Storytelling Guild Preserves History and Builds Community

Story and Photo by Amanda Mehall

Talking to one another and sharing stories is a cherished tradition on Chincoteague Island. “Teaguers” and “come heres” alike value the experiences about which people choose to open up, and listen closely on the edge of their seat, for the next detail.

Cindy Faith, Chincoteague Museum’s Road Scholar director, explained she is a “come here,” moving to the island with her family at 7 years old, but vividly remembers growing up around everyone swapping stories.

“It’s been more than a passing fancy, it’s life here,” Faith said, “Their past times were in communicating. In the city, you can get caught up in big entertainment, but here, people gather around the table and tell stories.”

This genuine interest in other people’s history begat Chincoteague’s Storytelling Guild.

“Our intent is to give people a place to tell their stories,” founding member, Greg Shupe said.

The guild formed about a year ago and is an informal, welcoming group that hosts its free “Hear a Story/Share a Story” event on the last Friday of every month. During each session, prominent local figures lead the evening by telling any sort of story to the audience, and attendees may also step up on stage to tell their own tales.

On June 30, keynote speakers included Kristin Willis from Eastern Shore Coastal Roasting Company, Elise Trelagan from Chincoteague Bay Field Station and Josh Chapman from Black Narrows Brewing.

“I’m going to tell you about the coolest thing I’ve ever found at the beach,” Willis began.

Detailing a trip to the Virgin Islands with her now husband, Jamie, he was hopeful to find a “jewel” on the beach. Willis had a diamond ring in mind, but the end of the trip was nearing and the couple still had not found anything valuable.

“Just feet from ocean water, this little 2-year-old blonde hair, green eye girl was sitting by herself; she was a jewel,” Willis said, explaining how they found this child sitting on the steps of a tiki bar.

“I just grabbed her up and she didn’t say a word and we started looking for her parents,” Willis said.

Willis and Jamie ended up tracking down the girl’s parents who owned a restaurant a few blocks away and brought her there. Willis said the couple were just as shocked as she was to find this child because they had left her with a babysitter who, Willis said, she later saw passed out.

“That’s the jewel, we found the jewel,” Willis said, “Sometimes when you go out and you look for one thing, you find something completely different.”

Trelagan talked about finding her own personal jewel, which was how she discovered her passion for environmental education while on a three-week trip to Alaska with her dad when she was 12.

“I fell in love for the first time, but it’s probably not what you’re thinking. I fell in love with a fish,” Trelagan said.

Trelagan’s three weeks in Alaska fishing and hiking with her dad often exposed her to salmon. As a pre-teen, she saw a deeper, unseen beauty to this fish because of how it migrates and then comes home.

“Salmon just kept popping up in my life, so I ended up pursuing that,” Trelagan said, explaining how she studied fisheries conservation at Hampshire College.

“It came around to my senior thesis and I figured I’d write about salmon,” she said.

However, Trelagan explained that things didn’t go the way she planned, because funding for her program to do her research got cut. However, instead of giving up on her favorite fish, she instead got involved with about 40 different organizations that work with salmon.

Her activism in the field brought her to Hartford, Conn., where she worked with inner city schools, helping to educate students. One day, she took a class outside where they saw deer droppings. She said some kids were appalled over the fact a deer had been standing in that spot and they were able to learn about it.

“This was a pivotal moment, because kids were learning about the environment and they took it in another direction and I was like, ‘Wow, I want to do this for the rest of my life,’” Trelagan said.

(Continued on Page 2)
Chapman also told the audience how he got involved with his career in the brewing industry.

He drove out to Denver with his wife, Jen, to help build a church, and she encouraged him to go to culinary school, he said. Chapman landed a job at a local restaurant, where the chef he worked with shared his interest in homebrewing.

“I looked at Jen, deep in her eyes, and said, ‘I know what I want to do, I want to be a brewer,’” Chapman said.

The couple then moved to Washington, D.C., and Chapman set his heart on working at a restaurant that always had 555 beers on tap. To prove his worth and show his dedication, Chapman said he worked a 13-hour shift for free.

“I didn’t get the job. I left at 1 a.m. and the parking garage [where my car was], was locked,” he said.

One week later, Chapman said the restaurant owner called him with a job opportunity at a different restaurant that also had a good beer program. They were on the verge of opening a brewery, so Chapman was determined to work his way onto the team.

“My wife said, ‘A: You have to bombard this brewmaster and B: You have to grow a beard,’” Chapman said, “And my wife is always right.”

Once Chapman got the job, here, he eventually ran the brewery when the brewmaster left. He then knew he wanted to open his own, and Chincoteague serves as a special place to Chapman because he and his wife got married on this beach 11 years ago.

“I heard about this oyster-shucking house on Chicken City Road for sale, and the owner wanted it to go to someone who really cared about the island.” Chapman and his wife bought the building which will be the future site of Black Narrows Brewing, the first brewery on Chincoteague.

The “Hear a Story/Share a Story” events once a month serve as one example of Chincoteague’s rich storytelling culture. Faith said the Chincoteague Museum welcomes anyone to schedule an appointment to come in for an interview to tell a story on camera to be archived.

“We’re trying to preserve as much as we can. It’s important for families and the culture of the island … we do it because there were things that should have been preserved that weren’t,” Faith said.

The monthly sessions will all lead up to the Storytelling Guild’s festival in November. The festival will host workshops including basic storytelling and finding family stories. Four professional storytellers will be brought in and a story swap will be held. All of the different festivities will be held at different places around the island.

“Stories build the whole fabric of a community,” Shupe said, “Ultimately, we’d like people to start sharing their history here and build community.”

To keep up with the Chincoteague Storytelling Guild and its events, follow its page on Facebook.
Imagine having a family member unexpectedly admitted to the hospital. As a loved one, you are worried, determined to stay by their side, even through the night. But that unexpected stay likely means you arrived without an overnight bag stashed in your car. You probably haven’t eaten, as you didn’t want to leave them.

This scenario happens every day in hospitals. While dedicated medical teams rally around the patient to help them heal, 18-year-old Chelsea Moore wanted to ensure the families were taken care of, too.

Moore completed a personal service project and rallied the support of the Eastern Shore community. She planned, packaged and delivered 300 family comfort kits to Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital.

“My goal was to help the family members of patients who are going into the hospital unexpectedly,” Moore said. “If you go to the hospital, you don’t always expect to stay overnight and then your family members don’t have the little things they need.”

Each comfort kit, packaged in simple plastic bags with a small note tucked inside, are given to family members free of charge and include a notepad, pen, lip balm, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, candy, game book, shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, water bottle and granola bar. They complement the blankets, pillows and other comfort items provided by the hospital to family members.

“A vital component of providing care in our hospital is the patient experience,” said Nurse Executive Deb Brown. “Research has shown that making the family comfortable helps the patient relax and begin the healing process. Chelsea’s generous gift to Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital will directly impact how our patients heal and will support their family members in meaningful ways. We are so grateful for the time and dedication she took to make this happen, and for all the community partners involved in the project.”

In addition to friends and family who made monetary donations to the effort, and even helped her put all 300 kits together, “businesses from the island really came together and supported the cause, donating a lot of the products we put into the kits,” Moore said.

While the service project was one she undertook out of a giving spirit, she also understands firsthand the impact the Comfort Kits will have.

“I recently had a blood clot and was in the hospital for five days, four of those days in the ICU,” Moore said. “My mom didn’t have anything with her, and I felt bad. I realized through my experience how much the kits we made would mean to people.”

Had the comfort kits been available for Moore’s own recent hospital stay, she said, “when I checked in the nurses would have given my mom the comfort kit and she would have been able to brush her teeth, have a little notepad to write things down the doctors and nurses were telling her and even have a little something to eat.”

Moore, who grew up in a U.S. Coast Guard family and lived in Rhode Island, Delaware and on the Eastern Shore, recently graduated from Chincoteague High School and is heading to Longwood University in the fall. Ultimately, she aims to earn her post-graduate degree and become a school librarian.
2017 TROLLEY SCHEDULE

GREEN ROUTE - EVENING HOURS ONLY

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ROUTE DAYS OF OPERATION

- The Green Route will run the 3rd of June, and will run continuously June 6th through September 9th. The Green Route route will run Friday and Saturday, starting September 15th through October 14th.

- The Red Route will begin on June 5th and will run every day through August 31st.

Trolley fare is 25 cents per person per ride. Exact change is appreciated. Free ride tokens are available at local businesses. Drivers do not carry cash. As a courtesy, please: no alcohol, no tobacco, and no pets. The Pony Express is seasonal transportation service provided by the Town of Chincoteague. This service is open to the public. Many of the motels, restaurants, shops, parks, recreational areas, ice cream parlours, and campgrounds are along our routes. Trolleys are equipped with wheelchair lifts. To inquire about Americans with Disabilities Act public transportation option, please contact the Town of Chincoteague during business hours at 757-336-6519, or The Pony Express at 757-854-8572, after 5 p.m.
What to do this week in and around Chincoteague

Friday, July 7 - Friday, July 14:
Rocketry, 2 p.m., all ages welcome, NASA Wallops Visitor Center, https://www.nasa.gov/content/wallops-visitor-center/public-programs

Main Street Fun Fridays, throughout the afternoon and evening, Shops on Main Street, Chincoteague, www.chincoteaguemerchants.com

Friday, July 7 – Saturday, July 8, Friday July 14 – Saturday, July 15:
Chincoteague Volunteer Fireman’s Carnival, 7 - 11 p.m., Chincoteague Island Carnival Grounds, www.cvfc3.com

Friday, July 7 – Thursday, July 13:
“Despicable Me 3”, 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 7 p.m., (9:15 p.m. Friday and Saturday), Island Theatre, 4074 Main Street Chincoteague, see website for ticket information, www.islandtheatres.com

Saturday, July 8:
The Artful Flea Market, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Free parking, Free admission, Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St., www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org/the-artful-flea.html

2nd Saturday Art Stroll, 5 - 8 p.m., Main Street and Maddox Boulevard, www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org/2nd-saturday-art-stroll.html

Imagination Playground, 11 a.m., geared toward ages 4 - 9, NASA Wallops Visitor Center, https://www.nasa.gov/content/wallops-visitor-center/public-programs

Peculiar Planet: Jupiter, 2 p.m., all ages welcome, NASA Wallops Visitor Center, https://www.nasa.gov/content/wallops-visitor-center/public-programs

Saturday, July 8, Wednesday, July 12, Saturday, July 15:
Chincoteague Island Farmer & Artisan Market, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St., www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org/chincoteague-island-farmers-market.html

Sunday, July 9:
Summer Watercolor Class, 1 p.m - 4 p.m., beginner - intermediate, call 757-336-6222, email danielptthomas@gmail.com

Tuesday, July 11:
Tuesday Nights at the Museum: Where Island Tales Are Told, 7 p.m., $4 admission for adults, free admission for children 12 and under, active military, and museum members, Chincoteague Museum, 7125 Maddox Blvd., www.chincoteaguemuseum.com/programs

Wednesday, July 12:
Engineering Challenge, 2 p.m, pre-registration required 1 hour prior to the program, ages 6 and up, NASA Wallops Visitor Center, https://www.nasa.gov/content/wallops-visitor-center/public-programs

Game Night, 6 - 8 p.m., $3 per person or $8 per family, snacks and drinks for sale, The Chincoteague Center, 6155 Community Drive, 757-336-0614, www.thechincoteaguecenter.com/meet-greet-open-house

Thursday, July 13:
Astronomy & Night Sky Summer Series, 7:30 p.m., free, refuge entrance fees still apply, Chincoteague National Wildlife, www.nasa.gov/content/wallops-visitor-center/special-events

Summer Cinema Series: “Young Frankenstein”, begins at dusk, Robert Reed Downtown Waterfront Park (moved to CCA Headquarters, 6309 Church Street, in case of rain), www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org/summer-cinema-series.html

Saturday, July 15:
Island Coffeehouse, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m., $5 for adults, $3 for students 22 and under, Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church Street.

Day Trips and Side Trips Around the Eastern Shore

Friday, July 7 - Wednesday, July 19:
“Spider-Man: Homecoming,” 7 p.m. (July 7 - July 15 and July 19), 4 p.m. (July 9 and July 16), adults $9, seniors $8, children (12 and under with parent) $7.50, 48 Market St., Onancock, http://www.roselandonancock.com/

Thursday, July 13:
“Gone With the Wind”, 7 p.m, $5 admission, Historic Palace Theatre, 305 Mason Ave., Cape Charles, 757-331-2787, http://artsentercapecharles.org/calendar/

Friday, July 14:
Fishing in the lower bay exploded over the week, much like the firecrackers during the Fourth of July celebrations. Flounder action at the bridge-tunnel, and cobia catches inside the lower bay, were responsible for a lot of the fishing fireworks.

Bluefin and yellowfin tuna catches were made by anglers chunking at the Lumpy Bottom, over the Parking Lot and the 21 and 26 Mile Hills, as well as by anglers trolling over the Norfolk Lumpy Bottom, over the Parking Lot, and Washington Canyons.

If toothy critters are your target of choice, a wide variety of shark species are available for catch and release in the waters around Chincoteague Inlet.

**Chincoteague** – Donna Rae, of Captain Bob’s Bait & Tackle, reported that good flounder action was occurring in the waters of Chincoteague Channel from Daisey’s Dockside up to the section of the old Black Narrows Bridge. Keeper flounder were caught from the town pier, located at the site of the old drawbridge, with one pair of anglers landing 39 flounder over a four day span, including several legal sized fish. The Four Mouths area has produced keeper flounder in the 18-22-inch range for anglers using pink 4-inch Berkley Swimming Mullet baits. Offshore flounder fishing was good along the Blackfish Banks wreck for fish in the 17-24-inch range. Assateague Channel has been producing croakers, kingfish (whiting), a few flounder, and small black sea bass.

The best kingfish action has been out near the inlet. Shark fishing has been very productive in Queen Sound and from the inlet outside to the CI buoy. Hammerheads were caught and released at the 2TL buoy over the weekend. Jimmy, at Captain Steve’s Bait & Tackle, verified the excellent shark action and said spinners, blacktips and Atlantic sharpnose sharks were among the species caught recently. The shop registered a 25.5-inch citation flounder catch for Rob Lynch; the fish was caught in Black Narrows. The waters of the back bay produced a 34-inch cobia release. Triggerfish and spadefish have now taken residence over the inshore wrecks. Tuna catches were being made at the Parking Lot.

**Wachapreague** – Captain Lindsay Paul was out taking advantage of the recent run of good fishing, but Kathy at Trident Tackle reported that flounder fishing has been “very good” with anglers doing well using combinations of silversides, live minnows, and squid. Anglers were catching limits of flounder over the rail cars. The shop weighed in a 104-0 bluefin tuna. Yellowfin tuna and dolphin were being caught in the canyons, and deepwater bottom droppers were catching bluefin tilefish.

Seth Matthews, with a little help from his father, Roger, boated a 50-pound class bluefin tuna while fishing with Bob Titus and Captain Gene Crockett aboard the Bimini Twist. The group found two gaffer dolphin in addition to the tuna, fishing just south of the 26-Mile Hill.

Don’s Tackle Shop reported good flounder fishing on the wrecks and inside the inlet in the deeper holes and cooler water. Don said captains Bobby Turner and Nat Atkinson were still finding large numbers of the flatfish. Offshore customers returned with yellowfin tuna and dolphin from the Lumpy Bottom. A few large bluefin were hooked but were broken off. Don said that ballyhoo sales have taken off with the surge in offshore action and that flats of butterfish were in short supply.

**Lower Shore** – Mark, from Chris’s Bait & Tackle, reported there were “plenty” of flounder being caught at the highrise section of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel. The shop had weighed in several citation flounder caught over the Fourth of July weekend. Spadefish, gray triggerfish and sheepshead are now being caught along the bridge pilings and rock islands. Cobia fishing remained good, with a lot of the fish found over the Inner Middle Grounds and on up to Buoy 36. Red drum have been a by-catch of the lower bay cobia fishery and are still a cooperating targeted specie along the Fisherman’s Island shoals. The sea mullet (whiting) run continues at the Cabbage Patch and outside of the Kiptopeke pound nets. Croakers are being caught out of Oyster.

**Upper Shore** – Matt Abell, of SealHawk Sports Center, reported both bluefin and yellowfin tuna were being caught at the Lumpy Bottom by anglers chunking with butterfish. A nice-size class of flounder were being caught over the rail cars as long as there is a current to aid the fishermen’s drift. Matt verified that triggers and spadefish were starting to stack up over the inshore wrecks. Captain Abell led a party to six cobia on a recent trip out of Cape Charles. Speckled trout still remain a possibility in the shallows of Pocomoke and Tangier Sound. Sand mullet (whiting) are the dominant species over the deepwater rocks. A recent trip to Folly Creek produced a catch of approximately 30 flounder, of which only three were keepers.

**Bill Hall** was the first Eastern Shore resident to achieve Virginia Salt Water Master Angler Status. He has been named Virginia Saltwater Angler of the Year and Virginia Saltwater Release Angler of the Year. **Bill is an I.G.F.A. International Committee Representative** and a longtime member of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament Committee. He is the Virginia Recreation Fishing representative on the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Panel and is a past recipient of the CCA-VA Virginia Outdoor Writer Conservation Leadership Award.
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Friday, July 7</th>
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<td>H 8:57 a.m. L 3:10 p.m.</td>
<td>H 9:39 a.m. L 3:50 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:21 a.m. L 4:32 p.m.</td>
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<td>H 9:43 a.m. L 3:49 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:25 a.m. L 4:31 p.m.</td>
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<td>H 3:57 p.m. L 10:24 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chescon. Creek</td>
<td>H 11:39 a.m. L 5:42 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:19 p.m. L 6:32 a.m.</td>
<td>H 12:57 p.m. L 7:08 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:34 p.m. L 7:43 a.m.</td>
<td>H 2:12 p.m. L 8:19 a.m.</td>
<td>H 2:51 p.m. L 8:57 a.m.</td>
<td>H 3:32 p.m. L 9:36 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onancock Creek</td>
<td>H 11:53 a.m. L 6:02 a.m.</td>
<td>H 12:33 p.m. L 6:52 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:11 p.m. L 7:28 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:48 p.m. L 8:03 a.m.</td>
<td>H 2:26 p.m. L 8:39 a.m.</td>
<td>H 3:05 p.m. L 9:17 a.m.</td>
<td>H 3:46 p.m. L 9:56 a.m.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Pungoteague Creek</td>
<td>H 11:09 a.m. L 5:16 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:49 a.m. L 5:56 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:27 p.m. L 6:42 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:04 p.m. L 7:17 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:42 p.m. L 7:35 a.m.</td>
<td>H 2:21 p.m. L 8:31 a.m.</td>
<td>H 3:02 p.m. L 9:10 a.m.</td>
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<td>Nassawadox</td>
<td>H 9:54 a.m. L 3:38 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:34 a.m. L 4:18 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:12 a.m. L 4:57 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:49 a.m. L 5:37 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:27 p.m. L 6:15 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:06 p.m. L 6:53 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:47 p.m. L 7:32 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occohan. Creek</td>
<td>H 10:33 a.m. L 4:56 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:13 a.m. L 5:36 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:51 a.m. L 6:15 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:28 p.m. L 6:57 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:06 p.m. L 7:33 a.m.</td>
<td>H 1:45 p.m. L 8:11 a.m.</td>
<td>H 2:26 p.m. L 8:50 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Charles</td>
<td>H 8:43 a.m. L 2:46 p.m.</td>
<td>H 9:23 a.m. L 3:26 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:01 a.m. L 4:05 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:38 a.m. L 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:16 a.m. L 5:25 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:55 a.m. L 6:07 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:36 p.m. L 6:40 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiptopeke Beach</td>
<td>H 8:21 a.m. L 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>H 9:01 a.m. L 2:55 p.m.</td>
<td>H 9:39 a.m. L 3:34 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:16 a.m. L 4:14 p.m.</td>
<td>H 10:54 a.m. L 4:54 p.m.</td>
<td>H 11:33 a.m. L 5:36 p.m.</td>
<td>H 12:14 p.m. L 6:22 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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