Affordable Housing –

...Some Virginia Communities Take a Second Look at an Old Solution

By Mary Miller

Trailers, mobile homes, single-wides, double-wides, and, more recently, manufactured and modular homes, have been a source of affordable housing since the 1970s. Since then, trailer parks became either viable neighborhoods or centers of poverty, well kept up or progressing to dilapidation and sub-standard housing. “Now, these communities are starting to disappear as land values rise, developments crop up, and the structures start to wither with age. But a movement to preserve the neighborhoods is gaining traction across the state,” according to a story by Cat Modlin-Jackson from Virginia Public Radio.¹

In Fairfax County, residents of 2 adjacent mobile home communities became concerned about development plans along their highway. They are trying to organize a resident/tenant association and consider ways to own their neighborhood. But the realities of financing, organization, and policy are daunting. “The second-best thing is to get a nonprofit to buy it, which has happened in a number of places in Virginia,” said Mary Paden, a community organizer. “Later down the line, the trailers will be replaced with units like condos for seniors on a fixed income and townhomes. But the overall aim is to prevent displacement.”

Shift to Southwood Mobile Home Park near Charlottesville. The owner and residents were facing a similar situation. Maintenance issues with aging structures, and pressure from local enforcement agencies, were forcing a decision – to sell the property for development or reach out to a nonprofit. They contacted Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville, which had just purchased a small mobile home park in the city and had made the bold promise to residents there that they would not be displaced. “It was a leap of faith on both sides – the community at Southwood put their futures and their families’ security into the hands of a nonprofit organization previously unknown to them – and a small nonprofit promised to take on ownership and maintenance of a 100-acre trailer park with more than 1,500 residents, with the long-term goal of redeveloping the park without displacing the community.” As the project is moving forward, “this unique nonprofit/public partnership will be a model for how to achieve redevelopment equitably, sustainably, and attractively, both here in Central Virginia and nationwide.”²

“We think there is opportunity for mobile home living to be included in affordable housing,” said Lee Householder, executive director of Project:Homes, a Richmond nonprofit that constructs and repairs homes for low-income people. A total of 11,437 people in central Virginia live in mobile home parks, according to a recent report. “Mobile Homes Parks: Relic of the Past or Opportunity for the Future?” was commissioned by Project:Homes and the Virginia Mobile Home

See Housing, cont’d on p. 2

CONTENTS

Affordable Housing……………………………1
And the Winner Is ... (Are?) ......................2
General Assembly Passes Clean Economy Act ..................................................3
theGIG: Shore’s First Coworking Space ......4
Effort Underway to Rename Nature Preserve ..................................................5
Recycling Corner ..................................6
Keeping Track ....................................6
Spicy Sweet Potatoes With Bacon and Pecans .................................................7
Community Calendar ..............................8
Housing, cont’d from p. 1

Park Coalition, a network of local nonprofits and community groups.3

The fact that Virginia communities are looking at mobile homes, single- and double-wides, tiny homes and manufactured homes in neighborhood settings as a possibility for providing affordable housing indicates that there may be a developing movement to consider these options.4 A future ShoreLine article will discuss the pros and cons of these housing choices, and new local developments – including the appointment of a United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Specialist for the Shore.

1 https://www.wvtf.org/postcould-community-ownership-save-mobile-home-parks#stream/0
2 https://www.cvillehabitat.org/what-we-do/southwood.html
3 Study looks at whether mobile home parks are relics of past or opportunities for future | Business News | richmond.com
4 https://homeguide.com/costs/modular-home-prices#prefab

Happy New Year!

Please Remember to Renew Your CBES Membership

www.cbes.org

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And the Winner Is… (Are?)

By Donna Bozza

Shore Artist Bethany Simpson draws the winning raffle ticket in December for her “2020 Between the Waters” painting donated to support CBES Mission.

CBES Raffle Winner Kim Klump of Bishopsville, MD, wants you to know she is smiling as she rendezvoused with the CBES Director at the Virginia Welcome Center to claim her prize.

There was more than one winner of the CBES Raffle for the “Between the Waters 2020” painting by popular Shore artist Bethany Simpson. First, there was the very delighted Kim Klump of Bishopsville, Maryland.

The other winner was CBES Mission.

The raffle raised $2,227, thanks to Bethany’s generosity in donating 100% of the proceeds. And in no small way, all those who purchased tickets brought a welcome infusion of revenue to our small nonprofit. The 28th Between the Waters Bike Tour, CBES only fundraising event, was a COVID casualty among so many others in 2020.

The painting raffle usually runs in conjunction with the Bike Tour. For the last 4 years, Bethany’s original paintings have been used not only for the raffle, but the images have promoted the Tour and have been showcased on bike apparel and commemorative T-shirts.

This year’s painting took a whimsical turn with a bike-riding bay mermaid – a perfect pairing with Bethany’s vivid, coastal folk-art style.

Kim said she was as surprised as she was “thrilled to win.” A CBES Bike Tour veteran, it seems fitting she would take home the prize.

“I really missed not being able to ride this year,” she said. “The painting lets me remember how special the Tour and the Eastern Shore are.”

Make sure to check out Bethany’s artwork online
https://www.facebook.com/Paintesva33
or at the Lemon Tree Gallery and Studio, Mason Avenue, Cape Charles.
In April, Governor Northam signed the Virginia Clean Economy Act, which in part incorporates clean energy directions that the Governor had initiated in Executive Order 43 (Expanding Access to Clean Energy and Growing the Clean Energy Jobs of the Future) in September 2019. The Act establishes a mandatory renewable portfolio standard, with 100% clean electricity by 2050. Virginia is the first southern state to set this standard. The law sets the following goals:

- **Renewable energy targets** — Dominion Energy Virginia must be 100% carbon-free by 2045, and Appalachian Power must be 100% carbon-free by 2050.
- **Retiring old fossil-fuel power plants** — Nearly all coal-fired plants must close by the end of 2024. Other fossil-fuel plants have different target dates, depending on size and fuel.
- **Energy efficiency standards** —
  - A new program will be established to reduce the energy burden for low-income customers, with a stakeholders group to be convened by the Department of Social Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop recommendations.
  - An energy efficiency resource standard will be established.
- **Offshore wind** —
  - The law establishes a target of 5,200 MW of off-shore wind generation.
  - Dominion Energy Virginia must prioritize hiring local workers from historically disadvantaged communities, work with the state to advance apprenticeships and job training, and include an environmental and fisheries mitigation plan.
- **Solar and distributed generation** —
  - The law establishes a target of 16,100 MW of solar and onshore wind energy.
  - The law expands net metering for homeowners and rooftop solar, with an increase in the cap from 20 kW to 25 kW.
  - The cap for a homeowner’s system has been changed from 100% to 150% of annual electricity usage.
  - The cap on the total amount of net metered solar has been raised from 1% to 6% of total generation statewide (including 1% for low- and moderate-income customers). Until the 3% mark is reached, customers will get credit for excess energy generated at the retail rate; once the 3% level is reached, the State Corporation Commission will determine the appropriate rate structure for new customers moving forward.
  - Dominion must include at least 1% of its renewable energy portfolio from distributed solar systems less than 1 MW in size. If they don’t meet this carveout, they must pay compliance through solar renewable energy certificates, which provide income to homeowners with solar installations.
  - Standby fees cannot be charged by Dominion for customers with systems up to 15kW; standby fees have been removed for Appalachian Power customers.
  - The largest energy companies are required to construct or acquire more than 3,100 MW of storage capacity.

Here on the Shore, ANEC supports net metering programs for wind and solar, as well as a community solar program. For electric cooperatives, customers representing up to 5% of their adjusted peak load (2% residential, 1% non-residential, 2% nonprofit/non-jurisdictional) can enroll in net metering. Currently, there are 90 ANEC net-metering customers, including 76 residential, with an installed capacity of 650 kW, representing 7.8% of that 5% cap (or 0.4% of ANEC’s adjusted peak load). The Clean Economy Act did not remove the standby fee for electric cooperatives, which are governed by the revised net metering standards passed in 2019.

**RGGI/Flood Preparedness**

In a related move, the Governor also signed the Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act, which requires the state to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). The Act will establish a carbon dioxide cap-and-trade program to reduce emissions from power plants under RGGI; proceeds from the auction sales of emissions allowances will fund the Community Flood Preparedness Fund. The Fund is designed to enhance flood prevention, protection, and coastal resilience, by creating a low-interest loan program to help both inland and coastal communities that are subject to recurrent flooding. The Governor’s amendments to the Act included forgiveness of loans in low-income areas.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation has published draft guidelines for the Fund (https://townhall.virginia.gov/L/ViewNotice.cfm?GNid=1175); the public comment period is open until January 31, 2021.
Two days before the Governor was slated to preside over its Grand Opening in March, the state went into lockdown for COVID-19. Yet despite the setbacks, including reduced capacity, entrepreneurial/coworking space theGIG (Gather, Innovate, and Grow) is up and running.

Joe Betit of Pungoteague, who recently retired as the Corporate Manager of Surveying and the first innovation officer for worldwide engineering firm Bechtel, has been one of the driving forces behind theGIG. Joe and his wife Amy moved to the Shore in 2000; while teaching at Old Dominion University, he noted that “we’re exporting our kids,” and added that “innovation locations can change expectations.” Most entrepreneurial/coworking spaces are located near technology centers; “there’s nothing like this private-sector model in rural areas,” he said. But the main concept – high-speed internet access, a good conference room, free coffee, and individual workspaces, with 24/7 access via key card – can be created anywhere.

theGIG got its start with grant money through the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Go Virginia project, with support and cooperation from Northampton County, the Northampton Economic Development Authority, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority, and the Eastern Shore Foundation, Inc. The Go Virginia grant has been extended to March 31, 2021, “after which we could be self-sustaining,” said Betit. That sustaining level would be 13 to 15 monthly subscribers; due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, they’re currently limited to 9 clients. “The social distancing requirements have limited our usefulness,” Betit said. “theGIG was built around working together and having a great time.” Although the conference room’s use has been limited during this time, Betit sees it as a key asset, to bring people in for webinars and seminars.

The Clients
“People using this space,” Betit said, “are a very interesting crowd.” Although most use the space for the reliable high-speed internet connection, their reasons vary. There’s the mom who drops her 2 girls off for school, uses the space in Exmore during the day, then picks up her girls and heads home. The entrepreneur building a mountain bike track system who started with a 1-month rental and is now a permanent occupant. Or the executive of a 3D printing company with a second home here on the Shore. There are as many stories as there are tenants – and the needs for high-speed internet connections and entrepreneurial opportunities abound.

Interested future clients can check out theGIG’s website (https://thegigva.com), or email them at info@thegigva.com. You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram. The cost is $20/day or $110/month. Once past COVID-19, clients can rent the conference room hourly or daily, or for special events.

theGIG has a reciprocal arrangement with 6 HotDesk locations on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In contrast to theGIG’s public/private model, the HotDesk locations are provided free by the locality.

The Future
Betit is now in discussions with Northampton County to create a larger version of this space in the former Northampton Middle School in Machipongo, once we’re past the pandemic. As he put it, there are “plenty of people trying to open small businesses and start-ups who don’t have a separate office space in their homes.” There is also a need for state workers, who may only be on the Shore for 1 day a week or less, but still need an office space to operate from.

What I really missed, beyond the space or location, was the motivation and inspiration of being around other entrepreneurs.” – Kerry Kobe, theGIG cofounder and Board member

theGIG: Shore’s First Coworking Space
By Sue Mastyl

“Open for Business”

The Team
In getting theGIG started, Betit searched for suitable spaces, and connected with Ron Matthews, who had office space available in Exmore (3292 Main Street). Matthews is a CPA who has spent his career in a number of healthcare organizations, and currently works with entrepreneurs to grow and sustain businesses. The third member of this partnership was Kerry Kobe, who moved to the Shore from Chicago in 2018 and experienced many of the well-known frustrations of trying to grow her internet consulting business from home. “What I really missed,” she said, “beyond the space or location, was the motivation and inspiration of being around other entrepreneurs.” She came up with the initial concept of theGIG, and with Betit and Matthews and support from the Town of Exmore, they made it into a reality.
On November 22, 2020, Edward S. “Ned” Brinkley, PhD, a long-time resident of Cape Charles, died unexpectedly while on a birding trip in Ecuador. Ned was among the elite in the field of observational ornithology: a prolific writer, highly skilled in the field, and a natural teacher. All of us who knew him, from his dear family, to his local friends and neighbors on the Eastern Shore, to the vast community of friends and admirers in the global birding community, grieve his passing and will continue to miss him greatly for a long time.

The Northampton County Board of Supervisors is now considering a request to rename the newly created Northampton County Nature Preserve (located on property that is a part of the County landfill in Oyster) in honor of Ned Brinkley. An honor such as the naming of a public asset after an individual is meant to recognize those special people who have positively impacted and contributed to the community and society.

Ned Brinkley would be just such an honoree. Ned’s life’s work was dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of bird life, both here in Northampton County and globally, through his writing, nature-tour-leading, and volunteerism. Ned wrote a popular field guide to North American Birds and was a long-time editor of *North American Birds* magazine. He authored numerous articles and was acknowledged by authors of many major contemporary bird books. He promoted the birds and birding opportunities of Northampton County within his vast network of followers, and mentored many beginning birders on the Eastern Shore and throughout Virginia.

Ned served on the Board of Directors of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Birding and Wildlife, Inc., and he wrote the entire text of the website for Birding Eastern Shore (www.birdingeasternshore.org). Furthermore, the re-establishment of the Seaside Walkway and the recognition of the ecological value of the landfill pond and adjacent habitat was instigated initially by Ned.

The landfill pond area was one of Ned’s favorite birding spots, especially after a hurricane, when birds might congregate and an occasional vagrant might be found. Ned found the only Virginia record of a Lucy’s Warbler at the landfill pond in 2016, a discovery which brought hundreds of birders from the mid-Atlantic region to view this diminutive songbird. During the past year, Ned served on the committee that approved the Seaside Walkway signage, the siting of the proposed photography blinds around the landfill pond, and the design of the photography blinds, and he was integral to future planning for habitat management at the preserve.

Not only would renaming the Northampton County Preserve to the Edward S. Brinkley Nature Preserve be an appropriate way to honor Ned’s contributions, it would also provide a focal point and gathering place for those who miss him to feel his spirit and his presence.

Ned scratched the word “amor” [Spanish for “love”] in the dirt as he became ill on the trail in Ecuador. For all of his contributions to society from an ornithological standpoint, it is truly the gift of his love that leaves the greatest void in the hearts of his family, friends, and even the acquaintances who briefly shared the joy of birding with Ned. That love manifested in kindness, integrity, generosity, mentoring, teaching, studying, advocating, and sometimes, cooking.

I have spent a lot of time reflecting on Ned’s gifts to us since he died; scrolling through texts and emails, recalling phone conversations and outings. He often advocated for the fellowship of birding – the shared joys of seeing a rare bird, birding in a special environment, and the meals and conversation after a day in the field – experiences that we took for granted before the pandemic.

Ned said that his love for nature and birds became focused through those who mentored and taught him when he was a child. I look forward to helping to develop a preserve in Ned’s honor to reflect those values: love of birds, love of nature, and sharing those loves with others.
Keeping Track

Chesapeake Underwater Grasses Under Stress

A report from *Bay Journal* (https://www.bayjournal.com/news/climate_change/chesapeake-s-grasses-hard-hit-by-heat-high-flows-in-2019/article_cbb4484e-b09c-11ea-b520-17f5e20459fa.html) highlights results from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science 2019 annual aerial survey of the Chesapeake Bay’s underwater grasses, or submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). Overall, the grass beds suffered their largest drop since surveys began, with a decrease of at least 33% from 2018.

SAV is considered one of the most important indicators of Bay health, since the grasses need clear water to survive, and provide important habitat for many Bay animals. The Chesapeake Bay Program has targeted 185,000 acres for Bay restoration; last year’s total of 66,400 acres represents 35.9% of that goal. Historically, there may have been up to 600,000 acres.

Higher temperatures and increased freshwater flows contributed to the loss, although 2019 did not have the “super high flows” associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, which can lead to scouring of the beds. Still, 2019 had the highest volume of river flows since monitoring began in 1937.

The loss of SAV was not evenly distributed throughout the Bay. The fresh and low-salinity areas of the upper Bay, which receive the full force of the freshwater flows, actually did very well in the survey, with significant gains in some areas and no change in the Susquehanna Flats, the largest SAV bed in the Bay.

The largest decline was seen in the mid-salinity, or mesohaline, region (roughly from Baltimore to the mouth of the Rappahannock River), with a 56% decrease, including more than two thirds of the grass beds in Tangier Sound. This region is dominated by widgeon grass, which disappears quickly but bounces back quickly as well. Unfortunately, there is little diversity in the SAV beds in this region; beds that do have more diverse mixes of species fared better.

A large decline was also seen in the very salty, or polyhaline, region (from the Rappahannock River to the mouth of the Bay), with a 35% decrease in SAV. This region is dominated by eelgrass, which is near the southern end of its range. This grass does not tolerate high temperatures, murky water, or reduced salinity, all of which were issues in 2019. Higher flows and warmer temperatures, expected to persist and worsen with climate change, may lead to the disappearance of eelgrass from the Bay.

“Together We Can Make A Difference for a Better Tomorrow”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day/ Community Unity Day Celebration

January 18, 2021
9:30 AM on WESR (103.3 FM)

This year’s event, formerly held annually at Northampton High School for more than 3 decades, is a joint effort by the Eastern Shore NAACP branches, CBES, and Northampton County Public Schools.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Community Unity Day Celebration will be held via broadcast on WESR Radio (103.3 FM) beginning at 9:30 AM. Although the program is still being finalized at press time, the event will include presentations by community leaders and local musicians.

Further information will be available in local media and on the CBES website (www.cbes.org) as it becomes available. Tune in for this year’s celebration!

Questions? Email Jane G. Cabarrus:
janecabarrus@aol.com

Recycling Corner

Plastic Bag Recycling Suspended

As we reported in the March 2020 issue of *ShoreLine*, Accomack County convenience centers, as well as Food Lion and Walmart stores, were collecting plastic grocery/shopping bags – as well as plastic overwrap (e.g., for toilet paper, paper towels, water bottles); dry cleaning bags; newspaper sleeves; produce bags; Zip-Loc bags; and cereal liners – for transport to Trex for recycling. Unfortunately, this program has been suspended at all locations on the Shore due to COVID-19 challenges.

CBES hopes that this is a temporary situation; we will follow this closely, and let our members know when any options for recycling become available.

In the meantime, this provides even more incentive for us all to reduce our use of these materials –

• Bring your own bags every time you shop. If you can, use canvas bags – they last forever, and are easily washed when soiled.

• Resist using produce bags whenever possible – there’s no need when buying a single bunch of bananas or a few apples.

• Reuse plastic bags, Zip-loc bags, and other plastic materials (for suggestions, see the November 2020 issue of *ShoreLine*).
Heavier Rainfall Predictions Due to Climate Change

Two recent studies are predicting increased rainfall during 100-year storm events as a result of climate change, according to a summary from Bay Journal (https://www.bayjournal.com/news/climate_change/climate-change-study-predicts-heavier-rains-for-eastern-shore/article_980b649e-639b-11ea-b19b-1788419bd1f4.html).

The first study, from the University of Maryland and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, estimated rainfall forecasts for 2041 to 2070, with an assumption that little is done to combat climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, for 5 towns on Maryland’s Eastern Shore (Elkton, Denton, Cambridge, Easton, and Centreville). For 100-year storm events (storms with a 1% chance in any given year), their estimates were 0.5 to 1.6 inches higher than the estimates in the current NOAA charts, with predictions ranging from 9.2 inches to 10.1 inches. Co-author Kaye Brubaker, from the University of Maryland, noted that the assumption of higher emissions was important, in order to plan for the worst-case scenario. “This [analysis] is a hint of what global-scale change might be bringing to our neighborhood,” she said.

A second study, by the Dewberry consulting firm, estimated the 24-hour rainfall total for a 100-year storm event in Virginia Beach in 2075 at 13.3 inches, compared with a historical average of 9.4 inches. Based on these results, Dewberry recommended an increase of 20% in rainfall intensities in the city’s design calculations.

Spicy Sweet Potatoes With Bacon and Pecans

If any vegetable could be called the “staff of life” down our way, the sweet potato would rank right up there. Since the mid-1800s it’s been a mainstay of both hearth and home and the farm economy. Delicious, nutritious, stores well, easy to grow, easy to cook – side dish, dessert, or sometimes both – plain or fancy, always dependable. Red- and orange-flesh varieties are the most familiar, but white and purple types have their fans. Hayman potatoes, a West Indian import and local specialty for over a hundred years, have pale flesh that turns light yellow when cooked – with a rich, sweet flavor.

But it’s the orange/red types that figure in most Southern recipes. In spite of the rich flavor of the potato, many cooks add sometimes extraordinary amounts of sweeteners in traditional recipes. Here’s one, cobbled together from old favorites, that embraces the traditional fall harvests of sweet potatoes, pecans, and bacon, with just a little extra sweetness – for a not-too-sweet, a little salty, spicy, crunchy side that goes with almost everything. Serves 4.

- 2 good-sized sweet potatoes – peeled, cut in bite-sized pieces
- 3-4 bacon slices – partially cooked
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 2 tbsp oil
- Warm spices to taste: allspice, nutmeg, chili powder, cayenne, paprika, cinnamon
- Sea salt and pepper

While preparing potatoes, put bacon in foil-lined pan and put in pre-heated 400° oven for about 10 minutes to render fat and partially cook. Mix spices and salt and pepper to taste in small dish. Spread oil in 13" x 9" baking dish, add potatoes, and toss to coat. Add maple syrup, then sprinkle spices and salt and pepper over potatoes and mix thoroughly. Remove bacon from oven to cool – then roast potatoes for 15 minutes at 400°. Remove potatoes from oven, add cut-up bacon and pecans – stir well and roast for another 15-20 minutes, until potatoes are fork-tender.

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https://www.talkrealnow.com
Shore Neighbors Are Still in Need of Help

Call (757) 787-2557 for dropoff locations/times

FOODBANK SHOPPING LIST

**Lean Protein**: canned tuna, chicken and turkey, peanut butter, dried or canned beans.
**Fruits and Vegetables**: canned fruits and vegetables, pasta sauce, 100% fruit juice, fruit preserves, dried fruit.
**Whole Grains**: cereal, pasta, oatmeal, rice, crackers.
**Meals**: soups, stews, boxed meals, canned pasta.

**Baby Products**: formula, baby food, diapers, wipes.

**Please Remember**: Low Fat - Low Sodium - Low Sugar Products Preferred. • Non-perishable food • Non-breakable containers • Nutritional labels intact • Check dates (items can be up to 6 months past printed date).

Thank You!

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InFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER!

Community Calendar*

*NOTE: For current status of public meetings, go to the appropriate website or contact by email or phone.

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<th>Northampton County</th>
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**CBES and Other Activities**

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<td>3rd Tues</td>
<td>CBES Board Meeting</td>
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For membership and other CBES information:
www.cbes.org