



CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE **SHORELINE**

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Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

TM

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Number 7

5 Years of Beautiful Bike Tour Art

A Conversation with Painter Bethany Simpson

By Donna Bozza

Perhaps it was waking immersed in Red Bank's watercolor sunrises and growing up playing hide-and-seek in its marshes teeming with life, but 30-year-old Bethany Simpson's paintings are not so much for looking at, as they are an invitation to explore. The Shore native's work explodes with color and layers of whimsical details.

For 5 years, Bethany has created and donated her vibrant paintings to Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore's annual *Between the Waters Bike Tour*. They become the focus of the tour's cycling apparel, commemorative T-shirts, and promotional materials. Also, cyclists and art lovers alike purchase raffle tickets with the hope of bringing home her brilliant interpretation of our peninsula, and in turn, the raffle generates much-needed funds for our grassroots nonprofit.



At CBES PICNIC@theBARN, artist Bethany Simpson and fiancé Andrew Durham wore Between the Waters Bike Tour tees with her previous designs.

Recently, we sat down with Bethany to get a peek into her artistic world.

When did you begin painting as a career, and how would you say your work – or the way you view it – has evolved?

I began painting on a regular basis in my early twenties, while waiting tables at a local restaurant. But it wasn't until 2018 that complications from appendicitis forced me to put down the serving tray, and stick with the brushes for a bit. During that time of recovery, I came to realize that being a full-time artist was actually a very obtainable dream. It's funny how God can use your most difficult times to force you down the path meant for you.

My work has most definitely evolved since then, maybe due to having more time to spend on detail and to attempt a wider range of subjects. And it's no longer something I just like to do. It's something I absolutely need to do for my happiness and mental well-being, but also to keep food in my dog's bowl.

What are your favorite subjects?

My favorite is luscious scenes overflowing with a mix of all different things. For instance, a large scale still-life with loads of flowers, local goodies, with tons of little add-ins...critters, some cute birds perched in the flowers, native plants or fruits, all overlooking a vast wide-open Eastern Shore landscape of some kind. The more abundant, the better!

How does living on the Shore affect your art?

Living on the Eastern Shore has not just affected my art, it has completely molded it into what it is. Had I been born anywhere else, I really don't think I would have become an artist. It's just so fun and exciting here – but in a completely natural and untamed kind of way. I try and have my work reflect that.

Any advice you would offer a young artist who wants to make art their livelihood here?

I would say what I tell my niece Alena, a 12-year-old aspiring artist – just do it! Work on your art every single day, find yourself artistically. Just like your handwriting, your art is unique to you only, even if you aren't thrilled with that at first. That needs to be nurtured and perfected, and you need to stay true to it. Once that is established, you can build on

See Bike Tour Art, Cont'd on p. 2

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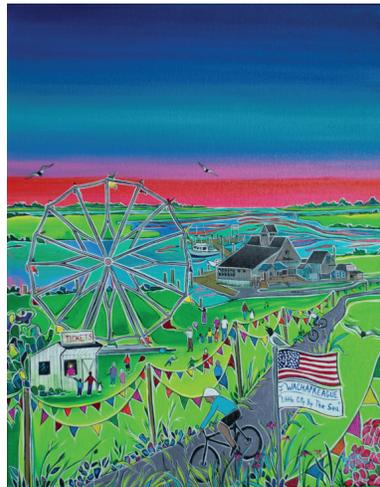
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it and add to it. But always build on the original foundation. Finally, go to all the art events you can. Put yourself out there. Meet other artists and let them inspire you. An art degree is an amazing plus, but not one that I had, so I can't say with certainty that it is necessary. Enjoy the ride and live within your means.

CBES 29th Between the Waters Bike Tour is being hosted by the seaside town of Wachapreague. Do share how you came up with your latest amazing painting.

This year's design was possibly the easiest to conceive and the most fun. I chose what felt like the coldest day of the year to go and walk around Wachapreague to take photographs. And though I was freezing, and the carnival rides had all been taken down for servicing, I found myself flooded with some of my very best memories. Being a little girl on the Ferris Wheel looking over that huge vast seaside landscape that is the Wachapreague inlet, seeing the boats come in for the evening, the smell of low tide and cotton candy, and then, more recently, having an amazing dinner on the deck at the Island House Restaurant to celebrate my 30th birthday and being newly engaged to my soul-mate. Wachapreague is a place where beautiful memories are made, and



Purchase Tickets online: <http://www.cbes.org/events.html> or at the Island House Restaurant, Wachapreague.

**Cherish an Original Keepsake –
Join the Raffle Excitement!***

Take home a quintessential Eastern Shore scene in Bethany Simpson's popular Coastal Folk Art style. This year's theme is the 2022 Bike Tour Host Town: Wachapreague, Little City by the Sea.

16" x 20" Painting. Value: Priceless!

**Raffle Tickets: \$22 per chance
or 3 for \$54. (All fees included)**

All Proceeds Benefit CBES 29th Annual Between the Waters Bike Tour and its mission: Pedal to Protect Virginia's Eastern Shore

*Drawing December 8, 2022

that was instrumental in my creative process. With those memories in mind as I worked on this year's painting, it seemed to flow together very naturally. The whole process was one that helped me to better appreciate that "little city by the sea" and all the times it has given me joy. Wachapreague is an absolute gem on the Eastern Shore and is cherished by so many.

When you started donating your work to CBES 5 years ago, you were beginning to hit your stride as an artist. Now your career is firmly established. So why do you continue this partnership?

I continue to do the Bike Tour painting because I feel so strongly about protecting the Eastern Shore, and it's a good feeling to know I am helping in some small way. We can all do a little something. I've made so many great friends throughout the years doing it, and I plan to continue until they get tired of me! Also, the free T-shirt is awesome.

See Bethany's artwork on FaceBook: Bethany Simpson Artist, and at Lemon Tree Gallery, Cape Charles, Virginia. Or call her: 757-710-1867. 

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The Corn Funk Revue inspired both dancing and laid-back listening pleasure.

PICNIC@theBARN Celebrates CBES Volunteers

By Donna Bozza

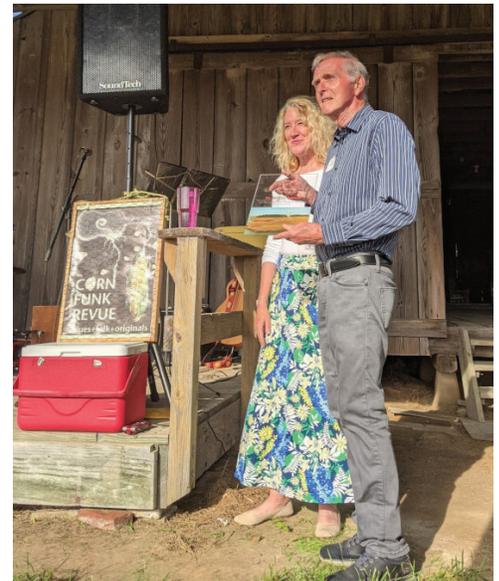
Golden waves of grain laced the edges of the century-old barn, for a quintessential Eastern Shore setting topped off with perfect weather. This was the scene for CBES 3rd almost-annual PICNIC@theBARN, held June 5 with 101 registered guests.

This year's gathering focused on celebrating the many volunteers who keep CBES biggest fundraiser, the *Between the Waters Bike Tour*, successfully rolling along. Thanks to the generosity of CBES Board Members Norman Colpitts, Lee-Ann Fick, and Mike Peirson, volunteers were offered complimentary tickets to the event. They joined attendees in enjoying the festive Mexican fare prepared by Kitchen Sync, tunes by the Corn Funk Revue, and plenty of Shore fellowship.

The highlight of the laid-back afternoon was the presentation of the Suzanne Wescoat Award to Dr. Michael Peirson – Mike – for his community service, staunch dedication to CBES Mission, and his profound impact on the development of the Shore's now-thriving Aquaculture Industry.*

Life Member Tommy O'Connor helped sponsor the event, which is not a fundraiser. Instead, CBES sets ticket prices to cover our costs. We also thank John Wescoat and family, who graciously allowed us to share their beautiful farm with our community.

*To read more about Mike Peirson's contributions to the Shore, see the June 2022 *ShoreLine* or go to www.cbcs.org.



Suzanne Wescoat Award recipient Mike Peirson, aka The Godfather of Shore Aquaculture, with CBES Executive Director, Donna Bozza.



Fresh Mexican fiesta fare was enjoyed. Served by caterer Louise Oliver, The Kitchen Sync.



Attendees arrive ready to enjoy a beautiful Sunday afternoon.



Down on the farm dancing at Cherry Grove Farm, graciously shared by John Wescoat.



New CBES member Joanne Fitchett and long-time Bike Tour volunteer Barbara O'Hare share smiles.

Broadband Update: Installation Assistance Programs

By Sue Mastyl

On June 10, Robert Bridgham, Executive Director for the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA), announced that ESVBA is an eligible service provider for the state's Line Extension Customer Assistance Program (LECAP), which will provide assistance with broadband installation costs. LECAP will be administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

With this addition, there are now 3 programs available to offset installation costs for homeowners and businesses on the Shore:

- ESVBA's Installation Assistance Program provides up to \$1,000 off installation costs for low-income subscribers (as defined by the FCC ACP program [see below], or based on the FY2021 Housing and Urban Development 80% low-income limits for the 2 counties), as long as funds last (initially funded with \$187,737).
- The Accomack Installation Assistance Program provides up to \$1,000 off installation costs, with the same criteria as above, for all service providers, as long as funds last (initially funded with \$50,000).
- The state's LECAP program, which will provide up to 100% of the cost of installation for low- to moderate-income end-users (earning up to \$89,066 in some zip codes, and \$133,599 in others). Participating providers must meet the current definition of broadband, which is 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speed. The program is funded at \$8 million.

In addition, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP; formerly the Extended Broadband Benefit, or EBB, program) provides benefits up to \$30.00 per month for subscribers who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines or meet other income eligibility requirements (<https://www.fcc.gov/acp>). Providers in the program include Neubeam, ESVBA, and Spectrum (Charter).

Future Opportunities

Additional funding for installation assistance was included as one of the proposals at the May 5 Town Hall meeting of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors, to consider options for the second installment of American Rescue Plan Act funds (\$3.1 million).

At the May 19 ESVBA Board meeting, Bridgham noted that the guidelines for 2023 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grants specify that areas without access to internet speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload are eligible for funding. This means that ESVBA can apply for areas previously off-limits under USDA grants, since the wireless service in those areas doesn't meet this definition. The VATI application deadline is August 25. 

Fun Facts About Ospreys

By George Mapp

Two of the statements below are false. See if you can guess which ones.

1. Ospreys spot fish from the air, dive in feet-first, and grab the fish by their talons. Then they flap their way to the surface and struggle to take off.
2. After taking off with a fish, ospreys shake like a wet dog to lighten their load.
3. Ospreys, like eagles, are opportunistic feeders, and eat fish, small reptiles, and mammals, and sometimes carrion.
4. Eagles dominate ospreys in aerial combat.
5. Ospreys live all over the world, but Chesapeake Bay has the largest concentration of breeding birds.
6. In the Chesapeake Bay, most ospreys nest on channel markers or other manmade structures.
7. There are more osprey nests in the James River than the Eastern Shore of Virginia.
8. Osprey nests can be 5 feet wide and 2 to 3 feet deep.
9. Local ospreys migrate to South America in the fall. Most cross from Florida to South America in one day – a distance of 500 miles.
10. Like eagles and peregrine falcons, ospreys almost all died off in the 1950s and 60s due to shell thinning attributed to DDT in their diet.

Numbers 3 and 4 are false. Ospreys feed on live fish 99% of the time. Like the canaries in coal mines, they are considered to be an indicator of ecosystem health, because toxic chemicals in the food chain tend to concentrate at the highest levels.

In debates about choosing a national symbol for the United States, Ben Franklin argued that the eagle was “a bird of bad moral character” that “does not get his living honestly” because it steals food from the fishing hawk and is “too lazy to fish for himself.”

Eagles are larger and can prevail over ospreys on the ground, but ospreys are more agile fliers. The 2021 *Nature* documentary shows an osprey harassing an eagle who attempted to move into its territory.

Number 7 is true. Ironically, osprey populations have bounced back slower on the lower Eastern Shore than the rest of the Bay. Diet may be the reason – a study found that “fish from higher-salinity waters were on average 6% shorter, 34% lighter, and 40% lower in energy content than those from fresher waters.” Ospreys on the James River feed on blue catfish, which have become abundant to the extent that they are displacing native species, after having been introduced by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in 1975. 

Source:

Virginia Institute of Marine Science. About ospreys. 2022. https://www.vims.edu/bayinfo/ospreycam/about_ospreys/.



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Opportunities range from \$100 to \$5,000

See cbes.org for details or contact us: info@cbes.org



Peach Shortcake With English Scones

Peaches, biscuits, whipped cream – the complete recipe for Peach Shortcake. What makes this one special is the English Scones recipe provided by CBES Board Member, Eleanor Gordon. If a Devon Cream Tea has ever been on your radar, you'll get the idea. Be sure your scone ingredients are at room temperature before you start. While scones bake, cut up peaches, add a little lemon juice and sugar, stir, and let sit for a little while. Whip heavy cream, add sifted confectioner's sugar and vanilla to taste, to make Crème Chantilly. Let scones cool a little, then cover with the peaches and cream. Summer in a bowl!

- 2 cups flour
- 4 tsp baking powder
- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 tbsp salted butter – *at room temperature!*
- ⅔ cup whole milk
- 1 egg

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and sugar to combine well. Add the butter, and either pulse in a food processor, or cut in with a pastry cutter, until the mixture resembles coarse sand. In a separate bowl, whisk egg and milk – reserve a little of this mixture to brush on top of scones before baking. Add mixture to dry ingredients and stir into a rough dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured counter and knead only 10 times, then work into a small ball. Roll dough to 1" thick for about 7 large scones, or a little thinner for more, smaller ones. Cut out scones with 2 ½" pastry cutter – roll any leftovers and cut a few more. **Don't twist cutter** to seal edges. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet and brush tops with egg/milk wash. Bake at 425° for 13 to 15 minutes until golden brown.

The Kitchen Hive. Reprinted with permission: <https://www.talkrealnow.com/>

RECYCLING CORNER

By Sue Mastyl

Plastic Bag Fee Adopted Around the State

In 2020, the General Assembly passed a bill allowing localities to impose a 5-cent tax on disposable plastic bags, beginning January 1, 2021 (see Recycling Corner, May 2020 *ShoreLine*). Retailers will be allowed to retain 2 cents for each bag through January 1, 2023, and 1 cent thereafter. The revenues generated will be used by each locality for environmental cleanup, mitigating pollution and litter, or providing reusable bags to low-income families.



To date, the following cities and counties have passed ordinances requiring that grocery stores (including larger retailers containing a grocery store), convenience stores, and drugstores collect a 5-cent tax on plastic bags –

- Albemarle County
- Alexandria
- Arlington County
- Falls Church
- Fairfax County
- Fredericksburg
- Loudoun County
- Roanoke

Virginia Beach City Council is currently considering the move, with a public hearing scheduled for July 5. Surfrider, Lynnhaven NOW, the Virginia Aquarium Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Virginia League of Conservation Voters all support the initiative. Jim Deppe of Lynnhaven NOW stated that localities have seen a drop of 70% to 80% in plastic bag debris in waterways after implementing the ban.

Statewide bans of plastic bags have been passed in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington.

Several large chains have announced plans to eliminate plastic bags in their stores, including Wegmans (by the end of 2022, with the Virginia Beach store discontinuing the use on July 1), Aldi (by the end of 2023), and Kroger (including Freddy Meyer, Harris Teeter, and Ralphs, by the end of 2025). Some chains have already ended the use, including Whole Foods (in 2008), Trader Joe’s (in 2019), and Lidl (in 2017).

The Consortium to Reinvent the Retail Bag (including founding members Target, Walmart, and CVS

Keeping Track



Waterkeepers Chesapeake Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Clean Water Act

Waterkeepers Chesapeake has launched a Clean Water Act 50th Anniversary campaign to celebrate and share clean-water successes, sign up for upcoming events, get more information on the 1972 Clean Water Act and its impacts, and amplify actions to further protect our water resources. The campaign includes 15 Waterkeepers organizations in the region, including the Assateague Coastkeeper, partnering with 34 environmental organizations around the Bay.

The campaign website states:

“Passage and implementation of the Clean Water Act is a quintessentially American story that reshaped our country for the better. The heroes of this story are you – everyday people who have used their power to enforce this law for the protection of their communities and families.

“Through storytelling, the CWA50 Campaign will lift up the stories of and start conversations with local clean water champions in communities across our region who stood up to polluters and lax regulators, and won. CWA50 will provide a platform for stories of low-income and marginalized communities still experiencing the effects of flooding, polluted waterways, and historical disinvestment, and the barriers they face in achieving solutions that must be addressed in order to fulfill the promise of the Clean Water Act.”

See the campaign website for upcoming events, success stories, actions to take, and more at <https://cwa50.org/>.



Health, which together have committed \$15 million to the effort) conducted a 6-week test pilot in 9 stores in California in 2021 to identify alternatives to single-use plastic bags. According to the website for the Center for the Circular Economy at Closed Loop Partners (<https://www.closedlooppartners.com/beyond-the-bag/>), which is administering the program, 100 billion single-use plastic bags are used every year in the U.S.; an average bag is used for 12 minutes; plastic bags are consistently in the top 10 of beach-litter items; and a plastic bag persists in the environment for an average of 1,000 years.

Rental Housing Proposal

At the June 7th Accomack-Northampton Transportation District (ANTDC) meeting, State Sen. Bill DeSteph (R-Virginia Beach) spoke about a proposed workforce housing project that he and Delegate Rob Bloxom have been working on. The goal is to provide rental housing for school teachers, among others. The reason they presented at the ANTDC meeting is that they are looking at a site in Exmore, at the old rail yard between Front St. and 6th St., near the post office. DeSteph's construction company would build the housing.

The 40- to 45-unit apartment complex would occupy a 6.45-acre plot. The goal is for the 1- and 2-bedroom units to rent for \$1,000 and \$1,100, respectively. Construction would be contingent upon the completion of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District's main sewer line, currently under construction. A sticking point is cost, as construction costs have risen sharply over the past few years, and continue to rise.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Rail-Trail feasibility study has a proposed layout for the Exmore rail yard that keeps the old railroad station alongside a "town event center." VDOT also recommends that there be "at least one primary or secondary trailhead in each of the towns" with amenities such as parking, wayfinding signs, information kiosks, restrooms, drinking fountains, bike racks, bike repair stations, benches, and picnic tables.

The proposal was received favorably by the group. Final plans would be worked out with the town of Exmore.

Proposal to Increase Litter Removal

At the June 15 meeting of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors, Stewart Hall, Deputy Administrator of Public Works and Facilities, outlined a proposal to provide additional resources for removal of roadside litter. He noted that "despite many decades of hard work ... by volunteers, grassroots organizations, and public agencies, roadside litter continues to plague Accomack County." Initiatives over the last 20 years have included:

- The Adopt-A-Highway program through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in which individuals or organizations volunteer to clean up a specific road or stretch
- Community clean-ups through volunteer groups, including Wastewatchers, Bayside Community, Boy Scouts, and local churches
- Work crews under the Sheriff's Department
- The Assign-A-Highway program, administered by the Public Works Department, in which individuals are assigned to clean up roadside litter as part of court-ordered probation
- The Sponsor-A-Highway program, initiated by Wastewatchers and administered by VDOT and the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, in which private businesses engage contractors to pick up litter several times a year
- Public education through the schools (mainly clubs) and community groups

Most of these public-facing programs have never gained sufficient momentum to make a difference; Hall noted that working with the schools and community groups is "preaching to the choir." Rather than focusing on prevention and education, he is recommending additional resources within the Public Works Department to address the problem.

Currently, there are 4 full-time employees available for litter removal as part of their other duties, including maintaining the county's 27 water access sites; transportation of appliances, batteries, and mulch from the county's convenience centers; and maintenance of all 911 street signs – all of which leaves little time for litter removal. The ditch vacuum purchased for this purpose requires at least 3 crew, with an additional 2 needed as flaggers on dangerous curves.

Hall's proposal would create a dedicated Litter Crew, with 4 laborers and 1 Crew Leader, in addition to the current 4 full-time employees. The budget for staff and equipment would be \$250,000 annually. With the current staff, he noted, "we're only hitting 2 to 3 roads a month. With an additional crew, we could do much more." The Supervisors' reception to the proposal was positive; Hall indicated he will bring this back to the Board during budget discussions.

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CBES Salutes Volunteers

The long-term strength of a grassroots organization is largely dependent on its volunteers. Now in its 35th year, CBES is no exception. Shown above is Bike Tour Coordinator Mary Ehmann conversing with volunteers during the recent PICNIC@theBARN celebration.

For information on joining the fun before, during, or after this year's Bike Tour, contact Mary at cbesbiketours@gmail.com.

Community Calendar*

**Note: For current status of public meetings, go to the appropriate website or contact by email or phone.*

Accomack County
757-787-5700
www.co.accomack.va.us

Northampton County
757-678-0440
www.co.northampton.va.us

- 1st Wed Board of Zoning Appeals
10 AM, Accomac
- 2nd Wed Planning Commission (PC)
7 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues School Board
7 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Wed Board of Supervisors
5 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Wed PC Work Session
7 PM, Accomac
- 4th Thurs Wetlands Board
10 AM, Accomac

- 1st Tues Board of Zoning Appeals
10 AM, Eastville
- 1st Tues Planning Commission (PC)
6 PM, Eastville
- 2nd Tues Board of Supervisors (BOS)
6 PM, Eastville
- 2nd Thurs School Board Work Session
6 PM, Machipongo
- 2nd Thurs Wetlands Board
Meets as needed, Eastville
- 3rd Wed PC Work Session
2 PM, Eastville
- 4th Tues BOS Work Session
5 PM, Eastville
- 4th Thurs School Board
6 PM, Machipongo

CBES and Other Activities

- 3rd Tues ES Ground Water Committee
10 AM, Melfa
- 3rd Tues CBES Board Meeting
No meeting in July
- 3rd Thurs (odd months) Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority
2 PM, Exmore

**For membership and other
CBES information:
www.cbes.org**