

Last, but not least, the library board has signed the lease

BY CLARA VAUGHN
Eastern Shore Post

A new regional library is one step closer to opening.

“I am pleased to announce that the library lease is being executed this afternoon,” said Joyce Holland, board chair of the Eastern Shore Public Library Board of Trustees in a press release Thursday.

“Our staff will begin immediately to plan for a move,” she said.

The new library building in Parksley was ready for occupation earlier this spring, but the library delayed move-in after the library foundation and ESPL board sent a letter to Accomack County on April 15 citing several concerns with the draft lease agreement.

Both the county, which owns the facility, and the ESPL Board of

Trustees had to sign the lease before the library system could begin moving to the new building on Bennett Street.

The library is a multi-million dollar project funded by Accomack County, the Eastern Shore Public Library Foundation, and the Commonwealth.

Ground was broken in 2019 on the 20,837-square-foot facility, which will replace the 11,000-square-foot regional library in Accomac, which dates to 1965.

New amenities will include a large community meeting room; separate, small rooms for meetings or group study; more space for public computer use; and a makerspace where people can work together on projects.

The library also includes the Heri-

tage Center, a repository for archival documents and other items related to Eastern Shore history.

Holland previously said it will take a moving company about two to four weeks to complete the move, once it begins.

The library will announce an opening date once set, she said.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Library and Heritage Center is at 24313 Bennett St., at the former Fresh Pride grocery store, in Parksley.

ESY&CC Offers Variety of Camps

The Eastern Shore Yacht & Country Club has a limited number of openings for a variety of camps this summer. To register, go to www.esycc.com/summercamps.



ECO-WARRIOR CAMP

Campers will explore the Eastern Shore through use of paddle boarding techniques, water safety and hands-on activities while learning about local habitats and waterways and how to respect and protect them. The camp is for youth 5-14 years from **June 27 to July 1** from **9 am to 1pm**. The cost is \$200 for members and \$250 for non-members.

Northampton grads now will march forth on June 4

It's a Sunday afternoon graduation to avoid athletics conflict

BY STEFANIE JACKSON
Eastern Shore Post

Northampton High School's graduation was rescheduled twice before school officials finally settled on the date of Sunday, June 4, at 2 p.m., a decision made behind the scenes weeks before the upcoming event.

The Northampton school board was "trying to get it right for our graduating seniors," Chair Liz Jones told the Eastern Shore Post on May 12.

The problem started when school board members realized that Saturday, June 3, the 2023 graduation date that they had approved around

a year ago, was the same date set for Virginia High School League track and field state finals.

Some graduating seniors would have had to "make a choice between two extremely momentous occasions in their life," said Superintendent Lisa Martin.

At the April 27 school board meeting, she proposed changing the graduation date to Thursday, June 8.

Jones said she would entertain a motion "to accept the ... proposal to move the 2023 graduation from June 3 to June 8." The motion was made, seconded, and passed in a 4-1 roll-call vote.

The chair cast the opposing vote

because she did not want to interfere with the plans of more than 100 graduating seniors and their families.

It was a "terrible situation and a really difficult decision," Jones said, although she supported the outcome of the vote.

But the June 8 graduation date was never announced to students and parents.

The day after the vote, Martin met with Northampton's high school leadership team, which includes the high school principal, assistant principal, and athletics director.

They learned that June 8 was a "travel day" for the upcoming VHSL finals and the school board asked them to change the 2023 graduation date to Sunday, June 4, Jones said.

Martin did not have the school board reconvene and take another roll-call vote to move the graduation date a second time, but she emailed the school board members to notify them of the change.

Jones said she loves Northampton schools, wants to make decisions in the best interests of the students, and is committed to following proper procedures in school board meetings.

The Northampton school board also voted on April 27 to move the 2024 graduation to an alternate date, to be determined, that will not conflict with VHSL's schedule.

Regarding the last-minute changes to this year's graduation date, Jones said, "We are absolutely making sure ... that never happens again."

Life without wondrous Kate's Kupboard takes the cake

I was sullen and surly over the winter after Kate's Kupboard, the Belle Haven bakery, closed suddenly.

I didn't feel like getting out of bed and lost patience with our kitty cat about little stuff I once ignored.



Ted Shockley

I sat alone on the steps of our home as the leaves fell from trees, the evenings grew colder and darker, and I longed for baked goods from Kate's Kupboard.

Losing any hallmark Eastern Shore business is troubling. But losing a bakery, well, takes the cake.

Kate Ward, the proprietor, closed the eponymous business Nov. 18 of last year be-

cause she had back surgery and faced a long recovery. She said it was a difficult decision.

I thought of Ward as Easter approached. It was one of her busier holidays. One year she made and sold 200 dozen rolls.

"Rolls for the holidays — we had people come from Pocomoke and Chincoteague to get them," she said.

Ward said she is recovering nicely from her back surgery but thinks frequently about the enjoyment she received from her long-running business.

"I miss baking — and the people," she said. "I have seen so many of my customers and I have received cards from them."

She opened the first Kate's Kupboard in 1982 in Eastville. She opened the second location in Belle Haven in 1992. The Eastville location closed in 1994.

In all, she was in business for 40 years — including the last 31 at her familiar spot in Belle Haven, which also sold a variety of subs and sandwiches.

She said she was grateful for all her customers. A.C. Ward, her husband, said he was grateful for the calm Christmas they had last December — always her busiest season — after her shop closed.



EASTERN SHORE POST/TED SHOCKLEY

Kate Ward holds a pan of freshly baked bear claws in 2017 at her business, Kate's Kupboard in Belle Haven.

"It was the first Christmas we have had in 30 or 40 years that she wasn't dead tired," he said.

I ate many wonderful Italian subs from Kate's. Her cheesesteak subs also were popular — the aroma of steak and onions on the griddle would usually waft through the back parking lot.

For a while, I felt like a regular at Kate's Kupboard, which I considered an honor worthy of placement on my resume.

Sometimes, someone would call my name as I swept through the entry door, like Norm Peterson entering the bar on the television show "Cheers."

Some people pay monthly dues to belong to gyms and workout clubs. I belonged among the bakery regulars at Kate's and never even had to pay an ini-

tiation fee.

Over time, places like Kate's Kupboard are a welcome respite from a cruel, hard world.

In my opinion, there's no problem that a bag of fresh, warm brownies can't fix.

One of Ward's longtime customers lived out of the area and said she considered selling her Silver Beach vacation home because Kate's Kupboard closed.

"There's no need to come to the Shore if we can't come to Kate's," the customer wrote in a letter.

"It's very flattering," said Kate Ward. "I nearly cried."

I know the feeling. I nearly cried, too.