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THE PRINCESS ANNE INDEPENDENT NEWS

PRINCESSANNEINDY.COM

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 7 • MARCH 29, 2020

RUNNING ON EMPTY

PAGE 10: Concern about spreading the new coronavirus is felt in all aspects of private and public life, and it's battering small businesses, including in Virginia Beach's vital hospitality industry. Dining rooms such as this one at Red Head Bay Café in rural Creeds are empty while businesses adapt to delivery and curbside pickup service. **OTHER COVID-19 COVERAGE THROUGHOUT.**

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GOVERNMENT

Virginia Beach proposed budget seeks change to fund meant to back up Sandbridge beach replenishment efforts

BY JOHN-HENRY DOUCETTE

VIRGINIA BEACH — A special service district in Sandbridge is generating more than enough money to pay for important sand replenishment projects there, which means Virginia Beach officials believe they can both lower an additional real estate tax rate for those paying into the district and stop setting aside another pot of money that was meant to back it up.

The city budget plan released on Tuesday, March 24, proposes ending a tax increment financing district for Sandbridge because it hasn't been needed for shoreline management for years. Instead, that money has been surplus and ended up in the general fund and to help schools. By dissolving the TIF, as it is known, the money would go directly towards other needs, some stemming from the mass shooting this past year.

Kevin Chatellier, acting co-director of budget and management services, on Tuesday, March 25, said the tax increment financing district effectively has been a "backstop" for the special service district, which is known by the acronym SSD.

"Sandbridge SSD revenues alone were adequate and healthy enough to support the beach replenishment needs," Chatellier said during a briefing for the City Council.

The special service district uses a surcharge on real estate taxes, among other sources, and it has generated more than enough money to cover replenishment efforts vital to maintaining the community's beaches and protecting property, according to a recent audit and the budget proposal.

"We're more than 20 years into the program," said City Councilmember Barbara Henley, who represents the Princess Anne District. "Clearly, as of their audit, the money is very sufficient to cover the costs."

Henley said the city had prepared a presentation about the audit and a budgetary

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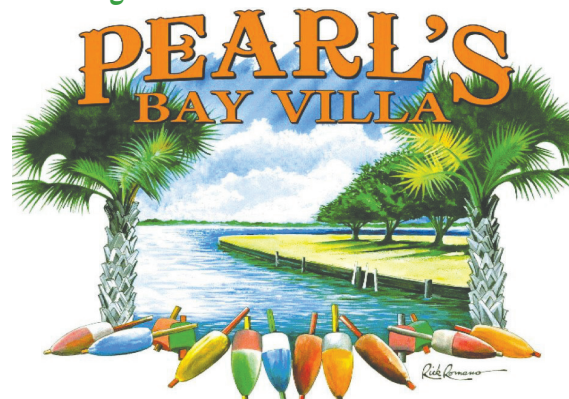


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AGRICULTURE

Local farm stands, pick-your-own operations prepare to provide produce to customers while addressing coronavirus restrictions, safety measures

BY JANE BLOODWORTH ROWE

VIRGINIA BEACH — Despite the outbreak of the new coronavirus, local produce farmers are preparing for the spring season, and they say they will open stands and pick-your-own locations with precautions in place to protect customers and employees.

Bruce Henley has opened Flip Flop Farm Market at 1166 Culver Lane in Ocean Lakes, and he is stocking it with early strawberries, asparagus and kale. Henley briefly opened his New Bridge Road field for you-pick in early March, and he plans to reopen as picking conditions become more favorable.

Henley and farmer Robbie Vaughan of Vaughan Farms Produce said all systems are go, and they anticipate a bountiful season.

Mike Cullipher of Cullipher Farm Market, meanwhile, said he is cautiously optimistic. He plans to open his Princess Anne Road market before Easter, but he said plans could change depending on whether the number of new cases related to the new coronavirus increases or declines.

"That's the \$60,000 question," said Cullipher, who added that he's busy seeking



File/The Independent News

As strawberry season nears, local produce farmers are preparing to open stands and pick-your-own operations while taking steps meant to ensure safety for workers and consumers amid the ongoing new coronavirus emergency.

information and trying to determine how to keep employees, family members and customers safe.

Tom Baker of Brookdale Farms expects a quiet spring without the buzz of children

who usually tour his farm during school and preschool field trips. This year, with schools out of session, there will be no trips. Beyond that, he declined to speculate on the virus's effects on his spring business, saying that the

situation was too "fluid" at the present.

The Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture has been working closely with state agriculture officials and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service at Virginia Tech, which has established guidelines on best practices for farmers markets and pick your own farms, according to Virginia Beach Extension Agent Roy Flanagan. [Ed. — Flanagan is kin to John Doucette, editor of The Independent News.]

The extension recommends routine precautions, such as the use of disinfectant to wipe down counters, and it also recommends that market employees use hand sanitizers and wear gloves.

Following Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's executive order this past week, the state released guidance for pick-your-own operations and individual farm stands to limit the number of consumers to 10 at a time in es-

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 8]

RELATED: State agriculture officials offer guidance for pick-your-own and individual farm stands, and farmers markets adapt to restrictions. **Page 6.**



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FROM THE EDITOR

The new normal of the new coronavirus

BACK BAY

Events were changing even as this edition of *The Independent News* went to press this past week, and my heart goes out to all of those affected by the ongoing public health emergency in our communities.

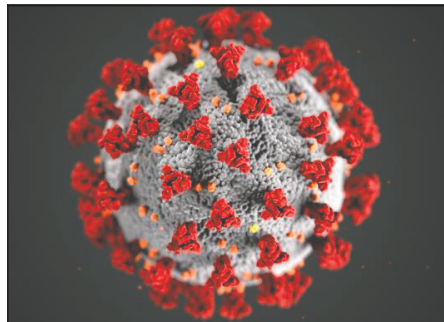
Obviously, safety comes first, but the economic impact of the new coronavirus is being felt here, too. Many of our advertisers have been wounded by this. That means the newspaper is in pain, too. I will work with everyone to keep ads running during the crisis.

I ask you to please support our advertisers if you are in a position to do so, including our local restaurants. There are ways to help.

You can order takeout, purchase gift cards or just be ready to support them when we regain some sense of normalcy. Additionally, there are ways help the restaurants that remain operating through takeout and delivery services. The Virginia Beach Restaurant Association has a list of member restaurants and available services online via dineinvb.com.

This newspaper doesn't exist without ads. Our revenue, like that of many small businesses, is extremely uncertain right now.

And so my goals, like so many of our goals, have changed amid the crisis. Some of



A. Eckert & D. Higgins/CDC

you may know we aimed to add additional editorial coverage for the main resort area this spring. Given the timing, that is on hold.

My goal is now is humble — keep publishing and get the newspaper to you. Let me talk about some distribution challenges first.

A number of locations where this newspaper is distributed for free are not open at all, not open to the public or operating differently, such as libraries, retail establishments and many restaurants. I am leaving additional copies at main distribution points, such as the 7-Eleven in Pungo, R-Co in Creeds, Blackwater Trading Post, Sand-

bridge Market, Walgreens at Red Mill and the Virginia Beach Farmers Market at Princess Anne and Dam Neck roads. Additional copies are at our three Harris Teeter locations and our exterior boxes at the Oceanfront, too.

Addresses are available at princessanneindy.com. Just click "Find Us." Or email me.

I am also working to add distribution points, even temporary ones, such as adding exterior newspaper boxes at the Senior Resource Center, Inc., in Creeds and interior racks at some drug store locations in our coverage area in the southern city and at the Oceanfront. Please follow us on Facebook for updates on these new distribution points.

I am grateful to all who have responded to my appeals for help distributing the newspaper in this challenging time for all of us.

We will continue to publish amid the crisis as long as we are able to do so. Advertising pays our costs, which is why the newspaper is free to readers. Obviously, this is a challenging time.

We could use some advertising, especially now. You do not need to run a business to advertise and show your support for local journalism. If you support this newspaper, I ask you to please consider advertising.

As I have mentioned on social media, I am adjusting our publication day from Friday to Sunday, starting with this edition. This should put us in a better position to respond to news that breaks later in the week, which has been an issue recently, especially now.

It will not change our ad deadlines.

Email jhd@princessanneindy.com or call (757) 502-5293 with any questions or concerns. I hope to keep providing local news to our communities throughout this crisis and beyond. I have faith in us.

I look forward to our mutual recovery. Thanks for reading.

GOVERNMENT

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Ed. — Given the public health emergency, a number of meetings and events have been cancelled due to the new coronavirus, and the public is advised to avoid gatherings. This is a standard schedule of events we run. Please check and use discretion.

► **Virginia Beach City Council:**

Formal sessions on first and third Tuesdays, 6 p.m., City Council Chamber, Building 1, Municipal Center. Normally first and second Tuesdays in July and December only. Call (757) 385-4303 for information. *As this edition went to press, city offices were closed to the public.*

► **Virginia Beach Planning**

Commission: Formal hearing second Wednesdays, noon, City Council Chamber, Building 1, Municipal Center; informal briefing second Wednesdays, 9 a.m., City Manager's Conference Room, Building 1, Municipal Center.

► **Princess Anne District Town Hall hosted by Councilmember**

Barbara Henley: Meets 5:15 p.m., fourth Thursdays, Building 19, Municipal Center. Reach Drew Lankford via (757) 409-4353 or dlankfor@vbgov.com for information. *The March forum was cancelled.*

► **Virginia Beach Agricultural**

Advisory Commission [Quarterly]: Meets 7 p.m., second Monday in January, April, July and October, usually in the agriculture department conference room, second floor, Building 14, Municipal Center. Call (757) 385-5775 for information.

► **Virginia Beach Board of Zoning**

Appeals: Meets 2 p.m., first Wednesday, except July, when it meets the third Wednesday. Informal session is at 1 p.m., Room 234, City Hall. Formal session is 2 p.m. in City Council chambers. Call (757) 385-8074 for information.

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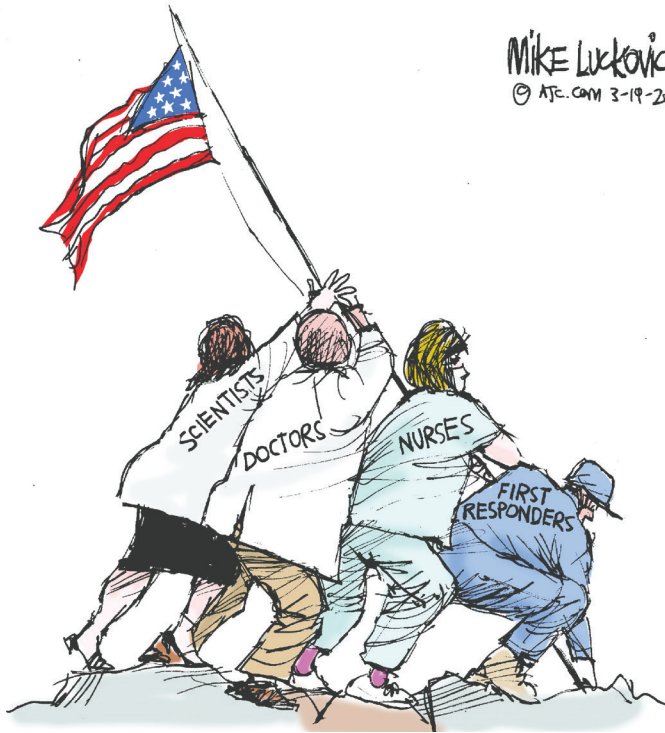
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► “After buyouts and the coming move of The Virginian-Pilot, concerns grow about the biggest newsroom in South Hampton Roads — and local news itself,” March 25

► “Letter: The kids are home from school so we should have a talk,” March 14

► “Agriculture: Vaughan recognized with 4-H Youth in Action Award; VB 4-H travels to Richmond,” March 7

► “Once largely forgotten, a Revolutionary War skirmish is remembered in Virginia Beach” March 25

► “Editorial: Restore local ownership to save The Virginian-Pilot,” March 4

FEEDBACK

The Princess Anne Independent News welcomes letters to the editor and commentary on local goings on. Reach us via letters@princessanneindy.com, social media or our snail mail address, P.O. Box 7064, Virginia Beach, VA 23457. Letters must include the author's name and neighborhood of residence. Please include a phone number with letters or emails. We won't publish it.

QUOTED

“Anxiety makes us feel powerless, said Dr. Steven Stosny, a therapist who coined the term ‘Headline Stress Disorder,’ or the feeling of stress borne from the news. A sense of powerlessness then breeds fear that we won't be able to handle the consequences of a terrible event, whether unemployment or sickness. However, we tend to exaggerate the severity of the threat and underestimate our ability to cope ...”

— Allie Volpe, “How to Stay Sane When the World Seems Crazy,” *The New York Times*, Monday, March 23

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AGRICULTURE

State clarifies pick-your-own, individual farm stand rules after Northam order; constraints placed upon how farmers markets operate in Virginia

BY JOHN-HENRY DOUCETTE

VIRGINIA BEACH — Local produce farmers can provide their goods directly to consumers amid the new coronavirus public health emergency, though they must take precautions to protect workers and customers, according to guidance from state agriculture officials clarifying aspects of the executive order issued by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam on Monday, March 23.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services issued guidelines for individual farm stands and pick-your-own operations about temporary restrictions during the ongoing emergency.

Such operations are not specified in the order as farmers markets are, but guidance says stands and pick-your-own locations should limit patrons to 10 at a time at establishments, in fields or “outdoor sectioned off areas” while enhancing sanitization practices. Other steps include providing single-use buckets or bags for people picking their own produce and engaging in social distancing, meaning keeping people six feet apart.

Virginia Agriculture & Forestry Secretary Bettina Ring said the government is working to ensure public safety and implement the standards of Northam’s executive order while keeping agricultural businesses going and the supply of healthy food available to Virginians.

“We want to make sure they still have access to that food, but we just have to do things differently,” Ring said during a telephone interview on Thursday, March 26.

“They can continue to do pick-your-own,” she added, “they just have to be careful how they do that.”

Agriculture is the leading industry in the commonwealth and the third largest in Virginia Beach. Last year, fruits and vegetables grown in Virginia Beach had an estimated value of \$4.4 million, up from about \$4.2 million the previous year, according to num-

bers compiled by the Virginia Beach extension office in coordination with the city agriculture department.

Much of that locally grown produce is sold directly to consumers through family-operated farm stands and pick-your-own operations, especially in southern Virginia Beach, which is entering strawberry season.

“We expect farm stands to be open, and we’re going to get the word out on strawberries,” Virginia Beach Agriculture Director David Trimmer said.

Virginia Beach City Councilmember Barbara Henley, a farmer who represents the Princess Anne District, said the governor has said food production is critical and farmers have a clear role to play.

“We’ve got a lot of food we’re going to be producing,” she said, noting that farm stands can take precautions to keep workers and the public safe.

“We’re talking about acres outside, not a confined space inside,” Henley said. “With care, we should be able to keep everybody safe.”

There has been some discussion locally about how farmers markets are classified and the constraints the executive order has placed upon them. Farmers markets bring a number of vendors to a central location, and these are specified in the order. They are different than individual stands or pick-your-own operations.

Trimmer said the city-managed Virginia Beach Farmers Market continues to operate, though the executive order has had an impact. Northam’s order includes a prohibition that went into effect at midnight, Tuesday, March 24, against operating dining areas at venues such as restaurants and farmers markets, though they can still offer delivery and takeout. This piece of the order is set to expire on Thursday, April 23.

Special events scheduled for April at the Virginia Beach Farmers Market are canceled due to the public health concerns about the



John-Henry Doucette/The Independent News

Virginia Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry Bettina Ring, shown during a 2018 visit to Virginia Beach, says the commonwealth is balancing safety concerns with efforts to ensure agricultural businesses and food production continue amid the new coronavirus pandemic.

new coronavirus, Trimmer said. The events include an annual celebration of the market’s birthday and the Friday night hoedowns, a popular free concert series that runs from spring through October.

“Some of the businesses are closed, but they are private businesses that are individual shops,” Trimmer said. “There are just going to be day to day shoppers.”

Trimmer said the office market is open and staffed. The public is welcome to call the office at (757) 385-4388 or communicate directly with individual businesses at the market.

Scot Wilson of the Princess Anne County Grill, a restaurant located at the market, said he had to make the difficult decision to shut down temporarily due to restrictions and a lack of traffic.

“We weren’t doing enough business to do curbside and to-go, but we’ll give it another shot in 30 days, if we can,” Wilson said. “Supporting us when we reopen would be the best thing – and support the other people who are still there.”

Ring said the state has had discussions about constraints with farmers market operators. Safety concerns about their operations include how farmers markets lead people to congregate. The limitation of 10 people at a site means different things depending upon how the market is arranged and operates.

“We’re not closing farmers markets,” Ring said. “They just have to do business differently.”

At the Virginia Beach Oceanfront, the Old Beach Farmers’ Market has used Saturday “drive thru” markets from 9 a.m. to noon to help support its vendors.

Consumers can preorder from several vendors and pick up goods at the market’s location in the Croc’s parking lot at 19th Street and Cypress Avenue within the ViBe Creative District.

“You don’t get out of your car,” said Laura Habr, co-founder of the market and owner of Croc’s. “We hand it to you. We have volunteers to help with traffic flow. You have to preorder.”

Preordering is best, and customers are asked to pay by credit card. The market is posting events for the drive-through markets at its Facebook and Instagram pages via @oldbeachfarmersmarket.



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FARMER JOHN

In a time of crisis, taking stock of how to make food more secure

BY J.D. WILSON

SIGMA

Food security means we have reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food. Where are we as a nation? Do you feel food secure now? How about if you project out a month or two?

What happens if gas prices skyrocket, farm workers aren't allowed across the border or if farmers start getting sick? There is no indication that food will become scarce through this crisis, but emergencies can be a time to think about what matters most. We simply are not a food secure nation unless you don't mind eating a field corn and soybean goulash.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 88.9 percent of households were food secure as of 2018. The longer the shutdown continues, the more our economic security will affect our feeling of food security. Of course, if it ends quickly, there will be a big drop in supermarket sales as people have to eat all the stuff they stockpiled.

There is wisdom in storing food for a hard time. Some folks may also be able to make compost out of all the mouse-eaten toilet paper they hoarded. I recently noticed eggs and greens missing from the shelves, and now some customers finally want the kale I grew. When I saw that, I felt very food secure.

I have several places I grow food which makes it easy for me to feel secure. And of course, what I grow is fresh, and it is grown organically. That means it is more nutrient dense.

During the Great Depression and World War II, a high percentage of people lived on a farm, were gardeners or were connected to someone still on the farm. That is a form of food security, which is now toast. We are down to less than 2 percent of the population who farm in the U.S.

Now is the time to really buckle down and create a comprehensive local food system – to value the local resources we have and to improve them.

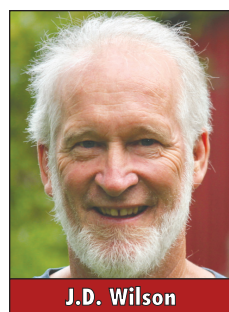
We should do this now while we are only thinking about being hungry and in the midst of the current situation while food and health are on our minds. History shows we collectively have a short attention span.

Some experts believe the changes due to the new coronavirus will end in the not too distant future. I sincerely hope we don't have any food shortages – and that everyone's larder is up for the challenge to last whatever the duration of this is.

I also hope we get the message that we desperately need to create stable, healthy and local food systems all over the country. Nothing could be more important. If you've read this column before, you know I mean an organic, regenerative system that builds soil and increases other parts of nature, too.

Right after World War II was over, a

movement began in Japan called community supported agriculture, which we know by the acronym CSA. Elisabeth Henderson's book *Sharing the Harvest* details the history of this effort and also discusses how it traveled.



J.D. Wilson

CSA is a system in which there are benefits to both the farmer and the shopper. The farmer has a secure customer base and seed money to start the season. The customer gets fresh local food from a known source – the community's own beloved farmer.

I don't know who first thought of it, but it was well-received and helped people put their lives back together. The war was a tumultuous time that called for new thinking and a helping attitude. All for one, and one for all.

The situation we are in now is not a food emergency, and it seems unlikely to become one. It is a reminder, however, that we are vulnerable. Shipping our food from one end of the globe to the other and back again, in some cases, is what? Crazy? Maybe. Unsustainable? Definitely. Bad for farmers? Yes.

Why do we do this? Business leaders profit. I know that is a simplistic sentiment.

It started innocently enough. Shipping some things not too far away was its beginning. Very little of your food comes from Virginia. Everybody's diet is like that – from farther away and less nutritious. Let's make a change. A healthy, food secure community is a bit like a healthy soccer team because its facets can work together to address changes. When the ball goes left, the team covers left, and the team is robust enough to shift when the ball changes direction.

An overly centralized food system is inherently more vulnerable. Imagine one of the movies where artificial intelligence is taking

over the world. The control of all the robots is in the big central computer. If you take out the big one, the rest crumple to the ground.

What would it take to create a stronger regional food system? One thing would be to allow and encourage farmers themselves to innovate on the topic. If they can solve all the problems they face every day, they can help solve this.

It might take some incentives to shift from the centralized systems favoring more chemicals to results-based incentives. It would shift jobs to more local and regional food hub organizers and farmers and away from executives of large corporations and middlemen.

A stronger local food system will help us remain resilient in the face of challenges.

It tastes better, too.

Wilson, a farmer and consultant, writes about sustainable farming and gardening for The Independent News. Reach him via farmerjohnnewearth@yahoo.com.

Agriculture: Amid coronavirus outbreak, local farm stands approach spring season with safeguards in place to protect consumers, workers

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3]

tablishments, fields or "outdoor sectioned off areas" and to adhere to social distancing standards of keeping people six feet apart.

"All businesses have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19," states the guidance from the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, using an acronym for the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

"It is critical that (pick-your-own) operations and individual farm stands take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their staff and patrons," the guidance adds.

You-pick markets and farm stands are advised to use disinfectants, provide sanitizers or handwashing stations for customers and advise customers to stay away from the fields or stands if they feel sick.

Social distancing won't be a problem for you-pick customers, Vaughan said. His fields along Princess Anne Road are six feet apart, which is the distance health officials recommend for individuals in a public venue.

"That's easy to do in a field," said Vaughan, a member of the Virginia Strawberry Growers Association. "These plants are six feet from each other, and the rows are 250 feet long."

Vaughan anticipates opening his fields for you-pick around Sunday, April 5, and he's also offering a bumper crop of asparagus this year. Normally, a lot of the local asparagus is sold to restaurants, but this year the restaurants aren't buying so it's all available to the public.

"It's a boon for the public," he said.

Vaughan, like Flanagan, expects that customers will respond enthusiastically this season. Locals, they said, are probably getting cabin fever and looking for an outdoor activity that will keep them in the fresh air and at a safe distance from others.

"For people who are cooped up in the house, it's great," said Vaughan. "I'm hoping that this will be a great outdoor adventure for the family."

Growers also believe some consumers may feel safer buying



John-Henry Doucette/The Independent News

Farm stands and pick-your-own operations, such as the Cullipher Berry Patch, seen in a 2019 file image, are preparing for the spring season — and strawberries.

locally grown items. Farmer Billy Vaughan of Coastal Cattle reported that the Meat Shack, his Vaughan Road retail market, was slammed with customers coming in to buy locally grown beef.

Henley, meanwhile, had to return to his farm by early afternoon on one recent day to cut more kale and pick more strawberries because of an influx of morning customers.

He anticipates a brisk pick-your-own business, but his fondest wish is to have everything return to normal.

"I want to see this over," Henley said.

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RESOURCES

Ed. — The novel, or new, coronavirus is named “SARS-CoV-2.” The disease it can cause is coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19. It is considered a pandemic by the World Health Organization. In late January, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar II declared a public health emergency in the U.S. This month, the World Health Organization called COVID-19 a pandemic. North Carolina and Virginia have declared emergencies, and President Trump declared a national emergency. The following information was compiled from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Virginia Department of Health, the City of Virginia Beach and the World Health Organization.

Find Information

- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** cdc.gov/covid19
- **Virginia Department of Health:** vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus or call the public information line at (877) ASK-VDH3
- **City of Virginia Beach:** emergency.vbgov.com/coronavirus
- **Virginia Beach Schools:** vbschools.com
- **North Carolina Division of Public Health:** publichealth.nc.gov or reach the N.C. COVID-19 Call Center at (866) 462-3821.
- **Albemarle Regional Health Services:** arhs-nc.org
- **World Health Organization:** who.int

Background (Mainly From The CDC)

Known symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. CDC recommends seeking medical advice if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of the virus. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild, including some with no reported symptoms, to severe, including illness resulting in death. Older people and people of all ages with underlying health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, seem to be at higher risk of developing serious illness. Medical officials have urged people to call their health care provider before coming in.

Prevention

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Wash your hands after going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or a sleeve, not your hands, when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, such as doorknobs or phones.
- Health officials recommend “social distancing,” steps made to prevent the spread of disease, such as staying at least six feet away from anyone, especially people who are coughing or sneezing, and avoiding crowds. According to the CDC, putting distance between you and others who are sick is especially important if you are at high risk of getting sick yourself.
- WHO and others recommend against greeting people by shaking hands.



John-Henry Doucette/The Independent News

Cathy Hock, owner of Monk's Place in Creeds, handles a takeout order on Thursday, March 19, while President Trump speaks on television. Hock, like many restaurant owners, already was limiting services before Gov. Ralph Northam imposed strict guidelines for restaurants, shutting down dining rooms throughout the commonwealth. Monk's remains open, but it has now converted to to-go orders only.

Coronavirus: In a devastating time for the restaurant industry, dining rooms are empty while eateries – if they can – turn to takeout

BY JOHN-HENRY DOUCETTE

VIRGINIA BEACH — Gov. Ralph Northam's executive order to protect Virginians from the spread of the new coronavirus made sweeping changes to life throughout the commonwealth, but the hospitality industry in this resort town, the state's largest city, felt the changes acutely.

The hospitality industry is suffering as the main tourist season approaches, and restaurants have been forced to close dining rooms to help prevent people from spreading the virus, which can cause a disease called COVID-19.

Many restaurants have laid off staff, limited hours, and, for those that have not closed amid the emergency, business models are adapting for curbside pickup and delivery.

Even before the executive order, Red Head Bay Café, a Creeds restaurant that is less than a year old, changed its model to curbside pickup and delivery, and the restaurant offered family style meals to appeal to customers.

"After the winter, it's our time to shine," said Aristotle Cleanthes, co-owner of the café, on Thursday, March 19. "What I'm most disappointed in is the weekends. That keeps us afloat."

Now, he's trying to keep staff busy and employed. He is grateful for community support amid the pandemic. And he feels for every small business weathering the same storm.

"At the end of the day," he said, "it's the heart of America."

About 9 percent of all jobs in Virginia are in restaurant or food service, and that is a growing piece of the state's employment numbers, according to the National Restaurant Association.

Nationally, the industry has lost at least 3 million jobs and \$25 billion in sales since Sunday, March 1. Seven in 10 restaurant operators have laid people off, according to information released by the association on Thursday, March 26. Many more believe further layoffs and hour reductions are coming.

More than half the restaurants in the country have changed to sales for off-premises consumption only. In Virginia Beach, restaurants were turning toward takeout and curbside pickup service before Northam's order tightened restrictions even more.

In some cases, restaurants had been operating limited dining room service. After the order, dining rooms are closed – and so are some restaurants, if only temporarily.

Industry leaders and restaurateurs are sounding the alarm that

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 12]

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*CDC: Centers for
Organization; NIH

Sources: CDC; WH

ORONAVIRUS

HOST

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Break the chain:

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1. THE ORGANISM

The coronavirus. CoVID 19 is the illness caused by the virus.
(For more information, visit the CDC, WHO, and NIH* websites.)

Break the chain:

- Prevention, not panic. Take calm, decisive action.
- Kill the virus with proper hand washing. Don't touch your face with unwashed hands, practice social distancing, and disinfect personal surfaces frequently touched.

2. RESERVOIR

The virus thrives in our respiratory tract, but it can survive on surfaces outside the body for three hours to three days. Infected people can be contagious before symptoms present themselves or without ever experiencing symptoms.

Break the chain:

- Treat everyone as though they have the virus.
- Take precautions to reduce transmission (read on).

3. EXIT PORTAL

The virus exits the body in infected droplets spewed into the air by coughing, sneezing or talking and can

contaminate surfaces touched by unwashed hands.

Break the chain:

- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue, not your hands.
(Virus can spread by shaking hands and touching public surfaces such as credit cards, money, gas pumps, keyboards, store products, etc.)
- Throw used tissues directly into the trash.
- Wash hands thoroughly as soon as you get home.
- Self isolate. Avoid crowds. (social distancing)
- Stay at least 6-feet away from others.

4. TRANSMISSION

The virus spreads to a new host through direct or indirect contact.

Break the chain:

- Do not shake hands or hug.
 - Avoid inhaling infected droplets from someone coughing, sneezing or talking in your face.
- ed droplets are thought to survive for up to 3 a closed space.**)
- ome.

- Wash your hands for 20+ seconds after blowing nose, coughing, sneezing or after touching surfaces in public. (Soap is best, but if it isn't available use hand sanitizer.**)
- Never touch eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Disinfect surfaces you touch daily.***
(ie: phone, steering wheel, toilet and fridge handles, kitchen counter, faucets, TV remote, doorknobs, etc.)

BREAK THE CHAIN OF INFECTION

If you break any of these links it can prevent you from getting sick or infecting others.

Mayor: Personal responsibility key in battle against new coronavirus

BY BOBBY DYER

COURTHOUSE

To slow the spread of the coronavirus, we know frequent handwashing and disinfecting items we often handle, like doorknobs, cellphones and faucets, offer protections.

These are the easy things to do.

Other measures require some personal sacrifices and recognizing how our own behavior could endanger the lives of people we care about.

I'm talking about the need for social distancing and self-quarantining.

Folks, the simple fact is, if we do not voluntarily comply with these measures, we may have no choice but to move to even stricter quarantines and curfews.

That's what you're seeing in Italy and in Spain, as well as here in

the United States in places like California, Kansas and New York.

Accepting personal responsibility is the key.

Parents must take responsibility for their children, and young people must understand that they are not invincible – and, in fact, could be carriers of the virus and infect people around them.

While the virus is a greater risk to the elderly and people with underlying health conditions, new data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that nearly 40 percent of patients who are sick enough to be hospitalized were ages 20 to 54.

Imagine how you would feel if you knew you were the reason someone you love got sick or even died.

If there ever was a time for each of us to behave responsibly to protect the welfare of others, it is now.

Please allow plenty of space between you and other people, and, if you've been exposed or are feeling sick, stay home before it's too late.

We can live with the inconvenience now so we don't have to live with regrets later.

Virginia Beach was recently named the number one most caring city in the country. Let's show everyone what this means and do what it takes to protect each other from this threat.

Dyer, a healthcare professional, is the mayor of Virginia Beach. This is adapted from a statement released on Sunday, March 22. It has been edited for style. Visit emergency.vbgov.com for more information about the new coronavirus.



Bobby Dyer

Disease Control; WHO: World Health
: National Institutes of Health.

**Study pending
peer review.

***You can make disinfectants. Visit Consumer Reports article, "These
Common Household Products Can Destroy the Novel Coronavirus"

O; APIC; Dr. Theresa Bernardo; Dr. Frances Downes

GRAPHIC BY KARL GUDE OF GUDETHINKING.COM AND CAROL NAVARRO, R.N.

Restaurants: Trade group, industry leaders urge support during 'takeout week' and beyond; City Council may consider relief for hospitality industry

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10]

local restaurants of all kinds – from neighborhood mom-and-pops to locally owned franchises – need help in the form of ordering takeout, buying gift cards from those who offer them and tipping well, if you can.

On Thursday, March 26, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association announced a “Virginia is for Lovers Takeout Week” from Monday, March 30, to Sunday, April 5. The group is asking people to order delivery, takeout or curbside pickup from three local restaurants during the week.

“We’re devastated,” said B.J. Baumann, president of the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association and owner of Rockefeller’s Restaurant on Rudee Inlet.

Baumann said she hopes people will help by buying gift cards and placing takeout orders, though she noted that restaurants that rely upon dine-in customers are not making up what has been lost with takeout. “We’re basically just trying to keep enough money coming in to keep our employees working.”

She said restaurants have a long tradition of supporting charities and community organizations, but now the industry needs support from its neighbors.

“I guess this is the time we reach out to the community and say we need help,” Baumann said.

“This is totally unprecedented,” she said. “We have gone through tough times before with recessions, hurricanes, fires ... Nothing compares to this magnitude for everyone. It is absolute devastation to all restaurants, at this point. I urge the community to order as much as they can from restaurants that are still open.”

She said the association is offering free memberships for any restaurant that wants to join so they can get current, accurate information about issues when they arise. Additionally, the association website – dineinva.com – lists member restaurants that are operating and how they have adjusted their businesses to keep going and serving their customers.

The Virginia Beach City Council is faced with an uncertain economic forecast and uncertainty about when business will return to something approaching usual, but the body is poised to consider taking steps to relieve pressure on the hospitality industry in the coming weeks.

Those discussion could begin on Tuesday, March 31, when a series of draft ordinances relieving tax pressure are up for discussion.

City Councilmember Guy Tower, who represents the Beach District, on Tuesday, March 17, sent an email to his colleagues on the council and Acting City Manager Tom Leahy, urging financial relief to the hospitality industry, among others.

Noting that his district, which includes the main resort area, is being hit hard by shut-



Makayla Altgibbers, a member of the waitstaff at Red Head Bay Café, delivers an order to Carmen Posey of Pungo outside the restaurant on Thursday, March 19, in Creeds. The café is among the many Virginia beach restaurants using takeout orders with curbside service and delivery to continue operating amid restrictions meant to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

downs, he wrote:

“The unfolding global health pandemic is striking particularly hard at our hospitality industry, so vital to our city’s economic health and that of the many members of our community who are employed by our hotels and restaurants. Due to cancellation of events and bookings, hoteliers who have survived the annual downturn in business during the winter months, are now facing loss of expected spring bookings that would begin to restore them to profitability. Some will likely close ‘for the duration.’”

He added, “In pursuit of social distancing, restaurant dining rooms are empty. A few have locked their doors. Others have skeleton crews working to fulfill delivery and carry-out orders.”

In an interview on Friday, March 27, Tower said he hopes to discuss ordinances that would, among other things, waive late fees and give extensions for meals, admissions and transient occupancy taxes.

“These would be retroactive to the beginning of the emergency,” Tower said.

He said he understood many businesses and citizens are suffering amid the emergency, but hospitality businesses clearly have been hit hard.

For restaurants, he said, it has been catastrophic.

“From just an economic standpoint, it’s just shockingly bad,” he said. “I feel very sorry for the owners, the managers, the people laid off and even the people who still have jobs. It’s got to be depressing as hell, under these circumstances. They’re used to being hospitable.

Now they are pushing food out the door.”

Acting City Manager Tom Leahy in a Friday, March 27, letter to the City Council summarized various draft ordinances.

Possible steps include asking City Treasurer Leigh Henderson not to take collection actions against businesses paying such taxes during the pandemic. And waivers of fees and extensions for real estate and personal property taxes also are proposed, as are avoiding collection actions on those taxes during the emergency.

Tower said the council would not be able to vote on the ordinances on Tuesday, March 31, when it will meet using distance technology, but the conversation can begin – and city staff can look at impacts of the measures.

In his letter, Leahy noted that property taxes are a major revenue source for the city government, and he recommended waiting in regard to real estate and property taxes. He also said the treasurer “may provide relief to the significantly impacted hotel and restaurant sector by waiving late fees and penalties” for taxes and working out payment plans.

In a memorandum on Friday, March 20, Henderson wrote that she is waiving late payment penalties on meals, lodging and admission taxes that were due on the 20th through the end of March. Henderson wrote that the timing of the next council meeting “may not provide the immediate relief that is so desperately requested by hoteliers and restaurants.”

Henderson sought council support to allow businesses to pay these taxes after the emergency and in installments, and then businesses could work out a formal repayment plan once

the emergency is lifted.

City Councilmember Aaron Rouse, who holds an at-large seat, in a Tuesday, March 17, work session discussed a draft resolution he and Henderson requested that would direct Henderson and Commissioner of the Revenue Phil Kellam not to impose penalties and interest on some local taxes during the pandemic. That measure addressed business more broadly, and focused upon personal property, meals, transient occupancy and admissions taxes.

Rouse urged colleagues to become cosponsors “as a way to bring calmness to the business community who aren’t able to bring in any type of revenue, but the bills are still piling up.”

“When people get back on their feet, they can get back to handling their business,” Rouse told his colleagues on the council. “But this resolution is just a way to bring a sense of calm to our community and to let them know that our council understands that businesses aren’t operating like they used to.”

During a telephone interview, Mayor Bobby Dyer said that he anticipated a conversation about providing relief for business will start on Tuesday, March 31, during a special meeting. The council expected to also certify Leahy’s declaration of an emergency in the city and pass an ordinance to let the body hold meetings using technology while providing public participation.

Dyer said the city will work to help businesses and citizens amid the crisis.

“There are people out there who are hurting,” he said. “There are businesses that are vulnerable.”

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STUDENT MEALS

Meals for Virginia Beach students are available for drive-by/pickup at 36 schools and five neighborhood distribution sites from 9 a.m. to noon, weekdays. Meals are bagged and include lunch and breakfast. Children must be present for meals.

Elementary Schools

- ▶ Arrowhead Elementary, 5549 Susquehanna Drive
- ▶ Bayside Elementary, 5649 Bayside Road
- ▶ Birdneck Elementary, 957 S. Birdneck Road
- ▶ Brookwood Elementary, 601 S. Lynnhaven Road
- ▶ College Park Elementary, 1110 Bennington Road
- ▶ Cooke Elementary, 1501 Mediterranean Avenue
- ▶ Green Run Elementary, 1200 Green Garden Circle
- ▶ Holland Elementary, 3340 Holland Road
- ▶ Kempsville Meadows Elementary, 736 Edwin Drive
- ▶ Kings Grant Elementary, 612 N. Lynnhaven Road
- ▶ Luxford Elementary, 4808 Haygood Road
- ▶ Lynnhaven Elementary, 210 Dillon Drive
- ▶ Malibu Elementary, 3632 Edinburgh Drive
- ▶ Newtown Elementary, 5277 Learning Circle
- ▶ Parkway Elementary, 4180 O'Hare Drive
- ▶ Pembroke Meadows Elementary, 820 Cathedral Drive
- ▶ Point O'View Elementary, 5400 Parliament Drive
- ▶ Rosemont Elementary, 1257 S. Rosemont Road
- ▶ Seatack Elementary, 912 S. Birdneck Road
- ▶ Shelton Park Elementary, 1700 Shelton Road
- ▶ Tallwood Elementary, 2025 Kempsville Road
- ▶ Thalia Elementary, 421 Thalia Road
- ▶ White Oaks Elementary, 960 Windsor Oaks Boulevard
- ▶ Williams Elementary, 892 Newtown Road,
- ▶ Windsor Oaks Elementary, 3800 Van Buren Drive
- ▶ Windsor Woods Elementary, 233 Presidential Boulevard
- ▶ Woodstock Elementary, 6016 Providence Road

Middle Schools

- ▶ Bayside Middle, 965 Newtown Road
- ▶ Bayside 6th Grade Campus, 4722 Jericho Road
- ▶ Brandon Middle, 1700 Pope Street
- ▶ Corporate Landing Middle, 1597 Corporate Landing Pkwy
- ▶ Larkspur Middle, 4696 Princess Anne Road
- ▶ Lynnhaven Middle, 1250 Bayne Drive
- ▶ Plaza Middle, 3080 S. Lynnhaven Road

High Schools

- ▶ Bayside High, 4960 Haygood Road
- ▶ Green Run High, 1700 Dahlia Drive

Neighborhood Sites

- ▶ Atlantis Apartments Community Office, 999 Atlantis Drive
- ▶ Campus East via Ebenezer Baptist Church, 965 Baker Road
- ▶ Friendship Apartments Office, 1235 Friendship Square
- ▶ Lake Edwards via Enoch Baptist Church, 5641 Herbert Moore Road
- ▶ Level Green Community Park, Level Green Boulevard

The Meals on Wheels program for children in Currituck County, N.C., provides lunch and breakfast for the following day, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, while schools are closed.

Sites In Our Coverage Area

- ▶ Gibbs Woods Community Center, 332 East Gibbs Road
- ▶ Knotts Island Elementary School, 413 Woodleigh Road



Angela Boothe, cafeteria manager at Birdneck Elementary School in Virginia Beach, prepares meals for students to pick up outside the school on Friday, March 20.

Meals: Working to feed local students while schools remain closed due to the coronavirus

BY JOHN-HENRY DOUCETTE

VIRGINIA BEACH — On Friday, March 20, public school employees stood outside Birdneck Elementary School. Throughout the morning, families drove up to the front of the school near where Birdneck Road and General Booth Boulevard meet to pick up meals and, in some cases, to exchange Chromebooks used by students in their studies.

It was a brief moment of face-to-face reconnection between families and the schools, though it was from what is considered a safe distance these days. The new coronavirus means students were home that day — and, within days of this visit, the governor announced that will stay the case for the remainder of this current academic year.

In some cases, students rely upon food they get at school, and Virginia Beach is among the many communities providing this resource to families. So is Currituck County, N.C., where the schools have been declared closed through May 15. The county Meals on Wheels program has reported growing demand for its free meals for students. Meals in Currituck are served 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and there are distribution points in Gibbs Woods and on Knotts Island.

At Birdneck Elementary in Virginia Beach, Principal R.V. Yoshida greeted one parent and gave them a message to pass along. “You can tell anyone in your neighborhood we are the closest elementary school,” he said.

The schools are providing free meals to students at 36 schools in the city and five neighborhood drop-off sites from 9 a.m. to noon, weekdays. Children must be present to get the meals, a breakfast and a lunch, bagged to be

picked up from a table.

Virginia Beach Schools Superintendent Aaron Spence in a video message released on Thursday, March 26, said they have delivered about 10,000 meals each day in the city.

“Our intention is to continue to distribute meals as long as we are able to do so,” the superintendent said.

Parents who stopped by Birdneck Elementary included a dad, multitasking during a conference call for work, who needed a Chromebook swapped out for his child and a mom picking up meals who said her military family needed all the resources they could get amid the public health crisis.

Angela Boothe, the cafeteria manager, worked to make sure the meals were bagged and ready to go for students, and she said the demand has been strong for this service.

“It’s increasing each day,” she said.

Students from anywhere in the system can come get meals — they just have to be present when their parent brings them to pick it up.

“We’re putting a breakfast and a lunch in the bag,” said Dr. John Smith, director of food services for Virginia Beach schools, who praised his staff and personnel at the schools for their efforts to provide meals while staying safe amid the emergency.

“That’s what (the U.S. Department of Agriculture) allows,” he said during a telephone interview. “That’s two squares a day that a parent doesn’t have to worry about.”

There’s another important piece of the effort — that it comes at a time when students and the educators and staff of their schools are apart, connected only by technology.

“I think it gives them a good sense of, ‘Hey, you’re not in this alone,’” Smith said.

John-Henry Doucette/The Independent News

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Dear readers of The Virginian-Pilot,

For the journalists lucky enough to write for one of the country's greatest newspapers, The Virginian-Pilot, the chance to tell your stories has been the defining privilege of our lives.

We love this community with our whole hearts.

We're used to telling your stories, but we hope you'll indulge us as we share ours.

Until two years ago, the Pilot was owned by local investors with ties to this region as strong as ours. Then, our newspaper — *your* newspaper — was purchased by Chicago-based Tribune Publishing. Since then, Alden Global Capital, a mercenary hedge fund with a reputation as a "destroyer of newspapers" has bought a third of the company.

It is dizzying to recount the changes the Pilot has experienced since its sale.

We've said goodbye to more than 30 of our colleagues who left in one of two rounds of buyouts. Earlier this month, a combined 360 years of experience walked out the door all in one day.

We've said goodbye to others who can't afford to work for years without so much as a cost-of-living increase. Others who tired of selling plasma to make ends meet. Goodbye to still more who want to settle down, buy homes and have families, and who feel they cannot with the albatross of job insecurity hanging around their neck.

When we formed the Tidewater Media Guild almost 18 months ago, there were 105 journalists at the Pilot, Daily Press, Virginia Gazette and Tidewater Review. As we write this, there are just 64 of us left.

Now, we are faced with the latest indignity: They have sold our headquarters, one of the oldest and most recognizable buildings in Norfolk's skyline.

After assuring us that it was important to keep the newsroom in Norfolk, they have reneged.

They are moving our paper — *your* paper — to Newport News.

Let us be clear: No one chronicles daily life in South Hampton Roads like The Virginian-Pilot. We're committed to ensuring that continues, even if it takes a bridge-tunnel commute.

But it is impossible to ignore the challenge Tribune is forcing us to overcome. Most importantly, it will hamper our ability to respond to breaking news in the most populous cities in Virginia. It will reduce our visibility in the community among readers and advertisers. And it deals another blow to our colleagues, who will all face economic and personal costs as a result.

Many of you have asked, "how can we help?" We appreciate this more than you will know.

Here are three concrete ways to show your support for the Pilot and for strong local journalism, the cornerstone of any successful city:

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- **Visit our website at www.tidewatermediaguild.org.** Learn more about what the Tidewater Media Guild is doing to preserve and protect our newsrooms and print signs to hang in solidarity.

We've saved our biggest ask for last. Our hope is to one day be owned again by investors who have as much of a stake in this community as we do. Someone, or someones, who recognize that a newspaper is not an ordinary business, but a civic asset.

We need new owners who care about us — and you.

In Solidarity,
Tidewater Media Guild



TIDEWATER MEDIA GUILD

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Mental Health: Adapting resources, services to the coronavirus crisis

BY JANE BLOODWORTH ROWE

VIRGINIA BEACH — The complete disruption of daily routines, confinement and economic worries due to the new coronavirus and the need for social distancing are challenging for everyone, but the conditions of the public health emergency can create excessive stress that can lead to depression, anxiety and perhaps even suicidal thoughts.

That's the word from local mental health professionals who are responding by adapting and expanding services amid the crisis, including using online group support sessions and remote therapy, in addition to in-person therapy.

"We anticipate mental health issues," said Katie Griggs, practice manager of Reboot, which offers therapy and other services from its offices in the Lago Mar community in southern Virginia Beach.

"Isolation causes people to get depressed, and we think that mental health issues will spike," Griggs said.

"Everything is uncertain," agreed Dr. Annie Phillips, a licensed professional counselor at Beach Counseling Center in Virginia Beach. "There is no normal, and people are having a hard time coping."

Reboot is offering online support groups meant to help people who are considered to be particularly vulnerable, Griggs said. These include separate sessions for first responders, small



Andrew Ostrowsky/Shutterstock

business owners, affected employees, college students, teachers and parents.

Griggs and Laurie Dierstein, a licensed clinical social worker and director of Reboot, said that their online sessions are \$5 each and won't be billable to insurance companies. Instead, clients can pay online when they register. Each group will be offered two sessions per week.

Dierstein said that the online sessions are, in part, an effort to provide her employees with some income during this crisis.

Like many small business owners, Dierstein said the business is suffering from loss of income because in-person services are canceled. Because she can empathize with their plight, she said she's offering sessions for small business owners and employees.

Phillips, meanwhile, said that she is still offering counseling sessions in the office for those who want to come in. Those who would rather stay at home can attend online through digital communication tools such as Skype or FaceTime.

The local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness also is offering online support groups for both mental health patients and for those who are dealing with them, according to Jen Williams, the outreach and marketing manager for NAMI Coastal Virginia in Virginia Beach.

NAMI has cancelled face-to-face classes, support groups and other programs for right now due to concerns about spreading the new coronavirus. Williams said that the online sessions may continue even after the therapists resume regular sessions.

"The one good thing that's come out of this is that we recognize the need for online services," Williams said. "Some people have trouble getting out."

The Virginia Beach Department of Human Services will also

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

GOVERNMENT

Knight reflects on the recent Virginia General Assembly session

This is adapted from state Del. Barry Knight's recent letter to his constituents in the 81st House District following the recent session of the Virginia General Assembly. It has been edited for style. The 81st District includes parts of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach, and it covers much of the main coverage area for The Independent News, such as rural communities and Sandbridge.

BY BARRY D. KNIGHT

BACK BAY

It is an honor to serve the 81st House District of the Virginia General Assembly. The 2020 legislative session came to an end on Thursday, March 12. Although our work in session has ended, we continue to track legislation that has passed and awaits the signature of Gov. Ralph Northam.

Before the General Assembly adjourns for the year, a conference committee resolves any differences between the versions of the state budget passed by the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia.

I serve on the House Appropriations Committee and was also selected by the Speaker of the House of Delegates as a budget conferee for the third year in a row. Therefore, I was directly involved in negotiating Virginia's budget. The budget is the most important bill before the General Assembly. The biennial budget the General Assembly passed this year increases teacher pay by 2 percent each year, provides for another freeze of college tuition

and made the largest ever deposit of \$182 million into the Rainy-Day Fund, totaling \$2 billion and protecting Virginia's AAA bond rating.

I do not like Washington-style politics in Richmond. Though there was much controversial legislation, I was able to work across the aisle, focusing on doing the business of my constituents and getting important work done.



Barry Knight

Alongside my own legislation, I introduced budget amendments that sought to bolster the Back Bay Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration Project and assist in funding the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center's stranding program for distressed animals. In addition, I was able to secure funding for extending Nimmo Parkway, which is a vital access road to Sandbridge and often suffers from flooding, thereby putting added pressure on Naval Air Station Oceana Dam Neck Annex.

Seven of my bills passed both chambers of the General Assembly this session. I sponsored bills to help farmers, reduce regulation and foster economic development. Currently, the Governor has already signed some of my bills into law. The others are under his consideration now, and I am confident he will sign

them as well. I will always do what is right for the 81st District and our Commonwealth.

HB 4 authorizes casino gaming in the Commonwealth to be regulated by the Virginia Lottery Board, but only after a local referendum. The Pamunkey Indian Tribe has received federal recognition and the ability to open a casino without state involvement, and the tribe has selected Norfolk as their site for business. If the Pamunkey come to Norfolk, then the state should see if it can enter into an agreement on rules and revenue sharing, as this would be a great economic opportunity. HB 4 passed the House by a vote of 60 to 35 and the Senate by a vote of 29 to 11.

HB 51 provides that children born or adopted after the death or disability of an employee covered by the Line of Duty Act are eligible for health insurance coverage. Under current law, such children are not eligible regardless of the effect on premiums. Our public safety officials honorably serve our communities and they should be looked after if they are harmed in the line of duty. HB 51 passed both chambers unanimously and was signed into law on Tuesday, March 10.

HB 119 seeks to help protect Virginia's dairy farmers by specifically defining milk. In 2018, Virginia lost 54 dairy farms, bringing the total number of dairy farms down to 514. Agriculture is by far the largest sector of Virginia's economy, and protecting Virginia's farmers is very important. The passage of HB 119 is a strong signal by the General Assembly in support of Virginia's farmers.

HB 390 is an omnibus bill that reorganizes many pages of Code language into 133 pages that pertain to Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control to reduce regulations and streamline rules. HB 390 passed the House of Delegates by a vote of 84 to 9 and the Senate of Virginia unanimously. Virginia ABC is an integral part of the budgeting process for the Commonwealth, and my bill makes it easier to carry out this business.

With the arrival of the novel coronavirus in Virginia, it is important that we use our common sense and do what we can to help stop its spread. The General Assembly will reconvene on Wednesday, April 22, to reevaluate the budget, considering anticipated drops in state revenue and consider other measures to help Virginians in this time of need.

Steps have been taken to make your government more transparent. All committee meetings are live streamed and archived. To watch, visit virginiageneralassembly.gov.

We have accomplished a great deal for our Commonwealth, but the work is never done. Throughout the year feel free to call or email my office if there is anything I can do to serve your needs at the state level. I can be reached via email at delbknight@house.virginia.gov or by phone at (757) 426-6387.

I am proud to be a Virginian and honored to have the opportunity to serve my family, friends and neighbors in the General Assembly. Together, we can ensure that Virginia remains one of the best places to live, work and raise a family.

COLUMN

For our high school seniors who will graduate during a pandemic

BY BETSY MORRIS

BACK BAY

For our graduating seniors: This is a unique time in history in which the entire world is connected by uncertainty and worry. We are all adjusting to an altered lifestyle, and it feels like we have all lost things important and dear to us. We hope that feeling is temporary.

There is one group among us, however, that deserves a special tribute. Our high school seniors — the Class of 2020.

How exciting it was on Wednesday, Jan. 1, when we entered a new decade—the decade of your graduation year. Who would have thought that in less than three months we would be swept up in a pandemic?

I want you to know that we feel your frustration and we acknowledge the uncertainty and disappointment that has replaced the hope and excitement of the final months of your senior year.

Normally, about this time, teachers are used to battling a condition known as “senioritis.” As much as we complain about that “illness” over the years, rest assured we would all welcome it now. I think we teachers fight against it, but tolerate it, because we remember what these months felt like all those years ago.

This is a special, precious time in your lives. Your plans for your futures are being finalized — you are committing to colleges, the military or the workforce. You are secure in the knowledge you will pass the class and graduate.

So you let things slide, and, to some extent, we let you slide into a few months of free-

dom. Because we know you will enter the world of adults after you graduate. A world where your focus shifts away from your needs.

Please know I am not suggesting you are self-centered. You have shown so much compassion for others. By listening to your discussions, I know you are not only aware that we are all connected. You embrace it.

What I am referring to is a subtle shift that happens when you move from child to adult. One of my favorite authors, John Steinbeck, says it best: “When you’re a child you’re the center of everything. Everything happens for you ... but when you grow up ... things go out of you to others and come in from other people.”

If this virus is teaching us one thing, it is that this exchange from person to person is, quite literally, all too real. While right now we are focused on limiting that exchange physically, the sacrifices you all are making by missing out on some of your quality moments are beautiful, generous and even life-saving.

Please remember that, to quote a line from Hamilton, “History has its eyes on you.” Your actions and choices during this time will forever define your generation.

That being said, missed moments stink. Uncertainty stinks. I want you to know that



Betsy Morris

we understand all the missed opportunities you have lost or are now worried about losing — competitive seasons, college visits, senior trips, proms, celebrations and simple moments spent with friends before you all start your walks down different paths.

Whether you are missing the culmination of hours of work and practice in the form of championship games and performances or the start of what would have been your last season with an activity, it’s a huge loss, and it isn’t something you can get back.

It’s your senior year — the thing that carried you through the awkward moments of freshman year, the uncertainty of sophomore year and the pressure of junior year. You were in sight of the finish line, and then life pushed the pause button. I want you to know we see this. We understand your frustration and loss.

I’ve seen a few open letters to seniors, and someone pointed out you all were born in the year of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and you are entering adulthood in the year of a pandemic. You’re the first generation to grow up through the reality of school shootings.

But here’s what is also true for the class of 2020: you have lived your entire lives with the understanding that the actions of a few can change the lives of many.

I think it’s what inspires you to take hold of this world and make us better. You have lived your lives in two worlds — the digital world

and the real world — and you can navigate them both with confidence and ease.

I know you all will find a way around this. You are terrific at finding new paths when you hit the roadblocks in your way. I’m sorry you all must enter that adult world a few months too early, but I know we will be better for having you in it with us.

I also share some advice offered by another teacher — do what you do best. Network.

For once, we won’t tell you to get off your phones. Play some online games, start a new TikTok dance (please make “Renegade” fade away), FaceTime, Snapchat, do whatever you do to stay connected to each other. It’s another thing you guys do better than any other generation.

And to the underclassmen, embrace the opportunities and cherish the moments when it’s time for your senior year.

The Class of 2020 is being reminded that the journey is more important than the destination. They also are reminding you that you never know when and how your journeys may end. Don’t take anything for granted.

Until we meet again.

Much love,
Mrs. Morris.

Morris, who lives in Back Bay, teaches advanced placement English and public speaking at Kellam High School

Mental Health: Technology helps connect people to needed services from a distance

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16]

close its building to the public beginning Monday, March 30, and technology is part of how services will still be connected to those who need them.

Essential services, including adult and child protective services and emergency mental health services will still be available through hotline numbers that are posted on the websites. Information about those services is included below. Human Services staff members will continue to work through telephone or video or, in some cases, in low exposure settings outside of the office.

► New clients can still apply for financial services online, and it’s possible to apply for Medicaid by calling (855) 242-8282 or for food assistance, child care subsidy and energy assistance by calling (855) 635-4370.

► Paper applications are available near the drop box at the Department of Human Services office at 3432 Virginia Beach Boulevard.

► Appointments are available for curbside pick-up of SNAP EBT cards at the Virginia Beach Boulevard location.

► For more information about services available through the Department of Human

Services, visit vb.gov.com/hs. Call (757) 385-0888 for emergency mental health services.

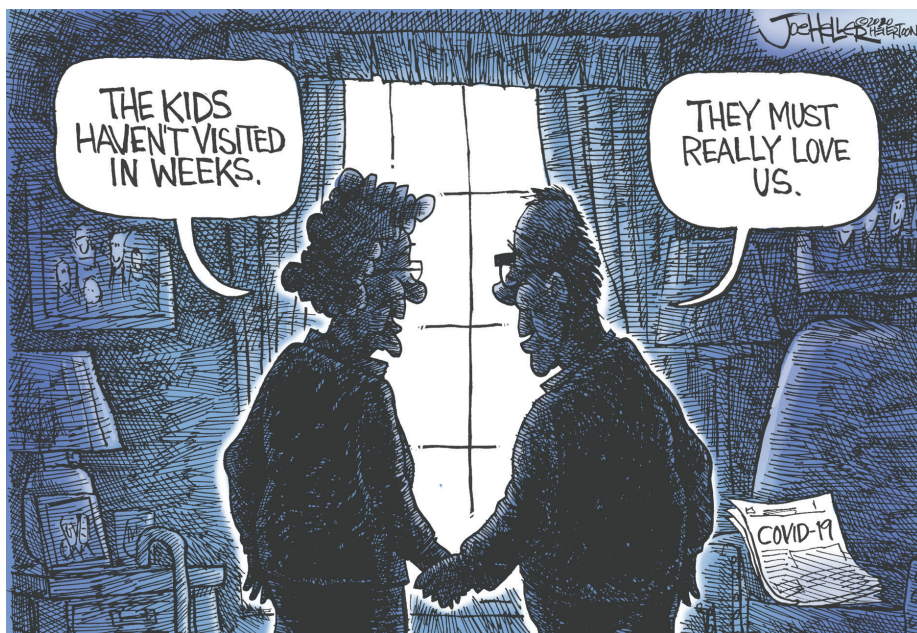
► To report suspected adult abuse or neglect, call (757) 385-3550 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. After hours or on weekends, call (888) 832-3858.

► For suspected abuse or neglect of children, call (757) 385-3400 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. After hours or on weekends, call (800) 552-7096.

► NAMI is also advising people who are in or know someone who is suffering a mental health crisis to call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255.

People who may be suicidal or know someone who may be can reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which provides free and confidential support, at (800) 273-8255. Additional resources are available online via suicidepreventionlifeline.org. Members of the armed forces and veterans who need help can call the Military/Veterans Crisis Center at (800) 273-8255, press 1, or find information and help online via veteranscrisisline.net. Veterans do not need to be registered with the U.S. Veterans Administration to get help.

JOE HELLER



COLUMN

Considering Purim, its serious message and our celebration of it

BY ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

VIRGINIA BEACH

Purim's tradition of merriment both masks and matches the extraordinary seriousness of the life and death issues behind it, while allowing for the healthy release of tension and emotion.

After all, a threat of genocide hanging over a vulnerable people such as the Jews, with a plot in place to terminate its existence in the vast Persian empire of antiquity, was not to be taken lightly.

The salvation found through an intermarried Jewish queen who happened to be – or was placed – in a pivotal position to help her kin adds an intriguing dimension to a drama whose historical veracity remains uncertain.

The challenges and lessons contained in the fascinating Scroll of Esther have remained applicable throughout the Jewish saga, which includes all that the human imagination – creatively and destructively – can conjure up.

The rabbis have taught us that in the messianic era yet to come that, of all the Jewish holidays, only Purim will continue to be celebrated.

Is it perhaps because we should never take Jewish survival for granted and need to always be on guard? Is that why God's name is not mentioned, even once in the scroll, a notable exception to all the other books in the Bible?

David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, stated that when the lion and the lamb will dwell together as biblically promised, he still would like to be the lion just in case. That is ample testimony to what our people have learned the tragic way.

We are thus invited to ponder those unique features of a mesmerizing account in which Jews are called upon to act in God's name. Of course, the absence of the divine name implies neither God's silence nor indifference to such matters of supreme importance.



Israel Zoberman

Curiously, the dictatorial leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, now celebrating the 41st anniversary of their theocratic revolution, continue to seek hegemony in the Middle East and the Muslim world. Their bloody involvement in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen and elsewhere is ample testimony.

They have not given up on "wiping Israel off the map," as has been threatened, and to conclude what Pharaoh, Haman and Hitler began.

While the United States is Iran's "Great Satan," Israel is its "Little Satan."

Have not the Haman-like, and even the more dangerous leaders of Iran who seek a nuclear capability and back terrorist acts, read the Scroll of Esther and taken to heart the fate of those who seek to destroy us?

Denying the Holocaust, they seek to deny Israel's existence, and if necessary, to hasten its demise.

Alarming, too, is the precipitous rise of anti-Semitism globally as well as in the United States. The Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue massacre of 11 Jews during a Shabbat service, the worst ever anti-Semitic crime on American soil, has been followed by other domestic terrorist acts.

Queen Esther was forced to hide her Jewish identity, other-

wise she could not get into the palace to fulfill her mission of saving her people.

Our beautiful and heroic Esther had to be prodded nonetheless by wise and courageous Mordechai – after all she was only human and young – to risk her life by appearing uninvited before King Ahsheverus.

However, she did succeed, forever earning an honored place in the pantheon of Jewish heroines and heroes.

The Jewish people are not yet fully safe but are finally capable of defending their lives in a way that was not possible before.

Remember, experienced Uncle Mordechai engaged in successful counterplots. Self-defense is a top Jewish and human Mitzvah, particularly in our post-Holocaust era.

We have already paid a very high price, and thus "Never Again!" is more than a slogan. It is a sacred imperative beyond blotting out evil Haman's name at the raucous Megillah reading.

A sovereign Jewish state, its formidable bond of shared values and interests with the United States and an influential American Jewish community make a critical difference.

May we act and pray so that the contemporary Iranian plot will meet the fate of oblivion of the biblical Amalek's descendants, while we are ever vigilant.

Our ultimate goal, so elusive for so long, remains a peaceful world of Shalom through the sacred task of Tikkun Olam's healing, hope and harmony for all of God's children.

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is the founder of Temple Lev Tikvah in Virginia Beach. He is the honorary senior rabbi scholar at Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church.

Budget: Civic league just learned about proposed Sandbridge change in spending plan

[CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE]

review of the districts, though it had been scheduled for a meeting that was canceled due to concerns about the new coronavirus.

During an interview, Henley said that the information is based upon the audit and study by city staff completed before restrictions on gatherings due to public health concerns. The city already has taken steps to address possible revenue shortfalls, such as a hiring freeze, and it has developed contingencies for the FY2021 budget.

"We don't want to do anything to threaten the project," said Henley, who last year requested the city review the Sandbridge funding districts. "That's number one."

Replenishment projects are important to Sandbridge, which has five miles of beach along the ocean. In addition to protecting the vacation industry and people's homes, such projects safeguard an area that acts as a buffer between the ocean and Back Bay.

Virginia Beach has become self-reliant to make sure the projects go forward after years of declining federal support for sand nourishment. The districts, due to the rising value of Sandbridge, have worked, but the community has not weighed in on this potential change.

"Officially, we don't have a position because we haven't been able to meet and we are just now aware of this," said Andrew Roper, pres-

ident of the Sandbridge Beach Civic League.

He said it was disappointing the city would consider this in a time of uncertainty, and he said Sandbridge residents might want TIF money put toward projects there, such as road improvement, drainage or Nimmo Parkway.

"We at least would like the opportunity to have an open discussion about these things and adopt a position that can be forwarded to City Council to be considered," he said.

In an interview, Mayor Bobby Dyer said the budget is, at this point, just a proposal. "We still intend to have public input, and we will address any questions and concerns as we traditionally have done in the past," Dyer said.

City Auditor Lyndon Remias on Friday, March 13, released an audit of both funds which showed they are being run effectively and are taking in more money than is being spent on the beaches in Sandbridge.

The special service district dates back to 1995, and the money is used for replenishment and others services that maintain the beach. Funding comes from a surcharge on real estate assessments and lodging taxes, as well as revenue from Little Island City Park parking lot fees, Remias wrote.

According to the auditor's report, lodging taxes comprise the vast majority of dollars that make up the district fund each year – about \$4.2 million, or nearly 77 percent, of the \$5.4

million budgeted in FY2020. In comparison, the real estate surcharge budgeted for FY2020 is about \$735,500, or 13.6 percent of the budgeted sum total of district funds.

Henley said that difference is why reducing the real estate tax surcharge from 6 cents to 4 cents could be possible in the FY2021 proposal. The surcharge means the real estate tax rate in Sandbridge is higher than the citywide real estate tax rate. The surcharge represents what is paid above the general property tax rate of \$1.0175 per \$100 of assessed value.

The proposed city budget anticipates – again, before the severity of the public health crisis became clear – about \$11.3 million generated by the tax increment financing district. "After the financial analysis was performed, it has been determined that the Sandbridge SSD can fully fund the necessary number of beach replenishments without the support of the Sandbridge TIF," the budget says.

The City Council created the tax increment financing district in 1998 to use real estate taxes for public improvements within the district. The audit says the funds are meant to provide additional money for replenishment and shoreline management projects.

The tax increment financing district means the city froze the FY1998 assessment for Sandbridge and has used the difference between that value and the current assessment to

set aside real estate taxes as a kind of backup for the SSD. Sandbridge taxpayers do not pay a greater real estate tax rate within the tax increment financing district.

Revenue in both districts has "outpaced expenditures," the audit found, and the city has transferred money from the tax increment financing district to the general fund since 2006.

The audit found revenues collected for both districts have been properly allocated and appropriately spent. It found that transfers from parking operations, worth \$65,000 for the SSD in FY2020, may no longer be necessary.

During a videoconference interview, Remias said his office's review showed revenues in the special services district are sufficient and the tax increment financing district "did its job."

He added, "For Sandbridge, they're going to have enough funding for their various projects through the SSD."

"Overall," Remias said, "the money is coming in, it's being properly allocated and properly managed. It's accomplishing what it was intended to do."

Review the full Virginia Beach budget proposal and the city capital spending plan online via vb.gov.com. No increase in the real estate property tax rate is proposed. More budget coverage will be in the next edition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Back Bay/Blackwater/Creeds/Pungo Areas

3/16 – hit and run, 6100 block Blackwater Road

Cardinal Estates

3/22 – narcotic violations, 1200 block Blue Jay Way

3/24 – assault, 2900 block Raven Avenue

Corporate Landing Area

3/12 – assault, 1500 block Corporate Landing Parkway

3/12 – assault, 1500 block Corporate Landing Parkway

Courthouse/Municipal Center Areas

3/13 – all other offenses, 2500 block Princess Anne Road

3/16 – assault, 2500 block James Madison Boulevard

3/17 – assault, 2500 block Allie Nicole Circle

3/17 – domestic assault, 3100 block Sacramento Drive

3/17 – domestic assault, 3100 block Sacramento Drive

3/17 – larceny, 3100 block Sacramento Drive

3/21 – destruction of property, 2500 block Princess Anne Road

Dam Neck Area

3/14 – hit and run, 2100 block General Booth Boulevard

Foxfire Downs

3/13 – recovered vehicle, 2600 block Hartley Street

3/21 – concealed weapon, 2500 block Bernadotte Street

3/21 – narcotic violations, 2500 block Bernadotte Street

Grassland Farms

3/25 – hit and run, 3200 block Holland Road

Lago Mar

3/18 – fraud, 1000 block Granada Court

Landstown Area

3/14 – shoplifting, 3300 block Princess Anne Road

3/15 – shoplifting, 3300 block Princess Anne Road

3/15 – hit and run, 3400 block Princess Anne Road

3/19 – all other offenses, 1900 block Landstown Centre Way

3/23 – destruction of property, 1900 block Winter Forest Court

3/21 – narcotic violations, 3300 block Princess Anne Road

3/21 – concealed weapon, 3300 block Princess Anne Road

3/23 – identity theft, 3000 block May Court

3/25 – assault, 3000 block Monet Drive

3/25 – assault, 3000 block Monet Drive

3/25 – destruction of property, 3000 block Monet Drive

London Bridge Area

3/12 – destruction of property, 1900 block Winterhaven Drive

3/13 – shoplifting, 2300 block Virginia Beach Boulevard

North Landing

3/12 – domestic assault, 3700 block North Landing Road

3/22 – cruelty to animals, 3000 block North Landing Road

Nottingham Estates

3/12 – domestic assault, 400 block Adventure Trail N

Ocean Lakes

3/16 – domestic assault, 1700 block Purchase Arch

3/18 – unauthorized use of auto, 800 block Cannondale Trail

3/22 – domestic assault, 1100 block Audobon Court

3/25 – larceny, 1000 block Purrington Court

3/25 – credit card fraud, 1000 block Purrington Court

Oceanfront

3/12 – hit and run, 2500 block Arctic Avenue

3/12 – residential burglary, 1700 block Atlantic Avenue

3/12 – shoplifting, 1000 block Pacific Avenue

3/12 – domestic assault, 900 block Virginia Beach Boulevard

3/13 – aggravated domestic assault, 1100 block Pacific Avenue

3/13 – domestic assault, 300 block 22nd Street

3/13 – assault, 600 block Atlantic Avenue

3/13 – larceny, 300 block Laskin Road

3/13 – obscene phone call, 300 block Laskin Road

3/14 – weapon law violations, 1200 block Atlantic Avenue

3/14 – hit and run, 1700 block Atlantic Avenue

3/14 – overdose, 1900 block Pavillion Drive

3/15 – shoplifting, 1000 block Pacific Avenue

3/15 – domestic assault, 500 block 18th Street

3/15 – narcotic violations, 1500 block Atlantic Avenue

3/15 – obstructing justice, 2100 block Atlantic Avenue

3/19 – hit and run, 200 block 11 1/2 Street

3/19 – assault, 2100 block Atlantic Avenue

3/21 – larceny, 800 block 15 1/2 Street

3/21 – att. residential burglary, 700 block 16th Street

3/21 – narcotic violations, 400 block 24th Street

3/21 – larceny, 2900 block Pacific Avenue

3/22 – destruction of property, 2400 block Atlantic Avenue

3/23 – larceny from motor vehicle, 3000 block Atlantic Avenue

3/23 – narcotic violations, 300 block Norfolk Avenue

3/23 – assault, 400 block 21st Street

3/24 – domestic assault, 300 block 21st Street

3/25 – trespass real property, 2200 block Atlantic Avenue

Pecan Gardens

3/13 – domestic assault, 3400 block Dana Lane

3/13 – domestic assault, 3400 block Dana Lane

Pine Hurst Estates

3/17 – shoplifting, 2100 block Upton Drive

Pine Ridge

3/16 – trespass real property, 2200 block Windy Pines Bend

Red Mill

3/23 – credit card fraud, 1900 block Quail Hollow Court

Redwing Area

3/16 – embezzlement, 900 block General Booth Boulevard

River Oaks

3/13 – identity theft, 3700 block Cypress Vine Lane

Salem Lakes

3/22 – domestic assault, 3900 block Morning View Drive

3/22 – domestic assault, 3900 block Morning View Drive

3/23 – assault, 3900 block Morning View Drive

Sandbridge

3/25 – recovered vehicle, 3800 block Sandpiper Road

Seatack

3/13 – weapon law violations, Integrity Way & Birdneck Circle

3/14 – hit and run, 100 block Birdneck Road N

3/17 – assault, 900 block Old Virginia Beach Road

3/18 – shoplifting, 1000 block Virginia Beach Boulevard

3/18 – narcotic violations, 1000 block Virginia Beach Boulevard

3/22 – narcotic violations, 1000 block Virginia Beach Boulevard

Strawbridge

3/15 – shoplifting, 1100 block Nimmo Parkway

Sources: Currituck County Sheriff's Office & Virginia Beach Police

MARCH 13 PUZZLE SOLUTION

L	O	S	T		C	A	P	R	I		A	C	I	D
O	G	L	E		A	L	L	E	N		D	O	D	O
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CROSSWORD BY MARGIE E. BURKE

ACROSS

1 Lasting impres-
sion

5 Life partner

9 Will Smith flick,
"____ Earth"

14 Cheer alternative

15 Make, as money

16 Words to live by

17 All atwitter

18 Order in the
court19 Cuban "line"
dance

20 Nev. neighbor

22 Like some
questions24 Moscow land-
mark

26 Puniest pup

27 Bird feeder filler

28 Skin salve

32 Early hit for The
Jackson 534 Passed out
cards

36 Make last, maybe

37 Peggy and
Brenda

39 Taxpayer's fear

41 Pinochle's low
card

42 Betrothal notice

44 Natural rope
fiber

46 Get the picture

47 Employ robots

49 Campus military
org.51 Bob of The
Grateful Dead

52 Conference site

55 Van Gogh's

"Sunflowers",
e.g.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
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60						61			62		63			
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

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59 Cloth for suits

60 Permissible

61 Marine growth

63 ____ Beach, Fla.

64 Do penance

65 Without ice, at
the bar

66 Looking down

67 Doomed one

68 Red-tag event

69 Pond creature

6 Hank who hit

755 home runs

7 Field follower

8 Intestinal inflam-

mation

9 Decorating

details

10 Bono, to U2

11 Watch over

12 Sharpness

13 Map feature

21 Hightailed it

23 Wimple wearer

25 "I had no ____!"

28 Nostalgic

number

29 Deprive of vital

parts

30 ____ the wiser

31 Hammock holder

32 Jessica of "Dark
Angel"

33 Mr. Bridges

35 Salzburg

residents

38 Mountain

demarcation

40 Counterbalance

43 Metal refinery

45 Great deal

48 Suffer illness

50 Mine-boring tool

52 Fit for a king

53 Burning bright

54 Offer bait

55 Refinery waste

56 Mambo's Puente

57 Graphic symbol

58 Little nipper

62 Had a bite

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