

# Rappahannock Record

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Thursday, January 9, 2014

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## School board votes 3-2 to terminate its relationship with superintendent

by Audrey Thomasson

**PITMAN'S CORNER**—The Lancaster school board on Monday terminated its relationship with school superintendent Dr. Daniel Lukich and immediately selected Sandy Spears, former principal at Lancaster High and Middle schools, as interim superintendent. Spears started work Tuesday.

Lukich attended the special session Monday night, but left when the board went into closed session to discuss personnel. When members reopened the meeting to the public, District 1 member Bob Smart made a motion to "terminate the services of Dr. Lukich."

District 4 member Patrick McCranie seconded the motion which passed on a 3-2 roll call vote. Serving in his first meeting on the school board, District 5 member Dr. Robert Westbrook, McCranie and Smart voted in favor of the motion. Opposing the motion were District 1 member Ella Davis and District 3 member Don McCann.

McCranie made a motion to hire Spears as interim superintendent. Smart amended the motion to include "pending approval of funds to the administration category."

"Has Spears been offered a contract?" McCann asked.

"D. Patrick Lacey (the board attorney) emailed one to her," Smart replied.

When McCann expressed concern about how they would pay her, Smart noted part of the funding would come from another position vacated in the central office.

"Hiring Spears would be dependent on the board of supervisors" making some funding changes, said Westbrook. "I plan to contact the board of supervisors after this meeting and ask for a special session to discuss the issue."

The vote for Spears again split 3-2 with Davis and McCann opposed.

Supervisors called a special session with Westbrook at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, January 9, at the County Administration Building, 1301 Mary Ball Road, Lancaster.

Ironically, Lukich served as chairman of the meeting until officers were selected for the new

year. Smart nominated Westbrook as chairman, which was seconded by McCranie. Davis nominated McCann, which failed for lack of a second. Westbrook won, 3-2, with Davis and McCann opposed.

McCranie then nominated Smart as vice chairman which was seconded by Westbrook. McCann nominated Davis, which failed for lack of a second. Smart won, 3-2, with Davis and McCann opposed.

Some 20 citizens and employees attended the 45-minute meeting at the school board office.

Following a number of controversies in the school system, former school board chairman Alex Fleet announced in September that the superintendent's contract would not be renewed when it expired on June 30, 2014.



Dr. Daniel Lukich



Sandy Spears

## School board seeks your ideas on qualifications of next superintendent

The Lancaster school board will hold a public hearing Wednesday for citizens to give their priorities for the qualifications of a new school superintendent.

The January 15 hearing will begin at 7 p.m. in the School Board Office Conference Room, 2330 Irvington Road, Pitman's Corner.

The school board also has created an online and paper survey related to superintendent criteria, which should be completed and returned by January 15. The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/lcpssupt> and at [www.lcs.k12.va.us](http://www.lcs.k12.va.us).

Paper copies of the survey are available at all schools and at the school board office.

## Spears named interim superintendent

by Audrey Thomasson

**PITMAN'S CORNER**—She is a familiar face to many students, teachers and parents in Lancaster School District. Since 1994, she has served as assistant principal and principal at the middle school and principal at the high school. Now Sandy Spears has interrupted her retirement to become the interim superintendent while the school board seeks a permanent replacement.

According to Virginia law, the board has up to 180 days to find a permanent superintendent.

"I'm honored they thought enough of me to ask me to do this," said Spears, who has been an adjunct professor at Rappahannock Community College and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) board member during her retirement.

"There are a lot of wonderful people in the school system," said Spears. "I'm glad I could help them out."

Spears has a bachelor's in health, physical education, driver education and science from Virginia Commonwealth University and a master's in educational administration from Old Dominion University.

She began her teaching career at Providence Junior High in Chesterfield in 1974 and has been an adjunct professor for Norfolk State University and the University of Virginia. She also has corporate financial and accounting experience, including a stint at Mobile Chemical.

"I can't tell you how happy we are that she's agreed to do this," said board chairman Dr. Robert Westbrook. "She's going to be a jewel for us—a positive impact on morale for our teachers, which will impact students. She is the right person for the next six months and will lay the groundwork for the next superintendent."

## Northumberland supervisors reorganize; Chairman Jett outlines priorities

by Renss Greene

**HEATHSVILLE**—The Northumberland board of supervisors on January 2 reorganized for 2014, re-electing District 5 supervisor Ronald Jett as chairman and District 2 supervisor Richard Haynie as vice chairman.

The board will continue to conduct its monthly meetings at 5 p.m. on second Thursdays in the New Courts Building, 39 Judicial Place, Heathsville. Public hearings will begin at 7 p.m.

Bylaws and the holiday schedule also remain the same.

### Priorities for 2014

Jett said the priority project for the board this year will be the new sheriff's office and radio system.

"Our sheriff's office and our new 911 communications center, we're trying to get that completed," Jett said. "We're trying to get our new radio system in at the same time."

Jett said the new facilities will help emergency responders stretched thin.

"Our 911 calls have increased so much drastically more than our volunteers have," said Jett, an EMS volunteer. "They have doubled probably in the last ten years. That's

putting quite a demand on the ones that are there running the calls."

### Dance permit denied

In other business, the board declined to act on an application for a dance permit from Tony Dublin of the Split Lounge in Burgess, citing parking problems.

"His parking area is not sufficient at the time for the amount of crowd and people and tables that he has," said Jett. "That is the main thing."

"The board pretty much told them 'get your parking straight and then we'll consider it,'" said county administrator Kenny Eades.



From left are Ronnie Jett and Richard Haynie.

## Show us your heirlooms

Did you walk down the aisle in your grandmother's gown or your mother's wedding dress? Maybe it belonged to an aunt or older sister?

We want to know why you chose to wear it and how you altered it. Send us a picture or two, hopefully of your mother or other family member wearing the gown, and you in the dress on your wedding day.

Include names, dates and wedding locations, why you chose that dress over a new one and if and how you altered it. Try to keep the description to 150 words. Your story may appear in our upcoming supplement, Bliss.

Please send your story to [editor@rrecord.com](mailto:editor@rrecord.com) or [editor@ssentinel.com](mailto:editor@ssentinel.com) or drop it by the Rappahannock Record or Southside Sentinel by January 20.

## Bluff Point PUD evolves into educational gift

by Renss Greene

**HEATHSVILLE**—A planned unit development project at Bluff Point has been cancelled in favor of a gift to James Madison University (JMU) and a conservation easement, reported Northumberland county administrator Kenny Eades following a January 2 board of supervisors meeting.

"There will be no development," said Thomas Dingleline, who owns the property. "There's only one residential unit on all of the acreage."

According to a recent press release, the land which had been set aside for development was instead parceled

into a 37-acre gift to JMU, a 6-acre gift to the county and an 860-acre conservation easement. JMU will have access to the conservation easement to conduct research and teaching exercises.

"Most importantly, it's not about the gift," said Dingleline. "It is the real keen interest that JMU has in establishing a facility there that allows them to create interdisciplinary studies down there."

"This presents a natural connection for us as JMU and Harrisonburg are located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed," said provost Dr. Jerry Benson. "The new field research site graciously provided by Tom Dingle-

dine creates an opportunity for our existing research efforts to expand in further exploring the full cycle of ecological impact on the bay."

"We were kind of hoping the other one could have been a big benefit to the county too," said supervisors chairman Ronnie Jett, referring to the scrapped planned unit development (PUD), "but this is a great thing too. It takes a lot of thought to decide to make a gift like this. This will be a big benefit to the county too."

Dingleline said he worked with several universities on this idea, including Wake Forest University,

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USPS (455-600)  
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Mr. & Mrs. Frederick A. Gaskins,  
General Managers  
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**How to reach us:**  
To reach members of the staff, dial the main phone number, 435-1701, and then the employee's extension when prompted, or use the e-mail address.

**Newsroom:**  
Robert D. Mason Jr., Editor  
extension 25, editor@RRecord.com  
Lisa Hinton-Valdrihi  
extension 23, lvaldrihi@RRecord.com  
Audrey Thomasson  
extension 22, athomasson@RRecord.com  
Shannon Rice  
extension 28, srice@RRecord.com  
Renss Greene  
extension 28, rens@RappRecord.com

**Display Advertising:**  
Sara Amis, Manager  
extension 13, saramis@RRecord.com  
K.C. Troise  
extension 19, mail@RRecord.com  
Marilyn Bryant  
extension 11, marilyn@RRecord.com  
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extension 15, troy@RRecord.com

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**Production:**  
Wayne Smith, Manager  
extension 26, wayne@RRecord.com  
Susan Simmons, Publications Manager  
extension 18, ssimmons@RRecord.com  
Hillary Greene  
extension 17, hgreene@RRecord.com  
Gloria Bosher,  
extension 17, gloria@RRecord.com  
Brenda Burtner,  
extension 24, mail@RRecord.com

**Publishing/Business:**  
Frederick A. Gaskins, President  
extension 20, fgaskins@RRecord.com  
Bettie Lee Gaskins, Treasurer  
extension 21, bigaskins@Sentinel.com  
Kate Oliver, CPA, Business manager  
extension 21, koliver@RRecord.com  
Lindsay Bishoff, Accounts manager  
extension 14, lbishoff@RRecord.com  
Angela Garrett, Accounts manager  
extension 12, agarrett@RRecord.com

**Subscriptions:**  
Anna Ticer, Circulation manager  
extension 16, circulation@RRecord.com

## Lancaster names new EMS chief

by Audrey Thomasson

LANCASTER—The Lancaster board of supervisors in December announced the appointment of Terrence J. McGregor as chief of emergency medical services.

McGregor is a 13-year veteran in emergency services, working as a care provider, educator, administrator and community volunteer. He began his service career as a medic in 2001 with Gloucester Fire and Rescue, worked as a unit secretary for the emergency department of Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in Gloucester, emergency technician at Sentara CarePlex Hospital in Hampton, and medic for Central Middlesex Rescue Squad in Urbanna.

From 2005 through 2011 he was assistant director of EMS Programs at Rappahannock Community College in Glens, served as president of the Chesapeake Bay Center for Health Education and was adjunct professor of EMS for Northern Virginia Community College in Springfield and Rappahannock Community College in Glens.

In 2011, he became the senior training specialist for the Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Services in the City of Richmond. McGregor's areas of expertise include the development and use of innovative methods of instruction.

He was educated at Ohio State University, Rappahannock Community

College, Tidewater Community College and Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a member of numerous professional organizations and has been consistently nominated for EMS awards of excellence.

"We got quite a few worthy candidates from the 22 applications received," said county administrator Frank Pleva. "One of the strengths we found with Terry is his experience in working with the paid side as well as the volunteers."

While the primary emphasis of the EMS chief's job is the rescue squads, McGregor also will have dealings with the fire department, Pleva noted.

"On a daily basis, Terry will coordinate schedules with the two (volunteer) rescue squads," he said.



Lancaster EMS chief Terrence J. McGregor

## Local heating assistance funds cut by 85 to 90%

by Renss Greene

KILMARNOCK—With winter bearing down, the Northumberland Department of Social Services recently reported a "90% reduction in emergency heating assistance available through the Dominion Virginia Power EnergyShare Program."

The program helps people who need assistance in paying for electricity or heating oil, according to Northumberland family services specialist Dawn Neale.

Northumberland has received \$3,071 this year so far, according to Neale and Dominion spokesperson Dan Genest.

Although the department was initially told it would be their only disbursement this year, it now has received word indicating additional funding may be forthcoming in February.

Northumberland received \$27,946 in heating assistance last year, according to Neale. However, Genest reported Northumberland received only \$12,270.

### Send donations for heating assistance to:

Northumberland Department of Social Services  
P.O. Box 399  
Heathsville, VA 22473

Lancaster Department of Social Services  
P.O. Box 185  
Lancaster, VA 22503

Lancaster Department of Social Services director Edna Davenport said Lancaster also has experienced cuts.

"I'm going to say close to at least an 85% reduction for us, if not more," Davenport said. "We were given \$1,500 this particular go-around, and in the past we usually get starting out \$2,000, then you go back and more is added. This time, they informed us that this was it."

"Overall, across the state, we had about 75% reductions," said Genest. He cited budgetary constraints as the reason for the cuts.

"I can tell you that while the economy has started to improve, the need for energy

assistance has continued to increase."

EnergyShare began as a program funded by donations, Genest explained. "Until about five or six years ago, it was funded by Dominion employee contributions and customer contributions. Then Dominion started kicking in some money."

That company funding has been cut, according to an email to Social Services departments from Dominion senior community affairs representative Rita Randolph dated October 9, 2013.

"We do not anticipate a company infusion in 2014, but customer and employee contributions are ongoing

year-round, so limited funds will be available," Randolph wrote.

"With oil averaging, say, 100 gallons for \$300-plus, it's just not going to last. That's our concern with these cold temperatures," Neale said.

"If we get another \$3,000, realistically, that might help us with 10 people," said Northumberland Department of Social Services director Jackie Clayton.

"Our concern is that our clients will turn to unsafe methods to heat their homes," said Neale.

"EnergyShare has a 14-member statewide customer advisory board that's made up of county officials, United Way officials, and other folks," said Genest. "They look at the number of Dominion customers they have in those areas, they look at employment, poverty guidelines, unemployment statistics, those types of things, and they review them every five years and make recommendations. We then provide the money to a distribut-

ing agency, which in the case of Northumberland County is United Way."

At press time, Greater Richmond United Way had not yet responded to a telephone message.

Davenport said Lancaster Social Services has received over 400 applications for heating assistance and is trying to use the money "wisely."

"I think in all programs we're experiencing reductions, so the message to the customer would be that it's even more important to try to monitor your usage," Davenport said. She advises customers to find ways to make their homes more energy efficient such as sealing windows and drafts and dressing warmly at home.

"I don't want them to think that we don't appreciate what we get. We do, it's just that we're used to being able to help so many more people," said Clayton.

Last year, Northumberland Social Services didn't have to turn anyone away, she said.

## State police confirm fatality following automobile crash

by Renss Greene

WHITE STONE—Virginia State Police last week confirmed the death of a driver who was injured in a single-vehicle accident December 23 near White Stone.

Leonard S. Downs was driving when his vehicle went off the road near the Robert O. Norris Jr. Memorial Bridge and hit a tree and a utility pole. Downs and a female passenger, Michelle White, were airlifted to Virginia

Commonwealth University Medical Center, reported Senior Trooper Rodney Ward. The accident occurred about 11:15 p.m.

Downs died on December 26, said Ward. White remains in the hospital.

Preliminary reports indicate that 20 individuals lost their lives in 19 separate traffic crashes over the Christmas and New Year's holidays in Virginia.

The statistical counting period for Christmas began at 12:01 a.m. December 21 and ended at

midnight December 25. During those five days, nine traffic crashes claimed 10 lives statewide.

Other fatal crashes occurred in the cities of Chesapeake, Newport News and Suffolk and the counties of Charlotte, Greensville, Lee, Prince Edward and Prince William.

The statistical counting period for the New Year's holiday began at 12:01 a.m. December 28 and ended at midnight January 1. During those five days, 10 people died in 10 traffic crashes

statewide. The crashes occurred in the cities of Newport News and the counties of Albemarle, Brunswick, Buchanan, Henrico, Henry, Orange, Patrick, Scott and Wise.

"As we begin 2014, state police cannot stress enough the need for motorists to discipline their driving behaviors," said Virginia State Police Superintendent Col. W. Steven Flaherty.

"If you're looking for a New Year's resolution that can truly make a difference in your life and others', then make one to be a

safer, responsible driver in 2014," said Col. Flaherty. "Buckle up, don't drive distracted, comply with speed limits, be alert and never drive impaired by alcohol or drugs. This year, let's count lives saved rather than lost on Virginia's highways."

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## Bluff Point

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University of Richmond, JMU, and University of Virginia, and envisions a collaborative venture among the schools.

"I think when it plays out, there will be nothing else like it," Dingleline said. "This will be such a collaboration between universities, various components of universities, interdisciplinary at a level that is simply not seen."

"It is not an economic decision for me, but it's about creating something special, something unique within Northumberland, and one that pro-

vides opportunity and growth for, hopefully, untold numbers of students as decades become centuries."

According to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, conservation easements vary by the property, but "restrictions necessary to protect the conservation values of your property might include limitations on divisions of the property, limitations on the number and size of improvements that can be constructed on the property, no-build areas, and riparian buffers."

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# NORTHUMBERLAND CIRCUIT COURT REPORT

by *Renss Greene*

HEATHSVILLE—Northumberland County Circuit Court convened on December 19 with Judge Harry T. Taliaferro III presiding.

On that date, Michael Anderson Crockett Jr. was arraigned and granted bond. He faces two charges of violation of probation on a felony offense. His trial is set for February 27.

Dwayne D. Gray was arraigned. He faces three counts of violation of probation on a felony offense. His trial is set for April 22.

Thomas William Newton Jr. was sentenced to five years in jail, with four years and two months suspended, and \$1,031.80 in court costs and restitution for shoplifting, to which he had previously pled guilty.

Joseph Patrick Stargell was sentenced to 10 years in jail and two years probation, as well as \$865 in court costs for burglary at night to commit a felony, to which he has pled guilty. He also was sentenced to 60 days in jail, suspended, for contempt of court. He has previously failed to show up at trial, had his bond revoked, and saw his legal representation withdraw.

Annie B. Ball was arraigned on four counts of violation of probation on a felony offense. Her trial is set for April 22.

Holly Starr Gough was tried on a charge of possession of a controlled substance. A nolle prosequi was filed, meaning the case was not tried.

Fran Sanchez Chiles pled not guilty to making an erratic lane change. She was fined \$50 and court costs.

# SMITH POINT SEA RESCUE REPORT

Smith Point Sea Rescue board member Capt. Andrew Kauders reported crews responded to three calls for assistance in recent weeks.

**December 11:** At 10:40 a.m., Rescue I was dispatched to assist a 23-foot powerboat with one aboard aground on the sand bar inside #4 at the mouth of the Great Wicomico River. The operator said he was "working with his fish finder" and was distracted. Time on call, 1 hour.

**December 21:** At 1:30 p.m., Rescue I assisted a 23-foot cabin cruiser travel from Barretts Creek to a boat ramp on Glebe Point where it was hauled out. The engine ran intermittently and the bottom had significant barnacle growth. Time on call, 1 ¼ hours.

**December 30:** At 5:10 p.m., the Northumberland County Sheriff's Office reported a 19-foot Sea Hunt with one aboard was overdue. Rescue

I began a search of Dameron Marsh and the mouth of the Great Wicomico River. The missing boater returned home and the search terminated. Time on call, 1 hour.

*Smith Point Sea Rescue can be reached on channel 16 or by calling 911. Rescue I and Rescue II are based on the Great Wicomico River and Rescue III is on Lodge Creek off of the Yeocomico River.*

# SHERIFFS' REPORTS

Lancaster County Sheriff Ronnie Crockett this week reported a misdemeanor charge against one individual.

A Topping man, 28, was charged December 11 with contempt of court.

## Activity report

**December 26:** Staff responded to the 10200 block of Mary Ball Road for a domestic civil complaint; and checked on the well-being of a Buzzards Neck Road resident at the request of a concerned citizen (no emergency services needed).

**December 27:** Staff responded to a suspicious/trespassing vehicle complaint in the 1200 block of Goodluck Road, to a brandished firearm complaint on Wild Flower Lane, to an E911 disconnect call in the 13000 block of Mary Ball Road (no emergency services needed), to a fraud complaint involving the purchase of Wii system from an unknown person, to a domestic related larceny complaint on Benson Road, with Kilmarnock Police Department (KPD) to a suspicious person complaint on North Main Street, with KPD to the emergency room for a possible sexual assault incident (no further information released in order to protect the victim and due to the nature of the investigation); and intercepted in the area of Old Fairgrounds Road a reported reckless driver.

**December 28:** Staff responded to a trespass by hunters complaint on King Carter Lane (subjects identified and incident was turned over to game commission officers), with KPD to a fight call on Black Stump Road reported by the game warden (members of two hunt clubs having a confrontation; no weapons involved), to a shots fired complaint in the area of Ocran Road (subjects were located skeet shooting), to an E911 disconnect call on Whispering Pines Road (no emergency services needed), with Virginia State Police (VSP) to a hit-and-run traffic crash near Cocks Farm Road and James B. Jones Memorial Highway (subject slowed down for a deer in the roadway and was struck by the vehicle following the complainant), to an E911 disconnect call on Campbell Road (no emergency services needed), to a noise violation complaint on Rose Lane, and to a domestic disturbance on Gaskins Road; checked on the well-being of a Harvey Lane resident at the request of a concerned citizen (no emergency services needed); and notified the game commission of a hunting complaint on Devils Bottom Road.

**December 29:** Staff responded to Middle Gate on a threatening telephone calls complaint (caller purports to be with Publishers Clearing House and that the complainant will be harmed if he/she does not follow directions to claim the "winnings"), to the Alfonso area to check on the well-being of a juvenile at the request of the non-custodial parent (child custody/visitation related), to Bayview Lane at the request of Henrico authorities regarding a disoriented motorist, to Virginia Road on a possible mental health emergency, to the area of Deep Creek Road on a shots fired complaint (subjects were located skeet shooting); responded to an E911 disconnect call on Iberis Road (telephone line problem); notified Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) of high water in the area of Rose Lane and Sandlin Drive, of a downed tree interfering with traffic in the area of Chinn's Mill, and of a large animal carcass between White Stone and Kilmarnock that

was a hazard to motorists; and attempted to intercept a reported reckless driver entering the county from Topping.

**December 30:** Staff responded to an injured game animal complaint in the area of Irvington and Old Mill Cove roads (animal lawfully destroyed by hunter and carcass was removed), to a suspicious person/trespass complaint on Newtown Road, to a domestic related trespass complaint on James Lane, to the 8000 block of River Road for an assault by threat/stalking complaint, with KPD to an assault call on Old Fairgrounds Way and checked on the well-being of a citizen in Morattico in relation to this incident, to a trespass complaint in the 15500 block of Mary Ball Road, with KPD to a domestic related trespass complaint in the 15500 block of Mary Ball Road, and to an E911 disconnect call on Galley Hook Drive (telephone line problem); received a walk-in complaint of fraud (civil incident); and checked on the well-being of a King Carter Drive resident at the request of an out-of-town family member after several cars pulled into the driveway (visitors to a neighbor's home used the driveway to turn around).

**December 31:** Staff encountered a suspicious vehicle parked at a White Stone area business (driver pulled off to rest); responded to a child custody/visitation dispute on Daniel Drive, to a domestic assault on High Bank Road (domestic assault warrant and protective order issued), and to a noise violation complaint on Sandlin Drive.

Staff also conducted 21 traffic stops, issued four summonses, assisted seven motorists, reported five deer strikes, handled a request for traffic control, investigated two building alarms, transported two inmates and fielded four calls for animal control service.

**Fire calls**  
Upper Lancaster Volunteer Fire Department responded to a smoke report on Flagstaff Road and with White Stone and Kilmarnock VFDs to a structure fire on Lee Lane.

Kilmarnock VFD also responded to a smoke report at Main and West Church streets.

**Northumberland County Sheriff Chuck Wilkins** this week reported charges against five individuals.

**Felonies**  
Lewis Curtis Smith, 44, of Callao was charged January 2 with grand larceny from the ABC store in Callao; and with shoplifting from the ABC Store in Essex County, on an Essex County warrant.

William Brent Hall, 21, of Lancaster County was charged January 3 with felony eluding and reckless driving. The arrest was made by the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office.

**Misdemeanors**  
A Heathsville man, 81, was charged December 30 with having no county tags for his animals.

A Montross woman, 25, was charged January 1 with operating a motor vehicle without a license.

A Montross woman, 25, was charged January 1 with writing a bad check, on a King George warrant.

**Reward offered**  
On July 21, the Northumberland County Sheriff's Office responded to an armed robbery in the Wicomico Church area. An assault and a larceny of several firearms occurred.

There is a \$5,000 reward offered for the arrest(s) of the person(s) involved in this incident. Call the Crime-Tips line at 580-8477.



Sharon Sue Evans



Carlesha Shawvel Reed

## CRIME SOLVERS

The Lancaster County Crime Solvers seeks information on the whereabouts of two individuals.

Sharon Sue Evans, 51, is wanted for probation violation. She is a white female, with brown hair and gray eyes. She is 5 feet, 4 inches tall and weighs 140 pounds. She is of small build and wears glasses. She is from England and she usually works as a care giver. Her last known address is 77 Wildflower Lane, Mollusk.

Carlesha Shawvel Reed, 26, is wanted for probation violation. She is a black female with black hair and brown eyes. She is 4 feet, 11 inches tall and weighs 140 pounds. She is of small build. She was last known to be working at McDonald's in Warsaw.

Report related information to Lancaster County Crime Solvers at 462-7463.

You will not have to give your name or appear in court. If an arrest is made on your information, you could receive a reward up to \$1,000.

## Corrections

In a January 2 article introducing 2014 officers for Lancaster board of supervisors, it was stated that District 3 supervisor Jason Bellows was elected to a first term as vice chairman. He actually was elected to a second consecutive term.

In a January 2 article covering the sentencing of Cheyenne McDowell, the court docket mistakenly noted she was convicted of involuntary manslaughter. The conviction was for manslaughter.

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## The Agenda

Local Government News

**WHITE STONE**—The town council will conduct a public hearing on a rezoning request at 7 p.m. tonight (January 9) at the town hall, 433 Rappahannock Drive.

The request to rezone a .465-acre lot on Rappahannock Drive adjacent to White Stone Family Practice is being made by Hurst Harvey Oil Company on behalf of owner Virginia M. Jodon. The oil company seeks a change in zoning district classification from residential to commercial to operate an automated car wash on the property. The car wash will have two wand bays and one automatic bay.

The planning commission recommends council rezone the parcel.

Council also will hear a presentation from Davenport LLC on possible financial investments for the town.

Town manager Patrick Frere, police chief Cliff Dawson and committee chairmen will present reports.

**IRVINGTON**—The town council will meet at 7:30 p.m. tonight (January 9) in the town hall, 235 Steamboat Road.

Town attorney Wes Charlton will introduce for consideration a licensing agreement that would be required of organizations to use the town commons for events.

Committee chairmen will present reports and council will appoint a member of the planning commission to the board of zoning appeals.

**LOTTSBURG**—The Northumberland school board will hold its annual organizational meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, January 13, at the School Administration Building, 2172 Northumberland Highway, Lottsbug.

The board will select a chairman, vice chairman, clerk and deputy clerk. The board also will make appointments to the Regional Special Education Board, the Regional Alternative Education Board, the Northern Neck Technical Center Advisory Board, the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School board and the Virginia School Board Association.

Jenny Dunaway, an information technology and gifted resource specialist, will present the new "Superintendent's Budget Blog."

The board also will take action on the senior class trip.

**KILMARNOCK**—The planning commission will continue its comprehensive plan review at 6 p.m. Monday, January 13, at the Town Hall, 1 North Main Street, Kilmarnock.

The commission will review chapter three, the land use plan. Chapter three includes the downtown business district revitalization plan.

The commission also will review the capital improvement plan.

**KILMARNOCK**—The Lancaster school board will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, January 13, in the media center at Lancaster Middle School, 191 School Street, Kilmarnock.

Agenda items include an update on the academic improvement process by principals, and a first look at the budget process, including capital improvement projects, by John Mann.

The school board also will conduct a public hearing at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 15 at the School Board Office, 2330 Irvington Road, Pitman's Corner.

The board seeks citizen input on qualifications for the next superintendent of schools.

A related survey may be found at [www.lcs.k12.va.us](http://www.lcs.k12.va.us), all county schools and the school board office.

# Red Cross Disaster Action Teams keep busy over Christmas holidays

**KILMARNOCK**—American Red Cross Disaster Action Teams were busy during the holiday stretch supporting and assisting families (42 individuals) throughout the region who have been displaced through house fires.

In the Northern Neck, volunteers responded to a family house fire in Northumberland on December 24 and in Lancaster on December 26, reported Eastern Virginia executive director Julie Dudley. The River Counties Red Cross Disaster Action Team on December 26 responded to a duplex on Levelfields Lane where assistance is on-going to two families.

"In the months of November/December, we have responded to a total five house fires assisting 19 residents, and in a year, an additional 143 residents," said Dudley.

The Red Cross responded to more than 52,000 home fires across the nation, helping 226,000 people get back on their feet, she continued. While it may not get the attention of a major high profile disaster, a home fire is just as devastating to the affected family.



The River Counties Red Cross Disaster Action Team responded to assist the residents of this duplex home on Levelfields Lane. The Upper Lancaster, Kilmarnock and White Stone volunteer fire departments fought the blaze December 26.

The American Red Cross also responded to 146 large disaster relief efforts in 42 states and territories between January 1 and December 1 in 2013. Thousands of Red Cross workers provided shelter, food, relief supplies and health and mental health services to people in need.

In 2013, the American Red Cross assisted an estimated 1.3 million people affected by disasters in 24 countries outside of the U.S., said Dudley. These included storms and floods in the Philippines, Argentina, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

### Be prepared

The Red Cross urges all Virginians to be ready for disaster in 2014, she said. Disasters can happen anytime and anywhere.

"Make your New Year's Resolution to act now and take action by preparing for disasters in 2014," said Dudley.

For information on how to prepare, call a local Red Cross office, or visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) and download guidelines for an emergency preparedness kit, make an emergency plan and stay informed. Free checklists, tip sheets and family emer-

gency plan worksheets are available.

To volunteer with the Red Cross locally, call the River Counties Chapter at 435-7669, or the Northumberland Chapter at 580-4933.

Donations can be made at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org), 1-800-733-2767, or texting the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Contributions also can be mailed to River Counties Chapter P.O. Box 1151, Kilmarnock, VA 22482, or Northumberland Chapter P.O. Box 103, Heathsville, VA 22473.

## Sen. Stuart prefiles bills of local interest

**RICHMOND**—District 28 Sen. Richard H. Stuart of Montross, as of January 3, prefiled several bills for consideration during the 2014 General Assembly session commencing January 8.

Bills which may be of local interest include:

- SB 48 which would prohibit the drilling for oil and gas in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. The bill would apply to groundwater and the associated acquirers in the coastal plain of Virginia.

The bill also would require the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt regulations protecting surface and ground water resources before the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy issues a drilling permit in those areas of Tidewater where such activity is allowed.

SB 48 was referred to the agriculture, conservation and natural resources committee. Sen. Stuart serves on the committee.

- SB 49 which would extend the sunset date for management of the menhaden fishery from January 1, 2015, to July 1, 2016.

Provisions to be extended would include criteria for qualifying for a limited entry purse seine bait license, the allocation of the total allowable landings, administration of the management program, reporting requirements, biological sampling, license fees, Commissioner of Marine Resources authority and annual closure of the fishery.

SB 49 was referred to the agriculture, conservation and natural resources committee.

- SB 51 which would protect customary agritourism activities at agricultural operations from local bans in absence of substantial impacts on the public welfare.

The bill would require a basis in health, safety, or public welfare for a local ordinance to restrict the conduct of agritourism activities, the sale of agricultural or silvicultural products or related items, the preparation or sale of foods that otherwise comply with state law, and other customary activities.

SB 51 was referred to the local government committee.

- SB 52 would exempt those ages 45 and older on July 1, 2014, from having to pass a boating safety education course to operate a motorboat.

SB 52 was referred to the agriculture, conservation and natural resources committee.

- SB 53 would require localities that adopt storm water management service charges to provide a waiver of at least 50% of such charge to any church, synagogue, or other place of worship.



SB 53 was referred to the local government committee.

- SB 148 would require the General Assembly conference committee report on the appropriation act to be online for 36 hours and distributed to each member of the legislature prior to a vote.

SB 148 was referred to the rules committee.

- SB 149 would require legislators to report gifts received by immediate family members exceeding \$100. Immediate family members would include the legislator's spouse and dependents in the same household.

SB 149 was referred to the rules committee.

### Senate pages

Some 34 Virginia teenagers arrived on Capitol Square January 5 for orientation and training in preparation to serve in the Senate Page/Messenger Program during the upcoming legislative session.

The class of 2014 represents 29 localities and schools throughout the Commonwealth. From the Northern Neck, William Hillman III of Warsaw, a student at Richmond County Intermediate School, will serve as a Senate page.

The chief duty of Senate pages is to assist during floor sessions and committee meetings. In addition to their chief responsibilities, they run errands, answer telephones, pull and file bills in the bill room, assist with mail distribution in the post office, offer support to the Clerk's Office, assist in the public information office, offer guidance at information desks and engage with school groups and tourists visiting the Capitol. Participants develop important job skills through an emphasis on time management and personal responsibility.

While in Richmond, the youth are responsible for obtaining and maintaining their schoolwork and assignments. A mandatory, two-hour study hall is administered Monday through Thursday evenings.

The class will serve until the legislature adjourns March 8.

Senate pages and messengers must be ages 13 or 14 years at the time of election or appointment. On a rotating basis, senators choose 16 pages, including one for the lieutenant governor. Senate messengers are appointed by the Clerk of the Senate at the recommendation of senators who do not make an appointment that year.

## Two from Saluda are named to governor's Task Force on Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response

**RICHMOND**—Gov. Bob McDonnell on January 2 announced the membership for the newly-created Task Force on Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response. The membership includes leaders in the mental health field, law enforcement communities, the judicial system, private hospitals, and individuals receiving mental health services and their families.

The group will review existing services and challenges in Virginia's mental health system and make recommendations, including legislative and budget proposals, for critical improvements to mental health procedures, programs and services.

"We must ensure that people experiencing mental health crises are connected immediately to needed services to help ensure their safety and the safety of those around them," said Gov. McDonnell. "It is critically important that we expand existing mental health treatment services as needed in order to help prevent mental health emergencies from happening."

Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel M.D. and Secretary of Public Safety Bryan Rhode are co-chairmen of the 37-member task force. The membership includes Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board executive director Chuck Walsh of Saluda, as well as Becky Sterling of Saluda.

On December 10, Gov.

McDonnell issued Executive Order 68 establishing a multi-disciplinary task force to seek and recommend solutions that will improve Virginia's mental health crisis services and help prevent crises from developing.

The task force will send initial recommendations no later than January 31, 2014. It will make additional recommendations on an ongoing basis and provide a final report on all aspects of the executive order to the governor no later than October 1, 2014.

The task force held its first meeting January 7 at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond.

## Decision on school nurses due Monday

by Audrey Thomasson

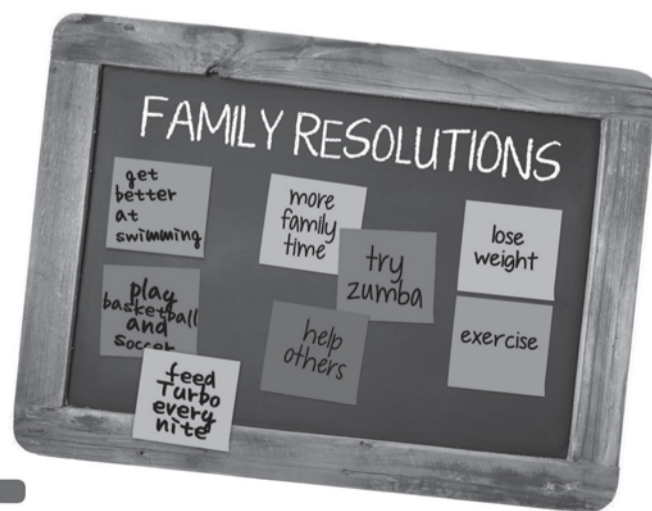
**LANCASTER**—With the departure of all three school nurses, the school district Tuesday conducted interviews with about six applicants.

Interim superintendent Sandy Spears said she hopes to have board approval on final candidates at the January 13 school board meeting.

Until the positions are permanently filled, she said the high and middle schools are being covered by substitute nurses, and the primary school is using staffers trained in first aid.



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## Focal Point



This photo taken off Fleets Bay Road on Indian Creek August 3, 2012, shows a piebald deer and a white-tailed deer. A genetic defect produces a few white-tailed deer that are brown and white spotted, similar to a pinto horse. These white-tailed deer are called piebald. In addition to the coloration deficiency, many piebald deer have skeletal deformities such as short legs, bowing of the nasal bone, arching of the back bone and heart defects. Piebald deer make up less than 1% of white-tailed deer herds. Source: Wildlife and Heritage Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Photo by Paul Servis

Submit your interesting photos capturing the life and times in the Northern Neck to editor@rrecord.com, subject line Focal Point.

## YOUR LETTERS

### Educating the town council

As you know, this May there will be an election for town council members and mayor in Kilmarnock. As you will be bombarded with both information and misinformation, I want to tell you about an educational opportunity in which the majority of your council members participate.

Your town council members are paid \$100 per month with the mayor receiving \$200 a month. One of the "perks" of serving on the council that involves a lot of hard work is the annual Virginia Municipal League's educational conference for all elected officials held in different cities in Virginia.

These conferences feature guest speakers, seminars, and roundtable discussions covering topics such as federal and state mandates, derelict buildings, legal matters, and how to better govern municipalities. Attendees are busy from eight in the morning until after nine at night. The information and networking gleaned is invaluable. The total cost to the town for this year's three-day conference for four attendees was approximately \$4,800, a small price to pay for the education and information received by your representatives.

Those on the current council who have attended at

least one conference are Mae Umphlett, William Smith, Howard Straughan, Emerson Gravatt and yours truly. Additionally, town manager Tom Saunders, deputy town manager Susan Cockrell and town attorney Chris Stamm have attended. Some members have used vacation days from their jobs to be able to participate and to better serve the citizens of Kilmarnock.

You may also be interested to know that serving on the council generally consumes about 20 hours a week of each council member's time.

Rebecca Nunn,  
Kilmarnock

### Interpreting proclamations

The Midwest and Northeast U.S. are suffering a potentially record-setting cold spell that may soon spread southward. No doubt global warming deniers will use this severe weather event to attack the hypothesis of global warming, showing their ignorance of weather's relationship to climate.

Global warming deniers like to cite local or regional weather events to counter scientific findings of global climate.

In a January 2 letter, "Proclamations at best suspect," the writer failed to mention the continual melting of Arctic ice, the Green-

land ice cap, and every major glacier in the world. Nor did the writer mention the record-breaking 2013 heat wave that hit Australia, just a global stone's throw from Antarctica.

And the writer's claim, without references, that "there has been no additional warming for the past 15 to 17 years," is a willful misinterpretation of the data.

Few of us can claim complete understanding of climate science, but our presence on Earth forces all of us to gamble on whether human-induced global warming is real or not, and the action you and I take now is the wager we make. Our collective bet will determine how much suffering global warming will deliver to our children and grandchildren and the cost of coping with it.

Global warming deniers base their case on the claims of a handful of science writers and bloggers who no longer publish original research, but are funded largely by the oil and coal industry. Some 95% of publishing climate scientists and all but one major national and international organization of scientists affirm the hypothesis that human activity is the major cause of global warming.

Whose guidance will you follow when placing your bet?

Bob Lindsey,  
Callao

## Fiction or Fact from Bob's Almanac

by Robert Mason Jr.

For years I've insisted that when people cease living, they die.

When someone's name appears in the obituaries, they died.

We can chalk this one up to common sense. When you cease to exist, you are dead.

The Associated Press Stylebook, as of November 26, 2013, confirms this notion. When it comes to death or die, the AP Stylebook says "Don't use euphemisms like passed on or passed away except in a direct quote."

Euphemisms are innocuous words or terms used in place of others that some may consider blunt, harsh or offensive.

Here I side with the KISS principle of concise writing versus political correctness. KISS is an acronym for "Keep It Simple, Stupid." Journalists use the KISS rule to get to the point in as few words as possible.

Politically correct is for wussies.

A "wussy" at urban dictionary.com is "A person with no guts. A person who whines all day and sits around and cries like a little baby for years over nothing. Will blow anything out of proportion and create drama to forget about their sad miserable lives."

Returning to my point, people die.

However, obituary writers don't always see it that way. Straying from the KISS rule, they sometimes submit copy stating the deceased has passed, passed on or passed away.

I don't care what they write for funeral bulletins, I don't have to fit them on a page. Obits, I do.

Don't confuse the reader. The brain quickly interprets "died." But, terms like "passed, passed on, or passed away" force the subconscious to process dozens of possibilities, even when encountered within the context of an obituary.

You see "pass" but your brain sees to move on, to move ahead, to extend, to go by, to move beyond another vehicle, to gain passage despite obstacles, to elapse, to circulate, to transfer, to throw a ball, to be communicated, to convey, to undergo transition from one estate to another, to come to an end, to cease to exist, to happen, to allow to happen without challenge, to decline one's turn to bid, to decline an offer, to do favorably on a test, to be accepted as member, to be adopted, to pronounce judgment, to be voided, to thrust, to leave behind, to go by without regard, to hand over, to disappear; also the act of passing, passage, a narrow gap between mountains, a permit or ticket, a free ticket of entitlement, written leave, a sweep, a single complete cycle of operations, a condition, a sexual invitation, a motion of the hand, or to die.

All that—to die.

Imagine the brain drain when the deceased:

- transitioned from labor to reward.

- was called home.
- was called to a heavenly home.
- was called by God to a heavenly home.
- traded his wheels for wings.
- traded his banjo for a harp of gold.
- joined a heavenly choir.
- joined a heavenly band.
- crossed the bar.
- closed the book of life.
- departed his earthly neighborhood for streets paved with gold.
- going from pounding concrete to walking streets paved with gold.
- embarked on a new journey.
- boarded the gospel ship.
- took that train bound for glory.
- entered into eternal rest.
- slipped away.
- completed his work here on earth.
- followed the angel who extended the message "Your job is done, It's time to come home."

Jesus died. According to the Apostles' Creed, he "...Suffered under Pontius Pilot; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead..."

Christians are taught from an early age "Jesus died to save us from our sins."

According to the King James Version of The Holy Bible:

• Matthew 28:7 says, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."

• Romans 10:9-10 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

• 1 Thessalonians 4:14 says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

• Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Everybody dies. However, not everybody ascends into heaven. Don't even submit that.

He died.

Feminists may insert "she" for "he." Wussies can insert any variation of "person" that makes them happy.

## Delegate's Report

by Del. Margaret Ransone

I hope you had a safe, enjoyable and happy holiday season. With the holidays behind us, I want to let you all know that I am in Richmond for the 2014 Legislative Session. And I want to pass along our contact information while we are in Richmond.

First, however, I want to introduce you all to my legislative aide Ross Snare.

During the legislative session he and I will be keeping you updated through our email mailing list. Urge your friends and family to go to margaretransone.com and sign up to receive updates.

We also have arranged with local papers for weekly updates to be printed, so everyone can be informed of what is going on in Richmond.

Contact information: Del. Margaret Ransone, General Assembly Building, Room 809, Capitol Square, Richmond, VA 23219; 698-1099, (fax) 698-6799; Delmran-sone@house.virginia.gov.

I am looking forward to serving you in Richmond and please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns.

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## Excerpts

by Henry Lane Hull

George Mason, the Father of the Bill of Rights, fathered a dozen children, hence his descendants over two and a half centuries are legion. Here in the Northern Neck we were fortunate to have among us for the past 40 years one of the most interesting of his progeny, Mrs. Virginia Smart, better known as Ginny. She and her late husband, the Rev. Frank Smart, an Episcopalian clergyman, moved to White Stone in the 1970s, and here she spent the last years of her lengthy life doing good deeds throughout our community.

Ginny lived to be 102. Her hair remained naturally light brown, albeit with a bit of gray interspersed, and her figure continued to be neat and trim. She liked to smoke, and enjoyed good company, particularly over dinner at a restaurant.

Across the span of her long life, she told great stories, all the while constantly dumbfounding her listeners who could not comprehend her having reached a century in age. She was amused by their reactions at learning of her age, and would smile sardonically. Together in their upper 90s, married almost 70 years, the Smarts seemed to be decades younger.

*She took life matter-of-factly and exuded a level of serenity that was both genuine and impressive. She refused to become perturbed, and lived accordingly.*

She kept an extraordinarily tidy home, and found special pleasure in her plants and flowers. After their long and happy marriage, she lost her husband shortly before her 100th birthday, and in the aftermath of his death she found her consolation in continuing her volunteer efforts, both at the library and at the hospital.

On one occasion I met a lady who was one of her caregivers during the day at a convenience store. The lady remarked to the clerk that she was able to go shopping then because her centenarian patient was volunteering at the library. I spoke up, and said, you must be referring to Mrs. Smart. She replied that I was correct, and since Mrs. Smart had stopped driving, on volunteer

days, her job consisted principally in taking her to and from her appointed rounds.

Shortly thereafter, I met both of them in the grocery store, and I asked Ginny how her volunteer work was proceeding. She said that after 40 years she had decided to cut back and retire from some of it, in part to save her energy to be able to do well at what remained. She took life matter-of-factly and exuded a level of serenity that was both genuine and impressive. She refused to become perturbed, and lived accordingly.

Perhaps in that quality her family and friends can find the reason for her good health across the century that she lived. She could manage and cope at her advanced age, because she had done so all her life. Her husband had been a career Navy chaplain, followed by another career as a school chaplain, and finally in retirement as a supply minister as needed in local churches. As was his wife, he too was a person of serenity and peace, and he almost made life to 100.

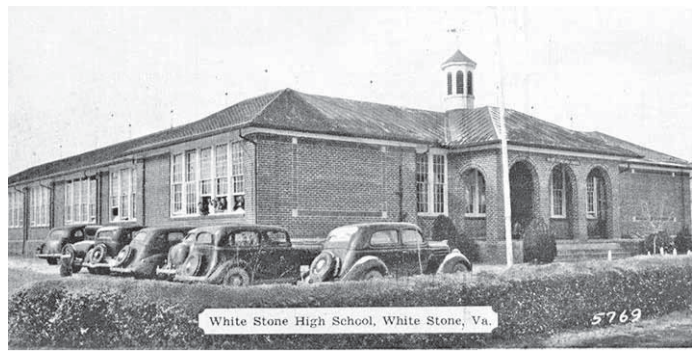
The Smarts were good friends with their next-door neighbors Stanley and Marian Stewart, whose property one passed before arriving at the Smarts' home. Stanley was

the great animal guru of his day in the Northern Neck, the author of the weekly column in the Rappahannock Record, "Animals are Smart." Ginny enjoyed driving past Stanley's menagerie in her goings and comings, and liked to offer pithy comments about Stanley's ever-changing environment. Knowing of her abiding interest in the usages of words, I once asked her if the "Smart" in the title of Stanley's column referred to her or to animal intelligence. She responded with a memorable chuckle.

Ginny was well up on her family genealogy, and had a close relationship with her many "greats" grandfather, George Mason. She had inherited several of his possessions, the presence in her home of which made the bonds all the thicker, especially realizing that when her stewardship of the Mason legacy ended, she would be passing it along to her two sons. History and tradition were integral parts of her character and presence, but despite her illustrious ancestry, she remained a humble and caring person who always put others first. That was how she lived for 102 years.

Virginia Cary Dawson Smart, September 26, 1911–December 21, 2013, R.I.P.





**Do You Remember?**

This 1930s postcard shows White Stone High School. At 606 Chesapeake Drive, White Stone, the building now houses the White Stone Event Center, according to Kilmarnock Museum president Carroll Lee Ashburn. "Do You Remember?" is a public service of the Kilmarnock Museum.

**Tea Party will meet Tuesday**

The 99th District Tea Party will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 14, at the Upper Lancaster Ruritan Club, 3989 White Chapel Road, Lively.

Middle Resolution PAC founder Bob Bailie will present "Taking action against unsustainable government expansion," reported president Edgar Doleman.

After a successful business career, Bailie founded the Middle Resolution PAC in 2009 in an effort to restore

fiscal integrity and legislator accountability in government. The PAC strategically identifies and supports candidates and policy that align with its values of responsible government and individual rights, said Doleman.

Since 2009, Middle Resolution has provided financial and intellectual support for selected challengers for state and federal offices and have been successful in nine out of eleven general election races, he said.

**NAACP Area 14 meeting set Jan 11**

Area 14 NAACP chairman Mark P. Lomax reminds all members of the upcoming Area 14 Virginia State Conference NAACP meeting from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, January 11, at Immanuel Baptist Church, 317 Townbridge Road, Saluda.

The Middlesex County Virginia Branch NAACP will host the event, said Lomax. To attend, contact the local NAACP unit. This event is open to the public.

**Blue catfish are taking bite out of key species**

by Karl Blankenship  
Bay Journal News Service

A new study confirms that blue catfish, introduced in Virginia in the mid-1970s by the state's sports fishing authorities, have spread to several of the Chesapeake's rivers and have the potential to take a significant bite out of the region's populations of important native species such as blue crabs and river herring.

The study examined the diets of blue catfish in portions of several Virginia rivers and concluded they "may contribute to substantial losses of key fishery resources" that could be ecologically significant for some species such as blueback herring, whose populations are already at low levels.

It also said hungry blue catfish could have a greater impact on abundant species, such as blue crabs and menhaden, than previously thought, in part because blue catfish are turning up in higher salinity water than expected.

"To me, the most surprising finding from our study was the extent to which we documented predators much farther downstream in the James — down to the Chesapeake Bay estuary proper," said Greg Garman, director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Environmental Studies and lead author of the study. "We wouldn't have expected that."

The study was one of several research projects supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Chesapeake Bay Office to better quantify the level of threat blue catfish may, or may not, pose to other bay species and resources.

Concerns about blue catfish have been growing as their numbers have exploded around the bay. The large predatory fish were introduced into the upper tidal James River by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries when introducing new species



**Blue Catfish**

for recreational anglers was common.

**By the numbers**

Their numbers have dramatically increased. They populate the tidal portions of all major Virginia tributaries, the Potomac, and have been turning up in many Maryland tributaries.

Blue catfish, which in rare cases can reach 100 pounds, can dominate rivers where they are introduced. In the James River near Hopewell, for instance, scientists estimate they account for 50% to 70% of all fish biomass. Scientists and fishery managers are worried that could mean trouble for native species.

The new study examined 1,002 blue catfish 15 inches or longer taken from the Rappahannock and James rivers during the fall 2011 and spring 2012. The researchers found that blue catfish ate a variety of species, including blue crabs, blueback herring, American shad, softshell clams, menhaden and white perch.

Based on the results, the researchers estimated what the potential predation by blue catfish might have been during spring 2012 in two specific locations.

In Burwell Bay, a small area of the James River not far upstream from Newport News, they estimated blue catfish had the potential to consume 560,000 to 720,000 blue crabs.

For perspective, that would be nearly 1% of the 765 million blue crabs estimated to be in the bay in early 2012 by the annual Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey.

In that same area, the study estimated blue catfish may have consumed 670,000 to 820,000 Atlantic menhaden and 1.9 million to 3.1 million softshell clams.

Farther upstream, near Manchester, they estimated blue catfish might have consumed 8,000 to 10,000 blueback herring—a once-abundant species whose East Coast population is at a record low—and 14,000 to 18,000 white perch.

"If those estimates are even close to being correct—and I'm pretty comfortable with them—you can imagine that that level of predation is probably going on at other places within the bay, and maybe over even longer periods of time," Garman said.

Scientists conducting the

study found blue catfish in salinities up to 17 parts per thousand. Before this, fishery scientists thought their salinity tolerance was 14 parts per thousand. The researchers expressed concern that the species may eventually occupy an even larger range around the bay than previously thought.

**Outlook is bleak**

Bob Greenlee, a fisheries biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, said he wasn't surprised by the findings. Previous studies by the department had suggested that blue catfish zero in on whatever prey is abundant.

Because blue catfish are such opportunistic feeders, it is hard to infer from one study what overall impact they have on a given resource, he said.

"Wherever you get a sample in these rivers, and its timing in a given year, is going to influence what you say the blue catfish diet is," said Greenlee. "If it's an abundant resource, they are targeting it."

He expressed doubt that much can be done to control blue catfish in the region because their population is well-established, and well-adapted.

"Given the status of the species in the watershed and lack of viable management options, it is highly unlikely we are going to control the species in the bay," said Greenlee.

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