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Laura Davis shows you how to create a magical seasonal treat | Page 14



CHESTER JACKSON OPENS HIS AUCTION HOUSE
CHRISTMAS SCENE TO THE PUBLIC | PAGE 4

Shore First

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monthly newsmagazine

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Jackson's Christmas open house set Dec. 14

Local auctioneer Chester Jackson will again be opening his auction barn to the public this year to see his personal Christmas display.

The auction barn, at 25191 Dennis Drive, near Parksley, will host an open house on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be cookies and punch.

There is no charge to come and view Jackson's large collection of trees, wreaths, Santa collectibles, and more.

The auction barn once housed the Carroll G. Matthews McCormick Deering tractor and implement dealer.

"There's more this year than there was last year," said Jackson, whose collection also features a wealth of Christmas Village pieces.

In the center of it all is the family's big Christmas tree, which is decorated after the family Thanksgiving dinner — which is also held in the auction house.

Another tree is decorated by Jackson's great-granddaughter.

"This is her tree," Jackson said proudly, motioning toward the piece.

In all, there are nine trees adorning the auction house, and Jackson said his wife, Linda, "wants me to put up another one."

Why does Jackson create such a big Christmas display?

"They say, 'Are you crazy?'" Jackson said.

"I say, 'I'm not crazy.' I love it for the children. I do it for the children."

Jackson added, "Everybody who has been here really enjoyed it. That's what I like."



SHORE FIRST/TED SHOCKLEY

Chester Jackson's auction house near Parksley is always richly decorated for Christmas.



SHORE FIRST/TED SHOCKLEY

Chester Jackson operates a model train in his auction house in Parksley, which is open for visitors Dec. 14.

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Historic Palace Theatre
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Par 4 Bar and Grill opens with food, good times

It has been worth the wait at Par 4 Bar and Grill, north of Temperanceville. The large building with the classy decor has opened to the public.

The business, located at 10003 Lankford Highway, is intended to be a destination for all customers to enjoy food, drink, and entertainment in a contemporary setting, said general manager William Watson.

“We wanted everybody to be able to come in and enjoy themselves,” said Watson.

The restaurant’s motif is a sports bar. But it also has a stage in the dining room, a full bar, upstairs seating, and other elegant touches.

Par 4 Bar and Grill is open Sunday through Thursday from noon to midnight and Friday and Saturday from noon to 2 a.m. The kitchen closes one hour before closing time — so it is still possible to get a late-night dinner.

The restaurant also features happy hour specials Monday through Friday from 4 to 7 p.m.

Every Wednesday features karaoke from 7 to 11 p.m. Beginning on Dec. 8, every Sunday will feature a soul food brunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Watson said business has been brisk since opening. In addition, people who enter are always impressed when they see the refined interior.

“They’re amazed when they walk inside,” said Watson.

In addition, word is getting around.

“We have had a lot of people in this week who said it was the first time that they’d been in here,” he said on Monday, Dec. 2.



William Watson stands in front of the bar at Par 4 Bar and Grill near Temperanceville.

SHORE FIRST/TED SHOCKLEY



Par 4 Bar and Grill in Temperanceville opened in November after much anticipation.

SHORE FIRST/TED SHOCKLEY

Rockfish tournament set

The third annual Eastern Shore Yacht & Country Club Rockfish Tournament will be held Friday, Dec. 13, and Saturday, Dec. 14, with the registration deadline Monday, Dec. 9.

Entry fees are \$50 for junior anglers 15 and under, \$125 for members,

and \$150 for non-members.

Fifty percent of the entry fees go to the prize pool.

Call 757-787-1525 or email estodghill@esycc.com for more information or to enter.

There will be a captain's meeting Thursday, Dec. 12.

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Oysters and music support student success at ESCC

The Eastern Shore Community College Foundation invites the Shore community to enjoy an evening of delicious seafood and live music in support of scholarships and services for local students.

A staple on the January calendar each year, the 2025 ESCC Foundation Oyster Roast will be held Friday, Jan. 31, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Workforce Development Building Great Hall, on the college's Melfa campus on Lankford Highway.

Held both outdoors under heated tents and inside the Great Hall, the event is the perfect way to indulge in a Shore tradition while benefitting its future.

Proceeds directly support the foundation's mission of providing scholarships and services that ensure local student success.

A ticket includes fresh local roasted oysters, steamed clams, homemade chowder, barbecue, and sides, craft beer, wine, sodas, and more.

A popular silent auction offers an array of great items to bid on, including Shore carvings, bourbon baskets, gift certificates at local restaurants and businesses, a scenic plane flight, and more.

Past years have brought high-caliber musical talent from the state level, and 2025 is no exception.

"BigForestFire" is the musical platform for gifted vocalist, guitarist, and instrumentalist Jeremy Mangrum. Soulful vocals and improvisational skills create a memorable and unique sound that is accented by Mangrum's abilities on trumpet.

From rock and blues to soul and beyond, music fans are in for a treat from "BigForestFire" at ESCC's 2025



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The band "BigForestFire" will perform at the Eastern Shore Community College Foundation Oyster Roast.

Oyster Roast fundraiser.

Always a delightful way to support local students, the event also offers the opportunity to meet some of the current ESCC learners. Students will assist throughout the event, showing their appreciation for the support

the event provides through the ESCC Foundation.

Tickets are being sold exclusively online at es.vccs.edu for \$75 each. The public is encouraged not to wait as all recent years have been sellouts. The tickets are particular

popular gift items during the holidays. For sponsorships and additional information, please contact ESCC Foundation Director Patty Kellam at 757-789-1749 or email pkellam@es.vccs.edu.



The Rise and Fall of Tides

Poems and Photographs

Curtis J. Badger

A New Book Celebrates the Shore Visually and in Verse

A Special Gift for Christmas This Year!

Writer and photographer **Curtis J. Badger** has combined his talents in *The Rise and Fall of Tides* to celebrate Virginia's Eastern Shore both visually and in verse. While Badger is widely known for his books on the natural history and human history of the coast, he also is a talented photographer.

"I have had a passion for photography all my life, especially black and white photography, and it seemed a natural marriage to join poems and photographs in this book. Black and white photographs seem to me a visual form of poetry. By removing color, you are reducing the image to its essence. And so it is with poetry. The challenge is to create an image not by adding words, but by subtracting them, mining a thought to get at its core."

The Rise and Fall of Tides is a testimony to one man's love of family and landscape and how the two have become inseparable over time. Fifty poems are complemented by 25 black and white photographs printed on premium paper in a horizontal format, 11 by 8 ½ inch book.

Copies are available directly from the publisher, Salt Water Media of Berlin, MD.
Softback copies are \$24.99 and hardbacks are \$34.99, plus shipping and taxes, if applicable.

Visit www.saltwatermedia.com, or call 443-513-4422.

Christmas season in full swing at Palace Theatre

The Christmas season is busy at the Historic Palace Theatre. Arts Enter, the 501 (c) (3) nonprofit fine and performing arts center in Cape Charles, is producing several programs to celebrate the sights and sounds of the season and the beginning of 2025.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, at 2 p.m. the dance students under the direction of instructors Lisa Brasch, Mara Ifju, Amy Watkins, and Lucy Watkins will present Merry Movement, a program where dancers will display their skills while they celebrate the holiday season. The dance celebration will feature adult and school-aged students in Musical Theater, Modern, Hip Hop, Ballet, Stretch, and Tap. Tickets are \$10.

To continue with Christmas festivities on Sunday, Dec. 8, at 5 p.m., The Shore Singers, an established community choir directed by Megan Cartwright, will perform. Men and women in the chorus have been rehearsing since September. After the performance, there will be a community sing-a-long. The choir welcomes new members and practices at the Historic Palace Theatre on Thursday evenings. Tickets at \$10.

On Wednesday, Dec. 18, at 7:30 p.m. special guest Gerry Gennarelli will perform in the theatre. A native of Italy, Gerry has performed at the Palace for several years.

A world-renowned vocalist and pianist, Gerry will treat the audience with ballads and classics and a bit of Christmas music as well. Audiences will be delighted by his warmth, charisma, and exceptional talent.

For what has become a traditional Christmas concert, the Virginia Symphony Holiday Brass will fill the stage of the theater on Saturday, Dec. 21, at



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Christmas Season is busy at the Historic Palace Theatre.

7:30 p.m.

Bold sounds of the Virginia Symphony brass section will ring in the holidays with a blast. The audience will experience the festive sounds of the season in a concert filled with wit, virtuosity, and the glorious music of the holidays — featuring the VSO brass and percussion sections in an all-new program. Patrons will enjoy music from a variety of styles that have made this concert a new holiday tradition.

As the region's most celebrated musical, educational, and entrepreneurial arts organization, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra is the largest performing arts organization in

southeastern Virginia. Paul Bhasin will conduct the symphony. His career began when he won the Yamaha Young Performing Artist Competition in 1998. Bhasin serves as music director and conductor of the DeKalb Symphony Orchestra and Atlanta Chamber Music Festival. He has also led performances as a guest conductor with members of the Richmond Symphony, National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra.

Tickets are available at the Lemon Tree Gallery in Cape Charles or at www.artsentercapecharles.org. Adult tickets are \$40. Blue Heron Realty, a much-appreciated patron of the arts

over many years, is the presenting sponsor for the performance, as they have been for several years. Blue Heron is a local family-owned business operating since 1993 and specializing in waterfront and water-access homes on the beautiful Virginia Eastern Shore.

Arts Enter is starting the new year with Chicago Rewired, which is regarded as the premier Chicago tribute band in the USA. Sounding just like Chicago, this eight-piece band performs all three decades of Chicago's biggest hits. This tribute to Chicago — one of the most successful pop/rock groups in history with 21 top-10 singles, five consecutive number one albums, 11 number-one singles, and five gold singles — will take you back to the timeless music you know and love. The soundtrack to the memories of so many, Chicago Rewired delivers big hits like "25 or 6 to 4," "Look Away," "Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?," "Colour My World," "Just You 'n' Me," "Saturday in the Park," "Make Me Smile," "Wishing You Were Here," and many more.

Other events to shake the winter blues at the Historic Palace Theatre include a Dave Matthews Tribute Band on Feb. 1, a Valentine Party with the Shoal Shakers on Feb. 8, and the popular Virginia Beach Deloreans, the ultimate 1980s tribute band featuring colorful costumes, powerful personalities and massive production, on Feb. 15. This May Arts Enter will produce the Rogers and Hammerstein classic Cinderella.

A goal of Arts Enter is to honor the heritage and enrich the future of the arts in Cape Charles.



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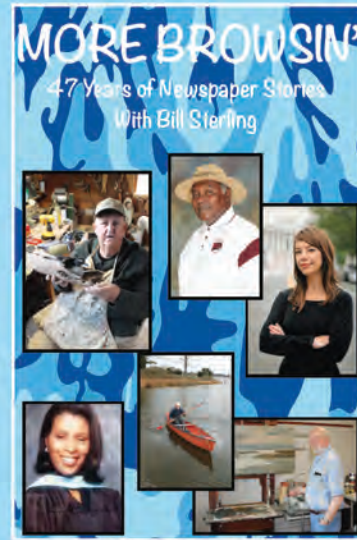
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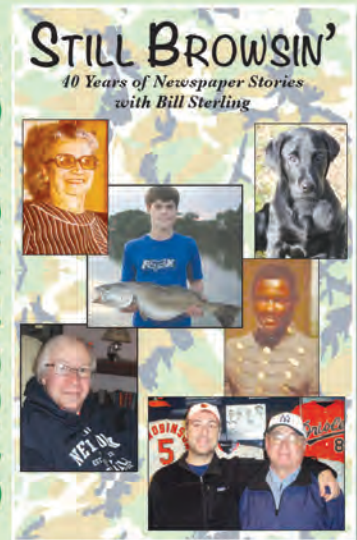
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MORE BROWNSIN'



STILL BROWNSIN'



More Brownsin' is a collection of Bill Sterling's 47 years writing for newspapers and magazines, including stories on athletes such as Marshall Cropper, Ronnie Killmon, Monica Shields, Tyler Webb, Bobby Brown, Felicia Johnson, Dallas Parks, Ace Custis, Samantha Tadder, Frank Havens, Danny Pickett and Kenny Collins, as well as stories on artists such as Willie Crockett, Buck Doughty, Carroll Lee Marshall, Eddy Dixon, Chet DeGavre and Ellen McCaleb. Also featured are media figures like Emily Hill, Paige Bull Tatum, George Reiger, Steven Ginsberg and Eddie Williams. The book also includes profiles on Eastern Shore towns Pungoteague, Saxis and Nassavadox, plus stories on Sterling's hunting and hunting adventures and thoughts on living on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

Still Brownsin', Sterling's first book published in 2016, is also a compilation of columns and feature stories from his award-winning career. Tad Beach, Coach Trent Serini, Hurricane Pete Peterson, Grayson Chesser, John Parsons, Robert Savage, Harold Wheatley, Starr Boggs, Scorchy Tawes, Thomas Young and Mike Castagna are just a few of the personalities featured in this book. *Still Brownsin'* also includes a healthy dose of Sterling's outdoor experiences while fishing, hunting or just enjoying his native Eastern Shore. Both books include personal experiences that touch themes binding all of us.



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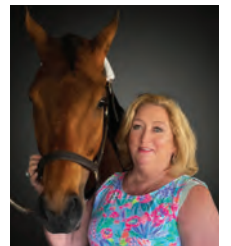
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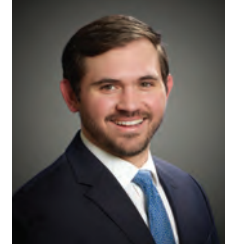
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Oysters Rockefeller — a fancy appetizer for the season

Now that the holiday season is upon us, let's talk about fancy appetizers.

Being at their prime during the cold winter months, oysters are a delicacy that we have always turned to on our peninsula to enjoy at festive holiday gatherings.



Laura Davis

For me, nothing “puts on the Ritz” more than Oysters Rockefeller.

It is a plump, salty oyster baked with a creamed garlic spinach, garlicky bread crumbs, and a pinch of Parmesan cheese.

They're a breeze to throw

together once you have the oysters shucked, and they are so darned impressive.

I mean, how good do they look just served on a simple wooden cutting board?

The couple of batches I've made already this season have been gobbled up in a matter of moments.

I hope everyone is having a good time decorating and getting ready for the holidays.

We went and got our tree this past weekend, and I can't wait to get it up and decorated.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the Eastern Shore of Virginia!



Nothing “puts on the Ritz” more than Oysters Rockefeller.

PHOTO COURTESY LAURA DAVIS

Laura Davis, of Chincoteague Island, is a food writer and blogger at www.tideandthyme.com. Her recipes have been featured on Huffington Post and www.craftbeer.com, among other publications.

She is a frequent guest on WBOC-TV's DelmarvaLife show, where she showcases her culinary talents for viewers. Her work appears monthly in Shore First.

Oysters Rockefeller recipe and ingredients

Ingredients

- 8 Tbsp butter
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 (10 oz) bag baby spinach
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, finely shredded
- 1/2 cup Panko breadcrumbs
- 20 oysters, shucked and on the half-shell

Recipe

Preheat oven to 425.

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and shallot, and saute until soft and fragrant — about two minutes.

Pour half of the melted butter mixture into a small bowl and com-

bine with the breadcrumbs. Toss to combine and set aside.

To the remainder of the butter in the skillet, add the baby spinach. If it doesn't all fit, just let it cook down some, and then add more.

Season with salt and toss until wilted. Slowly stir in the cream and let reduce for a minute before removing from heat.

Carefully place the oysters on a baking sheet. Spoon a small amount of the spinach mixture onto each oyster, then top with about two teaspoons of the breadcrumb mixture and a small pinch of Parmesan cheese.

Place in oven and bake until oysters have plumped up, about 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and serve immediately with lemon wedges and hot sauce, if desired.

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The almost state of Delmarva

“What a splendid state this Delmarva Peninsula would make — a rich country close to city markets but far enough away to avoid its contamination and its political influence, a unified people with common interests, ideals, and aspirations. What a great ‘free state’ we could have — a state with



Kirk Mariner

more than one-half million people with no dominating large cities — 14 rich, prosperous counties in the best section of the United States.”

So wrote the editor of the *Federalburg Times* in 1931 after columnist H.L. Mencken had once again blasted the Eastern Shore in the Baltimore papers.

Did he know that a century before him the state of Delmarva had almost come into being?

The Eastern Shore of Maryland’s sense of separation from the rest of the state dates back to colonial times, when it enjoyed its own land offices, treasurers, surveyors, and judges quite apart from those of the Western Shore.

There were times during the Revolution when the British held control of the Chesapeake Bay, and the Eastern Shore, effectively cut off from the rest of Maryland, functioned as a separate unit.

When in the 1770s a new state constitution was written, it specified that six of Maryland’s 15 state senators must come from the Eastern Shore, required the General Court to sit alternately on either side of the bay, and provided that “nothing ... which relates to the Eastern Shore particularly shall at any time hereafter be altered, unless ... at least two-thirds of the members of each branch of the General Assembly shall concur.”

There was, for a while, even an unofficial “capital” of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In the 1770s the General Assembly decreed that a new town be laid out on the Choptank River in Talbot County, as the place where the court “shall be forever held” when it met on the Eastern Shore. The town was to be named Dover — not a great choice, given the proximity of that other capital city Dover, Del. — but Dover, Md., never really came into being.

Instead, when a new courthouse was built in nearby Easton, the legislature named that town as the site of the court and of the other government offices for the Eastern Shore. The courthouse that stands today in Easton is larger than most, at the time of its completion in 1794 second only to the State House in Annapolis itself, and it was built large in expectation that the state legislature, also, might choose to sit alternately at Annapolis and Easton, the “Little Capital.”

By the 1830s the rest of Maryland was clearly outdistancing the rural Eastern Shore. Baltimore, blossoming into a metropolis, was demanding its share of representation, and canals and railroads were being constructed to further commerce and industry.

Though taxed for them, the rural Shore counties saw few of these new “internal improvements,” and began to feel overlooked and restless, a mood which did not go unnoticed across the line in Delaware.

On Feb. 4, 1883, the state legislature in Dover — Delaware, not Maryland — passed a resolution that “the people of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and of this State should be united under one government.”

No sooner had the idea been conveyed to the Maryland legislature in Annapolis than the newspapers took up the issue.

“Delaware grows (too) ambitious,” insisted the

Baltimore American and Daily Advertiser. But “the people of the peninsula ... form one people, [and] nature intended their territory to constitute one state,” countered the *Delaware State Journal*, of Wilmington. The new state would be named Delaware (“Delmarva” was not yet a term in general use during the 1830s). The new capital would be, most likely, Easton.

What about Virginia’s two Eastern Shore counties? “If natural boundaries had been originally considered,” wrote the Wilmington editor, “the whole peninsula, including the counties in Maryland and the two counties of Accomack and Northampton, which by some queer accident belong to Virginia, would have been included in one government.”

But Virginians were said to be “cold to the proposal, scornfully unwilling to sell their birthright for what seemed to them an unsavory mess of pottage.”

On March 20, 1833, the Maryland House voted 40-24 to call a “general convention” to ascertain the wishes of the citizens of the Eastern Shore of Maryland about uniting with Delaware.

The following day the measure went to the Maryland Senate, which promptly referred the matter to a special committee of three senators, all of whom were from the Eastern Shore: Thomas Emory, of Queen Anne’s County, William Hughlett, of Talbot, and Littleton P. Dennis, of Somerset, who lived at “Beverly,” on the Pocomoke River just across the line from Virginia.

It took the committee all of one day to report back to the Senate that they were “of the opinion that (the proposal) ought to be assented to.”

The Senate voted on March 21, 1833, but despite the committee’s report the measure was defeated 5 to 4.

Thus the proposal to consider uniting the Eastern Shore of Maryland with Delaware lost “by the exceedingly slim margin of one vote.” Had the vote gone the other way, it seems likely that the Shore counties would have voted to leave Maryland for Delaware.

In fact, defeat of the measure did little to allay interest in the idea, or to quell the restlessness of the Eastern Shore counties.

A similar proposal was submitted and defeated in 1834. Eight years later, in the legislature of 1842, Delegate Levi Cathell, of Worcester, proposed that “the Eastern Shore ... attach themselves to the State of Delaware.”

Again a select committee was appointed, again it urged adoption, but again the measure was defeated,

(Continued on page 17)

The Rev. Kirk Mariner was an Eastern Shore author, historian, and United Methodist minister whose book, “Off 13: The Eastern Shore of Virginia Guidebook,” is an indispensable volume for natives and visitors alike. Mariner died in 2017. His work appears in *Eastern Shore First* courtesy of Miona Publications. This first appeared in his book, “True Tales of the Eastern Shore.”

Delmarva

(Continued from page 16)

45-18, with all of the delegates from the Eastern Shore voting for it. "It was abundantly evident," writes one modern historian, "that there still existed on the Eastern Shore a considerable sentiment for secession from Maryland and merger with Delaware."

There was yet one more attempt. When a new state constitution was being written in 1850-1851, Thomas Holliday Hicks, of Dorchester, tried in vain to include a provision that would allow the Eastern Shore counties to separate from Maryland and unite with Delaware if a majority of Shore voters so decided.

By now, however, improved transportation and communication, especially the steamboats that linked the Eastern Shore to the rest of the state, had taken the fire out of the separatist mood on the Shore.

Not only did the new constitution not include Hicks' motion, it also eliminated the separate treasurer for the Eastern Shore. After 1851, all state offices were consolidated in Annapolis and Baltimore, and Easton's days as the "Little Capital" were over.

It is, however, an idea that has never fully died out.

In 1931 when Mencken raised the dander of the Eastern Shore's editors, in 1949 when the proposed Chesapeake Bay Bridge seemed to threaten the Shore's way of life, in 1964 when the Shore's representation in Annapolis was about to be reduced by redistricting, a few people again dreamed of the Delmarva Peninsula as a unified state.

And in 1992, when the issue was the toll on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, some Virginians wondered whether union with the rest of the peninsula might not be preferable.

It seems safe to predict that the state of Delmarva will never come to be.



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An Eastern Shore Christmas tree — and its aroma

For the past few years we have bought Christmas trees from local retailers, and they have been uniformly perfect.

Each one is seemingly a clone of the other, varying only in height and breadth — the cultivated product of a Christmas tree farm nestled in the mountains of West Virginia.

The trees are lovely, and when bedecked with lights and glittering ornaments, they magically transform our family room into a holiday wonderland. They are perfect, except for one thing.

They don't smell like Christmas.

Christmas smells like an Eastern Red Cedar, a wild-grown, uncultivated orphan of a tree that popped up in the high marsh from a seed delivered in the poop of a blue jay.

The red cedar is an accident of nature, and it is the Christ-

mas tree I grew up with.

We always got a cedar tree from the high marsh on my grandfather's farm. I would crawl under the tree with the hand saw, the aroma of cedar pungent on a winter day, and as I sawed the trunk at ground level, little spurs of cedar would fall and collect under the collar of my jacket. My neck would itch for the rest of the day.

The aroma of cedar is Christmas. It is the sensory gift that the season brings.

We would drag the tree out of the marsh and drive it home in the back of the truck, and then put it up in the living room, where it would lend its fragrance to the entire house, mixing now and then with the breakfast aroma of frying bacon and salted fish slow-cooking in a cast-iron skillet.



PIXABAY PHOTO

The commercial Christmas trees don't smell like Christmas.

So we decided this year to turn back the clock and get a local cedar tree for the family room.

It won't be a statuesque, perfectly shaped conifer from a tree factory. It will have its faults. One side, on the shady side of the tree, will be sparse. That side will go in the corner.

The tree will have a cocoon hidden within its branches, and after a few days of warmth, we will find our gift of miniature praying mantises marching among the presents beneath the tree.

The trunk will be misshapen and it won't fit neatly into the tree stand, so we will employ the old method of support. The stand will stay in the attic and the tree will go into a small crock that once was used for salting fish. A little fishing line inconspicuously attached will keep it upright.

Decorating the tree will be equally haphazard. Lights will be strung wherever they can get a good grip, and we will find some of those old shimmering foil icicles and stand back and toss them at the tree and leave them where they land. This will be a one-of-a-kind, free-form Christmas tree.

And when the holiday is over, we will remove the lights and decorations, and the old tree, dry and crisp, will be dragged across the room, leaving a trail of cedar spurs, and it will go out into the yard and under the bird feeder.

There it will stay until the grass needs mowing in late March or early April, and all this time it will support a family of white-throated sparrows that will hunt for spilled sunflower seeds and sing their plaintive song.

Curtis J. Badger is a Delmarva native who majored in English at Salisbury University and, with the exception of four years traveling as a U.S. Air Force photojournalist, has enjoyed a career photographing and writing about his native coast. His books include "Salt Tide: Cycles and Currents of Life Along the Coast," "Bellevue Farm: Exploring Virginia's Coastal Countryside," and many others. He lives in Accomack County.

100 years ago
December 1924

Cape Charles wants franchise in league

That Cape Charles, representing Northampton County, will be represented in the 1925 Eastern Shore Baseball League is beginning to look like a reality, and if present indications materialize, the many fans of the county should see organized baseball on Patton Athletic Field here next season.

G.L. Webster, president of Cape Charles Rotary Club, and J.J. Restein, train master of the Norfolk Division, P.R.R., while attending a meeting of the directors of the Shore Circuit held in Salisbury recently, filed an application for admission and were advised by the league officials that Cape Charles would be welcomed to the Eastern Shore League if a berth could be made for its entrance.

If one of the six clubs now entered should drop out, or if the league could make an eight-club outfit by the admission of another club, either Laurel, Pocomoke, or Wilmington, all three of which have under advisement the application for entrance, Cape Charles could be easily taken care of, and the application made by Cape Charles representatives would be filed and given final consideration at the annual meeting of the directors in January.

While Cape Charles and Northampton County have never been in organized baseball, the town itself boasts one of the finest ball parks on the Del-Mar-Via peninsula and is one of the big items to consider in joining the league circuit. The county fans are anxious to have baseball here next season and are in a position and ready to organize as soon as a definite decision is reached.

— *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Arrest two on arson charges

After a chase lasting more than two weeks, in which Maryland and Virginia authorities have joined, Andrew and Luther Bevans, brothers, of Pocomoke City, Md., charged with arson in which the Methodist Episcopal parsonage, occupied by the Rev. J.R. Bickings, of Pocomoke City, was burned, his family narrowly escaping death, were arrested here this week.

Numerous other fires of incendiary origin and explosions in Worcester County, Md., and operating one of the largest whiskey stills ever seen on the peninsula are also charged against them.

Only after a running chase, in which several pistol shots were fired by Worcester County and Cape

Charles police authorities, were the two taken in a woods near here.

The Bevans brothers, sons of Everett E. Bevans, of Pocomoke City, were traced down the Eastern Shore of Virginia last week when their trail was lost.

Tuesday, Sgt. Eugene Dennis, of Cape Charles police force, received a letter disclosing their hiding place. The name of the writer is withheld.

Sheriff William S. Purnell, of Worcester County, was notified and he drove to Cape Charles with a score of deputies and the arrest followed.

— *Ledger-Star*

Eastville man badly injured while hunting

With a portion of his cheek, ear, and nose torn away by the discharge of an automatic shotgun, Wade Hinman, of Eastville, spent three hours in a gas boat without medical attention while running from the ducking grounds in Hog Island Bay to the mainland at Eastville.

The accident happened when the gunning party that included Harry J. Roberts, Q.C. Nottingham, H.P.B. Rue Jr., and Wade Hinman, all of Eastville, were transferring their guns from the gas boat to the gunning boats yesterday afternoon when one of the guns accidentally was discharged. Hinman was rushed to a hospital in Salisbury. Though critically ill from the loss of blood, it is thought he will recover.

— *Ledger-Star*

Accomack and Northampton two richest ag counties

Two Virginia counties, both on the peninsula, share the honor of being the richest agricultural counties in the whole United States, according to figures compiled in the 1920 census. They have the highest crop value per acre of any counties in the United States. These counties are Accomack and Northampton.

— *The Daily Star*

Showmen indicted on murder charge

Frank West, aged 48, owner of shows that provided midway attractions at the fairs in the Del-Mar-Va-Penn Circuit the past summer, and T.A. Schultz, Girard Leozzo, and Charles Miller, members of the troupes connected with the shows, were

presented jointly for trial in the Accomack County Circuit Court this morning on indictments charging first-degree murder.

Schultz, Leozzo, and Miller have been in the Accomack jail since the fatal shooting of Ralph Roach, 25, of Tasley, at the Tasley Fair Grounds on Aug. 14. West was released on \$30,000 bail.

Some 50 shots are said to have been fired between showmen and a hundred evening patrons at the fair. Roach was killed instantly by a pistol wound. There followed an all-night and morning chase of fleeing members of the show troupe by armed posses headed by Sheriff Ben T. Melson, of Accomack, from Virginia through Maryland and into Delaware. Four were taken at Delmar, one at Harrington, Del., and two were apprehended in Wilmington, Del.

Eleven persons connected with the shows were arrested, but seven, including two women, were released after questioning.

— *The Evening Sun*

Accomack claims largest tree

Accomack County claims to have the largest tree yet recorded. It is in the Sinnickson tract, near New Church. The tree is known as wood poplar and is deep down in a ravine thick with loblolly pine.

The big fellow measures 300 feet in circumference one foot above the ground and is about 130 feet high. It is 45 feet to the first limb and the spread near the top is 120 feet. The estimated age is 450 years, and to carry the firewood the tree would produce would require about 10 large railroad cars.

— *The Daily Star*

Chincoteague: The Wild West of the East

The settlement of Chincoteague Island dates back to sixteen hundred and something, although on account of its almost complete isolation for generations, little was known of it by the outside world until within the last 15 or 20 years.

The first land grant of which any record exists seems to be that of Captain William Whittington in 1672. One record, however, shows that the island was inhabited by White men before this date. This record is a letter written by Colonel Edmund Scarborough in 1659 in which he called attention to a coming war against the Assateague Indians for outrages committed against the citizens of upper Accomack and Gingoteague Island.

The name, probably Indian in origin, was in the

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Yesteryears

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early days both written and spoken as spelled above, and some of the older people on the island still pronounce it with a G at the beginning instead of a CH.

Previous to 1853, there were no educational facilities on the island, and as is always the case where people are cut off from civilization and the opportunity to acquire knowledge, the people on Chincoteague developed prejudices and peculiarities, and even today a keen observer may note certain speech habits that are distinctive. For instance, the word “horse” is spoken as though spelled with an “a” and with the “r” fully sounded — much as a person with an Irish accent would say it.

Indeed, this difference in speech was one of the first things to be noticed by one who has traveled extensively in Virginia and who makes a study of voice inflections and speech characteristics. The Chincoteague Islander has no southern drawl. He puts in the letter “r” every time the book calls for it. Indeed, in speech he is more of a brother to the people in Southern New Jersey than to those in Virginia.

And this is not surprising, for he has not mixed much with other Virginians. It is likely that some of the old-timers were not off the island for years at a time. And the visitors to the island are generally people who travel down the peninsula from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware.

— *Worcester Democrat and the Ledger-Enterprise*

75 years ago
December 1949

New bus link set up here

Passenger bus service between Norfolk and the Eastern Shore of Virginia will be started on Saturday, Dec. 10, by the Eastern Shore Transit Company, a subsidiary of the Red Star Motor Coaches, Inc.

One round trip will be operated between Chincoteague and Norfolk, James A. Ceddes, of Salisbury, Md., director of public relations for the firm, said.

The bus is scheduled to leave Chincoteague at 6:25 a.m. daily and arrive at Norfolk at 11:05 a.m. The return trip will begin in Norfolk at 4:25 p.m. with a Chincoteague arrival of 9 p.m.

The route will be Highway 13 and serve about 26 towns on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The Norfolk terminal of the bus service, Geddes said, would be located temporarily at the D.D. Jones Transfer Company building at Main and Boush Streets.

Geddes said Red Star buses would be used and that the company would be able to provide several buses for each trip if there was sufficient passenger traffic.

The Eastern Shore Transit Company has been operating on the Eastern Shore for about 25 years, serving the area from Salisbury to Cape Charles. Red Star Motor Coaches has operated from Salisbury to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., since 1923.

Red Star bought the Eastern Shore Transit Company last October. Geddes said the latter company held intrastate rights into Norfolk for a number of years. He said the Norfolk operations would be limited to intrastate travel until an interstate franchise could be obtained. Geddes said the company planned to file for the interstate rights with the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The company operates three trips daily from Cape Charles to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. Edgar T. Bennett is vice president and general manager of the company, which has its headquarters at Salisbury.

— *Ledger-Star*

Oil truckman killed, blaze douses train

Charles Reade, 68, of Onancock, was killed instantly yesterday shortly after 3 p.m. at Melfa when the fuel oil truck he was driving was struck by a Cape Charles-bound express passenger train of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The train, No. 455, was delayed an hour and a half. Reade was catapulted out of the truck on impact and thrown 30 feet across the tracks. He suffered multiple injuries.

The truck exploded and flaming wreckage was strewn for 300 yards along the right-of-way. The engine and two forward cars were doused with flaming oil. Eye witnesses of the mishap aboard the train said that the truck driver apparently failed to see or didn't heed the swinging warning signal and drove his vehicle across the tracks.

C.C. West, of Delmar, Del., the engineer, said he was blowing the usual warning whistle as the train neared Melfa. He brought his engine to a halt about one-fourth of a mile past the crossing.

One of the eye witnesses was Paul W. Minke,

CSSN, USN, of Baldwin, Long Island, N.Y. He was returning to duty aboard the USS Sicily (CVE-118), moored at Pier 3, Norfolk Naval Operating Base. Minke gathered notes on the scene and brought them to the Virginian-Pilot newsroom. The impact broke a window near where he was sitting.

— *The Virginian-Pilot*

Childless Eastern Shore couple adopts Latvian family of three

A childless shoemaker and his wife in Exmore will increase their family by three after the first of the year.

Delmar P. Dennison and Mrs. Dennison have given themselves a real Christmas present this year. They have invited a young family of displaced Latvians to come and live in their home on the Eastern Shore.

So Aleksandr, Zenta, and Mara Parin will arrive in the small town where they will live as members of the Dennison family. Dennison will teach Aleksandr the shoemaking trade and Zenta, Aleksandr's young wife, will help Mrs. Dennison with the housekeeping. Mara, the 14-month-old baby, will play happily in the peaceful atmosphere of a home. She's never known a home — she was born in a DP camp in the British Zone of Germany.

— *The Virginian-Pilot*

Don't we belong?

Simplification of government has always been a subject for polite discussion in the Old Dominion, but concrete action now has been achieved through a major operation, unintentionally, of course. The inspection certificates for Virginia automobiles reduces Virginia's 100 counties to 98. Nice work if you can get it.

Accomack and Northampton are totally missing. It will be confusing to prospective motorists and schoolchildren in other states when there is nothing south of Pocomoke City, Md., except the Atlantic Ocean. Imagine the consternation of in-laws planning to spend Christmas holidays with us.

Once, we recall the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company produced a beautiful travel brochure of the Old Dominion, only it liquidated the very profitable tax area known as the Eastern Shore.

We admit we are wet at times but not that wet. Some cartographers appear to be more than damp.

— *The Virginian-Pilot*

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Yesteryears

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One dies in crash of fighter plane

The Navy announced today the death of Lt. Comdr. Wynkoop Kiersted Jr., of Scarsdale, N.Y., in the crash of a fighter plane into the Chesapeake Bay.

Captain G.K. Fraser, Commander at the Auxiliary Naval Air Station here, said Kiersted's plane went into two spins at about 1,000 feet and crashed into the bay off Onancock yesterday.

Kiersted was a 1942 graduate of the Naval Academy. He was married, had two children, and resided on the base here. Among other duties, he acted as a public relations officer.

A crash boat was standing by, but efforts to recover the body were being hampered by high winds and rough seas.

— *Daily Press*

50 years ago
December 1974

Bridge-tunnel to raise tolls

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel District Commission has voted to increase tolls, effective Jan. 1, it has announced.

Under the new schedule, automobiles, pickup trucks, and small motor homes will pay \$6 per crossing. The current toll is \$5.25. As before, there is no charge for passengers.

— *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Shore kindergarten is a model

The Cheriton kindergarten has been selected by the State Department of Education as an exemplary kindergarten, according to an announcement by the Superintendent of Northampton County Schools, George Willis Young, during the November regular meeting of the school board.

The selection resulted from a recommendation by Mr. Young and the school board staff. It will provide the other school divisions with the opportunity to visit the Cheriton kindergarten and possibly use some of its methods in the development of their own kindergarten programs, according to Mr. Young.

In other board action:

The superintendent was authorized to request a school building needs survey in connection with the

building program. The survey will determine the potential impact of Brown and Root's proposed metal fabrication facility at its 2,000-acre location at Cape Charles on Northampton County schools.

Machipongo Elementary School has been selected to participate in the development of field testing of the clusters approach to career orientation curriculum project for the middle schools in Virginia.

The testing is made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the State Department of Education. The school will be developing and making adjustments in the project for final distribution throughout the state.

Mr. Young announced that Northampton Senior High School will be visited in February by the Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, culminating a two-year evaluation project. This is a prerequisite for continuing membership in the association, Mr. Young said. He said the Cheriton primary school will be visited by the committee in April.

— *The Daily Times*

Virginia man shot to death in gun mishap

A 22-year-old man died at his home in North Chesconessex near here Monday when a 12 gauge shotgun accidentally fired, hitting him in the chest, police said.

David Lawrence Andrea, a carpenter with the Nassawadox Construction Co., was shot at about 1:15 p.m. by a juvenile who was visiting him, according to a report by State Trooper Walter Marx.

Tpr. Marx said the juvenile told him he had been hunting and stopped in to visit Andrea. When the boy started to leave, he picked up his gun, which had been leaning against the wall, and it went off in his hand and shot Andrea.

Andrea was pronounced dead at the scene by Accomack County Medical Examiner Dr. Walter A. Eskridge.

No charges have been placed against the juvenile, Tpr. Marx said.

Memorial services will be followed by cremation at a time to be announced. Arrangements are being handled by the Williams Funeral Home in Onancock.

— *The Daily Times*

The land is still there

Unless other food producers step in the void and pick up the farming and processing operation of Dulany Foods, Delmarva will be a loser

under plans to shut down the Dulany operation.

The parent company, United Foods, has announced plans to close both the Bridgeville, Del., and Exmore operations and the Salisbury headquarters office, which handled sales. The Dulany family, which founded the business many years ago, sold out in 1963.

The old and well-known name Dulany will continue on frozen food packages, but the product will come from other United Foods plants, principally one in Tennessee. Thus, the shutdown of the Delmarva production amounts to an area loss of \$2 million annually in payroll, raw product purchases of \$2 million, and supply purchasing of \$1.5 million.

The Bridgeville plant reportedly had 20 regular employees and Exmore had 80 on a year-round basis, with several hundred more at work during peak growing seasons.

An irony of the situation is that the profit picture of the peninsula operation was considered good, according to one official. But economic conditions and other factors apparently dictated consolidation with other plants.

Food is still a prime product of our industrialized society, and Delmarva is still a place where it can be grown. There's the possibility that with the area's nearness to major markets, production will continue by other operators. Delmarvans can only hope it turns out that way.

— *The Daily Times*

Shootings probed in Virginia

The Accomack County Sheriff's Department is investigating a rash of shootings and break-ins that have occurred since early Saturday morning.

On Wednesday, a radiator shop owned by W.F. Blankenship, of Keller, was entered and a cash register and 10 radiators were taken.

The Onancock Armory and an insurance agency in Belle Haven were also entered Wednesday, but nothing was reported as missing.

Several hundred clams and oysters, four hams, and miscellaneous other items were stolen from the Town House Restaurant in Onancock Tuesday.

The same day there was reported a break-in at a grocery store in Pungoteague owned by Jay B. Lingo.

A dial was broken off of a safe in an unsuccessful attempt to gain entry after thieves broke into the Melfa office of Harold Phillips.

Several reports of shotgun blasts have been reported since the beginning of the week.

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Yesteryears

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Officials at the Elder Ford Co. reported that a new station wagon on their lot had been damaged by shotgun pellets and a Tasley tractor dealer reported that two plate glass windows had been damaged by shotgun blasts.

At 12:15 a.m. Sunday, Willie Smullings of Guilford reported that someone fired at and hit his car with a shotgun blast. The person fired from a passing car.

About 45 minutes later, Drucella Burton, of Wachapreague, reported that someone fired a shotgun blast through her window.

At 9:20 a.m. Sunday, police received a report that someone fired at Mary's Country Store at Pas-toria with a shotgun.

Saturday morning the Hall-Richardson Insurance Agency was entered, but nothing was reported as missing, although \$200 worth of vandalism was reported.

The same day police got reports of tires and wheels being stolen off a car parked at the Onancock High School. The car was owned by David Rew, of Onley.

About \$1,200 worth of furniture was taken from the vacation cottage of Louis Wells in Guilford.

And \$150 in cash was taken from the law offices of Mapp and Mapp in Keller, it was reported Monday. An office calculator was also taken.

— *The Daily Times*

An Eastern Shore bicycle trip

A day spent bicycling on the Eastern Shore, from Wachapreague on the seaside to Hack's Neck on the bayside, disclosed a good many changes.

For one thing, the Wachapreague Hotel, founded in 1903, no longer has the chef that the new owners brought from New York for a few weeks. He put filet mignon on the menu, said Bob Huber, but when people come to Wachapreague they expect Southern cooking.

Anybody can cook a steak, I advised him, but it takes an artist to produce Wachapreague clam fritters.

The Wachapreague Hotel's cooks average 62 years of age.

"Cherish them," I urged.

For another change, there is a new, wide, straight road between Wachapreague and Keller. Nobody I met all day could explain why the highway depart-

ment had built the road, but there it is.

Three of us — my wife, Edna Sara, and I — took the old road, which follows property lines to Keller, pausing on the way to pick bay berries for doe — or rather, they picked them; I lay in the sun. Bay berries are for the birds, I told them — and yet we three reached Keller before those who took the straight road and pedaled as if they were in an eight-day bicycle race.

"It's just inexplicable," said Ed.

At Keller, there was a conference about where to go next.

"Look," I said, "it's early, and already we have seen geese in the sky, bay berries, and the unofficial mayor of Wachapreague. That's enough for one year; let's go back to Norfolk."

But fooler heads prevailed and we pushed on towards Hack's Neck.

At Bob Doughty's general store in Pungoteague, I drank a Coke so cold it was filled with tiny spurs of ice. Why is it, I pondered, that a soft drink tastes better out of a returnable glass bottle than it does out of a disposable bottle or a can?

Harry, from the cyclists, burst through the door.

"What's the matter with you?" he cried.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked.

"The others sent me back to see if you were alright."

"Give them my best," I said, "and tell them to push on the Hack's Neck. I am with them in spirit."

Harry rushed out, and I asked Mrs. Doughty what the best thing was to see in Pungoteague, aside from the general store, that is.

"St. George's Episcopal Church is always on the garden tour," she said.

"How old is it?"

"Oh my land, I don't know," she said.

"How far is it?"

"Two or three blocks," she said.

"I'll go look at it next year," I said.

That night at the motel next door to the Wachapreague Hotel, which opens early next year, everybody compared notes.

"Two things puzzle me," said Mike. "Number one, we were strung out as never before, and number two, although the map shows we only traveled 35 miles, I've never been as tired."

Harry, who has a pedometer on his bike, said he could explain it.

"While Friddell was pedaling 20 miles," he said, "the rest of us traveled 65 circling back to see if he could make it."

"I darned near didn't make it myself," he added.

— *The Roanoke Times*

25 years ago
December 1999

Ex-cop gets 15 years for bank robbery

A circuit court judge Monday sentenced former Cape Charles cop Van Bernard Collins to 45 years in prison — 30 of which were suspended — for his role in a robbery at a Cheriton bank and the subsequent theft of a police car in a botched getaway attempt.

Despite testimony from a psychiatrist who said Collins was suicidal and suffering from a major bout with depression before and during the July 1998 robbery, Judge Glen A. Tyler favored "the high end" of state sentencing guidelines when determining Collins' 15-year punishment.

Collins, who will be 26 next month, faced up to life in prison on three of the seven charges he faced. Under the state's present parole program, Collins would be expected to serve about 85% of the 15 years — which would be 12 years and nine months.

The only witness called during the sentencing was psychiatrist Dr. John Bulette, who evaluated Collins several times after the robbery and said the former police officer suffered from a major depressive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, and the effects of a mix of alcohol, marijuana, muscle relaxants, and other medications taken in the weeks before the incident.

Less than two months before the robbery, Collins resigned while under indefinite suspension from the Cape Charles Police Department, where he had worked for 16 months.

Bulette said Collins could be treated with medication and psychotherapy and had a good prognosis for recovery.

But Northampton Commonwealth's Attorney Bruce Jones still called for significant jail time.

"We have plenty of depressed people ... who do not rob banks," Jones said.

Collins was wearing a ski mask and brandishing a police-issue .45-caliber pistol when he entered the Cheriton Crestar Bank on July 27, 1998, jumped on the counter and placed what he claimed was a motion-activated bomb on the counter, according to testimony at his May 3 trial.

Collins took \$24,900 from two tellers and threatened everyone in the bank, saying he knew their families and children, Jones said during the trial. A bank manager watched Collins drive off in a white car, which Sheriff Wayne Bradford soon saw him driving north on Seaside Road in Nassawadox.

He caught and handcuffed Collins just south of town, according to Jones and accounts of the incident.

Collins, however, convinced a deputy to loosen his

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Yesteryears

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handcuffs, freed his hands, and then took the deputy's police cruiser, leading a high-speed chase north on Lankford Highway and west on Rogers Drive in Nassawadox. He crashed in Hare Valley, according to Jones and witnesses testifying at Collins' preliminary hearing.

The money was recovered. In January, the loaded .45-caliber pistol was recovered on a Marionville roadside by Virginia Department of Transportation employees.

— *The Daily Times*

Onancock B&B centers around family

The prospect of scads of company over the holidays is stressful to some, but for bed and breakfast owner Maphis Oswald, it's time to obsess happily over every detail that brings the sights and smells of Christmas to the eight guest rooms of Colonial Manor Inn.

"It's a wreck," Oswald said last week, surveying the jumble of Christmas decorations covering her dining room table. "But that's Christmas, it's not instantaneous."

Oswald's energy is convincing proof that it's not so bad.

Last year Oswald and her husband, Ed, had eight guests at Christmas in their 1882 Victorian home that has a long history of Southern hospitality as a tourist house in this bayside town.

Its original proprietor was Leola Horsey and later her daughter, June Evans, took over. The Oswalds have been here five years and have tried to maintain the warmth the home has always been known for, Oswald said.

"The great thing about Onancock," she said, "is that the Onancock Business and Civic Association decorates the downtown and puts up lights on the Bagwell Bridge and the tree in the park. You get the feeling of Christmas being in the whole town and not just in your house, and that's special."

Special, too, are all the touches Oswald adds to the B&B beginning the day after Thanksgiving.

"Never start before Thanksgiving, just can't do it," she said firmly.

On an antique desk in the foyer is a 500-piece Santa's workshop. The eclectic scene grew from three pieces and now includes elves, Santa, Mrs. Claus, and reindeer, along with the smallest details, from a Santa coffee maker to a tiny mousetrap com-

plete with Brie.

"We are like an extended home for people. Most of them will be family and friends of locals visiting for the holidays," Oswald said. "We get their overflow."

Decorating the 20-room house is a painstaking process. Soon, all the rooms will be filled with live greens that Oswald will constantly replace so they stay fresh and aromatic.

"It's the smell, the feel of them. Real things get me in the season," she said. "Christmas, it's all about the senses."

And she will feed the senses with the smell of mulled wine and spiced goodies like her breads.

"I think it evokes visions of sugar plums," Oswald said.

Breakfasts, especially the one on Christmas morning, are extra special.

"Quentin Bell, the chef at the country club, taught me how to make eggs Benedict for the masses," she said. "And I also do angel biscuits filled with all the bad things like whipped cream and butter."

Watching this whirlwind of organization, one would think Oswald has been in the B&B business all her life, but her earlier career was in marketing and advertising in Maywood, N.J. She and Ed left after the small town in north Jersey became congested.

"It was easy for Ed to transplant his recruiter business here," Oswald said. "All he needed was a fax and a phone, but then it was 'What should I do?'"

An advertisement for the house that would become the Eastville Manor spurred them to come to the Shore. "But that house needed too much renovation," said Oswald, so they ended up in Onancock, bringing the traditions of Maywood with them.

"Our guests are like extended family."

— *The Daily Times*

Possible bridge-tunnel cut causes joy, worry

The crimson light of a Chesapeake Bay sunset bathes Gary C. Byler's study, filtering through a wall of glass into the airy family room and kitchen of the sprawling home where he moved with his wife and four young children a couple of years ago.

Settled in a secluded four-acre site on high sand dunes near the southernmost tip of the Delmarva Peninsula, the Bylers live a few steps away from one of the bay's most pristine

beaches, a serene world away from the suburban tangle of clogged roads and traffic jams they left behind.

Byler, 42, a politically active attorney, keeps a foot in both worlds.

He commutes 45 minutes to his Virginia Beach office across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, an 18-mile ribbon of steel and concrete that connects rural Northampton County with the booming Hampton Roads region.

Though its \$20 round-trip toll has long been considered a blockade to development that has preserved the lower Eastern Shore as a rural enclave, the bridge-tunnel is looking more like a gateway to a growing number of commuters, retirees, and developers.

Now, talk of the first reduction in the toll, which has paid the bills and construction bonds since the bridge-tunnel opened 35 years ago, has quickened the hearts of developers and real estate agents on both sides of the bay. Investors from as far as Richmond and Baltimore are snapping up second homes and rental properties.

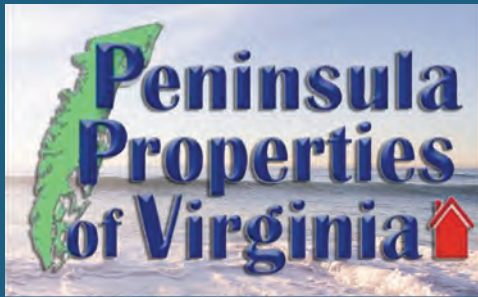
But many in Northampton County, wary of a 3,000-unit golf course being built near Cape Charles, the county's largest town, say tinkering with the toll would be like rolling out the red carpet for metropolitan Hampton Roads to gobble up their land and their slow-paced lifestyle.

"This is a rural community, and I'm afraid there's a level of naivete about the development pressure this could bring and our ability to handle it," said Frank Wendell, a six-term town councilman from Cape Charles. "The impact could be wide-ranging and scary. The impact is going to be proportional to the amount the tolls are reduced."

The 12-member commission that runs the facility has not discussed a new toll, although \$15 and \$12 round-trip rates for commuters are frequently mentioned by local businesspeople. Commission members are awaiting results of a commuter survey and financial analysis next month.

"For the time being, this is on ice," said commission chairman M. Lee Payne, a banker from Norfolk. "And it would take an endorsement by a majority of representatives from the lower Shore [as well as being] a financial plus for the bridge-tunnel's bottom line before I'd recommend it."

— *The Baltimore Sun*



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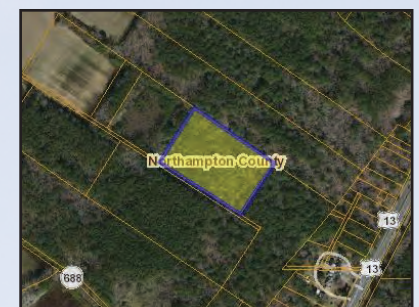
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WISHING EVERYONE PEACE, JOY AND HAPPINESS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON!