

Community calendar

Wednesday, Oct. 4

CATFISH DINNER - The Smithfield Ruritan Club Catfish Dinner will be held in the former Little's Supermarket lot across from Main Street Baptist, 518 Main St., 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The drive-thru dinner will be catered by Captain Bob's. \$12 per plate (to go only). Buy tickets at Ringo's Donuts, Smithfield Fast Lube or from Skip Sharpley at 757-448-7327 or from any Smithfield Ruritan Club member.

SENIOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION FAIR - Hosted by Commission on Aging at The Smithfield Center, 220 N. Church St., 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Doors open at 9 a.m. Flu shots, screenings and door prizes will be available. A continental breakfast and lunch will also be provided. Tickets can be purchased for \$7 at Nike Park, AmeriCare Plus, Home Sweet Home and Windsor True Value. Space is limited. Contact Marisa Taylor at 757-357-5951 or mtaylor@isleofwightus.net for information.

SURRY CANDIDATE FORUM - The Phi Chi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, in partnership with the Smithfield Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Lambda Nu Chapter of Omega Psi Phi fraternity and the Surry County Chapter of the NAACP will sponsor a "Meet the Candidates" forum at the Surry Parks and Recreation Center, 205 Enos Farm Drive, 6-8 p.m. Attendees can meet and engage with candidates running in state Senate District 13, House District 82 and for local boards and constitutional offices in the November election.

Thursday, Oct. 5

BINGO - Smithfield American Legion will host a community bingo game at 818 S. Church St. Regular and special games are paying out up to \$60, with larger progressive game jackpots. Doors open at 5 p.m.; card sales begin at 6 p.m. Refreshments are available from the Legion Auxiliary on site. For up-to-date information (in case of inclement weather, etc.) check the post Facebook page (Post49SmithfieldVA) or call 757-357-9239.

Friday, Oct. 6

NIGHT OF WORSHIP - "Fully Devoted: Go All In" night of worship will be 7-9 p.m. at Smithfield Assembly of God, 1800 S. Church St. Visit <https://www.smithfieldaog.com> for information.

Saturday, Oct. 7

HIGHWAY CLEANUP - Join area nonprofit organizations for litter pickup along the Route 10 Bypass. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the commuter lot, Main Street and Route 10. For information call 757-375-3321 or email damiandandley@gmail.com

BEEKEEPING CLASS - The Nansemond Beekeepers will hold a Beginner Beekeeping Class 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Oakland Christian Church in Suffolk. Cost is \$35. Deadline to register is Sept 30. Register at <https://www.nansemondbeekeepers.com/beekeeping-classes>

PICNIC & PLAY - Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation will host a free fall therapeutic program for families of children with disabilities ages 5-15 from 9-11 a.m. on Oct. 7 at Campdown Park. Coffee and a snack will be available for parents to enjoy while children play in the park with a therapeutic recreation specialist. Registration is required. For more information and to register, contact Jaimie Belch at 757-365-1663 or jbelch@isleofwightus.net.

YARD SALE - Surry Baptist Church will hold a yard sale 8 a.m.-1 p.m. All proceeds will benefit a toddler who needs a heart transplant. Rescheduled from Sept. 23.

WHAT'S COOKING LECTURE - At the Isle of Wight County Museum, 103 Main St., Smithfield, 2-3 p.m. in observance of Cookbook Month. The first recorded cookbook is said to be four clay tablets from 1700 BCE in Ancient Mesopotamia, and today most homes have an eclectic mix of cookbooks, everything from those purchased for a church fundraiser to handwritten family heirlooms. This lecture highlights

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Patti the poltergeist, played by Kristen Hartman, meets Victor the vampire, played by Mike Willard.



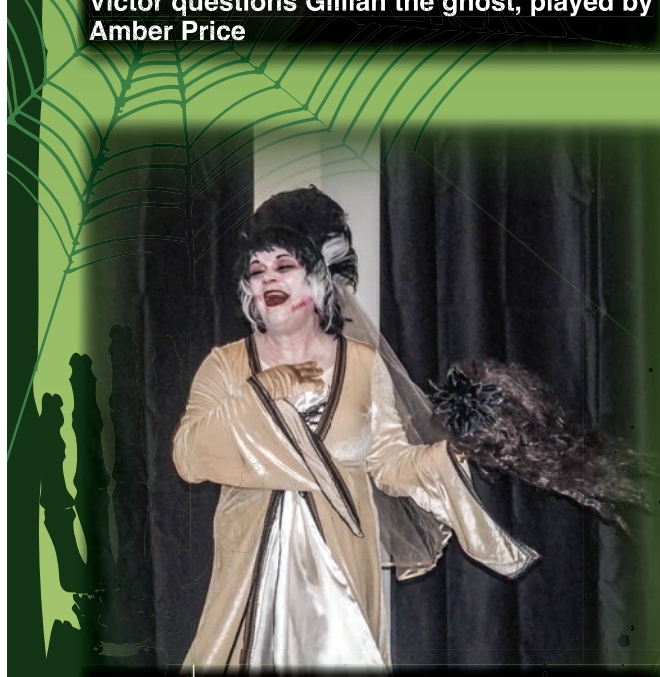
Malcolm the mummy, played by Tim Jones



Gary Parsons plays William the werewolf



Victor questions Gillian the ghost, played by Amber Price



Karen Willard plays Bella, a bride of Frankenstein

Murder mystery dinner meets Halloween

By Stephen Faleski
Staff Writer

Smithfield's murder mystery dinner theater troupe, All Y'all Players, is back with a new show just in time for Halloween.

The all-volunteer group performed "A Hair-Raising Halloween Happening," Sept. 29 and 30 at The Smithfield Inn. The group will reprise the performance Oct. 6 and 7 at Gatling Pointe Yacht Club.

The play by Lesley Gunn features a cast of undead characters. Victor the vampire, Patti the poltergeist, Winnie the 17th century witch, Zoe the zombie, Malcolm the mummy, Gillian the ghost, William the werewolf and Bella, a bride of Frankenstein, are going to a Halloween party when one of the dearly departed somehow dies again.

The audience will be tasked with helping a detective solve the apparent murder. Attendees are encouraged to come in costume.

Founders Kathy Strozak, GiGi Smith and John Gillis, all veterans of the Smithfield Little Theatre, founded All Y'all Players as a separate entity after meeting through various SLT productions.

The group's first production, "Cafe Murder," made its debut in 2018 featuring members of a cast Gillis had directed in 2010 for a church production of the show.

Every year since, except for 2020, All Y'all Players has returned with a new production.

New to the cast this year are Kristen Hartman as "Patti," Karen Willard as "Bella" and Rachel Popp as "Winnie."

The group donates the money from the sale of tickets for each performance to a different cause. This year, they've chosen the Windsor Gymnastics XCEL Team for the Smithfield Inn production and Mill Swamp Indian Horses, a Smithfield-based Corolla mustang breed conservation program, for the Gatling Pointe show.

Mill Swamp also operates a human-focused program for victims of trauma and their caregivers.

Strozak, the show's producer, has previously produced "Spamalot," "It's a Wonderful Life" and "The Dining Room" for SLT.

Smith, the show's director, has directed productions in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, Independence, Missouri, Smithfield, Norfolk and internationally.

Tickets to the Gatling Pointe Yacht Club productions can be purchased by calling the club at 757-357-0693.



Kaitlin Little plays Zoe the zombie

Community calendar

Thursday, April 27

PIG PICKIN - The 47th annual Windsor Ruritan Club Pig Pickin' Festival will be 3-7 p.m. at the Isle of Wight County Fairgrounds. Menu includes barbecue, cole slaw, beans, cornbread and beverages. \$35 per ticket. Featuring live music by Island Boy. Cornhole and 50/50 Raffle. For tickets and information, contact Gibbie Dowdy at 757-630-5420.

BINGO - Smithfield American Legion will host a community bingo game at 818 S. Church St. in Smithfield. Regular and special games are paying out up to \$60 and progressive game jackpots of over \$1,000. Doors open at 5 p.m.; card sales begin at 6 p.m. Refreshments are available from the Legion Auxiliary on site. For up-to-date information (in case of inclement weather, etc.) check the post Facebook page (Post49SmithfieldVA) or call 757-357-9239.

CAMP CC PROGRAMS - Free informational session on Camp Community College's Fast Track Healthcare Programs (Clinical Medical Assistant, Patient Care Technician, EKG Tech, Phlebotomy Tech and Medication Aide) at 3:30 p.m. at the college's Smithfield center. Dawn Hill, health care coordinator and instructor, will give an overview of the programs and answer questions. Call 757-569-6050 or email workforce@pdc.edu for information.

ROTARY MEETING - Gordan Macinally, Rotary president-elect, will present a program on the Mental Health Awareness Initiative via video. The club meets at Smithfield Station every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 28

2023 SPRING FEST - Isle of Wight County/Joel C. Bradshaw Fairgrounds, 21311 Courthouse Hwy., Windsor, April 28-30. Advance online midway ticket sales end April 28 at 5 p.m. Visit www.thefairiscoming.com for information.

LITERACY CONTEST - Deadline for entries in the Colonel William Allen Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, literacy contest for Isle of Wight County elementary classroom teachers and reading specialists. Two \$250 grants will be awarded. Essay required to explain how the entrant's classroom and students would benefit from the grant. Essay should be no more than 300 words. Winners will be notified by May 1. Submit essay, name, email address, phone number and school name to schupcolet@aol.com.

Saturday, April 29

BOOK SIGNING - Finley's General Store will host local author Mary Batten 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at 23305 Sugar Hill Road, Carrollton.

COURT DAY - The 1750 Isle of Wight County Courthouse, 130 Main St., Smithfield, will present Court Day, "Sounds of the Revolution," directed by Julian Bouchard, with performances at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Admission is \$10; children 6 and under free. For information, visit www.1750courthouse.com For more details call 757-356-9016.

PORK BUTT SALE - Possum Hollow Ruritans' Spring Pork Butt sale will be at Saunders Supply on Route 10 in Chuckatuck. Pick up 10 a.m.-2 p.m. A fully cooked overnight Boston Butt with barbecue sauce will cost \$35. To place advance orders call 757-685-4310. Purchase will be delivered from the cooker to your car. There will not be a bake sale. The Possum Hollow Ruritan Club is raising money for college scholarships and community projects. Members are from Chuckatuck, Smithfield and Suffolk. The club meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. for dinner at Smithfield Station.

CHURCH TOURS - 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, corner of Church and Main streets in Smithfield. Your tour guide will present the history of the oldest original church in Smithfield, built in 1832. Participants will enjoy stained-glass windows by Tiffany, Lamb, Mayer and Wipple glass studios. Ornaments made from window designs will be on sale for \$25-\$30.

Sunday, April 30

2023 SCHOLARSHIP - Deadline for African American seniors attending Smithfield, Windsor or Surry high schools who are planning to attend • See CALENDAR, p. 10



Above: The building that's now Q Daddy's Smithfield restaurant was built in 1969 as a Texaco gas station and auto body shop. Right: Q Daddy's opened its first restaurant in Smithfield in 2017 on South Church Street.

Q Daddy's buys iconic Pop's restaurant in Grafton

By Stephen Faleski
 Staff Writer

A beloved York County restaurant that closed its doors in March after 45 years will live on as Q Daddy's newest location.

Joy Andrus, who handles catering and marketing for Q Daddy's, says the Smithfield-based, family-owned barbecue restaurant is under contract to purchase the former Pop's Drive-In at Route 17 and Denbigh Boulevard in Grafton.

Q Daddy's opened its Smithfield restaurant in 2017 at a converted circa-1969 Texaco gas station and auto body shop on South Church Street that's changed hands several times over the years. In 2019, Q Daddy's purchased the decades-old, former Tasty Treat in Wakefield and opened a second location, making Pop's its soon-to-be third.

Bringing new life to iconic old buildings is "becoming our hallmark," Andrus said, perhaps nearly as much as Q Daddy's barbecue itself, which is cooked in a pit "the way our dad taught us."

Roughly two years prior to opening the Smithfield Q Daddy's, Andrus and her brother, Jesse Witten, hatched plans to bring a barbecue restaurant to the town that's home to the corporate headquarters of global pork-processing giant Smithfield Foods. Witten, Q Daddy's head "pitmaster" or barbecue chef, had initially eyed the former Tastee Freez restaurant on South Church Street; it had served as Smithfield's go-to place for fast food in the 1950s before McDonalds and Hardee's came to town. But the deal fell through and the town government, in 2021, declared the building "blighted" and had it razed.

"We loved the old building," Andrus said. "It was kind of iconic. ... It just looked like a throwback place."

It wasn't long after the collapse of the 2015 Tastee Freez deal that Witten, driving down South Church Street, saw a "for sale or lease" sign at the former Texaco, which had most recently operated as the Come & Go Food Mart.

"It was in pretty terrible condition," Andrus said, "but it had a hood vent in it that they had been cooking gas station fried chicken. We just loved it."

When the family's contractors advised against buying and trying to rehabilitate the dilapidated storefront, they bought it anyway and did much of the renovations themselves.

Q Daddy's Wakefield location also dates to the 1960s and was "important to the town," Andrus said. The Wakefield renovations included the addition of a smokehouse and dining room. "That's been a great second location for us," Andrus said.

The siblings and their mother, Q Daddy's President Lynn Witten, had begun looking "a while ago" to open a third location in Grafton, Andrus said.

The unincorporated York County community has a "similar vibe" and "small-town charm" to Smithfield, Andrus said.

Much like the Smithfield site's origins, Q Daddy's had initially eyed a different location than Pop's, but the deal fell through. Then the family's real estate agent called to inform them that Pop's Allen family owners planned to retire and sell the business. Andrus and her family took advantage of the rare opportunity to tour the restaurant before it hit the market.

"We met with the owners, who have been working there for 45 years. ... They sat in the dining room with us, told us their history and their legacy," Andrus said.

It "reminded us a lot," she said, of Q Daddy's own journey over the past six years.

As Andrus retells the story, after hearing it from Pop's current owner, Randall Allen, Pop's began as a hotdog stand,



Top: From left are Smithfield Q Daddy's Manager Jeff Canfield, brisket inspector Matt Skinner and Pitmaster Jesse Witten. Above: From left, Trey Witten of Tidewater Pro Build, Q Daddy's President Lynn Witten, Greg Brezinski of ARCI Architects and consultant Joel Andrus look over a floor plan inside the former Pop's Drive-In.

named for its original owner, Pop Warnick. Allen's father would deliver milk to the restaurant weekly. When Warnick retired, he sold the business to Allen's father, who then ran it with his children for the next 45 years.

The original structure has undergone two additions under the Allen family's management. In its dining room hung photos showing how the building had changed over the decades.

Andrus acknowledges she and her family will have large pots and pans to fill to live up to the expectations of the Allen family's loyal customer base. Once the impending closure hit the news, Andrus said, there were lines of people around the block waiting to eat their final meal at Pop's.

"It puts a lot of pressure on whoever comes next into that space," Andrus said.

She and her family plan to add dining space, outdoor seating and a smokehouse to Pop's, and possibly a drive-thru, pending approval from the Virginia Department of Transportation. She anticipates Pop's reopening as Q Daddy's in about a year.

Community calendar

Thursday, June 22

JOB FAIR - Isle of Wight County Economic Development will co-sponsor the seventh annual Tidewater News Job Fair 3-6 p.m. at the Paul D. Camp Community College Regional Workforce Development Center, 100 N. College Drive, Franklin. The cost of a booth is \$250. Electricity is an additional \$50. For information or to register contact Michelle Gray at The Tidewater News, 757-304-8265 or michelle.gray@thetidewaternews.com. The event is free for all job-seekers.

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Friday, June 23

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES - The York River Concert Band will perform pop tunes and marches at 7 p.m. on the front lawn of The Smithfield Times, 228 Main St.

Saturday, June 24

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8545 will hold its community breakfast 7-10 a.m. at the post home, 223 Washington St. The menu consists of sausage patties, bacon, biscuits, sausage gravy, hash browns, Belgian waffles, scrambled eggs, chilled fruit, fruit juice and coffee. Omelets are also available on request. The price is \$11 for adults, \$5 for children 5-12 and free for children under 5.

COLD WAR DEFENSE - The Isle of Wight County Museum will host a Nike Park Walking Tour, 2-4 p.m. Visit Nike-Ajax Missile Site N-75L, one of the Cold War's few surviving Army Air-Defense Posts. Historian Albert Burckard, along with former missile mechanic Ira Abbott, will give a short presentation and a walking tour of the site, which contains the original barracks, mess hall, administration and recreation building, officer/non-commissioned officer family housing, fueling area and underground missile magazines. Event begins in the Recreation Hall (former soldier barracks) at Nike Park, 13036 Nike Park Road, Carrollton. For information visit www.historicisleofwight.com or call 757-356-1223.

PLAY IN THE PARK DAY - Windsor Castle Park, 705 Cedar St., Smithfield 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. The Windsor Castle Park Foundation will host a day of free family fun, including an update on the latest improvements and plans for the future. Food will be available for purchase. \$5 lunch per person; kids under 3 eat free. A bike/scooter parade will be held at 11:30 a.m. and painted rock hiding all day. For information call 757-542-3109.

Monday, June 26

DINNER CHURCH - Surry Baptist Church will host its monthly dinner church at 6 p.m. For information call 757-653-1763.

Tuesday, June 27

BOOKWORM DISCOVERIES - From 2-3 p.m. the Blackwater Regional Library and Isle of Wight County Museum will host free outdoor-themed programming featuring themes of agriculture, nature and bugs at Windsor Castle Park, 705 Cedar St.; meet in the parking lot near the Children's

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Above, a monarch butterfly lands on a tithonia flower. Below, milkweed sprouted around other growing milkweed. (Photos submitted by Ruth Meredith)

Pollinators
in the **Park**

By Akilah Frye
 Staff writer

There is a loss of habitat for the monarch butterfly, which is now being considered for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species List.

In observance of Pollinator Week, which runs June 19-25, some Smithfield residents are continuing their advocacy that began when monarch butterflies and a milkweed meadow were put in at Windsor Castle Park in 2018.

Smithfield resident Ruth Meredith, Smithfield Middle School teacher Ellen Peterson and Paul Anderson, an Eagle Scout from Troop 7, made efforts to increase the milkweed forage available to the monarchs in Smithfield. In the fall of 2017, the seventh-grade classes of Smithfield Middle School began their school year with a tagged monarch butterfly release to send the migrating monarchs down to Mexico. The students were able to study the life cycle of the monarch along with habitat needs.

During this same educational period, efforts were underway with the Town of Smithfield to obtain permission to put in a milkweed meadow near the kayak launch of Windsor Castle Park. Students participated in obtaining permission from the Town Council, and plans were made by Meredith and Anderson for the meadow. Once they gained permission, sod

in the area was dug up and various species of milkweed plants were planted.

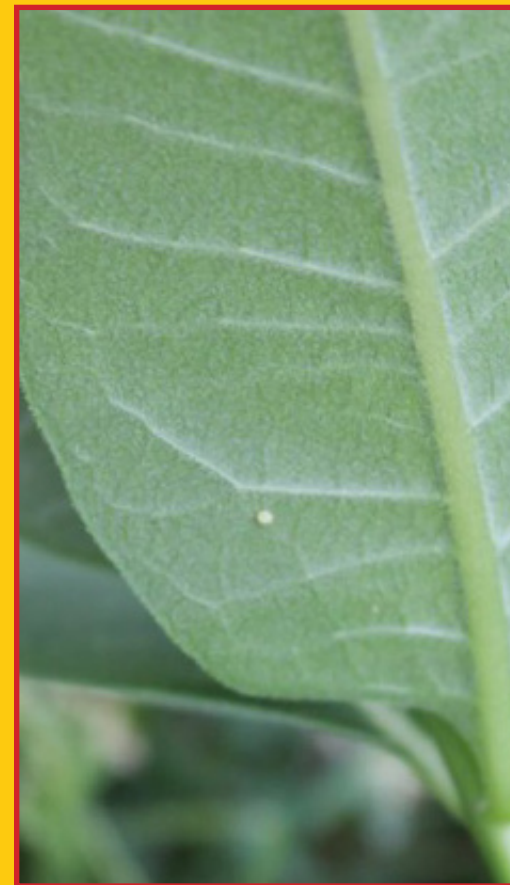
The current issue is that the milkweed is big and stout, causing a public misunderstanding of the meadow's purpose and repeated mowing by the Parks and Recreation Department, Meredith said. "Mowing the milkweed once or twice a year is acceptable, allows the common milkweed to regrow and provides tender leaves for the new caterpillars to munch on. Continuous mowing each month doesn't allow the caterpillars to mature, defeating the purpose of the milkweed meadow," said Meredith.

Meredith spoke with Amy Musick-Novak, Director of Smithfield Parks and Recreation, who agreed "to leave the milkweed meadow at its current location at Windsor Castle Park and to reduce the amount of mowing to twice a year."

"We will add a large permanent sign near the walking path so visitors will have a better understanding of why the tall milkweed plants are there and not being mowed down," Meredith said.

There is still a need for public awareness of the importance of milkweed.

"We still do need help in changing public perception and the importance of pesticide-free habitat for the monarch butterflies and their caterpillars," Meredith said.



Top, an egg pictured on common milkweed. Above, seedlings planted by Smithfield Middle School students. At left, a female monarch butterfly lays her eggs on milkweed.

