

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82942434/>

Hampton Roads Philharmonic brings its love of music to the community



Bob Harper Photography. The Hampton Roads Philharmonic in rehearsal

David Nicholson, dbnicholson@dailypress.com | 757-247-4794

3:00 am, March 1, 2015

Young and old, working and retired, military and civilian. The Hampton Roads Philharmonic is a mixed bag of musicians with a common bond: the music they love to play.

Founded less than two years ago, the community orchestra gave its first performance in October 2013 at Christopher Newport University. Since then, membership and audience attendance have grown, and the orchestra performs several concerts during the year.

Rehearsals take place on the grounds of Fort Monroe where the Philharmonic has been designated the "orchestra-in-residence." In the coming week, you can hear them Friday in Hampton and Sunday in Smithfield.

On the podium is 26-year-old conductor Steven Brindle, who travels from Richmond to rehearse and lead the group. Brindle, who graduated with a music education degree from CNU, also conducts Capitol Opera Richmond and plays cello in Classical Revolution RVA, a chamber group that brings classical music into the city's bars, restaurants and galleries. After guest conducting with the York River Symphony Orchestra, he was contacted and eventually hired by the Hampton Roads Philharmonic.

Brindle's programming philosophy is simple.

"I have a very pragmatic approach, which is to pick things that people will want to come out and hear," he said. "My first priority is building an audience."

This week's concerts will include the overture to Rossini's opera, "The Barber of Seville," and Schubert's Symphony No. 8, "Unfinished." The concerto slot goes to a virtuosic young cellist, Sterling Elliott, who will perform the Elgar Cello Concerto. Elliott, 15, a member of a talented Newport News musical family, took first place last year in the junior division of the national Sphinx Competition and was a soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra for its recent Martin Luther King Day celebration.

Brindle is not opposed to programming unfamiliar pieces. The October 2014 concert of American music included "Knights of the Red Branch" for three harps by Kevin Kaska and "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," an orchestral piece composed for the Philharmonic by fellow CNU music grad Chris Lamb.

The orchestra's makeup is an eclectic mix of retirees and former military band members as well as younger players who are looking for orchestra experience, says orchestra manager Debra Simmonds.

Principal flutist Darla Wilmot is retired from the U.S. Army TRADOC Band. Cellist Christoph Leemann is a retired laboratory director of the Jefferson Lab. Concertmaster Peggy Watson, who once played in community orchestras in New York, now lives in Newport News and teaches music.

"No one really notices the age difference — it's all about the music," says Watson. "The atmosphere is upbeat, and everyone wants to do their best. It's something I look forward to each week."

Brindle says his job is "balancing the different skill levels and working with the different personalities." If he starts spouting too much music theory, some of the players stare back to him with quizzical faces.

"You want to challenge them without ostracizing anyone," he says. "It's a volunteer orchestra, and people want to be there."

Want to go?

What: Hampton Roads Philharmonic will present two concerts

When:

- 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 6, the American Theatre, 125 E. Mellen St., Hampton
- 4 p.m. Sunday, March 8, Trinity United Methodist Church, 201 Cedar St., Smithfield.

Tickets: \$20 adults, \$5 students. Tickets for the March 6 concert are available by calling the American Theatre box office at 757-722-2787 or online at hamptonarts.net. For tickets to the March 8, call 757-375-9140 or go online to smithfieldarts.com/sundays-at-four.html.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82938714/>

Reader feedback February 28: Newport News fire, Fort Monroe seafood restaurant, policeman rescues car

[Recent Columns](#)

8:33 pm, February 27, 2015

Seafood restaurant slated for Fort Monroe marina

A new seafood restaurant with a sunset view is coming to the Old Point Comfort Marina at Fort Monroe by springtime. The two working owners of The Barking Dog on Kecoughtan Road have partnered with longtime fisherman Joe Illes to open The Deadrise, a reference to a type of work boat in the Chesapeake Bay.

- **Susan Fowler:** Yay!
- **Martina Jackson-Haynes:** Right when we are moving.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82916624/>

Seafood restaurant coming to Fort Monroe

5:31 pm, February 25, 2015

A new seafood restaurant, The Deadrise, plans to open at Fort Monroe in the spring. The restaurant will be located on the second floor of the Old Point Comfort Marina building.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82906959/>

Va. budget deal done

[Recent Columns](#)

6:15 pm, February 24, 2015

RICHMOND – State lawmakers are set to sign off on a state budget that includes employee raises and none of the controversy that extended last year's budget battle into months of legislative limbo.

This budget again strips Gov. Terry McAuliffe's hoped-for Medicaid expansion from the annual state spending plan. But that's no surprise, and after last year's knock-down, drag-out fight, there was little appetite to fight a losing battle again.

A recent upswing in state revenues, along with last year's preemptive spending cuts and a \$250 million dip into the state's unclaimed property holdings, helped smooth over any major disagreements.

State employees will get a 2 percent raise, with extra money set aside to make sure the lowest paid sheriff's deputies and corrections officers are paid above the federal threshold for food stamp eligibility. There's also funding to begin to address pay-scale-compression issues for state police.

Teachers will get a 1.5 percent raise, provided localities kick in their shares. University faculty get 2.5 percent.

The assembly included \$4 million to help Jefferson Lab in Newport News woo a massive new electron ion collider project. It put in \$400,000 to pay victims of the state's forced sterilization program, something a number of legislators had sought for years.

There are about 10 known victims left alive, according to Del. Ben Cline, who pushed the measure. The budget sets aside a maximum of \$25,000 each on a first-come, first-served basis, provided people can document that they were victimized by a eugenics program that operated from the 1920s into the 1970s.

The budget includes funding for 79 new positions to enforce the tougher day care regulations lawmakers are putting the finishing touches on now. It was released Tuesday morning, with House and Senate leaders saying they've agreed on all points. They'll vote Thursday to send it to Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who has indicated he's pleased with the plan, though he may still propose changes.

Democrats raised some questions about the spending plan Tuesday, but there seems to be little acrimony over this budget, and it's expected to pass easily come Thursday.

Legislators shot down a number of fee increases McAuliffe had proposed. The state won't charge higher sales taxes on online hotel/motel bookings, for example. Saltwater fishing licenses won't increase, and neither will restaurant inspection fees.

They also said no to a phase-in for a new hospital tax meant to increase revenues for the medical sector. These provider assessments will be studied instead, with a report due before the legislature's 2016 session.

The assembly also cut the \$28 million McAuliffe wanted to buy new voting machines, a program that would have helped local governments replace failing touch screens. The assembly undid a \$30 million reversion cut that required localities to return money to the state, though, boosting local coffers.

The budget includes a number of funding increases for veterans programs, including a new grant program to give Virginia businesses up to \$10,000 a year for hiring veterans.

Lawmakers came to a compromise on budget language meant to push local treasurers out of the fines and fees collections game and potentially push that business to private attorneys and collection agents. Going forward, treasurers would be limited in how much they could charge to do this work, but the six treasurers handling that business now – including Hampton's and Virginia Beach's – would get a partial grandfather.

They will have to split their profits with the state, though, sucking some money out of those local coffers.

The Virginia STEAM Academy, a proposed school at Fort Monroe, gets \$100,000 in this budget, an amendment put in by Senate Majority Leader Thomas K. "Tommy" Norment. The funding would be used as seed money to boost private donations to establish the school, run by a non-profit and meant to draw math and science students from across the state.

The Virginia Ship Repair Association's training program would also get an infusion from the state: \$250,000 to help produce new trainees for area shipyards. State Sen. Frank Wagner, who owns a shipyard but said he does not use this program, backed the amendment.

The Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute would get \$250,000 for its cancer treatment programs. There's \$250,000 set aside, too, to finish buying land around Langley Air Force Base, a project the state has funded for years in concert with the city of Hampton.

Hampton lost out, though, in its push to reap more revenue from Fort Monroe. The city argues that the fort's payment in lieu of taxes doesn't cover the cost of city services. McAuliffe would have given the city another \$346,000 a year, but the House and Senate said no.

A \$1.9 million transit study for the Peninsula, which would have focused on rapid bus lines, was cut out of this budget. An extra \$382,000 for the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, to fund costs at the new museum and help pay for the 2019 commemoration, survived.

Fain can be reached by phone at 757-525-1759.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/northam-in-va-governors-race-and-fellow-democrat-herring-may-be-close/2015/02/24/11f05978-bc66-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee_story.html

Ralph Northam confirms he's running to become next Va. governor

By [Laura Vozzella](#) February 24

RICHMOND — Lt. Gov. Ralph S. Northam said Tuesday that he intends to run for governor in 2017, setting up a possible primary battle with another likely candidate, Attorney General Mark R. Herring.

In a state where the governor cannot serve back-to-back terms, Northam and Herring were both widely assumed to have their eyes on the governor's mansion from the moment in 2013 when they won their current offices on a ticket with now-Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D). But neither had definitively said he planned to run — until now.

In the past few weeks, Northam has begun putting the word out, privately informing McAuliffe, Democratic leaders and supporters that he plans to run, the lieutenant governor confirmed Tuesday during an interview with The Washington Post.

"I'm planning for the next step — planning to run for governor," Northam said.

Several Democrats said they welcomed the news that Northam — a Virginia Military Institute graduate, Gulf War veteran and pediatric neurologist who hunts, fishes and speaks with the folksy drawl of an Eastern Shore native — was entering the race. They said his biography and collegial manner could play well across an increasingly polarized state, where Democrats have dominated Northern Virginia and other urban centers but have little following elsewhere.

A few Democrats expressed reservations, however, about the strain on the party that would come from a primary fight between Northam and Herring (D), who is widely expected to run but has yet to declare his intentions. Several expressed hope that one of the two Democrats would decide to step aside.

"I think we're doing a lot of good work for the people of Virginia, and I'll make decisions about future elections later," Herring said via e-mail.

Northam said that he, too, is focused on his current job, which involves presiding over the Senate and working with McAuliffe on economic development, mental health issues, early childhood development and the redevelopment of Fort Monroe in Hampton.

"The best way to run or apply for a new job is to have a good record," he said. "And that's what I want to work very hard on in the next three years."

Northam's early, albeit unofficial, entrance into the race is an aggressive move on the part of someone generally known for his [low-key style](#). It could be a bid to catch up with Herring, whose higher-profile perch has often put the attorney general in the headlines.

Herring has used his office to buck the [state's gay marriage ban](#), declare some [illegal immigrants eligible for in-state tuition](#) and advance other liberal causes that could endear him to Democratic primary voters but also complicate a general election bid.

As lieutenant governor — a part-time job in Virginia — Northam's biggest power is to break tie votes in the Senate. He has taken liberal positions without becoming the lightning rod that Herring has for some Republicans, who offered several bills this session seeking to [rein in the attorney general's powers](#).

Northam's early move also was seen as evidence that the soaring cost of running for governor in Virginia is forcing campaigns to start ever sooner. The 2013 battle between McAuliffe and then-attorney general Ken Cuccinelli II (R) cost about \$60 million.

"It's one of those things — if you're going to run for governor, you can't do it at the last minute," Northam said.

State Sen. Barbara A. Favola (D-Arlington) was among those who wholeheartedly welcomed a Northam bid.

"I think it's a great idea. He is such a Virginian," she said. "He sort of gets the thoughtful and methodical way that the Virginia General Assembly likes to conduct its policy. He's just a very, very good fit for his current job, and he'd be a great governor."

She was less gung-ho on the notion of a Democratic primary, saying: "I would hope the two gentlemen could work it out."

"Mark has done a fine job as AG," Favola continued. "[But] having a primary when you're running for governor that year can be very tough. It's tough on voters. It's tough on donors. It's just tough all around. And governor's races are battles. It would be better for the party and better for Virginia . . . if there's not a primary and we can just pick a front-runner and just go forward."

On the Republican side, Sen. Mark D. Obenshain (R-Rockingham), who narrowly lost the attorney general's race to Herring, is widely expected to run for governor.

Other names often mentioned for the GOP nomination include former White House counselor Ed Gillespie, who came close to unseating U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D) last year; Rep. Rob Wittman; and state Sen. Frank W. Wagner (Virginia Beach).

While Northam has begun to spread the word about his plans, he said he had not contacted Herring.

"I just talked to him yesterday about a tie vote," Northam said, "but I haven't discussed my next step with the attorney general."

Laura Vozzella covers Virginia politics for The Washington Post.

http://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/former-rep-moran-appointed-to-fort-monroe-authority/article_fee32818-b91a-11e4-a304-07cbc5663d97.html

Former Rep. Moran appointed to Fort Monroe Authority

Posted: Saturday, February 21, 2015 8:00 am

Gov. McAuliffe on Feb. 13 appointed former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran to the Fort Monroe Authority, the state government entity planning the future of the U.S. Army facility in Hampton Roads that was decommissioned in 2011.

Moran becomes one of 12 trustees in a body that also includes Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam and Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones.

The body supervises a professional staff that is working on efforts to tap into the economic potential of the site while retaining its historic resources and recreational opportunities.

The imposing stone fort was constructed to provide coastal defense during the War of 1812, a role it continued to play for a century and a half.

In the Civil War, Fort Monroe remained in Union hands even as Virginia seceded. During World Wars I and II, it protected the Hampton Roads area and its numerous military facilities; the fort's 16inch guns were able to fire 2,000pound projectiles up to 25 miles, about the same firepower as a top of the line battleship.

Moran last year opted not to seek reelection to the congressional seat he had held for 24 years. In late January, he was tapped as a senior legislative adviser for McDermott Will & Emery LLP, an international law firm focused on business issues.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82985857/>

Metro Fiber plans Fort Monroe to Norfolk underwater expansion

Robert Brauchle, rbrauchle@dailypress.com

7:07 pm, March 5, 2015

Metro Fiber Networks plans to place an underwater fiber optic cable on the floor of the Chesapeake Bay connecting the Peninsula to Norfolk through Fort Monroe.

The Yorktown-based telecommunications company has been seeking approvals from Hampton and Fort Monroe in recent months to expand its network throughout the lower portions of the Peninsula.

The company has not yet approached the state with its plans, a Virginia Marine Resources Commission spokesperson said Thursday.

Existing carriers are located in the connecting bridges and tunnels, leaving them susceptible to damage in the case of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, according to the company's pitch to the Hampton City Council. Metro Fiber's plan bypasses those infrastructure points.

The Hampton council agreed in September to grant Metro Fiber a five-year franchise agreement to use public streets, conduits and other infrastructure to install the company's telecommunications system.

The company is still finalizing plans with Hampton and the Fort Monroe Authority. It will also need an approval from VMRC and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before any work is done traversing the shipping channel.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources will also have a say in any work done on Fort Monroe.

Metro Fiber has submitted a first draft of its dig permit to the Fort Monroe Authority, although the company is now revising it, authority executive director Glenn Oder told the board of directors Thursday.

VMRC has not received an application or request for comments regarding an underwater crossing by Metro Fiber or any other company, VMRC spokeswoman Laurie Naismith said.

Metro Fiber is a part of Cable Associates Inc., which has built underground conduit in areas including Richmond, North Carolina, Franklin County and the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The company also created private fiber networks for Newport News Public Schools, the Newport News Information Technology Department and the Department of Defense.

Cable Associates has also placed underwater conduit beneath the Pamunkey, Mattaponi and York rivers for Cox Communications, according to the company's website. Fiber was then run through each underwater conduit to provide a fiber ring connecting Virginia Beach to West Point, in King William County.

In those cases Cable Associates received federal and state approval for the projects.

In September, Metro Fiber president Gary Tarpley told the City Council the cable will travel from Fort Monroe, to Mercury Boulevard, along LaSalle Avenue, then Tidemill Lane and "past NASA into York County."

Tarpley did not return messages seeking comment on Wednesday and Thursday.

"It's their intent to connect all of Tidewater," the company's lawyer, Allen Tanner told the City Council in September.

Brauchle can be contacted by phone at 757-846-4361.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82966462/>

Reader feedback March 4: Fort Monroe YMCA, White House breach

8:00 pm, March 3, 2015

YMCA to open fitness center on Fort Monroe

The YMCA has announced plans to open a 34,020-square-foot fitness center on Fort Monroe this spring, just feet from the decommissioned Army post's iconic moat and stone citadel. The Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA announced Tuesday its intentions to open its doors to members. The YMCA has history dating back to 1903 when it operated within the Ruckman Road building, making it the first YMCA on an Army post anywhere in the country. The facility then closed in 2011 when military personnel were transferred away from Fort Monroe.

- **Ron Wyckoff:** They should develop a timeshare property on the water.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-82960387/>

YMCA to open Fort Monroe fitness center

Robert Brauchle, rbrauchle@dailypress.com

10:06 pm, March 3, 2015

The YMCA plans to open a 34,020-square-foot fitness center on Fort Monroe this spring, just feet from the decommissioned Army post's iconic moat and stone citadel.

The Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA announced its plans Tuesday.

The Fort Monroe YMCA dates to 1903 when it operated in the Ruckman Road building, making it the first YMCA on an Army post anywhere in the country. The facility closed in 2011 when military personnel were transferred away from Fort Monroe.

In 2013, YMCA officials began polling residents about their interest in reopening such a facility. At the time, YMCA officials said they were seeking an expanded interest from the public, and siphoning members from existing location would only hurt the organization.

"We are optimistic the YMCA will be important to the residents of Fort Monroe, Phoebus, Buckroe and surrounding area," said Stacia Roeth, the Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA's chief operation officer, in a news release. "We are enthused to be able to meet community needs in this service area once again."

Fort Monroe Authority Executive Director Glenn Oder is expected to tell the authority's board of directors Thursday that the YMCA has signed a three-year lease with an option for another three years.

The YMCA could open the center "around May," according to Oder's report.

YMCA officials are reviewing what equipment and services will be provided at the new location.

The YMCA has operated a summer camp for children the past couple of summers using the Ruckman Road location as a base of operations on Fort Monroe.

"The building is in great shape and hasn't required a great deal of work," Oder said in the news release. "I'm sure we could have gotten another, similar business to open there, but it is and

has always been the YMCA building. This is the appropriate use for the property. I'm glad we are making this happen for Fort Monroe and for our neighbors."

Oder's report indicates the building's elevator shaft was not deep enough to accommodate a fully functioning elevator. A contractor was hired to drill a deeper pit for the elevator equipment.

Those repairs could take several more weeks, Oder said.

Brauchle can be contacted by phone at 757-846-4361.

Fort Monroe YMCA timeline

1889: YMCA establishes presence at Fort Monroe although there is no permanent building for the group.

1903: Building 171 constructed following a \$60,000 donation by Helen Miller Gould, daughter of railroad and fur tycoon Jay Gould. YMCA moves in.

1935: Ms. Gould donates additional \$35,000 to build a new wing for basketball court, handball courts and locker room.

1992: YMCA closed because a lack of funds.

Early 2000s: Gen. John Abrams, former TRADOC commander, procures Department of Defense funds to reopen YMCA.

2002: YMCA re-opens after \$11 million renovation.

2011: YMCA closes when Fort Monroe is decommissioned.

Source: Fort Monroe Authority

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-83045963/>

Pentagon continues push for base-closing authority

Hugh Lessig, hlessig@dailypress.com

10:46 pm, March 13, 2015

The Defense Department is open to changing how it handles another round of military base closings, hoping to break a stalemate on an issue in which Hampton Roads has a big stake.

The changes would not alter the fundamental purpose of the Base Realignment and Closure commission, or BRAC. The Pentagon still wants a nationwide, numbers-intensive analysis of its excess capacity in 2017. Communities could still mobilize and attempt to save any base targeted for cuts or closure.

What's on the table? New ways to limit cost and accelerate savings, moves designed to erase the memory of the much-criticized 2005 BRAC, which shuttered Fort Monroe, threatened Naval Air Station Oceana and resulted in two jointly managed bases in the region.

Members of the Senate panel who heard the proposal, including Sen. Tim Kaine, remained skeptical.

The committee didn't vote and no final decisions were reached, but Kaine advanced his own idea: Let the Pentagon recommended base closures to Congress, just as it does with weapons systems or personnel. Then allow lawmakers to decide the issue — and take the heat for it.

The Pentagon "has the province to make recommendations on excess capacity, and voters will hold us accountable," he said.

"I respect your viewpoint," replied John Conger, the Defense Department official who argued for BRAC.

However, he said a nonpartisan commission would remove politics from the process, and the military urgently wants it.

A numbers game

Army and Air Force officials said excess capacity more than justifies another round of base closings. The Navy, which is the dominant military presence in Hampton Roads, also supports BRAC, but not with the same urgency.

"It costs the Army over \$480 million a year to operate and sustain worldwide excess capacity," said Katherine G. Hammack, an assistant secretary of the Army. Throughout the U.S., wasted space ranges from 12 percent to 28 percent, depending on the type of facility.

Excess capacity is about 30 percent in the Air Force, said Miranda A.A. Ballentine, an assistant secretary of the Air Force.

The service has demolished unused buildings, privatized family housing and reduced energy costs, "all of which have paid dividends," she said. But these efforts "pale in comparison to the savings that can be achieved with BRAC authorities."

She said the Air Force continues to spend money on excess infrastructure that would be more wisely invested in weapons, training and improving the quality of life for its airmen.

By comparison, Assistant Navy Secretary Dennis V. McGinn said his service has done a good job of dumping excess space since the 1991 BRAC round. While fully supporting the 2017 request, McGinn said the Navy's need for base closings is "less compelling."

"Our balance is fairly good," he said. "We would not want to avoid BRAC. We would use it to our advantage."

Possible changes

The 2005 BRAC round was heavily criticized for its high cost and lack of savings. In fairness, Conger said some proposals were not designed to save money. They were aimed at transforming or realigning functions.

The transformation measures in 2005 cost taxpayers \$29 million and returned \$1 billion in annual savings. Previous base-closing rounds were more traditional, focusing only on cutting excess space. That's what the 2017 effort would do, Conger said.

When it comes to tweaking the BRAC process, Conger referred to a proposal from a Democratic lawmaker, Rep. Adam Smith. It would require BRAC to focus on cutting, not realigning or

transforming. It would require all recommendations to be completed in five years, not six. It would require master plans that would limit cost growth.

Conger also mentioned recent legislation that authorized Marines to move to Guam. That wasn't a BRAC move, but it imposed a cost cap.

"A model like that would be worth discussing," Conger said. "We want to have a conversation about this."

But the core principles of BRAC would remain the same, and Conger said the payoff to taxpayers would be measurable. A new efficiency-centered BRAC would save about \$2 billion a year after implementation, he said.

JFCOM revisited

In August 2010, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates blind sided Hampton Roads when he announced plans to close Joint Forces Command, based in Norfolk with facilities in Suffolk.

Federal, state and local lawmakers in Virginia were united in opposition. The command closed one year later, but fears of massive job losses never materialized. JFCOM was not a base, and therefore not related to BRAC. But Kaine mentioned it as an example of how base closings, although painful, might work a different way.

There was a proposal. It was unpopular. A debate followed and both sides got some of what they wanted.

"Now we've moved on and it seems to be working," Kaine said.

Nothing would prevent current Defense Secretary Ash Carter from submitting a list of proposed base closures to Congress, which would then have an open debate.

"We would have faith that you would use the analytical tools," Kaine said.

Conger said Kaine's idea puts the Pentagon in a quandary because they essentially must compile a "secret list" and that makes people nervous. "You make everybody nervous when you do a BRAC," Kaine replied.

Lessig can be reached by phone at 757-247-7821.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-83033335/>

Ali Rockett, alrockett@dailypress.com

5:12 pm, March 11, 2015

Tuskegee interpreter to perform

The Tidewater Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen will host John McCaskill, a historian and historical interpreter, at the Fort Monroe Theater, 41 Tidball Road, as he portrays Benjamin Davis Jr., who led the 332nd Fighter Group on a 1,600-mile, round-trip bomber escort mission in Germany.

McCaskill did the same performance for the chapter's Veterans Day ceremony in November. Saturday's event was rescheduled because of snow in February.

The performance will be at 2 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$5 for students ages 7 to 18, and free for children 6 and younger.

For tickets, call 757-826-6976 or email lrcvann@aol.com.

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-83026548/>

Casemate Museum attendance rises

Robert Brauchle, rbrauchle@dailypress.com

10:58 pm, March 10, 2015

Nearly 40,000 people passed through Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum during the 2014 calendar year.

That's an 11 percent jump for a museum whose staff has been on the job less than four years.

The Casemate Museum was operated by the Army for 60 years before the military decommissioned the post in 2011. The Fort Monroe Authority now operates the museum and has since hired its own staff.

Helping to boost that attendance were the 204 tour groups and special programs museum staff hosted both on and off site. Those tours and engagements helped generate interest in and income for the museum, according to an update given to the Fort Monroe Authority.

Tours created \$5,651 in extra income during 2014.

Another eight tours and events were scheduled for January 2015, according to the update.

For more information about the museum and a schedule of times it is open, visit <http://www.fmauthority.com/visit/casemate-museum/>.

Hampton Fire and Rescue honored

The Hampton Fire and Rescue Division was recognized during the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Fire and Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach in early March.

The division was honored for several programs, including the Hampton 2013 home and Safety Survey Campaign, Hampton TRIAD partnership, Camp Fury and Citizen's Fire Academy.

Hampton Fire Chief David Layman and Captain Charlie Kempton III were elected officers for the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association during the conference.

Building Fort Monroe

The Hampton History Museum is hosting a discussion about the construction of Fort Monroe from noon to 1 p.m. on March 18.

The Lunch in Time event titled "The Construction of Fort Monroe: An Archival Investigation" is free and open to the public. Attendees can bring a bag lunch.

W. Robert Kelly, Casemate Museum historian, will present the talk.

For more information, call the museum at 727-1610.

Museum curator retires

Hampton History Museum Curator J. Michael Cobb retired in late February after 31 years with the city.

Cobb was the founding curator at the museum, which opened in 2003, and at the position he mounted numerous temporary exhibits and led six major archaeological excavations that recovered more than 300,000 artifacts, according to a city news release.

The city manager appointed Cobb to serve on an original committee that developed the concept for the Virginia Air and Space Center and the "from the sea to the stars" slogan. He was also responsible for the 13,000-square-foot exhibit housed in VASC until 2001, according to a city news release.

Brauchle can be reached by phone at 757-846-4361 or rbrauchle@dailypress.com. Follow him on Twitter, @dp_brauchle and on Facebook, [facebook.com/hamptonnews](https://www.facebook.com/hamptonnews).

<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-83032563/>

Law firm signs lease at Fort Monroe, and other transactions

4:11 pm, March 11, 2015

Divaris Real Estate Inc. announced the signing of five leases for office space totaling 12,648 feet in in Hampton Roads.

Senex Law P.C. leased 3,745 square feet at the Divaris-leased and -managed Fort Monroe, in Building 77, located at 3 Ruckman Road. Senex Law uses custom, web-based software to process legal documents.

Fidelity National Title Insurance Co. leased 3,039 square feet at the Divaris-leased and – managed 4525 Main St. in the Town Center of Virginia Beach.

AnR Career Solutions Inc. renewed its lease for 2,551 square feet at the Divaris-leased and – managed Harbour Center at 2 Eaton St. in downtown Hampton. AnR Career Solutions provides recruiting and consulting services to the health-care industry.

Precision Measurements leased 2,013 square feet at 11835 Canon Blvd. in Newport News. The land-surveying firm is headquartered in Virginia Beach and has operated as an office in Newport News to serve Peninsula clients since 2001.

Care Advantage Inc. leased 1,300 square feet at 2006 Old Greenbrier Road in Chesapeake. The business provides personal care services in various settings: the home, hospital, nursing home or retirement home.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2015/03/army-seeks-23-million-two-fort-monroe-parcels>

Army seeks \$23 million for two Fort Monroe parcels

The Associated Press

© March 10, 2015

HAMPTON

The Army is seeking about \$23 million from Virginia for two parcels at Fort Monroe.

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Fort Monroe Authority executive director Glenn Oder says the land transfer could be completed within the next six months to a year.

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http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/10/army-seeks-23-million-from-state-for-2-fort-monroe/?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS#!

Army seeks \$23 million from state for 2 Fort Monroe parcels

By - Associated Press - Tuesday, March 10, 2015

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Fort Monroe expansion talk reaches National Park Service headquarters

Robert Brauchle, rbrauchle@dailypress.com

10:25 pm, March 9, 2015

The National Park Service will focus on gaining a footing at Fort Monroe before staff makes expanding the monument a priority, according to the service's northeast regional director.

Still, calls from preservation advocates and Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe to include the Wherry Quarter in the monument have reached National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis.

Regional Director Michael Caldwell told the Fort Monroe Authority board of directors on March 5 that he will continue to work on an agreement to transfer portions of the historic property to the park service before he focuses his efforts on expanding the monument's footprint.

"I've been asked by the director (Jon Jarvis) to look at the Wherry Quarter situation," Caldwell said. "I know there's some new interest in having that become a part of the monument."

He continued: "From my perspective, getting Building 17 (operating), and getting a parcel of land where we in effect can have a flag and work with you all is what I'm focused on right now."

Advocates for the National Park Service's involvement at Fort Monroe have stated that the monument created in November 2011 should include roughly 90 acres of the Wherry Quarter to help better protect views between the stone fort and the Chesapeake Bay.

As it stands, the monument includes varying levels of ownership within the Inner Moat and north of the existing Fort Monroe Community Center. That leaves a gap of state-owned land in the Wherry Quarter.

Since 2011, the National Park Service has worked to create a foundational document used to help develop the park. It does not own a single building at Fort Monroe, nor has it raised a flag or installed a roadside sign on the property.

The park service was budgeted to spend \$361,349 on the Fort Monroe monument in fiscal year 2014.

The monument's staff has consisted of two to three rangers — although that number increases periodically for specific events — and the park service arrowhead is only publicly present on brochures at the Casemate Museum.

Building 17, best known as Robert E. Lee's residence, will eventually be transferred to the park service and used as the monument's headquarters. The structure is located inside the moat and was once used as junior officers quarters where Lee stayed as he oversaw the fort's final construction between 1831 and 1834.

Caldwell said the park service's northeast region has experienced a growth in new units in the past few years, meaning ground-level work such as installing signs, creating brochures and restoring buildings needs to take place at many of those locations.

"All of these things obviously take time in new units," he said. "I want to reaffirm our commitment to Fort Monroe and I look forward to helping make things happen here."

Brauchle can be reached by phone at 757-247-2827.

<http://wavy.com/2015/03/10/army-seeks-23-million-from-state-for-2-fort-monroe-parcels/>

Army seeks \$23 million from state for 2 Fort Monroe parcels

By Stephanie Ballesteros Published: March 10, 2015, 7:18 am

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Beer for CW and other state Senate successes for the Peninsula

Dave Ress

2:06 pm, March 25, 2015

The interests of Virginia's General Assembly range widely and wonderfully, as a look at how our state Senators' legislative initiatives fared.

So, Colonial Williamsburg will be able to receive royalties from the sale of beer that uses historically authentic recipes and a name trademarked by that historical preservation entity, as legislation proposed by state Sen. Tommy Norment and just signed in law by Gov. Terry McAuliffe would have it.

What's a historical preservation entity, you ask? It is, according to the law a tax exempt entity with the purpose of preserving a historic community in Virginia "*that is the site of at least 50 historically significant houses, shops, and public buildings dating to the eighteenth century; and that owns not more than 12*" places licensed to sell booze.

That's how you balance a nonprofit's (*one* nonprofit's) effort to buoy its finances with opening the floodgates to Ye Olde Shad Planke Plonk. (It's my great uncle Tchichorge's recipe: Welch's grape juice and vodka.)

With a deadline looming for gubernatorial action on bills, most Peninsula legislators know pretty well by now how they fare.

But Norment carried some of the most challenging bills this session -- to name some, the ethics reform effort and new notification requirements for colleges and universities when a student leaves because of disciplinary action for violation of a school's code of conduct, an initiative that grew from rising concern over sexual assault on campuses.

He was't able to convince enough other legisaltors to clear the way for a STEAM academy at Fort Monroe.

But generally, Norment, who is the Senate Majority leader, had a pretty good track record this year, with 12 proposals signed into law, three that died (including a proposal on Colonial Downs that he used as a lever to push legislators on different sides of the track versus horsemen dispute to put their heads together and compromise).

State Sen. Mamie Locke, D-Hampton, had a pretty good session, even though she had no luck with two key priorities -- overturning the requirement that women get a transabdominal ultrasound before an abortion and reinstating Gov. Doug Wilder's one-gun-a-month limit on gun purchases. Both are real political flash points and land little support among the GOP supermajority in the House of Delegates.

But her bills on flood zone disclosures for home-buyers and on updating flood maps are now law. So is Hampton's request that people no longer be allowed to run for mayor and a city council seat at the same time.

All in all, her score is six bills signed into law and four killed.

State Sen. John Miller, D-Newport News, focuses a lot of his attention on education, and some of his efforts on SOL testing and to help focus schools' attention on military kids were melded into other Senators' bills. His proposals for no-excuse absentee voting for people over 65, for a referendum on an independent redistricting commission and for a cap on payday loan rates died. But his idea that localities' comprehensive plans should address sea level rise is now law.

And, thanks to him, you can keep an eye out down the pike for Newport News Shipbuilding license plates.

<http://www.thenewjournalandguide.com/community/statewide-news/item/5469-fort-monroe-a-national-gathering-place-for-our-pain>

Fort Monroe: A National Gathering Place For Our Pain

Thursday, 26 March 2015 09:22

By Sheri Bailey

Special to the Guide

As America grapples with issues related to race, there is an immediate need for Fort Monroe to serve the nation as a venue where conversations connected to the tragedy of slavery can be held.

In the wake of grand jury decisions in Ferguson and New York, President Obama convened a task force to report back to him with solutions within 90 days. The designation of Fort Monroe as the place where Americans would be guided in discussions promoting education and healing, without shame or blame, needs to be offered as one of those solutions.

A few months after the Nat Turner Insurrection, in March of 1832, the General Assembly, by one vote, decided not to gradually end slavery but rather to impose more draconian measures to insure its continuation. Imagine how advanced our nation would be regarding racial strife, income inequality, voter suppression and other problems we are dealing with almost 200 years later if Virginia's leaders had shown the courage and vision that is now being advocated by Governor McAuliffe for the future of Fort Monroe.

Thirty years after the Nat Turner Insurrection, in May 1861, about a month after the Civil War officially started at Fort Sumter, it was the courage and vision of three enslaved men James Townsend, Frank Baker and Shepard Mallory who dared to escape from their owner in Norfolk and in doing so made Fort Monroe the site of, "The greatest moment in American history," according to noted Civil War historian and president of the University of Richmond, Edward Ayers.

"As the Commonwealth prepares to observe the 400th anniversary of the first landing of the Africans who joined the Jamestown Colony in 1619, this is a moment that our descendants will look upon and try to decipher what we were thinking. Just as we today attempt to reconcile Thomas Jefferson, the statesman, with Jefferson, the slaveholder, let us be cognizant of the same realities, for what we do today will be judged tomorrow.

In the 2007 run up to the Jamestown 400th celebration, an apology for slavery and a Juneteenth Freedom Day proclamation issued by the General Assembly prompted several other states from Maryland to Georgia to also offer apologies. Such symbolic gestures are

welcome, but too often, as it was in this instance, the symbolic gesture is the sum total of all that gets done.

On December 2nd at the Buckroe Beach press conference that was focused on environmental concerns, Governor Terry McAuliffe took a few minutes to discuss Fort Monroe for some obvious reasons – it's all right there together as one continuous landscape.

The Governor addressed the need to get the details of history right such as noting that the first Thanksgiving was in Virginia, not Plymouth Rock. And the reasons to get the story right have nothing to do with ego. It's about appreciating that we "the American people" have been given amazing gifts collectively known as the American Dream and in order to save that ideal our foundation must be built on absolute truth and justice. And for the most historic of reasons starting in August 1619 through May 1861, Fort Monroe is where this journey started and continues.

During the holiday season of 1865 the 13th Amendment made its way through Congress as it was ratified on December 6th and passed into law on December 18th. Very few Americans living today know that history, but they should and in the years to come they will, as the efforts to save Fort Monroe will shine light on the birthplace of America and the place where the values of freedom for all were first fully realized by three Black men who probably could not swim, but crossed a river. And certainly, they did not know what awaited them at the Union camp, but knew they wanted to be free.

Soon thousands of other Black men, women and children started arriving at Freedom Fortress Monroe and now 150 years later it is time to re-commission this national treasure for the good of the nation.

We are angry, frustrated and bewildered. We need a gathering place for our pain and there is no better place than on the shores of the great Chesapeake Bay where sits Fort Monroe.

Sheri Bailey is a community organizer, playwright, and the founder and CEO of JuneteenthVA. She lives in Portsmouth, Va.

<http://www.bulletinstandard.com/breaking/virginia-steam-academy-nevertheless-missing-essential-components-h6107.html>

Virginia STEAM Academy nevertheless missing essential components

HAMPTON — Fort Monroe could someday turn out to be a one-of-a-type academic campus exactly where some of the state's brightest students are taught science, technology, engineering and applied mathematics-based education at no expense to them or their parents.

But income is the exact thing keeping the founders of the Virginia STEAM Academy from opening in the foreseeable future.

Buildings as soon as reserved for the college are now fair game for any developer for the reason that a letter of intent between the STEAM Academy's organizers and Fort Monroe Authority has expired.

The boarding college will need millions of dollars the school's organizers have not yet been in a position to drum up either from private donors or the General Assembly to pay for teachers, maintenance workers and administrative staff, as properly as ongoing equipment and upkeep expenses.

"We do have to show that we are not so far-fetched that we cooked this up about a kitchen table, that there are successes of public-private partnerships and we have accomplished it right here in Virginia," co-founder Judy Stewart said. "I assume we've made very fantastic gains, even though some folks would like us to move faster ... but we recognize it really is a process."

Producing a boarding college at Fort Monroe will take close to \$9 million from the General Assembly and an extra \$9 million to \$10 million in private donations each and every year, co-founders Caroline Martin and Stewart said for the duration of a March 11 meeting with the Day-to-day Press editorial board.

"We won't open the college unless we know just about every youngster can graduate," Stewart mentioned in reference to the funding. "So far, we've pretty significantly been able to match what's been provided to us (from the state)."

The state has provided about \$500,000 so far, like \$100,000 the General Assembly incorporated in the spending budget this year as seed funds to encourage private donations. The Common Assembly — which would have to approve the multimillion-dollar appropriation every year — has cut spending on K-12 education by 10 % because 2008.

The academy's organizers had hoped to launch the boarding school in the fall. That seems unlikely.

The boarding schools is supposed to be the signature piece of the academy, exactly where students will reside, discover and play on a campus that already mixes military history with expansive views of the Chesapeake Bay.

For the previous 3 years, the organizers have held educational summer camps throughout the state. A total of 187 students from each and every of the state's 4 college regions have participated in these, Martin said.

The founders have utilized classes taught at the camps to help identify what curriculum will be made use of later on.

Online courses could also be available for students who otherwise could not attend the camps or school.

Students will also have opportunities to function with professionals in STEAM-connected fields at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton and Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News, academy organizers said.

So what is holding up these plans?

Earlier this year, the Basic Assembly rejected a set of bills offering funding and a governance structure for the college. The organizers say they have to have Basic Assembly help to attract private donations.

Through their meeting with the Everyday Press, the organizers praised Sen. Thomas K. "Tommy" Norment Jr., R-James City, and Del. Chris Jones, R-Suffolk.

"I can't say enough about Sen. Norment," Martin stated. "He's been a champion of ours from the early stages."

But several state officials have small to say about the proposal.

State Sen. Mamie Locke, D-Hampton, and Del. Gordon Helsel, R-Poquoson, who are on the Fort Monroe Authority board of trustees, did not return various voice mail messages left at their district offices in the past week.

By way of a spokesman, Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton declined to comment about the Virginia STEAM Academy's role in the state's public education and directed a reporter to the Virginia Department of Education.

A Division of Education spokesman mentioned Thursday that he would analysis the topic, then was out of the office on Friday.

Publicly obtainable tax records show the nonprofit organization received \$156,000 in fiscal year 2013. Those documents, the most current available, had been submitted in January 2014.

The academy's total expenditures had been close to \$155,000, according to these types. Martin and Stewart every single took \$16,665 as salaries in the course of that time period.

Income has continued to climb. The academy received just \$5,900 in 2011, its inaugural year, and \$128,077 in 2012.

Its biggest expense was not the \$54,000 summer camp, it was \$70,713 for "consulting." It also paid \$five,008 in fiscal 2013 for a "mortgage and other notes payable" though it was unclear what actual estate the organization owns.

The STEAM Academy's leaders are scheduled to meet with the Fort Monroe Authority board of trustees on April 16.

The authority is looking for a big tenant such as the STEAM Academy to ease the burden of paying for building maintenance and renovation fees.

A letter of intent to lease signed by the Fort Monroe Authority and academy's organizers has expired, which means any developer's proposal will be regarded as for the buildings the academy wants to occupy, authority Executive Director Glenn Oder mentioned.

"Today's reality is that we're nonetheless their preferred place, and we nonetheless believe they are an fantastic tenant selection, but the buildings are out there," he said.

Without a formal governing structure and funding, the authority can not finalize a lease, Oder mentioned.

The academy's letter of intent to lease included a situation in which it leased 275,000 square feet at \$1 per year for 50 years with a 20-year optional extension. The academy's organizers think \$15 million is necessary to renovate three buildings for the initial class of students.

Leasing the buildings would imply the Fort Monroe Authority could eliminate the expense of preserving them from the authority's books.

Fort Monroe's master program — approved in 2013 by then-Gov. Bob McDonnell — incorporates the STEAM Academy occupying 27 buildings totaling 292,000 square feet, making it the biggest single commercial tenant on the home.

At that size, the school would consume 40 % of the complete commercial creating space on Fort Monroe.

On March 24, Oder stated the authority wants to remain correct to the program but be versatile if the academy never ever opens.

Our editors found this article on [this site](#) using Google and regenerated it for our readers.

05 April 2015 Sunday 06:35

<http://blog.preservationnation.org/2015/03/31/everyone-should-visit-fort-monroe-reflecting-on-the-future-of-a-national-treasure/>

“Everyone Should Visit Fort Monroe”: Reflecting on the Future of a National Treasure

Posted on: March 31st, 2015 by Rob Nieweg [No Comments](#)



Ten years ago I visited [Fort Monroe](#) with my colleague Free Harris, who served then as the National Trust’s director for diversity. The tour with Free, whose family is rooted in Hampton, was an eye-opener and my first step toward understanding what President Obama has called the fortress’s “storied history in the defense of our nation and the struggle for freedom.” Since then I’ve done my best to share Fort Monroe with my own family and to advocate effectively for this National Treasure.

The National Trust is now wrapping up our advocacy campaign for Fort Monroe. In the best tradition of our organization, we have contributed at key steps in the march toward preservation, beginning with the land-use planning triggered by the Army’s 2005 decision to

shutter this Gibraltar of the Chesapeake; through President Obama's creation of the [Fort Monroe National Monument](#); and, finally, to the completion of the Fort Monroe Authority's [master plan](#) to conserve the fortress's splendid vistas, landscapes, and 180 historic structures.

Along the way, I've experienced some highs and a few lows:

- Throughout the land-use planning process I was greatly encouraged by the public's enthusiastic participation in the process to re-purpose Fort Monroe. It proved to be a grinding marathon, with an occasional wrong turn and eventual course corrections.
- In November 2011, I was inspired by President Obama's designation of the National Monument, which placed 325 acres of the 565-acre site under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. But I was particularly moved by the [August 2011 letter of support](#) to President Obama from the pastors of eight historic churches in the City of Hampton which share a deep connection to Fort Monroe and to the Civil War-era freedom seekers.
- At times I was discouraged by the overwrought rhetoric used by a few activists who tried to refute re-development concepts by discrediting the land-use planners. Nevertheless, a constructive public debate has flourished about the future of Fort Monroe. I am hopeful that discourse will continue and innovation will be encouraged.



I have also come to believe four things about this significant place:

1. **Fort Monroe is an essential landmark of African-American history.** Freedom's Fortress commemorates the courage and resilience of individual [Civil War-era freedom seekers](#) and highlights the ongoing struggle for justice in our nation. That's what is most important about Fort Monroe. One cannot understand the Civil War -- the most significant event in American history -- without [knowing what happened at Fort Monroe](#), a chapter of American history which was relegated to the margins for too long.
2. **Fort Monroe is a case study in historic preservation planning.** In 2005 Fort Monroe lost its purpose, a sad fate for any historic place. But thanks to good thinking by dedicated people, that threat largely has been resolved. Success would have eluded us, however, if it weren't for the technical give-and-take of the Section 106 consultation pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act -- and for the dedicated staff of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

3. **You can't get enough of a good thing.** Indeed, Virginia's Governor Terry McAuliffe proposes to expand the National Monument by transferring 90 acres of the fort's Wherry Quarter from the Commonwealth's control to that of the National Park Service. The National Trust is inclined to support the expansion, and we are eager to learn the details of Governor McAuliffe's proposal.
4. **Everyone should visit Fort Monroe.** And, while you're there, stop by nearby Hampton University to [see the Emancipation Oak](#), an extraordinary, still-living witness to the first reading in the South of the Emancipation Proclamation, more than 152 years ago.

The historic fort is in good hands and has a bright future. That's very good news, I believe, for my daughter and her friends of the iGeneration, denizens of a virtual world, who will need real, physical, public places like Fort Monroe where they are free to stand -- at the mouth of the mighty Chesapeake Bay -- to understand their own roles in making the United States a more just and humane nation.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation works to save America's historic places. [Join us today](#) to help protect the places that matter to you.