

# Checking rhymes with cha-ching!

Earn 2% APY\* or Cash Back

\*APY = Annual Percentage Yield. Membership eligibility required. Federally insured by NCUA.



Smart Source  
Coupons  
INSIDE

Get now

# THE SUSSEX- SURRY DISPATCH



Over \$75 in SAVINGS

A Community Newspaper Rooted In Tradition

No. 7

©2022 Womack Publishing Co., Inc.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022

\$2.00

## Treasures found in Sussex County

By Terry Harris

Last fall a group of conservation heavy-hitters including Governor Northam quietly dedicated Sussex County's Piney Grove Flatwoods as Virginia's 66th natural area preserve, thereby commemorating ongoing rescue efforts to save federally endangered wildlife from near extinction.

But the preservation of 446 acres of woodlands in rural Sussex County is only the beginning of the story.

"Boiling it down," explained Brian van Eerden, Virginia Pinelands Director of The Nature Conservancy, "the governor came

down last fall to celebrate conservation of a really important tract of land for the preservation of the Long Leaf Pine as well as the native home of numerous little known, rare species, and it's all in Sussex County."

"Sussex County is a very special place, blessed with forest resources that are so important for the economy, for recreation, and for wildlife," van Eerden continued. "And if you want to touch the natural heritage of the region, it's only in places like Piney Grove that you can step on the lands and see and hear and imagine what Virginia at the time of John Smith - before Jamestown - was

like. And that's happening right in Sussex County."

"Birds are the last lineages of the dinosaur age, which ended around 65,000,000 years ago," he said. "And the red cockaded woodpecker, which is actually found on the acreage dedicated, very nearly vanished just a few years ago. Historically they were very common, but over the last several hundred years we lost the big trees and open forest, and as their natural habitat disappeared the once-abundant population came so close to extinction in Virginia that in 1999 there were only 12 of the birds left in the state."

That was when the Na-

ture Conservancy purchased the Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex County - the last remaining habitat housing those few remaining birds, and ever since they have been working toward bringing them back.

"Now, for the first time in decades, the red cockaded woodpecker has pulled back from almost certain extinction to the point that there are enough at Piney Grove that it's a relatively stable population," he said.

The significance of the rescue prompted Department of Conservation and Recreation Director Clyde E. Cristman, at the dedi-

See **TREASURES** on 9.



Carefully cradled in the hands of researchers when only a few days old, these alien-looking babies hold the key to the future of the species. (Photo by Terry Harris)

### SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

## Cupcakes and biscuits and OZ - Oh my!

By Terry Harris

As she scurried around picking up ingredients for all the delicious things she makes in Just for Kicks Cupcakes and More, proprietor Janette Johnson was happy to talk about old favorites as well as exciting additions in her Surry shop.

"Ever since I retired from the Sussex County Sheriff's Department in 2020, things have been pretty crazy around here! Covid slowed things down for a while, but we were very blessed with locals coming by for curbside service and now? We're here full time five days a week!"

While they may have expanded a bit over the years, the stars are still her sumptuous, whimsical cupcakes.

"People drive here from Smithfield and all over," she said, "and we have 18 Character Cupcakes now in all."

"It's because I love The Wizard of Oz!" she exclaimed. "Tin Man has apples in it because Dorothy found him in the apple orchard. That was my first one, and it has cinnamon, apples, cran-raisins, and a pecan caramel glaze. For chocoholics there's the Wicked Witch of the West with dark chocolate cake, chocolate chips, and chocolate fudge frosting. There's Dorothy and Toto and the Scarecrow - that's chocolate cake with Reese's Cups and peanut butter frosting. The Good Witch is my strawberry cake with strawberry filling and cream cheese frost-

See **CUPCAKES** on 2.



Janette smiles under her Happiness is only a Cupcake away! sign.



## Critical Local Blood Drive scheduled

By Terry Harris

To combat a crucial situation due to dwindling donations and supplies, on Tuesday, February 15, Hampton Roads Winery in Surry County will host what has been described as an "urgently needed blood drive."

In a joint statement issued by the AABB, America's Blood Centers, and the American Red Cross, they warn that across the county in recent weeks, blood centers have reported less than a one-day's supply of blood of certain critical blood types—a dangerously low level.

Further, they warn that, "If the nation's blood supply does not stabilize soon, life-saving blood may not be available for some patients when it is needed."

While donors of all blood types are needed, they list a particularly urgent need for those with O negative, B negative, and A negative to quell the blood crisis.

Between surges in COVID-19 cases and winter storms and their accompanying emergency situations, blood centers nationwide are dealing with a decline in donor

See **BLOOD DRIVE** on 2.

## Citizens meet to discuss rescue squad services

By Terry Harris

Last Thursday night, there was not a parking spot in sight at the Jessica A. Moore Community Center in Waverly when the time came to begin a called meeting concerning an action taken at the January 25 meeting of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors.

At that January meeting, with a mixed vote following a lengthy discussion which included advice of the County Attorney, the board of supervisors adopted a resolution designating Lifestar Ambulance Services as the primary EMS provider for the Eastern side of Sussex County, in effect leaving Waverly Rescue Squad still as

providers for the area but no longer the primary named provider.

At Thursday night's Concerned Citizens of Waverly meeting, Supervisors Eric Fly and Wayne Jones, who both had come out strongly opposed, as well as Supervisor Rufus Tyler who came out in favor of the action, were present. Fly and Jones made comments and answered questions at the Waverly meeting, Tyler declined the opportunity to do so.


Despite conflicting opinions and some strong emotional involvement concerning the decision, the crowd of approximately 60 people gathered to air concerns general-

See **SERVICES** on 3.



The crowd listened attentively as questions were posed and concerns were aired.

**Queenie Cooks:**  
**Easy Almond Joy Cookies**



Page 10

For 25 Years, You've been **OUR** Community and We've been **YOUR** Hospice!

**25th** CRATER COMMUNITY HOSPICE  
1997-2022 ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating Life Every Day

2019 best

804.526.4300