

a Slice of Smithfield

Spring 2014

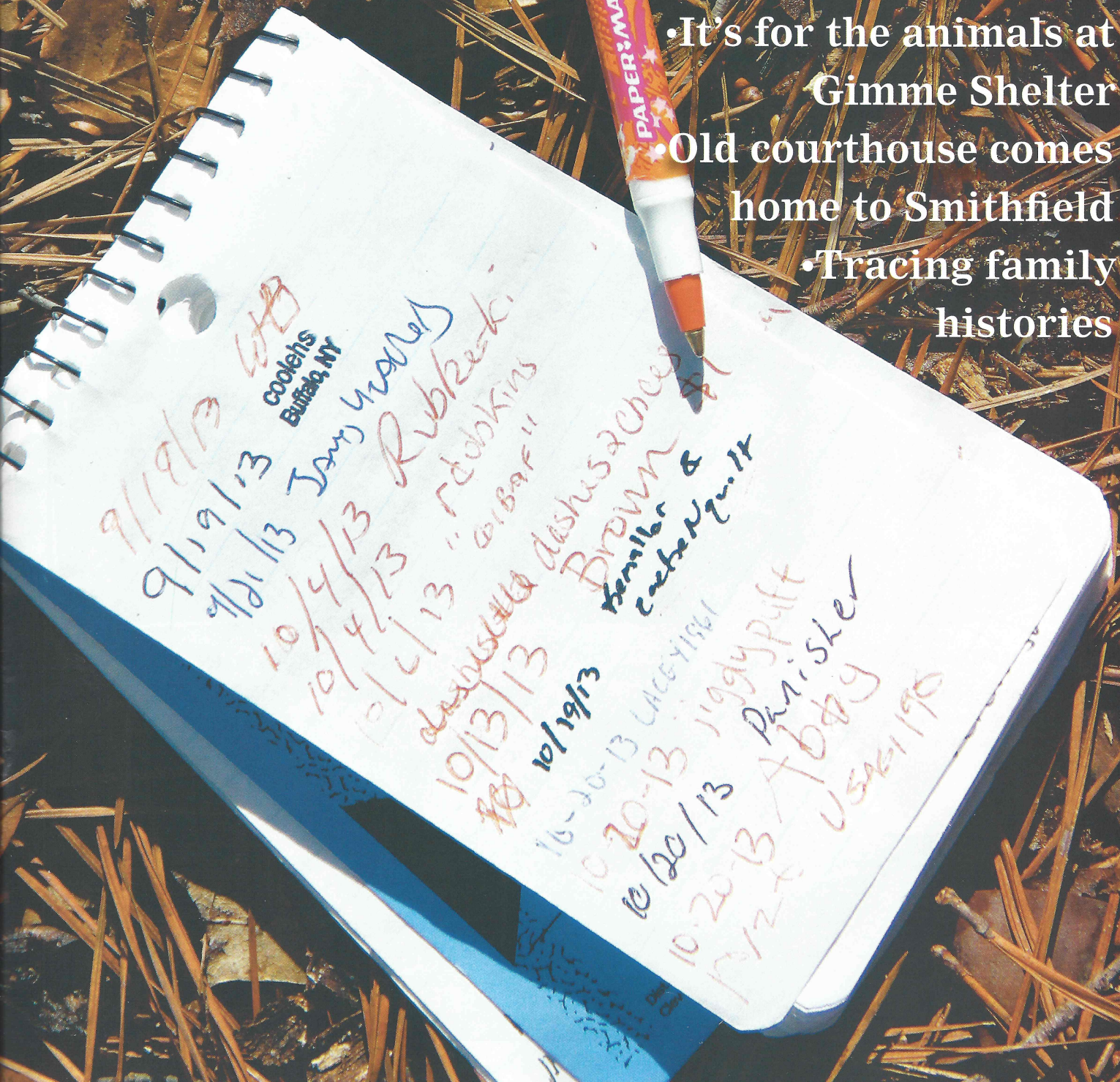
• Geocaching is catching on

Also inside:

• It's for the animals at Gimme Shelter

• Old courthouse comes home to Smithfield

• Tracing family histories



9/19/13 ^{WFB}
Coolidge
Buffalo, NY
9/19/13
9/21/13 Janey Wray
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Geocaching: modern game of hide-and-seek

Story and photos by Abby Proch

In this intricate game of hide-and-seek, adventurous types spend their spare time finding secret spots throughout the world — including here in Smithfield.

The name of the game? Geocaching.

Geocaching is a tech-centered type of hide-and-seek where “caches” are hidden and seekers locate them by using GPS coordinates.

The pastime emerged in 2000 when the federal government made available 24 satellites and improved GPS technology for public use, according to Geocaching.com.

The first geocacher reportedly appeared in Beavercreek, Ore. on May 3, 2000 — a day after the satellites went live — when computer consultant Dave Ulmer hid some items, published their coordinates online and asked people to find it, “take some stuff [and] leave some stuff.”

The game, which he originally called “GPS Stash Hunt,” morphed into a worldwide game of hide-and-seek now known as geocaching.

Smithfield hosts as many as 83 caches, 30 of them hidden in the Historic District and Windsor Castle Park, according to avid geocacher and Carrollton resident Barbara Haigh.

Haigh has been hunting since July 2006 and since then has found 2,228 caches in the U.S., Canada, Bahamas, Germany and China.

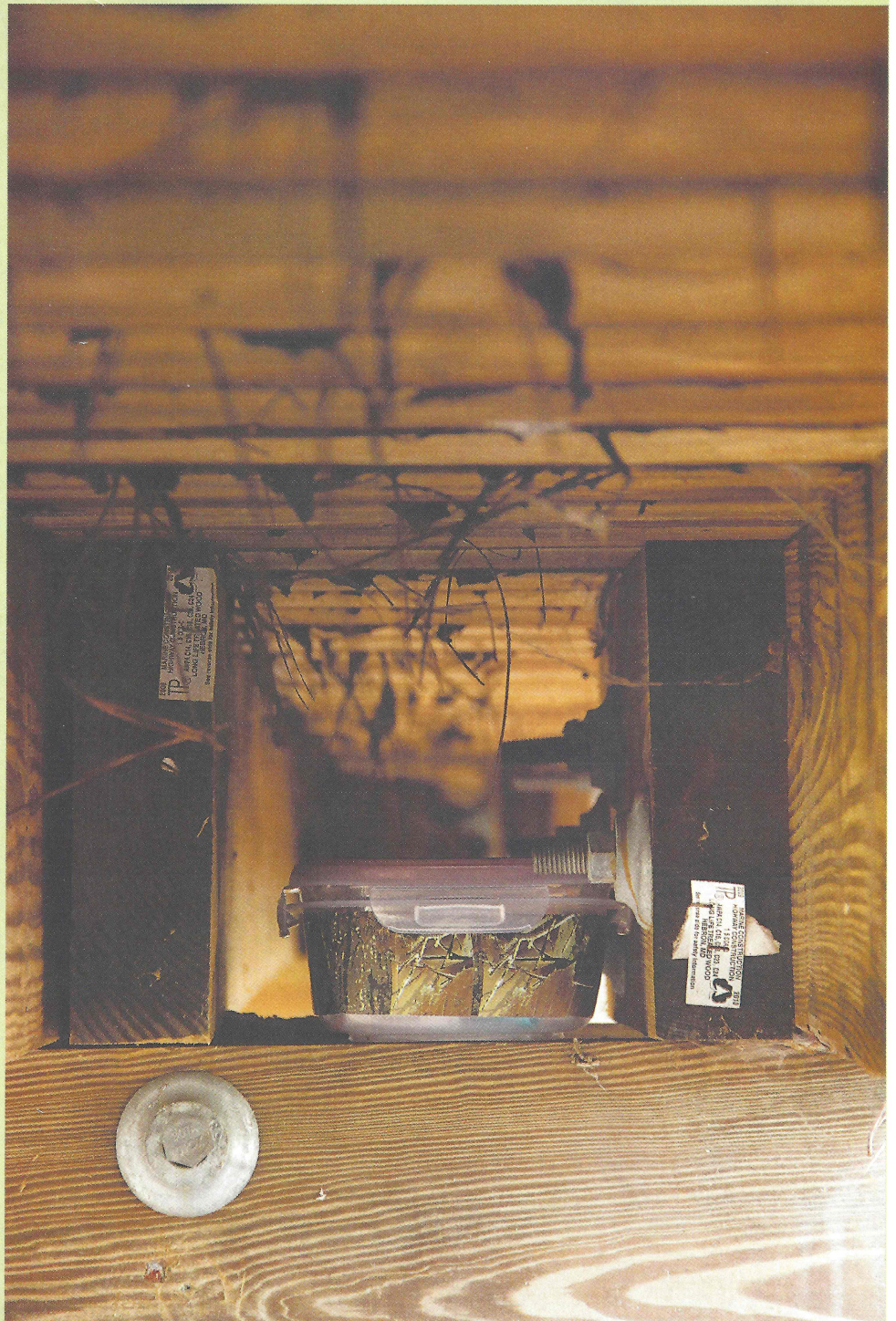
“It’s just really fun,” said Haigh. “I really enjoy it; my family thinks I’m crazy.”

Haigh has even planted her own caches and was recently honored with several Hampton Roads Geocaching 2014 “Hidey Awards” for her Porcine Parade geocache.

Haigh’s geocache features the well-known art displays, while others are less obvious — think dangling overhead in trees or slyly covered with groundcover at the base of a rotting tree stump.

Caches are made of ammunition boxes, watertight containers, PVC pipes and more, and inside you’ll find

See Cache, pg. 9



It might take some exploring to find this cache hidden at Windsor Castle Park.

Cache, cont. from pg. 7

trinkets, coins and log books.

Find the cache, leave your name in the logbook, and if you want, take the trinket and leave your own for another seeker to discover.

Trinkets in the caches are called trackables, or hitchhikers — game pieces that are moved around from cache to cache, some with goals left by the person who placed it.

One such goal would be to move the trackable up and down the East Coast.

Head to Geocaching.com, the premiere website for finding caches throughout the world, for more caches in the Smithfield and Isle of Wight County and around the world.

There you'll find a range of caches, some with simple instructions and others set up as elaborate scavenger hunts.

The site also indicates the caches' caveats, things like no dogs allowed, accessible by boat only, climbing gear needed, or rough terrain leading to the cache.

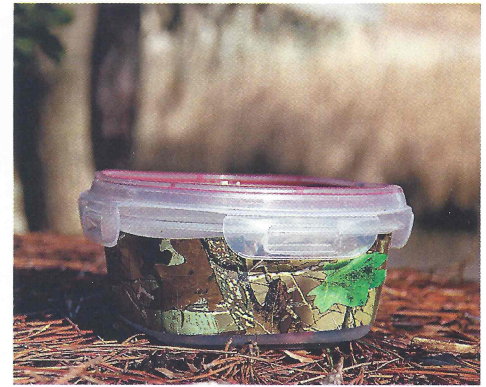
No matter the cache, it's always great, wholesome family fun, said Haigh.

In addition to Windsor Castle Park, Fort Boykin is another go-to geocache destination and is part of the Star-Spanned Banner Geotrail.

Launched in the spring of 2010, the

geotrail commemorates the people, places and events that led to the creation of the National Anthem during the War of 1812 by leading cachers to spots throughout the Chesapeake Bay region.

To find the caches, bring along a GPS unit or download a GPS app to your smart phone, then visit www.geocaching.com or the Isle of Wight and Smithfield Visitors Center, in person at 319 Main St. or online at www.visitsmithfieldisleof-wight.com, for geocache coordinates.



Geo-speak guide

- BYOP — bring your own pen or pencil
- DNF — did not find
- FTF — first to find
- TFTC — thanks for the cache
- ground zero — the point where a GPS device shows you have reached the cache
- hitchhiker — an item placed in a cache and has instructions for its travel
- Muggle — a non-geocacher, based on the Harry Potter series' term for a person without magical powers

Here's one of Haigh's caches to get you going, "Three Billy Goats Gruff."

- GPS coordinates: N 36° 58.696 W 076° 37.834
- Haigh's hint: "Once upon a time there were three billy goats, who were to go up to the hillside to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was 'Gruff.' On the way up was a bridge..." (Think Windsor Castle Park.)