

The Tidewater News

118TH YEAR, NO. 22

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

\$1.00

Courtland woman arrested in fatal domestic dispute



Stephanie Mulder

STAFF REPORT

A Courtland woman was arrested Wednesday, March 15, after surrendering herself in connection with a Feb. 4 domestic dispute that involved a shooting and the death of a Courtland man. The Southampton

County Sheriff's Office stated in a March 15 news release that Stephanie Mulder, 42, of Courtland, was arrested after turning herself in to the Southampton County Jail. Police said she was charged with second-degree murder, use of a firearm in the commis-

sion of a felony, and possession of a firearm while possessing schedule I/II narcotics. A prior sheriff's office news release noted that deputies responded at about 3:28 a.m. on Feb. 4 to a residence in the 20000 block of Ivor Road in reference to an adult male that had been shot

during a domestic dispute. Deputies secured the scene, officials noted in the release. Police stated that Jonathan Lewis Mulder Jr., 33, of Courtland, was pronounced dead at the scene. Stephanie Mulder is being held at the Virginia Beach City Jail.

Man dies in two-vehicle Windsor crash

STAFF REPORT

The Virginia State Police investigated a two-vehicle crash in Isle of Wight County that resulted in a fatality Monday evening, March 20. A VSP news release stated that the crash occurred at approximately 8:20 p.m. on Windsor Boulevard (Route 460) at Lovers Lane. Lorinza Thomas Boone was the man driving a 2007 Dodge Caravan and was traveling southbound on Lovers Lane, police stated. They indicated that Boone failed to stop at the stop sign and made a left turn onto Route 460 into the path of a 2011 Ford Eagle that was traveling westbound on Route 460. Police said that Boone, 76, of Deer Path Road in Suffolk, suffered serious life-threatening injuries and was taken to Sentara Obici Hospital, where he later died from his injuries. The driver of the Ford Eagle, a 16-year-old female, and the



SUBMITTED | VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

The 2011 Ford Eagle, left, and the 2007 Dodge Caravan were the vehicles involved in a fatal crash Monday evening, March 20, on Windsor Boulevard at Lovers Lane.

8-year-old front-seat passenger both suffered non-life-threatening injuries and were transported from the scene, the re-

lease stated. It is unknown if alcohol was a contributing factor, police said. They noted that Boone was not

wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash. Next of kin for Mr. Boone has been notified of his passing.

SCPS battles bus driver shortage

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Southampton County Public Schools has been navigating the challenge of a bus driver shortage in recent months. Will Melbye, SCPS coordinator of auxiliary services and transportation, has highlighted the need for more bus drivers in multiple Southampton County School Board meetings. In a March 9 interview, he shared more details about and surrounding the shortage.

THE IDEAL AND THE SHORTFALL

He explained that SCPS has 53 different runs that it manages every school day between its secondary and elementary schools. "If we were to have zero absences, all 34 contracted drivers and a sub are used to make this happen," he said. Some drivers are two-tiered drivers, which means they

SEE SHORTAGE, A6

Duke Street Committee Windsor mayor addressing buzzards

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Buzzards are roosting near the end of Duke Street in Windsor, beginning to make a mess, and Windsor Mayor George Stubbs is reaching out to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources to see about moving the birds elsewhere. As noted at FeatherFreeZone.com, all vultures — another name for buzzards — are protected in the U.S. by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and may not be harmed by law. "Humane control solutions, however, are allowed for their removal from unwanted areas," officials on the website stated. During the Tuesday, March 14, Windsor Town Council meeting, Stubbs mentioned receiving a call from a resident during the week of March 5-11 about buzzards present near the end of Duke Street, and Stubbs said he has been down there several times since then to evaluate the situation. "The buzzards have started roosting in those tall pine trees,"



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Windsor Mayor George Stubbs holds up a feather of one of the buzzards roosting in tall pine trees near the end of Duke Street. Stubbs is contacting the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources to learn how to have the vultures moved elsewhere.

he said during a Thursday, March 16, interview. "There were two already roosted there. Then there were a couple more that came in to roost up in the very top."

He noted that he has seen as many as six buzzards in that area. Nature.org states that vultures at rest in a tree or on a fence post are known as a committee of vul-

tures. In an on-site interview, Stubbs pointed out signs of the buzzards' presence that were on the ground at the foot of the pine trees, including feces and feathers. "I'm aware they can make a mess," he said. However, he also emphasized that no one should shoot them because there is a town ordinance prohibiting the discharge of weapons in town and also because buzzards are protected by federal law. "They are a carnivore," he said. "They perform a service to you by cleaning the roads up (of) carcasses and stuff like that." He said he was not sure what DWR can do in the Duke Street situation, but he wants to find out. He indicated that there are a couple other areas around town where buzzards have roosted. "One time at the end of Pine Lane off of Community (Drive), they started roosting in that little section of pines there," he said. Stubbs remembered learning about a humane method of get-

SEE BUZZARDS, A6

Council considers city code restricting tethering

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

The Franklin City Council discussed at its March 13 meeting the possibility of adding restrictions on the tethering of dogs to the city code. City staff was looking for direction from the council on potential language to draft and present at a later date. Council members showed support for adding restrictions to the city code but opted to table the matter until



Jarratt

SEE TETHERING, A6

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DEATHS
Samuel G. Bradshaw
J. Alfred Carr
William E. Drake Sr.
Wardell Driver
Barbara B. Fowler
Jewel L. Westbrook
Angela S. Williams



BEST BET
Easter Egg Drop: Franklin Parks and Rec will have a Easter Egg Drop on Saturday, March 25 from 1 - 3 p.m. at 920 Armory Drive in Franklin. For more information, call 757-562-2475 or email ktaylor@franklinva.com.

Deliveries may not be available at all addresses © American Dairy Queen 2022

Community News

Teamwork makes the league work

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Armory Field came alive on Thursday evenings in June and July this summer as the fifth annual Camp25/Franklin Department of Parks and Recreation Summer Soccer League unfolded, featuring children from age 4 to 14.

"The fifth annual Summer Soccer League, in partnership with Franklin Parks & Recre-

ation, was a huge success," Camp25 Founder and Executive Director Eric Benton said. "The league provided a positive and fun-filled environment for our kids to learn about the great game of soccer."

He noted that a total of 127 children registered this year, coming from Franklin, Southampton County, Isle of Wight County and Suffolk.

The league, which ran from

June 15 to July 24, featured two age divisions, with the Rookie Division being composed of children ages 4-7, including smaller 8-year-olds. The Junior Division featured kids ages 9-14, including larger 8-year-olds.

"We would like to thank Franklin Parks & Recreation, the Camp25 team, all kids and all players for making our fifth annual Summer Soccer League a huge success," Benton said.

TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Goalkeeper Asher Bryant steps forward to punt the ball during a Junior Division game of the fifth annual Camp25/FDPR Summer Soccer League in Franklin.

Scarlet Dortech awaits her opportunity to resume playing at Armory Field in Franklin.



Coach Patrick Leeman, far left, gives instructions to his Rookie Division team, including Theron Everton, center, during a break in play on game day amid the fifth annual Camp25/FDPR Summer Soccer League in Franklin.



Kinsley Burch puts the ball back into play during a Rookie Division game July 13 in Franklin.



Watching for his cue to throw the ball in during league play in Franklin is Derek Dortech.



Kason Allen sends the ball during the fifth annual Camp25/FDPR Summer Soccer League.



Veronica Griffith plots a destination for the ball as she prepares to throw it in.



Grayson Leeman keeps his eye on the ball on offense during a Rookie Division showdown July 13 in Franklin.



Competing for possession of the ball are Breyton Brown, left, and Sage Paiva.



Claire Whitley helps her team push the ball up the field during Junior Division play on July 13 at Armory Field.



Saniya Ivey, right, seeks to advance James Gray, left, and the advance of James' team on offense.

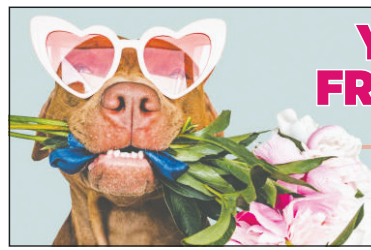
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118TH YEAR, NO. 44

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Tashawnda Nicole Drayton, a convicted felon, is wanted for first-degree murder and more in connection with a shooting incident that took place Aug. 9 in Franklin resulting in the death of a 10-year-old boy. Police said Drayton is considered armed and dangerous, and the U.S. Marshals Service is offering a reward of as much as \$5,000 for information that leads to her arrest.

COURTESY | YOUTUBE

Marshals offer reward for aid in arresting murder suspect

STAFF REPORT

The U.S. Marshals Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force is requesting the public's assistance in locating a woman who is on the run from charges stemming from the shooting death of a child in Franklin.

A U.S. Marshals Service news release stated that Tashawnda Nicole Drayton, aka "23 Brazy," is wanted for first-degree murder and related firearms charges in connection to a shooting that left a 10-year-old boy dead and an adult male injured in Franklin on Aug. 9.

Drayton is a Black female, with brown eyes and black hair. She stands 5 feet 11 inches and weighs approximately 250 pounds. She has "ONLY LOYALTY" tattooed above her left eyebrow, "23 Brazy" in red letters running from her forehead onto the left side of her face, along with several other tattoos on her face and neck. Drayton also has multiple tattoos on both of her arms and hands.

Drayton has ties all over the Hampton Roads area and should be considered armed and dangerous, the release noted.

She has the following outstanding arrest warrants from the Franklin Police Department: first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, aggravated malicious wounding, shooting into an occupied dwelling (two counts), use of a firearm in commission of a felony, threat to burn or damage a building, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and discharge of a firearm in a public place.

Anyone with information regarding Drayton's location should contact law enforcement. The U.S. Marshals Service is offering a reward of as much

as \$5,000 for information that leads to her arrest. Tips may also be submitted to the Franklin-Southampton Crime Solvers at 757-516-7100 or through the USMS Tips app.

Additionally, if anyone has information about Drayton's whereabouts, the shooting incident or other criminal activity within the city of Franklin, they can also call Franklin Police at 757-562-8575, or contact the FPD online at p3tips.com. Information that leads to an arrest can earn the caller a cash reward while remaining anonymous.



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Action is back on the Speedway track

The Southampton Motor Speedway offered a welcome sight to fans of exciting action on the track during the speedway's grand opening Saturday, Aug. 19, and Sunday, Aug. 20, that brought the track to life for the first time since 2004. The driving style of the event was drifting, and it drew a large group of participants. Merriam-Webster explains that drifting is "the act or activity of steering an automobile so that it makes a controlled skid sideways through a turn with the front wheels pointed in a direction opposite to that of the turn."

Franklin school division nearly fully staffed

BY TITUS MOHLER
 STAFF WRITER

Franklin City Public Schools is close to being fully staffed as the start of school nears for the 2023-24 academic year.

FCPS Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Human Resources Dr. Dwana P. White shared this positive report during the Franklin City School Board's regular meeting Thursday, Aug. 17.

"Tonight I come before you with great news, excellent

news," she said, first noting that all 37 teacher positions at Samuel P. Morton Elementary School have been filled.

At Joseph P. King Jr. Middle School, 15 of the 16 teacher positions have been filled.

"We're looking to hire a history teacher," White said, referencing a position in the sixth grade that was still open.

At Franklin High School, 34 of 35 teacher positions have been filled, with the lone vacancy being an eighth-grade

SEE SCHOOL, A7

Garris, transformative public servant, passes at 84

BY TITUS MOHLER
 STAFF WRITER

Wesley Floyd Garris, who served as an elected official in Windsor for 40 years, is remembered by colleagues and friends as a dedicated public servant, a true statesman, a good friend and mentor, a man of integrity and a natural-born leader who made Windsor a better place, driven to do so by his love for the town and its people.

Garris passed away Thursday, Aug. 10, at the age of 84 in his home with his family by his side.

The town of Windsor shared an official statement on Monday, Aug. 14.

"We are saddened to hear of the passing of Wesley F. Gar-

ris," town officials stated. "Wesley was dedicated to the town of Windsor and unselfishly served the town for decades as mayor and a member of Town Council."

The statement noted that he served on the Windsor Town Council from 1967-84, from 1988-96 and again from 2003-14. He was elected as mayor in 1996 and served in that role until 2002.

"During his 40 years as an elected official in Windsor, Wesley helped to navigate the town through several large changes, such as the renovation of the fire house into the municipal center and the annexation, which doubled the size of the town in 2001," town

SEE GARRIS, A7



SUBMITTED | TOWN OF WINDSOR

Former Windsor mayor and councilman Wesley Floyd Garris passed away Aug. 10 at the age of 84. Former Windsor Vice Mayor James Greg Ellis said Garris "was just a natural-born leader for the town. The town is a much better place because of the things that Wesley Garris implemented here."

Police to receive license plate-reading camera

BY TITUS MOHLER
 STAFF WRITER

The Windsor Police Department is set to receive a camera that reads license plates, enhancing the department's investigative capabilities.

The Windsor Town Council voted 5-0 on Aug. 8 to adopt a resolution appropriating the sum of \$7,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act unappropriated fund balance of the general fund and approving a budget amendment for fiscal year 2024 for the acquisition of a Flock Safety Falcon Flex camera for the WPD.

Councilman Walter Bernacki was not present at the meeting. In a memo to the mayor and Town Council that was found

SEE CAMERA, A7



COURTESY | FLOCK SAFETY

The Windsor Police Department is adding a Flock Safety Falcon Flex camera to its investigative arsenal that will serve as a key criminal intelligence tool via its ability to read license plates.

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Maddox W. Flythe
Cynthia K. Garris
Wesley F. Garris
Linda B. Seay
Sidney R. Simms
Rose D. Whitehead



BEST BET

Bingo in Newsoms: The Ruritans will host bingo night in the Newsoms Ruritan building on Thursday, Sept. 7. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the playing starts at 7 p.m. Pull tabs will be sold. Chips, cookies, water and sodas will be available for purchase. Must sell 15 packages in order to play.



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