

Schools set to open for 2019-2020 term

City schools' mentors help teachers teach

By Ginny Wray

Kathleen Clerc moved to Martinsville from Oklahoma where she taught for 10 years. There, she was considered a veteran teacher.

But in the Martinsville schools, she is a new teacher. As a result, she will be paired with a mentor for at

least her first year on the job.

"Even with 10 years of experience, I feel like a first-year teacher," she said, because she is finding that policies and procedures in Virginia are different than they were in Oklahoma.

(See Mentor p. 11)

Opening day

Schools in Henry County and Martinsville soon will welcome students for the 2019-20 school year.

Classes will begin as follows:

- Henry County, Aug. 12
- Martinsville, Aug. 7
- Carlisle School, Aug. 20

For full school system calendars and other information, see Pages 10-11.

County schools expanding positive behavior approach

By Ginny Wray

A Rich Acres Elementary School class that behaves well in the school cafeteria could receive the bejeweled "golden spatula" award.

Students who are well-behaved on the school bus could earn a small "golden bus," and a class that dem-

onstrates good behavior in the hallways could be awarded the "golden yardstick," also with jewels.

And a class that is well behaved in the restrooms and keeps those rooms neat could be rewarded with — you guessed it — the "golden plunger"

(See Positive p. 10)

Digging Dino Day

A friendly dinosaur makes a great seat, especially during Dino Day at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville. Here, Avana Giordano (left), 7, and Corbin Askew, 3, the children of Kristin Elliott of Radford, find a comfortable seat at the foot of an inflatable dinosaur outside the museum on July 27. The two-day Dino Day event drew a total of 3,535 people, 74 percent of whom were from outside Henry County and Martinsville, according to the museum. Sixteen states were represented in the crowd.



Short ride is Aug. 10

The 17th annual Jennifer Short Memorial Scholarship Bike/Car Ride will be held Saturday, Aug. 10.

Jennifer Short was 9 years of age in August 2002 when her parents, Mary and Michael Short, were killed in their Oak Level home and she was missing. After a massive search, Jennifer's remains were found several weeks later in Rockingham County, N.C.

All three had been shot in the head.

No arrests have ever been made in the case. However, it still is considered an active case and any leads are investigated, according to Henry County Sheriff's Lt. Col. Steve Eanes.

Now, 17 years after the deaths,

(See Short p. 6)

FIELDALE

A century of change in Henry County



Randolph Scott, a popular western movie star in the 1950s, toured the Fieldcrest hosiery mill in 1951.

(Editor's note: The following information comes from records, articles and documents at the Bassett Historical Center as well as interviews with area residents.)

For much of its 100-year history, the town of Fieldale and Fieldcrest Mills were inseparable. The company is gone now, but Fieldale remains a prime example of a textile mill town.

When Fieldale was named to the National Register of Historic

Places in 2008, the register recognized the town's significance for "its association with broad patterns of 20th century American textile mill production in the Southern Piedmont."

This year, as the town marks its 100th anniversary, it is part of the Smith River Small Towns Business District Revitalization Project along with Bassett, Stanleytown and Koehler. The project involves improvements that are designed to help the corridor at

(See Fieldale p. 4)

TEDDY COMPTON

His life story charts the changes in the textile mill town

For all but 19 of Fieldale's 100 years, Teddy Compton has watched as it changed from a textile mill town to a victim of changing business conditions and now to a town looking for ways to bring people back to its homes and businesses.

Compton was born in his Fieldale home on Jan. 3, 1938, one of three children of Luther Marshall and Virginia Merriman Compton. Other than time in college and the Army, he never has lived anywhere else. He never wanted to and never plans to.

"My grandparents came here before it (the town) started; they helped start

it. I've known just about every family that lived here. I knew who was trustworthy. I knew who I could depend on for help. I knew who I was going to assist if they needed help," Compton said in a recent interview.

Also, his father was one of 15 children and his mother was one of seven, and all their siblings remained in the area. So as Compton put it, "I'm related to much of the town."

.....

Compton grew up in a simpler time. Families were closer then, he said, and children all gathered at the YMCA — which later became the Fieldale Recre-

ation Center — to play baseball, softball and basketball and on the playgrounds. He made the 10-minute walk from his home rain or shine.

"If I had a bicycle, my neighbor had a bicycle," he said, explaining that no one quibbled about who a bike belonged to. If a child needed to get home quickly and a bike was available, he would take it and return it later, no questions asked.

They played games such as Stick Peggy, in which a player hit a short stick with a longer one and then others guessed how many jumps it would take to retrieve the stick, and Old Dead Mule, a version of hide and seek.

Compton said he often went to the Dale Theater in Fieldale and loved westerns, especially those starring Roy Rogers.

Compton grew up in a three-room house that Fieldcrest provided to employees, and his father bought it when the company offered it for sale. It had a kitchen and two bedrooms, and "you used the bedroom for a living room just about," he said with a laugh.

There was no plumbing — indoors or out. Instead, they had a bath tub and "johnny house" outside. The family dug a well by hand in the back yard and put in their own water supply in the

years before Fieldale had its own water system.

Compton went to Fieldale Elementary School and then Fieldale High School in the seventh grade because they ran out of room for the two seventh-grade classes in the elementary school, he said.

Compton played on the Fieldale High School Blue Devils basketball team. He played center against Eugene Eanes in the first basketball game on the court at what was then Drewry Mason High School. The Drewry Mason Spartans won the game, he recalled.

Compton also remembered a team in the late

(See Compton p. 6A)



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Harvest creates \$5 million pool for development incentives

The Harvest Foundation has created a \$5 million incentive pool program to fund economic development projects in Martinsville and Henry County.

The initial amount of \$5 million included in the pool will be used to fund grants to Martinsville and Henry County on a case-by-case basis for development initiatives.

“The demand is rising for higher-paying, living wage careers in Martinsville and Henry County,” Allyson Rothrock, president of The Harvest Foundation, stated in a press release. “Our community members are increasingly better educated and acquiring additional skillsets that support the growth of advanced manufacturing and highly technical trades. We want Martinsville and Henry County to be competitive and continue its upward trajectory. Our community is an ideal location for a variety of business and industry to locate and grow. We want them all to know we’re open and ready for business.”

Initiatives funded from the pool could include, but are not limited to, the creation of new industry, job growth and the expansion of existing businesses, according to the press release. Each incentive pool request will include written performance criteria and the terms and conditions for repaying the grant funds to the locality if the performance criteria are not met.

Latala Hodges, director of communications for Harvest, said requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with no cap on individual grants. The requests will be submitted by the localities and must be approved by the Harvest board of directors, she said.

Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said incentives are driven by performance agreement criteria on jobs/wages and capital investments. While each request for funds from the Harvest pool will be considered on its own, “I would like to use this for larger scale projects,” he added.

Rothrock said there is no time-

table for using the \$5 million in the pool. “We’ll start with that and see how it goes,” she said.

This fund will be another tool for economic developers and/or localities to provide incentives to bring businesses and industries here.

“Henry County’s relationship with the Harvest Foundation helps us separate ourselves from other localities,” Hall said. “Economic development is a never-ceasing endeavor, and knowing that Harvest is a part of the team allows us to do things we otherwise may not be able to accomplish. We all have the same goal — to make Henry County and Martinsville better tomorrow than it is today.”

The Harvest funding reflects local money, local investment and local interest, as well as a fast turnaround time on requests, he said.

This community, “like everybody else,” has used incentive funds available from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and it will continue to work with those agencies, Hall said.

The Harvest pool gives the area “a third option, literally across town,” he said.

Martinsville and Henry County officials regularly partner on economic development projects with the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. (EDC). Martinsville City Manager Leon Towarnicki said economic development and job creation are common denominators that impact many facets of the community, including the overall tax base, business growth, residential development, tourism and more.

“As Martinsville-Henry County continues to work diligently to create opportunities for economic growth, the creation of this incentive pool fund is significant. It substantially raises our ability to remain competitive,” Towarnicki said. “In some cases, the ability to close a funding gap for certain

(See Harvest p. 10)

Press Glass starts hiring with two openings; more are likely this fall

Press Glass has begun hiring for two positions in its new Henry County plant.

The company’s website, pressglass.us, lists openings for a manufacturing maintenance technician and an occupational health and safety specialist for the plant at the Commonwealth Crossing Business Center (CCBC).

They will be among the 212 jobs that Press Glass said it would create at its new 280,000-square-foot manufacturing operation at CCBC. The company is investing \$43.55 million to build what will be the first industry to locate in the business center.

Press Glass of Poczesna, Poland, is one of Europe’s largest independent flat glass processing operations.

Rhonda Hodges, vice president of workforce, economic and community development at Patrick Henry Community College, is talking with Press Glass about assisting with recruiting, training programs and other services.

In addition to the jobs listed on the website, more information on positions and hiring likely will come in September and October, Hodges said.

According to the website, the manufacturing maintenance technician will work with and support the production team to keep companywide equipment running. The position also involves preventive maintenance, troubleshooting malfunctions and repairing or installing factory equipment or machinery.

Qualifications for the position include a GED or equivalent, and additional education is a plus. Applications should have good electrical, electronic and mechanical skills and be capable of operating hand, power and specialized tools, the site states.

The occupational health and safety specialist will work at both the Ridgeway and Stone-



The Press Glass plant is under construction in the Commonwealth Crossing Business Center in Henry County.

ville, N.C., plants. The specialist will review, evaluate and analyze work environments and design programs and procedures to control, eliminate and prevent injury caused by physical or ergonomic factors.

The specialist also will conduct safety training and education programs, demonstrate use of safety equipment, identify hazards in the workplace, inspect and evaluate workplace environments, equipment and practices to ensure compliance with safety standards and government regulations, investigate accidents and perform other functions.

The position requires a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in occupational health, safety or a related scientific or technical field and strong computer skills, the site states.

For more information on the positions and how to apply, go to the company’s website, pressglass.us.

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Sports complex to hold field day for 10th anniversary

The Smith River Sports Complex will mark its 10th anniversary with a celebration of competition and community.

On Aug. 24, the complex will host a mini field day with teams and individuals competing in 18 events.

“Our vision is to make this available to everyone in the community, to celebrate the complex and everything it has to offer,” said Lloyd Barber, executive director of the sports complex in Axton.

“I wanted to showcase what we do day to day to make people aware of everything there is to do out here,” she added.

But this will be different from the competitions usually held at the complex.

Ideally, 16 teams will be organized by local companies, organizations, churches and others to compete for points — and for fun. Each team will be limited to 20 people who will take part in events from around noon to 5 p.m., though the exact times will be determined by the number of teams that take part.

Head-to-head bracket events will be double elimination tournaments in which team points will be awarded to the overall winners. Those events will include dodgeball, kickball, corn hole, 3v3 soccer and horseshoes.

Competition-based events will include punt, pass and kick, golf chip accuracy, soccer shots, whiffleball home run derby and tri-sport shootout (field hockey, lacrosse and ultimate Frisbee).

Participation-based competitions will include infield loop walk/run, bike ride, fun



Lloyd Barber, executive director of the Smith River Sports Complex, is planning for the complex's 10th anniversary celebration.

float on the Smith River, water slide and volunteers. Those events will be open to all registered participants and will be an easy way to earn points for teams.

Points will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place overall teams as well as the top three individuals, not affiliated with any teams, who collect the most points throughout the day.

The awards will be presented in the evening along with live music and refreshments in an “after party” event at the complex’s new amphitheater from 5 to 8 p.m.

There will be no charge for people competing in the events, Barber said. “That is key. This is being held to celebrate,” she said.

Team members will get shirts with their team logos but that will be covered by the team sponsors, she said, adding that Eastman will provide water for the event.

In addition to the fun and

games, the event will show off improvements being made at the complex to offset the normal wear and tear of a decade of use. Barber said. With \$2.4 million from The Harvest Foundation and Henry County, the complex has done a lot of painting, replaced bridges, installed new LED lights in the parking and pedestrian areas and performed other work, she said.

It has a new landscaping plan that likely will be implemented in the fall, and it hopes to run electrical and water lines to the festival grounds so the amphitheater will have power and rest rooms can be built there, Barber said. She added that the landscaping and paving should be done by the end of the year.

The \$8.7 million complex, off Irisburg Road in Axton, opened in 2009 with funds from The Harvest Foundation.

The complex initially host-

ed only soccer games, but it quickly transitioned from a soccer complex to a sports complex, said Henry County Administrator Tim Hall, who has been on the complex’s board since 2012.

Today, in addition to soccer, it hosts lacrosse, football, flag football, field hockey, Ultimate Frisbee and T-ball. It is home to the Piedmont Youth Soccer League (PYSL), 7-by-7 football matches for area high schools, cross country competitions, biking, hiking, water sports and corn hole, among other things.

In recent years, a golf driving range was added, and it sells 100 buckets of golf balls a week, Barber said. Also added were a water slide that is available by reservation; horseshoe pits, with equipment rentals from the complex; and the amphitheater which was built by Frith Construction. All those facilities were funded by the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. (EDC).

The Dick & Willie Passage trail is being extended to the complex although completion has been delayed by the rainy weather this spring, and a boat launch has been added at the Smith River.

In all, the complex hosts 14-15 different sports, Barber said.

She and Hall both said the complex is always exploring new uses for the facilities and taking feedback from complex users and visitors. “I don’t think anybody can stand pat and say ‘This is all we can do,’” Hall added.

In 2016, an independent, professional assessment put

the sports complex’s economic impact at \$4.2 million a year. Barber said the complex has the same number of events now as it did when that study was done — 29 out-of-town events throughout the year — so it likely remains accurate.

The \$4.2 million includes travel costs such as lodging, meals, entertainment, fuel and other spending throughout the community, she said. The complex’s impact on the area’s economy as well as the quality of life has made the sports complex an important asset to the area, Hall said.

The Harvest Foundation has continued to help support the complex for the past decade but its current funding will decline each year until it ends in July 2023, Barber said. Hall added that if Henry County and/or Martinsville has to have a role in assuring the complex’s future, “we will investigate that.”

“It’s important for the entire area that the complex continue to be open and successful,” he said. “It is in no one’s best interest to see that recede or go away.” Hall said he goes to the complex often and people frequently tell him how nice it is. Sometimes they tell him they are surprised something that nice is in this area, he said.

While that may irk him, “it does show an appreciation for it that extends beyond our border. It’s a wonderful amenity,” Hall added.

For more information about the Aug. 24 celebration, visit www.smithriversportscomplex.com.

Smith River Fest brings new activities, familiar favorites

The Smith River Fest, a celebration of the 44.5-mile section of the river from Philpott Lake to the North Carolina border, will be held Aug. 10.

The festival and vendor booths will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex, 1000 Irisburg Road.

New this year will be a paddle demo pool, which will give inexperienced boaters a chance to feel what it is like to get on a kayak but in the security of a shallow pool rather than a deep river. This free activity will give first-timers a feel for the basics of paddling and maneuvering through water. It is sponsored by SOVAH Health Martinsville.

Returning this year will be the Helgramite Hustle Mud Run, live music, a beer garden that will include local ales and demonstrations and vendors from throughout the area.

While the festival officially opens at 9 a.m., registration for the Helgramite Hustle Mud Run will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 9:30 a.m., with the run starting at 10 a.m. A kids mini mud run will be held at 11 a.m.

Registration for the 4.8-mile Smith River Race will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., and participants must attend a safety meeting at the starting line at 12:15 p.m. The last river race shuttle

will depart at noon.

The race will begin at 12:30 p.m. and the racers are expected to cross the finish line between 1 and 2:30 p.m.

Awards for both the mud run and river race will be given out at 3 p.m.

Among other activities, a Gear Swap will benefit the Community Storehouse of Martinsville & Henry County. People can sell their used outdoor and sports gear, and the commission will go to the Community Storehouse.

A regional fan favorite band, Crawford & Power, will perform from 1 to 4 p.m.

According to the band’s website, “With roots in country, Americana and southern rock, they seek to spawn a classic country music revival with a splash of sweet iced tea and whiskey. Their unique approach to a fading genre has been lauded as a breath of fresh air amidst the commercialization of sacred American music genres.”

Crawford & Power have opened for The Marshall Tucker Band, Travis Tritt, Willie Nelson, Luke Combs, and Jerry Douglas. Their debut EP, "Play a Hank Jr. Song," is a no-holds barred approach to country music, the website states. The follow-up EP, “You Only Get One,” is set to be released this summer. The single “She

Likes to Get High” was released on March 1.

DJ What! will provide entertainment from 9 a.m. to noon.

The stage is presented by Smith River Rentals and music is presented by the YMCA and VisitMartinsville, the area’s tourism office.

From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mountain Valley Brewing will sell craft beer in the Beer Garden, and Coors Light also will be available.

Other activities will include free fly-tying demonstrations; paddling rentals by Smith River Outfitters; a cooling station provided by The Harvest Foundation; and Infinity Acres’ petting zoo (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

A casting pool and also a boat showcase will be presented by Angler’s Choice; a Kids Zone will be presented by John Cassell for Henry County Sheriff; A Kids Cycle Station will be provided by the Center for Pediatric Therapies; the mobile bike barn will be provided by the Martinsville-Henry County YMCA; and a nature hike and plant identification will be led by the Virginia Master Naturalists, with times to be announced.

Spencer-Penn Centre will bring its “Pig Train” for free children’s rides.

Hammock Villages will presented by Dam Good Equipment.

Festival-goers must wear wristbands to participate in the free activities. The wristbands will be available at the festival gate.

Among the vendors at the festival are Bath Fitter, Blue Ridge Ski & Outing Club, Boys and Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, Burton and Co., Center for Pediatric Therapies, Chain of Fools Bicycle Repair, Chick-Fil-A, Colonel’s Custom Rods, D’s Hot/Ice, Dan’s Ice Cream, Eckankar, Fairy Stone State Park, Fat Daddy’s BBQ, Harvest Foundation, Henry County Public Safety, Hope Tree Foster Care, John Cassell for Sheriff, Kona Ice, LeafFilter North of North Carolina, Lularoe, Martinsville Eyesore Center, Med Express Urgent Care, Paparazzi, Polar Bear Real Italian Ice, Preston Ridge Winery, Presto! Italian Food, Romesburg Family Farm, Rumpelstilskin’s, Ryman’s Caricatures, Smith River Provision Co., Smith River Rentals, Smith River Trout Unlimited, SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County, Spencer-Penn Centre, Tupperware and Virginia 811.

The title sponsor this year is the Smith River Provision Co., 3775 Fairy Stone Park Hwy., Bassett. The business sells outdoor-related provides clothing and accessories.

Collection ‘treasures’ unveiled in program

A darning egg. Fans dating back to the 1900s. Silver soup ladles made from pocket change.

Those were among the items the local museums and collectors took out of their vaults recently and put on public display.

The July 21 program, “Treasures from the Vaults,” was organized by the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and held in the MHC Heritage Center in uptown Martinsville.

More than 50 people gathered for the presentations by Dr. Joe Keiper, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Natural History; Johnny Nolan; Mervyn King and Virginia King, who is the new president of the historical society; Lisa Martin of the Reynolds Homestead; Doug Stegall; and Steve Isom.

Each gave a brief descrip-

tion of their items and then the audience browsed among their displays, asking questions, learning the history of the items and sometimes offering new insight on them.

Keiper said he brought items from the museum’s reference collections which are used to identify things brought to the museum. He also had items that were dug up on the Baldwin Block 12 years ago when the site was prepared for construction of the New College Institute building.

In addition, he showed a specimen that he uncovered on Friday.

Nolan displayed a Confederate rifle musket that he said had been repaired and modified by a Richmond Armory. He explained that in the first quarter of 1864, the Confederate military ran out of gun stock wood — walnut — so it halted all production of complete guns.

It continued to make the metal parts, which it inserted in Union soldiers’ weapons recovered on the battlefield, Nolan said.

Mervyn King had three fans from his collection. One that dated from around 1896, had blades on two sides and it ran off water, not electricity. Another, dated around 1920, was much larger and was powered by hot air from a kerosene burner. The third, an electric model that used batteries, dated to 1886, King said.

Virginia King displayed anniversary editions of the Martinsville Bulletin that documented the area’s history as well as the military uniform that had belonged to the late Ralph Lester. Lester, who helped found the modular home industry in this area, was an Army Air Force glider pilot in World War II, and there is a capital “G” in the

(See Treasures p. 7)

Saturday - August 17th

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Century of Change



Fieldale and Bassett high school basketball teams play at the Fieldale Recreation Center (right) in an undated photograph. Above is the recreation center today. A new sign and stage area highlight renovations being done through the Smith River Small Towns Business District Revitalization Project.

Fieldale

(cont. from page 1)

tract and support businesses and residents as Fieldale heads into its second century.

THE EARLY YEARS

According to National Register documents on file at the Bassett Historical Center, George Waller and his wife Anne first settled in the Fieldale area in 1760 near Fort Trial. Waller, a major in the military, later received several parcels of land along the Smith River and the entire Fieldale area to compensate for his military service. The area became known as Waller.

Part of Fieldale also originally was called Waller for the first black family to live in the area, according to “Fieldale: Its Black History,” which was co-sponsored by Meadow View A.M.E. Church and Shiloh Baptist Church.

It states that the Waller tract was about where Meadowview AME Church was located and included part of a valley and adjacent hillside along Jordan Creek (named in honor of Jordan Hairston) to its juncture with the Smith River.

At that time, Henry County was predominantly a tobacco farming area. But after the Civil War, several textile mills opened in the Martinsville area and nearby North Carolina. The Danville & Western and Norfolk & Western railroads built lines through Martinsville in the 1880s, and by the early 1900s manufacturing companies such as Bassett Furniture were created.

Marshall Field & Co., a Chicago-based department store, came to the region when it bought the former Carolina Woolen and Cotton Mill in Eden, N.C. In early 1916, Marshall Field representatives bought 25 parcels totaling 1,841 acres

in Henry County to build a mill, and a mill town, to produce quality towels for their store. The land was purchased from the Waller family heirs.

Fieldcrest Mills opened in 1919 with 333 employees. Newspaper articles decades later recounted how H.B. Hunter, who was hired as a carpenter to work in the new mill on Jan. 5, 1918, drove the first nail into the mill. He stayed on the mill’s payroll until 1951.

Also, many black workers who helped build the plant were hired by Marshall Field and remained in Waller, the churches’ history states.

Fieldale was considered a typical company town with three areas — a mill complex, business district and residential area. The 245,000-square-foot mill covered almost four acres. The mill’s spinning facilities, weaving department and bleachers were built in 1918-19, and a full-fashion silk hosiery mill building was added shortly after 1928. It closed in 1955 when nylon hosiery became more popular.

According to the National Register, four historic secondary resources remained from the mills in 2008. The lower mill contained a 1940s gatehouse and the circa 1940 Cotton Warehouse. The upper mill contained the circa 1919 water infiltration plant and the circa 1919 one-story painted brick Welder’s Shop.

The Fieldcrest Lodge was built in 1917 to house officials visiting the mills in the region. It was purchased in 1997, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and became a bed and breakfast.

About half the houses in the town were built circa 1920 and the rest a decade later. Marshall Field & Co.



built the one-story bungalow-style homes and rented them to workers for 25 cents per room per week. The homes were sold to employees in 1941 when company towns declined as cars and highways — and, as a result, workers’ relocations — became more common. Also, the federal government began to withhold contracts from companies that owned their employees’ houses.

Around 1920, the company also constructed two apartment buildings for unmarried and temporary employees. The Virginia Home on Field Avenue housed female workers until 1929 when Bessie Merriman took it over and accepted male borders. It operated until 1996. The other apartment building was the Fieldale Hotel on Brook Court, which later became Blue Ridge Apartments.

Around 1920, the business district along Marshall Way and Field Avenue included The Bank of Fieldale/Post Office; Fieldale Cafe; Commercial Building (drug store); former theater/drug store; and commercial building/Ramona’s Dress Shop/Wilson’s Grocery Store.

Two of the most prominent people associated with Fieldale’s history were J. Frank Wilson and S.S. Flythe.

Wilson came to Fieldale in 1919 to manage Fieldcrest Towel Mill production, a position he held for 27 years, and he also was the first president of the Bank of Fieldale, which was organized in 1922. A 1973 Martinsville Bulletin article, “Fieldale: A Town Built of Towels,” called Wilson “The Grand Old Man of Fieldale.” He was the only man ever to serve as chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and mayor of Martinsville, according to published reports.

According to the reports, Wilson recalled the Smith River flood of 1937 before Philpott Dam was built. Several feet of water covered the river corridor south of Bassett.

Fieldcrest towels that were to be shipped were damaged by the rising water but those that could be salvaged were laundered and resold as seconds. For three weeks, every laundry in the area was busy, some

as far away as Danville and Roanoke, according to published reports.

Flythe also came to Fieldale with Fieldcrest Mills and became president of the Bank of Fieldale.

B.L. Fisher managed the Franklin County Telephone Co. in Fieldale, which had 22 phones by 1926. That number rose to 40 by the time Lee Telephone took over service in Fieldale and most of Henry County by 1934.

A telephone directory from around 1930 listed numbers for commercial establishments including Fieldale Furniture and Hardware Co., Fieldale Mercantile Co., Fieldale Hotel, Fieldale Motor Co., Bruce-May Drug Co. and O.W. Harrell Store in Fieldale.

A 1930 Henry County manuscript census showed Fieldale with population of about 1,250 residents. The mills employed 447 people or 36 percent of the population.

THE MIDDLE YEARS

The mill’s influence was everywhere in the town. According to records, the company withheld employees’ pay to cover coal deliveries to their home; paid for a nurse and doctor to care for workers, and nurse Corinne Ferguson made home visits when employees missed work; paid for a Dr. Rucker to remove everyone’s tonsils; sponsored baseball and other sports teams; decorated a community Christmas tree every year; and provided scholarships to employees’ children, among other things.

Fieldcrest graded and paved roads on its property and arranged for financing of first stretch of road to be paved in Henry County between Martinsville and Fieldale.

Marshall Field & Co. paid to build two schools and a community center on the borders of the town’s business district. Fieldale Elementary School was constructed in 1924, with additions made in 1927 and 1935. The former Fieldale High School was built in 1941, and the community center was constructed in 1937 with the proceeds of the sale of the power plant to Appalachian Power Co.

In 1946, Fieldcrest Mill Inc. and residents paid

\$350,000 for a new water and sewage system. The Fieldale Sanitary District was one of the first established on a voluntary basis in the state, according to records. The district’s funds were given to Henry County in 2013.

Marshall Field also built the first Fieldale Baptist Church, later demolished, overlooking the mills from the top of Church Hill, according to the documents. The second Fieldale Baptist Church was constructed in 1955.

The pool opened in Fieldale in June 1956 and was one of the first in the area. Admission was 25 cents for community center members and 50 cents for non-members. The pools were restored and reopened in 2017. Around 1960, Fieldcrest Mills worked with residents of the black community to build a recreation center, pool, playground, picnic shelter, basketball courts and softball fields. Carver Road was improved, street lights were erected and Jordan Creek was rerouted to accommodate the pool, the churches’ history states. Harry Jones and Paris Staples managed the center when it opened in 1962, and Charles and Betty Wade later managed it. The center later closed because the town could not support two recreation centers.

The Rev. Wash Waller organized the first black church, a nondenominational communal church on what now is 10th Street. It later became a Methodist Church and was the forerunner of Meadow View AME Church.

The first black resident to own and operate a business in Fieldale was Pete Angland, the owner, partner and later proprietor of a general store.

By 1980, the town’s population was 1,190, only 60 fewer than in 1930.

THE LATER YEARS

Fieldcrest Mills became independent of Marshall Field & Co. in 1953 when it was sold to Fieldcrest Mills Inc., a new corporation formed by a group of eastern financiers. By 1976, Fieldcrest Mills, with headquarters in Eden, had about 12,000 employees in 25 plants in North Carolina, (See History p. 5)



The Fieldale area flooded several times before the Philpott Dam was constructed in the 1950s. Above are undated photos of some of those floods.

Snippets of history

Following are snippets of Fieldale history, people and places gleaned from records, books and articles at the Bassett Historical Center and from interviews:

- J. Alfred Stegall came to Fieldale with his family in 1916, three years before the Fieldcrest Mills plant opened. In a 1979 interview when he marked his 46th year as the town's law enforcement officer, Stegall said his first job in Fieldale was driving a horse-powered wagon for his carpenter-father when Stegall was 13 or 14. He was a pro baseball pitcher at one time and played for Fieldale's successful Bi-State team. He died in 1993 at the age of 87.
- The Bi-State baseball league was organized as a member of the National Association of Baseball Leagues in 1934. It was one of strongest and most compact Class D leagues in the country. Cities in the circuit were Martinsville, Bassett, Mayodan, Danville, Leaksville-Spray, Reidsville, South Boston (which replaced Fieldale) and Mt. Airy. The league began as a fast semi-pro loop in 1922 with six clubs, operated for two years and then disbanded. J. Frank Wilson was the league's first president in 1934. There also was a Tri-County League, organized from Henry, Patrick and Franklin counties. Joe Bell of Fieldale was president of that league.
- In a 1973 newspaper interview, Wilson recalled the first Sunday baseball game locally in which Fieldale played a St. Louis farm team from Greensboro. After the game the manager wired home to his boss that they "played ball in a town with a population of 2,000 and had a crowd of 3,000." Ballplayers were cited afterwards by law officers for playing on Sunday, but the charges were dismissed.
- Snowbird Mill, named because of its small 6-by 8-foot size, ground corn, oats and wheat for local residents. The water-powered mill was built by Winston Mullis, supposedly at a cost of about \$4.75, probably around late 1860s. According to published reports, Civil War Pvt. Peter F. Griggs, who died on May 2, 1921, was part owner and operator of the mill for more than 50 years. It also was reported that Peter Griggs got the mill from Mullis and after Grigg's death, Jimmy Mullis, Winston's grandson, bought the mill. It was thought to have operated from 1925 to 1945 by Jimmy Mullis.
- Fieldale High School created the Bill Rakes Award in memory of Billy Rakes, who attended Fieldale High School and Elon College. He died in a car accident. The award was given to the student who most exemplified his kind and selfless spirit.
- ^a The Fieldale High School newspaper was The Spark. Fieldcrest Mills' paper was The Whistle.
- Fieldale High School Principal Branch K. Rives received the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star from France for his service in World War II. He was a liaison between the American and French troops for six months in 1945. He later became Henry County school superintendent.
- Susan Adkins (1948-98) grew up in Fieldale. At the time of her death she was the head reference librarian at NASA's Technical Library in Hampton. The meeting room at the Bassett Historical Center is named in her honor.
- In the 1950s Leonard Setliff ran a Fieldale restaurant called "Sut's" that was known for open-faced roast pork sandwiches. Taft and Helen Gilley ran the T&H, a cafe in Fieldale. James Stultz, who was active in early stock car racing in Henry County, was the oldest child of Brice Stultz, a Fieldale grocer from the 1950s.
- Applachian Power Co. came to Fieldale in 1926, and at first it had two customers, Blue Ridge Tale of Henry and Valley Veneer of Bassett. In 1931 Fieldcrest Mills connected to Appalachian lines and by 1949, four counties were served by the utility.
- In a hollow across Carver Road, there was a combination store and apartments nicknamed The Shanty. Dances were held there every Saturday, according to a Fieldale history compiled by two area churches. "People enjoyed playing the piccolo and sometimes dancing to the music" of the Scales Band, the history stated. The band was made up of brothers Shug, Jim and Tom Scales. Also, "Baseball was the sport of this fair town and Saturday and Sunday afternoons were proof of it. There were games every weekend," according to the history.
- The Fieldale Rotary Club sponsored an annual Talent Show. On the eighth show held on April 26 1962, performers included Bobby Taylor, pantomime; Margaret Richards and Norris Trio, vocals; Diane Tilley and Donald Spencer, piano; and Betsy Rhett, ventriloquist. Karen Parsons, Baton routine; and Vicki DeShazo, dance. An advertisement in the show's program listed the Fieldale Insurance Agency telephone number as OR 3-3081.
- The Dam-Dam, an original musical in three acts, was presented May 15-16, 1959, at Fieldale High School. Books and lyrics were by Mary Lou Lacy; music was by Paul Zimmerman. The story took place in the summer of 1951 near Philpott Dam about the building of the dam. The cast included Linda Gore, Sherry Wood, Richard McBride, Bobby Copeland, Erma Sapp, David Jones, Larry Goss, Evelyn Wellborn, Peggy Barnes, Michael Hundley and Terry Martin.
- Teddy Compton, 81, a lifelong resident of Fieldale, said the town's first carpenter was Ben Hunter, and Dr. May owned first drug store. • The Fieldale Recreation Center — formerly the YMCA — was managed by Mr. Bell, Mr. Coxwell, Clarence (Stormy) Joyce, Coy Campbell, Curtis Martin, Jim Littletown, Buster Ferguson and others. Major league baseball players who played there included Enos Slaughter, Boots Poffenberger (Connie Mack), Ken Keltner, Phil Rizzuto, Randy Hundley and J.C. Martin.
- Jim Martin graduated from Fieldale High School and played pro baseball for nine years with the San Francisco Giants and Washington Senators.
- The Fieldale Raceway hosted two races around 1951-52. Chester Rakes and Lyle McAlexander owned track.



The trestle from the old iron bridge (above) across the Smith River in Fieldale now is featured in a nearby park.

History

(cont. from page 4)

Virginia, Georgia and Alabama. It had net sales of \$303 million and about 1,500 employees in Fieldale.

A decade later, Fieldcrest bought the Cannon Co. of North Carolina for \$250 million, creating Fieldcrest-Cannon Inc., the fifth largest publicly owned textile company. In 1997, Pillowtex Corp. of Kannapolis, N.C., bought Fieldcrest-Cannon for \$725 million. The next year, sales were up nearly 500 percent according to published reports.

By 2000, Pillowtex's fortunes changed and it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection that November after it defaulted on a \$650 million bank debt. It emerged from bankruptcy in May 2002 but reportedly lost \$27 million in seven months after that.

On July 30, 2003, it announced it would file for Chapter 11 again. That led to disposition of assets and the loss of nearly 8000 jobs, including 950 in Fielddale.

In the years that followed, the Henry County Public Service Authority installed water lines, the county improved the ballpark; and the Fieldale Heritage Festival was organized with an estimated 900 people present at its first celebration in 2006. The Henry County Public Service Authority installed water lines; the county improved the local ballpark; and the Fieldale Heritage Festival was organized with an estimated 900 people present at its first celebration in 2006.

In 2013, the Harvest Foundation organized the Smith River Small Towns Collaborative to develop a vision for the communities of Fieldale, Bassett, Stanleytown and Koehler. The collaborative created a map of “15 Magical Miles,” a list of events, heritage sites, recreation areas and destinations for dining, shopping and lodging. It also identified priorities for revitalization, curb appeal and amenities.

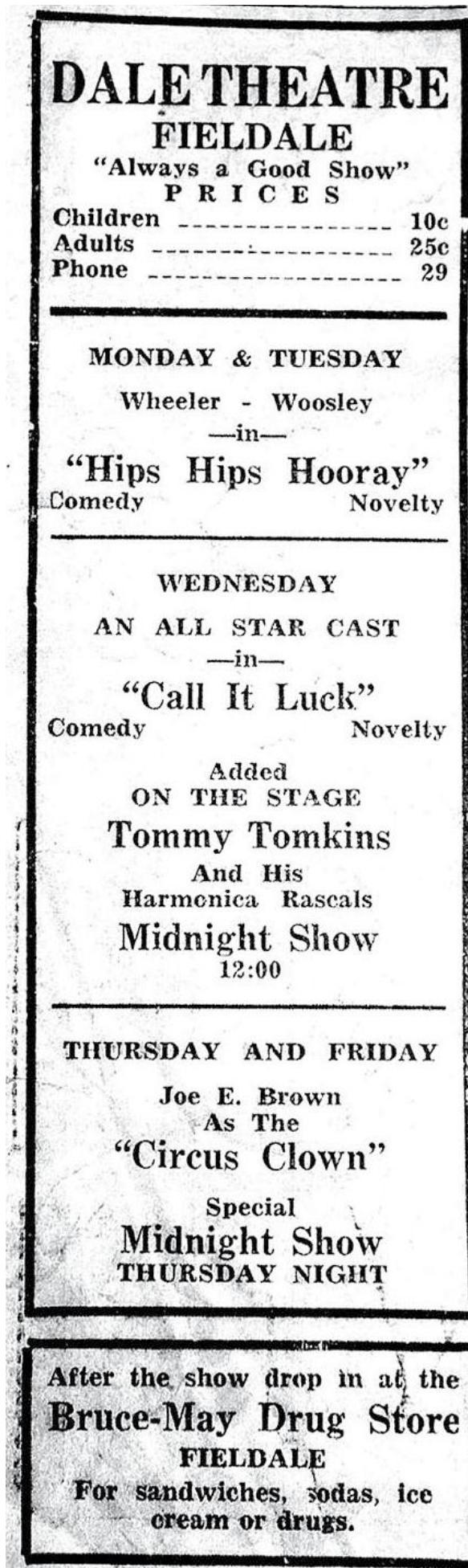
In Fieldale, the project focused on facade improvements in the business district and improvements to the Fieldale Recreation Center and grounds. Much of the first phase of that work has been accomplished, the pools at the center are open and use of the outdoor facilities has increased, officials have said.

Now, an Appalachian Regional Commission planning grant is being used to assess asbestos in the recreation center and possible uses for the interior of the building so it can generate revenue and become self-sustaining, according to Henry County officials.

Andrew Kahle, a member of the Fieldale Recreation Board, said recently that he believes the small towns collaborative “has been the best thing that happened to Fieldale since Fieldcrest closed. ... Without the collaborative getting involved, I don’t know where we would be now, at least in the downtown area. If they hadn’t gotten involved, I wonder” if the recreation center would look as good as it does.

He noted the satisfaction of seeing children headed to the pools and having pickup games on the basketball courts.

"It's a really good sight. If they're not playing ball, they might be getting in trouble," he added.



"Hips Hips Hooray," "Call it Luck" and "Circus Clown" were featured at the Dale Theatre in this advertisement.



Above: Branch K. Rives was principal of Fieldale High School and later became Henry County school superintendent.

Left: This Marshall Field & Co. employee identification card and Fieldcrest Mills padlock are among Fieldale memorabilia.

Compton

(cont. from page 1A)

1940s that shared a state championship title with a team from Clintwood. Both the Fieldale and Clintwood teams were undefeated but they never met on the court because of the bracket lineups. The Fieldale team included players such as Husky Hall, who went on to coach basketball at Martinsville High School; Billy Rakes; Robert Warrick and Jesse Joyce, Compton said.

All sports were popular then, he said, but not all sports were big. For instance, he remembered that Fieldale's Claude Padgett won the state championship in horseshoe pitching around 1950-51.

From around 1948 to 1960, several area companies fielded fast-pitch softball teams, Compton said. They represented companies including Fieldcrest, DuPont, Fontaine, Roy Stone Transfer, American of Martinsville and Morris Novelty.

Among the "awfully good softball pitchers" he recalled were Ronnie Donaldson, Buster Padgett, Paul Dean Nichols and Cullem Soots.

Compton graduated from high school in 1956 and went to Nashville (Tenn.) Auto Diesel College, graduating in 1957. He returned to Fieldale, was drafted into the Army and started basic training on his 24th birthday on Jan. 3, 1962. He never saw combat, instead serving much of his time in Germany.

After his discharge, Compton again returned to Fieldale on Nov. 15, 1964. A week later he was at the Texaco Service Station there waiting to use the phone when the person ahead of him opened the door and told him President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated.

"It was an awful sour note," Compton said, explaining that he had seen Kennedy only 45 days earlier during a military review in Germany. "Like him

or not, it was a terrible situation."

Compton had worked at Fieldcrest Mills "pushing the dope wagon" — a portable canteen that sold aspirin, Bromo Seltzer and similar items — for six months before he went to Nashville. His parents also worked at Fieldcrest for a combined 80 years, he said.

But Compton did not follow their lead. Several people encouraged him to apply at the DuPont plant in Martinsville instead. He was hired by Harry Daughtry in 1964, did jobs throughout the plant and was working in the control room when he retired in 1991.

In those days, when people found a job they were satisfied with, they stuck with it, Compton said. "Satisfaction means more than anything else," he said. "I wasn't tickled with my job but I was satisfied with it," and that included the people, pay and work.

When Compton was 12 the family moved to Kogertown in Fieldale. When he married Margaret Creasey, originally of Patrick County, he bought a house on the same street as his parents' home.

Teddy and Margaret had met in Martinsville — his second cousin married her sister — which was typical in those days, he said. "If I was going to get a date for Saturday or Wednesday night, I went to Martinsville," he said. "Girls from Martinsville married boys from Fieldale."

Margaret Compton went to Averett College after high school and then worked at Lee Telephone (later Centel) until she retired in 1993.

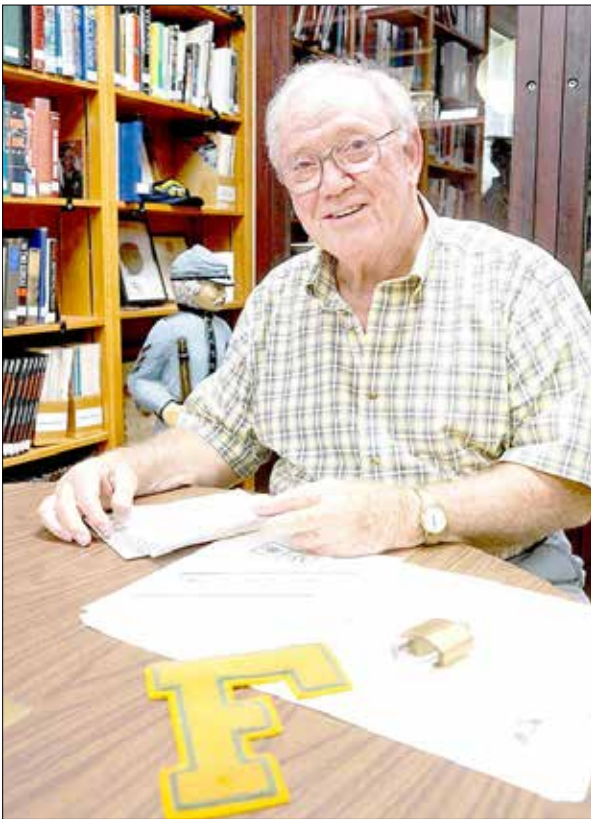
Compton said he believes Fieldcrest began to decline in the mid 1980s when it bought Cannon Co. of North Carolina and became Fieldcrest-Cannon Inc.

"(Fieldcrest's) Royal Velvet was the finest hand towel that had ever been assembled in the world. It was No. 1 anywhere you went. Cannon had an everyday wash cloth.

school, college and professional runners continue to aspire to.

Typically, runners experience the 1-mile run only as part of a track meet most often at a high school or college track team event.

This race will not be run on a standard 400-meter track but rather at a unique venue. Runners will negotiate approximately two laps around the Martinsville Speedway. Built in 1947, the track is a major stop on the NASCAR circuit, hosting the STP 500 and the First Data 500 Monster Energy Cup races.



Teddy Compton, a lifelong resident of Fieldale, looks over notes and memorabilia of the town at the Bassett Historical Center.

Every kitchen had one. It was a cheap product but good. Why should those two merge was always my question. It went downhill from there," Compton said.

Fewer than 20 years later, the company — then called Pillowtex — closed. Compton said he was "not really" surprised.

"It was kind of a washed out feeling. You knew if the mill wasn't there, the town would get very little support from all involved," Compton said.

The plant's closing affected everything — maintenance, the community center, schools, restaurants and so on, he said. Even though a lot of the people who worked at Pillowtex when it closed did not live in Fieldale, Compton said, the residents who did remain had to go elsewhere for jobs. The last major employers then and now are on the outskirts of the village — Appalachian Power and what now is Eastman, he pointed out.

And many of the residents have passed away or moved into retirement facilities. Compton said there were 36 people in his high school graduating class; nine are deceased. There probably are fewer than 100 people left in Fieldale who are 80 years of age or older, he added.

Compton noted that improvements to the Fieldale Recreation Center and swimming pools nearby have "livened it up a bit," but he is not optimistic that a major employer will move to the village.

Now, Compton spends much of his time volunteering at the Bassett Historical Center. He has some memorabilia from Fieldale's past, including an orange and green Fieldale High School "F" letter earned by his uncle, G.W. Merriam, and a padlock inscribed with "Fieldcrest."

He has found only one other Fieldale in the nation, located near Chicago where the home store of Marshall Field & Co. is situated. The store's founder and namesake was responsible for locating the Fieldcrest plant in Henry County and building the village.

The Illinois site, called the Fieldale Farm, was created so buyers of guns and other shooting devices at the Marshall Field & Co. store could try them out on a shooting range. The magazine, "Lucian Cary on Guns," reads, "At the Fieldale Farm near Chicago, a man can shoot pigeons or partridge, ducks or grouse in one afternoon. But he can't take them home to eat."

Short

(cont. from page 1A)

"leads are few and far between except when we have things like the Short ride that increase awareness" and bring attention to the case, Eanes said. The sheriff's office has an investigator assigned to the case and it "still is one the sheriff is passionate about working on and solving," as are the other officers in the department, he said, referring to Sheriff Lane Perry.

After the 2002 incident, Ray Reynolds, who lived near the Short home, organized a memorial bike/car ride to raise funds for Crimestoppers to use for a reward in the case.

Later, the fund became a scholarship for students at Bassett High School, which Jennifer would have attended. Reynolds said recently more than \$45,000 has been give out in more than 60 scholarships.

In the past, four scholarships of \$500 each were awarded. Now, two scholarships of \$750 will be presented, Reynolds said.

He expects about 250 motorcycles and vehicles will take part in the Aug. 10 ride. He said he knows of groups from Lynchburg, Danville and Winston-Salem, N.C., that are planning to take part, and he expects to see former local resident Larry Lackey, now of Concord, N.C., among the riders. Lackey has taken part in every ride, Reynolds added.

Sign up for the ride will begin at 10 a.m. at Victory Baptist Church off U.S. 220 in Fieldale. The fee is \$10 per person.

Participants will eat at noon before the ride begins at 1 p.m.

The entourage will travel on U.S. 220 South to the North Carolina state line. Riders will take Exit 135 and turn right at the light and then left on Dan Valley Road, left on River Road and left on Grogan Road.

The 35-mile ride will end at the Jennifer Short Bridge, near

where her remains were found.

Henry County School Superintendent Sandy Strayer is scheduled to be the guest speaker at the bridge. Traditionally, law enforcement officers from Henry County-Martinsville and Rockingham County also have made brief comments there.

In the past, riders have returned to Victory Baptist Church where food was available. But Reynolds said the schedule has been reversed this year so people can leave for home from the bridge.

Reynolds operates Rayzor's Edge Photography. Other sponsors include Bojangles, CKP (Cool Knobs and Pulls), State Farm insurance, Autos by Nelson.com, 24/7 Home Security, Queens Landing and Bryant Radio.

Also sponsoring the ride are Speed 365 by McMillon, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Ray Reynolds Construction, Vernon W. Peters & Sons, Victory Baptist Church, Crash Center, Fulcher Construction, T.L. Coleman Electrical, Cunningham Tire, Buford Boitnotte, Fieldale Cafe, O'Kelly's, Martinsville Family Medicine, Darden Tile, People's Save No. 9, Ace Hardware, West Window Corp., San Adkins Home Builders, Bassett Kiwanis, Subway, Sarver Cleaning Services, Community Fellowship Church, Los Nortenos, Roberts Best Way, Blue Ridge Mustang & Ford Club, The Spencer Group, Walmart Mayodan 3305, Brooks Septic & Portable Toilets, Pam's Florist, Community Fellowship, B.W. Wright Maintenance, Checkered Pig BBQ, Daniels Auto Glass, Stone Dynamics, B&B Trucking, S&K Office Supply, Victory Baptist Church, Jeff Gilbert, Debbie's Flooring, Cahill Real Estate, in memory of Tommie E. Wright and Laurel Park Tire & Auto.

The rain date for the ride is Sunday, Aug. 11. For more information, call Reynolds at 340-2000.

Speedway one-mile run salutes history of race track

The second running of the Martinsville Speedway Mile will be held Aug. 17 at the Martinsville Speedway.

This race is being presented by Miles in Martinsville, in partnership with Martinsville Speedway. It is a salute to the historical allure of the 1-mile run.

Most runners, along with the public, are familiar with the first sub 4-minute mile run by the late Sir Roger Bannister. On May 6, 1954, he ran a mile in 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds. That race, some 64 years ago, set a standard to which high

Runners will finish their race at the same checker board finish line used for auto races.

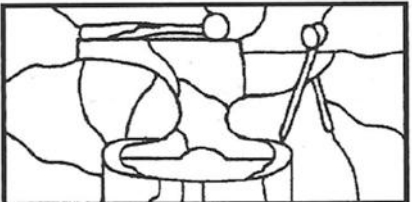
Runners enjoy the chance to test their optimum mile speed since a person's best time in the mile is a good predictor of how fast he or she can run longer road races with proper training. For example, based on several well-known running calculators, if you can run a 7:00 mile, you likely can run a

23:30-24:00 5K. If you can run a 6:00 mile, it would predict potential for a 20:00-21:00 5K.

The Aug. 17 race(s) at the speedway will be conducted in several categories. There will be a competitor heat for faster male and female runners, starting at 9 a.m. This will be followed by a runner heat for more moderate predicted finish times at 9:20 a.m. There also (See Speedway p. 13)

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Above, Kippy Cassell, director of operations at Piedmont Community Services, shows a rebuilt apartment in the Church Street building that burned in June 2018 (shown at right). The building is on schedule to receive tenants in October.

Burned apartment building being rebuilt, on tap to open this fall

The Piedmont Community Services (PCS) apartments that burned in June 2018 are on schedule to be ready for residents in October.

As of mid-July, 15 of the building's 33 units that were destroyed in the fire had been totally rebuilt to match their original floorplans. The fire destroyed everything but the exterior walls of those units, which were the first five on each of the building's three floors.

The other 18 units in the building at 303 E. Church St. had water, smoke and other damage. Like the other units, they were ready for painting, carpet and other finishing touches last month.

In addition, the roof had to be replaced where the units were destroyed and repaired elsewhere, a sprinkler system was added throughout the building, outside stairs and walkways were to be replaced and other work was either finished or nearly so.

The price tag for all the work is estimated at about \$2.5 million, according to Kippy Cassell, director of operations at PCS. That is covered by insurance, he and other staff members said in a recent interview.

The fire was caused by accidental unattended cooking, according to the PCS staff. No one was hurt in the

blaze but it displaced the building's 35 residents for more than a year.

Those residents were housed temporarily at the Dutch Inn. Greg Preston, executive director of PCS, said that was the only motel that PCS sought help from because of its large number of rooms and because it included the cost of meals in what it charged the agency.

It wasn't that other motels did not help, the staff said. "There was no need to go anywhere else," Cassell explained.

The motel's assistance was just one aspect of the community support that the PCS staff praises. "The community as a whole" — churches, clubs, individuals, families, agencies and other groups — pitched in to help on the first night and throughout the ordeal, Preston said.

The Red Cross was at the scene on the night of the fire, as were many members of the PCS staff; STEP and the Salvation Army both assisted; and restaurants donated meals, he said.

About half of the building's residents lost everything in the fire, and some still are recovering from that, the staff said. Preston added that Katie Whitlow, who works with individual and community relations with

PCS, was critical in overseeing and organizing the donations and other assistance.

The displaced residents were grateful and appreciative, said Carolyn Whiting, property manager for PCS. "Every day there was somebody who came up to us and thanked us," she said.

Preston and Cassell recalled how, on the night of the fire, the residents stood together like a family on a nearby hillside and watched the blaze. Then Preston opened the PCS office building adjacent to the apartments and gathered the residents there.

"They hugged us and thanked us for everything we did," he said.

All the residents have been offered units in the building, Preston said, and about a third plan to move back. Some of the others are happy where they are; others do not want to move again; and some have other reasons for wanting to stay put, Whiting said.

That will leave 11 or 12 vacant apartments, and PCS already has 28 applicants for the units. Cassell said applications will be considered as the occupancy date nears. Tenants do not have to be PCS clients, he added.

The displaced residents will plan to return "are very

excited. They want to come home," Whiting said.

And PCS is excited to get them back, Preston said, adding that an appreciation event will be held sometime after all the work is complete.

"We like having them (residents) here. It's almost like their own little community. They're a very close-knit group, and we're here to provide support," he said.

"A lot considered that it was their family," Cassell added.

Despite the damage and disruption, the extra work and the stress, the PCS staff said they learned valuable lessons from the fire.

One was the importance of housing to clients receiving behavioral health services, according to Sharon Beckman, clinical director at PCS.

Housing is not traditionally thought of as a behavioral health service, she said. But Beckman and the others said they realized that if people have stable housing, they can concentrate on their treatment. And if they are unsure of where they will live, their treatment suffers.

The staff said the General Assembly now is recognizing that as well and is starting to fund some programs to meet that need, the staff mem-

bers said. That may involve vouchers for housing, not necessarily operating housing facilities, they added.

Whitlow and Cassell also said the difficulty in finding apartments for some displaced residents revealed that some landlords do not want to rent to people PCS serves because they have had bad experiences in the past or some other reason. Whiting said PCS is trying to reassure them by providing wrap-up services, which Beckman described as having someone who coordinates all of a client's services and can be a contact if a problem arises.

Another lesson from the fire is how close-knit the Martinsville-Henry County community is and how quickly people respond to a need, Whiting said.

"I was grateful and humbled by that," she said. "It was amazing to see how Martinsville-Henry County came together to help the individuals we serve."

Preston added that the same is true for the PCS staff.

"From what I saw that evening, Piedmont Community Services is a family and people care regardless of the time of day or what day it is," he said.



Treasures

(cont. from page 3)

insignia on his uniform.

Lester flew missions from Australia to New Guinea, King said, adding that the engine-less planes carried troops, vehicles and other heavy equipment.

Martin, senior program director at the Homestead, brought items from the Reynolds' family home in Critz that people may not notice during tours of the site. There was a "mother rock" with fairy stones imbedded in it. The stones became popular good luck pieces for soldiers in World War II, she said.

She also displayed a darning egg. A sock was slid over the egg-shaped end of the tool so it could be darned, Martin said. She also showed two

bell flower glass pieces; a woman's spittoon; and a mourning broach with a lock of hair that had belonged to Mrs. A.D. Reynolds.

Stegall showed a flashlight once produced by the man for whom Collinsville is named, he said. Among other items he displayed were a 2009 photograph of the late Dr. John Bing with clips of his hair; a silver compact that belonged to Bing's mother, Adele Bing; a photograph of Frances Parker Turner, the first wife of "Cap'n Til" Lester, a prominent businessman who built the "wedding cake house" on Starling Avenue in Martinsville; and a law enforcement badge that belonged to the late Robert H. "Bob" Spilman, who headed Bassett Furniture and also was chairman of the

Port Authority in Norfolk. In that capacity, Spilman was considered a law officer, Stegall said.

He had a display of silver jewelry; two silver ladles, one of which was from San Francisco and the other was made by a company in Petersburg; and a small silver ashtray that a woman in the flapper era would have carried in her purse to use if she wanted to smoke.

All of his things "are part of history that need to be preserved," Stegall said.

Isom, who was introduced as a "history scholar," showed paper goods — programs from graduations and a beauty pageant from the 1950s; a paper from the Henry County Teachers Institute; a list of attendees and their grades from the

Fieldale Graded School (elementary school) from 1925-26; and a list of public school teachers from 1932. He also had old newspapers: the Martinsville Morning Post, a 1961 Martinsville Tribune and a 1928 Bassett Broadcaster.

To illustrate the lengths collectors will go to for unique items, Isom said he is going through trash bags to find invoices and statements from businesses that operated here from the 1930s to 1970s but no longer are operating. He also is looking for photographs and stories concerning Boy Scout history, he said.

Among the historical society's upcoming programs, it will partner with the Reynolds Homestead to hold a history and tour of Fairystone at 1 p.m. Sept. 1.

DeHart Dance Theatre

Dance Registration

Spencer Penn Centre
Spencer, VA

DeHart Dance Theatre

Saturday, July 20th
10:00 am - 1 :00 pm

Saturday, August 10th
10:00 am - 1 :00 pm

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For more information contact
Deana at 757-784-4495

DeHart Dance Theatre



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Genedge Alliance receives millions in grants

Genedge Alliance, based in Martinsville, has received two grants.

On July 29, U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine announced \$1,881,221 in federal funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s (DOC) National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership in Martinsville, also known as Genedge Alliance.

The grant will support the organization’s efforts to meet the changing needs of manufacturing in Virginia by helping small and mid-sized businesses develop new products and customers, expand into global markets, adopt new technology and support domestic production efforts.

“This grant makes an important investment in Virginia’s manufacturing industry. We’re excited to announce funding that can support the growth of good jobs and expansion of business in Virginia,” the senators said in a news release.

Also, Genedge recently received \$1.4 million to help small defense companies ensure they comply with the cyber security standards of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The grant, which was announced by Gov. Ralph Northam earlier in July, was part of \$3.2 million in federal funds awarded to support defense and community initiatives. Also included in the funding was \$1.5 million for the Maritime In-

dustrial Base Ecosystem initiative, which seeks to transform the shipbuilding and repair workforce and maritime training pipelines across the Hampton Roads region.

The Genedge funds were awarded by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) through its industry resilience program, according to a release from Northam’s office.

“Cyber threats are real and growing,” said Dr. Wayne Stilwell, chairman of the Board of Trustees of Genedge. “This grant will allow us to increase the cyber security capabilities for many small defense companies that are essential national security assets in critical supply chains.”

Genedge partnered with the governor’s office to apply for the funding, according to Bill Donohue, president and executive director of Genedge Alliance. That is typical of its business model, in which it identifies sectors needing services and then looks for investors to help reduce the cost of those services, he said.

Genedge began in 1994 under its legal name, the A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Its operating name was changed to Genedge Alliance eight or nine years ago in a rebranding move, Donohue said.

The agency essentially does consulting work, mainly with manufacturing, technology and engineer-

ing businesses, he said. It focuses on small- to medium-sized existing businesses in Virginia, “helping them to innovate, be more competitive and grow,” he said. Businesses have to bring out new products, services and offerings or else new “competition creeps in, margins become less attractive and a business struggles to generate the capital it needs to reinvest in itself.”

One example he gave involved services in the state’s coalfields that are diversifying into other markets, Donohue said.

“Coal won’t come back. We help them build capabilities go to into adjacent markets where their skill set is a good fit,” he added.

It also works with certified third-party providers who have specialty skills. “Some times we do the assessment, consulting and followup. In some cases we identify that a specific subject matter expert is needed. We pull that expert out of a prequalified group of third party providers,” and possibly assemble a team to help a client, he said.

Its 2018 annual report lists its projected service mix as follows: Supply chain engagement, 23 percent; technology acceleration, 23 percent; strategic innovation and growth, 21 percent; cyber security services, 13 percent; national network programs, 11 percent; and process improvement, 9 percent.

The agency is based in an office on Bridge Street in Martinsville and

has eight offices throughout Virginia. Locally, it has worked with Applied Felts, Drake Extrusion and other companies on subjects such as improving costs, introducing new products and certification of projects for their markets, Donohue said.

It also works with the economic development community, and a few years ago helped bring Starsprings, a Swedish bedding company, to Henry County, he said.

Genedge has 24 direct employees and expects to add five this year. It also is affiliated with the Manufacturing Technology Center based at the Wytheville Community College, which has another five employees, Donohue said.

It is part of a network of 51 manufacturing extension centers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico that all are affiliated with the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Genedge has affiliated with that institute since 1995-96, he said.

It is a component unit of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or a political subdivision, Donohue said. It does not report to any agency or cabinet member but is governed by an independent board that is appointed by the governor.

According to the 2018 annual report, the bulk of its funding, 39 percent, comes from contracted fees and 14 percent comes from state funds. It also receives federal funding and federal and other grants.

Group seeks to entice visitors to relocate to area

What started out as a few social meetings has morphed into a grassroots movement gaining traction throughout the community. The goal is simple — get people to move to Martinsville and Henry County. Dean Johnston, a founding member of the Move to Martinsville advisory group, said the movement began with a series of conversations on why Martinsville is not full.



Dean Johnston is vice president of the Move to Martinsville advisory group.

“Jim (Roberts) and I said we could spend a long time discussing why people aren’t moving to Martinsville or we can do something about it,” Johnston said. “There’s no one in the community who doesn’t say we don’t need more people in the church pews or more people contributing to nonprofits. We all know the need is there, but I don’t believe there’s ever been a collective movement to try and target this area.” Johnston said with Martinsville’s storied history, many people vowed they wouldn’t return after school because they didn’t want to work in textiles or furniture. Moving forward to 2019, he said in today’s economy with the use of technology, many people are free to be mobile and work from home.

“If you take away the general premise and assume Martinsville is a good place to live and raise a family but you don’t necessarily have to find the job here, why can’t we invite people to come?” Johnston asked.

Over the past year, Johnston and Roberts have worked to pull together an advisory group representing local government, nonprofit and private business leaders to determine what target audiences they can attract to the area.

Johnston said they look to target

aging millennials who are living in bigger cities but, with the prospect of starting families, they find themselves in congested communities. They also look to target younger military retirees who are working second careers that may not have residency requirements. Another opportunity for the group is to focus on leveraging the community’s proximity to the country’s fiber optic network.

“Our goal is to collaborate, not compete,” Johnston said. “We already have enough organizations in the area to accomplish most missions, but we looked very hard at our mission for this organization, which is to attract an active middle class to the area. There is no one in the community that has the singular, primary mission to go out and find those people and ask them to move here.”

Looking at progress on Interstate 73 and growth of the Piedmont Triad area, Johnston said it’s important for Martinsville to be positioned as a vibrant community to capitalize on that growth.

“When you’re looking for educated talent, they have access to it in the Triad,” he said. “There are at least eight or nine institutions of higher learning that offer four-year degrees in that area. With the build out of I-73 and the addition of the FedEx

hub at the (Piedmont Triad International) airport, we can attract some of that growth to our community. And I don’t know who to say thank you to, but the last green sign on I-73 coming out of the airport says Martinsville. It doesn’t say Eden, or Madison or Reidsville. It says Martinsville.”

Johnston estimates that the Move to Martinsville organization can get up and running with a modest investment of \$10,000, which has been secured. He said operations can continue for \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year.

“We do not want to compete for funding — there are enough annual giving campaigns in our community, and that money is best served to be with those organizations that make Martinsville a better place,” he said. “Our role is to pull it together and effectively push it out to an audience. And in today’s world of Facebook and Instagram, we believe it can be done on a fairly small budget.”

Most of the organization’s work will be done in a virtual environment, Johnston said. It plans to contract with people who are familiar with social media campaign development and implementation. A website is being created with the Move to Martinsville branding.

The initial advisory group includes Roberts, president; Johnston, vice president; and Lloyd Barber, Lee Prillaman, Dr. Angeline Godwin and Tory Shepherd. The group held an event to serve as an

introduction to the community on May 30 at Hamlet Vineyards with Violet Bell as musical guests. About 70 people were in attendance.

Johnston said there are many stakeholders already on board with the Move to Martinsville movement, including the Martinsville-Henry County Association of Realtors, whose members already sell the attributes of the area as they’re selling houses. He said he hopes in time, Move to Martinsville will be able to tell the story of its success through retail, real estate sales and tracking how newcomers relocate to the community

“I think we as a community have to believe that we can do this. We can get this right,” Johnston said. “We’ve done a remarkable job living through the trough of the demise of basic manufacturing. The basic infrastructure here is aging, but we still have a very good story to tell. And sometimes, it’s easier to tell it to someone who hasn’t lived it here than it is to convince people who have been here.”

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‘FLASHPOINTS’ exhibit puts focus on encaustic painting

New exhibits that focus on encaustic painting will be on display Aug. 3 through Oct. 5 at Piedmont Arts.

FLASHPOINTS: Material : Intent: Fused, features the work of Kristy Deetz, Reni Gower, Jane Nodine, and Daniella Woolf. These artists explore a range of materials and processes linked through craft and meaning. With a shared focus on encaustic (pigmented hot wax), FLASHPOINTS underscores where material and intent converse and fuse. FLASHPOINTS is curated by artist and retired Virginia Commonwealth University Professor Reni Gower.

Parts2 acts as an extension of decades of artist Ed Dolinger’s self-imposed creative constraints of composing in a square format while pursuing abstract expressions through

a variety of mixed media. All of the works presented in this exhibit are confined to a 12-inch square format, beginning as flat collages, assembled with magazine pages anchored with layers of beeswax.

Dolinger has been an active member of the Virginia art community for years. He is a former recipient of a painting fellowship from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and has been shown, collected and involved in public arts projects throughout the country.

Life, Love, Art: Works from the Collection of Judy and John Matthews will be on display in the museum’s Box Mezzanine Gallery and Lynwood Artists Gallery. In memory of the Matthews, longtime supporters and friends of Lynwood Artists and Piedmont Arts, this exhibit features works from the Matthews fam-



This painting is from the collection of John and Judy Matthews.

ily’s collection of contemporary art as well as original works by John Matthews.

An opening reception in honor of these exhibits will be held Friday, Aug. 2, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the museum. It is free to the public. Complimentary wine and light refreshments will be served. This reception is sponsored by Ann and John Austin, Eydie and Barry Greene,

Betsy and Jim Haskins, Barbara and Morgan Holland and Lynwood Artists. RSVP attendance to 632.3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org.

Piedmont Arts, a non-profit art museum, is located at 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville. Museum hours are Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

Donation to boost PHCC mobile lab, tiny house



Shown at the presentation of the donation are (from left) Jeff Koeler, PHCC’s coordinator of Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training; Brenell Thomas, PHCC’s Workforce Programs coordinator; April Haynes, regional vice president for the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia; Tiffani Underwood, director of the PHCC Foundation; and Rhonda Hodges, vice president for Workforce Economic and Community Development at PHCC.

An anonymous donation is helping Patrick Henry Community College give students better access and more project-based learning opportunities for high-demand technical career fields.

The Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia recently made a \$30,000 grant to the Patrick Henry Community College’s Foundation from an anonymous donor-advised fund. The college plans to use the money to fund its current construction trades tiny house project and a new advanced manufacturing mobile training lab.

“The foundation is proud to support PHCC in its training initiatives in developing a highly skilled workforce. The tiny house

and the advanced manufacturing mobile training lab will be wonderful assets in our community,” said April Haynes, regional vice president for the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia.

The training lab is a 38-foot-long, fifth-wheel trailer that will be multifunctional. PHCC can offer introductory training courses to K12 partners as well as customized training for employers needing quick, specialized training options for their workforce. The mobile lab also will be used as a community engagement center to increase the awareness and perception of the career options available locally in advanced manufacturing fields.

The mobile lab has been partially funded by the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund. Also, PHCC plans to use \$13,000 from the anonymous donation to further equip the lab with tools and supplies. The lab is set to launch this fall.

The remaining \$17,000 from this donation will be used for the construction trades tiny house project. In PHCC’s construction trades program, students work together to construct an entire tiny house.

This massive, multi-disciplinary effort started as a student project for Burr Fox’s carpentry class. Soon it will become a home complete with air conditioning, plumbing and electricity.

The grant will provide funding to purchase a flatbed trailer, materials and appliances to complete the house.

Once completed, PHCC hopes to sell the home to ensure the sustainability of the construction trades programs.

The construc-

tion trades program also is known as the National Council for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) credential program. Even though this program only began in 2018, the students enrolled have already earned 36 credentials in carpentry, HVAC or plumbing. All of these skills are in high demand in the Martinsville area.

“We are thrilled to have the extra funding we need to further these initiatives,” said Tiffani Underwood, director of PHCC’s Foundation. “Both the mobile lab and the tiny house project will serve to prepare students for well-paying jobs that are in high-demand locally. This kind of training is so needed in our area.”

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BIRD COMMUNITY

By BEN R. WILLIAMS

Dear birds,
I write today to request a cease-fire.

I will start at the beginning.

I’ve always considered myself an ally to the bird community. As a child, I was a fan of Big Bird, certainly one of the heavy hitters of your taxonomic class. I even watched his feature film “Follow that Bird,” in spite of the fact that it was a box office bomb and is surprisingly depressing for a movie starring Muppets.

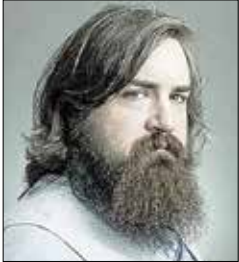
I have also long been a supporter of other famous birds, such as Daffy Duck and Opus the Penguin. It is because of the wise words of Woodsy Owl that I endeavor to give a hoot and not pollute.

Furthermore, for the last couple of years, I have provided my grandma with about 80 pounds of birdseed per month which she uses to feed the majority of the bird population of Patrick County. While I haven’t opened an aviary or built the world’s biggest birdbath, I feel it is safe to say that I have done more for birdkind than the average Joe.

However, about a year and a half ago, I was driving my Jeep down Fairystone Park Highway when a turkey vulture — one of the larger representatives of your kind — flew straight into my windshield and nearly passed through it, showering me and my freshly-wrapped Christmas presents with tiny pieces of glass.

At the time, I considered this a fluke. The turkey vulture had been eating a dead thing in the road and he tried to fly away when he saw my car, but some jerk was tailgating me and I couldn’t slam on the brakes. I remember thinking the vulture was going to make it right up until the moment when he assuredly didn’t. Really, I was as much at fault as the turkey vulture.

I have since sold the Jeep and bought a new vehicle which I love dearly (Note: When I say “new,” I mean that it was only eight years old when I bought it; for my generation, buying a car manufactured within the current decade is like buying a



hovercar from the future).

And then, on Friday, June 12, I was driving to work, minding my own business without a care in the world. I was within a quarter mile of the spot where, a year and a half earlier, the turkey vulture had demolished my wind-

shield, when I suddenly saw a flash from the corner of my eye. I had all of a half-second to react as the single largest wild turkey I have ever seen in my life kamikaze-d himself straight into my windshield.

Again, the windshield was destroyed and I was showered with broken glass. The wild turkey also managed to destroy a plastic trim piece above the windshield, which like all nondescript pieces of plastic on modern cars, was enormously and mysteriously expensive.

When one giant bird destroys my windshield, I consider it a twist of fate. When two giant birds destroy two different windshields on the exact same stretch of road, I am forced to arrive at the only rational conclusion: That all birds have declared war on me and are trying to kill me.

Listen, birds, I know I’m not perfect, but I try. I eat chicken on occasion, but I rarely touch turkey because I consider it the meat equivalent of an easy listening radio station. I have never gone hunting for any birds. When I first saw that video where Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Randy Johnson throws a fastball that explodes a dove, I tried really hard not to laugh.

While we differ in many respects, birds, I feel we are united on the important issues. For example, I like bread and I’m not a fan of cats. I also enjoy the hand gesture that’s named after your kind. We’re cut from the same cloth.

I beg of you, birds, to consider an armistice. Your side does not need to suffer any more pointless losses, and my side does not need to replace any more windshields.

Consider this letter my attempt to extend the olive branch. I understand your kind is a fan of that symbol.

Sincerely,
Ben R. Williams



Carlisle student Madelyn Craddock shows her mural in progress (left) and the finished work at right.

Carlisle student’s mural entered in Ocean Awareness Contest

Rising Carlisle senior Madelyn Craddock has brightened up the Peggy Ford Garden at Carlisle School while also bringing awareness to an important environmental cause.

This year students in Lindsay Favero's Spanish 4/5 class worked on an environmental awareness unit in which they spent time reading and interpreting information about environmental topics in Spanish.

They also learned about the Bow Seat Ocean Awareness contest to explain the effects of climate change through visual art, poetry, prose, music or film. The contest challenged students to create a piece about a coastal/marine species, place or system in 2019 that will be threatened, altered or lost due to climate change, and Craddock was immediately interested.

For her mural, she chose the Giant Pacific octopus, which is the world's largest octopus at

9.75 to 16 feet in size.

“Octopuses have always been one of my favorite animals since I was a kid. They're incredibly fascinating and intelligent creatures, and even from my earliest designs, an octopus was always present,” she said.

Craddock was inspired to create this particular design after seeing a picture of an octopus living in a plastic cup. She explained that because the octopus is the focal point of the design, the other fish had to complement it and still provide a color balance to the entire mural. For example, the Royal Blue tang is positioned to maintain a balance between blue, red and yellow.

She sketched out a draft, and with Carlisle School’s permission, the mural project took shape. Craddock also began working diligently to complete her submission.

“It was important to me that the sketch wasn't super de-

tailed so that I had room for spontaneity,” she said.

Craddock began painting on May 31 and spent seven days working on the mural, completing it on June 13. In addition to painting the mural, she applied glass gems to the surface to reflect light and add dimension to the work.

Submissions for the Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Contest closed on June 17 and winners will be announced in January. Scholarship awards ranging from \$100 to \$1,500 will be presented to winners in each category.

Craddock hopes the mural “will inspire people to be conscientious about the things they throw away and what they can do just in their own household to improve the situation with the pollution of the ocean. I'm also hoping to inspire people to find ways to express themselves through art.”

Positive

(cont. from page 1)

award, sparkling jewels and all.

The rewards are humorous but also valued by students as part of an initiative to teach, encourage and reward good behavior, rather than solely discipline students for bad behavior, according to school officials.

It is called Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), and this year it will be in place in all the county schools.

PBIS is more than a buzzword for a different approach to discipline. It is interactive, a topic of discussion each day in some schools, and students actively try to succeed to earn such things as class parties, prizes and more. It also provides the consistency of a system-wide process so students know what to expect and are set up for success from elementary school through high school, officials said.

“We treat behavior like academics,” said Renee Scott, principal at Rich Acres. Rather than assuming that students know how to behave, “we work with them to do positive behavior.”

The program was implemented in Laurel Park Middle School two years ago and one year ago at Magna Vista High School and Rich Acres Elementary School.

Participation was left up to each school and now, after seeing the successes at the other schools, the rest of the county schools will use PBIS in the new school year, said Monica Hatchett, director of communications and organizational learning for the county schools.

Scott said PBIS is a process, not a program. And while are similarities in the program at

all the schools, much of PBIS is devised at each school and tailored to its special needs, she said.

“What works at Laurel Park may not work at Rich Acres,” she added.

Jo Ellen Hylton, principal at Laurel Park, said each school has a team that is trained by the state and each school then develops a matrix. Across the top it lists places and situations where discipline may have been an issue at the school, and down the left side it lists the school’s core values. Appropriate student behaviors are listed where each column intersects.

Respect tops the values on the matrix of both schools.

At Rich Acres, the matrix lists places such as the cafeteria, hallways and playground across the top, and down the left side if lists values that also include responsibility, kindness, integrity, cooperation and self-control.

So in the cafeteria, students are taught to be respectful by using good manners, greeting the staff and having appropriate conversations. On the playground, they are taught be kind, apologize, include others in their play, help those who get hurt and stay safe.

“It puts pressure on kids to do better. They want to do better,” Scott said, and it teaches them how to do that. For example, a kindergartner does not understand what disrespect means, but with PBIS, the student is shown what respect may look like.

To illustrate, a Rich Acres school video on PBIS shows kindergartners greeting their classmates with handshakes as they enter the classroom.

to the community in an ever-increasing competitive market,” said Mark Heath, president and CEO of the EDC.

The Harvest Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 2002 by the sale of Memorial Hospital. The foundation seeks to invest in community initiatives that support economic development within Martinsville-Henry County.

To date, the foundation has put more than \$125 million in grants back into the community and has an annual grants budget of roughly \$10 million.

For more information about Harvest, go to www.theharvestfoundation.org.

Each class at Rich Acres holds a daily morning meeting to discuss the matrix.

At Laurel Park, the core values are respect, responsibility and productivity. Hylton said if a student creates a problem, there are consequences. But the teacher tries to follow up on that in the context of the school’s values, talking to the student about why he misbehaved and what he can do better the next time.

“It is important that students are taught expectations,” Hylton said. “A lot of time we assume they know what they’re supposed to do” but that is not always the case. So teachers now have lesson plans designed on the school’s matrix and they teach the expectations for each area at the beginning of the year, she said.

Rewards for positive behavior are a big part of PBIS. Students earn rewards — called “Bucs” at Rich Acres and stamps or points at Laural Park — and accumulate them for special treats or events.

Conversely, at Laurel Park, tickets are given for negative behaviors. If a student accumulates enough of them over a nine-week period, he cannot take part in the big reward, Hylton said.

At Rich Acres, in addition to the golden awards, the big rewards have included dance parties, inflatables, a fall festival and a movie and popcorn event.

At Laurel Park, rewards for eighth graders have included items from Magna Vista High School and bear its “Warrior” mascot. At one point attendance became a concern so a goal was set and when it was reached, a Valentine’s dance was held.

Such things “make kids want to go to school,” Scott said.

“You can see the change,” Hylton added. “Students really want to work for the big reward.”

The process is constantly being reevaluated and tweaked as needed, Hylton said. For example, this year, Laurel Park will implement the morning meetings that have been held at Rich Acres. Laurel Park also will move to a new level in the PBIS process in which it will work to devise strategies for students needing extra help or approaches.

Scott added that the process is rewarding. “It’s nice to hear how mannerly our students are,” she said, adding that the teachers and staff are proud of the school’s strong program.

School calendars

HENRY COUNTY

- Aug. 12, official opening
- Aug. 30, interim reports (high school)
- Sept. 2, Labor Day holiday
- Sept. 12, interim reports (middle and elementary schools)
- Sept. 23, end of first six-week grading period (high schools)
- Sept. 27, report cards sent home (high schools)
- Oct. 14, end of first nine-week grading period (middle/elementary schools)
- Oct. 14, interim reports (high schools)
- Oct. 18 report cards sent home (middle/elementary schools)
- Nov. 4, end of second six-week grading period (high schools)
- Nov. 8, report cards sent home (high schools)
- Nov. 15, interim reports (middle/elementary schools)
- Nov. 26, interim reports (high schools)
- Nov. 27-29, fall break
- Dec. 20, end of first semester/third six weeks/second nine weeks
- Dec. 20-Jan. 3, winter break
- Jan. 6, school reopens for students
- Jan. 8, report cards sent home (all schools)
- Jan. 20, Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
- Jan. 27, interim reports (high school)
- Feb. 6, interim reports (middle/elementary schools)
- Feb. 14, end of fourth six-week grading period (high schools)
- Feb. 21, report cards sent home (high school)
- March 10, end of third nine-weeks grading period (middle/elementary schools)
- March 10, interim reports (high school)
- March 16, report cards sent home (middle/elementary schools)
- March 31, end of fifth six-week grading period (high schools)
- April 3, report cards sent home (high schools)
- April 6-13, spring break
- April 17, interim reports (middle/elementary schools)
- April 29, interim reports (high schools)
- May 20, end of second semester/sixth six weeks/ fourth nine weeks
- Graduation: May 22 at Magna Vista High School; May 23 at Bassett High School.
- Early dismissal dates (Schools dismiss three hours early): September 18, December 20 and May 20
- Inclement weather early dismissal. Schools will be dismissed in the following order: Elementary schools first, middle schools second and high schools last. Times will be announced via local media outlets.
- Makeup days. (The order of make up days is determined at the discretion of the superintendent): Dec. 20 (to become full day for students); Jan. 2,3; Feb. 17; April 6-9; April 10 (with school board approval); April 13 (with school board approval); May 20 (to become full day for students); May 21, 22.
- Holidays. Ten-month employees: Sept. 2; Nov. 27, 28, 29; Dec. 20-31; Jan. 1; Jan. 20; April 6-10, 13; May 25. Eleven- and 12-month employees: July 4, 5; Sept. 2; Nov. 28, 29; Dec. 24, 25, 31; Jan. 1; Jan. 20; April 10, 13; May 25.

MARTINSVILLE

- Aug. 5, open house at all schools
- Aug. 2, convocation
- Aug. 7, first day of school
- Sept. 2, Labor Day holiday
- Sept. 18, two-hour early dismissal/collaborative planning
- Oct. 9, End of first nine weeks
- Oct. 16, two-hour early dismissal/collaborative planning
- Oct. 17, parent conferences/home visits
- Nov. 4, Student Exhibition of Learning (tentative)
- Nov. 5, teacher workday
- Nov. 27-29, Thanksgiving holiday
- Dec. 18, End of second nine weeks, end of first semester, two-hour early dismissal.
- Dec. 19-31, winter break
- Jan. 2, teacher professional day/staff development
- Jan. 3, teacher workday
- Jan. 6, classes resume
- Jan. 20, Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
- Feb. 5, two-hour early dismissal; parent conferences/home visits
- Feb. 17, student holiday/teacher professional day
- March 10, end of third nine weeks, two-hour early dismissal
- April 6-10, spring break
- April 13, student and staff holiday
- May 19, Student Exhibition of Learning (tentative)
- May 20, last day of school/two-hour early dismissal
- May 21-22, teacher workdays
- May 23, Martinsville High School graduation
- Makeup days: De. 19, 20; Feb. 5, 17; March 10; April 6-10, 13, as designated.

CARLISLE SCHOOL

- Aug. 19, orientation, noon to 6 p.m.
- Aug. 20, first day of school
- Sept. 2, Labor Day; no school
- Sept. 18, parent/teacher conferences, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. No school for students.
- Oct. 14, long fall weekend; no school
- Oct. 16, end of grading period 1
- Nov. 25-29, Thanksgiving break; no school
- Dec. 16-20, midterm exams (Upper School)
- Dec. 19, end of grading period 2
- Dec. 20-Jan. 3, winter break; no school
- Jan. 20, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday; no school
- Feb. 17, long winter weekend; no school for students. Professional development for teachers.
- March 16, end of grading period 3
- March 23-27, spring break
- April 13, Easter Monday; no school
- April 24, last day on campus for seniors
- May 14-20, final exams
- May 18, preschool closing
- May 21, Upper School closing ceremony
- May 22, end of the grading period
- May 22, commencement

‘Homework gap’ presents challenges for area schools

A large majority of Henry County students — but not all — have access to the internet at home for homework, research and studies.

Roughly 87 percent of the county’s students have internet access at home other than on a cell phone, according to a survey taken by the school system. However, Monica Hatchett, director of communications and organizational learning for the schools, said the survey responses were given by students and parents and could not be verified.

“I would like to say it doesn’t (have an impact) but obviously it does” when students cannot go online outside of school for things such as interactive assignments, Hatchett said.

In Martinsville, the problem generally is with the cost of having internet service at home, not availability of the service, according to Steve Tatum, director of technology for the Martinsville Public Schools. But, he added, a few companies offer lower cost residential internet for households with kindergarten through 12th grade students.

The situation is called the “homework gap,” according to the Associated Press (AP). Some students who routinely work with the internet at school cannot do so at home because of gaps in service in some areas and, for some families, the cost of service, the AP reported. Students with home internet consistently score higher in reading, math and science, according to the AP, but Hatchett said that has not been found to be the case here.

Tatum said he recently attended a conference in Richmond where “digital equity” was discussed. He learned of a study being conducted now on the impact on students who do not have internet at home. So there is no data on the topic yet, but it is a concern, he said.

Henry County’s estimate of 13 percent of students without internet at home compares favorably with the national numbers. An estimated 18 percent of students nationwide do not have access to broadband internet at home, the AP determined in an analysis of census data and reported recently. The AP also reported that an estimated 17 percent of students, or nearly 3 million youth, lack access to computers at home.

Local schools, like most nationwide, provide access to computers, laptops or iPads to essentially all students, according to the AP, Hatchett and Tatum. Hatchett praised the Henry County government, and County Administrator Tim Hall in particular, for supporting that effort.

Typically, Henry County students in kindergarten and first grade do not take their devices home, but other students can, Hatchett said. Also, she said some parents prefer that their students only use the devices at school.

In Martinsville, there are sets

of computers in all classrooms in grades 3 through 12, Tatum said. “This year we are moving toward issuing devices to students to take home” in grades 9 through 12, he added.

In the city’s kindergartens through second grade classes there are fewer computers needed for the curriculum, Tatum said. Those classes average five computers to serve about 15 to 22 students, he said.

The internet is not essential but it does enhance learning, Hatchett said.

“We could still teach math without it. We could still teach literature without it. We could still do our jobs without it,” she said. “Sometimes it goes down so we have to teach without it.”

However, the internet increases the resources available to teachers and students, helps educators engage students and “makes learning more meaningful,” Hatchett said.

In addition, “When they leave school and toss their (graduation) cap in the air, they will be going where they need to know how to use the internet,” she said.

Tatum agreed, saying today’s graduates need to be computer and digitally literate but they can gain those skills at school even if they do not have internet at home.

Hatchett said the county schools have several approaches to help remedy the “homework gap.”

First, students can use paper copies of material if needed.

Second, some of the schools have mi-fi equipment that students can check out. Mi-fi devices provide internet access even when there is no electrical service, she said. The county school system is seeking to add more mi-fi devices each year, she added.

Third, some schools offer wi-fi access for visitors when the schools are open for other activities, such as basketball games. Some hold internet nights or open library nights when families can use the service, Hatchett said.

Tatum said the city schools have not done that but “certainly it’s something we could look at and possibly should look at.”

The county school system’s “big dream,” Hatchett said, is to have a bus equipped with wireless internet that homes could link to when the bus was parked in their neighborhood. However, the expenses of a bus and the equipment make the idea out of reach, she said.

There also has been consideration of creating a map of places in the community with public internet access, such as restaurants and libraries. But Hatchett said that would take a lot of research and time to compile.

Tatum also said most students already know of those places where free wi-fi service is available.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) also is review-

(See Gap p. 15)

Serenity Cottage true to its name for PCS

By Ginny Wray

The Serenity Cottage was named by the women who live there. It is a place that is safe, a refuge, and it mirrors the Serenity Prayer used in self-help meetings the women attend.

The cottage is home to four area women who are in Piedmont Community Services’ (PCS) substance abuse disorder program. It is the first home of its kind for women in this area, according to Greg Preston, executive director of the PCS board. Men are served at The Landing residential facility.

The Serenity Cottage opened in Martinsville — the exact location is not being disclosed for security reasons — in July 2018 after a fire at a PCS apartment building displaced numerous residents, including those units that were designated for an intensive outpatient treatment program, according to Sharon Beckman, clinical director for Piedmont Community Services.

To accommodate three women in that program, PCS used \$80,000 from a Harvest Foundation grant to renovate, upgrade and furnish the four-bedroom, two full bath brick home that became the cottage, according to Preston and other PCS staff.

The cottage now is full with the four women residents. Their residency there will be evaluated when repairs to the apartments are done, probably in September, Preston said.

Preston; Beckman; Lisa Smith, manager of the agency’s Community Recovery Program; and Carolyn Faulkner, substance abuse disorder services coordinator, gathered recently to discuss the Serenity Cottage and its role in providing residential treatment for women.

Women with substance abuse disorder are referred to PCS by the court or Department of Social Services, and some are self-referred, Preston said. Before Serenity Cottage opened, PCS tried to find housing for them or they were returned to their original housing, he added.

The women go through an initial phase of treatment that generally lasts six months to a year and includes developing life and job readiness skills, recovery support network and more, the staff said.

That is followed by a recovery residence phase which generally takes another 18 months, they said. It involves sustained time free of drugs or alcohol and becoming financially able to pay rent, they said.

They are treated through PCS. Treatment includes two peer recovery support specialists who are part of the three-person staff at the cottage.

None of the women is able to work yet, they said. When they are, they will be referred to PCS’ Community Recovery Program for assistance.

CRP uses a holistic approach, said Lisa Smith, manager of Community Recovery Program.

“We look at the whole person and see what we can do to restore a person who appears to be broken,” she said.

For instance, “some people think their housing is fine because they are used to chaos and confusion,” she said. When they are removed from that,

“we can start putting the puzzle together (for recovery). ... We look at all the barriers that cause the person to be broken.”

Services also may include parenting classes, Smith said. Children may visit their mothers at Serenity Cottage, and Beckman said children probably are the most motivating factor for women to change.

PCS also partners with other services and agencies to serve the women, such as the United Way’s Bridges Out of Poverty program to combat generational poverty and the Cooperative Extension service to teach nutrition, Beckman said. Financial responsibility also is covered.

There are success stories, Beckman said.

“People do get better. We have seen women come through our services and get jobs and go on to have careers in technical fields. We’ve seen women get their children back and improve their relationships with other family members” as well as their health and self-esteem, she said.

Some even go on to mentor others coming into the program, she added.

Serenity Cottage is PCS’s third residential facility in this area for the substance abuse disorder program, Preston said, adding that is is “not nearly enough.”

Beckman added that substance abuse disorder prevention and treatment primarily are funded with a federal block grant.

The need for such services is growing, Preston said.

“The economy has improved but three generations have experienced systemic unemployment, poverty and all the issues that go along with it,” Beckman said.

Alcohol abuse is common, and the opioid epidemic gets a lot of attention, the staff said, although they added that physicians are prescribing fewer opioids now. However, that has resulted in increased heroin use, they said.

Methamphetamines also are used a lot and while they do not tend to be lethal, they affect people’s lives through aggressive behavior and mental and physical health issues, they said. Methamphetamines are powerful, highly addictive stimulants that affect the central nervous system, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse’s website.

One way PCS has expanded its substance abuse disorder services is with peer providers, Beckman said. PCS has 10 people who are either certified as peer providers or in the process of becoming trained and certified by the state Board of Counseling, the staff said.

The peers give abusers hope that they can overcome their problems and serve as role models on how to get the most out of treatment, how to advocate for one’s self, how to develop a road map for recovery and more, Beckman and the others said.

Faulkner described the peer providers — who are paid employees of PCS — as the “warm hand” offered to abusers when they come to the agency, are assessed and determined to need substance abuse disorder services.

Mentor

(cont. from page 1)

That is why Clerc said she especially is pleased that she will be paired with a mentor who also teaches in the special education program at Martinsville Middle School.

Clerc is one of 14 teachers who are new to the city schools this fall. Some, like Clerc, have teaching experience with another school system; some may be new graduates teaching for the first time.

Every one of them is assigned a mentor they can turn to with questions or concerns or when they need support. Mentors’ help is available for up to three years. The state requires school divisions to have a mentorship program, but how it is implemented is up to each division. In the Martinsville Schools, it is a multi-layer system that provides backups for the backups.

Dr. Tamra Vaughan, who oversees the mentoring program for the city schools, said mentors are chosen by school principals to match their subject area with that of the new teacher. The new teacher and

mentor work at the same school whenever possible.

Mentors must have at least three years of experience and a track record of good teaching, she added.

They undergo professional development five times a year on topics such as how to observe, how to provide support, how to communicate effectively and how to develop relationships with children, Vaughan said.

“Any time a teacher walks into a classroom the first time, it’s overwhelming. We try to take care of that” by helping teachers get to know their new school, the people and procedures, she said. That way, “you’re ready to say this is how we do business in this classroom” from day one.

Teachers and mentors meet for at least 30 minutes a week. Vaughan said they talk about something the teacher may be struggling with, something that went well or possibly something for which they need a strategy. Those meetings are held during the school day, and other “quick meetings” can be held if needed, she said.

Teachers coming straight

from college generally are prepared for instruction, but each school division does things differently, Vaughan said. That is why the city schools have curriculum assistance and grade level support, she said.

Also, new graduates generally have had little classroom management experience, Vaughan said, adding that involves things such as how to keep students engaged.

Building relationships with students is critical, Vaughan said. If a relationship exists, children are more willing to learn and work with the teacher, regardless of the grade, she said.

The school system also has lead mentors — one at each elementary school and two each at Martinsville Middle School and Martinsville High School — who can help a new teacher if needed, Vaughan said.

Once a month, the new teachers meet with Vaughan to study a particular book that is being read and discussed division-wide, hold professional development in a particular area of instruction or discuss some other topic. Often, Vaughan said, the

meetings focus on building relationships with students and classroom management.

Clerc and two other teachers who are new to the city schools this year all said they welcome the support evident throughout the school system and their mentors in particular.

“Coming from out of state, I’m impressed with what I’ve seen so far with the new teacher program,” Clerc said, adding that she came from a smaller school system with a less-extensive support program.

Shannon McGuirk, who will teach kindergarten at Albert Harris Elementary School this fall, previously taught with Head Start and with the Danville Schools. She said she has never experienced the level of teacher support she has found in Martinsville.

At a school division breakfast for new teachers held that morning, McGuirk said there were teachers who had 40 years with the division. “They said, ‘Just call,’” if she needed help, she said.

“It makes me feel I can be successful,” she added.

Nisamar Sechrist Barrera

was a tutor for 10 years with the English as a Second Language (ESL) program in the Henry County Schools. She left tutoring for 18 months while she got her degree from Longwood University at the New College Institute in Martinsville, and now she will teach in the ESL program at Albert Harris Elementary.

She previously worked with the woman who will be her mentor and whose place she will take at Albert Harris. The mentor knows the changes that occurred in the ESL program while Barrera was away from it and she now can share that material.

“She’s been there for all those things and can explain them to me. She knows the kids and families, and that helps me as well,” Barrera said.

All three women said they would consider being mentors when they become qualified to help other new teachers.

Vaughan added that mentors receive a stipend because they sometimes have meetings after school and they are “pretty much on call” all the time.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
(The following information is from visitmartinsville.com, the website of the Tourism Office of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp., and contributed items. See visitmartinsville.com for more information on these and other events. Also, events held more than once a month are listed each time but described only on the first event of the month, and activities at the Blue Ridge Library in Martinsville are in a separate calendar in this edition.)

- AUG. 2**
- Fido’s Finds fifth anniversary and basement sale, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 133 E. Main St., Martinsville. All proceeds benefit the SPCA. For more information, call the SPCA, 638-7297, or Fido’s Finds, 656-1101.
 - Opening reception for FLASHPOINTS, a new exhibit at Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville; 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free.
 - Movie in the Library at Spencer-Penn Centre; 6:30 p.m. Pizza, drink and popcorn available for \$3. This is sponsored by Matthew Penn Dry-wall.
 - Fast Fridays at Martinsville Speedway, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For \$20, fans get a dozen laps around the speedway behind a pace car at speeds of up to 65 miles per hour. No motorcycles permitted on the track. For more information, call 956-7200.
 - Ride ’N Dine on the Dick & Willie Trail, sponsored by the Henry County Bike Club, 9:30 a.m. Each week cyclists meet at the Liberty Street access point of the trail to ride and have lunch at a local eatery. A different lunch spot is chosen each week. Call Marti at 358-1312 for more information. Rides are year-round but are canceled if it is raining.

- AUG. 3**
- Piedmont Arts exhibits through Oct. 5: FLASHPOINTS; Part 2, Ed Dollinger; Life, Love, Art: Works from the collection of Judy and John Matthews.
 - Fido’s Finds fifth anniversary and basement sale, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 133 E. Main St., Martinsville. All proceeds benefit the SPCA. For more information, call the SPCA, 638-7297, or Fido’s Finds, 656-1101. New Hope Church of the Brethren fundraiser meal, 4-7 p.m. Dine-in or carry-out; \$8 per plate. The menu includes barbecue chicken, green beans, potato salad, slaw, roll and dessert All proceeds will help Zion’s Children Orphanage in Mawauj, Haiti. For more information, call (276) 930-2121 or (276) 629-4862.

- AUG. 4**
- Mountain Bike Ride at Mountain Laurel Trails, 361 Mountain Laurel Trail, Ridgeway, at 2 p.m. every Sunday. For more information, call 340-9144 or 618-0343. Check the club’s website and Facebook pages for possible location changes.

- AUG. 5**
- Open computer lab every Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Spencer-Penn Centre. High speed internet access will be available.

- AUG. 6**
- Author A.D. Hopkins will do a reading and book signing to launch the national book tour for “The Boys Who Woke Up Early” from 10 a.m. to noon at the Bassett Historical Center, 3964 Fairystone Park Highway, Bassett. This is the first novel by Hopkins, who has worked for newspapers in Virginia, North Carolina and Las Vegas. For more information, call 629-9191.

- AUG. 7**
- Henry County Bike Club variety ride

on the Smith River Trail System. Call 618-0343 or check the bike club’s Facebook page for ride locations and times.

- AUG. 8**
- Second Thursdays, 5-8 p.m., sponsored by Martinsville Uptown to encourage residents to get to know the uptown businesses. Many stores will extend their hours for the event; many restaurants will offer specials.
 - Throwback Thursday Movies at the Rives Theatre, 215 E. Church St., Martinsville, featuring “Sweet Charity”; sponsored by the theater and VisitMartinsville. Movies begin at 7 p.m.; admission \$5.
 - Classes and groups at Spencer-Penn Centre, 475 Spencer-Penn Road. To sign up or for more information, call 957-5757:
 - Chair aerobics, 11:30 a.m.; sponsored by the M/HC Coalition for Health & Wellness and taught by Paula Battle.
 - Martial Arts classes, 6 p.m., taught by Sifu Kristian Gordon. All ages and all fitness and experience levels welcome. Monthly fee: \$40 for Spencer-Penn members, \$65 for non-members.
 - Aerobic exercise class, 6:30 p.m.; sponsored by the M/HC Coalition for Health & Wellness and taught by Anita Hooker.

- AUG. 9**
- Ride ’N Dine on the Dick & Willie Trail, sponsored by the Henry County Bike Club, 9:30 a.m. Each week cyclists meet at the Liberty Street access point of the trail to ride and have lunch at a local eatery. A different lunch spot is chosen each week. Call Marti at 358-1312 for more information. Rides are year-round but are canceled if it is raining.
 - Spencer-Penn Centre Music Night of bluegrass music, open mic 5:30 p.m., followed by The Shelton Brothers and Hubert Lawson and the Bluegrass Country Boys. Concessions available. Donation: \$5. Call 957-5757.

- AUG. 10**
- Smith River Fest, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex, 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton. Activities include paddling, 4.8-mile river race, 5K Mud Run, vendor booths, children’s activities, petting zoo, music and more.
 - Jerry Garcia Cover Band Band will perform at Pop’s Farm, presented by Arts at the Rives and sponsored by Sovah Health. Gates open to all camping vehicles at 4 p.m. and to non-campers at 7 p.m. The band will perform around 9 p.m. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$17 at the gate. Camping is \$10 per vehicle for tent campers and \$25 per RV or low-behind camper. Food truck will be on site. No outside alcohol allowed. Concertgoers may bring blankets, lawn chairs, non-alcoholic drinks and food into the venue.
 - Pickers and Fiddlers Bluegrass Gospel & Mountain Music Songfest, 10 a.m. to noon at Pocahontas Bassett Baptist Church, 120 Old Bassett Heights Road, Bassett. This is held the second Saturday or each month; bring instruments to join in. Free; refreshments provided.

- AUG. 11**
- Barn quilt class at Spencer-Penn Centre, 1 p.m. Contact the center office, check Facebook or email Susan Sabin at spc.susan@yahoo.com for details. Spots will be give on a first-paid, first-served basis.
 - Henry County Bike Club’s Sunday Road Ride, 2 p.m. starting at the Ridgeway Library. For more information, call 618-0343.
 - Mountain Bike Ride at Mountain

Laurel Trails, 361 Mountain Laurel Trail, Ridgeway, at 2 p.m. every Sunday.

- AUG. 12**
- Open computer lab every Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Spencer-Penn Centre. High speed internet access will be available.

- AUG. 13**
- Artspiration Senior Studio offers self-guided art studio time for seniors; 10 a.m. to noon at Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave. Free to members; \$5 for non-members.

- AUG. 14**
- Henry County Bike Club variety ride on the Smith River Trail System. Call 618-0343 or check the bike club’s Facebook page for ride locations and times.

- AUG. 15**
- “August: Osage County,” 7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.
 - Classes and groups at Spencer-Penn Centre. Call 957-5757:
 - Chair aerobics, 11:30 a.m.
 - Martial Arts classes, 6 p.m.
 - Aerobic exercise class, 6:30 p.m.
 - Book Club, 3 p.m. at Spencer-Penn Centre. This month’s title is “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens.

- AUG. 16**
- TGIF Summer Outdoor Concert Series featuring Pizazz, 7-10:30 p.m.; admission \$7. For more information, call 734-5326.
 - “August: Osage County,” 7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.
 - Ride ’N Dine on the Dick & Willie Trail, sponsored by the Henry County Bike Club, 9:30 a.m.

- AUG. 17**
- Martinsville Speedway Mile, a 1-mile run consisting of two laps around the speedway in Ridgeway. There will be a competition heat for faster runners, runner heat for those with a slower pace and a non-competitive one-mile walk; 9 a.m. to noon. Fees vary from \$15to \$25. For more information, call Brad Kinkema at 632-6427 or Joe Philpott at 252-2011.
 - Basket-making class at Spencer-Penn Centre, 9:q15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$25-\$40 depending on the basket. Call 957-1521 or 957-5757 to register.
 - Encaustic Art Family Day, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave.; free. Inspired by the museum’s current exhibit, FLASHPOINTS, children can create an encaustic (hot wax) painting with special guest instructors. Complimentary snacks will be provided. All ages are welcome.
 - Bassett Hwy 57 Cruise-In, based at the Bassett Furniture headquarters, 3525 Fairystone Park Highway; 4-8 p.m.; free. Free popcorn; music; food court; 50-50; door prices for participants.
 - “August: Osage County,” 7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.

- AUG. 18**
- 1960s Sock Hop at Spencer-Penn Centre, 2-5 p.m. Admission is \$4 per person. For more information, call 957-5757.
 - Mountain Bike Ride at Mountain Laurel Trails, 361 Mountain Laurel Trail, Ridgeway, at 2 p.m. every Sunday.

- AUG. 19**
- Open computer lab every Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Spencer-Penn

Centre. High speed internet access will be available.

- AUG. 21**
- Henry County Bike Club variety ride on the Smith River Trail System. Call 618-0343 or check the bike club’s Facebook page for ride locations and times.

- AUG. 22**
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts statewide speaker on the arts, Amanda Dalla Villa Adams, will discuss famed photographer Sally Mann’s career, including her photographic processes, influences and transitions while highlighting her major works at Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave. Complimentary refreshments begin at 5:30 p.m.; speaker at 6 p.m. For more information, call 632-3221.
 - Classes and groups at Spencer-Penn Centre. Call 957-5757:
 - Chair aerobics, 11:30 a.m.
 - Martial Arts classes, 6 p.m.
 - Aerobic exercise class, 6:30 p.m.

- AUG. 23**
- “August: Osage County,” 7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.
 - Ride ’N Dine on the Dick & Willie Trail, sponsored by the Henry County Bike Club, 9:30 a.m.

- AUG. 24**
- Smith River Sports Complex 10th anniversary celebration. Teams created by businesses, families, churches, friends and others can compete in 18 activities from 9 a.m. to 8p.m. For more information or to sign up, go to www.SmithRiverSportsComplex.com and look for the 10th Anniversary Celebration Registration and Sponsor forms or the event page, or call 638-5200 Ext. 2 for Houston Stutz or Ext. 6 for Lloyd Barber.
 - Rhythms by the River: 5:30 to 8 p.m. on the grounds of the Bassett Historical Center. Free; eco-sponsored by the center and Greater Bassett Area Community (GBAC). Bring lawn chairs.
 - “August: Osage County,” 7 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.

- AUG. 25**
- Mountain Bike Ride at Mountain Laurel Trails, 361 Mountain Laurel Trail, Ridgeway, at 2 p.m. every Sunday.
 - “August: Osage County,” 2 p.m. at the Black Box Theatre, 44 Franklin St., Martinsville, presented by Theatreworks. Tickets: \$15.

- AUG. 26**
- Open computer lab every Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Spencer-Penn Centre. High speed internet access will be available.

- AUG. 27**
- Artspiration Senior Studio offers self-guided art studio time for seniors; 10 a.m. to noon at Piedmont Arts.

- AUG. 28**
- Henry County Bike Club variety ride on the Smith River Trail System. Call 618-0343 or check the bike club’s Facebook page for ride locations and times.

- AUG. 29**
- Classes and groups at Spencer-Penn Centre. Call 957-5757:
 - Chair aerobics, 11:30 a.m.
 - Martial Arts classes, 6 p.m.
 - Aerobic exercise class, 6:30 p.m.

- AUG. 30**
- Ride ’N Dine on the Dick & Willie Trail, sponsored by the Henry County Bike Club, 9:30 a.m.

August activities planned at Martinsville library

Several activities are planned at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library for August.

For more information about any of the programs or events, call the library at 403-5430.

The library has a “Strong Men and Women of Virginia” display that will remain in place until Aug. 14. It is on loan from the Library of Virginia.

Also, on every Wednesday and Friday, the library will hold a line dancing class at 10 a.m. The class is free and open to the public.

Following is a list by date. Unless otherwise indicated, all programs and events will take place at the library on Church Street in Martinsville:

- AUG. 2**
- Summer Feeding will end today.
 - A MADwags Robotics Outreach program, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. High

school students will teach younger children about robotics. To sign up, call the library at 403-5430.

Friday Evening Movie, 6 to 8 p.m. Popcorn will be provided.

- AUG. 3**
- Board Game Day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring a favorite game or try one the library has on hand.

- AUG. 5**
- The library, in partnership with Patrick Henry Community College, will hold a college fair, 6-8 p.m. Representatives of PHCC will be available to discuss professional development class, workforce short-term programs, financial aid and enrollment questions.

- AUG. 6**
- Fire safety workshop, 5:30 p.m. Martinsville Deputy Fire Marshal Andy Powers will discuss fire prevention. Participants can

be registered for the installation of a free smoke detector.

Aug. 8
Top Shelf STEAM activity, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m.

- AUG. 10**
- End of summer STEAM program, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the meeting room.

- AUG. 13**
- The Second Tuesday Book Club, noon.

- AUG. 15**
- Book Bingo, 2:30 p.m.
 - The library will host Pub Trivia Night at Mountain Valley Brewing. The theme for trivia is “I Love the 80s.” Trivia starts at 7 p.m. Prizes will be awarded throughout the evening.

- AUG. 17**
- The Martinsville Library, in part-

nership with the Virginia Museum of Natural History, will hold a Young Explorer event. Children may drop in from 10 a.m. to noon and participate in crafts and activities and see live insects. There will be a big announcement at the end of the event.

The library will showing a family friendly movie, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Popcorn will be provided.

- AUG. 20**
- “Cook the Book” series, at 5:30 p.m. Participants will choose a recipe from selected cook book at the library, prepare the dish, share it and vote of the best dish to win a prize. To sign up, call the Martinsville Library at 403-5430.

- AUG. 27**
- Lecture series “Faith Around the Globe,” 5:30 pm. This month the topic will be Sikhism. To sign up, call the library.



Shown at the endurance run finishing line are (from left) Anna Walker, Travis Crouch and his wife, runner Ashley Crouch, and Brandy Arnold. Walker and Arnold traveled to the race to help Ashley Crouch.

‘Run until you’re done’ in 100-mile challenge

By Ginny Wray

Ashley Crouch’s idea of crossing off a bucket list item is to run for more than 29 hours straight through the mountains and canyons of California.

Crouch, 38, of Bassett, took part in the Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run on June 29-30. She finished 294th out of 319 runners with a time of 29:31:25.

For non-runners, that is 29 hours, 31 minutes and 25 seconds. With no breaks and no stops.

She can eat a five-course meal on the run, carrying food in a pack and grabbing items at aid stations along the route. And answer the call of nature in the woods.

“You run until you’re done,” Crouch added.

And what a run it is. To put it in perspective for non-runners, Crouch said the Western States 100 Miler is considered the Boston marathon of ultra-running.

The event’s website describes the route this way:

“Beginning in Squaw Valley, site of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games, the trail ascends from the valley floor (elevation 6,200 feet) to Emigrant Pass (elevation 8,750 feet), a climb of 2,550 vertical feet in the first 4½ miles. From the pass, following the original trails used by the gold and silver miners of the 1850s, runners travel west, climbing another 15,540 feet and descending 22,970 feet before reaching Auburn, a small town in the heart of California’s historic gold country. Most of the trail passes through remote and rugged territory. ... Much of this territory is accessible only by foot, horse or helicopter.”

The U.S. Forest Service limits the race to 369 runners. They are chosen by a lottery drawing of names of people who have completed qualifying 100-mile runs. Crouch had completed such a run but never thought she would get picked in the lottery. But despite what she said was the 1.5 percent chance of getting her name drawn from among the 5,862 applicants, Crouch was selected.

“I knew a little about it but it was not on my radar,” especially since it was in California, she said.



Ashley Crouch crosses the finish line at the Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run.

But because the run is so prestigious and the terrain is so different from the places she usually runs, Crouch hired a trainer from Connecticut. She began training with him in February and ran a total of 2,400 miles between then and June.

The training included preparing for elevations on the route. Crouch said she had to train for “stuff I’ve never had before,” such as running 5-7 miles straight up and then down again. Her coach taught her tricks to get used to the elevations, such as putting cinderblocks on her treadmill.

“The first couple of times I wore a helmet,” she said, laughing. “It was scary.”

But all that faded away when the run began.

“It’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen,” Crouch said. “It’s breathtaking. It’s way different than the East Coast.”

When the race started in Squaw Valley, only half the pine trees were visible because there was 6 feet of snow on the ground, she said. But runners also went through canyons where the atmosphere was almost desert-like, she added.

There were challenges as well.

“I ran into problems early on because the race starts at 10,000 feet. The highest (elevation) on the East Coast is just over 5,000 feet,” Crouch said, explaining that she suffered altitude sickness — with headaches and vomiting — for the first

50 miles of the race.

“Everyone kept saying to keep going because it will get better going down,” and it did, she said. Still, “my time would have been much better if I hadn’t been sick.”

The first-place finisher was Jim Walmsley of Flagstaff, Ariz., with a time of 14:09:29. The top woman finisher was Clare Gallagher of Boulder, Colo., with a time of 17:23:25.

Crouch would recommend other runners do the Western States 100 miler if they qualified but she is not sure she would do it again. “There is so much involved” in buying plane tickets and getting time off work, she said. “If there was a more cost-effective manner I would because I could better myself.”

She actually got a part-time job to help cover the costs of the trip, and she is keeping the job so she can continue to compete. She has been running since 2013 when she quit smoking and gained weight.

Crouch plans to take part in a 100-miler at the end of this year and a half-iron man event, which includes swimming, biking and running, after that. She is training for that now.

She also has signed up for a run next year in Utah on her 40th birthday. “I learned a lot at the aid stations” on how to handle altitude sickness, Crouch said. “I’m going into it a little more prepared” than she was for the Western states endurance run.

Norris hosts mountain bikers for Sledgehammer

By Ginny Wray

Bob Norris spends hours each week on his mountain bike, enjoying nature and staying fit, but he doesn’t compete in mountain bike races. However, he knows how to host those who do.

On July 13, about 100 mountain bike enthusiasts competed in the first annual Sledgehammer race, part of the Southern Classic MTB Series. It was the first time the series was held in Ridgeway and the final race in the USA Cycling Virginia State Championship Series.

“It went off without a hitch,” said Norris, who created the Mountain Laurel Trails off Horsepasture-Price Road where the race was run.

Racers came from Northern Virginia to South Carolina, he said. They ranged in age from around 7 to the early 60s, males and females, he added. A “couple of hundred” spectators watched.

From 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. cyclists raced on the 11 miles of trails, competing in three categories:

- Cat 1 was for professionals who ran three laps of 6 miles each;
- Cat 2 was for the next level down in experience. They ran two laps on the same course; and
- Cat 3 was for beginners and others. They ran one lap.

The professionals ran the course in about 90 minutes, or roughly 12 miles per hour, Norris said, calling that “really fast.” He added that the trails are single track, narrow and tight in all directions, which is challenging.

Norris, 64, of Horsepasture, began mountain biking when he was 59. He said he was overweight and had type 2 diabetes, so his doctor recommended he start exercising.

“I’m the outdoors type, in the woods all the time,” he said, adding that he also is friends with Jim Frith, an avid mountain biker, and they talked about it. “I just decided to give it a shot.”

At the same time, he had idle property in Horsepasture so he created a half mile track where he could ride. “It was all I could handle at the time,” Norris said.

But as he got more interested in mountain biking, he created more trails with the help of his wife, Carla, whom he calls his “biggest supporter,” and friends who volunteered. Now, the Mountain Laurel Trails total 11 miles which are open to the public to use without charge.

The trails have become more and more popular in the last five years, and they now attract at least 50 riders each week and sometimes as many as 150, Norris said.

Mountain bikes have more “aggressive-type frames,” he explained. Their tires are fatter and with different tread than road bikes as well as a full suspension to cushion the ride, he said.

Norris rides three days a week and has lost 45 pounds, which he attributes mostly to cycling, he said.

“There is no flat land in Henry County,” he said, so mountain biking works the entire body. “You’re constantly fighting the bike ... constantly concentrating. The faster you ride, the more intense you get.”

He also is part of a Sunday group ride in which anywhere from 5 to 20 people get together to “ride, talk and have fun” in the woods, he said. That camaraderie is the best part of cycling, he added.

He rides for fun and exercise, not to compete. But he has watched some races and agreed to host the Sledgehammer when USA Cycling contacted him about having a race at the Mountain Laurel Trails. He



Bob Norris is shown at the start of the trail, spent six to eight months planning the event, and other sponsors got on board, including VisitMartinsville, which is the tourism office of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp., and Frith Construction.

The event was a “major success for Martinsville-Henry County,” he said, adding that he definitely would host another race in the future.

Beth Stinnett, assistant director of tourism and Film Office coordinator for VisitMartinsville, said that office wanted to be involved with the Sledgehammer XC race at Mountain Laurel Trails because of the popularity of mountain biking and the opportunity to bring those athletes and casual riders to the area and trails.

“Ultimately, we would love for the participants, spectators and new visitors who came out to the race at MLT to come back to our community for their next outing. Outdoor recreation is a major tourism asset for Martinsville-Henry County and with Mountain Laurel Trails appealing to cyclists of all skill levels, the complex plays a role in attracting outdoor enthusiasts here,” she stated in an email.

VisitMartinsville was on-site at the race to welcome the competitors and spectators, thank them for visiting, answer questions about the community and recommend other outdoor attractions that they may be interested in visiting.

“Assets such as Mountain Laurel Trails, the Smith River, Philpott Lake, the Smith River Blueway & Trail System and the Philpott Blueway make MHC an ideal place for outdoor enthusiasts to visit and also to live. There are numerous rides, events and even clubs to join to share your love of the outdoors and to experience the trails and waters that Martinsville-Henry County has to offer,” Stinnett added.

In 2016, Norris was given Henry County’s highest honor for community service, the Jack Dalton Award, for his work to create Mountain Laurel Trails. A Henry County news release at the time stated:

“As a result of his hard work, Mountain Laurel Trails has been designated at the ‘Best Mountain Bike Trail in Virginia’ and has ranked 32nd as the ‘Best Mountain Bike Trails in the WORLD.’ Because of his effort, Henry County has received world-wide recognition and tourists from all round the globe are coming to Horsepasture, Va., to mountain bike. This has helped increase local tourism and boost sales at local businesses and lodging facilities.”

Three years later, Norris said he was shocked at the honor. “Others do more,” he said, adding that he was helping get the community in shape. “It’s really about being healthy and being outside.”

Speedway

(cont. from page 6)

will be a separate non-competitive walker heat, starting around 9:40 a.m., for those who wish to experience the event and the Martinsville Speedway.

Community groups are encouraged to come out and walk in honor or memory of people or causes of their choice.

The awards ceremony will begin at 9:50 a.m. Awards will be given for top three overall male/female winners and for top three in each male/female age group in five-year increments beginning at 9 and under.

Fees will vary from \$15to \$25.

The track and infield will be open to spectators without charge. Runners and spectators are asked to park in the reserved suite parking lot and enter the speedway through Gate 8, Turn 4.

The Miles in Martinsville is a challenge series created to support outreach programs of the Martinsville-Henry County YMCA and financial aid and scholarships for Y memberships and child care.

For more information and registration, visit WWW.MILESINMARTINSVILLE.COM.

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HELP WANTED

computer systems; ability to multi-task; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the public and other employees; ability to obtain Basic Dispatch Certification NCIC/VGIN Certification within one year of employment and APCO Institute Emergency Medical Dispatch certification. Education and Experience: Any combination of education and experience equivalent to graduation from high school. Special Requirements: Ability to obtain police security clearance. "The Sheriff's Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer and actively recruits minorities". Daniel M. Smith Sheriff Patrick County

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Cleanup nets 600 pounds of trash from Smith River



Volunteers unload some of the trash pulled from the Smith River.

provided by a generous donation from Hugo's Restaurant and Sports Bar in Martinsville, and door prizes were donated by Rural King. The grand prize of a kayak was donated by Tony and Lisa Perez. Participants also receive special cleanup event T-shirts.

Pound for pound, the most weight comes from tires. Thanks to a partnership with Bridgestone, these tires all are picked up free of charge by Bridgestone through its "One Team One Planet" Tires Forward Program.

The most unusual finds this year were a water tank and a picnic canopy. The most frustrating items were the plastic bags hanging in trees, which are difficult to remove. The crews use long poles to reach the plastic and pull it from the bushes and overhanging trees. Plastic bottles, soda cans and Styrofoam also find their way into the river.

The items that we collect from the river are things you would find on the side of the road and in parking lots that can easily wash into the river. The tires mainly are from illegal dumping. Over the years we have collected larger items, from discarded appliances to car parts and barrels, but we have seen a marked decrease in those items.

Other items include articles of clothing, lawn chairs, diapers, mis-

cellaneous metal items, shopping carts, wheels, toys, boards and other things that wash out of residential yards.

Many volunteers come out every year, including a large group of volunteers from the local Boxley Quarry. They always bring plenty of boats and enthusiasm and an experienced river and road crew. All help is appreciated.

This year the local chapter of Smith River Trout Unlimited held its annual cleanup on the upper Smith River on the same date and collected more than 40 tires and several hundred pounds of trash from both the river and the roads from Philpott to Bassett.

(Brian Williams of Henry County is a program manager with the Dan River Basin Association.)

By Brian Williams

Twice each year the Dan River Basin, Gateway, Smith River Outfitters and Henry County, along with a fantastic group of volunteers, partner together to spend some time giving back to the community with a cleanup on the Smith River. We are happy to report that each the cleanup produces less trash than the previous years. This year, we ended up with about 600 pounds of trash which always includes a few tires that are the heaviest items collected.

On July 27, more than 50 volunteers showed up with canoes, jon boats and kayaks to join the flotilla from South Martinsville near the dam to the Smith River Sports Complex. Starting at 9 a.m., some cleanup crews hit the river while others walked the sides of the roads along sections of the river at Dye Plant Road, Frith Road and Marrowbone Creek.

The bulk of the trash was picked up in the first 1.5 miles and offloaded at Frith Road while crews from Gateway picked up the trash to be hauled to the dump. The river crews continued down to the sports complex where additional trash was offloaded and everyone was treated to lunch. This year, the meal was

Gap

(cont. from page 11)

ing the idea of allowing school divisions to apply for licenses for unused channels in the Educational Broadband Spectrum or to auction them to the highest bidder to provide service, Tatum said.

If that was approved, it could mean a school system such as Martinsville could acquire broadband frequencies not in use in the area to make wireless internet available residentially, he said. However, the schools would have to partner with

an internet provider because "it takes a high degree of expertise in wireless connectivity to get all the components to make that work," he added.

There also is an organization promoting the idea that governments would offer internet service as part of their infrastructure, just as they provide roads, Tatum said.

Martinsville does provide MINet, which offers telephone and internet service for local businesses but not residential customers, according to Tatum and the city's website.

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