

WACHAPREAGUE Times

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

Volume 2

Dec. 30, 2025

No. 19



A New Smile in Town Hall

SHERRY DUDAS

would never have imagined that the pet-friendly nature of The Wachapreague Inn - and of Mayor Charles Elliott - would be contributing factors in shaping the newest chapter of her life.

She and her husband Jim Kinsel had been vacationing on the Eastern Shore since their honeymoon in 2006. They came here because it was an easy drive from New Jersey, where they lived, and "has most everything we seek in a superior vacation spot: pet-friendly accommodations, exceptional hiking and birding opportunities, local produce and seafood and hot, strong, locally roasted coffee!"

They were looking at farm properties here, and staying at the Inn, when, walking the

In a CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture farm, people buy shares in the harvest, and then receive produce throughout the summer. Local CSAs include Perennial Roots <https://www.perennialroots.farm/> in Accomac and Cusheeba Earth Farm in Onley <https://www.cusheeba.com/>

dog one morning, Dudas ran into Elliott, and they got to talking. In time, that chance meeting would lead her to apply for the town clerk position.

Dudas and her husband had already chosen the

Eastern Shore as the next chapter in their farming lives. For years, before and during COVID, they'd operated what was once the largest organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm in the country, Honey Brook Organic Farm in Chesterfield, N.J. Dudas says they had 4,000 CSA members, and fed approximately 12,000 people over the course of their most successful season.

Kinsel started the business in 1991, focusing on organic produce, with Dudas joining him in the venture in 2003. At the time, it was difficult to find organic produce, even in their area, outside of Princeton, N.J.

The farm and the business grew well for a long time, but the pandemic changed everything. The couple

Continued on back

A Bench to Honor Betty

BETTY SUTTER, a longtime Wachapreague resident, died in 2010 and has never been forgotten. Said to have been a Wachapreague "institution," she was loved, appreciated and respected for her kindness, talents and sense of humor.

One neighbor says she remembers Sutter very positively. Sutter was a daily visitor to the neighbor's home, and an integral part of their life.

She remembers that Sutter "loved sparring verbally with my husband," and that during many lunches and dinners together, they learned about Betty's early years in Germany, her subsequent life in the States, and her family, the family she lived and worked for.

"Our wing-back chairs, our sofa, and our pillows were all reupholstered and redone by Betty and had her signature. To this day, whenever I sit in one of those chairs I think of Betty, and the thought brings a smile to my face.

"She was also the person who watched our house in our absence. She had the key to our house and one winter she alerted us to the flood



Continued on back

This and That

HAVE YOU SEEN the lights on the hummock in the marsh where Atlantic curves onto Bayview? Take a drive some evening and look.

A couple of anonymous and intrepid kayakers made their way out there one warmish afternoon and strung the lights for all to see.

AND SPEAKING OF LIGHTS, the Christmas lights decorating Main Street are indeed brighter this year, because they're new!

The Town Council voted to buy the new lights, and the Wachapreague Fire Department put them up.

Continued on back

Dudas

changed the way they got their produce to the people - even delivering it - but in time, even this wasn't enough.

Meantime, organic produce had become more common. Profits declined, membership fell off, and Dudas and her husband decided to sell the farm, but also to stay in farming.

And so, they ended up with 66 acres in Machipongo, just up the road from the Barrier Islands Center.

"IT'S HARD TO give up farming," Dudas says. She is 60, and her husband is 66. Kinsel's father was a physicist, and Jim grew up figuring he'd follow more or less in his father's footsteps - and he did, earning a degree in math from Rutgers and getting a job in the actuarial department of Prudential.

Dudas says it was "a deadening career" for Kinsel, and to balance it, he began auditing classes in environmental studies. A teacher suggested that he try organic farming.

In the next three years, he interned at three organic farms, and found it was a life he liked.

Dudas, who also went to Rutgers, was working for a farmland preservation group in 1999 when she and Kinsel met.

"No one tells you what it's like to date a farmer," she says.

Tasks on the farm have to get done when they have to get done, and that might mean that dates are rescheduled or dinners missed. But they worked their

way through it all, and found that they worked well together.

He is analytical, she says, good at problem-solving and fixing things. She is good at getting the word out, and dealing with people - skills that helped land her the job in Wachapreague.

HERE ON THE SHORE, Dudas and Kinsel are already converting their farm to organic.

They have to detox the ground first, which involves putting lots of compost into the soil and planting cover crops, which will be plowed into the dirt.

The USDA awards organic certifications, and it's not an easy process. But Dudas and Kinsel have been through it already, and know what to expect and what to do.

They are planting fruit trees, and plan to have organic pick-your-own strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, paw-paws, persimmons and figs by 2026.

In the meantime, Dudas will be manning the Wachapreague town office, answering questions, working with the town council, making sure forms are filled out, taxes paid, and more.

"I love the Eastern Shore and Wachapreague in particular," she says. "The climate, wildlife, people and culture are just fascinating, and the quality of life is simply exceptional."

Town Hall is open Monday-Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Betty's Bench

"She was also the person who watched our house in our absence. She had the key to our house and one winter she alerted us to the flood in the house that caused a lot of damage - but would have been far worse if not for her



intervention."

Speaking of Sutter's talents, the friend says, "Betty was very proud of the work that she had done and accomplished in her own house, and rightfully so. Great window treatments, upholstered chairs, sofas, refurbished kitchen, etc. Immaculate work throughout."

Another neighbor said she admired Sutter for feeding her neighbors' animals and walking their dogs.

"We looked forward to her laughing as she came by with her parade of happy dogs."

Friends of Betty Sutter decided to have a new bench dedicated to Betty Sutter, and have it placed in the town gazebo, to honor her "in a special way that she deserved."

This & That

A SAILBOAT that was towed to the Town Marina in June and then just left there was finally taken away in December, says Harbormaster and town council member Sandie Puchalski.

The Town Council hired Matt's Marine Salvage to remove the sailboat, Pulchaski said.

REGULAR WEDNESDAY TRASH PICKUP resumes on Weds., Jan. 8.

SENIOR EXERCISE CLASS at the Powellton Presbyterian Church resumes Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. The class, which lasts about an hour, is free and fun.

AFTER A NEW YEAR'S EVE with a special menu, The Island House restaurant will be closed until Jan. 23.

WORKERS ON THE DREDGING

project say that they expect it to be finished soon, perhaps by the end of January. Equipment problems and staffing issues have caused delays.

WHAT ARE YOU RESOLVING to do or change in 2025? Please email your resolutions to me at carrieBjacobson@gmail.com, and I'll print some of them in the January edition.

I decided to do this, instead of a Person of the Year, when to my dismay, the Person of the Year celebration ended up hurting people's feelings and making people angry.

I hope you'll share your resolutions - and that you have a great 2025.

Thanks for reading!

Tammie Stevenson

MY FRIEND Tammie Stevenson died in December, at the hospital in Onley.

She wasn't in town for many years, but her optimism, friendliness and good humor made her many friends and admirers, in town generally and at the Wednesday breakfasts at the store.

You could often see her walking around town with her cane, or volunteering at Current Reflections or



the Dos Santos shop in Onley.

She will be missed, indeed.