

# WACHAPREAGUE Times

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

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## Eighty-eight years in town, & counting

**THE STORY OF PAT HART** is, in some respects, the story of modern-day Wachapreague. Pat is a born here, and in this case, “here” is actually right here on Main Street, a few houses east of where she lives now. Aside from a couple brief stints away, she’s made her home in town for 88 years - and counting.

She’s seen our town grow, and shrink, change and stay stable, welcome come-heres and bury born-heres. She’s worked hard in town and outside of it and raised children and grandchildren here. She has offered lodging and friendship to strangers and visitors, some of whom became residents. She has sold antiques and art and treasures, and many, many houses in town - and a good many of those, more than once.

**PAT, WHOSE MAIDEN NAME** was Kellam, is the last survivor of eight children, all of whom were born in a little house on Main Street. Her daddy was a charter captain and all-around waterman, and her mama worked hard raising all those children.

They didn’t have electricity until Pat was 12, and they never had running water. But they did have chickens in the back yard, and she remembers her mama sweeping that yard every day.

Her daddy died in 1956, and before their mama died in 1980, Pat’s four brothers considered putting running water into the house. But one brother, Jack, “stood his ground,” Pat says. “He said the house was not worth it. ‘If she (their mother) gets so old that she can’t tote the bucket, I will.’” And, she says, “Guess who died first?”



As Pat was growing up, Wachapreague’s population hovered around 500-600, and the town had everything its citizens needed.

“People didn’t have cars,” she says. “They didn’t need them. We wouldn’t have any reason to leave town.”

She remembers there were at least six grocery stores, a five and dime, a barbershop, bank, post office, movie theater, drugstore with a soda fountain, a TV repair shop owned and run by the father of Cathey Bell, who still lives in Wachapreague, and a school for children from grades 1 through 6.

The school population and the town population, for that matter, were both all white. African-Americans lived outside town, and came to town to shop, do their banking, get haircuts and the like, but the schools were segregated until at least the 1950s, Pat says.

The Wachapreague school stood on Main Street where the octagonal house now stands. Pat says the school was two stories,

## Goodbye, General Store

**THE WACHAPREAGUE GENERAL STORE** will not be opening for the 2025 season - or at least, not under the direction of Emily Patrick, Chaundra Thorp and Ana Zapata.

In a letter posted on Facebook and sent to exhibiting artisans, they announced the decision this week.

“This decision was not made lightly,” they wrote, “but as life brings new changes and exciting chapters for each of us we felt it was the right moment to pause.



“Chaundra and Ana are joyfully preparing to welcome a new addition to their family and Emily is dedicating her energy to planning her upcoming wedding.

“These personal milestones are significant and wonderful, yet they require our full attention

and dedication.

“We want to extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for your support and love over the years. Your presence has made our store a vibrant part of Wachapreague. We look forward to seeing everyone around town and wish you all the best in your own journeys.

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## This and That

**THE WACHAPREAGUE CONVENIENCE CENTER** now offers glass recycling! You may put clean glass containers in the purple bin. Please remove lids and deal with them separately. Drinkware, window glass and lightbulbs are not accepted.

According to the Accomack County Public Works website, other recyclables include:

- Aluminum food and beverage containers
- Ferrous cans
- P.E.T. plastic containers with the symbol #1
- High Density Polyethylene plastic containers

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**Pat Hart**

and that white children from all around were bused there. The school had two cooks and offered hot lunches.

Pat and her siblings crossed the street and came home for lunch instead of buying it. Proximity was, of course, one reason. The other was that they were dirt poor.

All their clothes were hand-me-downs, she says, and if there were new clothes, their mother made them, usually out of feed bags.

She remembers that Norma Hickman's father, who had cows, would leave a quart of milk every day. And Motty Mears, a black waterman, would often leave a string of fish on a hook on a pole Pat's dad had put up inside the fence that surrounded their yard.

**PAT MET HER HUSBAND** Tom at the fair in Melfa when she was 16. He lived in Cashville, and was a little older. It was pretty much love at first sight. They dated for two years, and got married - secretly, in Pocomoke - the day after Pat turned 18. After the wedding, Pat lived at home, without telling anyone she was married, until she graduated from high school.

Her mama was angry when she found out, but her daddy was OK with it, she says. He liked Tom, and he knew Tom's grandfather, and liked him.

After they told everyone they were married, they went to live with Tom's family on their farm in Cashville - the only time Pat has ever lived outside of Wachapreague, if you don't count a short stay at Commonwealth Senior Living in Onancock.

The couple had two sons, Tom Junior and Michael, who died in 2020. When the boys were old enough, Pat began working at Acme, which is where Panzetti's Pizza now stands. She was a meat-wrapper and deli worker there, earning \$2.52 an hour. She worked there for 17 years, leaving when she was 50.

The idea of opening a bed and breakfast had come slowly, Pat says. She was always looking at magazines, and when she and Tom would go on vacation, they'd spend the drive home planning the next vacation. On one of those trips, after she'd seen some articles on B&Bs, they started talking about opening one, and Tom "said we'd do it if we could afford it."

**BURTON HOUSE**, the first of the Harts' two B&Bs, was for sale for \$29,000. They got it for \$23,000, and it was a mess, she says. They redid pretty much everything. "Nobody had lived there for a long time," Pat says.

In time, they bought the house adjacent to Burton House, and turned that into a B&B - Harbor House. At one time, she says, "we had 21 toilets and at any one time, only 19 would be working."

People came and stayed and loved the town, and felt at home at the B&Bs. Pat had become a real estate agent by then, and sold houses to many people who'd stayed at the B&Bs.

She and Tom bought Pat's current house, Rose Hill, on the south side of Main Street, because "Tom was bored and needed a project."

Tom had been using the back of the building next door - the building that would become Seaside Art and Antiques - for storage. They asked the owner if he'd sell, and he said yes.

To buy the place, she borrowed \$90,000 from a friend - and paid it back in three years.

She and Tom bought and sold other properties in town, and as a realtor, she sold many of the houses in Wachapreague - some, multiple times.

**IN HER SO-CALLED RETIREMENT**, she has spent time and energy buying and selling antiques and art. She and her late son Michael started Seaside Art and Antiques in the building where Tom had stored his equipment. In time, Michael left the business, and Pat took on a partner, Carol Burnham.

They bought antiques and art at estate sales and auctions, and invited local artists to show and sell their work there.

And then, in 2013, a man driving a truck crashed into the side of the shop, knocking it off its foundation and damaging a huge percentage of the contents. In time, the entire front of the building was removed, the rest of it put back on its foundation, and it reopened as a smaller version of itself.

Most of the time, the store is open only by chance or appointment.

Pat sells antiques on eBay and also at various antiques stores in the area.

**SHE HAS SEEN** a lot of change in Wachapreague over the years. Losing the big hotel and the commercial marina were the biggest changes she remembers. Big fishing boats, commercial and charter, would go way offshore to fish, and customers would stay at the hotel, and it was big business, and busy.

"People used to ride in town just to sit and watch the boats come in, and unload their catch in wheelbarrows," she recalls.

It might have some of that fishing energy again, now that the commercial marina has been purchased, but she says we'll have to wait and see.

Now, she says, "I think this is going to end up being an artsy town. It will start coming to life in April."

**Store**

this community, and we will miss seeing your friendly faces every day!

"While we may be closing this chapter, we hope this is just a 'see you later' rather than a goodbye.

"We want to extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for your support and love over the years. Your presence has made our store a vibrant part of this community, and we will miss seeing your friendly faces every day!

"We look forward to seeing everyone around town and wish you all the best in your own journeys.

"Thank you for being a part of our story. "If anyone is interested in taking over the General Store, please direct message us (on Facebook)."

*As a resident and a participating artist, I'd like to do something I rarely do, and chime in with my gratitude and my hope that someone will take over and open a new version of the store. I believe it added a lovely dimension to town, and I will miss it.*

*If you're interested in taking over the store but are not on Facebook, please contact me at [carrieBjacobson@gmail.com](mailto:carrieBjacobson@gmail.com), or 860-442-2046, and I will get you in touch with Emily, Chaundra or Ana.*

**This & That**

with the symbol #2, - H.D.P.E. pigmented plastic containers with the symbol #2,

- Low-density polyethylene plastic food and beverage containers symbol #4

- Polypropylene plastic food and beverage containers symbol #5

- Other plastic food and beverage containers symbol #7

- Newspapers

- Paper bags

- Corrugated containers

- Magazines

- Cartons

For more, please visit <https://www.co.accomack.va.us/home>, and search for "recycling."

**SHORTLY AFTER** Sherry Dumas was interviewed for the December Times, she left her post as town clerk to work for the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission. Wachapreague resident and well-known artist Lynne Rogers is now our town clerk.

HAVE NEWS, a photo, or an idea for a story? Please contact me at [carrieBjacobson@gmail.com](mailto:carrieBjacobson@gmail.com)