



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

July 2026

Director's Update



Christopher Pote,
System Director

This month ESPL was super excited to take possession of our new outreach van! After years of faithful service, it was time to retire our old van as maintenance and safety became concerns. Thanks to the support of state funding through the Library of Virginia and the tremendous fundraising by the ESPL Foundation, we can now safely do more outreach and bring more services to our communities. And thank you to the 131 individual donors that supported the Foundation's 2025 Annual Appeal for this initiative. We hope everyone enjoys our new Shore-inspired vehicle. Drive safe!



Upcoming August Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- **6th: Interactive Dinosaur Mystery Party - 5:30PM ESRL**
- **6th: End of Summer Reading Party - 4:30PM NFL**
- **11th: "Treasures of the Eastern Shore" by Andy Nunez, Heritage Center Lecture - 5PM ESRL**
- **12th: Kids' Craft - 12 PM ESRL**
- **13th: Teen Creative Writing - 5:30PM ESRL**
- **14th: Adult Crafternoon - 12PM ESRL**
- **20th: Romance Book Club - 5:30PM ESRL**
- **27th: Family Movie Night: *Dinosaur* - 5:30PM ESRL**
- **Tech Help: Every Wednesday - NFL**
- **Ancestry Help: Every Wednesday - ESRL**
- **Heritage Center Reference Assistance @NFL: 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

In 1964 Eastern Shore historian James E. Mears wrote in his weekly column for the *Eastern Shore News*, "The Shoreline," about his local history scrapbooks. The Mears Scrapbooks have around 3,800 indexed items about people, places, events, and Eastern Shore customs. Mears announced that his scrapbooks were preserved on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. He concluded, "It is hoped that the...Eastern Shore Public Library will have a 'reader' so that the information on this microfilm will be available on The Shore." Mears's wish came true long ago as both the microfilm and a reader are in the Heritage Center's Memory Lab, and physical versions of the scrapbooks are in the archives. Providing access to historical information on various media is the core principle behind the Memory Lab. Along with the microfilm reader is a book scanner, CD/DVD reader, and VHS converter. Equipment for digitizing photographic slides and negatives, compact cassette tapes, and film reels was recently ordered for the room. These tools allow staff and patrons to preserve historical information on aging media for future access.

Mears's article was found while cataloging the Kirk Mariner Collection. Mariner collected editions of "The Shoreline," which ran from 1928 to 1972. The result was fourteen binders rich in tales of Shore history from the Colonial Era to the mid-20th century. Copies of several "Shoreline" articles were already in the archives, but having every issue in one collection is an exciting discovery.

Laura Smith gave a lecture on July 21st, sharing her research on Robert Morris, Sr. and the maritime trade networks that built up the town of Oxford, Maryland. His son, Robert Morris, Jr. was instrumental in financing the Revolutionary War. She ended by sharing a special connection between ESVA and Oxford, in that the Cherrystone Bar lighthouse that was decommissioned and stored in Cape Charles was eventually moved to Oxford, Maryland.

The Eastern Shore Revolutionaries website was updated with all existing links to known patriots in MilesFiles in time for the nation's semi-quincentennial July 4th celebration. Posters have been made with a QR code to the page and will be featured at locations such as the Welcome Center at the Bridge Tunnell. The Eastern Shore Post featured a front page article on the project and the significance of the MilesFiles. The Heritage Center also created a Wish Wall, encouraging patrons to post cards about their wishes for our country, state, and communities' future.



On August 11, the Heritage Center will host Andy Nunez, author of *Treasures of the Eastern Shore* and *Treasures of the Eastern Shore II*. Andy will share some of the details of metal detecting and his finds specifically in Tasley. Some of his finds are on display in the Heritage Center.



Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



Wrapping up Projects with the Assistance of Summer Interns

Thanks to the support of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library Foundation, the Regional Library & Heritage Center has benefited from the assistance of two interns this summer. Kaitlyn Phillips and Ava Carlton have been tremendously helpful with various circulation and programming projects. From reshelving returned materials to assembling children's take-and-make craft kits, Kait and Ava have cheerfully assisted library staff in every department, but here in Technical Services, their positive impact has been particularly noticeable.

Over the past year, whenever staff members have had available time, they have been chipping away at a major inventory project. By systematically working through the materials collections at the Main library and scanning each item present on the shelves, a updated data set has been built. As you may imagine, with over 75,000 items in the collection, this process has taken some time.

Fast forward to this summer when, with the help of the library interns, the inventory project has gotten a second wind. The final portions of the collection that had not yet been scanned are steadily being completed and the final data set is nearly ready for uploading to the library's circulation software.

When the inventory project is complete, the library catalog will accurately mirror the physical collection on the shelves. Furthermore, the Collection Management Librarian can then review the inventory results and, where needed, select new items to replace those that have gone missing.

In addition to their valuable contributions to the inventory project, Ava and Kait have also tackled a much-needed shelf reconfiguration project in the very popular mystery section.

Mysteries are one of the heaviest circulating portions of the library collection, and because they are frequently written as series whose readers enjoy reading the entire set, the mystery section is constantly growing, but shelf space is finite. With the addition of an angled acrylic insert placed on the bottom shelf, and by shifting all other shelves upwards, we have gained one shelf in each shelving bay while still prioritizing visibility and accessibility.



Our interns are making great progress in the mystery collection, and are carrying out the heavy work of removing the books from each shelf, disconnecting the shelf from the frame, re-connecting it in the slightly higher location, and placing the books back on the shelf, all the while retaining correct alphabetical order. The mysteries will be easier to browse, select, and reshelv once the project is complete.

Thank you, Kait and Ava, for your conscientious dedication to helping library staff and patrons, and thank you to the Foundation for providing the library with such hardworking and supportive interns!



Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian



With summer in full swing, the library has been buzzing with activity! Due to the larger number of people entering the building, programming has reflected higher participation. Teen nights are full with anywhere from 13-20 teenagers a night. This has led to very busy Tuesday nights with many patrons participating in activities and utilizing the library space. In addition, the Hive Story Time has seen equal success with about 13 participants each session. This story time is brought to the library through our collaboration with the Community Service Board. After three years of collaborating, this program has grown to be quite well attended. Additionally, Saturday story times are seeing consistent participation from attendees each session. Now that there are more volunteers in the volunteer pool, it has become a lot easier to manage and support the program. On July 29th, the library hosted their 3rd Annual

Super Smash Brother's Tournament. This year the kids participated in a chance of winning Amazon gift cards. The kids had a blast competing for prizes. After the event, parents suggested that Mario Kart Tournaments would be just as popular.

On July 11th, The Virginia Jigsaw Puzzle Alliance, a new non-profit in Virginia, visited the library and provided an educational workshop on speed puzzling and led a social hour. This was well attended, and the participants were interested in many more puzzle events. The Eastern Shore of Virginia has a wide range of patrons who have shown interest in puzzles no matter if it's a program, a puzzle library, or working on a puzzle in the library. This event showed people will turn up and are very interested in speed puzzling events. Many of them were already familiar with the concept due to a popular youtuber.



A couple months ago, Tiffany was approached about starting a small free puzzle library where patrons could take and leave puzzles. Now that it has been installed in the foyer of the library, it has been hugely successful. Within 2 weeks, the bookshelf had been emptied twice. Now that it has been up for a couple weeks, patrons have begun to return the puzzles they complete in order to share them with the community. In addition to puzzles, sometimes Tiffany receives yarn donations in quantities more than the library needs. To give back to the community, Tiffany puts out a free yarn bin out at yarn club. This also keeps yarn supplies to a manageable level. Additionally, Waldo had a vet checkup this month He is a healthy boy who has "grown tremendously" since his last checkup! He now weighs a healthy 15 grams vs. the 3 grams he weighed when the library first received him.



Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library kicked off July with our most popular program of the month, a paper dinosaur hat craft for kids on July 9th. Our grown up patrons were invited to join us for a summer hat decorating activity on the evening of July 16th. The following week on July 23rd we hosted another dinosaur themed children's craft—attendees used colored sand to fill up dinosaur-shaped necklaces with all kinds of kooky patterns and designs. Staff at Northampton Free Library also continued to offer tech help on demand on every Wednesday throughout the month, and this was very popular in July.

Northampton Free Library's younger patrons have been knocking our summer reading challenges out of the park, and we will be celebrating all of your hard reading with a pizza party and raffle drawing on Thursday, August 6th starting at 4:30 PM. This program is open to anyone who participated in our summer reading program. The following week, the library will host an adult craft night starting at 6:00 PM on August 13th. This time we'll be learning how to make yarn art. This program is free, but signup will be required. Please watch our Facebook page or ask at the front desk for more information. Our final scheduled program of the month will be our Kids' Art night on Thursday, August 20th starting at 6:00 PM. To celebrate the end of our dinosaur-themed summer reading season, we'll be making paper tube brontosaurus. This program is free and a snack will be provided. No sign-up is required. Patrons who have technology-related questions are encouraged to keep visiting us for our Tech Help Wednesdays, offered on demand all day long on Wednesdays during the month of August.



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



JULY 2026

- CCML hosted 24 programs with 823 attendees
- 115 registrants for Summer Reading Challenge aged 0 to 15 have read 18,200 minutes
- 83 registrants aged 16+ have read more than 108 books





Chincoteague Island Library

Jodi Novak, Chincoteague Island Library



In the month of July we had a lot going on. It is one of our busiest months here at Chincoteague. Pony Penning week at the end of July means that the island is full of people!

Saturday July 4th, we had a 4th of July parade with lots of smiles, giggles, and memories as we celebrated the 250th!



Monday July 6th, we had a 4H Representative come out to the Library to help us Start a Garden Beautification Project!



On July 27th, we welcomed Local authors Linda Insley & Amanda Geci to speak about their books: *The Chincoteague Ponies of Assateague Stallions Volume I & Mares Volume II*. We had a great time with lots of insightful knowledge.



On July 30th, we had a Chincoteague pony at the library for anyone child or adult alike to come and visit. As well as Author Susan Friedland coming in to discuss her new book!

