

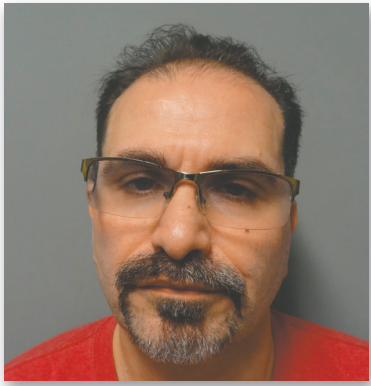
The Tidewater News

115TH YEAR, NO. 116

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023

\$1.00

Cataldo sentenced to 36 months in jail



Giosafat Cataldo

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Giosafat Cataldo, of Franklin, was sentenced to 36 months in jail Thursday, Jan. 5, in Southampton Circuit Court after pleading guilty in August to four misdemeanors, including three counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

According to the Virginia Judiciary's Online Case Information System 2.0, Cataldo received 12 months each for two of the con-

tributing to delinquency counts, and six months for a third instance of the same count. He also received six months for a count of sexual battery.

His attorney, Jack T. Randall, said that Cataldo is not required to become part of the sex offender registry in this case.

A Feb. 12 Southampton County Sheriff's Office press release stated that in January 2022, a juvenile female reported some alleged criminal activity to the sheriff's office that had occurred between

October 2021 and January 2022.

The release noted that after detectives investigated the report further, warrants were obtained for multiple charges. Cataldo, 51, was arrested on a charge of forcible sodomy, three charges of sexual battery and five charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor involving sexual acts.

Randall stated in an Aug. 9 interview that the commonwealth nolle prossed — made formal notice of abandonment of — five charges against Cataldo, includ-

ing three felonies and two misdemeanors. These abandoned charges included forcible sodomy, which is a felony, and multi-

SEE CATALDO, A8

SSSEVA to open Senior Center in Zuni

STAFF REPORT

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia will open a Senior Center at Tucker Swamp Baptist Church in Zuni on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

A Thursday, Jan. 5, Senior Services news release stated that older adults, ages 60 and above from the nearby towns of Zuni and Windsor, will have access to a variety of programs for seniors, including games, meals, classes, shopping, field trips, holiday celebrations and more.

While working on the Area Comprehensive Plan with Isle of Wight County, Senior Services targeted the areas of Zuni

SEE CENTER, A8

Carter presents Enrichment Day Program

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Franklin City Public Schools has launched a program designed to close the learning loss achievement gap present in the school system.

FCPS Interim Superintendent Dr. Carlton Carter gave a presentation on the Enrichment Day Program during a joint meeting of the Franklin City Council and Franklin City School Board in December at S.P. Morton Elementary School.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The program works in conjunction with the four-day school week schedule that the school board adopted in May 2022 for the 2022-23 school year.

SEE PROGRAM, A7



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Franklin City Public Schools Interim Superintendent Dr. Carlton Carter shares details on the school division's new Enrichment Day Program during the joint meeting of the Franklin City Council and Franklin City School Board in December at S.P. Morton Elementary School.

Safco murder suspect set for April 26 trial

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

A Carrollton man accused of fatally shooting a coworker over a cellphone dispute in 2021 is set to stand trial for first-degree murder on April 26.

Preston Kyle Thomas, 24, allegedly shot and killed 26-year-old Rakim Breeden of Commo, North Carolina, on Sept. 23, 2021, while the two were employed at the Safco Distribution Center near Windsor. Isle of Wight County Sheriff's Office investigators say the two had argued after



Thomas

SEE TRIAL, A8



STEPHEN FALESKI | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Army Lt. Caron Nazario's \$1 million lawsuit against Windsor Police Officer Daniel Crocker and ex-officer Joe Gutierrez began Monday, Jan. 9, at the Spottswood W. Robinson III and Robert R. Merhige Jr. Federal Courthouse in Richmond.

Nazario testifies in Windsor police lawsuit

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

RICHMOND — The first day of Army Lt. Caron Nazario's \$1 million lawsuit against Windsor Police Officer Daniel Crocker and ex-officer Joe Gutierrez saw Nazario himself testify.

The federal case, which began Monday, Jan. 9, is set for a

five-day jury trial in Richmond. Nazario, who is of Black and Latino descent, accuses the two white officers of racially motivated police brutality while holding him at gunpoint during a Dec. 5, 2020, traffic stop and shouting conflicting commands at him to keep his

SEE NAZARIO, A8



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Keith L. Tennessee Sr., right, receives a framed resolution from Southampton County Planning Commission Chairman Michael G. Drake on Dec. 8 recognizing his significant contributions to the commission's efforts in effectively balancing growth and development while a commission member from 1999-2022.

Tennessee honored for 22-plus years of service

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

The Southampton County Planning Commission opened its December meeting by honoring a former member, Keith L. Tennessee Sr., for more than 22 years of outstanding service to the people of the county while serving as a commissioner.

After calling Tennessee forward, Newsoms District Commissioner

and Commission Chairman Michael G. Drake said, "Mr. Tennessee, it gives me great pleasure to come tonight to present this resolution from the Southampton County Planning Commission for all your years of dedication. And I think I speak on behalf of the Planning Commission that we appreciate all that you have done, and I would like, sir, to read the resolution, as presented."

Drake noted that it was signed and

unanimously adopted by the commission back in June, so it is dated in June.

THE RESOLUTION

"Whereas, Keith L. Tennessee Sr., has served as a valuable member of the Southampton County Planning Commission from Oct. 14, 1999, un-

SEE TENNESSEE, A8

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Rosser E. Bryant
Gracie M. Byrd
Rossie A. Doles
Calvin R. Lucas

James L. McDowell
Christine J. Myrick
Claude T. Parker
Charles A. Saglio Jr.
Robert White

BEST BET

National Lego Day: Come by the Courtland Library and help us build a Lego Tower on Jan. 3-31. Kids earn blocks for the books they checkout.

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The Tidewater News

118TH YEAR, NO. 20

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

\$1.00

Southampton sheriff's office, school division address threats

STAFF REPORT

Southampton County Public Schools and the Southampton County Sheriff's Office addressed threats reported over the March 3-5 weekend that were made between students involving potential actions to take place on school

property.

At 6 a.m. on Monday, March 6, parents of students at Meherrin Elementary School received a message from SCPS Coordinator of Auxiliary Services and Transportation Will Melbye on Remind, an application that the school division uses to communicate with

parents.

"Good morning everyone, sorry for this early, but important message," he wrote. "Over the weekend, we received a report outlining threats made between students in our schools. The actions were to take place on school grounds. Our staff worked with the Southamp-

ton County Sheriff's Office to investigate the situation and do everything we can to maintain the safety of our school campuses. At this time, the situation has been cleared by the sheriff's office."

He noted that the school division would be releasing an official statement.

Near-moratorium on IW solar farms advances

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

Isle of Wight County's Planning Commission voted 9-1 on Feb. 28 to advance a proposed ordinance that would impose a near-moratorium on solar farms.

The ordinance, which is headed to county supervisors for a final vote, would limit the cumulative acreage of existing and proposed solar farms to 2% of the county's "prime" farm soils, or a maximum of 2,446 acres.

If approved, it would leave just 383 acres for new solar projects. According to county data and the 2017 U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1,759 acres, or 73% of the maximum, is already taken up by six approved solar farms. The Woodland solar farm off Longview Drive, which came online in 2017, is the only one of the six presently operating.

A nearly hour-long public

SEE NEAR-MORATORIUM, A8

IW supervisors to schools: Cut security guards from budget

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

Isle of Wight County supervisors have urged schools Superintendent Theo Cramer to cut five security guard positions from his proposed budget.

Cramer's \$81 million 2023-24 budget shows \$31.8 million, or 39.2% of the total, coming from county taxpayers, a nearly \$5 million increase over what was given this year.

Board of Supervisors Chairman William McCarty said at a March 2 joint meeting of the supervisors and School Board that the budget request would equate to a 10-cent increase in the county's real estate tax rate.

SEE SECURITY, A7



Work is underway on Armory Drive at the former Golden Skillet site, which will become a new Dunkin' Donuts location, expected to open this summer.

MITZI LUSK | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Dunkin' Donuts will be coming to Franklin soon

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Dunkin' is described on its website, dunkindonuts.com, as "the world's leading baked

goods and coffee chain, serving more than 3 million customers each and every day.

"True to our name, we offer 50+ varieties of donuts, but you can also enjoy dozens of pre-

mium beverages, bagels, breakfast sandwiches and other baked goods," company officials added.

SEE DUNKIN', A7

Broncos fall to Red Devils in state quarterfinals



Franklin High School junior center Chaevon Torrance gets this jump shot off while under pressure from the defense of Lancaster High School during the VHSL Class 1 State Tournament quarterfinals Friday, March 3, in New Kent.

MITZI LUSK | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

STAFF REPORT

A 2022-23 season of outstanding success for Franklin High School's varsity boys basketball team came to a conclusion a couple games earlier than the Broncos were aiming for.

A Franklin City Public Schools news release noted that on the neutral territory of New Kent High School on Friday, March 3, Franklin was dealt a strong defeat by undefeated Lancaster High School in the Virginia High School League Class 1 State Tournament quarterfinals.

The Red Devils quickly took the lead in the first quarter and were at 24 to the Broncos' eight points by the close of the period.

That lead continued to increase in the second quarter, 45-19, and with 1:45 left in the third, Franklin trailed 53-29.

In spite of the Broncos' rallying in the fourth, the Red Devils were too far ahead,

SEE BRONCOS, A8

A Brewer-Sadler primary? Not so fast, Republican Party says

**BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER**

The Republican Party of Virginia is denying 17th Senate District candidate Hermie Sadler's announcement that his race against Del. Emily Brewer, R-Isle of Wight, has changed from a convention to a primary.



Brewer

Sadler, a retired NASCAR driver from Emporia, announced on March 1 that the 17th's Legislative District Committee, a body formed from all county-level Republican Party chairs from the localities that comprise the newly formed Senate district, voted that evening to hold a traditional primary on June 20.



Sadler

As of January, the committee was leaning toward a convention, and still is, according to Ken Nunnenkamp, executive director of the Republican Party of Virginia.

SEE BREWER-SADLER, A8

You asked: When will Blackwater Park open?

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Community members have been wondering when Franklin's Blackwater Park will be open to the public, and City Manager Amanda C. Jarratt said the city hopes to have it open at some point in March.

The ribbon cutting ceremony with Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin was held Dec. 13, and Jarratt explained the next day that the city was waiting on a gate installation before the park could be open to the public, and she said city staff anticipated receiving the gate in the next few weeks.

Receipt of the gate did not end up happening in that time frame, and as of Friday, March 3, the city was still awaiting its delivery.

"With all these supply chain issues, it's taken us forever to get the gate," Jarratt said during a March 3

SEE PARK, A8

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DEATHS

Maude E. Bryant
T. Graham Copeland Jr.
T. Wayne Gray
Earnest Lankford
William Murphy
Bertie H. Scott
Glenda T. Williams



BEST BET
Adult craft program: The adult craft program meets the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. The March 9 craft is ceramic coasters. Registration is required. For more information, call 757-653-2821, visit our website, Facebook page . www.blackwaterlib.org/

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The Tidewater News

118TH YEAR, NO. 28

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023

\$1.00

Carter discusses year-round school plan

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Franklin City Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Carlton Carter developed a Division Strategic Plan Committee and shared a few details about one of his overarching goals — exploring the option of year-round schools in 2024-25 — during the Franklin City School Board meeting Thursday, April 27. At the March 30 joint meeting



Carter

between the school board and Franklin City Council where Carter was formally named superintendent of the school division, he presented an eight-item list of his overarching goals for the division. The last item on his list was the following: “Explore the option of year-round schools for the 2024-25 school year at the elementary school and middle school levels.”

During the April 27 meeting, Ward 6 Board Member Jerry McCreary asked Carter if he could explain a little bit about the year-round schools.

“Oh, absolutely,” Carter said. “That is to address learning loss.

“So, what are our students doing during summertime?” he continued. “Some students that are fortunate, the parents do have them into activities, but we have a lot of students that are just sitting around, and I do not want them on the streets.

“And so the year-round schools will look something like this, Mr. McCreary: You’ll probably have, after every nine weeks, two weeks off,” he said. “That’s like an inter-session, and then school will start again.”

He said that teachers will have their regular breaks for Christmas, Thanksgiving and spring

break.

“It’s just their summer break is broken down, because we have an eight-week summer, so it’ll be broken down into four two-week intersessions so we can cut down on the learning loss for the kids and keep them off the streets,” he said. “And in my estimation, this community needs that sorely.”

McCreary asked, “Will there be feedback, though, from families?”

“Oh, yeah,” Carter assured. “This is all part of the strategic plan. That’s why we get the feedback from the families, the community leaders, because it affects everyone. And so we’ll see how it

goes, but that also will be a survey, it’ll be a lot of data before I bring that forth. That’s why I’m projecting ‘24-’25, so we’re talking at least 18 months out.”

FORMING A DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Also during the April 27 meeting, Carter solicited volunteers from the board to join a Division Strategic Plan Committee that

SEE YEAR-ROUND, A8



BETTY RAMSEY | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

The facility at 1000 Armory Drive, which has been the home of The Tidewater News for the last 45 years, has been sold by Tidewater Publications LLC to Paul D. Camp Community College, which will use it to train future allied health care workers and nurses. The newspaper’s new office is located at 217A North College Drive.

The Tidewater News sells longtime office to CCC

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

For 45 years, the service rendered to area citizens out of the building at 1000 Armory Drive has been one of community journalism. The building has been the home of *The Tidewater News* since April 1978.

Tidewater Publications LLC has sold the 13,000-square-foot building to Paul D. Camp Community College and has moved its office to 217A College Dr., where it is continuing its full range of service to the public without interruption. Opera-

tions formally began at the new office Monday, May 1.

The facility at 1000 Armory Drive, which was sold to the college for \$750,000, will continue to be used to serve the people of Western Tidewater, but that service will be transformed into one directly responsible for building a pipeline of workers for the allied health care and nursing fields, courtesy of Camp.

For many years, all aspects of *The Tidewater News’* production process took place at the Armory Drive building, but that

SEE OFFICE, A8

Isle of Wight sees flurry of solar farm proposals

BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER

Isle of Wight County has seen an influx of proposals for new solar farms over the past two months.

County records show four pending applications received over a four-week period spanning March and April, the largest of which calls for a project site spanning more than 1,000 acres.

The first, submitted March 22 by Windsor-area resident Michael Doggett and Massachusetts-based New Leaf Energy, calls for a 3-megawatt, 18-acre site on a roughly 148-acre farm bordering Courthouse Highway and Poorhouse

SEE PROPOSAL, A8

Torrance makes all-state first team

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Franklin High School varsity boys basketball team had a storied 2022-23 season, and key to making that possible was the standout player of junior center Chaevon Torrance.

He was recognized for his role in the Broncos’ success by coaches at the Virginia High School League Class 1 state level and from the region when he was named to the all-state first team and also voted the Region 1B Player of the Year.

This season, Franklin won the Tri-Rivers District regular season and tournament championships, finished as the Region 1B runner-up, earned a berth in the state tournament for the first time in 14 years and advanced in the postseason as far as the state quarterfinals, finishing with an outstanding overall record of 24-4.

Broncos Head Coach Robby Cutchins noted that it was a special honor for Torrance to make the all-state first team as it has only eight

SEE TORRANCE, A7



SUBMITTED | FRANK A. DAVIS

Franklin High School junior center Chaevon Torrance brings the home crowd to its feet with a dunk during the 2022-23 regular season. Torrance was selected to the ‘22-’23 all-state, all-region and all-district first teams, along with being named the Region 1B Player of the Year.

Francis announces \$93K in grant funding

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Southampton Circuit Court Clerk Richard L. “Rick” Francis recently announced that he has received \$93,000 in funding to equip the room that will store the county’s historic records once the Southampton County Courthouse renovations are complete.

Francis noted that the Record Room will be a third smaller than it was in the old courthouse.

“To save costs, the new Record Room was downsized to just accommodate the hard books we then had in place,” he said, “so I had to make plans for our paper files and create room for future expansion.”

While modern records are 95% digital, Francis and his staff must make room for about 18 hard-bound books

SEE FUNDING, A7



SUBMITTED | RICHARD L. FRANCIS

Southampton Circuit Court Clerk Richard L. “Rick” Francis highlights in this photo an example of the historic records he has worked to store and preserve in a variety of ways, including by securing funding from state and local levels.

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DEATHS

Charles E. Burns
Laurena Coleman
James C. Darden
Gregory M. Nichols
J. William Underwood III

BEST BET

Smithfield Ruritan Cruise-In: The Smithfield Ruritans will begin its Cruise-In the first Friday of every month from now through October at the Joseph W. Luter Jr. Sports Complex, 900 W. Main Street in Smithfield from 5 - 8 p.m. For more information, call Brenda Redd at 757-647-9894.



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