



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

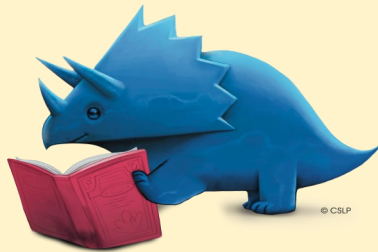
May 2026

Director's Update



Christopher Pote,
System Director

One of the main activities for staff in May is preparing for Summer Reading and its kickoff events. As you will read in the following pages, there are plenty to choose from. On Saturday June 13th, The Regional Library & Heritage Center in Parksley is hosting SummerFest, and Chincoteague Island Library is hosting their Field Day. Then on June 18th, Cape Charles Memorial Library is hosting their summer reading kick-off. All events will have lots of fun games, activities, crafts, treats, and more. Come out early for some fun in the sun, tire those kids out, and enjoy all the other weekend activities the Shore has to offer!



Upcoming June Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- **4th: Romance Book Club 5:30pm- ESRL**
- **11th: Adult Craft: Tote Bag Painting 6pm- NFL**
- **13th: Summerfest 10am - ESRL**
- **18th: Makerspace Class: Sewing Machine 6pm- ESRL**
- **19th: Libraries closed for Juneteenth**
- **20th: Free Patriots of Color Lecture 10am - ESRL**
- **23rd: Mike Klee Magic Show 11am - NFL (offsite at Northampton Parks and Rec)**
- **25th: Family Movie Night *The Land Before Time* 6pm - ESRL**
- **26th: Adult Crafternoon: Paper Bead Earrings 12pm - 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; (757) 787-3400

CIL = Chincoteague Island Library

CCML = Cape Charles Memorial Library

ESRL = ESVA Regional Library & Heritage Center

NFL = Northampton Free Library



EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

Heritage Center

esplheritage.org

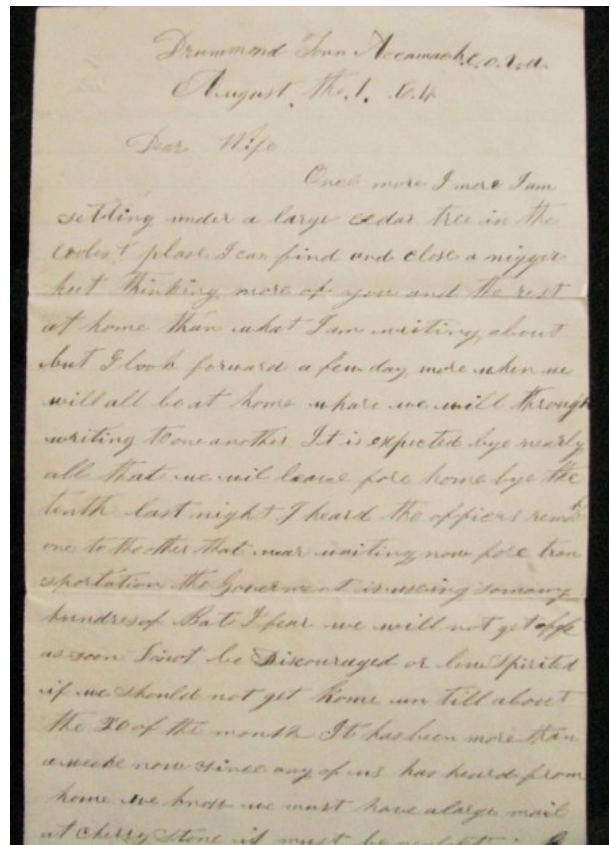
Jazmine Collins, Reference Manager & Local History

The final edits are being made for the Heritage Center's online public access catalog. In the meantime, staff have been working on a new exhibit that will be launched this June. The exhibit is the first of several that will explore topics regarding the Eastern Shore of Virginia and the America250 celebration. The Declaration of Independence marked a turning point in our country's history, as well as the daily life of the people who lived during that era. Religion is one of the areas with a large and immediate shift and the Eastern Shore was no exception. In many ways, the Shore was one of the earliest regions in the development and practice of the freedom of religion. The Shore is home to many historic churches and has been the setting for several religious figures with state and even national significance. The exhibit will showcase photographs of some of these historic figures and our historic churches. Viewers will understand how the principle of being able to freely worship one's faith transpired on the Shore. The photographs that will be on display were chosen from several of the collections preserved at the Heritage Center including those of Kirk Mariner, Frances Bibbins Latimer, Alton Brook Parker Barnes, Nora Miller Turman, and the Eastern Shore News. The exhibit is set to open the week of June 15th.

The Heritage Center received a donation of a Civil War letter written in August of 1864 by Thomas Rose, who was with 138th Ohio. Rose was detached to Drummondtown while most of the rest of his company stayed at Cherrystone. Rose praises the Eastern Shore for its variety and production of fruits and describe the mosquitoes as being the enemy's weapons of war. The letter is in good condition and will be added to the manuscript collection.

The Heritage Center's ClickShare Media Converter was used for the first time this month. A patron was able to convert two VHS to MP4 digital files using the device that the Heritage Center purchased. The quality of the digital format is laudable, however, the device does take the entire length of the film or recording to digitize any media. This is because the ClickShare plays the original recording on its screen as it is converting it to a media file as a new recording. Thus far, there is no way to expedite the process.

The Heritage Center also signed up to join the American Conversation Project. This summer — during Civic Season, June 19 through July 4 — libraries across the country will host recorded small-group conversations where neighbors share what's on their minds: what they love about where they live, what feels broken, what they hope for, and how they want to take action. Those stories don't disappear when the conversation ends. Using a combination of human listening and AI-assisted tools, ACP works with [Cortico](#) to surface insights from communities across the country and share them back — so people can hear not just what their neighbors are saying, but what Americans everywhere are thinking and feeling. We will host our first conversation in coordination with the gallery wall exhibit on freedom of religion.





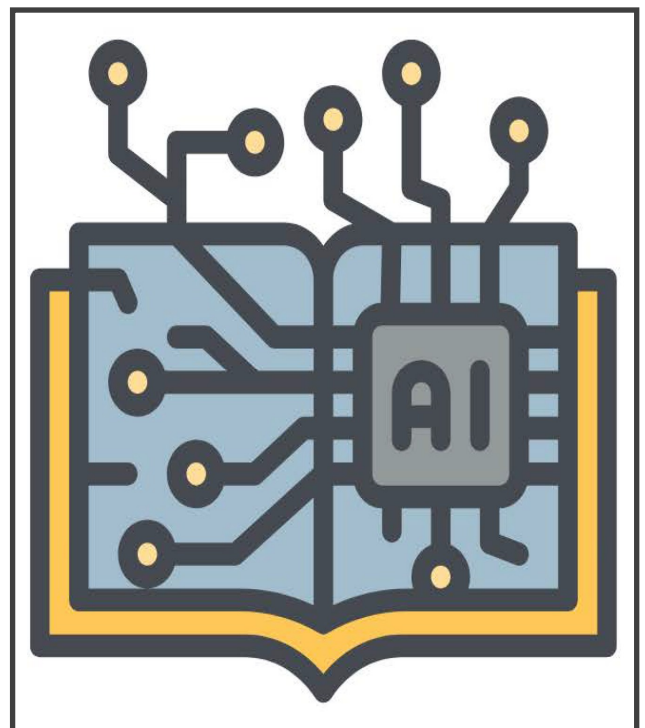
Artificial Intelligence as Author?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, has frequently been the focus of news and conversation in recent months. From privacy, political, and environmental concerns to fears of a robot apocalypse, humanity is wrestling with the benefits and potentially catastrophic outcomes resulting from the development and use of this new technology.

In the public library realm, administrators and staff are determining how to responsibly educate the public about AI. There has also been a great deal of discussion across national and state library listservs and webinars about how to best utilize AI's capabilities in day to day library operations, or whether or not to even implement AI at all.

While these larger scale conversations and decisions are taking place, library staff who acquire materials and manage collections are facing an increasing number of published and recorded works that are generated, either entirely or in part, by Artificial Intelligence. These AI-authored books are appearing in the selections of popular online book sellers, library vendors, eBook and eAudiobook platforms, and sometimes even in the catalogs of reputable publishers.

AI-generated books are uploaded to online book sellers in bulk as a source of passive income by individuals betting on volume of sales rather than quality of content. Various AI apps allow a seller to copy and paste an existing book's summary and table of contents into the app and "write" a new book on the subject. Within just a few minutes, the seller has a book ready for sale. There are significant copyright and quality concerns about these titles and, in some cases, the errors and misinformation included can be dangerous, particularly with medical subject matter.



In addition to the items written entirely by AI, there are a growing number of works written by an actual human but illustrated by AI. ESPL has been approached in the past few months by two authors, local to our region, who have published children's books with obvious AI-generated illustrations. At first consideration, this may not seem too concerning, but on closer examination, the images contain pictures of children with extra fingers, adults with two left hands, or animals that are combinations of two different species.

As we navigate through the impacts that Artificial Intelligence is having on the library and the wider world, library staff will remain mindful of the importance of maintaining public trust through continuing to safeguard the quality and veracity of information in our materials collection.



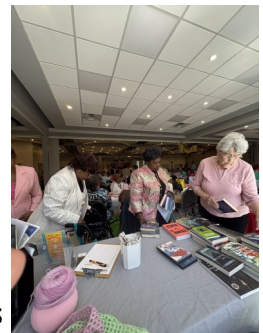
Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian



At the Regional Library & Heritage Center, teen programming has been buzzing lately! The weekly teen nights have ramped up in engagement with a good number of teens each night. In addition to participation, teens are also requesting programs and games they want to see. While this has been a gradual process, it is good to see them finally warm up and respond to questions about what they want. Suggestions include, snacks (of course), games, and program ideas. The latest suggestion is Tomodashi Life, a video game. Tiffany has obliged the request and communicated such. They are more than a little enthusiastic about working together to create their world. Teen Creative Writing continues to be a huge success: the teens really enjoy learning how to write creatively and hanging out the whole time.

The Regional Library & Heritage Center is committed to visiting and supporting every part of the community. During this month's outreach, Tiffany Flores visited a diverse range of people ranging from 4 to 104. On May 12th Tiffany attended the Older Americans Extravaganza hosted by Accomack County Parks and Rec. This event serves over 300 individuals and provides them with a day full of food, dancing, music, and comedy skits. In addition to the celebratory activities, community vendors are presented with the opportunity of advertising their services. All participants were enthusiastic about the library and the free giveaways available, especially the bags. This event was so well attended and full of positive energy.



The following day, Tiffany visited Pungoteague Elementary to read '*Splash, Crash, or Moo*' by Bob Shea with the help of Betsey the Cow Puppet. This went splendidly as all 4 classes enjoyed the hysterical antics of Betsey eating the story book; they were then able to build their own towers for cows to crash into. Tiffany read to fifty students and joined them in on a school fire drill. Additionally, Kegotank Elementary school visited the library for a tour of the building. While Tiffany couldn't be there, Alex and Maria were able to give all the pre-k students a tour, read them a story, and allow them to play in the kid's area. The teachers and students left pleased with their day and look forward to coming back next year.

Summer Reading is merely weeks away! On June 13th the Regional Library & Heritage Center will be having their yearly SummerFest in Parksley to kick-off this year's summer reading program: *Unearth a Story*. There will be a bounce house, food, games, and activities both inside and outside of the library. We will also have both Magic Mike's Amazing Balloon Show and the Salisbury Zoo presenting in the Lecture Hall. During SummerFest, families will be able to sign up for this year's summer reading program. This year's program will feature eight weeks of dinosaur fun including crafts, kid's parties, and a dino themed mystery party! There will also be a 'Creature Feature' in July where people can learn all about the library's dinosaur: Waldo the Crested Gecko.





Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library rolled into the month of May with a blooming pollinator garden and a calendar chock-full of public programs. The library hosted children's craft nights on May 7th and 21st—with participants making paper plate flower pouches and paper plate rainbows respectively. May's adult craft was hosted on Thursday, May 14th. Attendees enjoyed a spring-time herbal tea mixing activity and were able to build their own teapot drip protector to take home. Finally, on Saturday, May 16th, the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners were back for their final garden tour session and plant giveaway of the season. Library patrons and staff were able to take home black-eyed susan seedlings and learn more about the library's wild-flower collection.

Northampton Free Library will feature a suite of prehistoric-themed programs in June. Our first kids program of the month will be held on Thursday, June 4th and will start at 4:30 PM. This time we'll be making paper plate dinosaurs. Our second kids program will be held two weeks later on Thursday, June 18th, starting at 6:00 PM. In the return of a favorite from last year, kids will be invited to don goggles, break out their hammers, and smash real geodes to find the crystals inside! Both of these programs are free and no signup is required. There will be snacks provided at both. In a first, Northampton Free Library will also host two adult crafts in the month of June. The first—a canvas tote bag painting craft—will be held on June 11th starting at 6:00 PM. The next will be hosted two weeks later on Thursday the 25th, also at 6:00 PM. Attendees to this program will be invited to make their own paper bead earrings. Our adult craft programs are also both free, but do require signup in advance. Please ask at the front desk or visit our Facebook page for more information. Tech help will continue to be offered on demand on every Wednesday.

We also have an exciting off-site program this month: Join Magic Mike at Northampton County Parks and Rec for a magic show on Tuesday, June 23rd starting at 11:00 AM.

Northampton Free Library will be closed on Saturday, June 13th for Summerfest at the Regional Library & Heritage Center in Parksley, and on Friday, June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.



Cape Charles Memorial Library

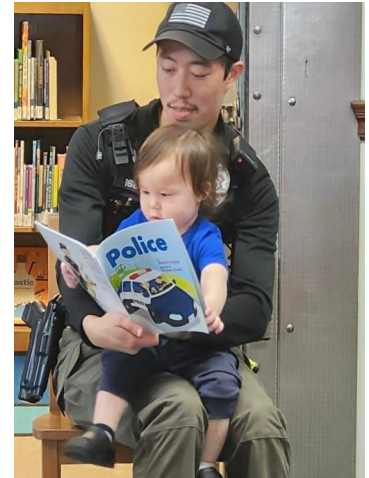
Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



The month of May was an eventful time at Cape Charles Memorial Library, with a variety of celebrations including Cinco de Mayo, National Police Week, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AAPI), and Mental Health Awareness Month.



We started off the month with a fun Cinco de Mayo story time, where young participants explored the enchanting world of dragons and tacos. Attendees had the opportunity to create their own tacos using a colorful assortment of materials such as yarn for cheese, crepe paper for lettuce, and corduroy for meat, all nestled into paper plate shells. With oversized tweezers in hand, the young chefs delved into the crafting frenzy, crafting their own unique taco masterpieces, making it a truly delightful fiesta!



In honor of National Police Week (May 10–16), we were delighted to have the Cape Charles Police Department join us for a special story time, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Chief Pruitt and Officer Yee for their engaging presence with our young readers.

For several years, CCML has proudly presented AAPI culture through our interactive 'Travel through Food' exhibit, showcasing delectable snacks from various countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, and more. This year, the Japanese candies and delicious jaggery and sesame seed chews from India were particularly popular, and visitors had the opportunity to enjoy these treats while participating in AAPI trivia for a chance to sample more snacks, resulting in over 400 snacks being savored and a greater understanding of AAPI countries.



May also marked Mental Health Awareness Month, during which we emphasized the significance of play through resources and toys from the nationwide 'Play for Resilience' initiative by MESH Helps (Mental, Emotional, and Social Health). Their fundamental belief underscores the idea that every moment spent playing aids children in developing emotional resilience, problem-solving skills, and communication abilities, allowing them to navigate challenges in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Lastly, we're thrilled to announce our upcoming *Unearth a Story* Summer Reading Program Kick-off Event on June 18 from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM at the Cape Charles Memorial Library. This exciting afternoon will feature Ryan the Balloon Guy, crafts, delicious treats, an opportunity to 'Adopt a Dino' (while supplies last), and WHRO-PBS Kids! The first 50 registrants will receive a special Dino Bag, so be sure not to miss out on this fantastic event!



Chincoteague Island Library

Jodi Novak, Chincoteague Island Library



In the month of May we had a lot going on! From our Tales 4 Tots programs, to Astronomy night in the park, to Needle Crafting Clubs our library was right at the center of it all.

Every Thursday at 10AM we have Tales 4 Tots. It's a great time where kids have a safe place to explore books, learn, make friends, and enjoy fun, age-appropriate crafts. One of our favorite moments this month was Lady Bug Craft where we were able to recycle and reuse old CD's.



We had the opportunity to enjoy Space Night at the library, where Solar System Representative Daniel McGill guided us through Space to view Jupiter, Venus, and the moon.

We host two needle art programs where people can come in, sit, and chat while sharing their love of crochet, knitting, quilting, and so much more. Our participants always look forward to these nights, enjoying the time together and sharing their own takes and creativity on their needle crafts.



We had a Spring Pot Painting, even though the weather wasn't in favor everyone who came in had such a fun time and they got to take home their artistic pots and a variety pack of Pollinator blend seeds to plant.

