Beloved Island Icon, Maureen Beebe, Passes

By Krystle Bono

“But some animals, like some men, leave a trail of glory behind them. They give their spirit to the place where they have lived, and remain forever a part of the rocks and streams and the wind and sky.” - Marguerite Henry

It was a weekend for remembrance and of celebration, but for the tight-knit town of Chincoteague, and the entire equine community, it turned into ripple of mourning for the passing of local legend Maureen Beebe Hursh, who’s loss at age 81 was felt across the Eastern Shore, and beyond.

Beebe was known for being the inspiration behind the young girl depicted in Marguerite Henry’s 1947 children’s novel, “Misty of Chincoteague.” Everyone has read it, everyone has heard of the famous Misty and the Chincoteague ponies, and everyone either knew, or knew of, Beebe’s iconic role that was so vital to what embodied all that is Chincoteague.

It was the story that started it all. Children across the country mulled through the pages, saved their loose coins in jars, and dreamed of owning their very own Misty someday. It’s the week-long event that causes thousands to flock to the Island from across the country to witness Chincoteague’s 94-year history.

For those that may have been living under a rock, the novel is based on real-life people and ponies. It follows the Beebe family, who took possession of both Misty and her mother, Phantom, after purchasing both from the annual Pony Penning auction in July.

The announcement of Beebe’s passing was posted on the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company’s Facebook page, tributing her as more than just the kindred spirit that posed a real-life connection to Henry’s fictional version written across 177 pages.

“It is with great sadness that the Chincoteague Vol Fire Co announces the death of our dear friend, Maureen Beebe. A true Chincoteague icon with a huge heart and huge personality. She was so much more than the little girl depicted in the MISTY book. She was a legend, a testament to good works, a heartfelt soul who cherished her independence and her family. This island will never be the same and we as individuals and company as a whole have been forever blessed by her gift of love and friendship that she bestowed to each of us. Ride high Maureen, we will love you forever!”

Social media ignited with condolences and moments of reflection from those that had even the briefest of encounters, to lifelong friends, with Beebe over her many years.

“Maureen was one of a kind, a legend in her own right. A cherished friend and neighbor. We will miss her hilarious stories, her generosity, and her calm presence. We are heartbroken. Our condolences to her family.” - Roseanne Price

“Sad to hear the news. I spent many years in Chincoteague...she was a lovely lady and gave me a ride back home one day in her el camino. We talked and I was in awe that I met the woman who was the girl who owned Misty, the book I read as a child!” - Valerie Vollmers

“Third or Fourth grade, reading the book that Keely Murphy showed me. I (Continued on Page 5)
Mystery solved. Isabella and I made a trip to see the ponies on a sunny afternoon on the island, and spent about five dollars in quarters in the process. It’s amazing to me how my daughter sees horses every day, and we own two of our own, yet she still wanted to spend so much time seeing and getting to know these ponies, as if she never gets the chance to.

Behind and to the right of the Chincoteague McDonald’s there are small paddocks which have housed ponies for as long as we can remember. The front part begins behind Bike Depot off of Maddox Boulevard, and is parallel to the Refuge Inn, which sits on the paddock’s right. When we visited, we were greeted by two mares, who we have since learned are named Martha and Martee Luna.

Martee Luna, or just Luna, as the ladies in the Refuge Inn told us, is a 2013 bay mare and Martha is a 2011 buckskin mare, both out of Mooney, a 1997 bay half Chincoteague pony, half Arabian. We own two half Armenians, so that was particularly neat information to come across. The Refuge Inn pasture is a part of the Chincoteague Pony Farm, which is owned by longtime Chincoteague residents, the Leonards.

The farm has its own website, www.chincoteagueponyfarm.com which includes info on all the ponies currently living on their farm, as well as the farm’s history. It is stated that Donald Leonard owned his first pony at the age of 12, and he started the Chincoteague Pony Farm because he had “a true love for ponies.” Before his passing in 2011, he ran the farm for over 60 years, and the reins have since been taken over by his sons, Arthur and Carlton, and his grandchildren. And now we know!

The farm is stated that Donald Leonard owned his first pony at the age of 12, and he started the Chincoteague Pony Farm because he had “a true love for ponies.” Before his passing in 2011, he ran the farm for over 60 years, and the reins have since been taken over by his sons, Arthur and Carlton, and his grandchildren. And now we know!

Note: There are signs that prohibit hand-feeding. They are there for a reason, and although Bella is a seasoned horse-treat feeder, she did not break the rules, and made sure to put her handfuls of 25-cent corn in the feed troughs that are around the perimeter of the fence. (There are quarter machine vendors on both the McDonald’s and Refuge Inn sides to buy corn.) This is to prevent any unwanted nips and lost fingers. Did you know that a horse’s bite is from 300 to 500 pounds per square inch of force? They use both their bite and their kick to defend themselves in the wild so, yes—a bite can be cause for serious injury, and it can really put a damper on what is supposed to be a nice, pleasant experience. Not to mention, a bite can cause unwarranted future animosity toward the animal that simply thought your fingers were part of the treat!

There are also other visitors that want you to feed them. We were stalked by seagulls and a pair of ducks. Bella also enjoyed that. Me, not so much.

This can be a quick 5-10 minute stop, or can be drawn out for a half hour if there aren’t people waiting, as was the case for us. We had the whole place to ourselves on a weekday afternoon. Bella would most definitely recommend being able to get up close and personal to these sweet Chincoteague ponies, considering the wild ponies are wild, and you are not allowed—or supposed to—get close enough to attempt to feed or touch them, for everyone’s safety.

All in all, we enjoyed our visit with the ponies, and we will continue to stop and visit on our future trips to the island!
**Friday May 31**

- **11 a.m. - Captain Timothy Hill House Tours** - 5122 Main St. - 914-589-7733 - free admission - [www.captaintimothyhillhouse.com](http://www.captaintimothyhillhouse.com)
- **1, 4, 7, and 10 p.m. - Movie: “Aladdin”** - The Island Theater, 4074 Main St. - Call 757-336-6109 for other show times.
- **7 p.m. - Story Swap: Mothers** - Community Center for the Arts, 6309 Church St. - doors open at 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday June 1**

- **9 a.m.-1 p.m. - Farmers and Artisans Market** - Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St. - free admission and parking - [www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org](http://www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org)
- **11 a.m. - STEM Lab** - NASA Wallops Flight Facility Visitors Center - free admission - 757-824-2298 - [www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter)
- **1-2 p.m. - Free Kid’s Art Class** - Community Center for the Arts, 6309 Church St.
- **2 p.m. - History Tours of the Island** - Museum of Chincoteague Island, 7125 Maddox Blvd. - $5/adults, $3/children 2-12 - 757-336-6117
- **2 p.m. - NASA Rocketry: Water Bottle Rockets** - NASA Wallops Flight Facility Visitors Center - free admission - 757-824-2298 - [www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter)
- **4-8 p.m. - Food Truck Rally** - Chincoteague Island KOA Resort, 6742 Maddox Blvd. - $5/person

**Monday June 3**

- **11 a.m. - Manna Cafe** - Christ United Methodist Church Social Hall, 6253 Church St. - free hot lunch every Monday - @MannaCafeCI on Facebook
- **1-4 p.m. - Board Games** - Island Theatre Annex, 4076 Main St., Chincoteague - free admission - [www.ciarts.org](http://www.ciarts.org)

**Friday May 31**

- **8 a.m. - Breakfast** - VFW Post 2296, Tasley
- **7 p.m. - Ballet: Cinderella** - The Historic Palace Theater, 305 Mason Ave., Cape Charles

**Saturday June 1**

- **7:30 a.m. - Yard Sale** - Shore Christian Academy, 11624 Occohannock Neck Rd., Exmore
- **9 a.m.-noon - Clean the Bay Day** - Onancock Creek, Onancock - by kayak, canoe and boat
- **3-8 p.m. - 8th Annual Crabby Blues Festival** - Central Park, 217 Peach St., Cape Charles
- **7 p.m. - Bingo** - Eastville Vol. Fire Co., 16453 Courthouse Rd., Cape Charles
- **7 p.m. - Ballet: Cinderella** - The Historic Palace Theater, 305 Mason Ave., Cape Charles

**Sunday June 2**

- **2 p.m. - Bingo** - VFW Post 2296, Tasley - doors open at 2 p.m.
- **3 p.m. - Ballet: Cinderella** - The Historic Palace Theater, 305 Mason Ave., Cape Charles
- **4-7 p.m. - CBES 2nd Annual Picnic at the Barn** - Cherry Grove Farm, 1734 Savage Neck Dr., Eastville - $25/tickets online at [www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org)

**Wednesday June 5**

- **7:30 p.m. - Virginia Institute of Marine Science Discussion: Managing the Channeled Whelk** - Eastern Shore Laboratory, 40 Atlantic Ave., Wachapreague

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**All listings are provided for information only; call or check websites for updates and confirmation.**

**The Hitching Post is a publication of the The Eastern Shore Post, Onley, Va. Contact us at 757-789-7676. Editor, Angie H. Crutchley; Copy Editor, David Martin; Reporter, Krystle Bono; Ad Manager, Troy Justis; Advertising Associate, Sam Sellard; Ad Designer, Kimberly Perry.**

**Nameplate Photograph by Solid Rock Photography, Chincoteague.**
May 31, 2019 • Eastern Shore Hitching Post • 5

~ Maureen Beebe ~ (Continued From Front Page)

never thought I would get to meet Maureen. What a sweet, sweet person.” - Tori Holland Bloxom

“So sad to hear this. She was such a kind warm and gentle lady. Don’t know if she knew how much she was loved. Her childhood put this Island on the map and in the hearts of more people than she could have ever known. You will be loved and missed deeply.” - Kim Godwin

“She is an island legend! I was fortunate to meet her once on one of our annual family vacations. I was a very shy little girl, so this was such an odd thing for me to do. But, we were walking in to one of the shops along Maddox Blvd. and there was a woman standing by the doorway with a “Misty of Chincoteague” T-shirt on. It was white, with the cover of the book photo on it. As we walked in, I excitedly said “I love that book!” A small conversation started and this woman introduced herself to me as Maureen Beebe from the beloved book. I couldn’t believe it! After a couple minutes of chatting, she offered to sign a copy of the book, so we promptly purchased a beautiful hardcover copy and Maureen signed the book for me. This is a memory I will never forget, and while I only met her once, briefly as a young girl, she left an impression on me. May she rest in peace. Many condolences to her friends and loved ones, and to the island she called home.” - Kristal Ruggles

Denise Bowden reflected on what it meant to have her as a friend, and resident on the island.

“One of the first people at my door when my daddy died to offer her love and sympathy to my family. Many a laugh at AJ’s, many a conversation at Dollar General, many a hug each time. Loved this lady dearly as did the whole island. You will be missed.”

With this year’s pony penning rapidly approaching, Bowden said they will be speaking with the family to see what their wishes are regarding any additional tributes that may take place during the events.

NASA Apollo-Themed Art Contest

Submitted Article

This July will mark the 50th anniversary of when humans first set foot on the moon. In recognition of this historic event, NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility Visitor Center announced the 2019 Apollo Youth Art Contest.

The theme of the contest is “Apollo’s 50th Anniversary” and is open to pre-K through 12th grade students nationwide.

This NASA-unique theme aims to inspire art through the celebration of Apollo as we push towards returning to the moon and take the next giant leap in deep space exploration.

The entries will be judged by an esteemed panel of judges in four age group categories. The first, second, and third place winners of each age category, People’s Choice, NASA’s Choice, and the Grand Prize winner, will receive prizes.

All contest participants also will receive an official NASA Certificate of Participation.

An opening reception and award ceremony of the “Apollo 50th Anniversary Youth Art Exhibit” will be held on Thursday, July 18, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the NASA Visitor Center. Winners will be announced and prizes will be presented at 6:30 p.m. in the Visitor Center’s Auditorium. The “Apollo 50th Anniversary Youth Art Exhibition” will be on display at the Visitor Center from Thursday, July 18, through Saturday, Sept. 7.

The registration form must be submitted by Saturday, June 1. All artwork entries must be submitted or postmarked by Saturday, June 15, 2019.

Rolling Back the Tide . . .

From the collection of Denise Bowden

Shown above filming a scene for the movie “Misty,” Pam Smith played Maureen Beebe and David Ladd played Paul Beebe.

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The cobia fishery has occupied most local anglers’ recent conversations and efforts. Although cobia have been available to Virginia anglers for the last two weeks or so, the official cobia season does not start until Saturday, June 1. Up until then, it has been release only. In Virginia, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) requires all anglers targeting cobia to obtain a permit. The permit is free and available at https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/permit/index.php.

In addition, there are catch and effort reporting specifications that are part of the permitting requirements. The 2019 cobia regulations remain the same as the previous year: one fish per person, three fish per boat maximum, 40-inch minimum size limit with only one over 50 inches allowed per boat. It will be legal to gaff a cobia this year, although a large dip net remains the preferred method for boating one of the muscular fish. All early reports point to a banner cobia season, with good numbers of fish reported from the ocean front of Virginia Beach to the Maryland-Virginia state line on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel Pungoteague Flats off Onancock. Black drum are being caught from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to the Maryland-Virginia state line on both sides of the peninsula in what is shaping up to be the best drum fishery in several years.

**Lower Shore** – Jeb Brady, of Bailey’s Tackle Shop, reported that fishing over the recent Memorial Holiday weekend was “both up and down.” Anglers reported catches of drum on the seaside and behind Fisherman’s Island. Cobia have been caught by both bottom fishing and by sight casting and anglers were biting at the bit while waiting for the opening of the cobia season on June 1. Brady also reported that small croaker have begun to show up, as well as small gray trout and larger sea mullet.

Chris Snook, of Chris’ Bait & Tackle, reports that there has been a really good sea mullet (whiting) bite. Flounder fishing in the back bay has improved with the water clearing. Vasilou had no reports from the canyons, but most wreck fishermen were returning to port with their limits of black sea bass.

**Upper Shore** – Captain Matt Abell, of the Sea Hawk Sports Center, reports that the drum fishing on the bayside has really picked up with both red and black drum. Kyle Abell returned from a recent trip to Bird’s Rock with a black drum catch as well as a red drum release. Similar reports were coming from other hard bottom fishing locations in Pocomoke Sound. Red drum and a larger class of speckled trout have been caught in the shallows. Captain Abell had a flounder charter on Tuesday and, despite winds in excess of 20 miles per hour, guided his clients to a catch of 25 fish, of which only three were big enough for the cooler. A casting trip in the shallows of Smith Island on Wednesday produced a three-man limit of rockfish to 25 inches. Bass Assassin paddletail grubs proved effective on the stripers.

**Chincoteague** – Donna Rae Roeske, at the Captain Bob’s Marina, reported that fishing had improved over the last week, especially the flounder action. Flounder catches were coming from inside the Chincoteague Channel from Buoy 17 north to beyond Daisy’s Dockside. Action inside of Assateaque Channel has also taken off, with the area from in front of Memorial Park to Tom’s Cove Campground producing flatfish from 17.5 to 22 inches. Live minnows topped with Gulp swimming mullet and Gulp baby crabs having been effective. Other bait options include smelt, silversides, shrimp, and minnow/squid combinations. Kingfish (whiting) action has occurred from Buoy 14 to Buoy 11. Live bloodworms, as well as bloodworm scented FishBites and bloodworm scented squid, have been productive kingfish baits. A few croaker have begun to show up in local waters this week. Catches of bluefish have come from the area around the Inlet, while limit catches of black sea bass have come from the offshore wrecks.

Pete Vasilou, of Captain Steve’s Bait & Tackle, reports that surf fishermen were still “picking off black drum” from the beach on Assateague, but fishing has not been quite as good as it has been the last couple of weeks. Larger sharks are starting to move in, such as sand tigers and black tips. Vasilou said that there has been a really good sea mullet (whiting) bite. Flounder fishing in the back bay has improved with the water clearing. Vasilou had no reports from the canyons, but most wreck fishermen were returning to port with their limits of black sea bass.

**Weekly Summer Paper Exclusively for Chincoteague Island**

**Photo by Herby Watson**

Debbie Watson caught this 36-inch striper while surf fishing off Wallops Island.
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<tr>
<th>TIDETABLE</th>
<th>Friday May 31</th>
<th>Saturday June 1</th>
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Disclaimer: Tides are provided for information only and are not guaranteed for accuracy.
Top 3 Reasons to Rent a Vacation Home:
1. In season or off season, rates are typically cheaper than most hotels!
2. Full kitchen and laundry! Cook your meals and wash your clothes
3. Did we mention SAVE MONEY? Rent an entire home for less!