



espl.org

LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library System

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

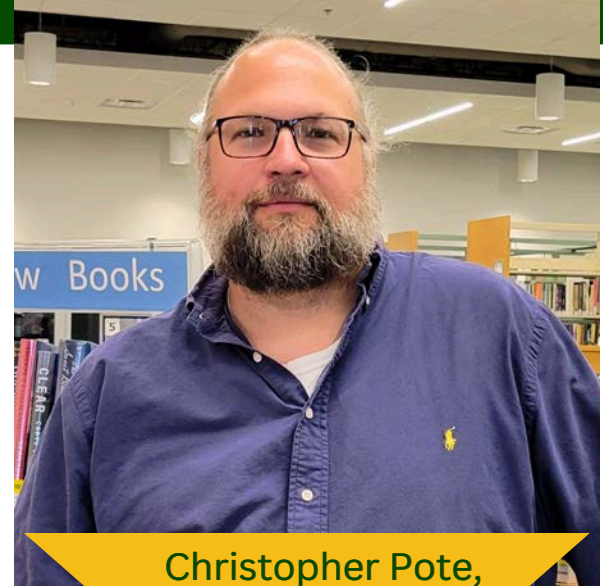


OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

Regional Library & Northampton Free

- 6th Makerspace Class: 3D Printer [ESRL]
- 7th Native Plant Miniseries [ESRL]
- 8th Young Adult Social Group 20+ [ESRL]
- 8th Kids' Craft [NFL]
- 9th Makerspace Class: 3D Printer [ESRL]
- 12th Library **CLOSED** for Columbus Day [ESRL&NFL]
- 14th Native Plant Miniseries [ESRL]
- 15th Teen Creative Writing: Horror [ESRL]
- 15th Author Talk: Bryan Lienesch [ESRL]
- 15th Adult Craft [NFL]
- 23rd Author Talk: Tony Pacardi [ESRL]
- 27th Costume Parade [ESRL]
- 29th Family Movie Night [ESRL]
- **Every Wednesday** All Day Tech Help [NFL]
- **Every Saturday** @10:30am Story Time & Play [ESRL]

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE



Christopher Pote,
System Director

Welcome to the new ESPL System Report! Sometimes changes is good, even if your hand is forced. With the sunseting of the Publisher platform, ESPL was forced to move away from that Microsoft service. Thank you to ESPL Circulation Manager Jamie Johnson for creating this beautiful new layout in Canva. She also showed much grace and patience in teaching the rest of us how to use it. Much appreciation to all staff and affiliate staff that assisted with the transition and/or for their contributions. While we plan to continue to provide you a clear snapshot of library activities from the past month, we really hope our readers enjoy the new format as much we do. Out with the old; in with the new.

Enjoy!

SEPTEMBER , 2026

HERITAGE CENTER

JAZMINE COLLINS,
Reference Manager
& Local History

LUKE KELLY,
Archivist



September was an exciting month for new additions to the Heritage Center's collection. First was two separate donations of architectural drawings, photographs, and research on Pear Valley and Grape Valley- two historic 18th century homes in Northampton County. Both structures are rare examples of what a “middle class” home looked like on the Shore in the Colonial Era. Second was copies of two letters written by John Hyslop during World War II. Hyslop was from Craddockville. He served in the Navy during the war and was aboard the USS Texas for both D-Day and the Battles of Iwo Jima.

Third was a series of letters from the Badger family from 1875 to 1945. The bulk of the letters were written by Thomas Norman Badger and sent from California back home to his father, John Wesley Badger, in Northampton County. John Wesley and his brother, Thomas Wyatt Badger Jr., left the Eastern Shore of Virginia for California in 1849 to test their luck during the Gold Rush. John Wesley returned to the Shore and started a family while his brother stayed in California and became a successful businessman. In 1891 Thomas Norman joined his uncle in California and became a surveyor. Both Thomas's wrote many letters to John Wesley and other members of the Badger family on the Shore. A collection of similar letters was published in the book *Letters Home: Of Gold Fields and Lost Ships* by Curtis & Lynn Badger in 2014. The letters donated to the Heritage Center have been included in a recently published second edition of *Letters Home*.



Heritage Center staff continue to review and outline website changes. With the updated website changes, the main menu will change to verbiage more relevant to our focus, update calendar entry for communication between platforms, and minimize the amount of tiers and categorization of pages to make specific resources easier to find.

We have acquired a new slide and negative scanner which will convert old media to digital format. The Heritage Center has also purchased a device to convert film, and cassette tapes to digital format. Once Heritage Center staff have tested the device in use, we will either make the item available for public use or order a duplicate device for the Memory Lab.



In October, the Heritage Center will host a traveling exhibit from the Virginia Museum of History and Culture entitled *Give me Liberty*. This is being hosted in partnership with the Eastern Shore Railway Museum in Parksley. Panels will arrive on October 7th and an **open house with refreshments will be held on October 13th from 5-7 pm in the Dennis Custis Lecture Hall.**

TECHNICAL SERVICES

CHARLE RICCI,
Collection
Management &
Acquisitions Librarian

A GATHERING OF RURAL AND SMALL LIBRARY STAFF IN ALABAMA

The Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) recently held their annual conference in Montgomery, Alabama and, through the support of a scholarship from the Library of Virginia, I was fortunate to be able to attend. Unlike other national library conferences that I've experienced in the past, the ARSL conference focused entirely on library systems that serve areas like the rural Eastern Shore, rather than on large, urban systems.



The Pre-conference began with a morning session developed specifically for collection management librarians. Over four hours of interactive and instructional discussions, I learned much that I could immediately apply to my work here at ESPL. The afternoon session consisted of a civil rights walking tour of Montgomery that highlighted the history of the city that was so central to the civil rights movement. Seeing the bus stop connected to the arrest of Rosa Parks, the church where Martin Luther King, Jr. pastored his first congregation, and the bus station where the Freedom Riders were brutally attacked was incredibly eye-opening. The struggle for freedom and equality, which continues today, became more real to me after visiting these historic locations, and also brought home how fragile these hard-won rights are still.

Librarian Amanda Jones and author Laurie Halse Anderson, who have both been targeted by censorship and book banning campaigns, provided powerful keynote addresses about the vital importance of intellectual freedom. Both speakers emphasized that libraries hold a trusted position in their communities and are uniquely positioned to offer a safe and welcoming space to every member of our local populations.



author Laurie Halse Anderson



The ARSL conference sessions offered practical and inspiring ideas for quality library services for our rural communities. From offering blood pressure monitoring and education, to creating a shelf-stable food pantry program, from improving the patron experience, to balancing work demands to prevent burnout, from the ins and outs of building a Library of Things collection, to utilizing publisher resources to aid in the selection of newly released books, the sessions were full of relevant and helpful information.

The real-world small library experience that the session presenters brought to their subject matter was impressive, but just as important were the discussions and collaboration with my fellow librarians. This is a profession that freely shares knowledge and resources – both the successes and the failures – so that no one needs to go it alone or reinvent the wheel.



Spending time learning alongside and building relationships with other library professionals who are situated in communities and regions similar to the Eastern Shore was incredibly valuable. I am excited to incorporate much of what I gleaned from the conference into my collection management responsibilities and to collaborate with ESPL staff about new services we could offer in the future.

PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

TIFFANY FLORES,
Programs &
Outreach
Librarian

On September 10th and 24th, the Regional Library hosted a Young Adult (20+) Club as the beginning steps to offer neurodivergent adults opportunities to socialize and engage with others. Each event brings with it a chance to play board games, video games, and hang out with other adults. Six people attended the first program and interacted. The hope is that the program will grow in the next few months and encourage socialization among patrons.

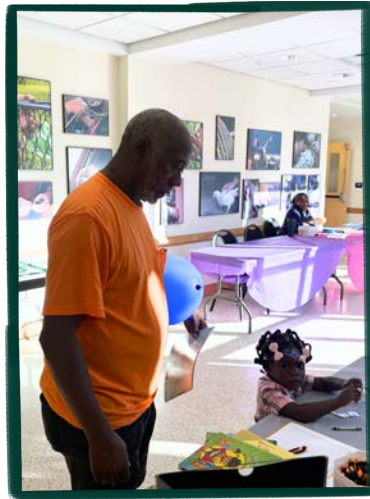
On September 14th, the Regional Library hosted its first ever live musical event featuring Sarah McQuaid. This was a well-received event enjoyed by the attendees. While it was small in attendance, it was loved by the patrons. Many patrons approached the desk inquiring about future musical events, especially from local artists.



Singer-songwriter Sarah McQuaid

September outreach marks the beginning of some of the most important events the library attends.

On September 15th, the library attended the Nurse Family Partnership Graduation. This event is for the 2-year-olds who are graduating out of their program. Many of the participants who attend are from minority families who need aid and resources. Our participation allows us the opportunity to reach individuals who may not attend the library and don't know what we have to offer. This year the event reached 13 families who engaged in activities, talked to vendors, and celebrated the success of their children. All in all, it was a good evening that allowed for networking and fun. **September 26th** marked the day of the 3rd Annual STEAM event held at Mary N. Smith Cultural Center. This event allows families to come in and explore elements of STEAM. Each year the library brings STEAM toys or activities for children to enjoy. This year, Tiffany brought foam dinosaurs, dinosaur themed books, and crafts so children can learn about prehistoric creatures. The event was attended by about 50 people who spent the whole time exploring. Many kids built some amazing dinosaurs and used their creativity and problem-solving skills to determine how to make them stand. This event also served as a great way to connect with other organizations about visiting the library.



COMING SOON! Over the past couple months Tiffany and Alex Flores have been researching, budgeting, and planning tech literacy classes for seniors. A long-term initiative in the library has been to bridge the gap between technology and seniors as many patrons seem to struggle with emerging technologies, or even just the basics. The goal of the program is to build confidence with technology, so that patrons can better navigate their personal devices and those available in the library. This has been an undertaking, but both staff members feel this will help fill tech literacy needs in the community. **Staff training begins on October 6th.**

NORTHAMPTON FREE LIBRARY

CONNOR BUYRN,
Branch Manager

Northampton Free Library welcomed the cooler weather in September with a full calendar of autumnal craft activities. We started the month with our adult craft night on **September 10th**. Attendees mixed seasonal herbal teas and decorated rustic wooden coasters. The following week we hosted an autumn tree craft for kids, and on **September 24th** we closed out the month's public programming with a paper autumn leaf children's craft night. Finally, our ongoing Tech Help Wednesdays program offered on-demand help with personal devices and other digital questions throughout the month.



UPCOMING OCTOBER PROGRAMMING:



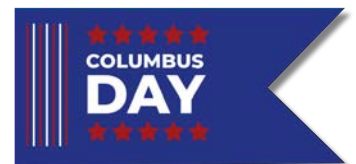
Our first public program of October will be a Kids' Art Night on **Thursday the 8th**, starting at 4:30 PM. This time we'll be getting into spooky season with a paper roll bat craft. Our second Kids' Art Night will take place two weeks later on **Thursday the 22nd**. For this second activity, kids are invited to join us to make paper plate jack-o'-lanterns starting at 6:00 PM. Snacks will be provided at both programs and both are free to attend. Our adult craft for the month of October will take place on **Thursday, October 15th** starting at 6:00 PM. Attendees will be able to make their own needlepoint monster bookmarks to take home.

All programs are free, but signup is required for the adult craft. Please see the Northampton Free Library Facebook page or ask at the front desk for more information. Tech Help will also continue to be offered on every Wednesday through the month of October.

NORTHAMPTON FREE LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSED



Northampton Free Library will be closed all day on Monday, October 5th for staff training and will also be closed all day on Monday, October 12th in observance of Columbus Day.



facebook.com/NorthamptonFreeLibrary

CAPE CHARLES MEMORIAL LIBRARY

SHARON SILVEY,
Library Manager



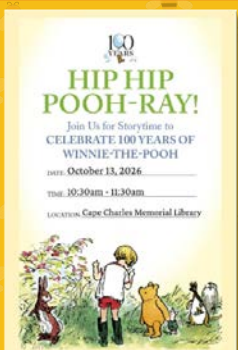
In September, we said goodbye to summer and warmly welcomed fall. Even though our summer visitors have left, the staff at Cape Charles Memorial Library has been quite busy! **September is Library Card Sign-Up Month**, making it the ideal time to get a new library card and borrow a book (or two!). At CCML, if you signed up for a new library card, checked out a book, or attended one of our programs, you were eligible to enter our raffle for a fantastic basket filled with goodies for the whole family!

Early in the month, our staff prepared “Back to School” good bags for local kids. Each bag included activity sheets, pencils, bookmarks and a copy of the book, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn.

We were thrilled to host five Wiggle Worm story times for our youngest patrons, along with two fun Crochet & Knit gatherings and one exciting STEM program.



We're also excited to share that our **Friends of CCML** received a wonderful **\$8,000 STEM Education grant** from the American Water Charitable Foundation!



October 13th

As we transition into October, we're looking to “Protect the Freedom to Read.” Plus, we're gearing up for a special celebration as Winnie the Pooh turns 100! Be sure to mark your calendars for October 13th, when we'll host a special birthday story time filled with stories, fun activities, and giveaways to honor our cherished bear.



CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND LIBRARY

JON ADAMS,
Info Specialist II
JODI NOVAK,
Info Specialist I

We had a LOT going on in the month of September! School is back in session and our fall programs kicked off including Tales 4 Tots, our adult book clubs, and a new club for teens!

Tales 4 Tots, a program for pre-school aged children, resumed after a brief hiatus at the end of the summer. Our themes this month were: Teddy Bears, Owls, and Lobsters. Upcoming themes will include Football and then Autumn and Halloween themes going into October.

On September 15, we started a new program called "Next Wave TCG Club". It is aimed at teenagers in 6th-12th grades. For those who are unfamiliar, "TCG" stands for "Trading Card Game". The club provides an outlet for students to play games together in a safe environment. Games include, but are not limited to: Magic: the Gathering, Pokémon, Yu-gi-oh, Disney's Lorcana, and Ophidian.



NASA

Our best-attended event of September was a program about the moon put on by Daniel McGill, NASA Solar System Ambassador. About 70 guests attended his presentation that was held in the Robert Reed Park just outside the library building.



September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month, and we are celebrating that with a special display reflecting the national musical theme, and a free raffle drawing for anyone who gets a new card this month.

