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GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Section C
Thursday, April 9, 2026

Newlywed cottage saved decades later

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

When Bette Dillehay was a newlywed some decades ago, she and her late husband Rob lived in a small cottage



Betty Dillehay cutting a fine figure in the cold December weather after the cottage she and her late husband Rob saved was placed on their property on Warehouse Cove.

at Iron Point on the banks of the Piankatank River in Mathews. From their vantage point, they could sit on the shore and look out all the way out past Stove Point and

Gwynn's Island to the Chesapeake Bay.

But the Mathews natives weren't destined to spend their lives in a small town. When they were offered jobs

in Richmond, they left their tiny cottage and spent much of their lives in the state capital, with Rob teaching and Bette working her way up the corporate ladder and

both eventually ending up in state government.

Some years after they

SEE COTTAGE, PAGE 3C



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Bette Dillehay and her late husband Rob lived in this tiny cottage, shown at left, decades ago, as newlyweds. Located on the shores of the Piankatank River, the home was many years later slated to be demolished when the couple saved it and moved it to its current location on Warehouse Cove, Cobbs Creek. At right, the cottage as it looked in 2000, placed on wheels and ready to be moved.

COTTAGE: *Charming getaway*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2C)

moved, the Dillehays had an opportunity to buy a small, fairytale-like second home, again on Iron Point Lane,

but looking out on Warehouse Cove. They were very content to spend weekends there, but there was little space for family and others

to visit.

Then, in late 2000, a friend told Bette that the cottage

SEE COTTAGE, PAGE 4C

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COTTAGE: *Moving on to greener pastures*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3C)

she had lived in as a bride was slated to be torn down by the end of the year. Bet-

te immediately contacted the owners and asked if she could have it, and they agreed, as long as she removed it from the property

before Dec. 31.

Bette said she contacted a house moving company and

made the arrangements, and, true to his word, the contractor moved the house

on the last day of the year.

SEE COTTAGE, PAGE 5C



Rob Dillehay preparing to clean up the site after the cottage he and his wife Bette saved had been moved to their property on Warehouse Cove.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Bette Dillehay enjoys a quiet moment in the living room of the cottage she saved from being demolished, then furnished with items she and her late husband Rob got at auction.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The living room of the Dillehay cottage is decorated simply but comfortably, with plenty of space for family to gather.

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The Dillehays refurbished the kitchen cabinets and placed an island in the center. At right, the cabinets as they were before being refurbished.

COTTAGE: *A refresh*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4C)

It had to travel across the fields of Hesse Farm, frightening two hunters along the way, but eventually it ended

up on the small peninsula of land adjacent to the peninsula where her own house sat. Over time, Bette and Rob

SEE COTTAGE, PAGE 6C

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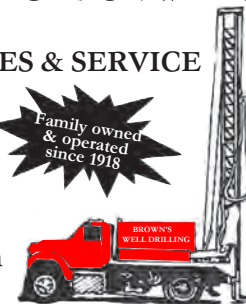
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The master bedroom of the cottage is simply furnished and decorated and has a very welcoming feel.

COTTAGE: *Old space gets a new life*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5C)

made the house their own again. They refurbished the kitchen with new cabinetry and modern appliances, rebuilt the fireplace, and painted the floors. They bought living room and bedroom furniture at auctions and flea markets, decorated with various pieces of art from local artists, and placed the reclining chair that Bette's grandfather had owned in the corner of the

living room. And they filled the bookshelves with books and art and toys.

Bette said she was glad they were able to save the house, and it has been a wonderful place for the family.

"The grandchildren and great-grandchildren have all loved coming here, and Rob was in his element," said Bette. "We didn't need the house, but the thought of tearing it down was horrible. And it fits perfectly on this space."

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Local rabbitry offers outreach

BY CHEYENNE FENTON

What started as a way to create high-quality yarn quickly became artistry, animal care and caring for others woven together into a unique—and fuzzy—backyard-based business.

The Fuzzy Ear, a licensed, no-cull English Angora Rabbitry in Gloucester, started in 2013 as a way for Pete and Lorraine Hanson to create their own fine yarn for fiber arts. “I like good yarn, I don’t like cheap yarn—life’s too short,” said Lorraine.

After beginning their business, the couple discovered quickly how much they loved the rabbits and they began growing their herd. “We are doing it for the fiber, but they become our pets and our loved ones,” she said.

About every three to four months the rabbits’ coats are collected and put in la-



CHEYENNE FENTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Cassie is an English Angora.

beled containers to get ready for spinning. “We scissor cut usually, or we can use a razor—the bunnies aren’t

harmed,” she explained.

The couple also purchases whole shorn fleeces, creating a 20 percent Angora

blend yarn that they sell at farmers’ markets, fiber festivals, and even a yarn shop in Williamsburg. “I always put on there that it’s a two-ply sport made with sheep, angora and alpaca—and I try to put the bunny’s name,” said Lorraine.

At their booths, she sets up pictures of the bunny that correspond with the skein. “When we go to fiber festivals, we do well, but yarn is expensive, some of the skeins are up to \$60,” Pete said.

“We love the rabbits and

it’s great, but the whole reason that we started doing this is for fiber arts,” explained Lorraine. “It’s a craft that we don’t want to see disappear, so the whole fiber arts thing: the weaving, the spinning, the knitting, the crocheting, the making of the yarn—the whole deal, we want to see that continue.”

Bunny therapy

Getting into rabbit therapy happened by accident, according to Lorraine. “After we

SEE RABBITRY, PAGE 8C



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Lily is a French Lop. "The big French Lops are not fiber animals, but we joke that I think that I get more hair from them," said Pete Hanson.



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RABBITRY:

Therapy animals

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7C)

had gotten our first rabbits, a dear friend of ours had a major surgery and was in a nursing home for recuperation," she explained.

With a bunny in her bag, Lorraine went to visit the friend who had not yet had the opportunity to meet the rabbits. "I walked into her room and closed the door and she just looked at me and smiled, she knew what I was up to," she said. "We put Honey Suckle in her lap and I think they sat there for like half an hour, the two of them, just loving it."

From there, the couple decided to share the experience with others who might need

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RABBITRY: *Special connections*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8C)

it and began adding more varieties of rabbit breeds. “These guys are French Lops,” Lorraine said, gesturing next to her. “They come from a breed in Berryville—Spanish Oaks Rabbitry, and she breeds these guys and does animal therapy, so they come from that line.”

One of the therapy outreach events that the Hansons’ participate in is stress therapy during exam weeks at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg. “We’ll load up the van with as many bunnies as we can fit,” said Lorraine. “We’ll

have a steady stream of students the whole time we’re there ... That’s Pete’s favorite event of the year because the students are just so wonderful.”

They also do animal therapy on a regular basis at Williamsburg Landing, an accredited Life Plan Community in Williamsburg. Starting in Memory Support, the couple brings in therapy rabbits for the residents to hold and pet, before moving over to the Namaste unit. “Namaste is basically an advanced dementia unit ... our bunnies are part of

SEE RABBITRY, PAGE 10C



CHEYENNE FENTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Darla is an American Fuzzy Lop. Darla and a woman from Williamsburg Landing, a Life Plan Community, had a deep connection with one another, immediately, said Lorraine Hanson. “We are convinced that they knew each other.”

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RABBITRY:

Children's story inspiration

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9C)

the tactile program,” Lorraine said.

“People take to certain [bunnies], you know, some gravitate toward the great big ones and others the little ones,” said Pete. “Some of the people have severe dementia, they’re not reactive to much of anything, but you put a rabbit in their lap and you’ll see their hands get going and they’ll smile and their eyes will open up—that’s pretty cool.”

On one of their visits to Riverside Lifelong Health & Rehabilitation Mathews, Pete brought a bunny to a patient’s bedside, earning a smile from the gentleman. “The nurse started tearing up. She said, ‘I’ve never seen him smile before,’” said Lorraine.

“That’s happened more than once,” Pete added.

Another time, in Williamsburg, staff stopped the couple as they were leaving to ask them if they could bring one of the rabbits to a patient. “We put the bunny on her lap and she started to cry,” said Lorraine. “We’ve just had stories like that through the years and it’s just heartwarming.”

Sometimes the couple will take an antique pram they were given and a bunny or two and walk Duke of Gloucester Street in Colonial Williamsburg, enjoying some street therapy, as Pete called it. “We don’t walk far, fast,” he said, fondly. “We’ll walk down the street and get a crowd of people around us.”

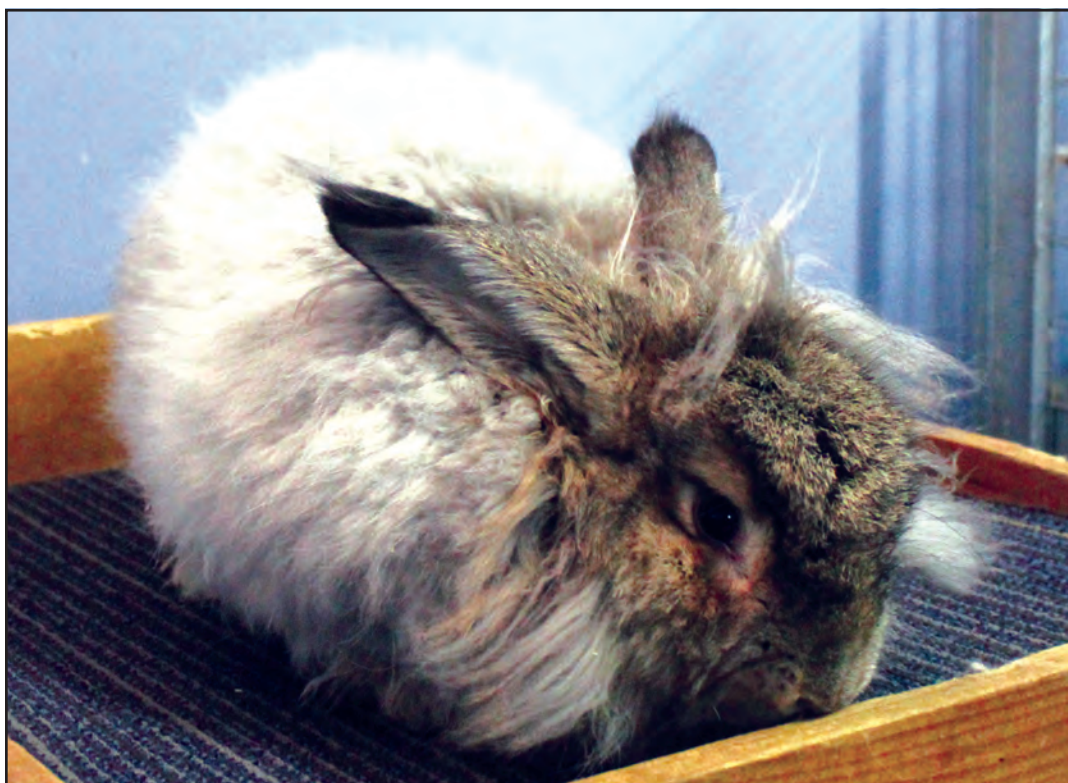
‘Cece Hops Again!’

Lorraine and her niece Shella Kline created a children’s book, based on a rabbit the Hansons rehabilitated. “Cece Hops Again!” is the story of Cece, a young rabbit that ended up with a brain infection.

Lorraine and Pete took Cece to Dr. Bonnie Brown, a rabbit specialist at Jolly Pond Veterinary Hospital in Williamsburg, who suggested they try to treat the infection, explained Lorraine.

“We brought her home, moved her into the house, treated her: it was two medicines two times a day for a

SEE RABBITRY, PAGE 11C



CHEYENNE FENTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Poe is a French and German Angora, who has a sister named Raven. “He’s a big boy—he’s got real short hair right now, but when he’s in full coat, this guy is amazing,” said Pete Hanson.

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Rosie is a French Angora which the Hansons plan to breed to Poe. "I'm hoping that they're going to have some male babies so I can call them Po' boys," said Pete Hanson.

RABBITRY:

Living their best bunny lives

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10C)

month, and we rehabilitated her. We did rehab with her, we actually got on the floor and worked her legs," she said.

Kline, who created the business's logo and banner, among other things, illustrated the book for Lorraine.

Rabbit retirement

Once a rabbit gets older, Pete and Lorraine stop taking them out for therapy and outreach programs, focusing

instead on giving the animal a happy, comfortable retirement. "They're going to live their best lives and they're going to get what they want, eat what they want; do what they want," said Lorraine.

More information on The Fuzzy Ear yarn, purchasing "Cece Hops Again!" and links to the business's social media can be found at <https://thefuzzyyear.com/store/miscellaneous/books/cece-hops-again>.

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Work progressing on new MVFD Station 1

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Work is proceeding apace on Mathews Volunteer Fire Department's new Station 1, to be located in the former Mathews Boys and Girls Club on Church Street.

The front part of the building was nearly completed at the end of March. All electric, HVAC, and plumbing elements were installed, new flooring was in place, all sheetrock was painted, and cabinets, plumbing fixtures and appliances were being installed in the expansive kitchen and restrooms.

All this was done in spite of the fact that firefighter Troy Garrett, serving as volunteer project manager, suffered a heart attack in mid-February and had to have several stents put in. He went to the hospital on Saturday and was back at work on Monday.

"I feel fine now," he said, adding with a laugh, "I just need to learn how to take a vacation."

Garrett's company, Garrett Industries LLC, has done much of the work on the project, including painting, jackhammering, lighting and electrical, but work has also been done by other Mathews contractors, four inmates from the Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center, and a handful of firefighters who volunteered their time.

"Everybody in the county has been supportive," said Garrett. "It's important for us to get this done and do it right."

The Mathews Board of

Supervisors, meeting on March 19, praised Garrett and the fire department as a whole. Supervisor Tim Doss spoke of how the fire department had saved the county money on the new building by doing much of the work. Originally faced with spending up to \$10.3 million on a new building on unbroken ground adjacent to Mathews High School, the county is now looking at \$4.2 million, including the cost of purchasing the former Mathews Boys and Girls Club.

In a walk-through of the building on March 20, Garrett pointed out all the progress that had been made. A front office was largely completed, with just some painting left to be done, and two newly-installed ADA-compliant public bathrooms with three stalls each had brand-new ceramic tile floors and roughed-in plumbing, with cabinets slated for installation a couple of days later. An extensive system of ducts was still visible over the kitchen, which was awaiting a ceiling.

An IT closet in a small office was wired and equipped to allow all television screens and computers throughout the building to operate either separately or in sync with each other. A large-screen television in the meeting room will be an asset for training, and will be visible to virtual training for firefighters who can't make it to a group meeting. Wi-Fi will be available throughout

SEE NEW STATION, PAGE 14C



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Troy Garrett, volunteer project manager for Mathews Volunteer Fire Department's new Station 1 renovation, looks over the meeting room in the former Mathews Boys and Girls Club that firefighters will use for training and public-facing gatherings once the project is completed.

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NEW STATION:

Preparing for the future

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12C)

the building.

“We’ve tried to encompass everything; to look toward the future,” said Garrett.

With the front portion of the building near completion, demolition had already begun on the back portion, which was built originally as a large gymnasium. A two-story structure inside the gym that previously provided classroom space below and storage above had already been demolished, and two remaining bathrooms were slated to be demolished after the new ones were furnished. The space will be outfitted with a dayroom downstairs and bunk rooms, locker rooms and bathrooms upstairs for firefighters to be able to stay the night. The living spaces will be separated from the remaining part of the gym by a two-foot wall that will be sealed off from the apparatus bay.

While the living quarters are under construction, said Garrett, workers will start on the apparatus bay. The existing concrete floor will be demolished and replaced with reinforced concrete that’s thick enough to handle the weight of large, water-laden fire trucks, and additional steel beams and supports will be installed to handle the framework for large apparatus doors. The existing outer skin, including the roof, will be replaced with all new metal. The building should be finished by early next year, he said, hopefully well before the scheduled finish date of September 2027.

Outside, a front parking lot will accommodate firefighters and visitors, and a wrap-around driveway will enable equipment to go straight through the bays, as needed. An easement along the property on the east side will add enough space for entering and exiting equipment to have a reasonable turning radius, and the rear parking lot at the human services building will have a new driveway added to provide an entry/exit without interfering with parking for social services and health department employees.

The fire department will install a grant-funded double EV Station for the public to use, just as it has at two other stations in the county, and there will be a picnic area outside on the lawn.

SEE NEW STATION, PAGE 15C



COURTESY OF GARRETT INDUSTRIES LLC

By the end of March, kitchen cabinets were being installed in the kitchen at the new MVFD Station 1. Project manager Troy Garrett said some of the cabinets would need to be exchanged.

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COURTESY OF GARRETT INDUSTRIES LLC

Vanities were installed in the bathrooms before the end of March, with fixtures to follow soon after.



COURTESY OF GARRETT INDUSTRIES LLC

An IT cabinet was being outfitted with all the equipment needed to operate hardwired computers and television screens throughout the facility, but the building will be served with Wi-Fi, as well.



COURTESY OF GARRETT INDUSTRIES LLC

The front of the new Mathews Fire Station 1, looking from the entry vestibule to the meeting room, is shown in various stages of construction.

NEW STATION: *A place of pride*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14C)

Background

Garrett was full of praise for the fire department building committee that has made all the decisions, as well as for all of the community partners who have helped with the project, from the inmates who have worked so hard that in one day of demolition, they filled up nearly three 20-yard dumpsters, to the material suppliers who have generously provided discounts, to everyone else in between. Even businesses outside the county have been generous when they've found out a volunteer fire department was doing the work.

"It's a wonderful project," said Garrett. "It can be a little hectic, but it's great. I think the county's going to be proud."

Replacing Station 1 in Mathews Court House became a significant goal for the board of supervisors in the early 2020s, and the county purchased a 40-acre tract between Liberty Square and Glebe Road for \$75,000 for that purpose. However, much of that land was determined to be non-tidal wetlands, and in 2023, with new supervisors seated on the board, the decision was made to purchase a different site, an eight-acre site at Moger's Corner, adjacent to Mathews High School, for the new firehouse. The cost of the land was \$300,000, and the county set aside funding to pay for design and engineering costs.

SEE NEW STATION, PAGE 16C

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COURTESY OF GARRETT INDUSTRIES LLC

An inmate from the Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center, accompanied by Deputy Sid Foster, standing, works on installing insulation in the ceiling of the meeting room at the new Mathews Station 1. Four inmates who helped with the project received high praise from project manager Troy Garrett, who said they worked hard and he would be glad to have them as employees after they've served their time.

NEW STATION: *Project process*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15C)

In March 2025, the board's configuration changed once again, and the new board decided to purchase the former Mathews Boys and Girls Club for \$575,000 after it heard a report from an architectural firm on the cost of locating the new fire sta-

tion at that site.

Donald Booth of DJG Inc. told board members that a new firehouse at the Moger's Corner site would cost between \$6.5 million and \$8.5 million, but development of

SEE NEW STATION, PAGE 20C



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NEW STATION:

Transferred ownership

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16C)

the land could run the cost up to as much as \$10 million. The 13,500-square-foot Boys and Girls Club, in contrast, could be torn down and rebuilt as a firehouse at a cost of around \$6 million, he said, while it could be refurbished for the same purpose for around \$5.6 million.

In early April 2025, then-supervisor Dave Jones suggested that the board could save money on renovation costs if it were to turn ownership of the Boys and Girls Club over to the fire department and provide the department with \$3 million to renovate it. By mid-April,

the rest of the board was convinced that this was the way to go and voted to transfer ownership of the property to the fire department and provide it with \$3 million in incremental payments over a two-year period. As part of the deal, the fire department agreed to turn ownership of the current Station 1 over to the county. That property is assessed at a value of \$633,200.

As of this month, the county had paid \$1.5 million for the renovations, then voted on March 19 to pay an additional \$2.8 million, which includes additional costs associated with building an extra driveway and sidewalks.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Classrooms in the gymnasium of the former Boys and Girls Club were demolished and will be replaced by a two-story structure that will house a dayroom downstairs and bunkrooms, bathrooms, and locker rooms upstairs for firefighters. The rest of the gym, shown below, will be turned into apparatus bays for fire trucks.



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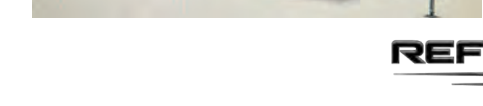
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Fosters needed to help with kitten season

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

Every spring, the Gloucester-Matthews Humane Society sees an influx of kittens and pregnant felines, a time of year dubbed as “kitten season.”

“It’s here,” said GMHS Foster Coordinator Autumn Lowey. “It’s just starting slowly.”

Kitten season usually begins in March and lasts into fall as cats tend to mate and breed in warmer weather, but there are certainly outliers.

“It even gets pushed a little bit,” said Lowey. “We still have stragglers every now and again.”

Lowey, who originally started at GMHS as a volunteer and foster, had her pregnant foster cat give birth on the first day in her new role as Foster Coordinator in December.

Fostering typically means welcoming multiple animals in your home at once, sometimes five or more.

“If you’re going to do puppies and kittens, it’s going to be multiples,” she said. “I had a litter of seven for my first litter,” recalled Lowey about her first-time fostering experience.

Fostering is not always so easy as some kittens come to the shelter without Mom and are in need of bottle-feeding and, sometimes, medication.

“So many people are gone for 8+ hours a day,” said Lowey, remarking that bottle-feeding is an around-the-clock operation. Those who work from home or are retired may be a better fit for kittens who need bottle feeding.

Another challenge of kit-

ten season is to find fosters who will simply be home. “Kitten season happens during the warmer months,” said Lowey. “People go on vacation.”

Fosters are also needed for scared or “spicy” kittens who still need love and socialization. “They might hiss at you,” she said. “They may swat at you.”

Last kitten season was difficult for many fosters. “We had a hard kitten season,” said Lowey. Many fosters had to take a break, but they are back in time to help handle kitten season.

“It does take a strong person to be a foster,” she said. “The kitties need loving while they’re here.”

Becoming a foster can take an emotional toll as the kittens will only be in their foster homes for a limited time.

“You’re just a resting spot,” said Lowey. “You’re there to love them while you have them. Then we find homes for them.”

GMHS provides for all of the physical needs for the kittens, such as food, formula, medications and litter, while fosters provide the love and the space.

“That’s why we’re here, but we get full sometimes,” said Lowey. “Let them be in a nice, warm home.”

GMHS will be holding classes to help prospective and current foster families alike gain skills and build confidence in caring for kittens, bottle-feeding, providing medication, looking out for illnesses and more.

“We want to get those classes out for people,” said Lowey.

For those who do not have the time or space to foster

can always donate to GMHS. Formula, kitten food, litter, blankets and more are all needed for the shelter to survive kitten season.

“Once we hit kitten season, that stuff’s going to be flying out of here,” said Lowey.

GMHS has wish lists available on its website, as well as online through Chewy and Amazon. Items can get mailed directly to GMHS.

“It adds up here,” said Lowey. “It really does.”

For those who observe lone kittens out and about in the community, Lowey has warned folks to not immediately bring them into the shelter.

“Don’t just bring them in,” said Lowey. “Mama could be out finding food.”

Lowey said that the kittens are better off with their mothers, especially the younger ones who still rely on milk. Those who are concerned about the kittens

should simply keep an eye on them.

“See if Mama comes back,” said Lowey.

Puppies also in need of care

“I don’t have enough fosters for dogs,” said Lowey.

In addition to kittens, GMHS also needs fosters for puppies, especially puppies who come into the shelter as

SEE FOSTERS, PAGE 24C

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MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

As kitten season begins, Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society Foster Coordinator Autumn Lowey is in need of more fosters. She is shown snuggling with kittens Christopher (front) and McDuff.

FOSTERS: *GMHS provides the supplies, fosters give the love*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22C)

a litter.

“The puppies need a little bit more room,” she said. Kittens are typically okay in a guest room, office or bathroom, but puppies usually exhibit more movement.

Many people who express interest in fostering puppies only want to take one or two at a time.

“I can’t separate them, especially the runt,” said Lowey. “They need siblings.”

Those interested in fostering can contact Lowey by emailing foster@gm-humaneociety.org or by calling 804-693-5520. Foster applications are available online through the GMHS website.



MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Fosters are also needed for puppies, like three-month-old Boxer Kirkland Signature shown here with Lowey.

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Spay and Neuter goes beyond pregnancy prevention

BY MELANY SLAUGHTER

Many pet owners will seek out spay and neuter services when they are concerned a female pet may become pregnant or a male pet may try to impregnate another female. However, spaying and neutering pets has lasting health benefits for animals that go beyond simply mitigating pregnancy risks.

"It can definitely lengthen their life," said Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society Fixin' to Save Spay & Neuter Clinic Director Candy Six about spaying and neutering pets.

From reducing the risk of various illnesses to keeping pets content at home, spaying and neutering is a preventative measure that any pet owner can take to ensure the health of their animals.

"It decreases the risk of prostate issues," said Six about neutering male dogs and cats. The risk of testicu-

lar cancer is also greatly reduced for male animals.

For female dogs, spaying them reduces the risk of breast cancer and completely removes the risk of their developing pyometra, a life-threatening uterine infection.

"You eliminate the need for emergency surgery, expensive surgery that they might not recover from," said Six.

Neutering male cats helps keep them home. "Male cats are going to roam to find a female," said Six.

Spring usually marks the beginning of kitten season. As the weather warms, cats become ready to mate.

"People don't really think about that," said Six. "It takes one warm day."

The clinic spends a good chunk of time spaying and neutering community or feral cats every week. Community cat "colonies" can quickly form when people

begin feeding a few cats without having them spayed and neutered.

"What was two cats will quickly become 50 cats," said Six. "The bigger they [colonies] get, the sicker they get."

Spaying female cats not only helps prevent unwanted litters, but also makes the cats happier in the long run. "Cats will continue to go into that heat cycle," said Six about unspayed felines. "It never stops for them."

Dogs and cats can be spayed or neutered at any

point in their lives; the services are not contingent upon age. "It's never too late," said Six.

However, pet owners should evaluate their animal's risk of surgery. If their animal has an underlying condition or is ill, owners should consider if the surgery is right for their individual pet since anesthesia is required.

"We want them healthy," said Six.

Pet owners should receive pre-operation and post-operation instructions from the

institution which will spay or neuter their pets.

For the day before the procedure, pets should not have anything to eat after midnight. Water can be provided to animals up until they are brought in to undergo surgery.

"It's a pretty easy post-op," said Six.

Owners should limit their pet's physical activity for two weeks to heal properly. Not allowing pets to lick

SEE SPAY & NEUTER, PAGE 26C



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SPAY & NEUTER: *Keep pets healthy throughout their lives*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25C)

their incision, providing pain medication as prescribed, and keeping an eye on their general behavior are all important to the recovery process.

Spay and neuter appointments at the clinic can be made online by visiting gmhumanesociety.org/request-an-appointment.

Those who are looking to have a feral or community cat spayed or neutered should call the clinic at 804-694-0349 or email fixintosave@gmhumanesociety.org.

org.

Pet owners should not wait to make their appointment, especially for female dogs. "That's the biggest waitlist," said Six. "Schedule your appointment now. Don't wait."

The Fixin' to Save Spay & Neuter Clinic is located in the White Marsh Shopping Center at 4926 George Washington Memorial Highway in Hayes. The non-profit offers low-cost spay and neuter services.

"Have your pets spayed and neutered," said Six. "It has more benefits than you know."

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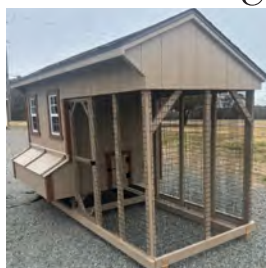
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MELANY SLAUGHTER / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society Fixin' to Save Spay & Neuter Clinic Director Candy Six recommends spaying and neutering pets for health benefits beyond pregnancy prevention.

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SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Randy Krahn is restoring two 1930s Plymouths at the same time in the garage of his Cobbs Creek home. This one is a 1938 Plymouth P6 4-door sedan.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Randy Krahn is also restoring a 1935 Plymouth PJ 4-door sedan, but it is a more involved project that he expects to take much longer.

Cobbs Creek man in the midst of restoring two 1930s Plymouths

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Randy Krahn doesn't consider himself a purist when it comes to old cars.

Krahn found himself the owner through family of a 1935 Plymouth PJ 4-door sedan a couple of years ago, so he decided to take a hand at restoring it. Then, a few months ago, while in the middle of dismantling the car and searching for parts, he came across a 1938 Plym-

outh P6 4-door sedan for a good price and said, "Why not?"

Now the Cobbs Creek resident, retired from the U.S. Coast Guard and working part-time court security for the Gloucester Sheriff's Office, is in the middle of restoring both cars, but he's not in a hurry, and he's not trying to make them showpieces. He'll just be happy

SEE PLYMOUTHS, PAGE 29C

An advertisement for Anchor Pools and Spas. The top part shows a hot tub in a modern outdoor setting with lounge chairs and a fire pit. The text "UP TO \$2,500 OFF" is prominently displayed. Below that is the Anchor Pools and Spas logo, which features an anchor and the word "Anchor" in a stylized font. To the right of the logo is the contact information: "757-865-1700", "www.anchorpools.com", "108 Hampton Hwy", "Yorktown, VA 23693", and "Monday-Friday 9-6 Saturday 9-5".



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The 1938 Plymouth P6 4-door sedan had “suicide doors” in the back. They opened from the center post and, if not shut adequately, could be caught by the wind and blown open, carrying a passenger out along the way.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The 6-cylinder engine of Randy Krahn’s 1938 Plymouth is still in good running condition.

PLYMOUTH:

Restoration project

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28C)

to get them running again someday and on the road.

“You either keep it as-is, 100 percent original as you can, or do a resto-mod,” said Krahn. “Maybe you change out the engine and transmission, maybe use a different upholstery material. You usually change out the brakes for safety purposes. I’m way past keeping it original. The original seat covers were already gone.”

The sleek black 1938 Plymouth has a 6-cylinder motor and a 3-speed on-the-floor transmission, and its restoration will take the least work of the two cars. It’s a four-seater, with room for

two in the front and two in the back. It might have been a salesman’s car, said Krahn, because the spare tire is mounted inside the trunk, leaving little room for storage for a family. The car originated in Maine, spent part of its time in Massachusetts, and, according to available records, has only had three previous owners.

Other features of the car are running boards, which were phased out in the 1950s; an ashtray, which lasted much longer; and “suicide doors,” or back doors that open from the center console toward the back of the

SEE PLYMOUTH, PAGE 30C

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SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

There wasn't much storage space in the trunk of a 1938 Plymouth sedan.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Randy Krahn opted to replace the original brakes on his 1938 Plymouth with modern disc brakes for safety purposes.

PLYMOUTHS: *Internet helps first-time restorer*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29C)

car and could cause a hazard if they aren't closed all the way and the wind catches them while driving. There is also a hood vent, or "cow ventilator" that pops out of the hood with a crank inside when air circulation is needed.

The 1935 Plymouth is a much longer-term project. Krahn has almost completely dismantled it from end to end. He's restoring the engine, the body is all primed, and he's in the process of painting a few parts at a time a brilliant red.

Since he'd never restored a car before he ended up with two at once, Krahn turned to the internet for help. Every-

thing he's needed to do has been available to him online. He said he couldn't imagine what it must have been like to restore old cars before the internet.

"It was all word of mouth back then," he said. "Somebody had to tell you about it."

There are companies that deal in old parts, he said, and sometimes they even have an original part, unused, in its original box. A man in Massachusetts sells classic and antique car parts, he said, and reproduction parts are also available, including small things like wheel seals and gaskets.

SEE PLYMOUTHS, PAGE 31C



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The rear window of a 1938 Plymouth was smart looking, but it didn't provide a lot of visibility for the driver.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The hood ornament of the 1938 Plymouth symbolized the Mayflower, the ship that brought the pilgrims from England to the New World in 1620.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The crank-up window is a thing of the past, but it was an essential part of a 1938 Plymouth.



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The "cowl ventilator" was normally hidden down in the hood of the car, but could be popped out with a crank when air circulation was needed.

PLYMOUTHS: *Expensive hobby*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30C)

Krahn said restoring an old car isn't cheap. On the low end, without using all authentic parts, he said a restoration could cost as little as \$8,000, but trying to keep everything original

is likely to cost as much as \$100,000.

"If it's a play toy to go cruise in, the difference is night and day than if you're going to drive it to California and back," he said. "I'm a hobbyist. I just work on it when I feel like it."



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Lighting the way at Timberneck in Gloucester

BY LORI JACKSON BLACK,
PROJECT MANAGER
THE FAIRFIELD FOUNDATION

The restoration of Timberneck House reached a meaningful milestone last month when overhead lighting began to illuminate the historic home for the first time in many years. For those of us who have worked closely on the project, the change was striking. In the larger scope of restoration, lighting may seem like a small detail. But as the rooms began to glow, Timberneck felt different. It no longer felt like a construction project. It felt like a house again.

That is part of what makes preservation work so powerful. Progress is often slow and methodical, but every so often there is a moment that reminds you exactly why the work matters.

The Fairfield Foundation has been leading the restoration of Timberneck House at Machicomoco State Park for several years. Built in the late 18th century and altered

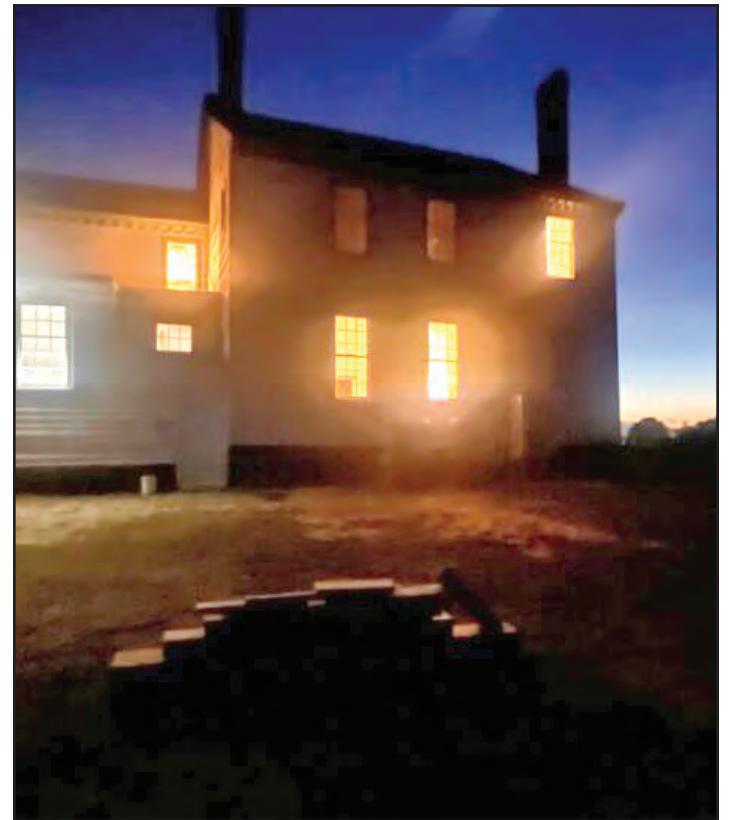
over generations, the house reflects a long and layered history tied to the York River landscape. The current work has focused not only on stabilizing the structure, but also on preserving its historic character, while preparing it for future public use with the help of many dedicated volunteers and trades people.

Over the past several years, I have seen floors lifted and repaired, foundations strengthened, walls patched, finishes studied, and systems rebuilt. Each phase has required patience, research, and a willingness to move carefully. That care continues throughout the house.

Outside, the Fairfield Foundation's archaeology team is excavating the footprint of the new front porch. Even a feature like a porch must begin with archaeological work. At Timberneck, new construction follows research, not the other way around. That sequence is an important part of responsible preservation.

The work at Timberneck has never been simply about fixing an old building. It has been about understanding the house, respecting its history, and ensuring that its next chapter is grounded in careful stewardship. There is still much left to do, and no one involved in historic preservation expects quick results. Buildings like Timberneck deserve patience. They deserve thoughtful decisions and careful craftsmanship.

Still, standing in the house after dark, seeing light fall across freshly painted walls and into rooms that have been quiet for so long, I felt something unmistakable. Timberneck is coming back to life. Sometimes that renewal begins not with a major public moment, but with something as simple as turning on the lights.



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Lights are glowing again at Timberneck, which is coming back to life.

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Applications open for Green Grants program

Applications for Keep Virginia Beautiful's Green Grants are now open.

Schools, nonprofits, localities and other community organizations are invited to apply for funding that supports environmental improvement projects.

Applications close April 30 and awards will be announced in June. Project categories include litter prevention, cigarette litter prevention and recycling, recycling and waste reduction, community beautification, and environmental education.

Past awards have been used to install cigarette butt receptacles outside municipal buildings and restaurants, purchase litter clean-up supplies, or to purchase reusable bags that prevent single-use plastic from entering our landfills.

"Communities understand how to improve the places they love and care for," said Cristi Lawton, Executive Director of Keep Virginia Beautiful. "Green Grants provides the funding support communities need to bring creative and impactful environmental projects to life."

The mission at Keep Virginia Beautiful is to engage and unite Virginians to improve our natural and scenic environment, a release stated. Since 2011, its Green Grants program has awarded \$360,000 to support 445 projects throughout the state.

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Beginner gardeners should 'start small and build on successes'

FROM THE VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Whether yearning for a grand outdoor oasis or simply a few vegetable plants for the patio, the journey to your dream garden begins with baby steps.

"Start small, and build on your successes," emphasized Ed Olsen, Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener director and consumer horticulture specialist.

Beginning gardeners with only a windowsill can try growing small container herbs that are readily available at grocery stores year-round, or at local nurseries and garden centers during the growing season.

Aspiring vegetable gardeners should start by scouting for an outdoor spot that gets over 6-8 hours of sunlight per day.

"Container gardens are a great place to start," Olsen noted. "If you can grow plants in a container on your deck for the summer, then you probably can succeed in moving them out to the yard

the next year."

If you're looking to beautify your yard with ornamental plants, pick an area for creating a small garden bed to get started with. The spot you pick will help determine which plants to choose.

After selecting your garden's location, get to know your soil. Gardeners can acquire a soil test kit from their local Extension office and submit a sample to the Virginia Tech Soil Testing Lab.

"Winter is a great time to do a soil test, as long as the ground isn't frozen," he added. "That will tell you what your ornamental or vegetable garden will need to make sure you're starting off with the right nutrients and pH for desired plants."

Raised beds are another great option for beginners who are unsure about their soil and want quick success. A 4-by-8-foot bed is generally a good size to start with.

After identifying your garden's location, create a list of desired plants with matching light and soil requirements.

"If you put a plant that likes high light in a shady garden, it's not going to thrive," Olsen cautioned. "And typically, you end up with diseases and pest issues when a plant's struggling to grow in that environment."

He added that perennial plants are great options for beginner ornamental gardeners—offering "immediate gratification" and extended blooms. Tomatoes

and peppers are generally easy to grow and popular options for beginning vegetable gardeners.

For first-time gardeners, Olsen recommends purchasing young plants at garden centers and then replanting them. Starting plants from seed takes a lot of time indoors and can result in more plants than intended.

It's also important to:

—Space plantings based

on the size your plants will grow into—not the size of the container;

—Avoid digging deep holes for planting. The hole should be no bigger than the plant's container;

—Ensure you're watering ornamental plants properly the first year for proper establishment, and

—Visit pubs.ext.vt.edu to access Extension's 2026 Pest Management Guide.





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Edible flowers have budding health and market potential

FROM THE VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

A recent Virginia State University workshop explored ongoing research into edible flowers' untapped powers—from emerging culinary uses to whole health benefits.

"Flowers are food for the soul and tummy," emphasized Theresa Nartea, VSU professor and Virginia Cooperative Extension small farm marketing & agribusiness specialist, during a Feb. 27 workshop at VSU Randolph Farm in Petersburg. Young farmers from across Virginia learned about innovative research about edible flowers as part of the 2026 Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers Winter Expo.

Nartea, while handing out dried organic lavender bouquets, encouraged workshop participants to crush the buds in their hands and savor the soothing aroma.

"I carry a few stems of dried lavender with me in my pocket so I can keep going, because if you crush just one bud between your fingers, the fragrance becomes even more beautiful," she noted cheerily. "Life's trials are like this—you feel a crushing, but the beauty comes from those hard times in our life."

Nartea highlighted emerging studies on the impacts of

lavender supplementation in reducing anxiety, depression and even cigarette cravings; and growing scientific evidence of edible flowers' healing properties.

Citing a 2021 study by University of Pisa researchers, she highlighted a variety of scientifically proven nu-

SEE EDIBLE FLOWERS, PAGE 37C

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EDIBLE FLOWERS:

A growing business

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36C)

traceuticals, including the anti-cancer properties of Indian chrysanthemums, anti-obesity properties of nasturtiums, visual health benefits of Aztec marigolds, anti-Alzheimer uses for roselles, and antioxidants found in almost all edible flowers. “There are little things we can do every day to help in our healing process,” Nartea remarked.

Through her Nourishing Blooms Program at Randolph Farm, Nartea explores edible flowers, herbs and value-added products like therapeutic tea blends that promote wellness, mental health and community well-being.

To explore the market potential of edible flowers, Nartea has hosted Extension field days inviting the com-

munity to pick their own flower bouquets on her half-acre demonstration field. Around 2,550 bouquets valued at \$38,250 were picked in 2025.

“There is definitely money to be had in this,” she emphasized. “People stayed even though we were done with the demonstration, because they found so much joy in cutting their own flowers.”

She cautioned against using pesticides if growing herbs and flowers for edible uses, and encouraged growers to use companion plantings and other alternative control methods.

She plans to further explore value-added uses for butterfly peas and sunflowers with VSU collaborators.



JOSHUA MACLIN / VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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