



# 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

January 2026

## Director's Update



### Upcoming February Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- 5th: Romance Book Club - ESRL
- 5th: Kids' Art - NFL
- 12th: Space Lecture, "The Biology of the Cosmos" - ESRL
- 13th: Adult Crafternoon - ESRL
- 13th&14th: Death By Chocolate - CIL
- 16th: LIBRARIES CLOSED - Presidents' Day
- 17th: History Lecture, "A Very Plain Demonstration of Malice" - ESRL
- 18th: Nature Journaling - ESRL
- 20th: Makerspace Class; Sewing Machine - ESRL
- 20th: Astronomy Night - CIL
- 26th: Teen Creative Writing - ESRL
- 26th: Family Movie Night - ESRL
- Tech Help: Every Wednesday - NFL
- Ancestry Help: Every Wednesday - ESRL
- Heritage Center Reference Assistance: Every Thursday - NFL
- Storytime Anytime: Every Monday & Wednesday - NFL

For times & more information: [espl.org](https://espl.org); (757) 787-3400

CIL = Chincoteague Island Library

CCML = Cape Charles Memorial Library

ESRL = ESVA Regional Library & Heritage Center

NFL = Northampton Free Library



Christopher Pote,  
System Director

This week the Town of Chincoteague honored long-time Island Library volunteer Harriet Lonergan with an official proclamation extolling all the amazing work Harriet has accomplished at CIL. From gathering and leading a core of dedicated volunteers, to joining the ESPL System, and providing a wonderful library space for patrons, Harriet has been integral to it all and vital to the success of CIL and ESPL. Thank you, Harriet, this honor is so greatly deserved.

Pictured: Harriet and Mayor of Chincoteague Denise Bowden; photo courtesy of Jodi Novak.



EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

# Heritage Center

[esplheritage.org](http://esplheritage.org)

Jazmine Collins, Reference Manager & Local History

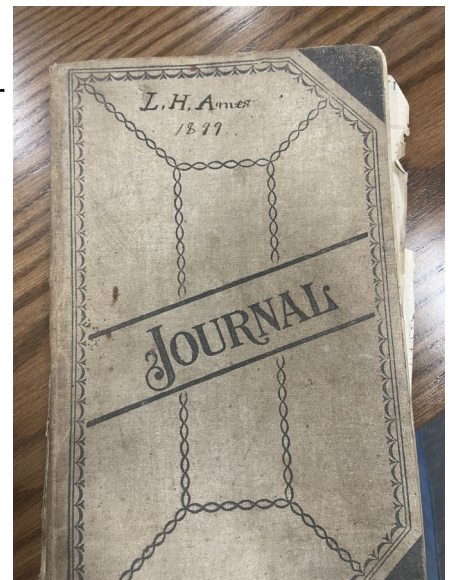
Archivist Luke Kelly has been in his role for a year, so he thought now is a good time to reflect on how the Heritage Center has grown in the past year. Firstly, the Collection Development Policy was made concise. These changes did not affect the Heritage Center's mission to collect, preserve, and provide access to the documents, images, and published materials that record our community's history and culture. Instead, the policy is more approachable to those looking to donate to the Heritage Center. Secondly, the Heritage Center selected a new Collections Management Software, Proficio Elements, to keep track of the collection's catalog records. The transition from PastPerfect to Proficio does mean that digital access to Frances Bibbins Latimer Collection is currently unavailable. However, these records have been transferred over and will soon be accessible online again soon.

We are working on a new public access portal using Proficio. This database will include Latimer's collection as well as a couple of others when it is launched. Cataloging the rest of the collection into Proficio will be a big task in 2026 as mentioned in previous System Reports. Also, in 2026 the Heritage Center plans to expand the Memory Lab to include more options for digitizing family records. Formats beyond paper like cassettes, VHSs, photograph slides, film tapes, and floppy discs will be digitizable in the Memory Lab.

The Heritage Center also received a donation from Miles and Anne Barnes of a store ledger, dating 1899 to about 1926 belonging to L.H. Ames of Pungoteague. Along with the ledger were store coins, a dry goods scoop, an egg scale and several mason jar lids for a rare brand of jars. The ledger covers store and farming accounts of the local merchant and provides details about crop production and prices as well as commercial transportation to larger markets.

Heritage Center staff attended the opening of the Impact Center at the Cape Charles Rosenwald School. The Impact Center has a large lecture space and meeting room. Impact Center staff agreed that the space would be ideal for simulcasting Heritage Center lectures for members of our population that are not able to physically make to the Heritage Center. Also, Heritage Center staff will be participating in a genealogy workshop along with Tyrone Goodwin and Bobby Harmon that will be hosted at the Impact Center on February 7th.

Next month, Jenean Hall will give a lecture on February 17th, and the first warm up round of the Eastern Shore Black History Trivia Tournament will take place on February 24th.



4 Shipments of

1899		1899	
July 11	2 Bbls Potato	1.50	30
" 13	" 7 "	Balt. Seed	8.33
" 18	" 9 "	Boston 40 Bushels	3.37
" 18	" 9 "	4 of 5 1/2 yds	0.00
" 28	" 16 "	" 1/2 D 1/2 yds	7.04
Aug 10 600 By Seamus P. 1000 Bbls		3.40	6
		26.05	
		27.80	
		27.80	
1899 Sweet Potatoes			
Aug 8	2 Bbls Balt. Kipner	16.18	San. R. R.
" 12	" 5 "	Chickadee Wood	3.70
" 17	" 7 "	" Kipner	8.70
" 23	" 5 "	" Kipner	1.79
" 28	" 5 "	" E. S.	2.75
" 29	" 19 "	Sold to Washington	14.71
" 29	" 2 "	Balt. Kipner	1.15
Sept 1	" 10 "	Sold to Washington	9.00
" 2	" 8 "	" "	6.40
" 2	" 2 "	Balt. Kipner	.76
" 8	" 5 "	Sold to Washington	4.00
" 7	" 5 "	" "	4.00
" 22	" 20 "	" to Washington	18.10
" 29	" 8 "	Balt. Kipner	4.01
" 29	" 2 "	to Washington	1.60
Oct 10	" 12 "	" Kipner	14.36
" 10	" 12 "	" Kipner	5.48
" 13	" 12 "	to Washington	7.20
" 17	" 10 "	Kipner to	2.71
" 18	" 10 "	" "	3.15
" 28	" 10 "	" "	4.55
Dec 2	" 10 "	Smith's H. R. R.	15.50
" 4	" 10 "	" "	15.70
1900 over Page 7		189.10	

1899 6

1899		1901	
July 15	15 "	July 25	25 "
Sept 23	23 "	Sept 10	10 "
Oct 28	28 "	Oct 28	28 "
Nov 16	16 "	Nov 16	16 "
" 23	23 "	" 23	23 "
1901		1901	
July 25	25 "	July 25	25 "
Sept 10	10 "	Sept 10	10 "
Oct 28	28 "	Oct 28	28 "
Nov 16	16 "	Nov 16	16 "
" 23	23 "	" 23	23 "
1902		1902	
July 15	15 "	July 15	15 "
Sept 10	10 "	Sept 10	10 "
Oct 28	28 "	Oct 28	28 "
Nov 16	16 "	Nov 16	16 "
" 23	23 "	" 23	23 "



## Library Materials Vendors

### Restoring Normal Levels of Service

In November of last year, I wrote about the tremendous upheaval that had recently occurred in the library materials vendor landscape. With the sudden closure of a giant in the field, the remaining vendors were scrambling to fulfill orders placed by both existing customers and the flood of new customers. During the last six weeks of 2025, ESPL received only a few very small shipments of materials from our main vendor.

While library staff created book lists and displays to provide alternatives to delayed items for local readers, the lack of new and requested items was noticeable. The shelves where the new books are featured began to look much less full than they usually do. Fortunately, in early January, our main vendor began to catch up with their backlog of orders and the ESPL began to receive shipments of orders. Over the past several weeks, we have had shipments arriving nearly every day.

As the shipments are unpacked, processed, and cataloged, Technical Services staff have prioritized items that were requested by patrons at all four Shore libraries. Closely following the requested items in order of importance are the newly released titles. The new book collection is one of the most popular and we're working hard to make sure our readers have plenty of titles to choose from.

Now that the worst of the vendor crisis is behind us, we are exploring options for additional vendors so that the ESPL will hopefully not find itself in a similar situation in the future. It is no longer wise to rely heavily on one or two major vendors and libraries now need to be able to pivot quickly when larger forces in the vendor marketplace cause disruption.

Through discussions with other collection management librarians throughout the country, we have identified two quality alternatives to our current selection of vendors. We have set up an account with one of them and will do the same with the second vendor once they begin accepting new customers. Additionally, one of our existing vendors has enhanced their offerings for public libraries and we plan to rely more heavily on them for new and requested items.

Having active accounts with multiple sources of library materials will allow ESPL to better navigate any future volatility in the library vendor world and to ensure that a steady supply of items will continue to be available for our local readers.







# Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian



Despite the clouds in the sky and the cold winds blowing through the Eastern Shore, programs have been fairly successful. This month, the Regional Library collaborated with Chincoteague Island Library for an Astronomy Night featuring Nasa Ambassador, Daniel McGill. The initial plan had been to use both his telescopes and the library telescopes to view Jupiter as it reaches opposition. Unfortunately, clouds prevented the use of the telescopes but Mr. McGill came prepared with an indoor activity where participants got to learn about stars through an interactive activity involving foam balls and a hair drier. This was so popular that all 20 participants participated (including adults). In fact, there wasn't any word of disappointment about the telescopes by the time the program ended. Chincoteague Island Library and the Regional Library plan to try again in February with the hopes of viewing stars. There is also discussion to make this a reoccurring program.

The Regional Library in Parksley saw astronomical success at their Winter Kids Craft Party with a grand total of 63 participants. Over the past year, Tiffany has seen more success at kid's craft parties than at stand-alone activities. Families on the shore seem more likely to come to an event when there is a wide array of things to do for a variety of age ranges. This shows that gearing kid's programming towards family engagement instead of targeting an age group is more successful because families can bring all their kids. Tiffany plans to host these programs seasonally and will continue to assess the success. And, finally, the teens want MORE programming. In an informal discussion with the regulars at teen programming Maria Burns and Tiffany Flores discovered that the teens want both more creative writing programs and a larger variety of programs. Requests included 'creature show and tell', educational programs about geckos, and video game themed crafts.



Even in the slower cold months, there is always opportunities for community engagement and outreach. Accomack Headstart invited Tiffany Flores to present to the parents at their January Parent-teacher meeting. During this meeting Tiffany was able to advertise both old and new e-resources, advertise programs, and answer questions. Six parents attended and listened intently to the presentation. Tiffany was also able to talk to the teachers about bringing story time or other programming to their facility.



The creature has ARRIVED! For those who may have been peeking into the established terrarium and inquiring about the future pet, he is here. The library now has a Flame Dalmatian Crested Gecko who was purchased locally at All About Reptiles and Pets on Chincoteague. Now that he has arrived and adjusting to his home, the library can start doing programming. A naming contest is already in the works and Tiffany plans to introduce the gecko to the public on STEM Day which the library will be hosting on March 14<sup>th</sup> (Pi Day). During this event, Charle will introduce the Circulating STEM kits to the public and STEM focused organizations will be present with activities and additional creatures.



# Northampton Free Library

Connor BuYrn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library kicked off the new year with an expanded calendar of public programs. For the first time, we offered two art nights for kids this month. On January 8th, kids were invited to the library to fold and paint their own paper plate penguins, and on January 22nd they were invited back to build and decorate fun winter hats with cotton balls and folded paper. Snacks were offered for both events. On January 15th, Northampton Free Library hosted our monthly adult craft night—this time we made decorative winter candleholders with glass jars and glitter. One patron kindly brought cookies for the group to share. Northampton Free Library staff also continued to offer tech help on every Wednesday through the month of January.



Next month, Northampton Free Library will again offer two kids' craft nights. The first will take place on Thursday, February 5th starting at 6:00 PM. Stop by to make Valentine's Day cards! On Thursday, February 19th, kids are invited back to make paper plate Valentine's Day bugs starting at 4:30 PM. Both programs are free and no sign up is required. Snacks will be provided. February's adult craft night will be hosted on Thursday the 12th starting at 6:00 PM. Attendees will learn how to make their own Valentine's Day cards out of various recycled and repurposed materials. This program is free, but sign up in advance will be required. Please ask for more information at the front desk or keep an eye on the Northampton Free Library Facebook page. Tech Help will be offered on demand on every Wednesday. Just walk up to the front desk and let us know how we can help!

*Northampton Free Library will be closed on Monday, February 16th in observance of President's Day.*



# Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



As January tends to be a slower month at Cape Charles Memorial Library, we take advantage of this quiet time to get plan for our Summer 2026 activities and programs. This summer the Collaborative Summer Library Program is, *Unearth a Story*. We are so excited to dig up some entertaining fun for our local friends and summer visitors!

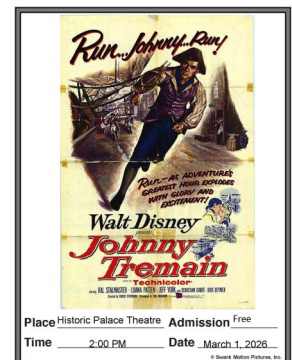
Between now and the summer, we will have some other excellent programs to offer.

*The Dinosaurs are Coming!*



In honor of Black History Month, we welcome back local historian and genealogist Bobby Harmon. Mr. Harmon will speak on *The Untold Black History of Northampton County* at Cape Charles Memorial Library on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 7:00pm. Program is free and open to all. Please note that there will be limited seating.

In recognition of America 250, the Board of CCML selected *Johnny Tremain* as the Town Wide Read. The book is available through your local ESPL branch and also as an ebook and audio book via Libby. A film showing of the Walt Disney version of *Johnny Tremain* will be shown at the Historic Palace Theatre in Cape Charles on Sunday, March 2, 2026. Program is free and open to all.



We've ordered about 6 pounds of GMO-free native flowers and fruits and veggies seeds for our annual Seed Cart Spring re-opening in March. Once the seeds arrive, staff and volunteers will disburse and pack them into individual packets which will be totally free for library patrons! The re-opening will be held on "National Plant a Flower Day", March 12, 2026 from 10am until 12pm. Master Gardeners will be attending to answer any gardening questions you might have.



On-going monthly programs at CCML include:

- Every Tuesday at 10:30am, Lil Sprouts story time & craft for ages 0 to 5
- Second Wednesday at 10:30am, S.T.E.M. Program for ages 5+
- First and third Thursday at 11:00am, Yarn Joy! for all skill levels







# Chincoteague Island Library

Teresa Wright, Library Manager



The month of January was a very busy month for the library. From crocheting and needlepoint to a moon observance, craft workshops, and a volunteer appreciation brunch, the library had a total of 16 programs with a total of 120 people attending.

**Tales 4 Tots:** January kicked off with a pajama party, winter animals, and snow and ice.



**Adult Programs:** The adult programs from the book clubs to the writer's group are continuing to grow with more people attending each week.



**Events:** The moon observation on January 9th was moved inside because of cloud cover and was a great success.



## Upcoming Events:

February 7, Craft Workshop

February 13-14 Death By Chocolate

February 18, Domestic Violence training/lecture

February 20, Astronomy Night

February 21 Kids Kraft Workshop