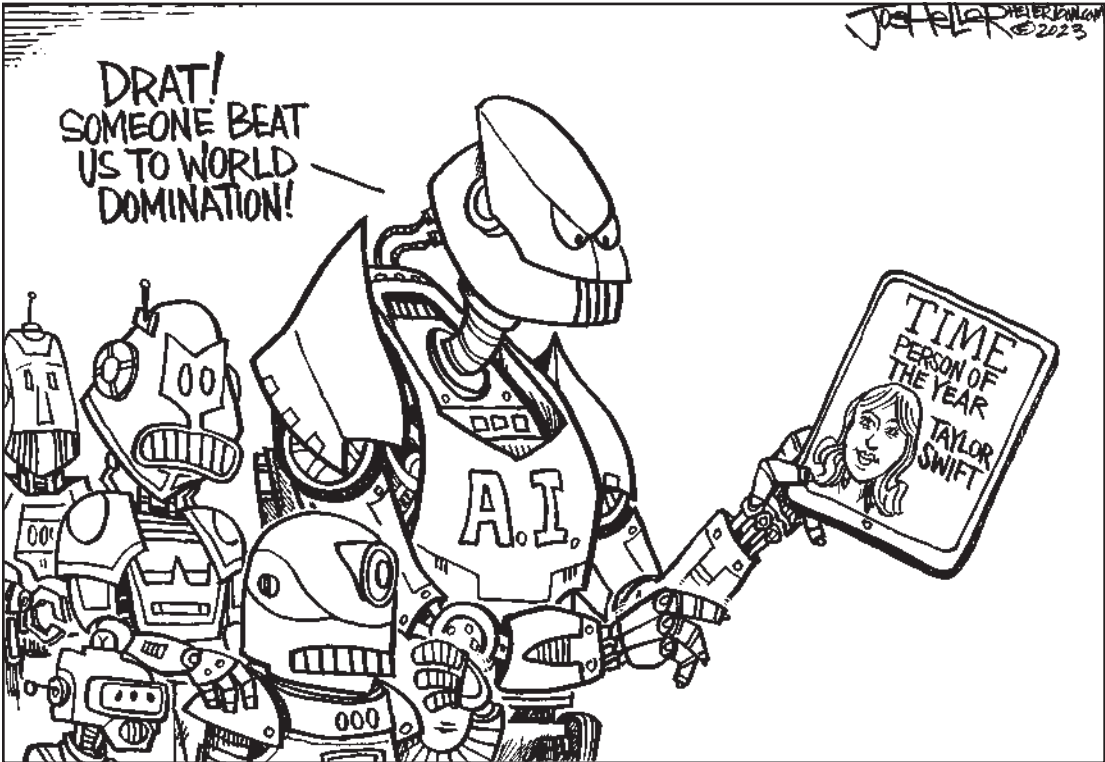
Editor, Gazette-Journal:

As the Abingdon District representative on the school board for the past 20 years over the past 24, I have been humbled, honored and thankful for the privilege to serve Gloucester County, something I never took for granted. This experience has been the most rewarding as well as challenging position I have ever had. At the same time, I love being part of GCPS and serving my community, something I take very seriously.

Our school system is one of the best in the country and our staff is second to none. As I leave the board, I just would like to leave knowing individuals who follow me truly have the students, staff and our community in their hearts and pursued a seat here for all the right reasons, and fortunately that has occurred. Much luck and success to those coming on the board, Mr. Troy Andersen (Gloucester Point) continuing to serve, Mrs. Cindy Saulman (At-Large), Mrs. Kari Struggs (Abingdon District), Mrs. Deborah McDonough (At-Large) and Mrs. Leonne Arsenovic (Ware District) who are ethical, dedicated, and knowledgeable as well as vested in this school system and our community. Our students were the true winners this past November.

Thank you, GCPS staff, for what you do each and every day, your unselfish efforts are not and have not gone unnoticed. And thank you to this terrific community for the opportunity you have allowed me to have and thoroughly enjoy.

Randy Burak
Gloucester, Va.



doms of Speech and of the Press; right peaceably to assemble, and to petition. “That the freedoms of speech and of the press are among the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained except by des-potic governments; that any citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his senti-ments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right; that the General Assembly shall not pass any law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, nor the right of the people peaceably to assemble to pe-tition to redress grievances.

Where does the Constitu-tion grant GCBOS (an ex-tension of the Legislature) trustees/servants, power to establish a despotic govern-ment within the Common-wealth of Virginia? Or to require random infrequent Town Halls to exercise unrestrained freedom of speech and to petition to re-dress grievances (remedy)?

Catherine Carter
Gloucester, Va.

Freedom of speech

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

Only despotic govern-ments restrain freedom of speech.

On Dec. 5, the Gloucester County Board of Supervi-sors temporarily allowed unrestrained freedom of speech for public comments.

For this moment, I felt free as the Founding Fa-thers must have felt when they first entered the Gloucester County court-house when this Common-wealth of Virginia govern-ment, republican in form, was established.

Yet, after adjournment, to avoid public record, by unanimous consensus/ acquiescence the BOS reestablished their despotic time restrained public com-ments.

Under the Bill of Rights Article I Constitution of Virginia, a contract, the people, Grantors, from whom government de-rives limited power, grant expressly written limited rights to elected officials under signed sworn oaths and their agents.

Constitution of Virginia Article I Section 14: Govern-ment Ought to be Uniform. “That the people have a right to uniform govern-ment; and, therefore, that no government separate from, or independent of, the government of Virginia, ought to be erected or es-tablished within the limits thereof.”

Constitution of Virginia Article I Section 12: Free-

A memorable parade

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

Thank you, Mathews, for such a memorable Christ-mas parade!

Special thanks to oh so many people, beginning with Shawn Cosby—thank you for loving your home-town as much as you do.

Thank you, Stuart Gibbs, for chauffeuring our guest in style.

Thank you, United States Coast Guard Station Milford Haven, for presenting the colors with perfection.

Thank you, Mathews Rotary, for the excellent judges.

Thank you, Frances Hudgins, for the unending help in mapping the pa-rade—you made the lineup

easy!

Thank you for answering all our questions, Lynda Smith Greve—you left big shoes to fill and we hope we’ve made you proud.

Thank you to our emcee Phillip Sanderson, and to Mike and Carolyn August for supplying and setting up the sound system!

Wasn’t the flyover super cool? Thank you to our local pilots for the excitement!

To all our participants—we appreciate all of you, and the effort you put into your entries to create a wonderful parade—and we hope you’ll plan to join us next year, too!

Thank you to our first responders—the Sheriff’s Department, Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, for always being such a big part of our pa-rade (and our community!) Thank you so much to all our MCVIC volunteers—we couldn’t have done this without you amazing people.

To Joe Reid, for always driving Jolly Ol’ St. Nick in your antique fire truck.

And Santa! Thank you for making the festivities complete—it wouldn’t be a Christmas parade without you!

We are grateful for our unique community!

Bobbi Hatton
MCVIC Board President
Kat Larkin
MCVIC Executive Director
Mathews, Va.

Standing with Israel

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

The Mathews County Republican Committee re-cently adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the Mathews County Republican Com-

mittee supports the right of the State of Israel to exist as a nation, as established in 1947 under International Law in the United Nations assembly;

Whereas this heinous assault by Hamas is remi-niscent of Hitler and Nazi Germany’s “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem” that led to the slaughter of 6 million Jews, known as the Holocaust;

Whereas “Never Again” is the cry of the Jews—a promise we support;

Whereas we also firmly support the Civil Rights of the Jewish people to wor-ship, work, attend school and live their lives without fear of verbal or physical attacks; that, therefore:

The Mathews County Re-publican Committee stands with Israel, and endorses the Resolutions passed by the United States Senate on Oct. 20, 2023 and the House of Representatives on Oct. 26, 2023 condemning the heinous attack by Hamas on the State of Israel on Oct. 7, 2023 in its 75th year of independence;

And which re-affirm U.S. support for military and humanitarian assistance to the State of Israel.

In further recognition thereof, the MCRC has made a contribution to Ma-gen David Adom (“Adom” means “red” and Magen David is the Star of David), the Israeli emergency disaster relief agency, blood center and ambulance service; their version of the Red Cross.

MDA has been dealing with the recovery of bodies from the massacre as well as helping survivors.

Others wishing to do so may via <https://afmda.org/>, the American Friends of the MDA, a 501(c)(3) organi-zation.

Jean Howard, Media Chair
Mathews County
Republican Committee
Mathews, Va.

Sad and senseless

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

To the hunter that shot a lone Canada goose in my open field, which is posted, on Dec. 2: Stay off of my land and do not endanger my family or pets again.

I guess the thrill was in the kill. Sad. This sneaky act demonstrated a lack of respect for the community in which you like to hunt. Acts like this tarnish you and your fellow hunters.

Deena Hudgins Waddell
Moon, Va.



CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Mathews High School Key Club members Abby Krouse, Vivian Kollar, and Suki Zheng, from left, wave to the crowd and pass out candy. The Kiwanis and Key clubs with the Pet Parade won Best Parade Theme.



CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Carol Rogers, Kim Boehme and Lynda Alexander, from left, wave to the crowd as part of the Mathews Chapel UMC float. The Rev. Dr. Marcus Stallworth, pastor of the Cobbs Creek church, walked during the parade dressed as an elf. This was the first year for the church to have a float, and they plan to do it again next year.



CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Best-selling author Shawn Cosby, this year's Mathews Christmas Parade grand marshal, is all smiles as he waves to the crowd.

MATHEWS PARADE: Beautiful weather prevails

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A)
Mathews County Visitor and Information Center.
Including first responders, flag bearers, Santa Claus and grand marshal Shawn Cosby, this year's parade had 52 entries. "We also had a flyover by local pilots, which was a fan favorite," Larkin said. "We are so appreciative of

the love and support shown by the community for this annual event."
Parade winners included:
Best Parade Theme: Kiwanis and Key clubs with the Pet Parade;
Best Walking Unit: Mathews High School/Thomas Hunter Middle School Combined Marching Bands;
Best Motorized Unit: Tidewater and Khedive Shriners;
Best Antique Vehicle: John Porter

and Lisa Popovich (1940 Chevy Deluxe);
Best Commercial Unit: Westville Landing / Bush Construction;
Best Civic Unit: Kiwanis and Key clubs;
Best Church Unit: Salem Church, Mathews;
Best School Unit: Mathews Elementary School Preschoolers;
Best Animal Unit: Canine Companions;
Honorable Mention: Santa on Joe Reid's Antique Fire Engine.

MONUMENT: Board chairman says no action likely Tuesday on Confederate statue issue

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A)
fer the monument to the two Confederate organizations, and during the April 2022 meeting, the board voted to have the land under the monument surveyed in preparation for such a transfer. Subsequently, there was an uproar against the proposal among county residents, 80 percent of whom had voted in a referendum in the 2021 election to keep the monument on the court green.
Asked whether a long-term lease of the monument to a Confederate organization might occur, Jones said he didn't expect to entertain such a motion. "Leases can be broken," he said.
There was also a proposal by the board last year to include names of the Confederate fallen on the monument, but Jones said the board met with "quite a bit of objection," so the matter wasn't taken any further.
"That monument means

some things to some people and something else to others," said Jones. "Lives were lost in a senseless war, which was fought long before anyone exists today. I believe in honoring all those who had to fight in any war. It's just another part of history. I served under the U.S. flag. I didn't serve under any other flag. I live in the United States of America."
"A hundred years ago, a community raised the funds to honor their dead soldiers," continued Jones. "That monument is not mine to give away and not mine to form an opinion about because I did not fight in that war ... I'm gonna honor those 80 percent that voted to keep it right there. It belongs to the people of Mathews County."
Dredging report
During the board's November meeting, Mathews County Administrator Ramona Wilson reported that she and planning and zoning director James Knighton had met

with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss dredging projects planned for Davis Creek, Milford Haven and Winter Harbor.
Wilson said that there is not yet a spoil site for the Davis Creek project that meets the Army Corps' requirements, and that the plan is to look at purchasing property rather than having a long-term lease. Upcoming milestones for the project include an analysis of the placement of dredged materials, establishment of a federal standard, and design and construction for placement and dredging.
For the project at the western end of Milford Haven, near the Islander Motel, approximately 15,000 cubic yards of material will be dredged and placed on the Islander beach and a beach on Queens Creek. The federal channel will be restored to a depth of minus 10 feet mean lower low water. In addition, an existing jetty will be repaired to its original

WOODS X ROADS: RCUT design continues

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A)
tunity to comment once the proposed designs are developed and I'll have graphics at that time."
The project for the RCUT at the intersection of Route 17 and Woods Cross Road is estimated to cost \$4.9 million, which will be funded through the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program.

New firehouse

The board of supervisors meeting on Dec. 5, also discussions about funding for the new firehouse in Gloucester Court House.

Two people spoke during citizen public comment about the new main station for Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue. Property has been purchased on Main Street.
It was stated that the referendum was not supposed to affect the possibility of getting a new firehouse, but there apparently was no funding it and questioners wanted to know why things have changed. The board addressed those concerns during the supervisor discussion period.
"I know I was asked several different times if the money is in the bank and the money is

not in the bank," said County Administrator Carol Steele. "We always talked that it would have to be a borrowing."
Vice chairman Ashley Chriscoe also responded, "I know that when we had meetings it was stated if the referendum did not pass there would be an opportunity to fund the firehouse with retiring debt service FY25."
Chriscoe also asked the board to keep this in mind as it works through the budget this year, because the firehouse is a priority for capital improvement projects that need to get done.



MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The Gloucester County School Board honored its outgoing members Randy Burak (Abingdon), Robin Rice (At-Large), Darren Post (Ware) and Nicole McPherson (At-Large) at its Tuesday night meeting. Above, from left, are school board members Post, McPherson, Carlton Drew, superintendent of schools Dr. Anthony Vladu, Karen Espinoza, Rice, Burak and Troy Andersen. In photo at right, recently retired superintendent Dr. Walter R. Clemons (left) was also honored at the meeting. Del. Keith Hodges (R-Urbanna) presented to him a resolution from the Virginia House of Delegates commending his work in public education.



GLOUCESTER SCHOOLS: Outgoing members honored

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A)
and maintaining healthy relationships, and making responsible financial, consumer, nutrition and housing decisions," said Dodier-Fernandez. "This would be a very hands-on course that prepares juniors and seniors for living on their own. And this will also help them develop leadership skills, interpersonal skills and career skills."
In voting matters, the board unanimously provided approval for the technology department to purchase Wi-Fi access points, costing the division \$90,000.
In September, the board voted to appoint a neutral third-party investigator to look into claims of harassment/discrimination. As part of the next steps in this process, the board gave the chair authorization to issue

decision letters on behalf of the school board that are consistent with the investigator's findings in the investigation cases by a vote of 6-1, with Burak dissenting.
Student presentations
There were several student presentations during Tuesday's meeting.
Samantha Wooldridge and Kamryn McDonough were recognized as December's seniors of the month.
Wooldridge has a 4.481 grade point average, is a team captain for the GHS tennis team, has served as vice president and historian for the Beta Club, a member of the National Honor Society, a member of the National Art Honor Society, a member of the Spanish Club. She also represented GHS this past summer at Virginia Girls State. She volunteers at the Burke's Mill Girl Scout Day Camp and Grace Covenant Presbyterian

Church. Wooldridge was chosen as this year's Duke of the Year and was crowned homecoming queen earlier this fall.
McDonough has a GPA of 4.231, is a four-year member of the GHS varsity field hockey team and was captain this fall where she led her team all the way to the state final match. She has been recognized for first team all-district, first team all-region and first team all-state. McDonough serves as secretary for the National Honor Society, a member of the Beta Club, a member of the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) club and was a finalist for Duke of the Year. Outside of school, McDonough has played for Saints Field Hockey and works at Scoot's BBQ. She plans to study nursing in college.
GHS students also presented on the Student Council Association, HOSA, NJROTC and the Renaissance Club.



Flat Iron Crossroads will hold a Blues-A-Palooza this Saturday on Flat Iron Road in Gloucester. Performing artists are, from left, Kelly Bell Band, Jenny Langer, Ron Holloway and Carley Harvey.

Blues-A-Palooza comes to Flat Iron Saturday

A Holiday Blues-A-Palooza will be held from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Saturday at Flat Iron Crossroads in Gloucester.

The collaborative performance will feature Jenny Langer & Moonshine Society, joined by blues-reggae guru Kelly Bell Band, celebrity

saxophonist Ron Holloway, and DC's Queen of Blues, Carley Harvey.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with food from The Pull Up food truck, serving seafood and American classics.

The venue is holding a raffle worth \$2,200 in total value for

\$20 per entry.

VIP tickets are \$55 and include table seating and merchandise from the artists. General admission tickets are \$30.

For more information, visit flatironcrossroads.com.

Bay School issues call for entries for 2024 Art Speaks exhibit

The Bay School Community Arts Center has issued a call for entries for the 2024 Art Speaks Juried Exhibition. The deadline for entries is midnight on March 1.

The show, which has a \$1,500 prize for best in show, will be juried and judged by Joe Gyurcsak, a plein air artist/instructor and brand manager for Utrecht Art Supplies at Dick Blick, a primary art materials firm.

Total prizes awarded will be \$6,350, including \$1,500 for best in show. Only original works that have been completed since Jan. 1, 2021 and that have not shown and are not markedly similar to work shown in a previous Art

Speaks Juried Exhibition will be accepted.

Eligible media in the 2D category include painting and drawing in all media, mixed media and printmaking, and fine art photography. The 3D art category includes ceramic, glass, wood or metal functional ware, sculpture in any media, and fiber art.

The entry fee is \$25 for up to three complete entries received by Feb. 1 or \$35 for up to three entries received between Feb. 1 and the deadline of March 1. For full-time students, the fee is \$20 for up to three entries.

Statewide courier service, with size limitations, will be available for an additional

\$25 fee.

In addition to best in show, prizes will be given for first, second, and third place in 2D art and first, second, and third place in 3D art. Student's Choice awards will be given in 2D and 3D art, and there will also be a Guest Gallery Award and Awards of Merit.

All works will be juried in digital format. Notification of acceptance to the show will be emailed no later than March 8.

For details on entering and displaying artwork, visit www.bayschool-arts.com/art-speaks or call 804-725-1278.



Thirteen paintings by the late Kasey Carneal are currently on display in the Shoreline Gallery at Riverside Walter Reed Hospital as part of collaboration of the hospital and the Cook Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to supporting the arts in Gloucester.

Works by Carneal featured at hospital

A new, exclusive exhibit of works by Kasey Sydnor Carneal (1935-2022) was recently unveiled in the Shoreline Gallery at Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in partnership with The Cook Foundation.

The Cook Foundation has for the past 18 months been providing artwork for the Shoreline Gallery, according to a press release from the foundation. During that time, the gallery has featured plein air, botanical, and other works, including a self-portrait by Virginia artist Suke-nya Best.

Riverside Walter Reed Hospital also donates the use of the lawn on Main Street to the Cook Foundation for the Virginia Symphony Under the Stars concert each June during the Gloucester Arts Festival, said the Cook Foundation release, "making this a true, year-round partnership in support of the arts in Gloucester."

The new installation at the gallery features 13 paintings by Carneal, who was a local, self-taught folk artist. The Cook Foundation acquired more than 300 of the late artist's works and artifacts in 2022, and 90 of them are featured in the inaugural exhibit at the Fine Arts Museum of Gloucester as part of a 50-year retrospective.

Carneal began painting at the age of 50, said the release. Working in oil on wood or canvas, she used the frame as an extension of the painting or an accent.

"Her distinctive style made her art unique and provides joy to all who view it," said the release.

The artist painted eight hours a day, seven days a week while listening to music. Her work reflects the things, the people, and the causes she loved, delivering thought-provoking and inspirational themes in her signature whimsical style, said the release.

Pieces by Carneal have been displayed in numerous juried art exhibitions, winning awards throughout the United States, said the release. Images of her paintings are on file with the National Museum of Women in the Arts in

Washington, D.C., the Abby Aldrich Folk Art Museum in Williamsburg, and the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City.

Carneal was also an Artist-in-Residence at the Kluge Children's Rehabilitation Center in Charlottesville, where many of her works are on display. Additional works are often on view at the University of Virginia Medical Center.

The Cook Foundation created and funds the Gloucester Arts Festival and the Fine Arts Museum of Gloucester, said the release. It additionally supports community-led arts and cultural initiatives to enhance the quality of life in Gloucester and across the region.

Other noteworthy projects by the foundation are the

murals on Main Street in the Court Circle district, including the Pocahontas mural, Daffodil "Narcissi" mural, T.C. Walker mural, Watermen mural, and Main Street Beecycles mural; the Main Street flower baskets; Chalkfest; original theater productions; the Beehive Project; the display of statues during the Gloucester Arts Festival; and supporting art education scholarships for graduating high school students.

The Cook Foundation has also invested in the arts and culture of Gloucester through the support of organizations like the Fairfield Foundation, Arts on Main, the Woodville Rosenwald School Foundation, and other organizations that enrich the lives of Gloucester's citizens and visitors alike.

North Star Market

13852 John Clayton Mem. Hwy., North
804-725-7777

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AND DON'T FORGET OUR
AWESOME DELI AND FAMOUS FRIED CHICKEN

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Propane Exchange
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WAREHOUSE SALE!!!

4 days only...
Wed, Dec 13 - Sat, Dec 16!
Up to 75% off on remaining
spring-flowering bulbs!

And in the Bulb Shoppe, great deals on everything throughout the store! December 16 is the LAST DAY we will be open for the season. Get what you need before we close the doors until February 1, 2024.

The Bulb Shoppe & Gardens
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Discover the Artist in You

Upcoming Classes

Needle Felted Sheep

Beginner Wheel Throwing

Watercolor Fox

Pottery for the Birds

Pick Your Basket

Beginner Wheel Throwing - 2 January classes
Needle Felted Sheep 1/18
Pottery for the Birds starts 1/23
The Artist's Way starts 1/23
Pick Your Basket 1/27
Sculpting Birds starts 1/27
Watercolor Fox 1/30

www.bayschool-arts.com
279 Main Street, Mathews, VA 23109
804-725-1278

Saturday, December 16, 2023 ~ 7 p.m.

Door Open at 6 p.m.

Coach Holaday is back at Zoll, this time with a Holiday Special!

Joining Coach Holaday is Hatton Jordan and Mark Matusof.

Tickets- <https://zollvineyards.shopsettings.com/Tom-Holidays>

10309 Vineyard Road, Dutton, VA 23050

774-275-7581 zollvineyards.com

Disclaimer- No refunds unless the event is cancelled. 21+ to drink. Please make us aware of any food allergies with your reservation and/or if you are coming with a large group. Come early to get seated and have a drink or snack before the event.



Winter Big Show

Jessie Mills, a December graduate of the University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, took part in last month's Winter Big Show put on by the university's Performing Arts Company. Ballet, jazz, modern, tap and hip hop are incorporated in the show. Mills attended Diggs School of Dance in Gloucester, later joining Bayside Youth Ballet. She is the daughter of Laura Lane and Danny Mills, and granddaughter of Gene and Annie Goin, all of Susan.

OBITUARIES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9A)

LAUREL ANDERTON ROBINS

Laurel Anderton Robins, age 78, of Gloucester, was called home to rest in her Savior's arms on Wednesday, December 6, 2023. She grew up in Mathews County, which she loved, and graduated from Mathews High School Class of 1964. She soon married the love of her life, Allen, at Oak Grove Christian Church, Bohannon (Mathews County), and became part of the Robins family. They later made their home in Gloucester, where she was employed by Safeway for 14 years. Laurel was preceded in death by her parents, Roland C. and Nellie Mae Outten Anderton, and her beloved daughter, Sharyn G. Robins. She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Allen W. Robins Sr.; son, Allen W. "Robi" Robins Jr.; brother, Tommy (Cindy) Anderton; grandchildren, McKenzie Zember (Logan) and Sarah Robins (Austin Hunter); great-grandchildren, Brandon Emerson, Jeffrey Hunter, and a host of extended family. Laurel was a member of Providence Baptist Church, and her faith in God guided her life and blessed her family and friends. She cherished the Bible, trusting in its promises, and so her life was filled with love, joy, peace, and hope. A graveside service will be held on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Providence Cemetery on East River Road, Cardinal, Virginia 23025; a reception to follow at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 5372 East River Road, Bohannon, Va. 23021. Memorial contributions may be made to Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue at GVFRS, P.O. Box 1417, Gloucester, Va. 23061 or to the Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society, P.O. Box 385, Gloucester, Va. 23061. The family extends sincere appreciation to hospice nurse Terri Newell for the tender love and care given to Laurel. Services under the direction of Hogg Funeral Home & Crematory.



MATTHEW LYN WEATHERWAX

Matthew Lyn Weatherwax, age 49, of Gloucester, died suddenly on Thursday, December 7, 2023. Matthew was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on September 28, 1974 to David Weatherwax and the late Mary Jo Hargrafen. He joined the U.S. Marines in February of 1995 and married the love of his life, Marsha Heims Weatherwax, in Manchester, Iowa, on May 24, 1997. He then separated from the military in January 2003. During his time in the military, Matthew graduated from Park University with a Bachelor of Science in Management/Computer Science in 2001 and graduated from Troy University with a Master's in Management in 2003. Matthew was employed by the U.S. Department of Defense as a Branch Chief of the Air Force Enterprise Capabilities Team. He was also a member of the Abingdon Ruritan Club. In addition to his mother, Matthew was preceded in death by his father-in-law, Jerald Heims. Matthew is survived by his wife, Marsha Heims Weatherwax, and his children, Martin and Miriam. He is also survived by his father, David Weatherwax (Janie); sister, Jen Daniels (Curt); brother, Ben Weatherwax (Kayla); mother-in-law, Darlene Heims; brothers-in-law, Mark Heims (Ginger), Ron Heims (Shelly); sister-in-law, Nancy Atkinson (Paul); nieces and nephews, Colt Daniels, Piper Daniels, Paige Daniels, Remy Weatherwax, Rowan Weatherwax, Brendan Heims, Kyleigh Heims, Mike Atkinson, Troy Atkinson, Kaitlyn Heims, Kelsey Heims, Lexi Heims, and Grace Heims. The family received friends at Hogg Funeral Home on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, from 6-7:30 p.m. The memorial service, conducted by Pastor Arthur Wolz, was held in the chapel of Hogg Funeral Home on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 11 a.m., followed by military funeral honors. In memory of our beloved Matthew, we ask that contributions be made to The Degood Foundation for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Gloucester. Donations can be made to www.degoodfoundation.org or by phone at 757-574-0334.



Services under the direction of Hogg Funeral Home & Crematory.

CONNIE SARDINA

Connie Sardina, deceased Dec 6, 2023; she was soon to be 81 years old. She lived with her husband Frank on a farm for 40 years in Centerville, N.Y.; 10 years in Unionville, Va., and one year in Hudgins, Va., where she passed away.

Connie's husband Frank lovingly described her as the most gracious, wise and common-sense woman he had ever known.

Connie is survived by Frank, her husband of 59 years; three children, Heather, Christopher and Jonathan, and their spouses; 21 grandchildren (one of whom went to be with Jesus), and two great-grandchildren.

Connie was known to all who crossed her path as a special woman who loved the Lord and would that all follow Him. She was outwardly grateful to God for the life given to her and never shy to express her love for Jesus. She modeled and taught that the best path in life was to follow Him. In her heart she took joy in the fact that her children and their families have chosen the "best path." Unknown numbers are out there who would freely testify to that.

Often throughout their marriage her husband commented that she "gave him life." All through her life friends and family would not hesitate to say in so many words that Connie was a beautiful person.

Connie believed with all her heart the passage in I Thess. 4:13-18 that Jesus died and rose again and she would not fear death but always hope to spend eternity with our Lord.

Final word from husband, Frank: Be happy, Dear, in the tranquility of heaven with Jesus. You were truly a gift from God that I will never forget till I am called.

"Well done good and faithful servant."

Several hikes planned at Beaverdam

Gloucester Parks, Recreation and Tourism is encouraging residents to come out and hike the nature trails at Beaverdam Park, with three organized hikes planned for the coming weeks, beginning with a Shortest Day Hike next Thursday.

The Shortest Day Hike, on the winter solstice, will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 21. The registration fee for this two-hour hike is \$5 and the deadline to register is today.

A 9.5-mile First Day Hike will be held on Monday, Jan. 1, beginning at 10 a.m. The registration fee is also \$5 and the deadline to register is Dec. 25.

A National Birding Day Hike with a local Master Naturalist will be held from 9-11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 6. Birders are encouraged to bring binoculars and camera. The fee is \$5 per person and the deadline to register is Dec. 30.

Those attending any of the hikes are advised to dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes and bring along water and snacks.

For more information on these and other activities, call PRT at 804-693-2355, email prt@gloucesterva.info or stop by the office at 6382 Main Street. For online registration, visit <https://gloucesterva.info/civirc>.

IN MEMORIAM



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Norma Hogge

Jan. 13, 1941 - Dec. 15, 2004

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and one dream that could come true

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hearts just to see and speak to you

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bring you back

We know because we've tried and

neither will a million tears

We know because we've cried

You've left behind our broken hearts

and precious memories too

But we've never wanted memories

We only wanted you.

Love & miss you, Debbie, Cliff,

Nicole, Clifton Lee

Family and Friends

Signups are underway for Gloucester Parks, Recreation and Tourism's Junior (ages 12-14) and Senior (15-18) basketball leagues.

The league will play early



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Youth basketball teams now forming in Gloucester

March through late April. Teams meet for practices and games twice a week, Monday-Thursday. Volunteer coaches are needed. The registration fee is \$45 by Dec. 18 or \$50 Dec. 19 through Feb. 11.

GYMNASTICS: Gymnastics for ages 3 to 18 will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at Botetourt and Abingdon schools, beginning the week of Jan. 2. These

10-week classes include: Parent and Child classes for 3, 4, and 5 year-olds (\$60); Beginners for ages 5 and older (\$75), Intermediate for ages 6 and older (\$75) and Advanced (\$80). Registration deadline is Dec. 26.

ZUMBA: Zuma classes will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays in January from 6:45-7:45 p.m. at Abingdon Elementary. The fee is \$8

per day if you sign up for the whole month or \$9 per day for individual days. The deadline to register is Dec. 27.

For more information on these and other activities, call PRT at 804-693-2355, email prt@gloucesterva.info or stop by the office at 6382 Main Street. For online registration, visit <https://gloucesterva.info/civirc>.

COMING EVENTS

For listings, call 804-693-3101

SATURDAY

GRINCHES GALLOP: The Mathews High School Athletic Booster Club will have a Grinch Gallop from 8-10 a.m. Saturday beginning and ending at Mathews High School. There are 5K and 1-mile fun run/walk options. Registration is \$50. Email Brandy Larson at larsonbbl@yahoo.com for a registration form. Proceeds benefit MHS athletics.

DEMOCRATS: The Mathews County Democratic Committee has issued a call to caucus to all Democrats in Mathews to be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, at the Westville Landing Clubhouse, 132 Westville Landing, Mathews.

BLUES-A-PALOOZA: Flat Iron Crossroads will have a Holiday Blues-A-Palooza featuring music from artists Kelly Bell Band, Jenny Langer & Moonshine Society, Ron Holloway, and Carly Harvey from 6:30-9:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, at 7709 Flat Iron Road, Gloucester. General admission is \$30; VIP tickets, with preferred seating are \$55. For more information, visit flatironcrossroads.com.

MONDAY

NAACP: The Mathews Branch NAACP will hold its monthly meeting and holiday celebration at 6 p.m. Monday at Antioch Baptist Church, 110 Antioch Road, Susan.

TUESDAY

NARFE: Chapter 1757 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees will hold its monthly meeting and Christmas party at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday at Olivia's in the Village, 6597 Main Street, Gloucester. All active and retired federal employees are encouraged to attend; visitors are always welcome. For information about the local chapter, call Bob Howe at 804-642-2659.

SUPERVISORS: The Mathews County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the historic courthouse on Court Street.

NEXT THURSDAY

SOCIAL SERVICES: The Gloucester Social Services Board will meet at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 21, at 6641 Short Lane, Gloucester.

NIGHT SHOPPING: Nick of Time Night Shopping will be held from 5-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 21 on Main Street in Mathews. Many businesses will be open.

LOCAL TIDES

Mobjack Bay, East River Entrance			
	HIGH	LOW	
Thursday	9:35 a.m.	3:08 a.m.	
12/14	9:55 p.m.	4:07 p.m.	
Friday	10:23 a.m.	3:55 a.m.	
12/15	10:46 p.m.	4:54 p.m.	
Saturday	11:14 a.m.	4:47 a.m.	
12/16	11:41 p.m.	5:46 p.m.	
Sunday		5:46 a.m.	
12/17	12:08 p.m.	6:40 p.m.	
Monday	12:39 a.m.	6:51 a.m.	
12/18	1:03 p.m.	7:35 p.m.	
Tuesday	1:38 a.m.	8:00 p.m.	
12/19	2:00 p.m.	8:30 p.m.	
Wednesday	2:41 a.m.	9:11 a.m.	
12/20	3:01 p.m.	9:27 p.m.	

Tide adjustments at other points:

York River, Tue Marsh Light—Subtract 5 minutes.

York River, Yorktown—Add 5 minutes.

York River, Allmondsville—Add 1 hour, 5 minutes.

York River, Entrance to Perrin River—Add 1 minute.

Brown's Bay—Subtract 7 minutes.

S.W. Branch Severn River—Add 4 minutes.

Ware River—Subtract 4 minutes.

North River—Subtract 4 minutes.

New Point Comfort—Subtract 1 minute.

Piankatank River, Cherry Point—Add 1 hour.

Piankatank River, Dixie—Add 1 hour, 33 minutes.

Urbanna—Add 2 hours, 50 minutes.

THE SUN THIS WEEK

	Sunrise	Sunset
12/14	7:10 a.m.	4:49 p.m.
12/15	7:11 a.m.	4:50 p.m.
12/16	7:12 a.m.	4:50 p.m.
12/17	7:12 a.m.	4:50 p.m.
12/18	7:13 a.m.	4:51 p.m.
12/19	7:13 a.m.	4:51 p.m.
12/20	7:14 a.m.	4:52 p.m.

THE MOON THIS WEEK

	Moonrise	Moonsset
12/14	9:08 a.m.	6:25 p.m.
12/15	10:00 a.m.	7:38 p.m.
12/16	10:42 a.m.	8:53 p.m.
12/17	11:16 a.m.	10:07 p.m.
12/18	11:48 a.m.	11:16 p.m.
12/19	12:16 p.m.	
12/20	12:42 p.m.	12:27 a.m.

DECEMBER MOON PHASES

Last quarter	12/5
New moon	12/12
First quarter	12/19
Full moon	12/26



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/ RTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	11/14/2023
MONTGOMERY	28886	314	DUCK PON DR/ RTE 314	STROUBLES CREEK	11/9/2023
PATRICK	13342	677	WILLIS GAP RD/ RTE 677	EAST FORK JOHNSON CREEK	10/27/2023

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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Budget process begins for Mathews schools

BY CHARLIE KOENIG

The Mathews County School Board, meeting Tuesday night at Thomas Hunter Middle School, began its preliminary discussions on the 2024-2025 budget, a process made difficult by declining enrollment and an adjustment in the Local Composite Index that will likely mean a reduction in the state's contribution.

Superintendent Dr. David S. Daniel gave a presentation on some of the factors going into the coming budget during a work session, which was held prior to the board's regular monthly meeting.

In the state's 2024-2026 biennium budget, Mathews County has a Local Composite Index, or LCI, of .5904. That number, based on such factors as county real estate values, residents' adjusted gross income and local retail sales, has been steadily inching upward in recent years.

For the present budget, the LCI figure is .5453. That number was .5162 for the 2020-2022 biennium and .5060 for the years 2018-2020.

The increase in LCI represents an increased "ability" to fund education at the local level, Daniel explained. "Depending on the upcoming state budget, it may result in a decreased per pupil funding amount," he said.

Put another way, Daniel explained, it roughly means that the state believes that Mathews should be able to provide roughly 59 percent of the cost of education in the county through local funds.

School board member Linda Hodges asked if there is any appeal process available to contest the recently released LCI number. "Not that I'm aware of," Daniel replied.

Daniel provided a comparison of school divisions' Composite Index numbers statewide, with several local divisions highlighted. In this chart, West Point's LCI is

slightly over 0.2 and Gloucester's is approximately 0.4. Middlesex has an LCI that is a slightly higher than that of Mathews.

Another major factor at play is declining enrollment and its effect on the state's share of the school budget. The state's funding of local school divisions is based on Average Daily Membership, a figure based on school enrollment.

Enrollment in Mathews has been on a steady decline since 2003, when the division had about 1,300 students. The latest report from PowerSchool (the program the division uses to track enrollment) shows that figure to be 804 students, Daniel said.

A number of factors are at play in this decline, including a transient student population moving out of the county, a lack of affordable housing for young families, and some that have chosen homeschooling as a "better fit" for their children, Daniel said.

The loss in ADM, based on present figures, means a drop of about \$7,000 in state funding for each student. The current budget is based on an ADM of 875 students. What this would mean is a reduction somewhere in the \$300,000 ballpark, Daniel said, although he added the division does have some ESSER money (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds "to get us through."

"I'm not in panic mode at this point," Daniel said.

Exactly what this all means will become a little clearer in the coming week, as Gov. Glenn Youngkin is expected to release his draft budget sometime around Dec. 20, Daniel said.

"Our #1 priority [in the coming budget] has to be retaining and then recruiting staff members," Daniel said, with the division being able to compete with neighboring jurisdictions in terms of compensation. As a starting point,

based upon requests from principals and directors, he is proposing a 5 percent pay increase for all staff.

That priority was echoed during the regular meeting, when Mathews High School teacher Rachel Morris presented the results of a teacher advisory committee tasked with conducting a survey to gauge what was most important to faculty and staff when preparing the budget.

Overwhelmingly, the survey pointed to a need for a cost-of-living increase in salary and benefits, with over 90 percent of those taking part in the survey stressing this as a priority.

Also on the list was the need for additional staffing to include a permanent substitute for each school.

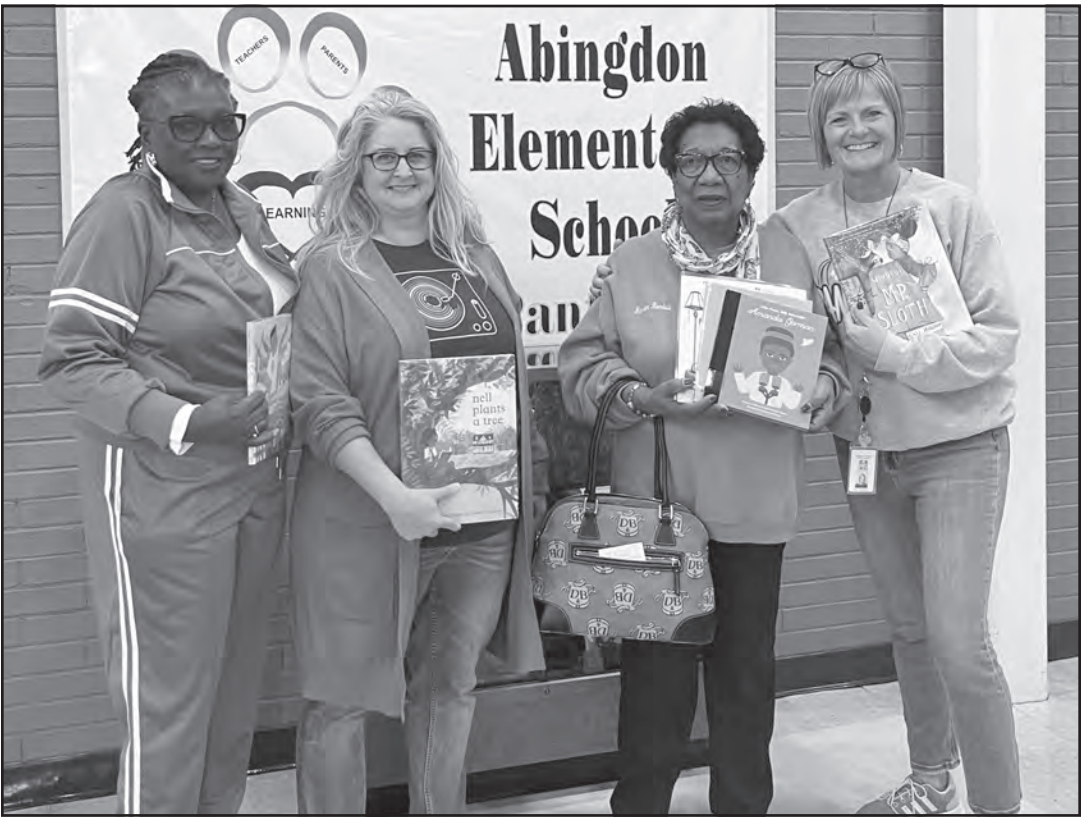
A second budget work session has been scheduled for 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, prior to the board's regular scheduled monthly meeting at 6. A daylong school board retreat will be held the following Thursday, with a public hearing on the budget and third budget work session on Tuesday, Jan. 23.

Following a closed meeting, the board approved the resignation of Mathews Elementary teacher assistant Anna Bas and the appointment of the following intramural basketball volunteer coaches: Brandy L. Larson, Ricky M. Wiatt Jr., Alex Forrest, Frank T. West, William D. Hargis, Corey D. Christensen, Justin P. Clements, Sarah H. Lowe, Katherine H. Davis-Small, Jason M. Leslie, Sarah E. West, Julie T. Christensen, Stephanie T. Sowers, Stacie T. Wiatt, Jeffrey D. McCurry, Melissa H. Diggs, Freda G. Snyder, Amber W. Williams, Brittany D. LeTennier, John Vincent Slaughter Jr., Michelle L. Slaughter, Reginald L. Johnson, Brandon L. Fields, Natasha R. Fields, Ashley E. McBurney, Christopher G. McBurney and Leah T. Hurst.



THMS Spelling Bee

Winners of Thomas Hunter Middle School's Spelling Bee were, from left, Keegan Walls (third place), Corey Zheng (first place) and Charlotte Bailey (second place). A total of 36 students participated. As the winner, Zheng will be heading to regional competition.



School library donation

Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. Epsilon Eta Chapter, donated several books about African Americans to the Abingdon Elementary School library in observance of American Education Week. The books were given in memory of chapter member Blois Catlett, who taught at Abingdon for many years. Catlett, who retired in 2010 after 39 years teaching at Abingdon and Botetourt elementary schools, passed away in August. Shown at the book presentation are, from left, chapter president Donna Osborne, librarian Michelle Davis, sorority member Marion Randall, and Abingdon Elementary principal Anna Harwood.



'I Promise'

The Mathews Branch of the NAACP donated over fifty copies of the book, "I Promise" by LeBron James to first graders at Mathews Elementary School on Dec. 11. The picture book, inspired by his foundation's I Promise program, is designed to motivate children everywhere to always strive for greatness. Shown here are, front row from left, Mike Witherspoon, Eva Boutwell, Louise Witherspoon, Bryce Gross, Sir Young, Kennedy Lowe; back row, Edith Turner, Dee Russell, Terry Dixon, Kent Willis, Peggy Newsome and Janet Deschak.



Candy canes

As part of Bethel Elementary School's spirit week, Rebecca Coleman's third graders dressed as candy canes on Tuesday. Pictured, from left, are students Kennadie Beasley, Makenna Smith, Leah Dahm (in back), Chayton Shall, Fayelyn Davis, Trace Rasmussen, Eddie Johnston, Mattox Busch, Tanner Rowe, Tenley Wiggs, Peyton Mulvaney and Ellie Valentine.

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Holiday spirit

Mathews High School student Sophia Verner shows off her holiday spirit with her shaggy wagon.



Holiday 'book tasting'

Shannon Kerr, media specialist at Page Middle School, recently set up a holiday display in the library. Pictured is eighth grader Daniel Cunha enjoying a "holiday book tasting" with other students. The students are reading the summaries of different friendship- and holiday-themed books to see if they like them enough to check them out.



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MHS girls beat Northampton, drop three

BY GRAYSON GRIFFITH

The Mathews High School varsity girls' basketball team started off the week posting a win last Wednesday, Dec. 6, over the visiting Northampton Lady Yellow Jackets. The rest of the recent schedule wasn't as successful for the Lady Devils, with losses to Charles City, Colonial Beach and King William.

Northampton

Last Wednesday's game began with a flurry of action as Mathews fought to earn an early advantage, taking an 18-7 lead into halftime. In the second half, Northampton fouled one girl after another and kept giving Mathews free shots. The game ended strong for the Mathews, winning by 20 points, 36-16. Top scorers of the game were Laura Rowe with 10 points and Grayson Griffith with 8.

Charles City

On Friday, Mathews played a triple header with the Panthers at Charles City, beginning with the JV boys, followed by the varsity girls and concluded with the varsity boys.

In the varsity girls' matchup, the game started off strong for both teams, scoring layups after layups. By the end of the first half, Charles City was up, 20-12. In the second half, two MHS players got hurt and that made the team spirit drop for the Lady Blue Devils. Mathews fought hard to keep pace, but lost at the final buzzer, 51-31. Top scorers were Lyla Duff and Griffith, each with eight points.

Colonial Beach

On Monday, Mathews welcomed the Colonial Beach Lady Drifters to the Devils' court. The night started with the JV contest. Mathews played good defense on the jump but unfortunately the junior varsity Lady Drifters scored the first points. The first half did not go well for Mathews, which was held scoreless through much of the first two quarters, trailing 16-3 at the half. The second



CHARLIE KOENIG / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Mathews varsity player Lyla Duff (#15) scored four points in Monday night's game against the Colonial Beach Drifters.

half didn't go any better, as the JV Lady Devils fell, 24-5. Elizabeth Moore scored all five points for MHS.

In the varsity contest, MHS had many girls sick and injured, limiting their sub in options. In spite of that, Mathews remained somewhat competitive, trailing 23-11 at the half. The Drifters took charge in the second half, winning 37-19. Griffith (eight points) and Duff (four points) provided much of the MHS scoring.

King William

The following night, the MHS girls were back on their home court again, this time facing King William. Once again, Moore scored all the JV points for Mathews as the Lady Devils came up short, 27-13.

The varsity game was a lit-

tle more competitive, with the Cavaliers holding a 19-16 half-time lead. The Cavaliers came out aggressively in the second half, drawing a number of fouls including a technical. Even with the free throws it was not enough the keep the Cavaliers from scoring and staying on top. The Lady Blue Devils fought hard as their team chemistry was top notch but they could not get the win this time, as the Cavaliers won, 46-33.

Zoe Camp and Laura Rowe were top scorers with nine points each. The MHS girls earned one day off, returning to action on Friday when they will travel to West Point to face the Pointers in the last game before Christmas break.

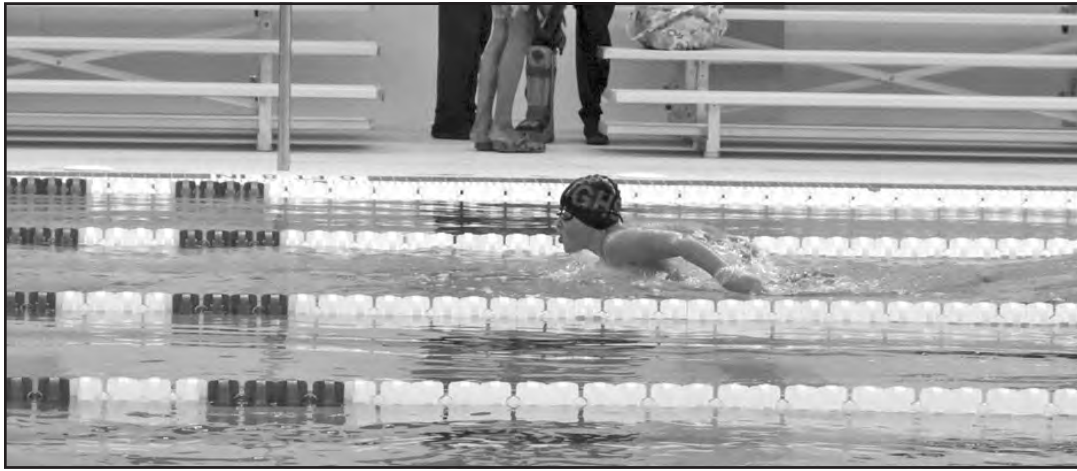


PHOTO BY LISA JONES

GHS swimming

The Gloucester High School girls' and boys' varsity swim teams completed their second double dual meet last Thursday at the Hampton Aquaplex. Both teams gained another win against Warwick, but came away with the first loss of the season against Kecoughtan. Win or lose, swimmers in the Peninsula District continuously cheered on each other through the meet. Top point-earners against Kecoughtan were Auggie Baker and Renner Andersen. Tara Carter and Summer Bayly were the top point-earners against Warwick. Camden Hoercher, shown above, also gained a top team time for the boys' 100-yard butterfly event. In only the second meet of the season, all swimmers have earned a personal best record in at least one event since time trials, which were held only one month ago. Assistant Coach Crystal Sterling said the teams are "built on discipline and camaraderie." Gloucester swim is led by seniors Andersen, Carter, Joshua Coleman, Sara Hedge, Scarlett Lutman, Saige Miller, Dominic "DJ" Turner and Madison Walters. The swim teams will compete at the Hampton Aquaplex today against Hampton and Heritage high schools.

Dukes suffer tough week on the court

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

The Gloucester High School varsity boys' basketball team faced a tough week, falling to Warwick, Nansemond River and Menchville.

The Dukes lost to Warwick, 72-24, last Thursday night on the road. The Warwick win was the first triumph for La'Tasia Robinson, the first woman to coach a varsity boys' basketball team in the Peninsula District.

Bryce Monroe was the top

scorer for Gloucester with 14 points, followed by Jayden Ganzenmuller and Preston Prentiss with three points each and Watson and Welch with two apiece.

The Dukes also traveled Saturday to face Nansemond River, where they lost to the Warriors, 77-13. Monroe was again the top scorer for Gloucester with a total of eight points. Ganzenmuller and Prentiss also scored, earning three and two points, respectively.

Gloucester hosted Menchville Tuesday night at home,

falling to the Monarchs, 74-36. Monroe was the top scorer for Gloucester with 13 points with Ganzenmuller following close behind with 12 points.

Gloucester will be on the road again tonight, traveling to face Bethel High School.

JV Dukes

The GHS JV boys' basketball team, meanwhile, has had a few successes this season. The JV Dukes defeated Kecoughtan, 51-44, on Nov. 28; Denbigh, 49-47, on Dec. 5; and Warwick, 49-40, last Thursday.

MHS boys drop three

BY JOHN STEPHEN SHAW

The Mathews High School boys' JV and varsity basketball teams suffered losses during the past week to Northampton, Charles City and Colonial Beach. The teams will look to get back on the winning column on Friday when they host West Point, starting with the JV contest at 5:30 p.m.

Northampton

The JV Blue Devils suffered a 70-17 loss last Wednesday at Northampton. Strong defense prevented Mathews from advancing the ball and allowed for easy scoring opportunities. Despite the lopsided result, the JV Blue Devils did not stop fighting and played their hardest until the final whistle.

The varsity match-up wasn't much better, as Mathews fell to the Yellow Jackets, 101-47. The Blue Devils started strong, beating the Northampton press and keeping the game within reach. Both teams played strong defense, but the hosting Yellow Jackets had superior shooting, making key three-pointers to extend their lead going into halftime.

Mathews struggled to gain momentum after the half, as sophomore Demond Darby controlled the boards, along with junior center Jordyn Cosby. The Blue Devils did not give up and continued to play hard until the final whistle. Demond Darby led

the team in scoring with 12 points, followed by Jordyn Cosby with 11, and Desmond Darby with 10.

Charles City

The JV Blue Devils lost in a close matchup against the Charles City Panthers on Friday, 24-20. Mathews played strong basketball, keeping the game close while holding the Panthers to a one-point lead going into halftime. Mathews was assisted by freshman Stanley Ouma, with 9 points, all three pointers. Ouma shot 3-3 from beyond the arc and has been a big part of the scoring effort this season for the Blue Devils.

The varsity Devils also suffered a heartbreaking loss to the Panthers, 58-54. Mathews dominated the first half with strong scoring and lockdown defense. While Mathews played great basketball, their free-throw shooting was lackluster, preventing Mathews from extending their lead. Jordyn Cosby led the team in scoring with 16 points, with Colin Moore scoring 11. Mathews had an 11-point lead going into halftime with just 16 minutes left to play. During the second half, the game began to get chippy as both teams received technical fouls, with Charles City committing multiple fouls. The Panthers took a five-point lead to end the third quarter, forcing Mathews to score quickly to overcome this deficit. The Blue Devils

tried their hardest to score and come back for the victory, but Charles City hung on to earn the win.

Colonial Beach

The JV Devils struggled against Colonial Beach on Monday in a tough 46-14 loss. Mathews had a strong first half, keeping the game close with a 10-22 score. Scoring in the second half was a challenge, as Colonial Beach pulled away to a 30-point lead. Mathews was led in scoring by eighth graders Darin Echeverria and Michael Wiatt with six and four points, respectively.

The Mathews Blue Devils were defeated by the Drifters, 51-67, in Colonial Beach Monday night. The Drifters hosted Mathews for their second matchup of the season. The game began with both teams fighting hard to gain control of the pace, but Colonial Beach ended the first half with a 38-21 point lead. Mathews took the court without three key players and it showed after the first half.

The Blue Devils were forced to play physical and gritty, with Cosby grabbing the most rebounds on the team. Cosby ran the offense, with 28 points and countless assists to his teammates. Junior Colin Moore scored 10 points to help the Blue Devil scoring effort. Although Mathews made a run at the end of the game, it was not enough to overcome the deficit.

MHS indoor track opens season

Mathews High School indoor track opened its season with a pair of Lampert Timing Indoor Track meets on Dec. 5 and 11 at the Boo Williams Sportplex, Hampton.

In the Dec. 5 meet, the MHS boys' varsity team placed fourth overall with 80 points, behind Norfolk Academy (120 points), Catholic High School (96) and Northeastern (88), beating out fifth place West Point (52 points).

The MHS varsity girls, meanwhile, tied with Catholic for third place (56 points), behind Norfolk Academy

(147) and Northeastern (69).

On Monday, the MHS varsity team placed second with 81 points, behind Currituck County (99), while the varsity girls came in fifth (48 points), behind Trinity Episcopal (76), Currituck (69), John A. Holmes (67) and Northampton (52).

Dec. 5 meet

For the MHS girls in the Dec. 5 meet, Nora Suthard took first place in both the triple jump (33') and long jump (16') events. She also took second in the 300-meter dash (47.16 seconds), third in the high jump (4'6") and sixth in the 55-meter dash (7.92 seconds).

Other standouts included Lorena Carballo (fifth in triple jump, 10th

in 500-meter dash and 17th in the long jump), Lauren Johnson (fifth in 1,600-meter run), Adelle Hudgins (seventh in 1,600-meter run), Haley Hoell (sixth in 55-meter hurdles and 13th in the long jump), Jordan Sadeg (10th in 55-meter hurdles and 12th in long jump) and Shayla Kekoa (13th in shot put). The girls' 4x800 relay team placed third with a time of 11:45.8.

Gavin Dustin, Chance Higginbotham, Donovan Forrest and Keith Taylor all took individual first-place finishes. Dustin won the 1,000-meter run (2:51.68). Higginbotham won the 3,200-meter run (10:31.9). Forrest came in first in the 55-meter hurdles (8.35 seconds), placing second in the long jump (19') and 10th in the 55-meter dash (7.05 seconds). Taylor won the triple jump (39'9"), also taking fourth in the long jump (18') and 11th in the 55-meter dash (7.1 seconds). In addition, the 4x800 meter relay team came in first (8:53.08), while the boys' 4x400 team placed second (4:07.46).

Eighth grader Hunter Horsley won the JV shot put (23'3.5"), with fellow eighth grader Kris Diggs tossing the shot put a distance of 16'10" to place second among JV competitors. Senior Soles Small threw the shot put 31'1" for 10th place in varsity.

Dec. 11 meet

For the MHS girls on Monday, Suthard took first in the high jump (4'6"), long jump (15'11") and triple jump (33'3"), while Kekoa came in second in the shot put (16'1").

Top finishers for the MHS boys included Dustin (first place in 1,000-meter run, 2:45.01), Forrest (first in the 55-meter hurdles, 8.11 seconds; second in long jump, 18'11") and Taylor (first in long jump, 19'4.5"; second in high jump, 5'8"). Horsley and Diggs again placed first and second among JV boys in the shot put, with throws of 23'9" and 16'1", respectively.

Indoor track returns to action on Monday, Jan. 8, back at the Boo Williams Sportsplex.



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