

Southside Sentinel

SSentinel.com

Serving Middlesex County and adjacent areas of the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck since 1896

VOL. 127, No. 13

URBANNA, VIRGINIA 23175 • JULY 7, 2022

TWO SECTIONS • \$1



Topped by an oversized Uncle Sam top hat, Middlesex County School Board Chairman Claudia Soucek waves the flag during the Urbanna Independence Day boat parade on Friday. Joining her in the celebration was her husband, Archie Soucek, and other family members. (Photo by Tom Chillemi)

Wittman tours site in Urbanna

Sees refurbished Bay Aging office complex; federal funds facilitated the renovation

by Larry Chowning

U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman, R-1st District, was in Urbanna Wednesday, June 29, touring recently refurbished facilities at Bay Aging (BA).

The nonprofit organization reported it now serves 24,155 people in the region and employs 90 people, many of whom live in Urbanna and Middlesex County. Bay Aging recently made a commitment to purchase and refurbish office facilities in Middlesex, just outside the Town of Urbanna, rather than move and build another complex elsewhere in the region.

Federal funds were used to refurbish the new office complex and Rep. Wittman, who represents Middlesex in Congress, worked to help BA receive those funds. Wittman praised all of the BA staff for their dedicated and important work in providing services in the region. He also listened to comments from the BA staff concerning upcoming Congressional proposals that could negatively impact Bay Aging. Wittman noted that the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck are some of the fastest growing communities for the elderly in the state and he is aware of the significance of the services Bay Aging is providing to the region.

Bay Aging was founded in 1978 by Allyn

(See Wittman, Page A5)



U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman, left, discusses the positive economic impact Bay Aging is having on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck with Kathy Vesley-Massey, president and CEO of Bay Aging. Bay Aging staff members watch in the background during Wittman's June 29 Urbanna visit. (Photo by Larry Chowning)

Fireworks, Freedom and Unicorns

Thousands thrill to Urbanna's Independence Day boat parade and fireworks

by Tom Chillemi

Kinley Nichols wanted to see a unicorn — a mythical white horse with a single spiral horn. But the word “unicorn” has come to mean something “unusual, rare, and highly valued.”

On Friday, July 1, Kinley, 4, and her family had come to the right place to find the next best thing to a unicorn — fireworks!

Parents Megan and Justin Nichols of King William County and their children, Carter and Kinley, waited on a picnic table at Urbanna Boat Yard and Marina (“Urbby”) for fireworks as darkness descended on Urbanna Creek, following the early evening annual Independence Day-themed boat parade on the creek.

Carter likes the way people dress up in costumes for the Fourth of July. “Those (parade) boats were cool,” said Megan, and her children agreed. And, Kinley said one word when asked what was her favorite firework. “Unicorn.”

(See Freedom, Page A8)



“Uncle Sam” (Keith McAuley of Gloucester) is seated on a motorcycle as he prepares to lead the Fun Run competitors down General Puller Highway in Deltaville early Saturday morning. Later that morning, Jordan Bendura, 20, of Glen Allen won the Deltaville 5K for the second straight year, setting a new Deltaville 5K record with a time of 16 minutes, five seconds — 14 seconds faster than three-time winner Adam Otstot's record time from several years back. See story, more photos, starting on page B1. (Photo by Don Richeson)






Fireworks boom above Urbanna's harbor as thousands watch from the Urbanna Town Marina starting at around 9:25 p.m. Friday, July 1. (Photo by Don Richeson)

BEST
Of The **Rivah**
2022

Share your favorites!
Vote at
Rivahguide.com
or find a ballot inside or
in the July issue of The
Rivah Visitor's Guide.

Deadline:
Friday, July 8 by 5 p.m.

Inside

Business directory ... B2	Letters.....A4	 <p>Remlik man, 96, loved by all at marina PAGE A5</p>	 <p>Deltas pummel Pandas PAGE B1</p>	 <p>Report dolphin sightings PAGE B5</p>
Church.....A6	ObituariesA7			
Classifieds.....B2	Sports.....B1			
Crossword.....B6	Weather.....A3			

Southside Sentinel

SSentinel.com

Serving Middlesex County and adjacent areas of the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck since 1896

VOL. 127, No. 14

URBANA, VIRGINIA 23175 • JULY 14, 2022

TWO SECTIONS • \$1



Middlesex County corn had just started to "tassel" last week. The tassel produces pollen that encourages growth and ripening of the corn ear. (Photo by Tom Chillemi)



Corn is so widespread it's easy to forget it's a marvel of nature — with help from farmers. Some of Fairfield Farms' corn stretches to its former dairy barn in Hartfield. (Photo by Tom Chillemi)

Middlesex rain arrives just in time

Corn crop "high and green" -- farmers anticipate good yields

by Tom Chillemi

The rain that dampened many outdoor plans over this past weekend saved the area corn crop.

With well-timed rain this growing season corn is high and green from Deltaville to Water View. However, last week the ears were just beginning to form and the corn was "tasseling," and during this pollination rain is essential. Corn has shallow roots and needs

moisture replenished as the ground dries.

Inside

Related story, page A2.

Area corn farmers hope for rain around the Fourth of July holiday when the corn is beginning to pollinate, said E.G. Fleet of Fairfield Farms in Hartfield. On Friday afternoon, Fleet was hoping for rain. Last year's corn crop was one of the best in his 50-plus years of farming. And whether this year's corn crop could survive and come close to the 2021 yield depended on one thing — rain.

Irrigation

Friday afternoon, Craig Revere of Revere Farms in Deltaville turned off an irrigation system that waters about 100 acres. He'd been waiting all week for the promise of rain that never came. By Friday rain looked like a sure thing. This time Mother Nature delivered. On Saturday, 2.8 inches of life-giving rain fell near his farm's main buildings and produce stand, located diagonally across General Puller Highway from the Deltaville Market.

The July 9, life-giving rain soaked Middlesex County and neighboring areas

blessing the corn, which was at a critical stage of development. "Mother Nature has been kind again this year . . . so far," said Revere. "This will make a lot of corn because it's hitting at the right time."

Revere hopes to get at least an inch of rain by the end of next week. "Then we'll be in pretty good shape."

When the ears have fully formed and stopped growing, there's no need for more rain, he explained. In fact rain can make the corn moisture content too high at harvest.

(See Corn, Page A8)

Architect: "Bones" of MHS good

Converting MHS tennis courts to more parking spaces eyed

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County School Board (MCSB) had Stephen Halsey, vice president of Moseley Architects in Richmond, report Monday at the board's July regular monthly meeting that "the bones of the Middlesex High School (MHS) buildings are in very good shape."

Renovation or the building of a new high school facility is a part of the MCSB master plan. MCSB hired Moseley Architects to study the possibility of renovating the high school campus.

The purpose of the study was to assess needs and to dream into the future as to what can be done to modernize the county's secondary education facilities, said Halsey.

There are three generational parts to the high school. The front portion of the campus was built new in 1949 as part of a consolidation of two all-white high schools, Syringa and Saluda high schools.

In 1976, the John Clements Memorial gym, shop and life-skill classrooms, etc. were added and in 2002 there was a major renovation with the two-story classroom complex built on the west side of the school, which included a new cafeteria.

The 2002 renovation included razing the 1962 elementary school complex built that year on the MHS campus to house an all-white elementary

(See Bones, Page A8)



A renovation study of Middlesex High School in Saluda was presented to the Middlesex County School Board Monday night by an architect from Moseley Architects of Richmond. The study revealed that the mostly half century old high school structure has "good bones" for a total renovation. (Photo by Larry Chowning)

New four-way stop setup eyed for Va.-Cross sts. intersection

by Tom Chillemi

The idea of making Urbana's intersection of Virginia Street and Cross Street a four-way stop has come up again.

Most people driving east on Virginia Street turn right onto Cross Street. However, there is the occasional vehicle that continues straight on Virginia Street and goes towards the waterfront or turns left.

Drivers waiting at the stop sign on Cross Street often assume that vehicles approaching the intersection will turn right. This has led to near collisions. Urbana resident Billy Mayo told council recently that he saw two vehicles nearly collide at the intersection.

In response council voted

unanimously to request the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to look at the intersection to determine if a four-way stop is warranted.

A four-way stop has been talked about through the years by previous town councils, yet it remains a traditional two-way stop intersection.

Town Administrator Garth Wheeler said he met with the superintendent of VDOT's Saluda office to discuss the intersection. Wheeler said that the town council's resolution has been forwarded by the local VDOT office to VDOT's traffic study division for review.

Council is set to meet 7 p.m. today, Thursday, July 14, at the new town hall location at 350 Old Virginia St.



Couple Oliver Vauvelle, left, and Clare Padilla recently made a trans-Atlantic cruise in their 41-foot Jeanneau sailboat and have found the southern Chesapeake Bay to be "awesome." Clare and Oliver recently explored Jackson, Carters and Urbana creeks and have found all three communities of Deltaville, Urbana and Irvington friendly and interesting. (Photo by Larry Chowning)

Trans-Atlantic sailing couple spends holiday in Middlesex County

by Larry Chowning

After making the trip across the Atlantic Ocean starting in March 2021, Clare Padilla and Oliver Vauvelle have been cruising through the West Indies and southern U.S. and recently found their way to Middlesex County.

The couple sailed into Deltaville the Saturday of the final day of boatbuilding week at the Deltaville Maritime Museum and in Urbana Creek the next weekend to celebrate the Fourth of July events.

Oliver and Clare met nine years ago when Oliver was working in Chile for an investment firm. They married and moved to England, Oliver's home

country.

In January 2020, they went to a boat show near London where they intended to purchase a powerboat. "Neither of us knew anything about sailing other than I had sailed in small boats as a child," said Oliver on their 41-foot Jeanneau sailboat in Urbana Creek.

"There was only one boat broker at the event who took us seriously and he was selling Jeanneau sailboats," said Oliver. "We bought the boat with only an hour left at the show."

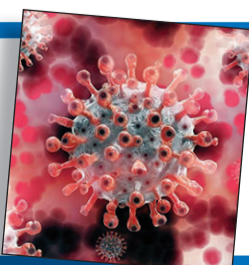
The boat had to be built and it arrived in August 2020. "I took a five-day sailing course to get the boat insured and we

(See Couple, Page A8)

Inside



Business directory ... B2 Letters.....A4
Church.....A6 Obituaries.....A7
Classifieds.....B2 Sports.....B1
Crossword.....B6 Weather.....A5



MC COVID-19 cases rise to high level
PAGE A4



Mayor issues call to action on pool
PAGE A7



Deltaville 5K supporters' efforts saluted
PAGE B1

Southside Sentinel

SSentinel.com

Serving Middlesex County and adjacent areas of the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck since 1896

VOL. 127, No. 18

URBANNA, VIRGINIA 23175 • AUGUST 11, 2022

TWO SECTIONS • \$1



CELEBRATING FOUNDERS DAY

Participants (above) in the Urbanna Founders Day celebration wind their way through town Saturday en route to a Constitutional Debate at Urbanna Baptist Church. "Town Crier" Garth Wheeler, who is actually the town administrator, leads the entourage, that includes the Williamsburg Field Musick Fifes and Drums Corps. "Musick" is the way the word "music" was spelled during the colonial era. Shannon Wilson (below) of Urbanna gives Roscoe a snow cone as her brother Thomas enjoys the cool treat courtesy of the Middlesex Kiwanis Club during Urbanna Founders Day on Aug. 6. (Photos by Tom Chillemi)



This diagram depicts the new option three renovation of Middlesex High School (MHS), which would add 50,000 square feet to MHS and is estimated to cost \$40.7 million. There are two other options that bring the overall lowest estimated cost down to renovate MHS to \$20.5 million. (Courtesy of the Middlesex County Public Schools)

Architect: MHS work could cost \$40.7 million

by Larry Chowning

To renovate Middlesex High School (MHS) in Saluda could cost between \$20.5 and \$40.7 million. That's what Middlesex County School Board members heard Monday at their regular monthly meeting. During the Aug. 8 meeting, which was in the St. Clare Walker (SCW) Middle School auditorium, representatives from Moseley Architects in Richmond presented cost estimates on three proposed renovation plans for MHS.

The first option would cost \$20.5 million; second option, \$30.9 million; and a third option, \$40.7 million. Stephen Halsey, vice president of Moseley Architects, said the first option would add 16,000 square feet to MHS. The second option would add 23,000 square feet and the third option, 50,000 square feet. The costs of the three options are figured on costs of \$350 per square foot.

The third and most expensive option calls for moving the eighth grade from SCW to MHS and demolishing the old east wing of MHS and building a new two-story eighth grade facility. This would also require expansion of the school's cafeteria to accommodate the added students in the school.

Two of the options call for construction of a new auxiliary gymnasium that would accommodate eighth grade physical education classes, house the volleyball court and provide a half-size basketball court. The eighth grade move to MHS would mean the fifth grade at Middlesex Elementary School (MES) would be moved to SCW and that school would then accommodate fifth, sixth and seventh grades.

The options offer a new 500-seat auditorium and a modern renovated library facility. The MHS library is located in what was the 1949-built school gymnasium. It was later converted to a library. The plan calls for pulling out the current suspended ceiling and reopening windows from the old gym that were blocked off in an earlier renovation.

Two of the three options call for "right sizing" classrooms and administrative and guidance offices to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. There will be a new wrestling room and a new layout of the interior of the front of the building that will keep visitors inside the administrative portion of the building before being allowed in the student portion. The outside entrance will retain the same 1949 look but the doors will be expanded.

MHS was renovated and expanded in 1976 when the current gymnasium and life-skill classrooms were added and in 2002 when there was a major renovation and expansion of classrooms, library and cafeteria space. The original high school was built in 1949.

Options also call for building onto a portion of the current

(See MHS, Page A5)

Urbanna observes special annual event with colonial-style outfits, music, debate

by Barbara Lovelace

The stirring cadence of fife and drum and the vibrant calls of a town crier filled the streets of Urbanna's historic district on Saturday as the town celebrated its ninth annual Founders Day.

Presented by volunteers from Friends of Urbanna, Founders Day celebrates the town's rich colonial heritage, resonates its founding American values, and invites visitors to enjoy the delights of present-day Urbanna. This tradition of Founders Day was initiated by (now-mayor) Barbara Hartley in 2014 and is now an annual celebration of the town's deep-rooted participation in the founding of America.

A key event was a spirited constitutional debate, offered at Urbanna Baptist Church by two interpreters from Colonial Williamsburg, who portrayed the divergent opinions of Virginia's 1788 ratification of the new federal Constitution. Introduced by Town Historian Larry Chowning, Robert Weathers, as nation-builder George Wythe, presented the need for a unifying Constitution, and Richard Schumann, as



former Virginia Governor Patrick Henry, presented the pitfalls of the document.

Lively questions from the audience provided opportunities for each patriot to enlarge his perspective, and each spoke with great vigor and passion, especially concerning the absence of a Bill of Rights in the Constitution. Although the two views of the Constitution were presented persuasively, both "Wythe" and "Henry" agreed that the people, only by continuously and closely engaging in the

political process, will preserve American freedom.

The 18th century James Mills Scottish Factor Store, Urbanna's one-of-a-kind museum and visitor center, hosted visitors throughout the day, with docents telling the story of Urbanna's founding and growth, and the origin and importance of the resident Mitchell Map. Virginia Street drew visitors to see Urbanna's original 1748 colonial-era courthouse and, on the town green, the Explorer, Deltaville Maritime Museum's recreation of Captain John Smith's shallop that explored the Chesapeake Bay in the early 17th century.

Volunteers from Friends of Urbanna, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, planned and presented Founders Day. This small but enthusiastic group is dedicated to preserving, promoting and educating the local community on the deep and rich history of Urbanna and the surrounding areas. The Urbanna Town Council has appointed the Friends of Urbanna as the primary advisory group to the town on the continuing development and preservation of the James Mills Scottish Factor Store.

(Barbara Lovelace fell in love with Urbanna in the early 1990s and has loved sharing her training as a historian to bring history to life in this most excellent of Virginia hometowns.)

Supervisors fear delays on sheriff's office move

by Larry Chowning

The proposal to move the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) headquarters from Saluda to Cooks Corner is moving forward. The plan involves spending \$3.75 million to renovate the currently vacant 40-year-old former Lewis B. Puller Vocational Center building.

At the Aug. 2 Middlesex County Board of Supervisors regular monthly meeting, supervisors scheduled a 3 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 18, work session on the matter. The work session will include

a discussion with Bay Design engineer Ben Davis and the county's newly hired engineer Charlie Beam and will be at the Middlesex County Historic Courthouse.

When it was suggested that it might take as long as two years before the MCSO could move into the building, supervisors balked at that time-table, encouraging staff and engineers to find a quicker way.

Supervisors have not taken a vote on moving forward with the project, but all indications are that the board

(See Move, Page A5)



Hummel Field's current runway — the one with painted runway lines — closed forever on Tuesday, Aug. 9, as work on the realigned runway continued. The new wider runway -- set to open in early September -- will be longer and aligned so planes fly over water instead of houses. (Photo by Rick Lewis)

More citizen oversight of Hummel requested

by Larry Chowning

A citizen requested more of a neighborhood voice in matters concerning the county-owned Hummel Field airport in Topping.

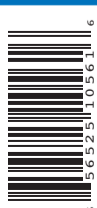
Russ Perkinson, a trustee involved in the historical property of Prospect that adjoins the county-owned airport, requested during the public comment period at the Aug. 2 Middlesex County Board of Supervisors (MCBS) meeting that a second person from the airport neighborhood be appointed to the airport committee.

There are currently seven seats on the airport committee and one is designated as a position of someone who lives in the airport neighborhood. Robert Roberts is currently the neighborhood member of the committee.

"It has been very helpful for me to find out what's going on to have a neighborhood representative on the airport committee," said Perkinson. "I think neighbors need a greater voice and I hope you will consider another neighborhood position on the

(See Hummel, Page A5)

Inside



Business directory.....B2 Letters.....A4
Church.....A6 Obituaries.....A7
Classifieds.....B2 Sports.....B1
Crossword.....B5 Weather.....A5



MC Rescue Squad installs new officers
PAGE A3



Deltaville Deltas advance
PAGE B1



Middlesex school bus routes listed
PAGE B4