



Library System Report

EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA • PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Regional Library and Heritage Center • Cape Charles Memorial Library • Chincoteague Island Library • Northampton Free Library

March 2025

Director's Update



Christopher Pote,
System Director

For the last couple of days of March, I was fortunate to be able to attend the annual Virginia Public Library Directors Association Conference. This was my first opportunity to meet, network, and learn from other directors throughout the state. From large to small, public libraries share many of the same challenges and enjoy many of the successes; it was very beneficial for me. Of course, the tone of the meeting was reserved as the uncertainties of federal support of public libraries comes into question. But the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public System Library is in a strong

Continued...



Upcoming April Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- **10th: "Not Your Disney Pinocchio" - ESRL**
- **15th: Teen Gaming and Craft Night - ESRL**
- **17th: Robot Night - ESRL**
- **19th: Craft Supply Swap - ESRL**
- **22nd: Wallops Island Tour - CIL**
- **24th: Family Movie Night, *The Wild Robot* - ESRL**
- **24th Teen Creative Writing - ESRL**
- **24th: Robot Night - NFL**
- **Teen Gaming Night: Every Tuesday - ESRL**
- **Tech Help: Every Wednesday - NFL***
*Note the New Day this Month
- **Ancestry Help: Every Wednesday - ESRL**
- **Heritage Center Reference Assistance:
Every Thursday - NFL**
- **Storytime Anytime: Every Monday &
Wednesday - Northampton Free**

For more information: espl.org; (757) 787-3400

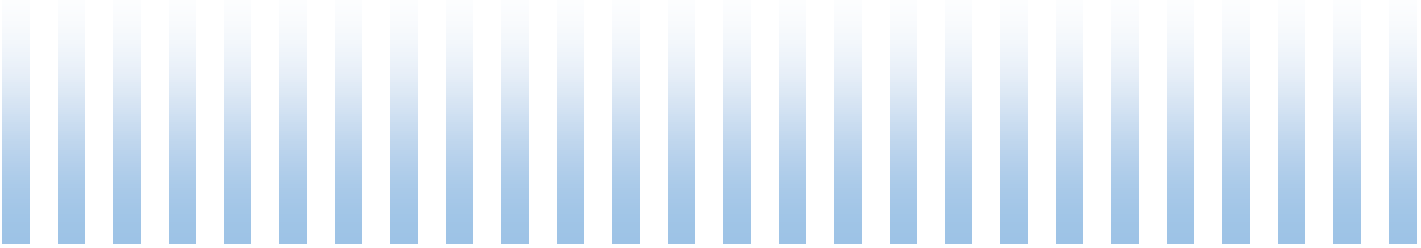
CIL = Chincoteague Island Library

CCML = Cape Charles Memorial Library

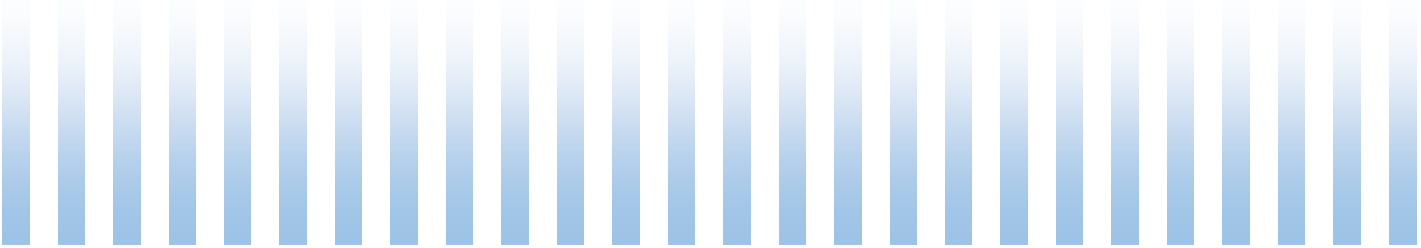
ESRL = ESVA Regional Library & Heritage Center

NFL = Northampton Free Library

position to weather this storm. Both Accomack and Northampton Counties, as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia, provide the total of ESPL's operating expenses. ESPL does not receive federal funding, but does benefit from services that are federally funded. Should we lose those services, we will do our best to make sure our patronage will not suffer. In the meantime, we are open for business and remain ready to serve you as best as we can.



The Barrier Island Center in Machipongo has donated copies of its newest children's book to the four public libraries on the Eastern Shore. "The Many Faces of Assateague" was recently published, marking the one-hundredth anniversary of Pony Penning on the island. Copies of the book were also donated to schools in the two counties. This is the third in a series of books for young readers about the barrier islands. Other books cover the history of Hog Island and Cobb's Island. A fourth book, "Birds of the Barrier Islands," is currently in production. Pictured above are Christopher Pote, library director, and Curtis and Lynn Badger, the authors of the books.



ESPL, in conjunction with the Eastern Shore Public Library Foundation, is in the process of buying some new furniture for the Regional Library in hope to make it more comfortable for individuals and families to grab a book and enjoy the space. This is in response to the Foundation's capital campaign this year. Thank you to all supporters, and the Foundation, for being such great support to the Library System and the communities of the Shore.

The Regional Library will also be installing new furniture and shelving in the Teen Room. Constructed with mostly hand-me-down items, I am glad we are turning this into a more inviting space.



The Heritage Center Mission Statement and Collection Development Policy will be up for a second reading and discussion at this coming Board of Trustees meeting (April 8, 1pm, Regional Library).



EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

Heritage Center

esp1heritage.org

Jazmine Collins, Reference Manager & Local History

As warm weather starts to come our way the Heritage Center kicked off its lecture series for 2025 in March. We started with the Board of Trustees' own Grayson Chesser on the 13th for a talk on Eastern Shore decoys and decoy carving. The event was originally scheduled for February but was postponed due to inclement weather. Changing the date was not a problem as the event drew a crowd of over 65 people.



Many local collectors brought out some of their decoys to show off and pick Grayson's brain on their origins. Grayson went down the table, decoy-by-decoy, answering questions and used his knowledge to identify the carver of many of the decoys. After the talk several collectors hung around to ask Grayson more questions, seek autographs and photos, as well as share stories and information with other collectors. The Heritage Center aims to be the main repository of

knowledge for this rich section of Eastern Shore history and culture by creating a database about local decoy carvers and preserving examples of their work for study and exhibition.

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Heritage Center hosted Ted Corbett on March 18th, for a presentation on his research regarding women during the Revolutionary War. Ted shared stories of four Virginia women including Tabitha Arbuckle from the Eastern Shore. Attendees were thoroughly informed and entertained with stories of how the war affected women of the middle and upper classes. This was a follow up lecture to Ted's presentation from last March about events on the Shore during the Revolutionary War. He is in the process of writing a book about women during the war so there is certainly material for another presentation.

Our Women's History Month display featured titles relating to the experiences and contributions of women on the Eastern Shore and highlighted some of the Shore's notable historians Nora Miller Turman, Francis Bibbins Latimer, and Susie Ames. The Heritage Center also acquired a CZUR M3000 Pro V2 Professional overhead scanner for digitizing and preserving more delicate documents, books, and photos. The scanner captures precise and excellent quality images and has several enhanced features such as the ability to produce flattened images from curved materials. The scanner was made possible with the help of a donation from Brooks Miles and Ann Barnes, given in memory of Furlong Baldwin.



Book by Book—Inventory at the Chincoteague Island Library

In November 2024, Collection Management Librarian Ricci traveled to the Chincoteague Island Library (CIL) to meet with Teresa Wright, library manager, to discuss a collection inventory project. A full inventory of CIL had not been conducted in recent memory, and Ricci and Wright had previously identified the quieter Winter off-season as the perfect time to carry out a project of this scale.

ESPL's integrated library system software, Atrium, includes an inventory module that collects data regarding the materials held by each library in the system. The first step in the inventory project was for Ricci to create a master file report that included every physical item in CIL's materials collection, which totaled just under 12,500 items.

Once the master report was created, Ricci then began to break down this report into manageable sections for Wright, who would be carrying out her normal managerial and circulation duties while conducting the inventory scanning. The sections needed to be of a size that could be completed in two or three days to avoid errors caused if items on the report were checked out before they were scanned.

Ricci and Wright soon settled into a routine where Ricci would create a sub-collection report, Wright would scan the items in that particular section of the library, and then request the next report to be generated. Wright efficiently progressed through every portion of the CIL collection until she had covered the entire library.

At this point, the second phase of the inventory project began. Ricci compiled the results from each of the section reports to create a single report that listed only the items that had not yet been scanned. Wright is now carrying out a targeted search for this list of items that may have been missed during the initial search or that are no longer present at CIL.

Once Wright completes the search for the yet to be scanned items, Ricci will then label any not found as "Missing" in the catalog. This helps to avoid the frustration that can arise when patrons or library staff search for requested items that are simply not on the shelves.

Phase two of the CIL inventory project should wrap up in April, and the available library materials in the ShoreCat catalog will then be identical to those available on the CIL shelves.

While a materials inventory is a technical process consisting of data, reports, and scanning item barcodes book by book, it results in improved patron service and satisfaction when searching for and requesting library materials.





Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian

For Spring, Tiffany Flores and Maria Burns threw a whimsical Fairy Tea Party with fairy themed crafts and snacks. Participants were able to make fairy tutus, crowns, and wings and enjoy snacks fit for a fairy. Ten patrons participated and loved the activities, devoured the cucumber sandwiches, and made magical Pea Blossom Tea drinks (tea and lemon juice). Additionally, adult programming was a huge success this month. With the integration of the Yarn Club, there has been an increase in participation. The participants enjoyed the first club so much, they showed a lot of interest for a weekly club. This demand was so strong that Maureen Teague and Tiffany agreed to schedule weekly meetings in April. Also, the tea blending program was just as successful. Twelve patrons, a mix of adults and older kids, blended their own teas and decorated tea infuser balls.



The adults expressed interest in seasonal tea blending, including a local woman who streams tea tastings online. The kids, while fascinated by the smell of the tea were shocked to learn that the tea tastes way more bitter than it smells. Movie Night was held on Tuesday May 25th with thirteen participants. Finally, The Regional Library hosted their first ever puzzle competition. Three teams of four competed to be the fastest to complete their puzzle. The first place winner finished in 48 minutes, second place finished in 88 minutes, and the final team finished in 120 minutes. Every participant enjoyed puzzling together and competing. The library will host more of these in the future.

Warm weather brings ample opportunity for community outreach. In March, Tiffany was invited out to Occohannock Elementary School to present during their after school Book Fair event. Attendees listened to Tiffany's presentation on library services and programs. Additionally, Tiffany was invited out to the Brownsville Nature Conservancy for their Welcome, Spring nature walk. Tiffany joined eight participants on an educational nature walk then read to the children about Spring time. Participants left with packets of pink coneflower seeds to add to their own gardens. As part of the library's engagement in the community, the Regional Library collaborated with the Adult Lifelong Learners to provide a tour and class on the library and services. The tour, hosted on March 27, educated participants on library services and the Heritage Center. Finally, Tiffany was invited out to the LGBTQ Community Café hosted by ESCADV on March 31st. Tiffany plans to support the Café by bringing board games for the attendees to play.





Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library ushered in the spring season with a full roster of public programs in March. Library patrons were invited to stop by for tech help on every Tuesday throughout the month. The library also hosted two programs for kids—a children's after-school story-time on March 6th and a STEM craft on March 20th where kids learned how to build functioning catapults out of popsicle sticks and rubber bands. Everyone had a blast and no eyes were shot out in the process. Adult patrons were able to enjoy a craft night of their own on March 13th and were each able to take home a handmade yarn bird.



The month of April will see Northampton Free Library host even more fun programs. Tech Help will continue to be offered on every Tuesday throughout the month, though may be moved to another day of the week. Watch the Northampton Free Library Facebook page for updates. Kids are invited to join us for an after-school story and snack on Thursday, April 10th starting at 4:30 PM. April's adult craft will take place on the following Thursday, April 17th, starting at 6:00 PM. This time attendees will learn how to build mason jar lanterns decorated with pressed flowers. Finally, the library will host a special combo STEM program and story time for children starting at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 24th. We'll be learning how to code Botley the Robot!

Northampton Free Library will also be hosting a special challenge for kids throughout the month of April—every day, library staff will hide an Easter egg somewhere in the children's section. Any kid who finds it will be able to choose a prize (or a piece of candy) at the front desk.

As always, Northampton Free Library's programs are free and open to the public. Please note that space for the adult craft is limited and sign-up in advance is required. Keep an eye on the Northampton Free Library Facebook page or ask at the front desk for more information.

In other news, our pollinator garden maintained by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners is starting to wake up!



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



In celebration of "National Plant a Flower Day", Cape Charles Memorial Library hosted an event for patrons to visit our fully replenished Seed Cart and to ask questions of local Eastern Shore Master Gardeners. Staff spent many hours packaging close to 600 non-GMO vegetables and herbs and native flowers seed packets. Attendees were invited to take up to 4 seed packets and come back once a month for an additional 4 packets. An updated version of *Native Plants of Accomack and Northampton* was also available for those who signed a pledge agreeing to plant only native flowers. The CCML Seed Cart is open during regular business hours and is free for everyone.



Our book displays this month celebrated Women's History Month and Spring.

Several days this month were spent packing up our programming room and two huge shelving units full of STEM activities, seasonal items, and miscellaneous craft donations. This was an excellent opportunity for some spring cleaning! Over the next month, the library's mezzanine will experience some updates and renovations.

We continue to work on our summer programs, confirming dates with performers, ordering crafting supplies for new programs and scheduling activities with local community partners. CCML would like to thank our Friends group for their continued support of our Summer Reading Programs.

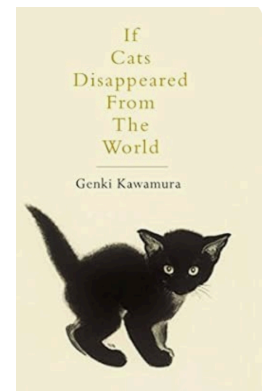


Chincoteague Island Library Monthly Report March 2025

March was very eventful and fun for everyone...our Tales 4 Tots programs revolved around a visit from the YMCA, Dr. Seuss, and rainbows. We also had kids sign up for their first library cards.



Women's History Month and St. Patrick's Day were celebrated with displays, the Tuesday and Thursday night book clubs and the writers group met, and a "Financial Wellness in Retirement" talk was given.



"Search For The Shamrock" was a fun two day scavenger hunt March 14 & 15 hosted by the Historic Main Street Merchants who also presented a donation to the library from that event.



After a hard winter, we have decorated for Easter early!

Submitted by:
Teresa Wright
March 31, 2025