

# WACHAPREAGUE Times

News, information  
& happenings from  
the Flounder  
Capital of the World

Volume 2

Oct. 21, 2024

No. 17



## Phil Wilson Turns the Page

The now-former Wachapreague citizen looks forward to life in Vermont, and to seeing books in a new way

**AT 'NEARLY 63,' PHILIP WILSON** is starting a new chapter. In fact, it's already underway. He has sold his house in Wachapreague, he has sold the Book Bin, and he is heading north, to make his home in the snowy wilds of Vermont.

Wilson grew up in Wichita, Kansas. He went to college at the University of Kansas, and then spread his wings, earning higher degrees at Johns Hopkins and the University of London.

He arrived in Wachapreague on a wave of literary serendipity. He'd been teaching at the Penn State College of Medicine, in Hershey, PA, on the history of medicine - and had made his way "up the academic ladder" when he decided he wanted to do something different, something that promoted literacy - in a different way than teaching college did.

Running a bookstore was a lifelong dream, he says, and so he began looking.

He focused on six or seven shops on the Eastern Seaboard, from Maine to North Carolina.

A shop in a strip mall was not what he had envisioned, but when he came to visit the Book Bin, he says, "It spoke to me, and the Shore spoke to me."

It was the shop that had been around the longest - 35 years at that point (2015). It had books, it had coffee, it had a good vibe. And, he would come to realize, it had a community that was loving and loyal.

Wilson's only prior experience in sales, he says, was selling things door to door in childhood. At the Book Bin, he learned through doing, and it seems he mastered it. He was responsive to customers, and during our interview, got up numerous times to greet people and help them find books. He knew most of them by name, and treated them all with a courtly politeness for which he has

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## Get Out and Vote!

**ELECTION DAY IS NOV. 5**, and in Wachapreague, voting will be at the firehouse. Below is the second page of the sample ballot. Our entire Town Council is up for election. Mayor Charles Elliott is running unopposed.

The candidates for Town Council are:

Glenn J. Schagelin  
Sandie M. Puchalski  
Craig L. Baker  
Aileen Z. Joeckel  
Robert F. Bilicki  
Stephen B. Joseph

You may vote for as many as six candidates, and you may also choose to write in a candidate or candidates.

In addition to national and state candidates, there's a proposed constitutional amendment, which reads as follows:

*Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to that the tax exemption that is currently available to the surviving spouses of soldiers killed in action is also available to the surviving spouses of soldiers who died in the line of duty?*

You may vote Yes or No.

For the national and state ballots, please see [www.elections.virginia.gov](http://www.elections.virginia.gov).

## This & That

**A GROUP OF WACHAPREAGUE** citizens, including the Volunteer Fire Department is collecting donations to help flood victims in North Carolina.

Fred Janci, former mayor, is part of the group, along with Vernon and Cathey Bell and Rep. Rob Bloxom.

Items may be brought to the Powelton Presbyterian Church on Main Street, or to Janci's East Coast Dismantling business, 24227 Greenbush Road, Tasley, just past the roundabout.

Items sought are:

**Pull-tab canned goods**, breakfast items that need no cooking, peanut butter, fruit juice and more.

(Janci said on Monday that food items are particularly needed.)

**Baby supplies**, including diapers, wipes, formula and baby food (no glass)

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**Wilson**

become known.

Asked how he chose Wachapreague as the place he wanted to make his home, he says that Dan Bilicki had as much to do with it as anybody.

Wilson had been staying at the Wachapreague Inn while he looked for a house, and Bilicki and he struck up a conversation. They talked for about 90 minutes, Wilson says, and Bilicki told him all about the town, and VIMS, and Wilson says that that conversation, and the feeling of a little bit of academia right in town, made him understand that Wachapreague was the place for him.

He lived on Main Street for 18 months, in the house Mayor Elliott lives now, before finding and falling in love with the house at the corner of Brooklyn and Liberty, where he lived for seven years.

He's decided to leave because, in part, he has done what he wanted to do with the Book Bin. With the help of Stephanie Smith, "who has been my right hand," he says, he has expanded sections on nature, local subjects - and books by local authors.

Smith is now a store owner in her own right, with the wonderful shop Manuscript, in the Historic Onancock School. Manuscript sells fine stationary and writing accoutrements - pens, ink, wax sealing stamps and the like. Wilson says she has been particularly helpful in expanding the birding section of the Book Bin.

During his time here, Wilson also worked at the Eastern Shore Community College library. The library had been closed, because the college hadn't been able to find a librarian. Wilson worked there until they found one, then stayed on for a time to help students and professors with their research needs.

He has hired a number of high school and college students to work at the store - "more than we needed at times," he says, which he says was not a great business practice, but aligned with his values and goals. Helping these kids learn to deal with the public, he says, was the most fun and rewarding work he had at the Book Bin.

He has also loved the book signings and readings by local authors, and the poetry nights he held at least a couple times a year. "These were evenings that everyone felt something special."

He and his girlfriend have decided to move to Newport, VT. He wants to write a book, on 19th century geography and history, and for that, he needs quiet and calm.

While he has loved running the Book Bin, "You become the bookstore," he says. "You are always on call."

He is very much looking forward to the next chapter, but is also finding it very hard to leave the store and, more importantly, Wachapreague, where he had peace, a house he liked and the very best of neighbors.

"It was always," he says, a little wistfully, "a pleasure to go home."

**A Plea**

**ON A RECENT STROLL** around town, following the walking path set out in Kirk Mariner's "Wachapreague, Virginia: Then and Now," I noticed that the street numbers on many, many homes are not displayed.

This means that if EMTs, for instance, need to come to your home in the middle of the night - or even in the daytime - they might lose seconds or minutes finding your home - and that could be the difference between life and death.

Please, please put your street number in visible letters on your front entryway!

**This & That**

**Bedding** of all sorts, including sleeping bags and cots

**Paper supplies** are needed, including plates, bowls, wrapped flatware and more.

**Dry and canned pet food**

**Hygiene items**, including towels, wash cloths, razors and travel or regular sized shampoo, soap, shaving cream and the like.

**Toothbrushes** and toothpaste, hand sanitizer and deodorant

**Medical supplies** including Band-Aids, medical tape, ointments, disinfectant and more.

A full list is on the bulletin board in the post office.

Janci will drive the items to North Carolina.

He will also take donations collected by Chincoteague and Parksley.

**THE WACHAPREAGUE GENERAL STORE** will be offering pre-made gift baskets for the holidays, complete with locally produced treats! The store will stay open until Dec. 22, before closing for the winter. It's open Weds. - Sun., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**STORE BREAKFAST** takes place Wednesdays at the General Store at about 9 a.m. It's an informal group of that gets together to chat and share. All are welcome!

**THE 14th ANNUAL** Island House Oyster Roast, to benefit the Navy SEAL Foundation is set for Saturday, Nov. 2. Tickets are \$65 each. In addition to oysters, clams, pulled pork and sides, you can participate in an auction and hear music by The Significant Others from Richmond. For more, visit <https://www.theislandhouserestaurant.com/oyster>

**WORD IS THAT** the "tar and chip" surface of Brooklyn and Riverview streets is going to stay as it now is.

Town Council member Steve Joseph confirmed that after the initial asphalt paving, a resident called VDOT to complain that the pavement was too high.

VDOT came back, ground off the asphalt and covered the streets with the new surface.

**SANTA WILL VISIT** the gazebo at Seaside Park on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m.

Bring your friends and family to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate or cider, some cookies, and sing Christmas carols. If you're truly in the spirit, please bring cookies or desserts to share!

In case of bad weather, Santa will meet kids in the fire house.

**Town Technology Committee**

If you are interested in serving on this new committee, please snap the QR code or use the URL to complete a form so we may get back with you with additional information.



<https://tinyurl.com/ymqa73qn>

**JIM BELL** sends a note asking people to sign up to serve on the brand-new Town Technology Committee. Snap the QR code above!

Bell also reminds people that it's near the deadline to donate to help Wachapreague become a registered historic district. Click on the QR code below to reach paypal, where you can make a donation.



**Historic District Grant Match**

Our share of the grant to fund the completion of the Historic District State and Federal Nomination.



Scan code

<https://tinyurl.com/yqsqnhwr>